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# THE BATTLE FOR LEYTE GULF

OCTOBER 1944

## STRATEGICAL AND TACTICAL ANALYSIS

VOL III

Operations  
from 0000 October 20th.(D-day)  
until 1042 October 23rd.

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By

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In preparing this volume, Commodore Richard W. Bates, USN (Ret), had as his principal assistants:

Captain Joseph J. Rochefort, USN (Ret), who translated numerous Japanese documents and collected basic data on Japanese plans and operations.

Commanders Albert W. Bowker, USN; Elmar S. Waring, USN; and Howard Cole, USN, who succeeded one another in the Battle Evaluation Group in the order listed and who compiled data on Allied air and surface force operations and provided initial drafts.

Commanders Stanley E. Hindman, USN; Joseph C. Zirkle, Jr., USN; and Roy S. Belcher, USN, who succeeded one another in the Battle Evaluation Group and who compiled data on Japanese air and surface force operations and provided initial drafts.

Captains H. M. S. Gimber, Jr., USN and Jack C. Titus, USN, who acted in an advisory capacity in matters of communications and submarine operations respectively.

Mr. Clark Kawakami and Mrs. Lily Y. Tanaka, who translated Japanese documents, served as advisors in matters of ambiguous Japanese translations to determine the correct interpretation and reviewed several of the completed drafts of the Japanese operations.

Mr. Philip R. Gaudet, who drafted all diagrams and plates in smooth form for publication.

Chief Quartermaster Samuel T. Trembath, USN, who collected data on Allied submarine plans and operations, compiled information for plates on diagrams and assisted in plotting the movements of all forces.

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Commodore Bates, for his part, checked and evaluated the above data, personally collected all data other than the above, consulted ranking American officers who participated in the battle or in its planning, wrote the manuscript, and prepared all analyses and comments, resulting therefrom.

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FOREWORD

This analysis of the 0000 October 20th - 1042 October 23rd phase of the Battle for Leyte Gulf which embraces in general the operations wherein SOWESPAC forces, supported by POA forces, seized footholds in the Leyte Gulf area of the Philippines, and the Japanese reactions thereto, was prepared by the Naval War College. It is based on information from both Allied and Japanese sources which is wider and more complete than that available to writers on this subject up to this time. It endeavors to maintain at all times, the viewpoint of the commanders of the units on both sides.

It follows directly the (a) preliminary phases including the Battle off Formosa, which were analysed in Volume I and (b) next phase which embraced the operations of the SEVENTH Fleet Advance Forces in Leyte Gulf prior to D-day which were analysed in Volume II. A knowledge of both of these phases is essential for the proper understanding of Volume III.

Complete information from all sources was not available to this analysis. This is especially true of (a) Japanese Army and Navy aircraft in the Philippines the sources for which commencing with October 23rd have become less and less complete, and (b) Japanese submarine operations and dispositions. It is also true concerning the thought processes which motivated the principle Japanese senior commanders. All known sources for obtaining information in the United States and in Japan have been examined and reexamined with only limited success on the Japanese side, but with somewhat more success on the Allied side since, during the past several years, some new material, largely in the form of dispatches, has been located. Notwithstanding, new facts and circumstances may come to light from time to time which may change some of the analysis produced herein.

In view of the critical nature of this analysis an effort has been made in certain important situations to place the critic in the position of the commander in order to obtain the latter's point of view. In employing this system it is realized that although the critic can often succeed in placing himself sufficiently near the position of the commander for any practical purposes, in many instances he may not succeed in doing so.

Because of the nature of the Allied victory at Leyte Gulf and the numerous controversies which have arisen concerning it, as complete a study as possible of the operations of this phase has been provided.

This present phase, as well as the two phases which preceded it, was a continuing test of the combat ability of the various commanders on both sides. The pages of history have invariably revealed defects in command in similar situations and it would have been surprising had such defects not appeared in these operations.

This battle reaffirmed the lesson so often forgotten--that the test of battle is the only test which proves the combat ability of commanders. The ability or lack of ability of the various commanders in the art of war became apparent. Valor alone was shown to be insufficient, for valor is not an attribute of only one race, but is an attribute and a heritage of many races. The indispensable qualification for command, the art of war, was shown to be the ability in combat to apply the science of war to active military situations.

The present senior officers of the Navy are well aware of the reasons for changes in established doctrines and in the developments of new ones. But this cannot necessarily be said of the commanders of the future, who very probably will be inexperienced in command in war.

Finally, all comments and criticisms, the more important of which are emphasized herein by the employment of capital letters, are designed to be constructive. By indicating what appear to be sound and unsound decisions, and the apparent reasons for arriving at them, it is hoped to provoke earnest thought among prospective commanders and thus to improve professional judgment in command.



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CHAPTER V - ALLIED OPERATIONS, October 22nd

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(a) SAWFISH	593-594
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CHAPTER VI - JAPANESE OPERATIONS, October 22nd

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Learns night search planes from Garan Bi made no contacts	616
Learns Main Body had sortied from Brunei at 0805	616
Sends dispatch exhorting all forces do utmost	617
Receives dispatch regarding the jamming of enemy intelligence organizations in the Philippines	617
Learns movements of CRUDIV SIXTEEN reference Manila	617
Discussion thereon	617
Learns of orders moving reinforcements to Cagayan	617-618
CofS directs care be exercised in identification	618
Studies developing situation and warns against Allied submarines	618
Learns THIRD Section sortied Brunei at 1500	619
Receives Main Force dispatch regarding changes in his projected movement plan	619
Awaits movement reports SIXTH Base Air Force to the Philippines	619-620
Issues dispatch concerning training of certain SIXTH Base Air Force personnel	620
Learns of enemy air strikes in the Philippines	621
Receives intelligence information presumably from Allied broadcasts	621-622
Discussion of disagreement between CinC Southern Army and C.G. FOURTEENTH Area Army	622-623
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Continues departure preparations	624
Ships complete fueling to capacity at 0500	624
Organizes Supply Force	624-625
Transfers seaplanes within battleships	625
Commences getting underway	625
Composition of FIRST and SECOND Sections (Main Body)	626

THIRD Section remains at anchor	626
Sortie undetected	626
Fails to make antisubmarine sweep on sortie	626-627
Has at least forty-one seaplanes	627-629
Forms alert cruising dispositions	629
Discussion thereon	629-631
Receives numerous contact reports	632
Estimates situation	632-633
Issues directive for search and escort aircraft (ship-based)	635
Receives message from CinC to use care in identification and recognition	635
Issues modifying instructions for search and escort aircraft	636
Receives warning against Allied submarines	636
Receives numerous reports on aircraft, submarines and mines	636-637
Issues maneuvering instructions for the night	638
Discussion thereon	638-639
DACE and DARTER in unfavorable intercepting position	639
(a) Operations of Commander THIRD Section	640-642
Completes plans and issues them to his command	640-641
Sorties Brunei Bay at 1500	641
Composition of THIRD Section	641
Forms cruising disposition	641
Discussion thereon	641
Sends seaplane to make arrangements with ships present mark Balabac Strait	642
Receives same reports as Commander FIRST Striking Force	642
Does not seem to be too concerned over the Allied submarines challenge	642
(2) Operations of Commander Main Force	643-664
Continues toward a position about due east Luzon Strait	643
Ponders developing situation (has 113 planes)	643
Alerted by reported presence enemy submarines (all false)	643
Discussion Japanese doctrines regarding individual movements of ships	644
Launches air search and A/S patrol	644
Weather conditions not particularly satisfactory	644
Assumes conditions alert for daylight steaming	645
Sights type Two large flying boat	645
Concerned over shortages of standard articles	645-646
Notes land based aircraft assigned patrol duties had not appeared	646
Learns friendly plane had reported contact on a force similar to his	647
Revises air antisubmarine patrol dispositions	647
Decides force contacted was Main Force; notifies those concerned	647
Discussion thereon	648
Issues schedule for the day	648
Issues fueling plan	648
Receives info from Hyuga of RDF on what were estimated to be enemy carriers	648-649
Studies enemy situation as of afternoon of previous day	649
Discussion thereon	650
Makes estimate of the situation and decides on fueling course and security precautions	650-651
Discussion thereon	651
Supplements earlier orders concerning air antisubmarine dispositions	651



Learns plane had sighted and attacked enemy submarine	652
Delays fueling	652
Issues instructions modifying fueling plans	652
Issues instructions for afternoon search	653
Advises command that at 2116 previous evening enemy task force was in Latitude 15°-00'N, Longitude 131°-00'E heading north	653
Directs fueling operations be started immediately	653
Notes delays in fueling	654
Receives contact reports on Allied carriers	654-655
Reestimates the situation and makes decisions	655
Discussion thereon	655-657
Receives penetration order for Main Body and THIRD Section	657
Learns SECOND Striking Force to penetrate into Leyte Gulf - wonders about coordination with THIRD Section	657
Receives CinC Combined Fleet's dispatch exhorting all forces to do their utmost	657-658
Changes movement schedules	658
Learns both day searches negative	658
Learns CARDIV FOUR directs exercise care regards recognition	658-659
Issues air operations plan for following day	659
Receives Imperial Rescript	660
Discussion thereon	660
Lack of training evidenced by loss aircraft	660
Orders fueling continued until 2000	660
Discussion fueling performance	661
Fueling record table	661
Summary air cover during the day	661
Discussion continued movement to eastward	662
Contacts Allied submarines (false)	662
Radically changes course - heads for planned station east of Luzon Strait	662
Receives CofS Combined Fleet's dispatch advising Main Force routing	663
Plots many contact reports	663
At 2400 about 680 miles due east of Formosa	663
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Concerns himself with operations FIRST Supply Group	663
(1) Operations of Commander FIRST Supply Group	664
Sorties from Bungo Suido at 0500	664
Forced to reduce speed because of mishaps	664
Sonar contacts not on Allied submarines	664
Fortunes of war are with him	664
(2) Operations of Commander SECOND Supply Group	664
Remains at Kure making preparations for October 23rd departure	664
(3) Operations of Commander Advance Expeditionary Force	665
Submarine I-54 at 1700 contacts a group of Allied ships	665
Discussion thereon	665
(4) Operations of Commander SIXTH Base Air Force	666-67E
Completes preparations movement his force to Philippines	666
Awaits reports from planes from Formosa and day searches Luzon	666
Reviews his plans	666
Substance of plans	666-667

October 22nd

Learns Rapu Rapu landing report false	667
Devotes his attention movement his forces to Philippines	667
Receives erroneous report on carrier force 500 miles east of Tacloban	668
Learns night searches from Garan Bi negative	668
Receives several contacts on carrier forces off Leyte Gulf	668
Learns eighty transports inside Leyte Gulf	669
Aware of air raid warning southern Kyushu	669
Learns with satisfaction no air strikes on Luzon by the Allies	669
Estimates the situation	669-670
Discussion thereon	670-671
Decides present movement plan suitable	671
Cancel dusk attack owing inability determine Allied situation	671
Arrives Manila about 1700	672
Operates directly under Commander SW Area Force	672
Receives routine information dispatches	672-673
Sees the "die is cast"	673
Becomes more familiar with plans FOURTH Air Army	673-674
Arrival SIXTH Base Air Force Luzon causes great confusion	674-675
Learns SECOND Striking Force ordered penetrate Leyte Gulf in coordination with FIRST Striking Force	675
Discussion thereon	675
Reestimates the situation and recommends all antisubmarine patrols be assigned 954th and 955th Air Groups	675
Assigns tasks for following day	676
Learns for the first day's offensive strikes still has to rely on FIFTH Base Air Force personnel for servicing aircraft	676
Believes has 178 aircraft in Clark area	676-677
Summary of planes landing at Clark Field Complex	677
Studies running estimate determine whether changes in his basic plans required	678
Receives CofS Combined Fleet's dispatch advising Main Force routing	678
(5) Operations of Commander SW Area Force	679-714
Aware that designated air bases would not be completed when SIXTH Base Air Force arrived	679
Commences receiving contact reports	679
Learns night searches from Garan Bi negative	680
Information extent long range searches meager	680
Receives contact on eight carriers from FOURTH Air Army	680
Receives Commander FIRST Striking Force's "penetration order"	680
This information very important for it affected air operations his command	680-681
Receives report eighty transports in Leyte Gulf	681
Receives CinC Combined Fleet's dispatch directing Commander SECOND Striking Force into the penetration operation	681-682
Receives above dispatch with satisfaction and concern	682
Directs Commander SECOND Striking Force to comply	682
Makes every effort insure effective movement two army battalions Cagayan to Leyte	682
Concerned over how to neutralize the Allied "intelligence organs" in Philippines	683
Advise COMCRUDIV SIXTEEN concerning plans for movement two battalions Cagayan to Leyte	683



October 22nd

Discussion thereon	683-684
Estimates carrier forces he might encounter	684-685
Receives request for additional destroyers from COMCRUDIV SIXTEEN	685
Receives CinC Combined Fleet's dispatch exhorting all forces do their utmost	685
Receives suggestion exercise care in identification	685-686
Arrival Commander SIXTH Base Air Force in no way changes relationships between Commander SW Area Force and Commander FIFTH Base Air Force	686
Learns air action by Main Force would be initiated dawn October 24th	687
Receives warning against Allied submarines	687-688
Discussion thereon	688
Learns planned movements THIRD Section next three days	688
Learns THIRD Section plans operate independently	689
Results consultations with THIRTY-FIFTH Army Headquarters relative landing craft	689
Knows Philippines have been struck by Allied aircraft (total 162)	690
Receives Commander SECOND Striking Force's dispatch advising expected arrival entrance Surigao Strait 0600 October 25th	691
(a) Operations of Commander SECOND Striking Force	692-707
Heading toward Manila Bay	692
Fired on ineffectively by SEADRAGON with four torpedoes	692
Contacted by SHARK and BLACKFISH	692
CofS SW Area Force reiterates recommendation SECOND Striking Force be employed penetration operation	693
Causes satisfaction and disagreement	693
Sights large aircraft	694
Decides send representative Manila explain his plans	694
Discussion "Oft recurring requirements"	695
Directed take part penetration operation and to cooperate with Commander FIRST Striking Force	695
Likely makes several estimates of situation employing different assumptions	695
Discussion thereon	695-696
Foresees losing three DD's (likely DESDIV 21)	696
Would be serious reduction his fighting strength	696
Instructs COMDESDIV 21 rejoin SECOND Striking Force	696
Learns FIRST Striking Force divided into two groups	696-697
Will change own plans	697
Awaits movement dispatch from Commander THIRD Section	697
Learns CRUDIV SIXTEEN directed arrive Cagayan to transport troops to Leyte	697-698
Receives Commander Main Force's planned route	698
Learns Allied submarines assembling cover movements Japanese forces	698
Receives Commander THIRD Section's movement order	698-699
Now has necessary information prepare own plans	699
Estimates the situation	699
Issues penetration orders to SECOND Striking Force	699-700
Discussion thereon	700
Discussion plans and ideas of CinC Combined Fleet	701-702
Issues SECOND Striking Force OpOrd No. 5	702
Receives RDF fix on Allied submarine transmitting an urgent request	702

October 22nd

(1) Operations of COMCRUDIV SIXTEEN	702-706
Unknown to him, is being trailed by DARTER	702-703
Wonders what counterlandings are being contemplated	703
Receives dispatch from CofS SW Area Force advising that five transports were to concentrate at Cagayan October 24th and were to come under his command	703
FOURTEENTH Area Army's coordinate action	703
Estimates the situation, decides on needs	703
Advises Commander SW Area Force of needs	703
Receives CinC Combined Fleet's dispatch exhorting all forces do their utmost	704
To take charge of all ships Cagayan as Commander SW Area Force Guard Force	704
Wonders meaning "depending on the situation the division may put into Manila Harbor"	704-705
Receives Commander Main Force's movement plan	705
Receives warning against Allied submarines	705
Receives COMBATDIV TWO's movement plan for THIRD Section	705-706
Receives dispatch giving boats available Guard Force	706
Learns SECOND Striking Force (CRUDIV TWENTY-ONE, DESRON ONE) to take part in penetration operation	706
Notes need for continuing antisubmarine measures	706
(2) Operations of COMDESDIV TWENTY-ONE	706-707
Sighted by DRUM	707
Receives dispatch orders from Commander SECOND Striking Force	707
(b) Operations of Commander FIFTH Base Air Force	707-714
Fighters preparing for Kamikaze Operation	707
Learns night search from Garan Bi negative	708
Directs his command assist SIXTH Base Air Force in the activation of base activities	708
Discussion thereon	708
Receives contact reports on light carriers by SECOND Air Division	708-709
Not unduly alarmed by these contacts	709
Learns from C.G. FOURTH Air Army eighty transports in Leyte Gulf	709
Receives first contact report from own search planes (on carrier force)	709
Aware arrival first units SIXTH Base Air Force	709
Learns division of FIRST Striking Force and prospective route each part	709-710
Receives suggestion exercise care in identification	710
Learns air action by Main Force would be initiated dawn October 24th	710
Learns planned movements THIRD Section next three days	710
Briefs Commander SIXTH Base Air Force on current situation	711
Learns Commander SECOND Air Division's plans for the general offensive	711
Learns confusion caused by arrival SIXTH Base Air Force	712
Learns SIXTH Base Air Force's operations for next day	712
Learns plans SECOND Striking Force in penetration operation	712
Learns composition and route of Main Force	712-713
Number of operational aircraft (24)	713
Japanese very adapt employing dummy aircraft	713



October 23rd

Discussion thereon	713-714
Ponders advisability moving a large part his aircraft Davao	714
(B) Operations of C.G. FOURTH Air Army	715-720
Concerned over Allied air operations	715
Awaits results of the morning search and reconnaissance flights	715
Interested primarily in contacts made by his own planes	715
Receives two contact reports from SECOND Air Division on eight carriers	715
Error in contact identification - were escort carriers	716
Receives report eighty transports Leyte Gulf	716
Orders Commander SECOND Air Division restrict attacks to Allied ships other than warships	716
Receives report from a Manila search plane	717
Cautions his command	717
Learns division FIRST Striking Force and prospective route each part	717
Receives SECOND Air Division Operation Order A-207 which is discussed herein	717-718
This order conforms closely with his basic attack order (A-518)	718
Discussion thereon	719
Arrival SIXTH Base Air Force causes considerable confusion	719
Reinforcement aircraft arriving as planned (61 planes)	720
Receives reports indicating Philippines had been attacked by Allied aircraft	720
Operational planes (97)	720
<u>CHAPTER VII - ALLIED OPERATIONS, 0000 - 1042 October 23rd</u>	721-787
(A) Operations of COMSOWESPAC	721-764
Receives contact reports on Japanese shipping en route Manila.- Coron Bay area	721
Preparing install Philippine Commonwealth Government	721
Gratified learn COMTHIRDFLT will continue cover SOWESPAC operations	721
Receives DARTER contact report on three probable battleships in Palawan Passage	721
Receives DARTER's report amplifying contact to eleven ships	722
Informs COMNAVGRPCHINA he wants FOURTEENTH Air Force continue air searches until November 30th	723
(1) Operations of COMSEVENTHFLT	723-758
Takes no unusual action either as COMSEVENTHFLT or as CANF SOWESPAC	723
(a) Operations of CTF 77 (Central Philippines Attack Force)	723-758
Watches contact reports very closely due having some transports and LST's to unload and prospective arrival TG 78.7	723-724
Commences receiving contact reports on enemy forces west of Philippines	724
Learns with satisfaction THIRD Fleet to search much of Sibuyan Sea as possible	724-725
Receives report DARTER's contact on three probable battleships	725
Discussion thereon	725
Receives second report from DARTER increasing enemy to nine ships	725
Confuses these contact reports	725-726
Receives third report from DARTER increasing enemy to eleven ships	726
Receives intelligence Commander SECOND Striking Force had requested an oiler at Coron Bay	726
Restimates the situation and decides request assistance from COMTHIRDFLT	726-728

October 23rd

Observes replenishment group anchor	728
Informs commanders he regards approach enemy combatant ships in Coron Bay area as build-up for magnified Tokyo Express runs against Leyte	729
Discussion thereon	730-733
Disregards enemy capabilities of major fleet action and/or raids by enemy surface forces and settles instead on enemy intention of Tokyo Express operations	733
Naval War College analysis of Savo Island states, "A Commander in making his plans, should follow the method of enemy capabilities rather than the method of enemy intentions".	734
Reasons for CTF 77's acceptance of enemy intentions this case	734-735
Necessity for thinking each situation through	735
(1) Operations of CTF 78 (Northern Attack Force and CTG 78.1)	735-738
Continues unloading	735
Receives CTF 79's request for operation summary as of 1000 daily	735
(a) Operations of CTG 78.2 (San Ricardo Attack Group)	736
Continues unloading	736
Notes LCI(G)'s 64 and 69 commence reconnoitering San Juanico Strait with representative FIRST Cavalry Division	736
(b) (1) Operations of CTU 77.2.1 (Fire Support Unit NORTH)	736-737
Releases CALIFORNIA and PENNSYLVANIA proceed independently stations FS Area SOUTH	737
Anchors San Pedro Bay	737
(2) Operations of CTG 77.3 (Close Covering Group)	737
Continues patrolling the area two to five miles east and southeast of the Transport Area	737
(c) Operations of CTG's 78.7 (Reinforcement Group Two) and 78.8 (Reinforcement Group Three)	738
(1) Operations of CTG 78.7	738
Approaching Leyte Gulf	738
(2) Operations of CTG 78.8	738
Sorties Humboldt Bay and heads for Leyte Gulf at an SOA of nine knots	738
(2) Operations of CTF 79 (Southern Attack Force)	738-742
Observes unloading and, because of contacts on Allied forces in Palawan Passage and west Luzon Strait, desires expedite	738
Advises CTF 77 of the TF 79 and TU 77.2.2 units present in Leyte Gulf	739
Transfers to WASATCH for further transfer to Tacloban	739
Discusses above contacts with CTF 77	739
Directs CTG 79.1 send six LCI gunboats, four LCI (Mortar) boats report to CTG 78.2 for duty	739
(a) Operations of CTG 79.1 (Attack Group ABLE)	739-740
Continues unloading	740
Due to rapidity of unloading foresees early departure	740
(b) Operations of CTG 79.2 (Attack Group BAKER)	740-741
Learns 170th Engineer Battalion has landed	740
Learns 381st RCT has landed	741
(c) Operations of CTU 77.2.2 (Fire Support Unit SOUTH)	741-742



October 23rd

- Observes Replenishment Group (TU 77.7.1) enter and anchor off Liberanan Head 741
- RICHARD P. LEARY reports for duty 742
- (3) Operations of CTG 77.2 (Bombardment and Fire Support Group) 742-743
- Continues to patrol east of Tay Tay Point with ships from TU 77.2.2 742
- TENNESSEE at anchor near Catmon Hill repairs completed 742
- Directs units TU 77.2.2 proceed FS stations 742
- Enemy aircraft appear, beginning at 0530 742
- Makes plans for replenishment his units 743
- (4) Operations of CTG 77.4 (Escort Carrier Group) 743-745
- Provides air cover and support over objective area and his own unit 743
- CHENANGO's TCAP shoots down enemy plane 744
- Flying conditions good 744
- Support Groups commence hitting pill boxes and trenches in the San Pablo Area 744
- Launches fighter sweeps against northern Mindanao airfields 744
- Fighter sweeps strike Del Monte airfield complex 744
- Receives or intercepts contact reports of enemy combatant units in Palawan Passage and westward Luzon Strait 745
- Receives COMTHIRDFLT's order restationing his carriers to search to westward 745
- Estimates effect enemy movements toward Coron Bay and Manila 745
- Decides new disposition carriers will enlarge the scope of own operations 745
- Completes numerous sorties 745
- Has 311 VF, 190 VT remaining 745
- (5) Operations of CTG 70.1 (Motor Torpedo Boats) 746
- MTB's in San Juanico Strait make no contacts 746
- Makes preparations extend operations include Mindanao and Camotes Seas 746
- Directs WACHAPREAGUE, with fifteen MTB's establish advance base at Liloan Bay 746
- Thirty MTB's endeavor complete voyage repairs and prepare for immediate service 746
- (b) Operations of CTF 71 (Submarines West Australia) 746-758
- Believes Japanese surface force has entered his area of responsibility 746
- Regrets absence air searches by FOURTEENTH Air Force 746
- Receives several contact reports from DARTER on enemy surface forces reporting a minimum of eleven ships 746-747
- Passes this information to the Senior Allied Commanders 747
- Estimates enemy force as from one carrier, four unidentified ships to four large ships and three additional ships 748
- Regrets failed maintain on station four submarines which he had promised 748
- Considers Japanese forces contacted likely heading for Coron Bay 748
- (1) BREAM and GUITARRO proceeding independently to assigned patrol stations 748
- (a) BREAM, southwest of Manila, fires six torpedoes at enemy cruisers, likely ATAGO or AOBA Class 748-749

October 23rd

Torpedoes AOBA	749
Air and surface A/S searching effectively for BREEM	749
AOBA being towed by KINU en route Manila	749
(b) GUITARRO takes station for interception of reported Japanese force en route Manila	749
(2) ROCK and BERGALL	750
ROCK returns to assigned station	750
BERGALL having made no contacts off Saigon commences return assigned station	750
(3) BLUEGILL proceeding southward en route Mios Woendi	750
(4) ANGLER reverses course and heads for Palawan Passage at full speed in hopes intercepting DARTER's contact report	751
(5) DACE and DARTER rendezvous at 0100 and discuss tactics to be employed for wolfpack operations against merchant shipping	751
Both DACE and DARTER make contact on FIRST Striking Force entering Palawan Passage - DARTER at 0116, DACE at 0125	751
Encounter great difficulty in obtaining suitable attack positions due speed of enemy ships	751
DARTER contacts by radar three probable battleships	752
DACE now estimates correctly enemy disposition	752
Wolfpack commander directs DACE submerge and make dawn attack with DARTER making first attack	752-753
Directs DARTER take station ten miles ahead of western column and DACE ahead eastern column	752
DARTER fires bow tubes and sinks ATAGO	753
DARTER fires four stern torpedoes at second heavy cruiser	753
Makes two hits on TAKAO	753-754
DACE fires six bow torpedoes at battleship (actually MAYA)	754
DARTER notes enemy shipping departed except TAKAO	754
Attacks of DACE and DARTER possible because of lucky breaks	754-756
(6) HAMMERHEAD departs for Fremantle	756
(7) GURNARD makes two unsuccessful attacks merchant ship convoy	756
Breaks off chase, heads Point DATOE minelaying operations	756
(8) BATFISH	757
(9) COD unable locate SEADRAGON contact	757
Commences patrolling Cape Bojeador	757
(10) LAPON en route Fremantle decides render any assistance	
PADDLE and patrols off Balikpapan	757
(11) COBIA completes transit Mindoro Strait en route Fremantle	758
(12) BLACKFIN receives orders to patrol Area D-6 and sets course for same	758
(13) PADDLE arrives at lifeguard station off Balikpapan	758
(14) Several submarines retiring from the area	758
(2) Operations of CAAF SOWESPAK	759-764
Prepares depart NASHVILLE attend installation President Philippine Commonwealth	759
(a) Operations of C.G. FIFTH Air Force	759-764
Awaits results tasks assigned subordinates	759
Requests rescue PBY and fighter escort for bomber strike on Puerto Princessa	760



October 23rd

Discussion thereon	760
CTF 77 unable provide fighter escort	760-761
Learns two B-24's staging through Morotai, bombed Malabato airfield (near Coron Bay)	761
Discussion thereon	761-762
(b) Operations of CTF 73 (Naval Air Force)	762-764
Arrives Morotai and moors alongside TANGIER	762
Due congested airfield requests CTG 77.4 have CVE arrive as soon as possible	762
(1) Operations of CTG 73.7 (Advanced Group)	763-764
Awaits arrival first elements VPB's	763
Awaits CTF 77's reaction to request for fighter escort before replying to C.G. FIFTH Air Force's request for rescue PBY	763
Learns two five-plane sections of PBY's have departed Mios Woendi for Leyte	763
Advises CTF 77, "Daylight Catalina Available"; requires fighter escort	764
(B) CINCPAC - CINCPAA	764-787
Advises command Japanese oiler expected arrive Coron Bay this day	764
Learns Japanese plane for second straight day has made contact on Japanese surface force off Okinawa	764
Considers report erroneous - (actually report correct as was on Main Force)	764
(1) Western Pacific Task Forces	765-783
(a) Operations of COMTHIRDFLT	765-783
Previous day dispatches show marked difference of opinion regarding the strategic employment of TF 38	765
Watching developments to determine whether or not his planned replenishment schedule was sound	765
Receives SHARK's report of four large and three additional combatant ships	765
Receives H.Q. COMSEVENTHFLT intelligence summary indicating no major reaction to invasion of Leyte	766
Reviews instructions to his command and decides his planned operations for TG's 38.2 and 38.3 in Area CONDOR are not sound	766
Finds it difficult to swing blows in support from Area CONDOR	766
Decides move TG's 38.2 and 38.3 much closer to the Philippines	766
Directs CTF 38 (who was in TG 38.3):	
(a) proceed immediately to Latitude 15°-00'N, Longitude 123°-30'E,	
(b) extend afternoon air search cover much Sibuyan Sea as practicable,	
(c) launch early morning search to maximum distance in sector 220°-295°(T) and	
(d) leave WASHINGTON, ALABAMA and DESDIV 100 at Point CONDOR to rendezvous with CTG 38.4	767
Discussion thereon	767
Learns BESUGO now patrolling eastern half Area 7; RONQUIL western half	767

May have felt Bungo Suido submarines had failed intercept Main Force or that Kii Suido or Shimonoseki Suido had been employed 768

Learns from CTF 71 of DARTER's contact on three probable battleships in Palawan Passage 768

Receives DRUM's contact report of the previous evening on three destroyers 768

Notes TG 38.2 has rendezvoused with the fueling group 768

Receives DARTER's contact reports amplifying enemy forces first to nine and then to at least eleven enemy ships 769

Receives ICEFISH's contact of previous day on two heavy cruisers and three destroyers 769

Believes correctly ICEFISH and SHARK's contact reports are both on Japanese SECOND Striking Force 769

Reestimates present situation determine whether or not his plans are adequate 769-770

Decides present plans are inadequate to guard approaches through Philippines 771-772

Reassigns TG's 38.2, 38.3 and 38.4 along the eastern littoral of the Philippines 772

Discussion thereon 772-773

Fails give coverage enemy moving from north or northeast 773

Issues no special instructions to CTG 30.5 to investigate intelligence reporting Japanese force 773

Decides not to change CTG 38.1's orders 773

Discussion thereon 773-775

(1) TF 38 (Fast Carrier Force) 776-783

    (a) Operations of CTG's 38.1 and 38.4 776-777

        COMBATPAC in WASHINGTON with ALABAMA and DESDIV 100 joins TG 38.4 776

        Composition TG 38.4 776-777

        CTG 38.1 notifies COMNAVBASE Ulithi of impending arrival with TG's 38.1 and 38.4 777

        CTG 38.4 ordered operate off Samar 777

    (b) Operations of CTG 38.2 778-780

        Receives instructions from COMTHIRDFLT directing him to operate about ninety miles due east Polillo Island 778

        Effects rendezvous with fueling group and commences fueling 778

        Is now to operate off eastern entrance San Bernardino Strait 778

        Use of phrase "unless otherwise directed" discussed herein 779

        Detaches BUNKER HILL, STEPHEN POTTER, and BENHAM to proceed Ulithi 780

        Composition TG 38.2 780

    (c) Operations of CTG 38.3 780-782

        Learns CTF 38 with TG 38.3 directed proceed station ninety miles due east Polillo Island 780

        Detaches COMBATPAC in WASHINGTON with ALABAMA and DESDIV 100 to join CTG 38.4 781

        Composition TG 38.3 781



Learns movements other groups TF 38 but does not know  
new assignment TG 38.2

782

Receives numerous contacts on Allied forces

782

(2) Operations of CTG 30.5 (Air Search, Reconnaissance, and  
Photographic Group)

782-783

Continues air searches from Kossol Passage, Saipan and  
Tinian which as of 1042 are negative

782

Attacks merchant ships while on search

783

Discussion thereon

783

(2) Operations of CTF 17 (Submarine Force Pacific)

783-787

Realizes enemy surface units heading Luzon have likely entered  
his area

783

Receives dispatch from BESUGO effect patrolling plan for BESUGO  
and RONQUIL has been changed to cover Bungo Suido

783

Discussion thereon

783-784

Receives report DARTER has encountered three "probable battleships"  
in Southern Palawan Passage

784-785

Learns DARTER now reports enemy force composed of at least eleven  
ships

785

Notifies COMTHIRDFLT BONEFISH will arrive Saipan October 27th with  
rescued airmen

785

(a) CONVOY COLLEGE

785

(b) Northwest Coast of Formosa

785-786

TANG sinks three cargo ships

785-786

(c) Northeast Coast of Formosa

786

(d) MARU MORGUE

786

(e) Nagasaki - Sasebo

786

CROAKER sinks cargo ship

786

(f) HIT PARADE

787

BESUGO and RONQUIL take stations across entrance Bungo Suido

787

(C) China - Burma - India Theater

787

(1) Operations of C.G. FOURTEENTH Air Force

787

Day searches as of 1042 negative

787

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788-853

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788-849

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788

Warns his commanders to give special attention activities Allied  
submarines

788

Learns Commander SECOND Striking Force's plan for penetration operation

789

Becomes aware SECOND Striking Force plans enter Surigao Strait five  
hours after THIRD Section

789

Receives contact and RDF reports largely on Allied submarines

789

Learns AOBA torpedoed

790

Contact reports reveal little change in position and number Allied  
carriers

791

Learns Main Force contacted by Japanese plane

791

Discussion thereon

791

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791

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791

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792

October 23rd

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ALL TIMES IN THIS ANALYSIS, EXCEPT ALLIED DISPATCH TIMES  
ARE ZONE TIME (-9)

ALLIED DISPATCH TIMES ARE GREENWICH CIVIL TIME\*

The time of receipt of many dispatches, both Allied and Japanese, has been generally unavailable to this analysis. In order to compensate for this, it has been assumed from an average time of receipt of a number of important dispatches that, unless otherwise stated, important dispatches concerning operations were received by action addressees in one-half hour when handled via direct circuits. Such assumed times of receipt are indicated by the phrase "at about", while actual times of receipt are indicated by the phrase "at (time inserted)". While this assumption may seem somewhat generous, a study of this analysis will show that where such assumptions are made the result of later receipt (such as one hour or more) would have caused little or no change in the basic study.

Often the time of receipt is known for one command but is not known for other commands. When this much information is available an analysis of the commander under discussion is made to determine whether or not it was likely he received the dispatch on the same transmission as the commander with the known time of receipt. Such items as location, command organization, importance of command and importance of the dispatch are considered. When appropriate it is therefore assumed that several commanders received a particular dispatch at the same time, in which case this assumption is so indicated in the text.

In order to summarize contact information each contact plate lists in tabular form time of contact, location and the time of receipt by the principal commanders. The abbreviation "Rec'd" in the time box indicates the report was probably received; exact time unknown. The time box left blank indicates either lack of information as to receipt or the contact was considered of lesser concern to the commander. Where applicable the one-half hour transmission time assumption explained above, has been applied to contact reports and those receipt times recorded.

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\* It will be noted that some Allied Air Force dispatches employ local zone time, in which cases the zone designating letter (I) is suffixed to the date-time group.



PRINCIPAL COMMANDERSALLIED

(a) Southwest Pacific Area	
Commander Southwest Pacific Area (COMSOWESPAC)	General MacArthur, Douglas A., USA
Chief of Staff	Lt. General Sutherland, Richard K., USA
Commander Allied Air Force SOWESPAC (COMAIRSOWESPAC)	Lt. General Kenney George C. (AC), USA
Chief of Staff	Brigadier General Beebe, Royden E., (AC), USA
Commander Allied Naval Forces SOWESPAC (CANFSOWESPAC)	Vice Admiral Kinkaid, Thomas C., USN
Chief of Staff	Commodore Schaeffer, Valentine H., USN
Commander SEVENTH Fleet (COMSEVENTHFLT)	Vice Admiral Kinkaid, Thomas C., USN
Chief of Staff	Commodore Schaeffer, Valentine H., USN
Commanding General SIXTH Army	Lt. General Krueger, Walter, USA
Chief of Staff	Brigadier General Decker, George H., USA
Commander Central Philippines Attack Force (CTF 77)	Vice Admiral Kinkaid, Thomas C., USN
Chief of Staff	Commodore Schaeffer, Valentine H., USN
Commander Bombardment and Fire Support Group (CTG 77.2)	Rear Admiral Oldendorf, Jesse B., USN
Chief of Staff	Captain Bates, Richard W., USN
Commander Escort Carrier Group (CTG 77.4)	Rear Admiral Sprague, Thomas L., USN
Chief of Staff	Captain Carson, Joseph M., USN

Commander Dinagat Attack Group (CTG 78.4)	Rear Admiral Struble, Arthur D., USN
Chief of Staff	Captain Abdill, Everett W., USN
Commander Minesweeping and Hydrographic Group* (CTG 77.5)	Commander Loud, Wayne R., USN
Commander Northern Attack Force (CTF 78)	Rear Admiral Barbey, Daniel E., USN
Chief of Staff	Commodore Noble, Albert G., USN
Commander Palo Attack Group (CTG 78.1)	Rear Admiral Barbey, Daniel E., USN
Chief of Staff	Commodore Noble, Albert G., USN
Commander San Ricardo Attack Group (CTG 78.2)	Rear Admiral Fechteler, William M., USN
Chief of Staff	Captain Sprague, Albert T., Jr., USN
Commander Southern Attack Force (CTF 79)	Vice Admiral Wilkinson, Theodore S., USN
Chief of Staff	Commodore Powell, Paulus P., USN
Commander Attack Group ABLE (CTG 79.1)	Rear Admiral Conolly, Richard L., USN
Chief of Staff	Captain Moore, Walter E., USN
Commander Attack Group BAKER (CTG 79.2)	Rear Admiral Royal, Forrest B., USN
Chief of Staff	Captain Dugan, Paul F., USN

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\* Since no Chief Staff Officer was assigned CTG 77.5 this function was performed as additional duty by Lieutenant Roy E. Daly, USNR.



Commander Submarines SEVENTH Fleet	Rear Admiral Christie, Ralph W., USN
Chief of Staff	Captain Nichols, Philip G., USN
Commander Submarines West Australia (CTF 71)	Rear Admiral Christie, Ralph W., USN
Chief of Staff	Captain Nichols, Philip G., USN
(b) Pacific Ocean Areas	
CinC Pacific Ocean Areas (CINCPOA)	Admiral Nimitz, Chester W., USN
Chief of Staff	Vice Admiral McMorris, Charles H., USN
Commander Western Pacific Task Forces	Admiral Halsey, William F., Jr. USN
Chief of Staff	Rear Admiral Carney, Robert B., USN
Commander THIRD Fleet (COMTHIRDFLT)	Admiral Halsey, William F., Jr. USN
Chief of Staff	Rear Admiral Carney, Robert B., USN
Commander FIRST Carrier Task Force (CTF 38)	Vice Admiral Mitscher, Marc A., USN
Chief of Staff	Commodore Burke, Arleigh A., USN
Commander Forward Area Central Pacific Task Force (CTF 57)	Vice Admiral Hoover, John H., USN
Chief of Staff	Captain Scull, Herbert M., USN
Commander Shore-Based Air Force Forward Area (CTF 59)	Major General Hale, Willis H., (AC), USA
Chief of Staff	Colonel Carr, Lawrence J., (AC), USA

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Commander Submarines Pacific Fleet  
(COMSUBPAC) (CTF 17)

Chief of Staff

Vice Admiral Lockwood,  
Charles A., USN

Commodore Comstock,  
Merrill, USN

(c) China-Burma-India Theater

CG Army Forces CBI

Chief of Staff

General Stilwell, Joseph  
W., USA

Brigadier General Cannon,  
Robert M., USA

CG FOURTEENTH Air Force

Chief of Staff

Major General Chennault,  
Claire L., (AC) USA

Brigadier General Glenn,  
Edgar E., USA

CG TWENTIETH Bomber Command

Chief of Staff

Major General LeMay, Curtis  
E., (AC) USA

Brigadier General Upston,  
John E., USA

JAPANESE

Commander-in-Chief Combined Fleet

Chief of Staff

Admiral Toyoda, Soemu, IJN

Vice Admiral Kusaka,  
Ryunosuke, IJN

Commander Mobile Force

Chief of Staff

Vice Admiral Ozawa,  
Jisaburo, IJN

Rear Admiral Obayashi,  
Sueo, IJN

Commander Main Force

Chief of Staff

Vice Admiral Ozawa,  
Jisaburo, IJN

Rear Admiral Obayashi,  
Sueo, IJN

Commander FIRST Striking Force

Chief of Staff

Vice Admiral Kurita,  
Takeo, IJN

Rear Admiral Koyanagi,  
Tomiji, IJN



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Commander SECOND Striking Force	Vice Admiral Shima, Kiyohide, IJN
Chief of Staff	Rear Admiral Matsumoto, Takeshi, IJN
Commander Advance Expeditionary Force	Vice Admiral Miwa, Shigeyoshi, IJN
Chief of Staff	Rear Admiral Nishina, Kozo, IJN
Commander Southwest Area Force	Vice Admiral Mikawa, Gunichi, IJN
Chief of Staff	Vice Admiral Nishio, Hidehiko, IJN
Commander THIRD Southern Expeditionary Force (Philippine Force)	Vice Admiral Mikawa, Gunichi, IJN
Chief of Staff	Rear Admiral Shimamoto, Kyugoro, IJN
Commander FIFTH Base Air Force	Vice Admiral Teraoka, Kimpei, IJN
Chief of Staff	Captain Odahara, Toshihiko, IJN
Commander SIXTH Base Air Force	Vice Admiral Fukudome, Shigeru, IJN
Chief of Staff	Rear Admiral Sugimoto, Ushie, IJN
CinC Southern Army	Field Marshal Terauchi, Hisaichi, IJA
Chief of Staff	Lt. General Iimura, Jo, IJA
CG FOURTEENTH Area Army	General Yamashita, Tomoyuki, IJA
CG FOURTH Air Army	Lt. General Tominaga, Kyoji, IJA
Chief of Staff	Lt. General Terada, Seiichi, IJA

(g) Southern Army

(1) FOURTH Air Army

(a) SECOND Air Division

(b) FOURTH Air Division

(c) SEVENTH Air Division

Field Marshal Terauchi, Hisaichi

Lieutenant General Tominaga, Kyoji

Lieutenant General Kinoshita, Isamu

Lieutenant General Kinoshita, Isamu\*

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\* Philippine Air Operation, Phase II, Page 40. It is believed Lieutenant General Kinoshita commanded both divisions after assuming command of the 2ND Air Division when its original commander was wounded on October 19th, 1944.



INTRODUCTION

Volume I of the study of the Battle for Leyte Gulf covers the preliminary operations of this battle on both the Allied and Japanese sides until 0719 October 17th, 1944. This was the moment when Japanese lookouts on Suluan Island at the entrance to Leyte Gulf made a contact report on Allied surface forces entering Leyte Gulf. These Allied surface forces were the advance forces of the SEVENTHFLT which had been ordered, commencing D-3\* day (October 17th) to prepare the way for the seizure by the SIXTH Army of certain areas on Leyte Island preparatory to seizing the Philippines. (A thorough brief of Volume I is contained in the Introduction to Volume II).

Volume II of this study covers the three-day period of operations from D-3 through D-1 day (2400 October 19th).

(A) Allied.

(a) Advance Force (1) seized Suluan Island at the entrance to Leyte Gulf and also seized positions on southern Homonhon and northern Dinagat Islands, (2) destroyed by gunfire and air bombardment enemy personnel, installations and facilities along the east coast of Leyte and especially within the selected landing areas (in the vicinity of Palo and Dulag), (3) reconnoitered with UDT's the approaches to the above selected landing areas and reported them as satisfactory, (4) cleared most of the objective area of mines (actually all mines swept were in Area SWEEP at the entrance to Leyte Gulf. Here in these three days the minesweepers swept 190 mines all of which proved to be of the chemical horn contact type), (5) made a hydrographic survey and installed a number of navigational aids;

(b) Covering and Support Forces (1) hit the Clark Field Complex, the Manila area of Luzon, and the shipping in the Manila area heavily by air strikes on the 18th and 19th (TF 38 planes), (2) hit the Takao area of Formosa by an air strike on the 17th (TWENTIETH Bomber Command), (3) hit the western Visayas by air strikes (Negros, Cebu, Panay) heavily on the 18th and 19th (TG 77.4), (4) made reconnaissance searches throughout the area, (5) made by both air and submarine a number of important contacts, notably on the SECOND Striking Force en route Mako, this latter by submarines.

During this period (a) COMTHIRDFLT sent two dispatches to COMSOWESPAC warning of the likelihood of Tokyo Express operations by the enemy in support of the Leyte garrison, (b) the Allied amphibious forces continued on toward Leyte and at 2400 October 19th were already penetrating into Leyte Gulf.

In strategic command of all forces in the SOWESPAC area was COMSOWESPAC with his headquarters at Hollandia but who at this time was in the cruiser NASHVILLE, entering Leyte Gulf.

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\* Although COMSOWESPAC employed the term A-day rather than D-day, the latter is employed throughout this analysis to follow the more familiar military usage.

## (B) Japanese.

Because they felt that the Allied landings on Suluan, Homonhon and Dinagat Islands appeared to be part of an invasion move against the central and southern Philippines, and because they had contacted four enemy carrier groups off Luzon, the Japanese High Command decided on October 18th that there would be a landing in the Philippines. The Navy activated SHO One at 1701 and the Army activated it for 0000 the following day.

Meanwhile the Naval High Command commenced concentrating the principal air strength of the SIXTH Base Air Force in Formosa preparatory to moving it to the Philippines--restored CARDIV THREE air units still in Japan and CARDIV FOUR units at Oita and Kagoshima Air Bases capable of operating from carriers to CARDIV THREE, and transferred the sadly depleted T-Force to CinC Combined Fleet.

On October 19th the Navy informed the Army that preparations were underway for the Combined Fleet penetration into Leyte Gulf. Surprisingly this plan was opposed by the Chief of the Army General Staff who proposed that the Navy adopt a policy of conserving fleet strength. As a result of this disagreement no conclusions were arrived at. The Navy therefore persisted in going ahead with plans for the penetration operation--the Army, on the other hand, persisted in opposing such an operation. Also since on this day the air forces operating in the Philippines had contacted many Allied forces concentrating on Leyte Gulf, the Naval High Command became convinced that the Leyte landing was to be the main landing and was not a diversion nor a reconnaissance in force.

The Japanese surface and submarine forces operated as follows:

(a) FIRST Striking Force sortied from Lingga-Singapore at 0100 October 18th and headed for Brunei Bay where it was to arrive on the 20th,

(b) SECOND Striking Force sortied from Amami O Shima at 0530 October 18th and headed for Mako (Pescadores Islands) where it was to arrive also on the 20th, and

(c) Main Force in the Inland Sea continued preparations for sortie which was planned for the 20th; the Advanced Expeditionary Force sortied eight submarines of the B Group on October 19th.

The Japanese air forces operated as follows:

(a) FIFTH Base Air Force continued preparations for the defense of the Philippines by (1) launching seventeen sorties on October 18th and five on October 19th against Allied carriers and shipping and by launching long range searches on October 19th which contacted in their range, most of the Allied forces approaching the Leyte area, and (2) preparing base facilities for the deployment of the SIXTH Base Air Force there. At 2400 October 19th the FIFTH Base Air Force had forty planes operational out of sixty-seven available,



(b) SIXTH Base Air Force continued its preparations for moving to the Philippines. On October 19th the commander (1) issued orders for the SHO One decisive battle, (2) directed his command to move to the Philippines on October 21st and 22nd and launch attack operations on October 22nd and 23rd, and (3) advised the principal commands that he had on Formosa at 0800 this day 395 aircraft of which 223 were operational. At 2400 October 19th the SIXTH Base Air Force had about 505 operational planes out of 842 available, and

(c) FOURTH Air Army continued its operations in defense of the Philippines by launching five air strikes against Allied shipping in Leyte Gulf and by conducting short range air searches which supported the long range air searches of the FIFTH Base Air Force. At 2400 October 19th the FOURTH Air Army had fifty-five operational planes out of ninety-two available.

In strategic command of all Naval forces including Naval air forces was CinC Combined Fleet who was en route from Formosa to Hiyoshi (Kyushu) but who at 2400 October 19th was at Omura Kyushu where he had been forced to stop for the night, because of bad weather.

A Brief Narrative of the 0000 20 October - 1042 23 October Phase of the  
Battle for Leyte Gulf

(1) Operations on October 20th.

(a) Allied.

During the early hours the Allied amphibious forces entered Leyte Gulf. At this time, CTF 77, who had arrived with these forces, assumed command of all operations in the objective area. The advance group was then dissolved and its several components reported to various commands to continue their functional tasks, and the F3 groups and air support groups commenced conducting the final pre-landing bombardments as scheduled.

At 1000 CTF 78 landed the TENTH Corps on schedule on the northern beaches in the vicinity of Tacloban with only limited opposition. The TWENTY-FOURTH Division landed on RED Beach (Palo), while the FIRST Cavalry Division landed on WHITE Beach (San Ricardo). Meanwhile the TWENTY-FIRST Infantry Regiment had landed unopposed at GREEN Beach (Panaon).

Similarly CTF 79 landed the TWENTY-FOURTH Corps on the southern beaches, in the vicinity of Dulag, also with only limited opposition. The SEVENTH Infantry Division landed on VIOLET and YELLOW Beaches, while the NINETY-SIXTH Infantry Division landed on ORANGE and BLUE Beaches.

This success in landing unopposed, or with only limited opposition, was not due entirely to the effectiveness of the Allied preliminary air and gunfire bombardments, but was also due to the fact that the Japanese troops in the Dulag and Tacloban areas were not in their defense positions but instead had withdrawn to safer positions until the preliminary bombardments had ended. The Allied landings occurred faster than had been estimated.

The unloading of additional troops, supplies, and equipment followed soon after the assault waves, and by early afternoon general unloading had commenced. Some delays were encountered in the unloading of material over various beaches.

Also in early afternoon COMSOWESPAC with his party went ashore to inspect the progress of operations at the northern beaches and to broadcast his return to the people of the Philippines, returning to his flagship at 1600. Near the day's end he reported to COMINCH that the Leyte landing had been most successful, that operations were proceeding according to schedule with very light losses, and that while heavy enemy mortar fire had been encountered no enemy heavy shore artillery had been located.

At 1430 the C.G.'s TWENTY-FOURTH Infantry Division and FIRST Cavalry Division and at 1750 C.G. NINETY-SIXTH Infantry Division assumed command ashore, illustrating the rapidity with which operations progressed.

At 1615 the HONOLULU was torpedoed by an enemy plane.

By 1800 the Panaon phase of the operation had been completed. CTG 78.3 then withdrew most of the naval forces participating therein and proceeded toward the specified rendezvous with the unloaded transports of TF 78 which he was to conduct from Leyte Gulf to the rear areas. These numbered fifteen transports and five LSD's from the northern beaches; none departed the southern beaches.

During the day (a) the Escort Carrier Group (TG 77.4) made a significant contribution to the operations by providing direct air support of 305 sorties and air cover of 132 TCAP, and twenty target ASP sorties; with losses of but two VF and five VT aircraft, (b) Allied submarines carried out their routine operations making no contacts of unusual importance. However, certain submarines were off station; with the result that (1) the Japanese Main Force sortied Bungo Suido unobserved at 1735 this day, and (2) the Japanese FIRST Striking Force entered Brunei Bay also unobserved at 1200, (c) the minesweepers swept thirty-two chemical horn moored mines in Area SWEEP giving a four day total of 222 mines, and (d) the air elements of the SOWESPAC forces continued their operations in general support of the KING II operations, performing searches, reconnaissance strikes and auxiliary tasks in various areas.

COMTHIRDFLT during this day, noting that enemy reaction in strength was meager, does not seem to have been unduly concerned about the situation for he directed two of his carrier groups to fuel on the morrow, and the remaining two to operate in a covering position off San Bernardino Strait. However, he was clearly becoming more and more concerned over operation HOTFOOT (air strikes on the Japanese Homeland) and over the fact that his pilots were showing combat fatigue. In this latter connection, he had received a report during the forenoon that FITERON EIGHT in the BUNKER HILL was "practically 100 per cent suffering from combat fatigue".

TF 38 on this day continued to operate in active support as follows:



(a) TG's 38.1 and 38.4 (under CTG 38.1 as OTC) (1) furnished two direct support strikes of 101 planes each which attacked ground targets behind the southern beaches and (2) flew several fighter sweeps, totaling forty-four planes, on neutralization missions against Japanese airfields in the western Visayas and northern Mindanao, and

(b) TG's 38.2 and 38.3 rendezvoused at noon in an area about 200 miles northeast of San Bernardino Strait where they operated in a covering position and from where they flew morning and afternoon searches to the northwest which were negative as far as enemy contacts were concerned.

The aircraft of TG 30.5 carried out the Central Pacific Search Plan with negative results. TG 30.3 continued onward toward Ulithi undisturbed.

No contacts of importance were made by the FOURTEENTH Air Force planes, with the result that only one contact was forwarded to Allied commanders, i.e., that on five large unidentified ships, heading eastward in the South China Sea.

(b) Japanese.

During the morning (a) the Chief of the Army General Staff who had violently opposed the Combined Fleet penetration into Leyte Gulf at this time and who had refused to defend Leyte with other than the forces there now, surprisingly reconsidered his position and decided that the army would defend Leyte with the maximum ground forces which could be brought into the area in a manner similar to that which was originally planned for Luzon, (b) the SECOND Striking Force arrived Mako (0800) and shortly thereafter commenced fueling from the oiler RYOEI MARU, (c) the Chief of Staff Combined Fleet issued (at 0813) his overall battle plan which entailed primarily (1) the FIRST Striking Force penetration to the Tacloban area at dawn on October 25th, X-day; (2) the Main Force, in cooperation with the FIRST Striking Force, maneuvering in the area east of Luzon so as to divert the enemy to the north and, should a favorable opportunity arise, attacking and destroying the enemy; (3) Commander SW Area Force, who commanded all naval air forces concentrated in the Philippines, in cooperation with the FIRST Striking Force, destroying enemy carrier and invasion forces; and (4) Commander SIXTH Base Air Force advancing to the Philippines, and under Commander SW Area Force, launching an all out offensive against the enemy task forces on October 24th, Y-day, (d) the Chief of Staff Combined Fleet also (1) suggested, at 1006, to Commander FIRST Striking Force that he consider dividing his command into two groups to enter Leyte Gulf through San Bernardino Strait and Surigao Strait, and (2) informed his commanders of the composition of Allied carrier forces as compiled by POW interrogation. This information was remarkably accurate, and (e) at 1145 CinC Combined Fleet finally arrived at Hiyoshi (Tokyo) having completed the last leg of his long-delayed return flight from Formosa.

During the afternoon (a) at 1200 the FIRST Striking Force arrived Brunei Bay and by 1230 had commenced fueling the small units from the larger units, (b) at 1400 the Main Force, with but 116 planes, departed Sada Misaka

and headed for Bungo Suido through which it sortied undetected at 1735, (c) at 1600 a contact report was made in Leyte Gulf on twenty warships, seventy large ships and eighty smaller craft and transports, (d) throughout the day a number of contacts were received on Allied forces outside Leyte Gulf, and (e) at 1802 CinC Combined Fleet assumed direct command of the FIRST Striking Force thereby, in effect, dissolving the Mobile Force.

The FIFTH Base Air Force, with but forty operational planes, continued limited operations for the defense of the Philippines by launching small air attacks against Allied shipping in Leyte Gulf and Allied carriers off the Gulf. Since it lost seven planes during the day and appears to have received none, it ended the day with thirty-three planes. At 2000 Vice Admiral Onishi relieved Vice Admiral Teraoka as Commander FIFTH Base Air Force and at 2347 he established the first Kamikaze Special Attack Corps.

The SIXTH Base Air Force, in addition to issuing by dispatch the essentials of the attack organization which listed 330 aircraft, continued to regroup and to complete preparations for the planned movement to the Philippines.

The FOURTH Air Army, with but fifty-five operational planes, also continued operations against Allied shipping in Leyte Gulf by launching twenty sorties. The SECOND Air Division issued its plan for the Philippines Decisive Battle with the basic policy of committing the entire strength of the division against enemy forces landing in the Philippines and to annihilate them at any cost. Since some reinforcements were received during the day and air losses were few, at end of the day the FOURTH Air Army had increased its operational aircraft to seventy-five planes.

(2) Operations of October 21st.

(a) Allied.

As a consequence of the excellent weather and of Japanese weakness the operations of the Allied forces, both ground and naval proceeded satisfactorily although the progress of unloading supplies was slower than expected. The principal damage to the Allied force this day was suffered by the AUSTRALIA which was heavily hit by a suicide plane but otherwise enemy air opposition was weak.

During the morning, COMSOWESPAC went ashore at WHITE Beach with the President of the Philippines to observe at first hand, operations ashore. In the early afternoon, having visited Tacloban Airdrome, he returned to his flagship NASHVILLE.

CTF 77 and his principal subordinate commanders were chiefly concerned with (1) expediting unloading operations, (2) reducing the enemy air threat over the objective area and (3) improving logistic replenishment.

As regards item (1), difficulties continued to be encountered by both CTF's 78 and 79. CTF 78's difficulties lay largely in the unloading at RED



Beach where the lack of pontoon causeways and LCI's had restricted the unloading of LST's but with the arrival of some of these units from the southern beaches the rate of unloading improved. CTF 79's difficulties lay largely in the unloading at ORANGE Beach where the shore party was inadequate.

As regards item (2), CTF 77 requested CTG 77.4 to conduct an afternoon sweep over the western Visayas and northern Mindanao. Coincidentally, independent of this request CTG 77.4 was working out a similar proposal to CTF 77 in order to reduce the frequency of harassing raids against his escort carriers.

As regards item (3), there was a growing shortage of fuel, smoke producing materials and bombardment ammunition. Arrangements were made to resupply from the fueling group off the entrance to Leyte Gulf.

During the forenoon CTF 77 observed the arrival of the MTB Group. During the afternoon he (a) requested (1) at 1325 CTF 38 to provide an 8 VF dusk CAP over the objective area on this and subsequent days. (COMTHIRDFLT's peremptory denial of this request raised an interesting difference of opinion between CTF 77 and himself regarding the manner in which TF 38 would support the Allied landings, which was further emphasized by additional messages from COMTHIRDFLT) and (2) at 1425 requested C.G. FIFTH Air Force to keep Coron Bay under daily surveillance, to detect and destroy enemy shipping, and (b) issued (1) as a precautionary measure against possible surprise penetration by enemy surface forces into Leyte Gulf his Harbor Defense Plan Number ONE which largely gave to CTG 77.2 the responsibility for the night defense of the Gulf, and (2) his daily operational summary report to COMSOWESPAC wherein he stated operations were proceeding according to plan.

On this day (a) certain Army commanders assumed command ashore as follows; (1) at 1300 C.G. SEVENTH Infantry Division and (2) at 1600 C.G. TENTH Corps, and (b) numerous ships having completed discharging their supplies departed at sundown for the rear area. Of these ships seventeen LST's and four cargo ships were from the northern beaches and fourteen transports and two LSD's were from the southern beaches.

Also during the day (a) the escort carriers provided 360 direct support sorties, forty-four attack sorties, 132 target CAP sorties and twenty target ASP sorties, with losses of but one VT aircraft, (b) Allied submarines carried out their usual operations and made one important sighting, i.e., that by the SEADRAGON on the Japanese SECOND Striking Force about 100 miles SW of Formosa. CTF 71 on this day advised ROCK, BERGALL and DARTER (which submarines were not on station) that he planned to keep them on station for a few more days. Also the HAMMERHEAD had withdrawn from the SW approaches to Brunei Bay with the result that the fueling group from Singapore passed undetected into Brunei Bay, (c) the minesweepers swept sixty-three chemical horn moored mines in Area SWEEP giving a five day total of 285 mines, and (d) the air elements of SOWESPAC forces continued their operations in general support of the KING II operation, performing searches, reconnaissance, air strikes and auxiliary tasks in various areas.

During the forenoon COMTHIRDFLT sent dispatches to interested commanders wherein he advised that he was returning the BUNKER HILL to Manus, largely to obtain replacement pilots, as well as to obtain replacement aircraft as necessary.

Early in the afternoon, feeling that operations were proceeding satisfactorily and that enemy opposition would be more in the nature of raids, including Tokyo Express runs, than of major fleet action, and further feeling that the movements of Japanese naval forces in the South China Sea showed that the Japanese might be planning to bring heavy forces into the South China Sea, he decided that he might be forced by the demands of the situation to move into that sea and therefore he queried COMSOWESPAC as to "what is the earliest estimate for a safe route to that sea via Surigao and Mindoro Straits".

Also during this afternoon apparently in part because of his additional concern over (1) Operation HOTFOOT and (2) the deterioration of the air group in the BUNKER HILL, he queried COMSOWESPAC, saying in part, that since his present operations were being restricted by the necessity for covering the transports, etc., he desired early advice regarding the withdrawal of such units to safe positions.

TF 38 on this day operated as follows:

(a) TG's 38.1 and 38.4 fueled and received replacement aircraft and pilots and then headed for a rendezvous with TG 38.2 in vicinity Point READY, and

(b) TG 38.2 struck Cebu, Masbate, Negros and Panay while TG 38.3 struck Luzon, Mindoro and Coron Bay. Two successive air strikes were made preceded by a fighter sweep employing a total of 356 sorties for all purposes. In addition to the above TG 38.2 conducted a morning and afternoon search, and a combined photographic and anti-snooper search in order to contact any enemy shipping moving along the coast of Luzon, all of which were negative. Upon completion of the above TG 38.2 headed for Point READY and TG 38.3 for Area MICK where it was to fuel the next morning.

The aircraft of TG 30.5 carried out the Central Pacific Search Plan with negative results. On this day these planes do not appear to have covered their sectors adequately although this did not have an adverse effect.

The FOURTEENTH Air Force made numerous contacts, some on combatant forces including one carrier task force--but all of these contacts appear to have been estimated by COMNAVGRPCHINA as on merchant shipping.

(b) Japanese.

For the Japanese this was a day largely devoted to preparations for the forthcoming penetration operation. CinC Combined Fleet, whose major forces were not only committed but were either underway on this day or would be on the morrow, still had two problems awaiting solutions. These



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were (1) whether to employ the SECOND Striking Force in the penetration operation in support of the FIRST Striking Force, or to use it for counter-landing operations, and (2) whether or not Commander FIRST Striking Force would decide to divide the FIRST Striking Force into two groups.

Meanwhile Commander FIRST Striking Force, while his command continued fueling and making preparations for the penetration operation, continued his deliberations as to whether or not to divide his forces into two groups as suggested by Chief of Staff Combined Fleet. Finally having decided to do so, and having decided on the plan of movement, he, at 1700, assembled all unit commanders on board the flagship and issued to them his written order for the penetration operation. In essence the order provided for the force to separate into two groups, i.e., (1) the Main Body consisting of the FIRST and SECOND Sections and (2) the THIRD Section. The Main Body was to sortie from Brunei at 0800 October 22nd, proceed via San Bernardino Strait to arrive in the vicinity of Suluan Island at 0400 October 25th and then penetrate into the Tacloban anchorage. The THIRD Section was to sortie at 1500 October 22nd, proceed via the Sulu and Mindanao Seas and, in coordination with the Main Body, pass through Surigao Strait and penetrate into the anchorage at dawn on October 25th.

The Main Force continued on on southerly courses. During the day (a) Commander Main Force (1) advised his command about radio deception which he planned to employ and which would be augmented by the possible transmission of false messages by Tokyo radio and (2) conducted a forenoon search of nine planes in the southern sector which search was negative, and (b) the force lost three planes, thus reducing the planes in the command from 116 to 113.

The SECOND Striking Force (less CRUDIV SIXTEEN) completed refueling at Mako and at 1200 detached DESDIV TWENTY-ONE to proceed to Takao to transport ground personnel of the SIXTH Base Air Force to Manila. At 1600 the remaining units of the SECOND Striking Force (CRUDIV TWENTY-ONE and DESRON ONE (less DESDIV TWENTY-ONE)) departed Mako to arrive Manila morning 23rd. At 1710 CRUDIV SIXTEEN got underway from Brunei Bay in accordance with orders from Commander SECOND Striking Force to advance to Manila also by the morning of the 23rd at the latest.

During the day numerous contact reports and RDF fixes indicated that (a) strong Allied carrier forces were continuing to operate to the eastward of the Philippines, and (b) fourteen to fifteen battleships and cruisers and eighty transports were still in Leyte Gulf. Also during the day one additional submarine departed the Inland Sea, thus increasing to eleven the submarines en route to the Philippine area.

The FIFTH Base Air Force devoted the day largely to the organization and preparation of the Kamikaze units. However, operations for the defense of the Philippines were continued as well. These consisted of the launching of (1) a search-attack group of six planes to attack an Allied carrier task group but which failed to locate the group and (2) the first Kamikaze unit consisting of two fighter bombers escorted by one fighter to attack an Allied carrier group. While the results of this latter attack are unknown

the fact that the attack was launched is of historical importance because it marked the inauguration of regularly planned Kamikaze attacks. The FIFTH Base Air Force seems to have lost nine planes on this day and to have received none, thus ending the day with twenty-four planes.

The SIXTH Base Air Force continued its preparations for its movement to the Philippines on the following day and for the general offensive October 23rd, and during the forenoon Commander SIXTH Base Air Force issued his directive thereon. This order embraced 350 aircraft for movement to the Philippines and forty-eight to be held on Formosa. As CinC Combined Fleet had designated October 24th as the day for the general air offensive (Y-day) the advancement of the offensive by one day by Commander SIXTH Base Air Force seems to have been done because of the outlook for bad weather in the Philippines on October 24th.

The FOURTH Air Army, while it continued air attack operations for the defense of the Philippines by launching about seventeen sorties against shipping in Leyte Gulf, likewise readied itself for the forthcoming offensive, which preparations culminated in the issuance by C.G. FOURTH Air Army of his (1) Operation Order A-518 wherein he directed a full-scale offensive against "enemy shipping engaged in landing operations in the Leyte Gulf area", and (2) dispatch amplifying the above order. During the day the SIXTH Base Air Force lost thirty-eight planes and appears to have received none, thus ending the day with thirty-seven planes.

### (3) Operations on October 22nd.

#### (a) Allied.

As a consequence of the continuing excellent weather and of the continuing weakness of the Japanese ground operations Allied and naval operations continued satisfactorily although problems continued to arise relative to the unloading.

CTF 77 was anxious to expedite the unloading as this would expedite the (1) departure of the unloaded ships and thereby reduce its period of vulnerability to enemy attack and (2) assumptions of command ashore by C.G. TWENTY-FOURTH Corps and C.G. SIXTH Army.

During the morning CQMSOWESPAC went ashore to inspect at first hand the conditions on the beach and to see how the ground offensive was progressing. On this visit with CAAF SOWESPAC he inspected the Dulag Airdrome, recently captured.

CTF 78's principal problem this day related to the arrival of Reinforcement Group ONE and the difficulties inherent in unloading the fourteen LST's destined for RED Beach. He decided to beach all RED Beach LST's on the Cataisan Peninsula in which vicinity the WHITE Beach LST's had been unloading as well. The problem here lay in the fact that the unloading of the LST's on Cataisan Peninsula naturally forced the delay in the



reconstruction of Tacloban Airdrome as the space required for the supplies being landed would gradually embrace the air strip.

CTF 79's principal problem lay with the unloading at ORANGE Beach where the ineffectiveness of the shore party continued to be a strong delaying factor and contributed toward C.G. TWENTY-FOURTH Corps delay in assuming command.

On this day, as on the previous days, numerous ships including certain new arrivals with Reinforcement Group ONE completed discharging their cargos and departed at sundown for the rear areas. Of these ships seven transports, three cargo ships and sixteen LST's were from the northern beaches, and six transports, two cargo ships, two LSD's and one LSV were from the southern beaches.

Also during the day the (a) escort carriers provided 242 direct support sorties, forty-four attack sorties, 140 target CAP sorties and twenty ASP sorties with a loss of eight VF and two VT aircraft, thus reducing the aircraft within the command to 313 VF and 190 VT, (b) Allied submarines carried out their usual operations with certain submarines of (1) TF 17 contacting and attacking ineffectively (SEADRAGON) the Japanese SECOND Striking Force and (2) of TF 71 (DARTER) contacting CRUDIV SIXTEEN en route Manila which it variously reported as "three unidentified large ships", "three cruisers" and finally that the tops of one dimly seen was probably a battleship, (c) the minesweepers swept sixteen chemical horn moored mines in Area SWEEP giving a six day total of 301 mines, and (d) the air elements of SOWESPAC forces continued their operations in general support of the KING II operations.

It seems probable that sometime in the early forenoon COMTHIRDFLT was advised by CINCPAC that the restrictions imposed by the necessity of covering the SOWESPAC forces were accepted and that COMTHIRDFLT was not to move major units into Central Philippine waters without authority. During the day which was largely uneventful COMTHIRDFLT issued orders to his command which showed that he (1) planned to operate his forces more in distant support than in the immediate vicinity of the objective area, (2) was not now anticipating a major fleet engagement, and (3) planned a gradual withdrawal of his forces from support of KING II in order to be prepared and in position for the next scheduled operation (HOTFOOT).

Dispatches originated on this day reveal the difference in the mental attitudes between the principal commanders at this time. On the one hand CTF 77, concerned with the threat of enemy raiding forces, was desirous of maintaining sufficient surface forces in Leyte Gulf to cope with such a threat, while on the other hand, COMTHIRDFLT seemed not too concerned with such a threat but rather gave thought to (1) the possibility of destroying a major portion of the enemy fleet and (2) operation HOTFOOT in view of which he had already ordered two groups to withdraw to Ulithi.

TF 38 operated on this day as follows:

(a) TG's 38.1, 38.2 and 38.4 operated in the vicinity of Point READY throughout the day. Except for the launching by CTG 38.2 of a morning 300 mile search in sector 290°-360°(T), which search was negative, the day's operations were uneventful. Upon completion of the day's operation, CTG 38.2 headed for Point MICK to fuel while CTG's 38.1 and 38.4 headed for Point CONDOR, and

(b) TG 38.1 fueled and received replacement aircraft and pilots and then headed for a rendezvous with TG's 38.3 and 38.4 at Point CONDOR.

The aircraft of TG 30.5 carried out the Central Pacific Search Plan with negative results. On this day as on the previous day, these planes do not appear to have covered their searches adequately. While on the previous day this did not have an adverse effect, on this day it may have had a most serious effect for the Japanese Main Force, during a large part of the day, fueled well within the area searched without detection.

The FOURTEENTH Air Force searches were ineffective; (a) the night searches (October 21st/22nd) because one plane turned back due to radar difficulties; the other made no important contacts, (b) the day searches, because of mechanical trouble which caused both planes to return to base, and (c) the night searches (October 22nd/23rd) because of bad weather were cancelled.

(b) Japanese.

CinC Combined Fleet learned during the morning that Commander FIRST Striking Force had divided his force in accordance with the suggestion his Chief of Staff had made on October 20th. He therefore now had but one major problem remaining in connection with the penetration operation, i.e., how to employ the SECCND Striking Force. After determining from Imperial General Headquarters (Navy Section) that only CRUDIV SIXTEEN would be needed in the counterlanding operation he decided to employ the SECOND Striking Force in the penetration operation. He then directed Commander SW Area Force to order Commander SECOND Striking Force to (1) penetrate into Leyte Gulf through Surigao Strait and (2) in so doing to cooperate with Commander FIRST Striking Force. Later in the day, after receiving several RDF fixes on enemy submarines, one of which was in the Sibuyan Sea, he advised his commanders that enemy submarines were apparently assembling to cover the movements of the FIRST Striking Force and other units and directed that the matter be given special attention.

Meanwhile, at Brunei Bay, the FIRST Striking Force had completed refueling and, (a) at 0745 the Main Body (FIRST and SECOND Sections) commenced getting underway. After clearing the bay entrance the force formed into cruising disposition and headed for Palawan Passage. At the time of sortie Commander Main Body had, within his ships, at least forty-one and probably forty-five reconnaissance seaplanes, and (b) the THIRD Section continued preparations to depart Brunei Bay in the afternoon. Some time during the morning Commander THIRD Section issued his plans for the penetration operation. These were (1) his Operation Order No. 1, which directed the THIRD Section to penetrate from Surigao Strait into Tacloban anchorage two hours before



dawn and (2) his movement plan. At 1500 the THIRD Section sortied and after getting well off shore in order to avoid submarines proceeded toward Balabac Strait. At this time Commander THIRD Section had within his ships at least eight and probably ten reconnaissance seaplanes.

The Main Force proceeded generally southward until about 1100 when fueling was commenced on a course of 090°(T). At 1200 Commander Main Force estimated that even if the enemy carriers had moved as far south as San Bernardino Strait it would still be necessary to divert the enemy to the northeast. He decided to employ radio deception to accomplish this. Upon the completion of fueling late in the afternoon the force again resumed its movement to the south and southwest. The fueling was slow and poorly executed largely due to "inadequately trained destroyers". The air losses were also heavy with six carrier type attack planes failing to return from search operations, thus reducing the planes in his command from 113 to 107.

The SECOND Striking Force (less CRUDIV SIXTEEN which had been assigned to counterlanding operations and which was en route Manila, and DESRON TWENTY-ONE which was transporting SIXTH Base Air Force personnel to Manila) was en route Manila when ordered by Commander SW Area Force to penetrate into Leyte Gulf in cooperation with the FIRST Striking Force. As a result Commander SECOND Striking Force changed his plans and announced by dispatch at 2000 his plan to (a) arrive and refuel at Coron Bay during the evening of October 23rd, (b) sortie Coron Bay 0200 October 24th, and (c) arrive at the entrance of Surigao Strait at 0600 October 25th. This last item is of particular interest because it is five hours behind the scheduled entrance into Surigao Strait of the THIRD Section. He also, earlier in the day, directed COMDESDIV TWENTY-ONE to rejoin him the morning of October 24th.

COMCRUDIV SIXTEEN continued on toward Manila. While en route COMCRUDIV SIXTEEN learned that as Commander SW Area Force Guard Force, he was to move troops by transport from Cagayan (Mindanao) to Leyte and was to arrive at Cagayan by evening of the 24th.

During the day, as on the previous day (a) numerous contact reports and RDF fixes indicated that strong carrier forces were continuing to operate to the eastward of the Philippines, (b) the Visayas had been hit by Allied aircraft (100, naval report or 189, army report), and (c) the submarines continued on toward the Philippines without incident. One submarine (I-54) contacted some Allied ships (either TG 30.3 or TG 30.7).

The FIFTH Base Air Force continued the preparation, organization and deployment of the Kamikaze units. Having throughout this day but twenty-four planes, the force engaged primarily in search operations and in assisting in the base activities of the SIXTH Base Air Force and "T" Force. With the arrival of the SIXTH Base Air Force planes, considerable confusion resulted because many of these planes landed on fields other than those designated.

The SIXTH Base Air Force commenced early in the morning to execute its plan for the movement of its fighting strength to Luzon. The movement was accomplished in general according to plan and at 1330 Commander SIXTH

Base Air Force boarded his plane for Manila where he landed at 1700 and established his headquarters there. Upon arrival he reported to Commander SW Area Force, who, as directed by CinC Combined Fleet, was in command of all air units in the Philippines. Considerable confusion attended the arrival of SIXTH Base Air Force aircraft at the Clark Field Complex where many planes landed at the wrong fields and maintenance crews and aircraft were thus separated. By the end of the day 197 of his aircraft had arrived in Luzon, of which about nineteen were seaplanes.

The FOURTH Air Army, while it continued air attack operations in defense of the Philippines by launching eleven sorties against shipping in Leyte Gulf, likewise continued to prepare itself for the coming offensive. On this day, C.G. SECOND Air Division, which unit possessed the major air strength, issued his operation order for the offensive October 24th against enemy shipping in and around Leyte Gulf. This order (a) anticipated a strength of about 173 aircraft for the initial attack, and (b) was unrealistic in that it stated the objective was the destruction of 100 ships by the end of the first day and that for this purpose the division would "thoroughly apply the principle of one plane for one ship". Also on this day the FOURTH Air Army lost one and possibly two planes, and received sixty-one planes, thus ending the day with about ninety-seven operational planes.

By the end of the day the decision of the Army High Command to defend Leyte with maximum strength had been communicated to the commanders in the field. As a result C.G. FOURTEENTH Area Army issued his implementing directive.

(4) Operations on October 23rd, 0000 - 1042.

(a) Allied.

As on previous night COMSOWESPAC and CTF 77 in their respective flagships patrolled eastern Leyte Gulf and returned to the transport areas in the early morning.

Certain contacts of the previous day had aroused CTF 77's interest since they indicated that Japanese operations of some important nature were underway. Soon after midnight he commenced receiving from the DARTER contact reports on heavy ships in Palawan Passage, so that by 0800 he (a) knew of Japanese combatant ships heading for the Coron Bay-Manila area, including (1) the Japanese SECOND Striking Force and possibly another group which had had a carrier torpedoed, (2) two groups heading northward through Palawan Passage, one of which included battleships, (b) had been informed of the movement of aircraft into Luzon on the previous day, and (c) had information concerning (1) the sortie of the Japanese Main Force and/or its Supply Force and (2) oilers in Coron Bay. Bringing his running estimate of the situation up to date he, at 1042, having decided that these operations were largely concerned with Tokyo Express operations against Leyte issued the warning dispatch "I regard the approach of enemy combatant ships and tankers toward Coron Bay as the first phase of the build up of magnified Tokyo Express runs against Leyte, etc.", which marks the close of this volume, and in which he asked for air strikes to disrupt the above operations.



Since (a) TF 78 expected to unload, on this day, the twenty LST's and one cargo ship remaining and expected to unload a small percentage of the cargos of the six XAK's, and (b) CTF 79 expected to unload most of the fifteen large ships (seven transports, six cargo ships, one LSD and one LSV) and fifty-nine LST's remaining, both TF's 78 and 79 remained at anchor in order to continue unloading throughout the night. Unloading operations proceeded satisfactorily and by mid-morning the Army Reserve (381st RCT) had been landed.

By 1042 the (a) escort carriers had provided about sixty-nine direct support sorties, twenty-four fighter sweep sorties, probably fifty-six target CAP sorties and eight target ASP sorties with losses of two VF thus reducing the aircraft within the command to 311 VF and 190 VT, (b) Allied submarines carried out their usual operations. However the submarines of TF 71 made some very important contacts, notably the DARTER. This submarine commencing at 0225 made a series of reports on an enemy force in Palawan Passage the composition of which she reported at 0525 as a minimum of eleven ships. Both the DARTER and the DACE, which was operating with her, attacked the above force (Main Body FIRST Striking Force) and sunk the ATAGO and MAYA and heavily damaged the TAKAO, (c) the minesweepers continued to sweep on this day and seem to have swept but one mine (chemical horn moored type), giving a six and one-half day total of 302 mines, and (d) the air elements of SOWESPAC forces continued their operations in general support of KING II operations with negative results. However it seems that the plane in Sector ONE of Search Plan FOX might have contacted the THIRD Section, FIRST Striking Force which had just passed through Balabac Strait, had the plane not been shot down.

COMTHIRDFLT, in the light of contacts made on the previous day, the significant dispatches exchanged on the previous two days, and the contacts received soon after midnight, largely from the SHARK and DARTER, decided to operate two fast carrier task groups (TG's 38.2 and 38.3) closer to the Philippines in order to extend to the westward the coverage of his air searches, and at 0252 issued appropriate orders. As additional contact reports from submarines (DARTER, DRUM, ICEFISH) revealed a pattern of increasing Japanese reaction, he reestimated the situation and decided to (a) employ three carrier task group (TG's 38.2, 38.3 and 38.4) to cover the Philippines, and (b) permit TG 38.1 to continue on to Ulithi to carry out its scheduled replenishment. He, therefore, recalled TG 38.4, then en route Ulithi for replenishment, and stationed all three groups on an approximately 320°-140°(T) line along the eastern littoral of the Philippines.

TF 38, on this day, operated as follows:

(a) TG's 38.1 and 38.4 rendezvoused with TG 38.3 at Point CONDOR where TG 38.4 received from that group COMBATPAC in WASHINGTON with ALABAMA and DESDIV 100. During the forenoon orders were received from COMTHIRDFLT for TG 38.4 to operate on the morrow in a position about seventy miles, bearing 050°(T) from the SE tip of Samar. Since no new orders were received for TG 38.1 this group continued on toward Ulithi,

(b) TG 38.2 commenced fueling from the fueling group with the

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expectation of completing fueling by 1200. During the forenoon the BUNKER HILL, STEPHEN POTTER and BENHAM were detached to Ulithi. Orders were received from COMTHIRDFLT directing CTG 38.2 to operate on the morrow in the vicinity of the eastern entrance to San Bernardino Strait, and

(c) TG 38.3 rendezvoused at Point CONDOR with TG's 38.1 and 38.4 and transferred COMBATPAC in WASHINGTON with ALABAMA and DESDIV 100 to TG 38.4. He knew that on the morrow he was to operate in an area about ninety miles due east of Polillo Island in company with TG 38.2 (he had not as yet received COMTHIRDFLT's orders to CTG 38.2 to operate off San Bernardino Strait).

The aircraft of TG 30.5 carried out the Central Pacific Search Plan, but by 1042 had made no important contacts. Similarly the FOURTEENTH Air Force's day searches from China had made no significant contacts by 1042. The night searches had been cancelled because of bad weather.

(b) Japanese.

With all major decisions resolved and with his forces either underway or poised for attack in the SHO Operation, CinC Combined Fleet watched closely the events of the morning.

The Main Body of the FIRST Striking Force entered Palawan Passage during the early morning hours. Through a series of events most fortunate for the Allies, it was so effectively attacked by the submarines DARTER and DACE that by 0700 it had lost the flagship ATAGO and the MAYA (both sunk) and the TAKAO (rendered unnavigable). Commander FIRST Striking Force with his staff, was forced to leave his sinking flagship and was picked up by the destroyer KISHINAMI.

The THIRD Section which had steamed uneventfully through the night passed through Balabac Strait at 1025.

The Main Force continued southwestward still undetected by Allied forces, although it had been within the search range of Tinian-based long range search aircraft since shortly before midnight October 21st. Up to 1042 no air losses were suffered although one ZUIHO search plane had landed at Oruku (Okinawa) thus temporarily reducing the planes in the command to 106.

During the morning the SECOND Striking Force (less CRUDIV SIXTEEN and DESDIV TWENTY-ONE) steamed uneventfully toward Coron Bay where it was planned to fuel during the evening preparatory to sortie at 0200 October 24th for Leyte Gulf via Surigao Strait.

Meanwhile CRUDIV SIXTEEN was proceeding toward Manila. At 0425 the AOBA (the flagship) was torpedoed by the submarine BREAM some seventy miles west of the entrance to Manila Bay. Unable to proceed under her own power, she was taken in tow by the KINU and proceeded toward Manila Bay at about seven knots.



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DESDIV TWENTY-ONE continued on uneventfully toward Manila where it was to arrive at 1500.

Contacts during the morning were largely RDF fixes on submarines. There were however (a) three contacts reported on surface targets east of the Philippines, and (b) four battleships or cruisers, thirteen large and four small transports reported in Leyte Gulf. Since these contacts were not unusual and were showing no unusual activity the commanders felt that the situation was satisfactory.

The FIFTH Base Air Force continued to prepare for the coming offensive. Commander FIFTH Base Air Force decided to disperse his Kamikaze planes more widely and therefore he ordered three Kamikaze Special Attack Units (about seventeen operational planes) moved to Davao from the Clark Complex.

The SIXTH Base Air Force now in the Manila area with the main strength of the command, launched its planned attack at 0630 as scheduled. However the Attack Group, which numbered something less than 150 aircraft, soon encountered bad weather southeast of Manila and by 0745 had turned back.

The FOURTH Air Army likewise continued to prepare for the coming offensive scheduled for the following day. C.G. SECOND Air Division issued his A-210 which implemented his A-207 of the preceding day, and directed the SECOND Air Division to launch a general attack early the next morning to annihilate shipping in the Leyte Gulf area. By 1042 the FOURTH Air Army had received sixty additional aircraft bringing the operational total at that time to 157 aircraft.





CHAPTER I -- ALLIED OPERATIONS, October 20th, 1944

## (A). Operations of COMSOWESPAC.

COMSOWESPAC, in NASHVILLE, continued his approach toward Leyte Gulf in company with the transport groups of the Southern Landing Force--the rear echelon of the amphibious assault forces. He noted that the approach and entry of the forces ahead was proceeding according to plan despite the reported adverse currents and the partially swept enemy minefield at the entrance.

At 0032, having received at 1916 on the previous day a dispatch from C.G. FIFTH Air Force to the effect that at 1240 (also on the previous day) sixteen large naval ships and numerous smaller had been sighted in Pare Pare Bay, SW Celebes, by a reconnaissance plane from Darwin,\* he directed CAAF SOWESPAC and the C.G. FIFTH Air Force (a) to advise all addressees of the photo interpretation of the composition of the above force, and (b) if not satisfactory, to re-photograph same at the earliest moment on this day (October 20th) and then to advise the same addressees of the definite composition of the force.\*\*

At 0653 he received word that the FOURTEENTH Air Force night search planes--then in the air over the South China Sea--were making their searches 200 miles short and that the daylight searches for October 20th had been cancelled due to a temporary shortage of fuel.\*\*\* He no doubt viewed this situation at such a critical time with concern, especially in view of the two enemy task forces reported the day before--one at 1405 off Hainan Island, and the other at 1400 off northern Formosa heading toward Formosa Strait. Since his own and other intelligence estimates had indicated that the Japanese fleet would not oppose the Leyte operation in force,\*\*\*\* he concurred with both CTF 77 and COMTHIRDFLT in the belief that the enemy would use his naval units as high speed armed transports to reinforce his Leyte garrison forces, taking maximum advantage of land-based air, weather, darkness, coastal hiding and dispersion into small groups near the east coast of Leyte in such manner that they could quickly concentrate to make "Tokyo Express" runs. It will be recalled that he had been alerted on October 17th by COMTHIRDFLT to the likelihood of this employment\*\*\*\*\* and on the following day had extended Allied land-based air reconnaissance to

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\* C.G. 5TH Air Force Dispatch 191651/I October 1944 to CAAF SOWESPAC, COM7THFLT, and AOIC.

\*\* COMSOWESPAC Dispatch 191532 October 1944 to CAAF SOWESPAC, C.G. 5TH Air Force, info COM7THFLT, COM3RDFLT, C.G. 13TH Air Force.

\*\*\* COMNAVGRPCHINA Dispatch 191729 October 1944 to COM3RDFLT passed for info to COMSOWESPAC, COM7THFLT, etc.

\*\*\*\* Intelligence Summary, Serial No. 245, Headquarters Allied Air Forces, SOWESPAC Area, October 15th, 1944, Paragraph 4; GHQ SOWESPAC Dispatch 171536 October 1944 to COMSOWESPAC.

\*\*\*\*\* COM3RDFLT Dispatch 170909 October 1944 to COMSOWESPAC; GHQ SOWESPAC Dispatch 170102 October 1944 to CAAF SOWESPAC.

cover Balabac Strait the night of October 18th - 19th.\* Again on October 19th he had been similarly alerted by COMTHIRDFLT as a result of a contact report from CTF 71 which stated that a submarine had contacted at 0300 October 18th three large ships, course 035°(T), in Latitude 01°-07'N, Longitude 119°-24'E,\*\* and concerning which COMTHIRDFLT at 1000 October 19th had sent a dispatch thereon.\*\*\*

At 0655, with his flagship unit (TU 77.1.2--NASHVILLE, ABNER READ and BUSH), he entered Leyte Gulf behind the amphibious assault forces and arrived off the northern beaches at 0950 to observe the landing operations.\*\*\*\* Meanwhile, he noted that CTF 77 (in the WASATCH) had taken station off the Southern Transport Area to observe the landings on the southern beaches.\*\*\*\*\*

Immediately after this (at 0711) he intercepted a dispatch from CTF 77 to CTG 38.1, who was senior commander and OTC of the two task groups (TG's 38.1 and 38.4) scheduled to provide pre-landing hour strikes in support of the Leyte landings, requesting that commander to launch fighter sweeps against enemy airfields in northern Mindanao and the Western Visayas as necessary to destroy enemy aircraft so as to keep them from opposing the landings.\*\*\*\*\*

At 0805 he received, as an information addressee, a reply from CINCPAC to COMNAVGRPCHINA relative to the query from C.G. FOURTEENTH Air Force forwarded by COMNAVGRPCHINA as to how much longer he would be required to conduct searches over the northern half of the South China Sea\*\*\*\*\* (with his LAB-24's from their bases in eastern China).

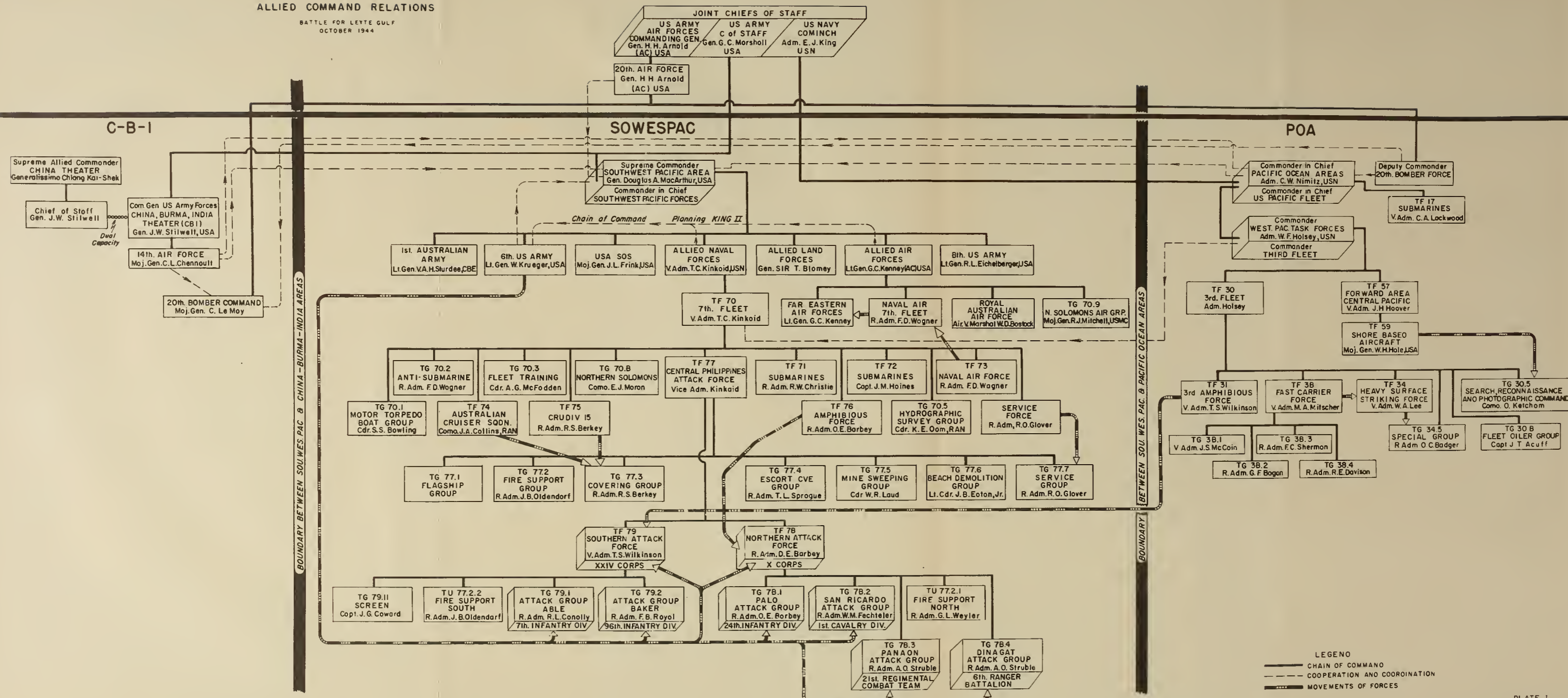
In his reply CINCPAC stated that he (a) was unable to estimate the duration of the searches required, and (b) considered that they should be maintained until COMSOWESPAC deemed them no longer necessary.\*\*\*\*\*

In this connection, it will be recalled (from "Operations of C.G.

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- \* COMSOWESPAC Dispatch 180626 October 1944 to CAAF SOWESPAC, info CINCPAC, COM3RDFLT, COM7THFLT, etc.
  - \*\* CTF 71 Dispatch 172248 October 1944 to all TFC's 3RD and 7TH Fleets, etc.
  - \*\*\* COM3RDFLT Dispatch 190100 October 1944 to COMSOWESPAC, COM7THFLT, info CINCPAC, COMINCH, all TFC's 3RD and 7TH Fleets.
  - \*\*\*\* War Diary NASHVILLE, October 20th, 1944.
  - \*\*\*\*\* Action Report WASATCH, Leyte Operation, Serial 0013, November 6th, 1944.
  - \*\*\*\*\* CTF 77 Dispatch 191917 October 1944 to CTG 38.1, info COM3RDFLT, CTF 38, CTG 77.4, etc.
  - \*\*\*\*\* COMNAVGRPCHINA Dispatch 190441 October 1944 to CINCPAC.
  - \*\*\*\*\* CINCPAC Dispatch 191930 October 1944 to COMNAVGRPCHINA, info COM3RDFLT, CTF 38, and COMSOWESPAC.



ALLIED COMMAND RELATIONS  
BATTLE FOR LEYTE GULF  
OCTOBER 1944



LEGEND  
 — CHAIN OF COMMAND  
 - - - COOPERATION AND COORDINATION  
 ... MOVEMENTS OF FORCES





FOURTEENTH Air Force, October 19th") that CINCPAC, having received this query from C.G. FOURTEENTH Air Force, had queried COMTHIRDFLT in the matter,\* and that COMTHIRDFLT had replied at 2207 to the effect that he could not at this time estimate the duration of such a requirement.\*\* Since CINCPAC's reply embraced the principal matter of COMTHIRDFLT's reply, it seems clear that CINCPAC's reply was based on the latter dispatch.

THIS REPLY BY CINCPAC WAS LIKELY SATISFYING TO COMSOWESPAC FOR IT INDICATED CINCPAC'S CLEAR UNDERSTANDING OF THE VITAL IMPORTANCE OF INTELLIGENCE AT THIS TIME TO COMSOWESPAC AND OF THE NECESSITY FOR MAINTAINING THE SOURCE INTACT UNTIL THE SITUATION IN THE SOUTH CHINA SEA HAD CLARIFIED AND THE NATURE OF THE JAPANESE REACTION TO THE ALLIED LANDINGS SCHEDULED FOR THIS DAY HAD BECOME APPARENT.

At 0940 he intercepted a second dispatch from CTF 77 to CTG 38.1 requesting a dusk CAP at the objective area on D and D+1 days and thereafter as practicable.\*\*\*

During the forenoon he received reports as follows: that (a) the first wave of troops had landed on WHITE Beach on schedule and were proceeding inland; (b) the second wave of troops had landed at 1005 on both northern beaches and were proceeding inland without opposition; and (c) at 1021, the enemy was using mortar fire and had hit two small landing craft, sinking one.

At 1114, with operations progressing satisfactorily, his flagship anchored in San Pedro Bay.\*\*\*\*

At about noon he heard that LST 171 had been struck by enemy mortar fire in the vicinity of the sick bay and had suffered a number of casualties.\*\*\*\*

At this time, in accordance with previous instructions, his proclamation leaflets announcing the Allied landings were being distributed by aircraft from TG 77.4 over the various villages and towns on Leyte and Samar.

At 1247, with other members of his special observing party, including his Chief of Staff and CAAF SOWESPAC, he went ashore to see for himself the operations in progress at the northern beachhead and to broadcast his

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\* CINCPAC Dispatch 190856 October 1944 to COM3RDFLT, info CTF 38, COMSOWESPAC.  
 \*\* COM3RDFLT Dispatch 191307 October 1944 to CINCPAC, info COMSOWESPAC, CTF 38.  
 \*\*\* CTF 77 Dispatch 191930 October 1944 to CTG 38.1, info COM3RDFLT, CTG 38.4, CTG 77.4, etc.  
 \*\*\*\* War Diary NASHVILLE, October 20th, 1944.

return to the peoples of the Philippines. This he did at 1400 over a special Army Signal Corps radio hookup.\*

At 1355 he made a report to the Chief of Staff War Department, stating (a) all landings had been made on schedule with extremely light losses, (b) the operation was progressing splendidly in every respect, (c) from a strategic standpoint the enemy seemed to have been caught unaware, apparently in anticipation of an attack to the southward, (d) the enemy's Mindanao forces were now practically isolated and no longer an immediate factor in the campaign.\*\*

THE ABOVE OPINION (ITEM (C)), THAT THE JAPANESE HAD APPARENTLY BEEN EXPECTING AN ATTACK IN THE SOUTHERN PHILIPPINES RATHER THAN IN LEYTE - SAMAR, WAS ONLY PARTIALLY CORRECT FOR THEY HAD BEEN EXPECTING LANDINGS IN THE CENTRAL PHILIPPINES AS WELL.\*\*\* THIS CONCEPT HAD ORIGINATED AS EARLY AS SEPTEMBER 17TH WHEN THE JAPANESE ESTIMATED THAT, AT AN OPPORTUNE TIME, THE ALLIES WOULD LAUNCH INVASION OPERATIONS AGAINST STRATEGIC SECTORS OF THE SOUTHERN PHILIPPINES AND MIGHT, AT THE SAME TIME, LAUNCH INVASION OPERATIONS AGAINST STRATEGIC SECTORS OF THE CENTRAL AND NORTHERN PHILIPPINES SHOULD THE COUNTERACTION BY JAPANESE LAND-BASED AIRCRAFT PRIOR TO INVASION PROVE INEFFECTIVE.\*\*\*\* IT HAD BEEN FIRMED (A) AS TO TIME, WHEN, ON SEPTEMBER 21ST, IMPERIAL GENERAL HEADQUARTERS (NAVY SECTION) ESTIMATED THAT THE ALLIES WOULD ENDEAVOR TO LAND IN THE PHILIPPINE AREA DURING OR AFTER THE LAST TEN DAYS OF OCTOBER AND DIRECTED THAT OPERATIONAL PREPARATIONS FOR SHO ONE BE COMPLETED WITH FIRST PRIORITY,\*\*\*\*\* (B) AS TO THE LOCAL AREA, WHEN, ON OCTOBER 17TH, COFS COMBINED FLEET ASSUMED THAT THERE WOULD BE A LANDING IN THE SAMAR - LEYTE AREA\*\*\*\*\* AND (C) AS TO PLACE, ON OCTOBER 18TH WHEN THE COFS COMBINED FLEET ESTIMATED THAT THERE WAS STRONG POSSIBILITY OF A LANDING IN THE TACLOBAN AREA.\*\*\*\*\*

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- \* Action Report NASHVILLE, Participation in Amphibious Operations at Leyte Gulf, October 20th, 1944, Serial 0127, November 1st, 1944.
  - \*\* COMSOWESPAC Dispatch 200455 October 1944 to CofS War Department, info GHQ SOWESPAC, CINCPA.
  - \*\*\* CofS Combined Fleet Dispatch 170946 October 1944 to Commander 6TH Base Air Force, Detailed Action Report 1ST Striking Force, SHO Operation, October 16th - 28th, 1944, WDC Document 161641, NA 11839.
  - \*\*\*\* Situation Estimate at the Start of the Enemy Invasion of Palau and Halmahera; Combined Fleet HQ, September 17th, 1944, Army Historical Division Microfilm HS-26, Item B.
  - \*\*\*\*\* Imperial GHQ (Navy Section) Dispatch 220929 September 1944 to CinC Combined Fleet (Imperial GHQ (Navy Section) Directive No. 462), September 21st, 1944, WDC Document 216769 (Microfilm).
  - \*\*\*\*\* CofS Combined Fleet Dispatch 171201 October 1944 to Commander Mobile Force, 1ST Striking Force, etc., Detailed Action Report HYUGA, SHO Operation, October 20th - 29th, 1944, WDC Document 161006, NA 12604.
  - \*\*\*\*\* CofS Combined Fleet Dispatch 181110 October 1944 to CsofS 1ST and 2ND Striking Forces, 5TH and 6TH Base Air Forces, SW Area Force, Mobile Force, etc., Detailed Action Report 1ST Striking Force, SHO Operation, October 16th - 28th, 1944, WDC Document 161641, NA 11839.



MEANWHILE, THE JAPANESE ARMY, AS POINTED OUT UNDER "OPERATIONS OF CTF 77, OCTOBER 20TH", HAD BEEN MAKING PREPARATIONS FOR THE GROUND DEFENSE OF LEYTE SINCE APRIL 1944 AND HAD DETERMINED THAT THIS DEFENSE (A) WOULD BE, IN GENERAL, "DEFENSE IN DEPTH" WITH ONLY LIMITED DEFENSE ON THE BEACHES AND (B) WOULD BE CONDUCTED WITH (1) THE LOCAL GROUND FORCES (SIXTEENTH DIVISION), AND (2) THOSE LIMITED GROUND FORCES WHICH MIGHT BE FERRIED TO LEYTE FROM THE NEIGHBORING ISLANDS. THERE WAS NO PLAN TO DEFEND LEYTE TO THE UTMOST WITH GROUND TROOPS. THIS WAS RESERVED FOR LUZON. IT WAS FOR THIS REASON, AND FOR THE ADDITIONAL REASON THAT JAPANESE LAND-BASED AIR POWER IN THE PHILIPPINES WAS VERY WEAK, THAT ALLIED TROOPS WERE ABLE TO LAND ON SCHEDULE WITH EXTREMELY LIGHT LOSSES. THEREFORE, ALTHOUGH IT IS CLEAR THAT THE ENEMY HAD BEEN CAUGHT STRATEGICALLY UNPREPARED, IT IS DOUBTFUL IF THEY WERE CAUGHT STRATEGICALLY UNAWARE.

At 1419 he announced that, as of noon, his Advance Headquarters had been established at Leyte and that his General Headquarters and Rear Echelon Headquarters remained at Hollandia and Brisbane respectively.\*

At 1600, with his observing party, he returned to the NASHVILLE which then, with the BUSH and ABNER READ as escorts, got underway in company with the WASATCH, AMMEN and MULLANY and retired for the night to the eastern portion of Leyte Gulf in the area generally west and southwest of Homonhon Island.\*\*

Upon his return aboard he looked over the dispatches which had been received during his absence ashore and learned among other things that (a) at 1333 a dispatch had been received from COMNAVGRPCHINA that the FOURTEENTH Air Force would continue the searches over the South China Sea then underway and would not discontinue them until so directed by him.\*\*\* This was gratifying, for as pointed out elsewhere, the discontinuance of these searches would have been a heavy blow to Allied intelligence since, except for a few submarines positioned in the area, the Allies had no other direct information source concerning Japanese operations, and (b) at 1415, as an information addressee, a dispatch had been received from COMTHIRDFLT that, in accordance with a request initiated by CTF 77 at 0421, TF 38 would strike the western Visayas on D+1 day from the vicinity of San Bernardino Strait with two fast carrier groups in order to keep enemy airfields in that area neutralized; the other two TF 38 task groups would retire from the objective area at about 1700 D-day so as to fuel D+1 day.\*\*\*\*

At 1630 he received word that the HONOLULU, while operating off the

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- \* GHQ SOWESPAC Dispatch 200519 October 1944 to all SOWESPAC Commanders, COM3RDFLT, etc.
  - \*\* War Diary NASHVILLE, October 20th, 1944.
  - \*\*\* COMNAVGRPCHINA Dispatch 200356 October 1944 to COMSOWESPAC, info CINCPAC, COM3RDFLT.
  - \*\*\*\* COM3RDFLT Dispatch 200314 October 1944 to CTF 77, info COMSOWESPAC, CINCPAC, all TFC's 3RD and 7TH Fleets.

southern beachhead, had been torpedoed by an enemy plane.\*

At 1740 he advised COMINCH as to the progress of the operations in the Leyte Area based on reports he had received throughout the day, stating, among other things, (a) the landing on Leyte had been most successful, (b) all operations were proceeding on schedule with very light losses, (c) 186 mines had been swept, (d) heavy enemy mortar fire had been encountered and (e) no heavy enemy shore artillery had been located.\*\*

At 1949 he received an amplifying dispatch from COMTHIRDFLT reporting further minor successes on October 18th against coastal shipping, aircraft and runways at Aparri and barracks and fuel dumps at Laoag.\*\*\*

During the night he received from CTF 77 a detailed amplifying report concerning the situation at the landing beaches as of 1400. This report (quoted in full under "Operations of CTF 77, October 20th") was, in general, most favorable and indicated that all operations were progressing satisfactorily.

\* \* \*

Plate II is an intelligence estimate prepared by COMSOWESPAC's headquarters at Hollandia. It seems unlikely that this plate was available to COMSOWESPAC in the NASHVILLE at Leyte at this time although some of the information contained therein may have arrived by dispatch. This estimate is of particular interest in that it (a) visualizes a concentration of all major units in the South China Sea (which concentration did not eventuate), (b) rejects any concept of enemy action by fleet units through the Philippines (the one development which materialized), and (c) accepts an enemy capability of fleet action through Luzon Strait against Allied amphibious forces, although such acceptance is distinctly qualified.

(1) Operations of COMSEVENTHFLT, October 20th.

COMSEVENTHFLT took no unusual action this day as COMSEVENTHFLT nor in his capacity as CANF SOWESPAC insofar as the Leyte operation was concerned. His deputy commander continued administrative control from his headquarters at Hollandia while he himself, as COMSEVENTHFLT, continued operational control of SOWESPAC naval forces associated with the Leyte operation from the WASATCH.

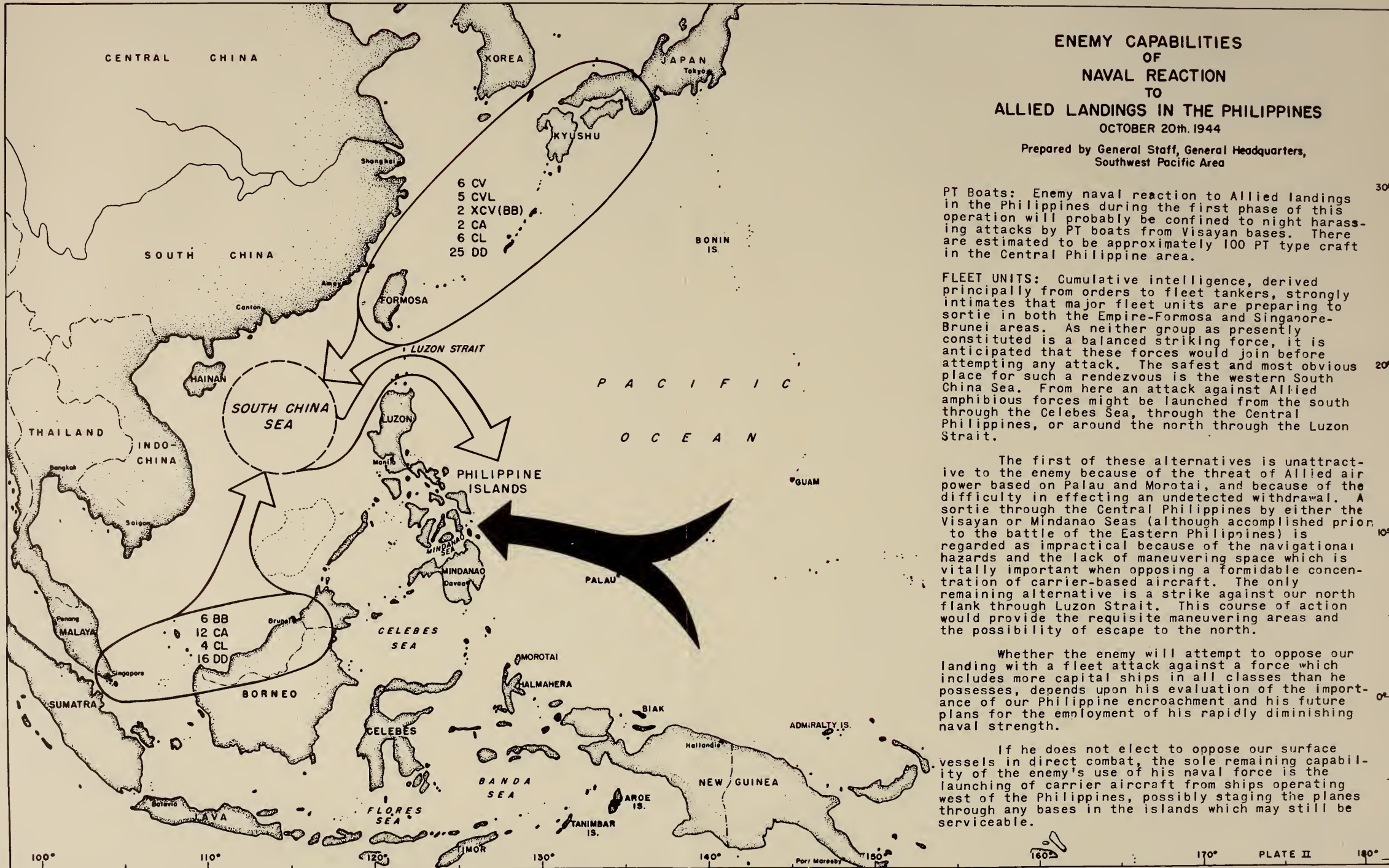
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\* War Diary NASHVILLE, October 20th, 1944.

\*\* COMSOWESPAC Dispatch 200840 October 1944 to COMINCH, info CNO, CINCPAC and COMSOPAC.

\*\*\* COM3RDFLT Dispatch 200843 October 1944 to COMSOWESPAC and CINCPAC, info COMINCH, COM7THFLT, etc.





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## (a) Operations of CTF 77 (Central Philippines Attack Force).

At the start of the day CTF 77, in WASATCH, bearing 118°(T), distant thirty miles from the entrance, was approaching Leyte Gulf in company with CTF 79 and Transport Groups ABLE and BAKER of TF 79. By this time TF 79's Landing Craft Movement Group (composed of Tractor Groups ABLE and BAKER) had just about completed its entry through Area SWEEP with TF 78 following about ten miles astern. CTF 77 could see that the approach and entry of his forces was thus far proceeding according to schedule without incident despite the predicted strong adverse currents and the difficulties in clearing the enemy minefield at the entrance to the gulf.

At 0417 he requested CTG 38.1, the OTC of the two groups (TG's 38.1 and 38.4) scheduled to provide air support to the D-day landings, to (a) make fighter sweeps of the airfields in Mindanao north of Latitude 08°-45'N and the western Visayas as necessary to destroy enemy aircraft so as to keep them from opposing the landings, and (b) caution them that U.S. Army planes might be striking the same area.\*

At 0418 he received a contact report from COMNAVGRPCINA on five large unidentified ships in Latitude 18°-42'N, Longitude 113°-15'E, course East, speed thirteen knots\*\* (Contact 3).

At 0420 he received from his headquarters at Hollandia a weather forecast for the Philippine area which predicted generally favorable weather for the D-day landings.\*\*\*

At 0421, he advised COMTHIRDFLT that present orders indicated that no fast carrier groups would be available to support operations after D-day and, in view of this fact, he requested that one group be retained at the objective area until the situation clarified and to be prepared against air attacks after D-day by keeping the western Visayan airfields neutralized.\*\*\*\* The phrase "until the situation clarified" probably referred to the developments in the South China Sea.

THIS REQUEST BY CTF 77 WAS APPROPRIATE SINCE THE AIR PLAN IN HIS BASIC OPERATION ORDER FOR KING II STATED THAT (A) SUBSEQUENT TO D-DAY TF 38 WOULD OPERATE IN STRATEGIC SUPPORT OF THE OPERATION, EFFECTING AIR STRIKES AS THE SITUATION THEN REQUIRED, AND (B) COMSOWESPAC OR COMSEVENTHFLT WOULD REQUEST FAST CARRIER STRIKES AT THAT TIME IF NECESSITATED BY THE EXISTING SITUATION, AND COMTHIRDFLT WOULD COMPLY OR IMMEDIATELY REPORT HIS INABILITY.\*\*\*\*\*

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- \* CTF 77 Dispatch 191917 October 1944 to CTG 38.1, info COM3RDFLT, CTF 38, CTG 77.4, C.G. 5TH Air Force, etc.
  - \*\* COMNAVGRPCINA Dispatch 191716 October 1944 to CINCPAC, info COMSUBPAC.
  - \*\*\* COM7THFLT Dispatch 191559 October 1944 to all TFC's 3RDFLT.
  - \*\*\*\* CTF 77 Dispatch 191921 October 1944 to COM3RDFLT, info CTF's 38, 78, 79, etc.
  - \*\*\*\*\* CANF SOWESPAC Operation Plan No. 13-44, Serial 00022A, September 26th, 1944, paragraph 1(a), Annex "G" and paragraph 1(a), Appendix 6 to Annex "G".



At 0425 he entered Leyte Gulf.\* On arrival he automatically relieved CTG 77.2 as OTC and assumed control of all naval operations in the objective area in accordance with the basic plan. This included the functions of Force Fighter Director and Commander Support Aircraft. It seems appropriate, at this point, to digress somewhat to describe briefly the air defense and air support systems employed in KING II.

CTF 77, as OTC, exercised control and coordination of all Allied air operations in the objective area through his Commander Support Aircraft Central Philippines (CSACP) in the WASATCH. These operations included the target combat air patrol (TCAP), target antisubmarine patrol (TASP), direct air support, air - sea rescue and other miscellaneous special missions such as spotting, observer and photographic flights. CSACP exercised direct operational control of TASP, air - sea rescue operations, air delivery and itinerant aircraft entering the objective area. He exercised control of the TCAP in defense of the objective area through the agency of the Force Fighter Director, also aboard the WASATCH. He delegated control of direct air support operations respectively to (a) CTF 78, (b) CTF 79, and (c) CTG 78.3, each of whom exercised this function through his respective CSA.\*\*

CTF 79 CRITICIZED THE ABOVE ORGANIZATION ON THE GROUNDS THAT, WITH THE CONSIDERABLE GEOGRAPHIC SEPARATION OF THE ATTACK FORCES AT LEYTE, THE COMPLETE RETENTION OF CONTROL OF THE TCAP BY THE OTC DID NOT GIVE MAXIMUM FLEXIBILITY TO THE FIGHTER DIRECTOR SYSTEM. HE FELT THAT EACH ATTACK FORCE COMMANDER SHOULD HAVE BEEN ASSIGNED ZONES OF RESPONSIBILITY AND, AS THE OCCASION REQUIRED, ASSIGNED FIGHTERS UNDER HIS IMMEDIATE CONTROL TO COVER THESE ZONES, ESPECIALLY IN LAND-LOCKED WATERS SUCH AS LEYTE GULF, WITH THE ATTENDANT POOR RADAR COVERAGE AND INCREASED VULNERABILITY TO LOW-FLYING AIRCRAFT APPROACHING OVER LAND.\*\*\*

COMMANDER AIR SUPPORT CONTROL UNITS (CASCU) DID NOT AGREE WITH THIS CRITICISM AND POINTED OUT THAT (A) (1) IN THIS PARTICULAR CASE, SINCE TF 78 AND TF 79 WERE SEPARATED BY BUT TEN MILES, IT WAS SIMPLER TO MAINTAIN THE CONTROL OF THE TCAP BY THE OTC, AND (2) IN THE CASE OF THE PANAON GROUP, WHICH WAS FORTY-FIVE MILES TO THE SOUTH, A SEPARATE TCAP HAD BEEN PROVIDED, (B) BECAUSE OF THE CLOSENESS OF THE TWO ATTACK FORCES, THE CENTRAL CONTROL, IN THIS CASE, TENDED TO MAKE THE FIGHTER DIRECTOR SYSTEM MORE EFFECTIVE AND FLEXIBLE SINCE THE FORCE FIGHTER DIRECTOR WAS ABLE (1) TO PLOT AND FILTER ALL RADAR INFORMATION AS IT WAS RECEIVED, AND (2) IMMEDIATELY TO PLACE ELEMENTS OF THE CAP IN A POSITION TO INTERCEPT A RAID, AND (C) IF AREAS OF RESPONSIBILITY HAD BEEN ASSIGNED TO THE VARIOUS ATTACK FORCE COMMANDERS, VALUABLE TIME WOULD HAVE BEEN EXPENDED IN DECIDING WHICH ZONE AN ENEMY RAID

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\* Action Report WASATCH, Leyte Operation, Serial 0013, November 6th, 1944.

\*\* CANF SOWESPAC Operation Plan No. 13-44, Serial 00022A, September 26th, 1944, Annex G, Appendix 1.

\*\*\* COM3RDPHIBFOR (CTF 79) Recommendations for Improvement of Future Operations, Serial 00317, November 11th, 1944.



CONTACTS RECEIVED  
BY  
PRINCIPAL ALLIED COMMANDERS  
OCTOBER 20th. 1944  
BATTLE FOR LEYTE GULF  
OCTOBER 1944  
ALL TIMES ITEM

EAST CHINA SEA



	TIME OF CONTACT	LOCATION	TIMES OF RECEIPT		
			CSWPAC	CTF 77	C3rd.FLT
1	1240-19th	PARE PARE BAY	*	•	•
2	1400-19th	N.E. OF FORMOSA			0558
3	2250-19th	EAST OF HAINAN		0418	0417
4	2340-19th	W. OF HALMAHERA		1333	1511
5	0940-20th	W CELEBES SEA		1647	1650
6	1145-20th	BALABAC STRAIT		1825	1309
7	1435-20th	W OF PALAWAN		1816	1517

Omitted times of receipt are unknown.  
\* Received on previous day

2250(19th)-5 LARGE UNIDENTIFIED SHIPS  
C 090°(T) S13K

1435-2DD  
C 050°(T)

C 080°(T)  
0940-2DD

(19th) 16 LARGE NAVAL VESSELS SIGHTED. SIZE & TYPE DOUBTFUL. PHOTOS ORDERED.

COMTHIRDFLT

COMSOWESPAC CTF 77





WOULD FINALLY ENTER.\*

IT IS BELIEVED THAT CASCU WAS JUSTIFIED IN HIS NON-CONCURRENCE WITH CTF 79'S CRITICISMS FOR THE REASONS GIVEN. HOWEVER, CTF 79'S CRITICISMS WERE NOT ENTIRELY INCORRECT. CERTAINLY, UNDER THE CONDITIONS EXISTING IN LEYTE GULF--LAND-LOCKED WITH POOR RADAR COVERAGE--OCCASIONS AROSE WHEN THE AIR DEFENSE WOULD HAVE BEEN MORE EFFECTIVE HAD BOTH CTF'S 78 AND 79 HAD CERTAIN FIGHTERS UNDER THEIR IMMEDIATE CONTROL WHICH THEY COULD VECTOR OUT VISUALLY. IT IS LIKELY THAT ONE OR MORE OF THESE OCCASIONS PROMPTED CTF 79 TO CRITICIZE.

THE CONCEPTS PRESENTED ABOVE IN CASCU'S COMMENTS ARE THE SAME AS THOSE INCORPORATED IN TODAY'S DOCTRINE (1957) WHICH PROVIDES THAT "ALL AIRCRAFT WITHIN THE OBJECTIVE AREA OF AN AMPHIBIOUS OPERATION MUST BE UNDER CENTRALIZED CONTROL".\*\*

At 0427 CTF 77 received a most favorable report from CTG 77.2 (quoted in full under "Operations of CTG 77.2, October 20th") concerning the progress of operations October 19th, which showed that the advance operations, all in all, had been highly successful.\*\*\*

At 0430 he requested CTG 38.1 to provide a dusk patrol of eight VF over the objective area from 1730 until 1900 on D and D+1 days and thereafter as practicable.\*\*\*\*

While a dusk CAP was provided in CTG 77.4's operation plan, it is believed that CTF 77 felt that, since the above operation plan also called for the CAP to depart station at 1820,\*\*\*\*\* this was too early to provide adequate defense at this critical period (the end of evening twilight was not until 1930). He based this request on the fact that (a) on October 18th, he had found it necessary to refuse CTG 77.4's request on October 16th to enter Leyte Gulf on D-day with two carriers in order to increase early morning and sunset coverage over the objective area,\*\*\*\*\* (b) he now realized that he must have air cover later than 1820, (c) if he did not obtain this from TF 38, the planes of his escort carriers would be forced

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- \* Commander Air Support Control Units, Amphibious Forces, U.S. Pacific Fleet, Reports of Air Support Control Units Operations, Palau, Leyte and Lingayen, with comments by Commander Air Support Control Units, Amphibious Forces, U.S. Pacific Fleet, Serial 0034, April 18th, 1945.
  - \*\* Amphibious Operations (NWP 22), Department of the Navy, Office of the Chief of Naval Operations, December 1952 (Change No. 1), Paragraph 731.
  - \*\*\* CTG 77.2 Dispatch 191544 October 1944 to CTF 77, info CTF's 78, 79, C.G. 6TH Army.
  - \*\*\*\* CTF 77 Dispatch 191930 October 1944 to CTG 38.1, info COM3RDFLT, CTG 77.4, etc.
  - \*\*\*\*\* CTG 77.4 Operation Plan No. 2-44, Serial 00075, October 5th, 1944, Annex D, Paragraphs D.1.(d) and 16(a).
  - \*\*\*\*\* CTG 77.4 Dispatch 152103 October 1944 to CTF 77.

October 20th

into night landing operations for which they had had little or no training,\* and (d) he felt justified in making this request because he realized that these dusk CAP's would likely be forced to make night landings and he knew that the basic plan stated, that, if practicable, night fighter cover would be provided over the objective area by THIRDFLT fast carriers commencing D-3 day and continuing as long as a carrier with night fighters could be made available.\*\*

Why he addressed CTG 38.1 is not clear but it seems probable that since on October 6th he had been advised by COMTHIRDFLT that if he required night fighters prior to and on D-day he was to request this service from CTG 38.1,\*\*\* he apparently considered that this advice from COMTHIRDFLT applied to dusk fighters as well.

At about 0653 he received a dispatch from COMNAVGRPCHINA wherein that commander stated that (a) the FOURTEENTH Air Force search planes then in the air over the South China Sea were making their coverage 200 miles short, and (b) the next flight scheduled for daylight October 20th had been cancelled due to a temporary shortage of fuel.\*\*\*\* This situation aroused his concern because it left him at a vital time (D-day) with no means, other than through chance sightings by Allied submarines widely dispersed in the South China Sea (Diagram B), for obtaining information not only of the two enemy naval task forces reported October 19th--i.e., (a) the force consisting of one carrier, two cruisers, and three destroyers (reported composition erroneous) off Hainan Island,\*\*\*\*\* and (b) the force of four cruisers and five destroyers (SECOND Striking Force) off northern Formosa heading into the South China Sea\*\*\*\*\*--but of other forces as well which could be expected to be in the area.

ALTHOUGH HIS INTELLIGENCE INFORMATION, AS LATE AS OCTOBER 16TH,\*\*\*\*\* LED HIM TO BELIEVE THAT THE JAPANESE FLEET WAS DEPLOYED WITH ITS CARRIERS CONCENTRATED IN THE EMPIRE AND WITH THE BULK OF ITS BATTLESHIPS AND HEAVY CRUISERS APPARENTLY IN THE SOUTH CHINA SEA (WHICH WAS CORRECT FOR OCTOBER 16TH ALTHOUGH THE LATTER SHIPS WERE ACTUALLY AT LINGGA - SINGAPORE), IT IS CLEAR THAT HE STILL DID NOT BELIEVE THAT ANY MAJOR

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- \* Action Report CTG 77.4, Leyte Operations, October 12th - 29th, 1944, Serial 00120, November 15th, 1944.
  - \*\* CANF SOWESPAC Operation Plan No. 13-44, Serial 00022A, September 26th, 1944, Annex G, Appendix 1, Paragraph 3.
  - \*\*\* COM3RDFLT Dispatch 060418 October 1944 to COM7THFLT, info COMSOWESPAC, CTF 38, CTG's 38.1 and 38.2, INDEPENDENCE.
  - \*\*\*\* COMNAVGRPCHINA Dispatch 191729 October 1944 to COM3RDFLT passed for info to COMSOWESPAC, COM7THFLT, etc.
  - \*\*\*\*\* CINCPAC Dispatch 190726 October 1944 to COM3RDFLT, COM7THFLT, COMSOWESPAC, etc. (Re-encypherment of COMNAVGRPCHINA Dispatch 190558 October 1944).
  - \*\*\*\*\* TRIGGER Dispatch 190715 October 1944 to COMSUBPAC, info COM3RDFLT.
  - \*\*\*\*\* COM7THFLT Dispatch 160611 October 1944 to 3RD and 7TH Fleets, info CINCPAC.



ELEMENTS OF THE ENEMY FLEET WOULD BE INVOLVED IN OPPOSITION TO KING II\* SINCE HE HAD MADE NO CHANGE IN HIS BASIC ESTIMATE IN THIS REGARD. ALSO, IN HIS INTELLIGENCE ESTIMATE OF OCTOBER 16TH, HE HAD STATED THAT HE DID NOT EXPECT ANY ENEMY ATTACKS FROM CARRIER-BASED AIRCRAFT. HOW, THEN, FROM A NAVAL STANDPOINT, DID HE THINK THAT THE ENEMY WOULD REACT TO KING II? IT SEEMS CORRECT TO SAY THAT HE ESTIMATED THAT THE EXTENT OF JAPANESE OPPOSITION ON THE SEA TO KING II WOULD BE LIMITED TO EITHER (A) STRIKING ALLIED SUPPLY LINES WITH A FAST TASK FORCE, TAKING FULL ADVANTAGE OF DARKNESS, SURPRISE AND LAND-BASED AIR OR (B) ATTEMPTING COUNTERLANDINGS VIA "TOKYO EXPRESS" OPERATIONS TO REINFORCE THE GARRISON FORCES ON LEYTE. HE HAD CITED THE FORMER CONCEPT IN HIS BASIC OPERATION PLAN\* AND THE LATTER IS DERIVED FROM HIS REVISED INTELLIGENCE ESTIMATE OF OCTOBER 16TH\*\* WHEREIN HE STATED THAT LARGE CONCENTRATIONS OF ENEMY TROOPS ON CEBU INDICATED A POSSIBILITY THAT THEY MIGHT BE USED TO REINFORCE LEYTE. HE HAD BEEN SUPPORTED IN THIS VIEW BY COMTHIRDFLT, WHO, ON OCTOBER 17TH AND AGAIN ON OCTOBER 19TH, HAD STATED THAT THE ENEMY MIGHT EMPLOY "TOKYO EXPRESS"\*\*\* METHODS TO REINFORCE THE LEYTE GARRISON. CONSEQUENTLY, HE LIKELY BELIEVED THAT THE TWO ENEMY TASK FORCES SIGHTED OCTOBER 19TH MIGHT BE EN ROUTE TO LEYTE TO BE EMPLOYED AS ABOVE. BUT HOW COULD HE KEEP HIMSELF ADVISED OF THEIR MOVEMENTS AT SUCH A CRUCIAL TIME WITHOUT THE CHINA-BASED LONG RANGE SEARCHES? OF COURSE, THERE WERE AIR SEARCHES FROM MOROTAI BUT THEY DID NOT COVER TOO MUCH OF THE SOUTH CHINA SEA. (DIAGRAM B).

At 0943 he arrived off the Southern Transport Area and at 1130 off the Northern Transport Area. In each area he observed the progress of the landings from aboard his flagship.\*\*\*\*

About this time he received word that the landing by CTF's 78 and 79 had been highly successful, with limited opposition and few casualties. Lest it be imagined that this was due entirely to the effectiveness of the Allied preliminary air and gunfire bombardments, as was indicated by CTG 77.2\*\*\*\*\* and by C.G. SIXTH Army,\*\*\*\*\* it seems proper, at this point, to digress long enough to discuss Japanese army plans for

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- \* CANF SWPA Operation Plan No. 13-44, Serial 00022A, September 26th, 1944.
  - \*\* COM7THFLT Dispatch 160611 October 1944 to 3RD and 7TH Fleets, info CINCPAC.
  - \*\*\* COM3RDFLT Dispatches 170909 and 190100 October 1944 to COMSOWESPAC and COM7THFLT.
  - \*\*\*\* Action Report WASATCH, Leyte Operation, Serial 0013, November 6th, 1944.
  - \*\*\*\*\* Action Report CTG 77.2 (COMCRUDIV 4), Bombardment and Capture of Leyte Island, October 16th - 24th, 1944, Serial 00147, November 5th, 1944.
  - \*\*\*\*\* 6TH U.S. Army, Report of the Leyte Operation, October 17th - December 25th, 1944, Part VI, Section B.1., Page 34.



the ground defense of Leyte, and Japanese air power in the Philippines.

(a) Japanese army plans provided for the defense of Leyte by "defense in depth" with the main battle being fought away from the beaches. This was the result of Japanese studies of Pacific campaigns wherein Imperial General Headquarters (Army Section) had decided that beach defenses could not withstand naval bombardment and, therefore, had instructed the army to establish "defense in depth".\* However, C.G. THIRTY-FIFTH Army\*\* who was charged with the defense of the Visayan Islands, decided that some troops should remain (in the beach area) to resist the American landings\* and made provisions accordingly for both "defense in depth" and "beach defense".

This brings forth the thought that the question of the beach defense tactics which an enemy might employ is one which must be carefully considered by the commanders responsible for the success of the landing operations. This is so since the decision thereon will have a controlling effect on the character of the preliminary bombardments and on the scheme of maneuver.

As a result of these decisions and because C.G. SIXTEENTH Division (this division was composed of most of the army troops on Leyte) had decided in April that if the Americans landed on Leyte they would land in the Dulag area, this area was given priority as the first line of defense. The second line of defense was between Dulag and Dagami; the third in the vicinity of Dagami.\* At the time of the Allied landings the first line of defense was practically completed\*\*\* and was manned by the TWENTIETH Infantry Regiment (less one battalion), elements of the TWENTY-SECOND Field Artillery Regiment; the FIFTY-FOURTH Air Field Company and the SEVENTH Independent Tank Company. The NINTH Infantry Regiment (less one battalion) was in the Catmon Hill - Tanauan District.

Although C.G. SIXTEENTH Division did not include Tacloban with either the first, second or third lines of defense, he decided, in accordance with the concept of limited defense of the beaches, to station in the Tacloban area the larger part of the THIRTY-THIRD Infantry Regiment which had arrived from Luzon in mid-September and which was less adequately trained than the other regiments.\*

AT THE TIME OF THE LANDING MOST OF THE TROOPS AT DULAG AND TACLOBAN WERE NOT IN THEIR DEFENSE POSITIONS. INSTEAD, DURING THE NAVAL AND AIR BOMBARDMENTS WHICH TOOK PLACE IMMEDIATELY PRIOR TO THE LANDING, THEY HAD WITHDRAWN TO SAFER POSITIONS UNTIL THESE BOMBARDMENTS HAD ENDED, AT WHICH

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\* True Facts of the Leyte Operation, prepared by Major General Yoshiharu Tomachika, ex-IJA, Japanese Studies in World War II, Special Staff, U.S. Army, Historical Division File 8-5, SS-14, 786/2-14.

\*\* Lieutenant General Sosaku Suzuki, IJA.

\*\*\* 35TH Army Operations, 1944-1945, Japanese Studies in World War II, Special Staff, U.S. Army, Historical Division File 8-5, JS-11, 851/1-11.



TIME THEY PLANNED TO REGROUP AND RETURN TO THEIR DEFENSE POSITIONS BEFORE THE AMERICAN TROOPS HAD SECURED MOST OF THE COASTAL DEFENSES. HOWEVER, OWING TO THE SPEED OF THE ALLIED LANDING AFTER THE PRELIMINARY BOMBARDMENTS, THEY WERE UNABLE TO DO THIS.\* AS A CONSEQUENCE, THE ALLIES ENCOUNTERED ONLY LIMITED OPPOSITION IN THE BEACH AREAS. IN THIS CONNECTION THE AMERICAN TROOPS, ON SEIZING HILL 522 NEAR PALO AT ABOUT DUSK, OBSERVED JAPANESE TROOPS MOVING UP THE SLOPES TO RE-OCCUPY SOME POSITIONS VACATED DURING THE BOMBARDMENTS. THE JAPANESE WERE, OF COURSE, FAR TOO LATE.\*\*

(b) Japanese air power at this time in the Philippines was very weak, as is discussed under "Operations of Commander FIFTH Base Air Force" and "Operations of C.G. FOURTH Air Army" for this day.

IN SUBSTANCE, THE FIFTH BASE AIR FORCE HAD ONLY FORTY OPERATIONAL AIRCRAFT; THE FOURTH AIR ARMY ONLY FIFTY-FIVE, FOR A GRAND TOTAL OF NINETY-FIVE OPERATIONAL AIRCRAFT OF MANY TYPES. THESE PLANES WERE NOT CONCENTRATED IN ONE AREA BUT WERE SPREAD FROM LUZON TO MINDANAO. THEY WERE EMPLOYED IN SPORADIC AIR ATTACKS AGAINST THE ALLIED INVASION FORCES IN THE LEYTE AREA-- THE LARGEST STRIKE CONSISTING OF BUT TWENTY PLANES WHICH MADE PIECEMEAL ATTACKS.

TO COUNTER THESE PLANES THE ALLIES HAD APPROXIMATELY 471 AIRCRAFT IN THE SIXTEEN CARRIERS OFF LEYTE AT THIS TIME.

Now to return to the operations of the day!

At 1240 he received information from a support air observer that the Tacloban airfield had been captured and that bulldozers were working on it.\*\*\*

At 1333 as an information addressee he received a contact report on a submarine sighted at 2340 the previous evening about four miles NW of Hiri Island \*\*\*\* (west of Halmahera) (Contact 4).

At 1401, in response to a report from CTG 77.5 that both his DMS and YMS type minesweepers were getting low on fuel, he directed CTF's 78 and 79 to fuel these vessels as soon as practicable from ships present in Leyte Gulf.\*\*\*\*\*

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- \* True Facts of the Leyte Operation, prepared by Major General Yoshiharu Tomachika, ex-IJA, Japanese Studies in World War II, Special Staff, U.S. Army, Historical Division File 8-5, SS-14, 786/2-14.
  - \*\* 6TH U.S. Army, Report of the Leyte Operations, October 20th - December 25th, 1944, undated.
  - \*\*\* Action Report CTG 78.2, Leyte Operation, Serial 0085, November 29th, 1944.
  - \*\*\*\* CTU 70.2.1 Dispatch 200202 October 1944 to CTG 70.2, COM7THFLT, info CTF 77.
  - \*\*\*\*\* CTF 77 Dispatch 200501 October 1944 to CTF's 78 and 79, info CTG 77.5.

At 1415 he received an answer from COMTHIRDFLT to the request he had made earlier that morning for the retention of one fast carrier group at the objective area after D-day. COMTHIRDFLT stated that (a) at 1700 October 20th he must retire TG's 38.1 and 38.4, which were low on bombs, in order to fuel them on the 21st, and (b) TG's 38.2 and 38.3, then operating in strategic support in the vicinity of Latitude 15°-00'N, Longitude 127°-00'E, would strike the Visayas on D+1 from the vicinity of San Bernardino Strait unless a change in the strategic situation prevented in which case he would notify CTF 77.\* Although COMTHIRDFLT, in his reply, referred to the dispatch request from CTF 77 to CTG 38.1 for a dusk CAP at the objective area, he failed to make any mention of it whatsoever.

This failure to take action on the dusk CAP request beyond citing it as a reference must have caused CTF 77 some concern, for unless CTG 38.1 decided to provide the CAP, notwithstanding COMTHIRDFLT's intent to commence retiring TG's 38.1 and 38.4 about 1700 preparatory to replenishment, CTF 77 would have to rely on his escort carriers for this task, which as pointed out earlier, were not normally trained for night landings. Doubtless, the question in his mind was "will the escort carriers be able to handle night landings if forced to do so by the exigencies of the situation?"

CTF 77 COULD NOT BE BLAMED IF, AT THIS TIME, HE FELT THE NEED FOR A MUTUAL SUPERIOR IN THE WESTERN PACIFIC AUTHORIZED TO COORDINATE THE ACTIVITIES OF ALL UNITS ENGAGED IN KING II.

At about 1449 he received, from COMSOWESPAC, an announcement that, as of noon, his Advance Headquarters had been established at Leyte and that his General Headquarters and Rear Echelon Headquarters remained, respectively, at Hollandia and Brisbane.\*\*

At 1558, likely being alerted over the TBS voice radio to an enemy torpedo plane\*\*\* in the vicinity, he observed, some ten miles to the south, the AA firing of ships in the Southern Transport Area.\*\*\*\* At 1602 he may have observed an explosion of a ship in this same area, but, whether he did or not, he soon learned that the HONOLULU had been torpedoed by an enemy plane which had approached from over Leyte and had been undetected until its final low approach.\*\*\* Although some of the firing ships claimed hits on this plane, it escaped and landed safely at Cebu base, where it reported having torpedoed a transport.\*\*\*\*\*

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- \* COM3RDFLT Dispatch 200314 October 1944 to CTF 77, info all TFC's and TGC's 3RD and 7TH Fleets.
  - \*\* GHQ SOWESPAC Dispatch 200519 October 1944 to all major SOWESPAC commands, COM3RDFLT, etc.
  - \*\*\* Deck Log HONOLULU, October 20th, 1944.
  - \*\*\*\* Action Report WASATCH, Leyte Operations, Serial 0013, November 6th, 1944.
  - \*\*\*\*\* Detailed Action Report No. 3, 253RD Attack Unit (331ST Air Group), October 20th - November 13th, 1944, WDC Document 160354, NA 12378.



At 1647 he received a contact report on two destroyers at 0940 in Latitude 03°-15'N, Longitude 118°-10'E on course 080°(T)\* (Contact 5).

At 1655 he sent a progress report to COMSOWESPAC. He stated, among other things, that (a) the Leyte operation was proceeding according to schedule, (b) Allied troops had landed at Panaon Strait at 0930 without opposition, (c) landings had been made on schedule at 1000 on the southern and northern beaches, following heavy air and ship bombardment, with only minor enemy opposition at the beachheads and that the troops were moving inland against moderate opposition, (d) LST's and other landing craft had received some damage from enemy mortar fire on the beaches although casualties appeared to be light, (e) only four enemy planes had been reported in the area with no attacks pressed home until 1620 (actually, 1602), at which time what appeared to have been a single plane had torpedoed the HONOLULU, extent of damage as yet undetermined.\*\*

In regard to item (e) above, there had actually been a total of six enemy aircraft sighted over the objective area by this time and, in addition to the attack on the HONOLULU, an army-type fighter had scored a direct bomb hit at 0607 on the PRESERVER (ARS), which had been standing by the disabled ROSS off the western tip of Homonhon Island to conduct salvage operations. The nature of enemy air activity in the vicinity of the objective area this day is discussed in detail under the "Operations of CTG 77.4 (Escort Carrier Group), October 20th".

At 1730, with his flagship unit TU 77.1.1 (WASATCH AMMEN and MULLANY), he proceeded to clear the transport area\*\*\* and, before dark, joined with the flagship unit of COMSOWESPAC TU 77.1.2 (NASHVILLE, ABNER READ and BUSH). He then retired for the night in the eastern portion of Leyte Gulf. The heavy ships were in column and the destroyers formed a special anti-aircraft screen.\*\*\*\*

At 1753 he received from COMCRUDIV NINE a preliminary report of damage to his flagship (HONOLULU) from the enemy aerial torpedo attack stating that (a) the midships forward handling room had been hit, (b) the forward fireroom was partially flooded; (c) pumping and counterflooding was in progress, (d) there was no increase in list (thirteen degrees to port), (e) ship had steering and engine control and (f) two salvage tugs were alongside.\*\*\*\*\*

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- \* RDO Hollandia Dispatch 201100/I October 1944 to all concerned SOWESPAC operations.
  - \*\* CTF 77 Dispatch 200755 October 1944 to COMSOWESPAC, info COMINCH, CINCPAC, COM3RDFLT, etc.
  - \*\*\* Action Report WASATCH, Leyte Operation, Serial 0013, November 6th, 1944.
  - \*\*\*\* Action Report BUSH, Leyte Operation, Serial 074, November 21st, 1944.
  - \*\*\*\*\* COMCRUDIV 9 Dispatch 200815 October 1944 to CTF 77.

At 1816 he received a contact report on two destroyers west of Palawan in Palawan Passage on course 090°(T) speed fifteen knots\* (Contact 7) and at 1825 on a small convoy of one DD, one AK and one AO in Balabac Strait\*\* (Contact 6).

At 1847 he received a report from CTF 79 concerning the situation at the southern beaches as of 1400 stating, among other things, that (a) the assault and reserve battalions and part of the corps reserve regiment of the SEVENTH Division had been landed, (b) artillery was being landed, (c) no casualties to ships, although the LCI's encountered some mortar fire on landing, (d) several LST's had beached and were unloading, (e) troops were generally 1000 to 1400 yards inland thus far and still advancing against fairly light resistance, except immediately behind Dulag, where the enemy was entrenched and using mortars, (f) personnel casualties on landing beaches were light, and (g) there was little evidence of enemy movement.\*\*\*

At this time any concern which he may have had regarding a fighter CAP from TF 38 was dispelled because six VF(N) from TG 38.1 arrived on station\*\*\*\* thus releasing the dusk fighters from his CVE's.

He did issue one dispatch concerning communications. At 1951, because (as CTF 77) he had either not been receiving certain information concerning the KING II operation or had been receiving it too late, he requested COMTHIRDFLT, CTF 38, and the four fast carrier group commanders to address such traffic intended for Commander Philippine Attack Force to CTF 77 as well as to COMSEVENTHFLT.\*\*\*\*\*

In this connection, it will be recalled (from Volume II)\*\*\*\*\* that, as COMSEVENTHFLT, he had advised the interested commands on October 13th that, commencing at 1600 that day, traffic concerning the KING II operation was to be addressed to CTF 77, and that his deputy commander at Hollandia would continue the routine administration of the SEVENTHFLT.\*\*\*\*\* It would appear from this that he meant that (a) he would, in general, use the title CTF 77 in originating dispatches concerned with the KING II operation, (b) his deputy commander would use the title of COMSEVENTHFLT in handling routine matters, and that (c) he, himself, as COMSEVENTHFLT might also employ that title when he thought it appropriate. His reason for permitting his deputy commander to employ the title of COMSEVENTHFLT was "deception"—he hoped that Japanese radio traffic analyzers would not

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- \* 5TH BOMCOM Dispatch 201435/I October 1944 to AOIC.
  - \*\* Search Plane (Sector 1 from Morotai) Dispatch 200245/I October 1944 to 5TH BOMCOM.
  - \*\*\* CTF 79 Dispatch 200552 October 1944 to CTF 77, C.G. 6TH Army.
  - \*\*\*\* War Diary TG 38.1, October 20th, 1944.
  - \*\*\*\*\* COM7THFLT Dispatch 201051 October 1944 to COM3RDFLT, CTF 38, and CTG's 38.1, 38.2, 38.3 and 38.4.
  - \*\*\*\*\* Volume II, Battle for Leyte Gulf (NavPers 92194), Naval War College 1955, Chapter I, Section (A)(1), Operations of COM7THFLT.
  - \*\*\*\*\* COM7THFLT Dispatch 130055 October 1944 to COMSOWESPAC, CINCPAC, COM3RDFLT, C.G. 6TH Army, COMINCH, etc.



know that COMSEVENTHFLT was at sea, and that an overseas operation was pending.\*

However, it seems clear that the above was not being complied with completely by the THIRDFLT addressees and therefore he felt it necessary to request compliance.

At 2203 he sent COMSOWESPAC an amplifying report on the progress of the landing operations as of 1400 which incorporated, verbatim, the earlier report from CTF 79 regarding the southern beaches and similar reports he had received from CTF 78 and CTG 78.3 in regard to the northern and Panaon Strait beaches. In this dispatch he stated that (a) the Panaon Task Group expected to complete unloading at 1800, (b) APA/AP's and AK's off RED and WHITE Beaches (Plate V) were respectively twenty-five and fifteen per cent unloaded, (c) unloading of LST's at the northern beaches was slow, except at two points, because shallow water prevented close approach; LCT's and pontoons were being obtained from the Southern Attack Force to expedite unloading, (d) assault troops had landed exactly as scheduled, (e) troops landed on RED Beach had advanced 1800 yards inland; mortar fire had sunk one LCVP and damaged three LST's killing seven and wounding ten navy personnel in LST 171 and wounding six army personnel in a sunken LVT, (f) troops landed on WHITE Beach had encountered only light opposition with no casualties thus far reported and had advanced through San Jose and half of the Cataisan Peninsula, (g) all transports off RED and WHITE Beaches expected to be ready to depart at 1900.\*\*

IT SEEMS SOMEWHAT SURPRISING THAT THE FACT THAT TACLOBAN AIR-FIELD HAD BEEN CAPTURED AT 1240\*\*\* WAS NOT INCLUDED IN THIS DISPATCH SINCE THE SEIZURE OF THE JAPANESE AIRFIELDS WAS ONE OF THE OBJECTIVES OF THE LANDING OPERATIONS. ITS CAPTURE WAS OF IMPORTANCE TO CTF 77 FOR THE PLANS CALLED FOR ONE STRIP AND UNDISPERSED PARKING AREAS TO BE READY FOR TWO FIGHTER GROUPS AND A NIGHT FIGHTER SQUADRON BY D+5.\*\*\*\* IN THIS CONNECTION, CTF 77 KNEW THAT HIS ESCORT CARRIERS COULD NOT BE WITHDRAWN FROM THE OBJECTIVE AREA UNTIL THE GARRISON AIR FORCES WERE OPERATIONAL AND, EVEN THEN, A NUMBER OF ESCORT CARRIERS MIGHT BE FORCED TO PROVIDE SUPPORT OF AIR OPERATIONS UNTIL THE GARRISON AIR FORCES COULD ASSUME FULL RESPONSIBILITY FOR AIR DEFENSE.\*\*\*\*\*

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- \* Letter from Captain L. G. Shaffer, USN, 7THFLT Communications Officer during Leyte Operation, to Captain H.M.S. Gimber, Jr., USN, World War II Battle Evaluation Group, Naval War College, January 31st, 1956.
  - \*\* CTF 77 Dispatch 201303 October 1944 to COMSOWESPAC, info COMINCH, CINCPAC, COM3RDFLT, etc.
  - \*\*\* Action Report CTG 78.2, Leyte Operation, Serial 0085, November 29th, 1944.
  - \*\*\*\* Field Order No. 25, Headquarters 6TH Army, September 23rd, 1944, Annex 9, 6TH U.S. Army, Report of the Leyte Operation, October 17th - December 25th, 1944, Page 118, undated.
  - \*\*\*\*\* CANF SOWESPAC Operation Plan No. 13-44, Serial 00022A, September 26th, 1944, Annex G, Paragraph 3b.



At 2208 CTF 77 received a report from CTG 77.4 that (a) his escort carrier group had been attacked by three enemy carrier-type fighters at 0830, and (b) one small bomb had hit the SANGAMON causing minor damage.\*

At 2219 he received a dispatch from CTU 77.7.1 (Commander Fueling Group) wherein that commander stated, in effect, that he was assigning the units of TU 77.7.1 as follows: (A) ACCIPITER Group: this group, which consisted of the oilers ASHTABULA, CHEPACHET, SALAMONIE, SARANAC, and the ammunition ships DURHAM VICTORY and MAZAMA, under his direct command, and escorted by the MANILA BAY, was to depart Kossol Roads at 1200 D-day for Area ACCIPITER, arriving in that area on D+2 day; and (b) Kossol Roads Unit: (1) this unit, which consisted of ammunition ships MERIDIAN VICTORY, IRAN VICTORY, BLUEFIELD VICTORY, KISHWAUKEE, and escorted by the destroyer escorts LOVELACE, NEUENDORF, THOMASON, under the command of COMCORTDIV THIRTY-SEVEN, was to arrive at Kossol Roads prior to October 25th; (2) the KISHWAUKEE, with one destroyer escort, was to arrive in Area ACCIPITER not later than 0700 D+8 day; and (3) the ammunition ships were to remain at Kossol Roads until called forward.\*\*

Since this dispatch was in accordance with his instructions as regards fuel and ammunition for his forces in the Leyte operation, he likely viewed it with satisfaction as it indicated clearly that his logistics operations were proceeding normally.

During the day, as noted on Plate III (Contacts Received by Principal Allied Commanders), there were no contacts of particular consequence, and even the contacts on the preceding day were neither unusual nor unexpected. Of the more important contact reports shown on this plate, the one on the SECOND Striking Force (Contact 2) had been reported on the previous day by the TRIGGER, and the one at Pare Pare Bay (Contact 1) of sixteen large naval vessels, had also been reported on the previous day by Allied aircraft. This latter contact had been questioned as to its accuracy and was presently under reconnaissance.

(1) Operations of Advance Force, October 20th.\*\*\*

On the arrival of the assault forces at the objective area,

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- \* CTG 77.4 Dispatch 200214 October 1944 to CTF 77, info CTF's 78, 79.
  - \*\* CTU 77.7.1 Dispatch 192358 October 1944 to COMSERV7THFLT, CTG 77.7, info CTF's 77, 78, 79, COM3RDFLT, etc.
  - \*\*\* CANF SOWESPAC Operation Plan 13-44, Serial 00022A, September 26th, 1944; Action Report CTG 77.2 (COMCRUDIV 4), Bombardment and Capture of Leyte Island, October 16th - 24th, 1944 Serial 00147, November 5th, 1944; Action Report CTF 78, Leyte Operation, Serial 00911, November 10th, 1944; Action Report CTF 79, Seizure of Leyte, Serial 00323, November 13th, 1944; Action Report CTG 77.3, Leyte Occupations, Serial 0359, November 3rd, 1944; Action Report CTG 77.6, Leyte Island Operations, Serial 0084, November 10th, 1944.



October 20th, at which time CTF 77 (Commander Central Philippines Attack Force) automatically assumed overall control of all operations in the objective area in accordance with the basic plan, the Advance Force ceased to exist. From D-3 day until this time CTG 77.2 (Commander Bombardment and Fire Support Group) had functioned as OTC of all advance groups in the objective area, and, in such capacity, had been responsible for pre-D-day operations, including shore bombardment and night harassing fire, minesweeping, underwater beach reconnaissance, air defense and air support, air-sea rescue and lifeguard service, and covering support for the beach demolition and minesweeping units. However, with the arrival of the amphibious forces, CTG 77.2's overall responsibilities for the operations in the area ended. At this time (a) CTF 78 (Commander Northern Attack Force) assumed control of TU 77.2.1 (Fire Support Unit North) in addition to TG 77.3 (Close Covering Group), TG 78.3 (Panaon Attack Group) and TG 78.5 (Harbor Entrance Control Group), (b) CTF 79 (Commander Southern Attack Force) assumed control of TU 77.2.2 (Fire Support Unit South) and of TG 77.6 (Beach Demolition Group), and (c) Commander Minesweeping and Hydrographic Group (CTG 77.5) reported to CTF 77 (Commander Central Philippines Attack Force). Commander Support Aircraft Central Philippines (CSACP) (under CTF 77) relieved Advance Commander Support Aircraft (ACSA) (under CTG 77.2) and took control of all air operations in the objective area.

(a) Operations of CTG 77.2\* (Bombardment and Fire Support Group), October 20th.

CTG 77.2 (with TG 77.2 less the night harassing units) continued to steam on various courses at twelve knots in night cruising disposition in an area south of the Tacloban - Dulag Approach Channel.\*\*

At 0044 he made an amplifying report to CTF 77 concerning the progress of operations in the objective area through the end of the previous day stating, among other things, (a) all advance operations were proceeding according to plan, except mine clearance in Area SWEEP, where 186 mines had thus far been swept and destroyed, but only the southern half had been cleared, (b) beaches apparently were suitable for landing craft since no underwater obstacles or mines had been discovered, (c) enemy defenses behind the northern and southern beaches were deep and strong although no heavy artillery had thus far been used or observed, (d) many mortar batteries had been discovered and some had been put out of action, (e) he was retaining on board until after the landings a number of alleged Philippine patriots who had come ostensibly to give him information, suspecting that there might be some quislings among them, (f) wakes of torpedoes from enemy torpedo boats had been seen although the boats escaped (erroneous report since there were no enemy torpedo boats in Leyte Gulf),

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\* All information here, except as otherwise indicated, obtained from Action Report CTG 77.2 (COMCRUDIV 4), Bombardment and Capture of Leyte Island, Philippine Islands, October 16th - 24th, 1944, Serial 00147, November 5th, 1944.

\*\* War Diary COMCRUDIV 4 (CTG 77.2), October 20th, 1944.



and (g) ROSS and CHICKASAW had been attacked by two enemy carrier-type bombers and the LOUISVILLE by a suicide dive bomber that disintegrated in mid-air due to the force of its dive.\*

At 0107 he made radar contact on the Landing Craft Movement Group of TF 79, the leading echelon of the assault forces entering Leyte Gulf.\*\*

At 0415 he detached TU 77.2.1\*\* (Fire Support Unit North), less the CONY and SIGOURNEY which two destroyers he had stationed off the northern beaches the previous evening to conduct night harassing fire.\*\*\* Thereupon, CTU 77.2.1, in MISSISSIPPI, plus MARYLAND, WEST VIRGINIA and AULICK, formed column and set course toward his assigned fire support areas off the northern beaches\*\*\*\* (Plate V). This detachment of TU 77.2.1 left CTG 77.2 solely with TU 77.2.2, less the RICHARD P. LEARY and HALFORD which two destroyers had been stationed off the southern beaches the previous evening also for harassing fire.

At 0455 he detached TG 77.6\*\*\* (Beach Demolition Group) to report to COMDESRON FIFTY-SIX, who assigned all available APD's in this group to patrol stations south of the transport area until released to report to CTF 79 for post-assault demolition work.\*\*\*\*\*

At 0500 he ordered (a) the heavy ships of CTU 77.2.2 (Fire Support Unit South) to proceed independently, as previously directed, to their firing positions (Plate VII) off the southern beaches and to commence firing at 0600;\*\* and (b) COMDESRON FIFTY-SIX to form his destroyers in a north - south screening line to the seaward of the battleships and cruisers when not required for scheduled gunfire support.\*\*\*

At 0600 he observed the heavy units of TU 77.2.2 commence scheduled fires against designated targets in the vicinity of the southern beaches. Due to the paucity of visible targets, slow and deliberate area fire was employed as in the pre-D-day bombardments, except in cases where definite targets were previously known or new ones were discovered by (a) the lifting of camouflage by bombing or gunfire, (b) enemy counterbattery fire, or (c) spotting aircraft.

At 0615 his flagship (LOUISVILLE) was attacked by an enemy army-type fighter which dropped two bombs that exploded fifty yards on the port beam causing no damage. The plane escaped.

AS A RESULT OF THE MACHINE GUN AND MORTAR FIRE ENCOUNTERED BY THE UNDERWATER DEMOLITION TEAMS DURING THE PRE-D-DAY BEACH RECONNAISSANCE, HE MOVED AT 0625 SOME OF HIS GUNFIRE SUPPORT SHIPS TO POSITIONS CLOSER TO

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\* CTG 77.2 Dispatch 191544 October 1944 to CTF 77, info CTF's 78, 79.  
 \*\* War Diary COMCRUDIV 4 (CTG 77.2), October 20th, 1944.  
 \*\*\* War Diary COMDESRON 56, October 19th, 1944.  
 \*\*\*\* War Diary COMBATDIV 3, October 20th, 1944.  
 \*\*\*\*\* War Diary TALBOT (CTG 77.6), October 20th, 1944.



THE BEACHES FOR THE D-DAY FIRING WITH INSTRUCTIONS TO PAY PARTICULAR ATTENTION TO ALL BEACH POSITIONS.\*

HE DID THIS BECAUSE HE REALIZED THAT "CLOSE IN" OR "SHORT RANGE" FIRES WERE EXTREMELY IMPORTANT FOR THE DESTRUCTION OF SUCH BEACH POSITIONS (USUALLY MATERIAL OBJECTS) AS GREATER RANGES REQUIRED MORE TIME AND A GREATER EXPENDITURE OF AMMUNITION. THIS CONCEPT REMAINS IN EFFECT TODAY AND IS SPECIFIED AS A REQUIREMENT FOR DESTRUCTION FIRES.\*\*

At 0645 the RICHARD P. LEARY and the HALFORD, which had completed harassing fires, headed for their next station, the former to her screening station, the latter to her FS station.

At 0700 he noted that both CTF 78 and CTF 79 had arrived in the objective area. He therefore, as CTU 77.2.2, in accordance with instructions, reported for duty to CTF 79. CTU 77.2.1 likewise reported to CTF 78.\*\*\* During the remainder of the day, since TU 77.2.1 continued to operate with CTF 78 and TU 77.2.2 continued to operate with CTF 79, the operations of these units after 0700 this day are incorporated in the discussions of the operations of their respective attack force commanders.

(b) Operations of CTG 77.4 (Escort Carrier Group), October 20th.

In addition to protecting his own units with local CAP and ASP for each task unit, CTG 77.4 provided air cover and support for the D-day landings on Leyte in accordance with CTF 77's basic air plan.\*\*\*\* Scheduled air cover consisted of a daylight CAP of twenty-eight VF over the target area from 0615 until 1730, a dusk CAP also over the target area of twelve VF from 1700 until 1820, and an ASP of two VT each across the southern part of Surigao Strait and the eastern entrances to Leyte Gulf (Plate VIII) from 0615 until 1730. Scheduled air support consisted of thirty-six VF and fifteen VT on station over the target area from 0615 until 1730, plus a landing-hour strike group of twenty VF and nine VT and miscellaneous air coordination, observer, spotting, smoke and photographic missions.\*\*\*\*\* To accomplish this he began the day with a total of 222 VF and 127 VT.\*\*\*\*\*

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- \* Voice Radio Log, Action Report HALFORD, Report of Bombardment of Leyte Island, October 19th - 20th, 1944, Serial 047, October 23rd, 1944.
- \*\* Naval Gunfire Support in Amphibious Operations (NWIP 22-2), Department of the Navy, Office of the Chief of Naval Operations, June 15th, 1953, Chapter I, Paragraph 111.
- \*\*\* Action Report CTU 77.2.1, Bombardment of and Fire Support Mission on Leyte Island, Philippine Islands, Serial 0166, October 29th, 1944.
- \*\*\*\* CANF SOWESPAC Operation Plan No. 13-44, Serial 00022A, September 26th, 1944, Annex G.
- \*\*\*\*\* CTG 77.4 Operation Plan No. 2-44, Serial 00075, October 5th, 1944, Appendix 3 to Annex D.
- \*\*\*\*\* This total differs from the comparable figures contained in the Table of Organization of Allied Forces in Volume II of "The Battle for Leyte Gulf", the latter figures showing a total of 229 VF and 128 VT as of 2400 October 19th. In the interim period between the promulgation of Volumes II and III, the acquisition of additional information has resulted in modifications of the earlier figures.

CTU 77.4.1 supported CTG 78.3's (Panaon Attack Group) landings on Panaon and southeast Leyte; CTU 77.4.2 supported CTF 79's (Southern Attack Force) landings in the vicinity of Dulag and CTU 77.4.3 supported CTF 78's (Northern Attack Force) landings just below Tacloban.

The Panaon landing-hour strike group and direct support group each consisted of four VF/three VT; the northern and southern attack force landing-hour strike and direct support groups consisted, respectively, of eight VF/three VT and sixteen VF/six VT for each force. The armament for these missions consisted, generally, of bombs, napalm and rockets in addition to the normal loading of machine gun ammunition.

The weather in the sea operating area was good with north-northwesterly winds seven to ten knots, visibility twelve miles until 1000 reducing thereafter to six miles in haze, partially cloudy skies with bases of lower clouds at 1500 to 2000 feet, and smooth sea. Over Leyte there were low scattered clouds and haze during the early morning, visibility was six miles improving to twelve miles at about 1000, flying conditions were excellent. First light was at 0517 and sunrise at 0629.

At 0645 TU 77.4.14, consisting of the SAGINAW BAY, PETROF BAY, EDMONDS and RICHARD S. BULL, with thirty-three VF and twenty-four VT joined TU 77.4.2 having been released at 0100 from escort duty with the transport group of TF 79.\* At 0705 TU 77.4.34 consisting of the GAMBIER BAY, KITKUN BAY, DENNIS and JOHN C. BUTLER with thirty-four VF and twenty-four VT joined TU 77.4.3, having been released from escort duty with TF 78 at 2000 the previous day.\*\* Consequently there was now available within TG 77.4 a total of sixteen carriers with 289 VF and 175 VT. At this time TU 77.4.2 consisted of six carriers, TU 77.4.3 of six and TU 77.4.1 of four.

A morning fighter strike against Catmon Hill area was launched at 0745 from the MARCUS ISLAND. This strike was accompanied by a special mission torpedo plane with COMCARDIV TWENTY-SEVEN\*\*\* embarked as observer. On completion of several strafing and rocket runs against Catmon Hill entrenchments, during which time the plane was heavily hit by a 40mm or larger calibre shell and COMCARDIV TWENTY-SEVEN was wounded, the plane returned to the MARCUS ISLAND where, owing to its heavy damage, it was jettisoned.\*\*\*\*

While (a) COMCARDIV TWENTY-SEVEN's reasons for making this flight are not known but were apparently to gain at first hand information concerning the results of a particular ground support mission, and (b) his courage in flying such a mission was commendable, there is considerable doubt that the demands of the situation required that he so expose himself to enemy gunfire and the risk of possible capture.

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\* Action Report CTU 77.4.14, Leyte Operation, Serial 026, November 4th, 1944.

\*\* War Diary COMCARDIV 26 (CTU 77.4.34), October 20th, 1944.

\*\*\* Rear Admiral W. D. Sample, USN.

\*\*\*\* Aircraft Action Report No. 51, VC-21, October 20th, 1944.



THIS POINTS UP THE BATTLE LESSON THAT IT IS UNWISE FOR A NAVAL COMMANDER, WHO IS CONVERSANT WITH THE PRESENT AND PLANNED FUTURE OPERATIONS OF HIS COMMAND, AND POSSIBLY OF OTHER COMMANDS AS WELL, TO EXPOSE HIMSELF IN SUCH MANNER UNNECESSARILY FOR, WERE HE CAPTURED BY THE ENEMY, HE MIGHT BE FORCED TO GIVE AWAY INFORMATION OF VITAL IMPORTANCE TO THE SUCCESSFUL CONDUCT OF THE OPERATION.

The first target CAP of the day made a fighter sweep of Leyte airfields en route to their stations and twelve VF of the first direct support group made anti-shipping and anti-motor torpedo boat sweeps over Carigara Bay, San Pedro Bay, Camotes Sea and Surigao Strait.

At 0832 TU 77.4.1 was attacked by three enemy carrier-type fighters carrying bombs while in the midst of launching the landing-hour strike group for Panaon. Four bombs narrowly missed the SANTEE and one bomb skipped and struck the SANGAMON at the waterline causing negligible damage. One of the attack planes was shot down by anti-aircraft fire, one by the CAP and one by VF of the strike group.\* These enemy aircraft, which had come from Cebu, reported, prior to being shot down, as having scored direct hits on two converted carriers.\*\*

The landing-hour strike group over Panaon was cancelled owing to the lack of any enemy opposition to the landing and the aircraft returned aboard their parent carriers in TU 77.4.1 with their bombs. Some Panaon direct support groups were sent by the Commander Support Aircraft to sweep airfields on Cebu and Panay and others were assigned targets behind the northern and southern beaches. The pilots on these sweeps claimed destroying four barracks, one warehouse, seven luggers and damaging two torpedo boats; one airborne enemy army-type fighter shot down over Opon Field, Cebu.\*\*\* Japanese sources available do not positively support the above claims. In fact, these sources show that no damage to shipping occurred during these attacks.\*\*\*\*

The direct support air operations over the northern and southern beaches were quite effective in supporting the landings and advance of the assault troops. Pilots reported damage to various buildings, fuel dumps, pill boxes, gun emplacements and destruction or damage to thirty-six trucks and cars.\*\*\* All roads leading to the beaches were kept under constant surveillance to keep the enemy from moving reinforcements by land and the immediate sea areas were patrolled to prevent overwater movement.

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\* Action Report CTU 77.4.1, Leyte Operation, October 12th - 29th, 1944, Serial 00104, November 8th, 1944; also War Diaries CHENANGO and SANGAMON, October 20th, 1944; also CTG 77.4 Dispatch 200214 October 1944 to CTF 77, info CTF 78, CTF 79 and all TGC's TF 77.

\*\* Philippine Area Naval Operations, Part II, October - December 1944, Second Demobilization Bureau, Japanese Government, October 1947, Department of the Army Historical Division, File No. 8-5, JS-104.

\*\*\* CTG 77.4 Dispatch 210350 October 1944 to CTF 77, info CTF's 78, 79 and all TGC's of TF 77.

\*\*\*\* The Imperial Japanese Navy in WW II, GHQ, FEC, Military History Section, Special Staff, February 1952.

Again, as on the previous day, due to the inability of Allied radars to detect low flying aircraft in proximity to the surrounding land masses, the TCAP was not too effective in preventing enemy aircraft from penetrating the objective area inside Leyte Gulf. Fortunately, enemy resistance to the Allied landing was as meager in the air as it was on the ground and was limited to the following:

## (a) Naval Aircraft:

(1) At 0828 an enemy carrier-type fighter, pursued by three Allied fighters, passed low and close aboard the BISBEE in the entrance to Leyte Gulf and was shot down shortly thereafter.\*

(2) At 1602 an enemy carrier-type attack plane torpedoed the HONOLULU, inflicting serious damage.\*\* This plane was one of the two that took off from Nichols Field, Luzon, about 1320 and landed at Cebu Base at 1705. The pilot of one plane reported that he had definitely sunk an Allied transport in Leyte Gulf; the other plane did not return.\*\*\*

The unit identity of the carrier-type aircraft, which made the attack in (a) (1) above and which appears to have come from Cebu, cannot be fully established as the information thereon is meager. It appears to have belonged to the 201st Air Group which had received an order on October 18th to "continue surprise attacks".\*\*\*\*

## (b) Army Aircraft:

(1) At 0607 an enemy army-type fighter dropped two bombs on the PRESERVER off the western tip of Homonhon Island. One bomb scored a direct hit putting the PRESERVER out of commission, although she was deemed salvageable.\*\*\*\*\*

(2) At 0615 an enemy army-type fighter dropped two bombs close aboard the LOUISVILLE without causing any damage.\*\*\*\*\* This plane was apparently one of two similar type planes sighted over Dulag at about this time by the air coordinator, who reported that one plane had made an attack on the bombardment cruisers, and then flew off to the north.\*\*\*\*\*

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\* War Diary BISBEE, October 20th, 1944.  
 \*\* War Diary HONOLULU, October 20th, 1944.  
 \*\*\* Detailed Action Report No. 3, 253RD Attack Unit (331ST Air Group), October 20th - November 13th, 1944, WDC Document 160354, NA 12378.  
 \*\*\*\* Ibid., Commander 5TH Base Air Force Dispatch 182142, October 1944.  
 \*\*\*\*\* War Diary PRESERVER, October 20th, 1944.  
 \*\*\*\*\* Action Report CTG 77.2 (COMCRUDIV 4), Bombardment and Capture of Leyte Island, Philippine Islands, October 16th - 24th, 1944, Serial 00147, November 5th, 1944.  
 \*\*\*\*\* Aircraft Action Report No. 8, VC-81, October 20th, 1944.



(3) At 0620 an enemy land reconnaissance plane bombed the LST's of the Northern Attack Force with negative results.\*

(4) At 0713 an army-type fighter dropped a bomb near the LCI(R) 31 off the Panaon beaches without causing any damage.\*\*

The army aircraft, which made the above attacks, reportedly belonged to the SECOND Air Division which had launched a twenty-plane attack at dawn. Actually, they were from at least four separate units and were, therefore, probably not coordinated as a single attack group. As indicated above under (b) (1), (2), (3) and (4) they made only one hit although they claimed having (1) sunk one destroyer, one transport and two landing craft and (2) made near misses on one destroyer.\*\*\*

(c) From 1805 until 1846 an enemy two-engine land bomber, apparently on a reconnaissance mission, flew leisurely around Leyte Gulf while the ships fired at it ineffectively. The dusk CAP could not make an interception because of the heavy anti-aircraft fire.\*\*

Despite the above, it should be pointed out here that the target combat air patrol was not always unsuccessful in thwarting enemy air attacks. It had several successes: (a) at 0745 a low-flying enemy carrier-type attack plane carrying a torpedo was shot down over Biliran Strait off the northwestern tip of Leyte\*\*\*\* and (b) at 1645 a second torpedo-equipped carrier-type attack plane was shot down over Leyte Gulf.\*\*\*\*\* The latter plane is most likely the one that had departed Nichols Field at 1400 and failed to return.\*\*\*\*\*

During the day, if the basic plan was followed, which seems correct, CTG 77.4 maintained a local CAP of eight VF and an ASP of four VT over TU 77.4.1 and a CAP of four VF and an ASP of four VT each over TU's 77.4.2 and 77.4.3. The CAP over TU 77.4.3 shot down one enemy plane (probably army) at a distance of twenty-five or more miles from the formation.\*\*\*\*\*

By 1915, when the dusk CAP was recovered, the three carrier

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- \* Action Report CTG 78.2, Leyte Operation, Serial 0085, November 29th, 1944; also War Diary MURRAY, October 20th, 1944.
  - \*\* War Diary SCHROEDER, October 20th, 1944.
  - \*\*\* Daily Record of the War Situation, GHQ, FEC Special Historical Collection, Supporting Documents to General of the Army Douglas MacArthur's Historical Report on Allied Operations in the Southwest Pacific Area (Item 4, Footlocker 10 of 10, SWPA Series Vol. II).
  - \*\*\*\* Aircraft Action Report No. 8, VC-81, October 20th, 1944.
  - \*\*\*\*\* Action Report WICKES, Assault on Leyte Island, Serial 060, November 3rd, 1944; also War Diary BENNION, October 20th, 1944.
  - \*\*\*\*\* Detailed Action Report No. 3, 253RD Attack Unit (331ST Air Group), October 20th - November 13th, 1944, WDC Document 160354, NA 12378.
  - \*\*\*\*\* War Diary KALININ BAY, October 20th, 1944.

task units of TG 77.4 had flown about 305 direct support sorties, 132 target CAP sorties and twenty target ASP sorties.\*

Total aircraft losses for the day were two VF (CHENANGO, KITKUN BAY) and five VT (FANSHAW BAY--one, MARCUS ISLAND--one, ST. LO--three), all lost operationally. One pilot (CHENANGO) was lost.\*\* Thus, at the end of the day, he had remaining 287 VF and 170 VT.

After the last planes of the dusk CAP's had landed, all three units of TG 77.4 retired to their respective night operating areas.

(c) Operations of CTG 77.5 (Minesweeping and Hydrographic Group), October 20th.

On this day the various sweep units of TG 77.5 operated as follows:\*\*\*

<u>Area (Plate IV)</u>	<u>Unit</u>	<u>Type Sweep</u>	<u>Character</u>
PLUMMET	ONE (1)	Exploratory****	Moored and acoustic to a depth of forty feet.
SWEEP	TWO, THREE & MINDIV THIRTY- FOUR	Clearance	Moored and acoustic to a depth of eighty feet in order to clear moored mines that might be riding lower than their set depth in the low currents.
RED & WHITE BEACHES	FOUR	Exploratory	Moored and acoustic to a depth of twenty feet.
BLUE, ORANGE, VIOLET & YELLOW BEACHES	FIVE	Exploratory	Moored to a depth of twenty feet.
GREEN BEACHES and Tay Tay Point	SIX	Exploratory	Moored and acoustic to a depth of twenty feet.

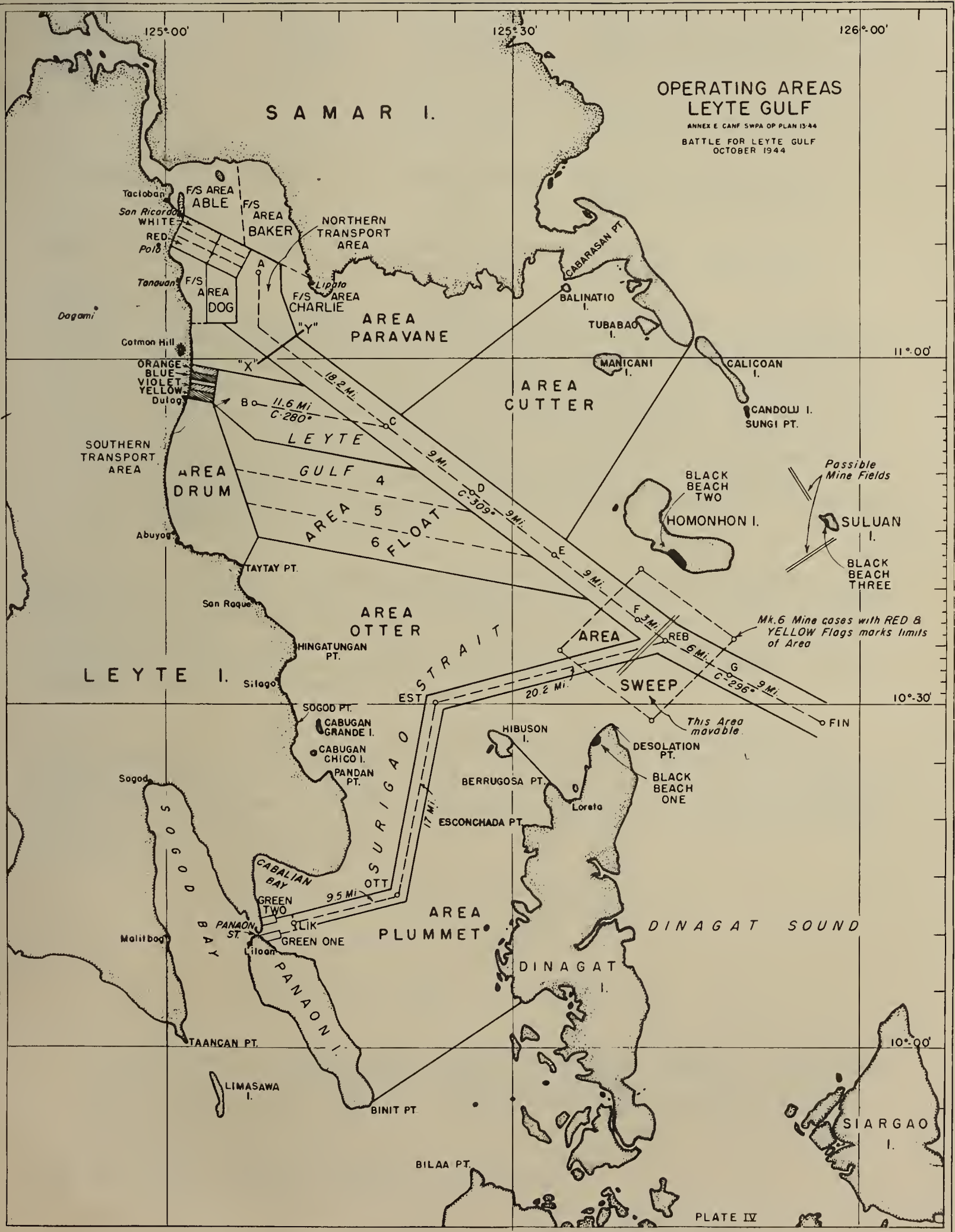
\* War Diaries SANTEE, SUWANEE, NATOMA BAY, MARCUS ISLAND, SAVO ISLAND, FANSHAW BAY, KITKUN BAY, KALININ BAY, October 20th, 1944; also CVE Action Reports, Leyte Operation, KALININ BAY, Serial 0121, November 5th, 1944; WHITE PLAINS, Serial 0011, October 27th, 1944; PETROF BAY, Serial 052, November 2nd, 1944; MANILA BAY, Serial 0103, November 2nd, 1944; SAGINAW BAY, Serial 0127, November 4th, 1944; Aircraft Action Reports Nos. 43, 44, 45, 46, VC-5, October 20th, 1944; Aircraft Action Reports Nos. 7, 8, VC-58, October 20th, 1944.

\*\* War Diaries COMCARDIV 25, CHENANGO, KITKUN BAY, October 20th, 1944; also Aircraft Action Report No. 51, VC-21, October 20th, 1944.

\*\*\* Action Report CTG 77.5, Minesweeping Operations in Surigao Strait and Leyte Gulf, Serial 0111, October 29th, 1944.

\*\*\*\* War Diary HAMILTON, October 20th, 1944.









<u>Area (Plate IV)</u>	<u>Unit</u>	<u>Type Sweep</u>	<u>Character</u>
Fire Support Areas ABLE & BAKER	SEVEN & EIGHT	Clearance	Moored and acoustic to a depth of twenty and ten feet.
CUTTER	FOUR	Exploratory	Moored and acoustic to a depth of forty feet.
PARAVANE	FIVE	Exploratory	Moored and acoustic to a depth of forty feet.
OTTER	SIX	Exploratory	Moored and acoustic to a depth of forty feet.

NOTE (1): Sweep Unit ONE, less CHANDLER, HOWARD and PREBLE, also made a tactical sweep ahead of TF 78 on approach and entry into Leyte Gulf; BREESE operated with Hydrographic Unit; PREBLE, whose services were not required for hydrographic duty, anchored off Dulag to watch the invasion; CHANDLER and HOWARD rejoined Unit ONE for the exploratory sweep of Area PLUMMET, which sweep had negative results; SANDS engaged in shallow water minesweeping operations off northern and southern beaches using LCPR's equipped with minesweeping gear; CHICKASAW assisted damaged ROSS, PRESERVER and HONOLULU.\*

By this day CTG 77.5 had made exploratory or clearance sweeps in all areas of Leyte Gulf (Plate IV) with negative results, except in Area SWEEP, where he had discovered many moored chemical horn contact mines in a straight two-row field. In addition, his Hydrographic Unit (TU 77.5.2) had buoyed the channels, the approaches to the beaches, and the dangerous shoals and obstructions within the gulf.

At 0750 he received three additional minesweepers--the SALUTE, SAUNTER and SCRIMAGE of MINDIV THIRTY-FOUR. These minesweepers had proceeded to Leyte Gulf with CTG 79.2 and had now been assigned to CTG 77.5. CTG 77.5 then assigned the SCOUT, from Sweep Unit TWO, to the above three minesweepers and directed them, as MINDIV THIRTY-FOUR, to sweep Area SWEEP. This unit swept eight mines.\*\*

Additional mines were swept as follows:

(a) Sweep Unit TWO -- eight.\*\*\*

(b) Sweep Unit THREE -- sixteen.\*\*\*\*

\* War Diaries SOUTHARD, BREESE, HAMILTON, PALMER, CHANDLER, PRESERVER, SANDS, PREBLE and CHICKASAW, October 20th, 1944.

\*\* War Diaries SALUTE, SAUNTER, SCRIMAGE and Deck Log SCOUT, October 20th, 1944.

\*\*\* War Diary TOKEN, October 20th, 1944.

\*\*\*\* War Diary REQUISITE, October 20th, 1944.

At 1933 Sweep Unit SIX returned from operations off GREEN Beach and Tay Tay Point.

CTG 77.5 stated, in his report of the operation, that by D-day (presumably meaning by nightfall on D-day) TG 77.5 had swept a total of 227 mines in clearing channels, anchorages and fire support areas.\* Actually, he appears to have swept a total of 222 mines, computed as follows: October 17th, twenty-seven; October 18th, fifty-three; October 19th, 110; October 20th, thirty-two.\*\*

(d) Operations of CTG 77.6 (Beach Demolition Group), October 20th.

Upon being released by CTG 77.2 at 0455, CTG 77.6, in the TALBOT, assigned his APD's to patrol stations on an east - west line four miles south of the Southern Transport Area as directed by COMDESRON FIFTY-SIX.

At 0800 he turned over command of the APD screen to the Commanding Officer OVERTON and, with the TALBOT and GOLDSBOROUGH, reported to CTF 79 for duty. He was then directed by CTF 79 to report to the Beachmaster of Transport Group ABLE for post-assault demolition work as required. On learning from the Beachmaster that no post-assault demolition work would be required this day, he released the GOLDSBOROUGH to return to the APD screen and directed the TALBOT to stand by in the Southern Transport Area on call.\*\*\* Nothing further of importance occurred.

Since the units of this group performed screening and escort duties only, these APD's will be discussed under the attack force commanders and this group will be dropped from further discussion.

(2) Operations of CTF 78 (Northern Attack Force), October 20th (Plate V).

Prior to discussing the D-day operations of CTF 78 (Commander Northern Attack Force), who was also CTG 78.1, it might be well to review

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\* Action Report CTG 77.5 (COMMINRON 2), Report of Minesweeping Operations in Surigao Strait and Leyte Gulf, Serial 0111, October 29th, 1944.

\*\* In evaluating the individual ship and unit records to verify the minesweeping reports, an attempt has been made to count only those mines logged as actually swept, excluding the "floaters" (largely mines freed by the recent typhoon), of which a considerable number were encountered, and which were sunk or destroyed; nor in this analysis of the minesweeping operations have mines reported by other units been included.

\*\*\* War Diaries COMDESRON 56 and TALBOT, October 20th, 1944; also Action Report CTG 77.6, Leyte Island Operations, Philippine Islands, Serial 0084, November 10th, 1944.



the tasks that had been assigned to him in the basic plan\* for KING II insofar as the main landings are concerned (the pre-D-day landings on Dinagat, Suluan and Homonhon Islands, which had been successfully accomplished by units of his command, have already been discussed in detail in Volume II).\*\* These tasks were:

(a) At 1000 on D-day to land the FIRST Cavalry Division and the TWENTY-FOURTH Infantry Division (less the TWENTY-FIRST Infantry Regiment) of the TENTH Corps, U.S. SIXTH Army, on WHITE Beach (San Ricardo) and RED Beach (Palo) in the Tacloban area of northern Leyte, with the objective of gaining control of the Leyte Valley to Carigara Bay and San Juanico Strait.

(b) At 1000 on D-day to land one regimental combat team (TWENTY-FIRST Infantry Regiment) of the TWENTY-FOURTH Infantry Division on GREEN Beach in the vicinity of Panaon Strait for the purpose of gaining control of the strait to permit the passage of motor torpedo boats into Mindanao Sea and waters west of Leyte.

(c) To establish, prior to D-day, a harbor entrance control unit and to maintain this unit until relieved of responsibility by Commander Central Philippines Attack Force.

(d) On arrival in the objective area to assume control of Close Covering Group (TG 77.3) and Fire Support Unit North (TU 77.2.1) for bombardment, night harassing fire and close fire support on D-day and subsequent thereto as required.

(e) On D-day, and subsequent thereto, to control and direct the operations of UDT Unit North as required.

(f) To control such support aircraft as had been specifically assigned by CTF 77.

(g) To provide antisubmarine, antimotor torpedo boat, and anti-aircraft protection in own area of responsibility (Plate VIII).

In furtherance of the above assigned tasks he had organized his force into three principal groups for the main assault, viz., the Palo Attack Group (TG 78.1), the San Ricardo Attack Group (TG 78.2) and the Panaon Attack Group (TG 78.3). In addition he had formed three reinforcement groups (TG's 78.6, 78.7 and 78.8) to land service troops, supplies and equipment at the objective area on D+2, D+4 and D+9 days. He himself commanded both the Palo Attack Group and the Northern Attack Force. He had assigned command of the Panaon Attack Group, effective on its arrival at the objective area, to Commander Dinagat Attack Group (CTG 78.4), who had

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\* CANF SOWESPAC Operations Plan No. 13-44, Serial 00022A, September 26th, 1944.

\*\* Volume II, Battle for Leyte Gulf (NavPers 92194), Naval War College, 1955.

conducted (under CTG 77.2) the pre-D-day landing.\*

IT IS NOT ENTIRELY CLEAR WHY CTF 78 ASSUMED COMMAND OF BOTH THE NORTHERN ATTACK FORCE (TF 78) AND THE PALO ATTACK GROUP (TG 78.1) FOR, BY THUS WEARING "TWO HATS" IT WAS POSSIBLE FOR HIM TO BECOME SO ENGROSSED IN THE TACTICAL OPERATIONS OF THE PALO ATTACK GROUP AS POSSIBLY TO OVERLOOK HIS BASIC RESPONSIBILITIES AS COMMANDER NORTHERN ATTACK FORCE.

At the beginning of the day CTF 78, in BLUE RIDGE, was in the outer swept channel ten miles from the entrance to Leyte Gulf. Five minesweepers from Sweep Unit ONE were conducting a tactical sweep ahead and on the right flank of the force.

At 0040 he entered Area SWEEP. When he had completed safe transit through this area at 0153, he released CTG 78.3 to proceed to GREEN Beach while he proceeded with TG's 78.1 and 78.2 up the Tacloban - Dulag Approach Channel toward RED and WHITE Beaches (Plate IV).\*\* He released the minesweepers at 0200.\*\*\*

At 0230 he received a request from CTG 78.3 for permission to advance the time of landing. He relayed this request to CTF 77 and obtained approval.\*\*\*\*

At 0645, upon arriving off the mouth of San Pedro Bay, he gave the signal for the various elements of the Northern Attack Force to deploy to their designated areas, while he stationed his flagship astern of the transports to observe the operation. His cruisers and fire support destroyers proceeded ahead to their assigned fire support areas and his remaining destroyers formed a screen around the starboard quarter of the formation; his transports proceeded to their assigned anchorages in the Northern Transport Area, followed by the LST's.

At 0700 he noted that CTU 77.2.1 (Commander Fire Support Unit North), who had just reported to him for duty, had commenced his bombardment of the designated areas along the northern beaches.

At 0750 he received word that the fast carriers would strike the beaches from 0830 to 0845. He therefore directed that Plan

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\* CTF 78 Operation Plan No. 101-44, Serial 0008, November 3rd, 1944; also Action Report CTF 78, Leyte Operation, Serial 00911, November 10th, 1944.

\*\* Action Report CTF 78, Leyte Operation, Serial 00911, November 10th, 1944.

\*\*\* War Diaries LONG and SOUTHARD, October 20th, 1944.

\*\*\*\* Action Report CTG 78.3, Report of Panaon Group, Serial 0019, undated (probably early November 1944); also CTF 78 Dispatch 191846 October 1944 to CTF 77.



VICTOR be put in effect during this time.\* Plan VICTOR as employed by CTF 78 restricted all naval guns to a maximum ordinate of 1,000 feet for ships gunfire during air strikes.

At 0828, having arrived in the Northern Transport Area, he learned through the CSACP in the WASATCH that the scheduled air strike was now going in and that CSACP would advise him when the area was clear.\*

At 0830 he received a query from CTU 77.2.1 as to whether or not the air strikes scheduled for that time had been completed. To this he replied in the negative.\*\*

Also at about 0830 he received a disappointing TBS voice radio message from CTG 78.2 wherein that commander expressed a doubt as to his ability to meet the landing-hour and recommended that the landing-hour be delayed until 1030 (one-half hour).\*\*\*

At 0900 he observed that CTU 77.2.1 had completed his scheduled bombardment of the beaches and commenced retirement to the southern part of FS Area DOG to stand by for call fires. As the battleships of TU 77.2.1 completed their operations, he likely observed the cruisers of TG 77.3 (Close Covering Group) commence their scheduled bombardment which continued until 0945. There was no hiatus in the bombardment, a situation which would have been unacceptable in a heavily opposed landing.

AT THE TIME CTU 77.2.1 RETIRED HE HAD NOT AS YET SEEN ANY PLANES FROM THE AIR STRIKE REPORTED GOING IN AT 0828 AND, THUS, BECAUSE PLAN VICTOR REMAINED IN EFFECT, HAD DONE NO FIRING AFTER 0830 ON THOSE TARGETS REQUIRING A MAXIMUM ORDINATE GREATER THAN 1,000 FEET.\*\* THE UNFORTUNATE RESULT OF THIS WAS THAT CERTAIN TARGETS WHICH MIGHT HAVE BEEN FIRED ON DURING THIS PERIOD HAD TO BE USED AS "CALL FIRE" TARGETS LATER.

FROM THIS IT SHOULD BE CLEAR THAT (A) SINCE A RESTRICTION ON THE MAXIMUM GUNFIRE ORDINATE FOR EXTENDED PERIODS OF TIME BEFORE THE ACTUAL ASSAULT CAN PROVE TO BE DETRIMENTAL TO THE BOMBARDMENT, THE EMPLOYMENT OF SUCH RESTRICTIONS SHOULD BE WEIGHED CAREFULLY WITH RELATION TO THE DEVELOPING SITUATION AND (B) ANY GUNFIRE PLAN LIMITING THE MAXIMUM ORDINATE DURING AN AIR STRIKE SHOULD NOT BE ORDERED UNTIL THE STRIKE IS READY TO GO IN AND SHOULD BE CANCELLED AS SOON AS IT HAS DEPARTED.

The above confusion was caused by improper coordination between (a) CTF 77 and the fast carriers (CTG's 38.1 (OTC) and 38.4)

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\* Second Endorsement by CTF 78 (Serial 01889, December 27th, 1944) to Action Report CTU 77.2.1, Bombardment and Fire Support Missions on Leyte Island, P.I., Serial 0166, October 29th, 1944.

\*\* Action Report CTU 77.2.1, Bombardment and Fire Support Missions on Leyte Island, P.I., Serial 0166, October 29th, 1944.

\*\*\* Action Report CTG 78.2, Leyte Operation, Serial 0085, November 29th, 1944.

regarding the pre-landing-hour strike, and (b) Commander Support Aircraft Central Philippines (CSACP) and the Commanders Support Aircraft of the Northern and Southern Attack Forces. For example, CSACP had (a) not been advised previously as to the numbers, composition and armament of the various pre-landing-hour strike groups from the fast carriers and (b) ordered these planes on arrival to attack only the southern beaches but did not make this point clear to CTF 78 who in turn thought the strike group was to attack the northern beaches as well and, therefore, had ordered Plan VICTOR. The "all clear" signal was never received.\*

THIS IS AN EXAMPLE OF THE DIFFICULTIES WHICH ARE OFTEN EXPERIENCED IN NAVAL OPERATIONS WHEN PROPER COORDINATION HAS NOT BEEN ACHIEVED BETWEEN THE VARIOUS UNITS CONCERNED.

IT SHOULD BE POINTED OUT HERE THAT DOCTRINE PROVIDED THAT COORDINATE COMMANDERS SHOULD, "AS FAR AS CONDITIONS PERMIT, KEEP ONE ANOTHER INFORMED OF THEIR POSITIONS, MOVEMENTS, INTENTIONS AND OF CONTACTS WITH THE ENEMY. IT IS NOT NECESSARY TO BURDEN COMMUNICATIONS WITH FREQUENT REPORTS WHEN OPERATIONS ARE PROCEEDING AS PLANNED OR WITH REPORTS OF THE ENEMY THAT CONTAIN NO NEW INFORMATION. IT IS ESSENTIAL TO REPORT NEW INFORMATION OF THE ENEMY AND DELAYS OR MODIFICATIONS IN THE EXECUTION OF PART OF A DIRECTIVE."\*\*

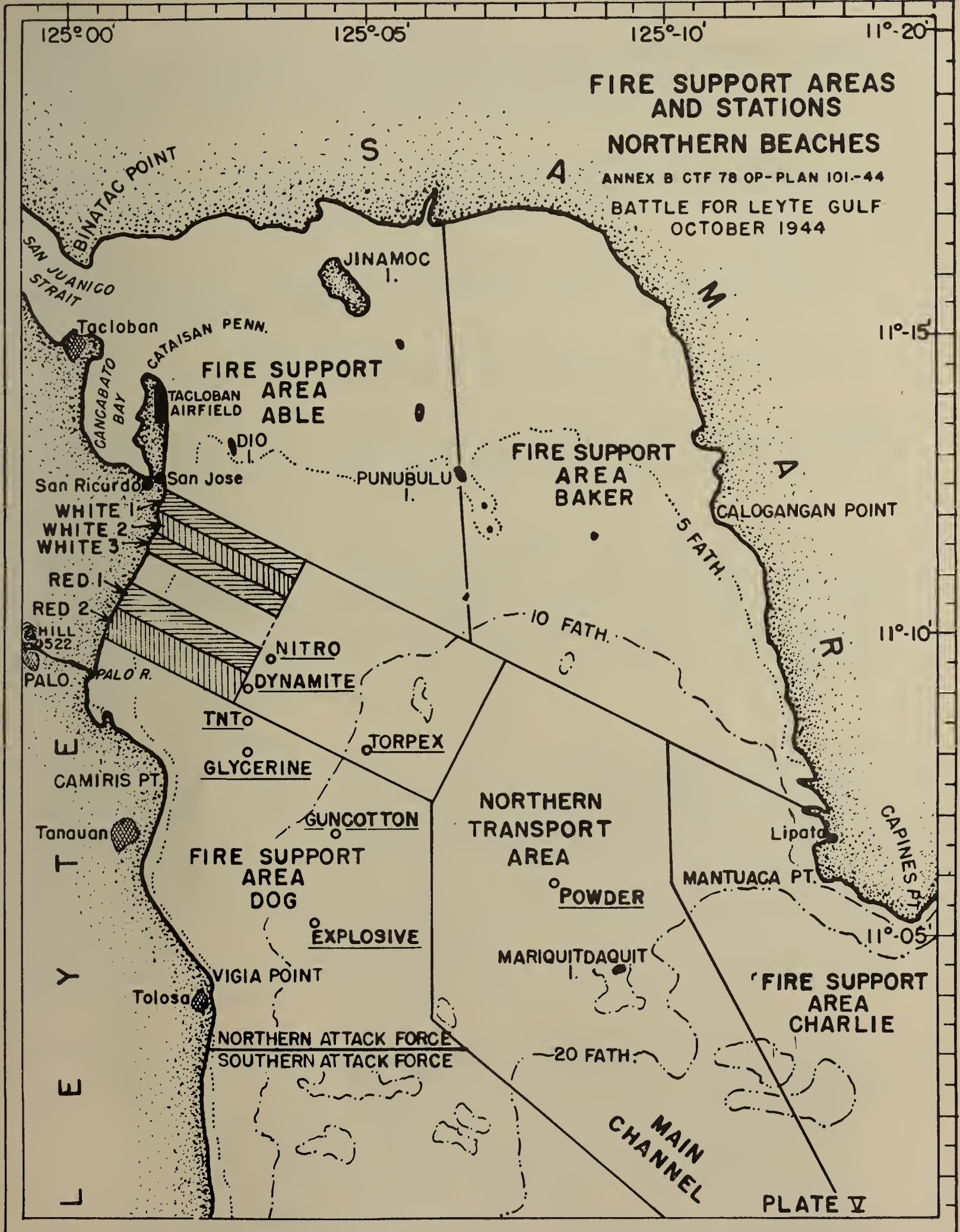
At 0920 CTF 78, replying by TBS voice radio to CTG 78.2's request to delay the landing-hour, stated that it was too late and directed him to do the best possible. Thus, he confirmed to his attack group commanders the landing hour as 1000. There is no available record or indication of any further confirmation.

At 0925 he noted that the destroyers of TG 77.3 commenced their scheduled bombardment.\*\*\*

At 0938 the first boat waves of assault troops departed their line of departure for WHITE Beach\*\*\*\* and at 0943 the first boat waves of assault troops departed their line of departure for RED Beach (Plate V).\*\*\*\*\*

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- \* Report of Support Aircraft Operations, KING II, Commander Support Aircraft, 7THFLT ltr dated November 2nd, 1944, No Serial; also Second Endorsement by CTF 78 to Action Report CTU 77.2.1, Bombardment of and Fire Support Mission on Leyte Island, P.I., Serial 0166, October 29th, 1944.
- \*\* War Instructions, U.S. Navy, 1944, FTP 143(A) U.S. Navy, U.S. Fleet, Headquarters of the Commander in Chief, Navy Department, 1946, Paragraph 228.
- \*\*\* Action Report KILLEN, Central Philippines Invasion, October 20th - 24th, 1944, Serial 0076, November 1st, 1944.
- \*\*\*\* Action Report CTU 78.2.7 (Commander Control Unit), Operations Against the Island of Leyte, Philippine Islands, Serial 07, October 24th, 1944.
- \*\*\*\*\* Action Report CTU 78.1.7 (Commander Control Unit, Leyte Operation, No Serial, November 1st, 1944.









Both boat waves were on schedule. Since the WHITE Beach wave was clearly visible, CTF 78 now knew that, despite CTG 78.2's concern about landing on time, that commander's boat waves had left the line of departure on schedule.\*

At 0947 he noted that the cruisers of TG 77.3 (except SHROPSHIRE) had completed their scheduled bombardment and lay to in FS Area DOG for "call" or "counterbattery" fire.\*\*

At 0955 he noted those destroyers of TG 77.3, which had been firing at the landing beaches and which had no assigned targets after this time, had ceased firing.

Between 0955 and 1000 the beaches were subjected to an intense rocket barrage (approximately 1970 rockets).\*\*\*

At 1001 he observed that the first boat wave of TG 78.1 had reached RED Beach. How closely he was able to follow the landing operations of CTG 78.2 is not known but it seems likely that he observed TG 78.2's first boat wave reaching WHITE Beach also on schedule.

IT WILL BE NOTED THAT THE BOMBARDMENT, JUST PRIOR TO THE LANDINGS, DID NOT INCLUDE BOMBING AND STRAFING OF THE BEACHES. THIS WAS, TO QUOTE CTF 78, BECAUSE HE CONSIDERED "THAT GUNFIRE AND ROCKETS COULD MORE EFFECTIVELY KEEP THE BEACHES UNDER CONTROL THAN TO STOP BOMBARDMENT FOR TEN TO TWENTY MINUTES AT A CRITICAL TIME WHILE PLANES CAME IN FOR, AT MOST, A FIVE-MINUTE BOMBING AND STRAFING RUN. PLANES ARE HIGHLY DESIRABLE ON REAR TARGETS BUT SHOULD NOT BE USED ON THE BEACHES JUST PRIOR TO THE ASSAULT AT THE EXPENSE OF GUNPOWER."\*\*\*\*

THE FOREGOING MAY HAVE MERIT WHEN ALL FACTORS ARE CONSIDERED, IN PARTICULAR (A) THE REQUIREMENT TO TEMPORARILY LIFT NAVAL GUNFIRE (WHEN PLAN VICTOR IS IN EFFECT) FROM ENEMY GUN POSITIONS LOCATED ON HIGH GROUND FROM WHICH THEY COULD CONCENTRATE FIRE ON THE BEACHES AND APPROACHES THERETO, AND (B) THE BELIEF THAT CONTINUOUS BOMBARDMENT (BY NAVAL GUNFIRE), PLUS THE SCHEDULED CONCENTRATED ROCKET BARRAGE (SO CONSIDERED BY CTF 78), PROVIDED AMPLE FIREPOWER TO CAUSE THE ENEMY TO WITHDRAW FROM ALL BEACH DEFENSE POSITIONS. HOWEVER, DOES IT NOT SEEM TO INDICATE AN EVIDENT RELUCTANCE ON THE PART OF CTF 78 TO ATTEMPT CLOSE COORDINATION BETWEEN HIS AIR AND NAVAL GUNFIRE SUPPORT? IN ADDITION TO FACTORS (A) AND (B) ABOVE, THIS RELUCTANCE MIGHT BE ATTRIBUTED TO AN ADDITIONAL FACTOR; I.E., A LACK OF CONFIDENCE IN HIS ABILITY TO EFFECTIVELY COORDINATE THESE TWO SUPPORTING ARMS.

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- \* Action Report CTU 78.2.7 (Commander Control Unit), Operations Against the Island of Leyte, Philippine Islands, Serial 07, October 24th, 1944.
  - \*\* Action Report PHOENIX, Bombardment of Tacloban Area, Leyte Island, P.I., on October 20th, 1944, and Subsequent Action in Leyte Gulf on October 21st - 24th, 1944, Serial 090, October 25th, 1944.
  - \*\*\* Action Report CTU 78.1.8, Leyte Operations, October 20th - November 20th, 1944, Serial 160, November 22nd, 1944.
  - \*\*\*\* Action Report CTF 78, Leyte Operations, Serial 00911, November 10th, 1944.

THE ABOVE DIFFERED FROM THE VIEWS OF CTF 79, WHO, RATHER THAN DO WITHOUT THE PRE-LANDING AIR BOMBING AND STRAFING OF THE BEACHES, ENDEAVORED TO IMPROVE THE COORDINATION BETWEEN HIS AIR AND HIS SUPPORT NAVAL GUNFIRE. TO ACCOMPLISH THIS HE EMPLOYED FLARE SIGNAL FROM THE LAST AIRCRAFT COMPLETING ITS ATTACK, WHICH FLARE SIGNAL WAS TO INDICATE TO THE BOMBARDING SHIPS THAT THEY COULD RESUME FIRE WITH NO RESTRICTIONS ON THE MAXIMUM ORDINATE. THE PRINCIPLES OF THIS CLOSE COORDINATION ARE INCORPORATED IN CURRENT AMPHIBIOUS WARFARE DOCTRINE AS A RESULT OF EXPERIENCES GAINED DURING WORLD WAR II.\*

At about 1100 he received word, and also observed, that his LST's, on both RED and WHITE Beaches but notably those on RED Beach, were having difficulty in beaching and it seemed probable that long delays in unloading them would ensue.

These delays were due, in part, to the fact that, although LSM's, LCT's, LCM's and pontoon causeways had been brought forward with the D-day assault forces for the purpose of assisting in the unloading of the LST's, no LCT's or pontoon causeways were carried by TF 78. All were carried by TF 79.

Certainly CTF 78 had recognized that a need for them might arise for (a) his operation plan shows that all beaches (RED and WHITE) had a very shallow gradient with reefs and shoals in the off shore approaches,\*\* and (b) his attack order (as CTG 78.1) states (1) that it was possible that the RED Beach would not be suitable for unloading LST's without employing pontoon causeways, (2) he expected to be able to obtain a considerable number of pontoon sections from CTF 79 if required, and (3) he believed that once the beach off the Tacloban airstrip had been captured he would be able to use it if necessary.\*\*\*

That his immediate superior, CTF 77, also knew that these pontoon causeways were in TF 79 is clear for in his operation plan he refers to the fact that pontoon barges and pontoon causeways were being carried by CTF 79 and if not required in the Southern Attack Force beaches\*\*\*\* were to be moved to the Tacloban area where they were to be anchored until required for construction of floating piers. CTF 78's

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\* Amphibious Operations (NWP 22), Department of the Navy, Office of the Chief of Naval Operations, December 1952, Chapter 7.

\*\* CTF 78 Operation Plan 101-44, Serial 0008, October 3rd, 1944.

\*\*\* CTG 78.1 Attack Order 1-44, Serial FF-0001, October 7th, 1944.

\*\*\*\* CANF SOWESPAC Operation Plan 13-44, Serial 00022A, September 26th, 1944, Annex I.



operation plan makes a similar statement.\*

Whether CTF 78 made any effort to obtain some of the causeways for his own command prior to his departure from Hollandia is not known, although he may have since C.G. SIXTH Army in his action report states that, due to the stepping up of the operation, there was insufficient time to equip SOWESPAC LST's with pontoon causeways.\*\* However, it is known that CTU 78.2.2 endeavored to obtain some ashore at Manus but was unsuccessful, possibly because the LST's of TF 79 which were also at Manus had all available.\*\*\* If this was so, does it not seem strange that CTF 78 did not obtain some from CTF 79 either through agreement or through intervention by CTF 77. The fact that he did not indicates that it is likely he did not make any direct effort but felt that if, upon arrival in the objective area off the beaches, he required such pontoon causeways, he could obtain enough from CTF 79 in both time and number to maintain his unloading schedule.

It should be pointed out here that, while he knew that ten LCT's were to be supplied to CTF 78 by CTF 79 once the assault landings in the Southern Attack Area had been effected,\*\*\*\* he also knew that no pontoon causeways were to be made available by CTF 79 except possibly on request.

Based on this concept, he loaded all the heavy equipment, including vehicles, bulldozers and especially shore artillery, in the LST's with the hope that they would be able to unload across the beaches so soon as the assault waves had secured a beachhead.

AS WILL BE SHOWN LATER, THE FAILURE TO HAVE THESE PONTOON CAUSEWAYS AND LCT'S IN TF 78 SUBJECTED THE D-DAY ASSAULT SHIPPING TO A LONGER PERIOD IN THE OBJECTIVE AREA THAN SHOULD HAVE BEEN NECESSARY.

Immediately after the beaching of the LST's had proved abortive, CTF 78 endeavored to obtain pontoon causeways from CTF 79. Numerous messages resulted wherein an effort was made to ascertain the number of pontoon causeways available within TF 79.

Meanwhile, by 1400 he knew that (a) the TWENTY-FOURTH Infantry Division, what had landed on RED Beach, had advanced inland 1,800 yards and was within 1,000 yards of Hill 522, the primary D-day objective,\*\*\*\*\* (which hill was a dominating terrain feature just across the

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\* CTF 78 Operation Plan 101-44, Serial 0008, October 3rd, 1944.  
 \*\* 6TH U.S. Army, Report of Leyte Operation, October 17th - December 25th, 1944, Report of G-3, page 209.  
 \*\*\* Action Report CTU 78.2.2 (also CTU 78.2.7) Operations Against the Island of Leyte, P.I., Serial 07, October 24th, 1944.  
 \*\*\*\* CTF 79 Attack Plan No. A304-44, No Serial, October 2nd, 1944, Annex H, page 1.  
 \*\*\*\*\* Action Report CTF 78, Leyte Operation, Serial 0911, November 10th, 1944.

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Palo River from Palo, and was the key to the enemy's defense of the entire Palo beachhead),\* and (b) the FIRST Cavalry Division, which had landed on WHITE Beach, had advanced through San Jose and half way up the Cataisan Peninsula, meeting only light enemy resistance and suffered no casualties.\*\*

At 1430 he learned that C.G. FIRST Cavalry Division and C.G. TWENTY-FOURTH Infantry Division had assumed command of their divisions ashore at WHITE Beach and RED Beach, respectively.\*\*

This was gratifying because it showed that (a) operations ashore were proceeding admirably and (b) Commander TENTH Corps, who was with him on the BLUE RIDGE, would presently move his headquarters ashore and assume command there. This was the first "step" in the transfer of command from the attack group and force commanders to the landing force commanders and was in accordance with instructions from

(a) COMSOWESPAC, which provided, in part, that "during the amphibious movement and landing the Commander Naval Attack Forces is in command of the amphibious operations; his command continues until the landing forces are established ashore. Command of the forces ashore is then passed to the Landing Force Commanders. The exact time of transfer of command from (sic) the Commanders Landing Forces will be announced by radio. The controlling considerations for fixing the time when the landing forces are established ashore will be as agreed by the Commander Allied Naval Forces and C.G. SIXTH U.S. Army, and will be announced by them to this headquarters and appropriate subordinates",\*\*\* and

(b) CTF 77, which provides that:

"(1) At each beach, when the Landing Force has been established ashore, the local Landing Force Commander will assume command, informing the local Attack Group Commander and reporting to his Attack Force Commander for duty.

"(2) In each Attack Force, when all Landing Forces have been established ashore and command has been shifted ashore, the Attack Force Commander and the Corps Commander will so report to the Commander Central Philippines Attack Force, the Corps Commander reporting to him for duty.

"(3) When all Landing Forces have been established ashore and the Commanding General SIXTH Army advises the Commander Central Philippines Attack Force that he is ready to assume command, the command of the forces ashore is transferred to the Commanding General SIXTH Army.

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\* 6TH U.S. Army, Report of Leyte Operation, October 17th - December 25th, 1944, page 32.

\*\* Action Report CTF 78, Leyte Operation, Serial 0911, November 10th, 1944.

\*\*\* GHQ SWPA Operations Instructions No. 70, dated September 21st, 1944, annexed to 6TH U.S. Army, Report of Leyte Operations, October 17th - December 25th, 1944, page 92.



The exact time of transfer of command will be announced by radio to GHQ and all commanders concerned.\*\*

IT IS OF INTEREST THAT THE ABOVE COMMAND RELATIONSHIP RESEMBLES FAIRLY CLOSELY A CURRENTLY (1957) ACCEPTED DOCTRINE TERMED "COMMAND RELATIONSHIPS WHEN ATTACK AND LANDING FORCES ARE FORMED AND COMMAND IS JOINED AT THAT LEVEL."\*\*

By 1530 the entire Cataisan Peninsula, including the Tacloban airfield, was in Allied hands.\*\*\*

By 1540, upon completion of unloading the five LSD's assigned to his force (EPPING FOREST, CARTER HALL, GUNSTON HALL, OAK HILL, WHITE MARSH), he formed TG 78.9, consisting of these LSD's and the ARIADNE, STACK, LANG (which, at 1857, was replaced by the McKEE), SCHLEY (actually CROSBY),\*\*\*\* and KILTY as escorts, and directed CTU 78.3.3, in ARIADNE, to take charge and proceed to Hollandia.\*\*\*\*\*

Having learned several hours earlier (at 1401) that twenty unused sections of pontoon causeways were available within TG 79.2,\*\*\*\*\* he, at 1626, requested information from CTF 79 as to whether CTG 79.2 would deliver them and, if so, would he expedite their delivery.\*\*\*\*\*

At 1700 he learned that at 1555 three LST's (745, 1013, 1024) which were carrying sections of pontoon causeways had been ordered to proceed to RED Beach area and would report to him for duty.\*\*\*\*\* This was likely a considerable relief for the need for both pontoon causeways and LCT's had been urgent throughout the day.

At 1752 he ordered his transports to get underway upon completion of unloading in time to rendezvous with CTG 78.3, the convoy command, at 2200 at Point EST for retirement to Palau and Hollandia in

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- \* CANF SOWESPAC Operation Plan No. 13-44, Serial 00022A, September 26th, 1944, Paragraph 5(c)(3).
  - \*\* Amphibious Operations (NWP 22), Department of the Navy, Office of the Chief of Naval Operations, December 1952, Paragraph 297 and Figure 2-4.
  - \*\*\* Action Report CTF 78, Leyte Operation, Serial 00911, November 10th, 1944; also 6TH U.S. Army, Report of the Leyte Operation, October 17th - December 25th, 1944, undated.
  - \*\*\*\* SCHLEY was designated in error, having been replaced by CROSBY as a hospital evacuation ship the previous day.
  - \*\*\*\*\* CTF 78 Dispatch 200640 October 1944 to CTU 78.3.3, info CTG's 78.2, 78.3, CTF's 77, 79, etc.
  - \*\*\*\*\* CTG 79.2 Visual Dispatch 200452 October 1944 to CTF 78, info CTF 79.
  - \*\*\*\*\* CTF 78 TBS Voice Radio Message 200726 October 1944 to CTF 79, info CTG 79.2.
  - \*\*\*\*\* CTU 79.6.1 TBS Voice Radio Message 200800 October 1944 to CTG 79.2, CTG 79.4, info CTF 78, CTF 79.

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accordance with his basic movement schedule.\*

At 1815 he was relieved to learn that the three LST's with pontoon causeways had finally anchored off RED Beach.\*\*

It seems likely that the ten LCT's from TF 79 also arrived about this time for CTF 78 in his action report stated that it was not until late on D-day that any of the pontoon causeways and LCT's arrived in the northern area.\*\*\* He does not appear to have used either the LCT's or the pontoon causeways until the following morning.

At 2045 LANG reported for duty from TG 78.3 and assumed patrol duties near Capines Point, Samar.

By 2112 all of his transports then departing--twelve APA's (FAYETTE, ORMSBY, LEEDSTOWN, DuPAGE, FULLER, ELMORE, WAYNE, LEONARD WOOD, PIERCE, JAMES O'HARA, HARRIS, BARNSTABLE) and three AP's (JOHN LAND, LA SALLE, HERALD OF THE MORNING)--were standing out of San Pedro Bay toward the rendezvous position,\*\*\*\* but, owing to delay in departure of several transports, did not effect final rendezvous until about 0415 the following morning.\*\*\*\*\*

By the end of the day CTF 78 had met his D-day commitments with the exception of the complete unloading of his LST's. This was because (a) some of the twelve LST's assigned to CTG 78.1 (LST 466 had cargo for both beaches and therefore at this point is included with TG 78.1) did not commence unloading their troops or their cargoes this day and (b) although all of the thirteen LST's assigned to CTG 78.2 were beached and had continued unloading throughout the night, they likewise did not succeed in completely discharging their bulk cargo until the following morning. A beachhead had been secured and the transports and LSD's had been unloaded on schedule. Based on the expected loading (about 1300 troops in each APA or AP and 500 in each LST--no exact figures are available) a total of approximately 32,050 troops and about 20,350 tons of the scheduled 26,400 tons of supplies and equipment had been landed

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- \* CTF 78 Dispatch 200852 October 1944 to CTG's 78.2 & 78.3, CTU 78.1.3 info CTF 77, CTG 78.5; also CTF 78 Operation Plan No. 101-44, Annex B, Serial 0008, October 3rd, 1944; also Action Report CTG 78.3, Report of Panaon Group, Serial 0019, undated (probably early November 1944).
- \*\* Action Report CTG 79.6.11, Period October 20th - 24th, 1944, Serial 038-44, October 31st, 1944.
- \*\*\* Action Report CTF 78, Leyte Operation, Serial 00911, November 10th, 1944, page 22.
- \*\*\*\* Action Report FAYETTE, Leyte, Philippine Islands Operation, Serial 055, October 23rd, 1944.
- \*\*\*\*\* Action Report SCHROEDER, Operations against Leyte, October 13th - 23rd, 1944, Serial 047, October 25th, 1944; also Action Report CTU 78.1.3 (COMTRANSDIV 24), Leyte Assault, Serial 0200, October 24th, 1944.



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across the northern beaches. (6,050 tons of supplies and approximately 5,500 troops in eleven LST's of TG 78.1 had not as yet been unloaded).\* Enemy resistance on the ground had been comparatively light and was confined principally to the RED Beach area. There had been no damage to the forces by enemy aircraft.

It is to be noted that, although he had prepared a very elaborate and comprehensive smoke plan, he did not, on this day, use smoke. He felt, possibly because his AP/APA's and LSD's were unloaded and making preparations to depart prior to the critical dusk period when air attacks were likely and smoke would provide the best protection to his forces, that there was no occasion to execute the smoke plan.

THIS DECISION (NOT TO AUTOMATICALLY EMPLOY THIS SMOKE PROTECTION AT THIS TIME, AS DID CTF 79 FOR THE SOUTHERN ATTACK FORCE) IS CONSIDERED UNWISE, FOR EVEN THOUGH ENEMY AIR ATTACKS WERE OF A MINOR NATURE AND HAD CAUSED NO DAMAGE TO HIS FORCES ON THIS DAY, WAS IT NOT APPARENT THAT (A) RADAR COVERAGE, FIGHTER PROTECTION AND ANTI-AIRCRAFT DEFENSES WERE NOT ADEQUATE COMPLETELY TO INSURE HIS FORCES AGAINST THE EFFECTS OF ENEMY AIR-CRAFT TORPEDO AND BOMBING ATTACKS AND (B) THESE AIR ATTACKS MIGHT MATERIALIZE WITHOUT SUFFICIENT WARNING TO EXECUTE EFFECTIVELY THE SMOKE PLAN? FURTHER DISCUSSION OF THE REQUIREMENT FOR AND USE OF SMOKE APPEARS UNDER "OPERATIONS OF CTF 79 (COMMANDER SOUTHERN ATTACK FORCE), OCTOBER 20TH".

(a) Operations of CTG 78.1 (Palo Attack Group), October 20th.\*\*

The task of landing on RED Beach the TWENTY-FOURTH Infantry Division, less the TWENTY-FIRST Infantry Regiment, which was to be landed at Panaon, had been assigned to CTG 78.1, in BLUE RIDGE, who, as has been mentioned previously, was also CTF 78. For this purpose, he had been allotted eight transports, three cargo ships, twelve LST's, three LSD's, three LSM's, five screening destroyers, and a number of control and support craft (PC's and LCI's). The unloading plan envisaged the complete debarkation of the initial assault troops and the unloading of their associated stores, supplies, and equipment from the transports, LST's and LSD's in time for these ships to depart from the objective area prior to the end of D-day.

At 0640 the JOHN RODGERS departed formation and headed

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\* Research has failed to disclose whether or not any of the troops carried on the LST's of TG 78.2 were unloaded on this day. The best evidence indicates that only LST 452 was unloaded.

\*\* All information here, except as otherwise indicated, obtained from Action Report CTF 78, Leyte Operation, Serial 00911, November 10th, 1944; also CTF 78 Operation Plan No. 101-44, Serial 0008, October 3rd, 1944; CTG 78.1 Attack Order No. 1-44, Serial 0001, October 7th, 1944; Action Report CTU 78.1.3, Leyte Assault, Serial 0200, October 24th, 1944.

for her patrol station in outer screen (Plate VIII) where she was to patrol the northern end of the patrol line. She was delayed in her arrival by a submarine contact made by the ANDERSON from TG 78.2. (In company with the ANDERSON, she finally arrived on station at 1240.)\*

At 0645, upon execution of the signal "deploy" by CTF 78, his forces proceeded as directed in the deployment plan and his attack order. This attack order, among other things, directed CTU 78.1.3 (Commander Transport Unit) to (a) assume operational control of the control unit (TU 78.1.7), the LST Unit (TU 78.1.4) and the LSM Unit (TU 78.1.5), and (b) direct the ship-to-shore movement and beaching of landing craft.

Thus, the details of immediate supervision of the landing operation at RED Beach were delegated to Commander Transport Unit (TU 78.1.3). CTG 78.1 thereby though not relieved of this responsibility, could none the less act in his capacity as CTF 78 in order to view and coordinate as necessary the operations at both RED and WHITE Beaches.

By 0810 he observed that all ships were in their assigned anchorages and that the transports had commenced lowering boats to disembark personnel of the TWENTY-FOURTH Infantry Division.

At 0920 (as CTF 78) he confirmed the landing hour. At this time Commander Control Unit for RED Beach reported on station.

At 0943 the first boat wave of assault troops left the line of departure.

Just prior to 1000 he learned from Commander Control Unit that enemy fire was landing as far out as 4000 yards from the beach. Despite this, the first wave landed on RED Beach on schedule.

At 1007, after the second wave had landed, troops on RED Beach were reported 300 yards inland with no return fire. Shortly thereafter, Commander Control Unit reported conditions on the beaches "very good with troops having gone ashore in only two feet of water."

At 1055, with the beachhead reported secured, his Commander Transport Unit (CTU 78.1.3) ordered TRANSDIV's SIX and TWENTY-FOUR to get underway to new positions closer to the beach, as planned to facilitate unloading.

Also at 1055 the LST Unit (wave number twelve), consisting of all twelve LST's (only six LST's were originally scheduled for this wave), proceeded from the line of departure toward the beach at two-thirds speed (about seven knots).\*\*

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\* Action Report JOHN RODGERS, Leyte Operation, Serial 092, November 5th, 1944.

\*\* Action Report CTU 78.1.4 (COMLSTGRP 20), Leyte Operation, No Serial, November 1st, 1944; also Action Report CTU 78.1.7 (Commander Control Unit), Leyte Operation, No Serial, November 1st, 1944.



As the LST's approached the beach they observed what appeared to be a limited area just off the beach on their left flank covered by enemy artillery and mortar fire. Upon entering this field of fire LST's 171, 181, 452 and 456 were hit. About a quarter of a mile from the beach all LST's, excepting LST 452, grounded on a sandbar which had not been detected by earlier reconnaissance (notably by the UDT's) the previous day. LST 452, which had increased speed to flank upon being hit, managed, because of this increase of speed, to completely pass over this sandbar, subsequently beached successfully and commenced unloading.\*

All of the other LST's had eight - ten feet of water at the ramp. This was not acceptable for unloading without LCT's and pontoon causeways, which were not available within TF 78 at this time.

At 1125 CTG 78.1, observing the above situation and realizing that the LST's were in an exposed position, advised that they be retracted.

IN THIS CASE, AS CTF 78, HE LATER POINTED OUT "INFORMATION OBTAINED BY BEACH RECONNAISSANCE PARTIES ON D-1 DAY WAS ACCURATE AT THE POINTS OF DETERMINATION BUT THE CONCLUSIONS DRAWN THEREFROM WERE ERRONEOUS IN THAT THE DEPTHS REPORTED WERE THE BOTTOMS OF UNDULATIONS AND THERE WAS INSUFFICIENT DEPTH AT THE CREST TO PERMIT BEACHING OF LST'S".

WHILE HE DOES NOT GIVE HIS REASONS FOR BEING SO CRITICAL OF THE REPORTS OF THE UDT'S SINCE, AS HAS BEEN PREVIOUSLY STATED, HE EXPECTED SHALLOW GRADIENTS, REEFS AND SHOALS, IT IS PRESUMED THAT HIS CRITICISMS WERE BASED ON THE FACT THAT, DESPITE THIS, (A) HE HAD NOT EXPECTED HIS LST'S TO BE GROUNDED AT SUCH A DISTANCE FROM THE BEACH AND (B) HAD HE HAD CORRECT REPORTS FROM THE UDT'S, HE MIGHT HAVE MADE CHANGES IN THE (1) BALLASTING OF HIS LST'S AND (2) SPEED OF APPROACH.

UDT DOCTRINE AT THIS TIME, AND CURRENTLY (1957), PROVIDES THAT SUCH RECONNAISSANCE INCLUDE THE APPROACHES FROM THE THREE-FATHOM LINE INSHORE TO THE HIGH-WATER MARK.\*\* IN THIS CASE THE POSITION OF THE THREE-FATHOM LINE WAS NOT ACCURATELY DETERMINED. INSTEAD, THE UDT'S COMMENCED THEIR SOUNDINGS FROM 250 - 200 YARDS FROM THE BEACH AND REPORTED (A) "OVER FIFTEEN FEET OF WATER AT THIS POINT" AND (B) "WATER VERY DIRTY WITH UNDERWATER VISIBILITY NEAR ZERO".\*\*\* THEREFORE, WITH NO PREVIOUS INDICATION OF THE AFOREMENTIONED SANDBAR (ABOUT ONE QUARTER OF A MILE OFF SHORE) THE TEAMS INCORRECTLY ASSUMED THAT THE GRADIENT FROM THEIR POINT OF DEPARTURE TO SEAWARD WAS SIMILAR TO THAT DETERMINED BY THEIR SOUNDINGS TAKEN AS THEY APPROACHED THE BEACH. THIS INCORRECT ASSUMPTION RESULTED IN INCORRECT INFORMATION BEING PROVIDED CTF 78 SO THAT HE WAS NOT ABLE TO MAKE THOSE CHANGES IN HIS PLANS REQUIRED BY THIS NEW SITUATION.

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\* Action Report LST 452, Leyte Operation, No Serial, October 27th, 1944.

\*\* Underwater Demolition Teams in Amphibious Operations (NWIP 22-4), Department of the Navy, Office of the Chief of Naval Operations, February 1953, paragraph 111.

\*\*\* Action Report UDT 9, Leyte Operation, No Serial, November 3rd, 1944.



THIS EMPHASIZES THE NECESSITY FOR THOROUGH AND ACCURATE RECONNAISSANCE OF THE SEAWARD APPROACHES TO THE LANDING BEACHES.

During the afternoon he noted the following items of interest in connection with the progress of the landing operations: (a) 1215, the transports anchored in their new positions (closer to the beach), (b) 1230, conditions were favorable for unloading of general cargo and LSM's reported to the transports to take vehicles, (c) 1330, LSD's had discharged LCM's and equipment, (d) 1430, C.G. TWENTY-FOURTH Infantry Division assumed command ashore, (e) 1445, Commander Control Unit reported unloading at the beaches was progressing satisfactorily (this did not include the unloading of the LST's), (f) 1700, the smoke boats, which had been stationed 400 yards to the windward of their own ships, were recalled having had no occasion to cover the ships (see discussion of the use of smoke this day under CTF 78 and CTF 79) and (g) 1725, DuPAGE finished discharging cargo thus completing the assignment for all ships, (except the LST's) scheduled to depart this day. The following ships had now completed discharging cargo (a) eight transports (FAYETTE, ORMSBY, LEEDSTOWN, DuPAGE, FULLER, ELMORE, WAYNE, JOHN LAND), and (b) three LSD's (EPPING FOREST, CARTER HALL and GUNSTON HALL).

By the end of the day CTG 78.1 had completed unloading about 12,650 troops but only about half of the 13,500 tons of cargo scheduled to be unloaded that day (the LST's carried 5,500 troops and 6,050 tons of cargo) and, with the exception of the troops and the cargo discharged by the LST 452, none of the troops and cargo in the LST's appear to have been discharged until the following day.\*

Personnel casualties and damage to landing craft incident to the ship-to-shore movement were confined primarily in the area on the left flank of the beach and the approaches thereto. Here the enemy kept up a light but continuous mortar, artillery and sniper fire throughout the day. It is estimated that the above casualties numbered nineteen killed and 115 wounded.\*\*

(b) Operations of CTG 78.2 (San Ricardo Attack Group),  
October 20th.\*\*\*

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- \* Action Report CTU 78.1.4 (COMLSTGRP 20), Leyte Operation, No Serial, November 1st, 1944; also Action Report CTU 78.1.7 (Commander Control Unit), Leyte Operation, No Serial, November 1st, 1944.
  - \*\* Action Report CTU 78.1.3 (COMTRANSDIV 24), Leyte Assault, Serial 0200, October 24th, 1944; also Action Report LST 181, Palo, Leyte Island, P.I., No Serial, October 28th, 1944; Action Report LST 452, Leyte Operation, No Serial, October 27th, 1944.
  - \*\*\* All Information here, except as otherwise indicated, obtained from Action Report CTG 78.2, Leyte Operation, Serial 0085, November 29th, 1944; also CTG 78.2 Attack Order No. 1-44, Serial 00045, October 10th, 1944.



CTG 78.2, in the FREMONT, had been assigned the task of landing the FIRST Cavalry Division on WHITE Beach. For this purpose he had been allotted eight AP/APA's, two AKA's, two LSD's, fourteen LST's, nine LSM's, four screening destroyers, and a number of control and support craft.

His unloading plan, similar to that of CTG 78.1, envisaged the complete debarkation of the initial assault troops and the unloading of their associated stores, supplies and equipment from the transports, LST's and LSD's in time for these ships to depart from the objective area prior to the end of D-day.

At 0552 he learned that the HARRIS had fouled a mine in her port paravane as a result of which she had hauled clear of the transport formation. (At this time the HARRIS was in the vicinity of Point "C" in the Tacloban - Dulag Approach Channel (Plate IV)). At 0640 he learned that she had cleared the mine and had commenced returning to station (about four miles ahead) at fifteen knots.

At 0645, upon execution of the signal deploy by CTF 78, he watched his forces proceed in the channel east of Mariquitdaquit Island to their assigned areas in accordance with his Attack Order No. 1-44. THIS ATTACK ORDER DID NOT, AS DID THAT OF CTG 78.1, DELEGATE OPERATIONAL CONTROL OF CERTAIN UNITS TO A SUBORDINATE COMMAND; ACCORDINGLY, CTG 78.2, WHO HAD RETAINED CONTROL, COULD DEVOTE HIS ATTENTION EXCLUSIVELY TO THE DETAILS OF THE SHIP-TO-SHORE MOVEMENT AT WHITE BEACH. IT WILL BE NOTED THAT THIS PRACTICE VARIED WITHIN AND BETWEEN TASK FORCES AND WAS LEFT TO THE DISCRETION OF THE GROUP COMMANDER CONCERNED. CURRENTLY, THE RECOMMENDED METHOD IS, IN GENERAL, THAT WHICH WAS EMPLOYED HERE BY CTG 78.2. HOWEVER, THIS (1957) METHOD PROVIDES THAT, UPON COMPLETION OF THE LANDING OF THE SCHEDULED ASSAULT WAVES AND WHEN THE SITUATION ON THE BEACH PERMITS AND AT SUCH TIME AS THE ATTACK GROUP COMMANDER DIRECTS, THE CONTROL OF THE REMAINDER OF THE SHIP-TO-SHORE MOVEMENT AND THE UNLOADING IS TRANSFERRED TO THE TRANSPORT GROUP (OR UNIT) COMMANDER.\*

At 0715 he observed that the approach channel to WHITE Beach had been blocked by a group of YMS's sweeping across channel and by cruisers of the fire support group that had stopped behind them, as a result of which the transports were forced to slow and stop until 0731 when the channel was cleared.

As a result of the above delay, he advised CTF 78, by voice radio at 0830, that he doubted his ability to meet the scheduled landing hour and recommended changing the time of landing to 1030. At

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\* Ship-to-Shore Movement (NWIP 22-6), Department of the Navy, Office of the Chief of Naval Operations, August 1953, Paragraph 203, Pages 2-3,4, Paragraph 570, Page 5-46, and Paragraph 572, Page 5-48; also the Amphibious Task Force Plan (NWIP 22-1), Department of the Navy, Office of the Chief of Naval Operations, February 1953, Paragraph 3.b.(6), Page 9-50.

0920 he received a voice radio reply to this recommendation stating that "it was too late to change the landing hour, do the best you can."

With dispatch and efficiency in hoisting out his boats, debarking his troops, and forming his assault waves in the boat assembly areas, he was able not only to make up for the time lost but also to land on schedule at 1000.

Sometime after 0900 the JENKINS assumed Radar Picket Station No. One, as Radar Picket and standby Fighter Director Ship for TF 78.

Contrary to reports from the underwater demolition teams, he discovered that WHITE Beach was generally unfavorable (though not as completely unapproachable as was RED Beach with the intervening sandbar) for beaching LST's and he found it necessary to beach those ships on the northern end and to the northward of this area. This had the unhappy result that he (a) was unable to beach all of his thirteen LST's until 1511, instead of at 1100 as planned, and (b) therefore could not entirely complete unloading as scheduled on D-day.

At 1240 he knew that C. G. FIRST Cavalry Division had left the FREMONT and at 1430 he knew that that commander had taken command ashore.\*

During the afternoon he was pleased to learn that his two LSD's (OAK HILL, WHITE MARSH) and the seven transports (LEONARD WOOD, PIERCE, JAMES O'HARA, LA SALLE, HARRIS, BARNSTABLE, HERALD OF THE MORNING) had experienced no difficulty in unloading and were prepared to leave the area at 1400 and 1830, respectively. His flagship the FREMONT, which did not unload completely, remained in the area.

He knew by dark that his support and control units had withdrawn to anchor in the eastern part of San Pedro Bay; that his Fire Support Units remained in their assigned areas for call fire and night harassing fire, and that his LST's remained at the beaches to continue their unloading.

Enemy air opposition to the landings was limited to one desultory attack by an enemy twin-engine plane that dropped a bomb on the LST formation at 0620 without inflicting any damage.

By the end of the day CTG 78.2 had unloaded a total of 18,900 troops and a large portion of the scheduled 12,900 tons of supplies and equipment across WHITE Beach.\*\*

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\* Action Report FREMONT, Leyte Operation, Serial 00555, November 20th, 1944.

\*\* Action Report CTF 78, Leyte Operation, Serial 00911, November 10th, 1944, Paragraph 46 (Unloading).



(c) Operations of CTU 77.2.1, CTG 77.3 and Certain Other Destroyers, October 20th.

(1) Operations of CTU 77.2.1 (Fire Support Unit North).

At 0415 CTU 77.2.1 (COMBATDIV THREE), with TU 77.2.1 consisting of MISSISSIPPI, WEST VIRGINIA, MARYLAND and AULICK--which had retired during the night with CTG 77.2--departed CTG 77.2 for his fire support areas off the northern beaches.\*

At 0630 he was rejoined by the CONY and, at 0650 by the SIGOURNEY, which had been conducting night harassing fire off the northern beaches.\*\*

At 0700 he reported to CTF 78 for duty and immediately thereafter commenced scheduled bombardment wherein his destroyers generally fired counter battery.\*

At 0750 he was advised by CTF 78 that the fast carriers would strike the beaches from 0830 to 0845 and was directed to place Plan VICTOR in effect during that time.\*\*\*

At 0830 he queried CTF 78 as to whether or not the air strikes scheduled for this time had been completed and received a reply in the negative.\*\*\* Because of this he did no firing on targets requiring a maximum ordinate greater than 1,000 feet. This matter is discussed more fully under "Operations of CTF 78, October 20th".

At approximately 0900, his task unit having completed its scheduled bombardment of the beaches, he retired his ships to the southern part of FS Area DOG and stood by for call fires. He was relieved by the units of TG 77.3.\* Meanwhile, his heavy ships recovered and reserviced aircraft. Only two of his ships--the CONY and SIGOURNEY--fired call fires, and this was for phosphorous shells at 1253.\*\*

During the early evening he directed (a) his battleships to anchor in lower San Pedro Bay, and (b) his destroyers either to lie to or to screen the battleships.\*\*\*\*

In accordance with these instructions (a)

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\* Action Report COMBATDIV 3 (CTU 77.2.1), Bombardment of and Fire Support Mission on Leyte Island, P.I., Serial 0166, October 29th, 1944.

\*\* Deck Logs CONY and SIGOURNEY, October 20th, 1944.

\*\*\* Second Endorsement by CTF 78 to Action Report CTU 77.2.1, Bombardment of and Fire Support Mission on Leyte Island, P.I., Serial 0166, October 29th, 1944.

\*\*\*\* War Diary COMBATDIV 3, October 20th, 1944.

all three battleships anchored prior to midnight,\* (b) the AULICK and CONY lay to in FS Area DOG in the vicinity of the battleships,\*\* and (c) the SIGOURNEY patrolled in the same area.\*\*

(2) Operations of CTG 77.3 (Close Covering Group),  
October 20th.

CTG 77.3 with TG 77.3 consisting of the PHOENIX, BOISE, AUSTRALIA, SHROPSHIRE, HUTCHINS, BEALE, BACHE, DALY, KILLEN, ARUNTA, WARRAMUNGA, plus the MURRAY, entered Leyte Gulf with TF 78 and, at 0645, when in the vicinity of San Pedro Bay, was detached. At 0700 he directed his units to proceed to assigned fire support areas and to carry out the bombardment schedules. In accordance with these instructions, the cruisers of TG 77.3 commenced their scheduled bombardment. In doing so, they followed TU 77.2.1 which at 0900 had completed its bombardment and had commenced its scheduled retirement. They continued this bombardment until 0945 at which time the PHOENIX, BOISE and AUSTRALIA, having completed their scheduled bombardment, lay to in FS Area DOG for call or counterbattery fire. The SHROPSHIRE also lay to in this area, but since she had additional scheduled bombardments to fire she was not awaiting call fires at this time.

At approximately 0925 the destroyers of TG 77.3, plus the MURRAY, commenced their scheduled bombardments. At 0955 those destroyers, which were firing at the landing beaches and had no assigned targets at this time, ceased firing. However, the ARUNTA, KILLEN and WARRAMUNGA, which had targets in other than beach areas, shifted fires to the new targets. The ARUNTA commenced scheduled fires again at 0955 and ceased firing at 1100, the KILLEN at 1005 and ceased firing at 1015, and the WARRAMUNGA at 1010 and ceased firing at 1110.

After this firing the four destroyers--HUTCHINS, BACHE, DALY and KILLEN--operated in FS Area ABLE prepared to render fire support to the ground troops on call. After dark the BACHE, and DALY (assigned to night support work)\*\*\* and the HUTCHINS anchored in FS Area ABLE while the KILLEN at 2115 relieved the MURRAY in FS Area DOG.

During the early afternoon the WARRAMUNGA and ARUNTA, which remained in FS Area DOG, fired call fires generally toward the town of Palo. At 1430, having been relieved by the HARRISON and McKEE of TG 78.1, they shifted station to FS Area CHARLIE, where they stood by for call fires throughout the night but none were required.\*\*\*\*

The PHOENIX fired several counterbattery missions

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\* Deck Logs MARYLAND, MISSISSIPPI, WEST VIRGINIA, October 20th, 1944.  
 \*\* Deck Logs CONY and SIGOURNEY, October 20th, 1944.  
 \*\*\* Action Report CTG 78.2, Leyte Operation, Serial 085, November 29th, 1944.  
 \*\*\*\* Action Report ARUNTA, Battle for Leyte Gulf, October 17th - 24th, 1944.



during the afternoon, then anchored at 1854 in FS Area DOG;\* the BOISE, which had fired several call fire missions during the day, also anchored in FS Area DOG at 1908;\*\* the AUSTRALIA continued to lie to in Area DOG but had no fire support missions; the SHROPSHIRE fired several scheduled missions and then at 1158 ceased firing but remained in FS Area DOG for call fire.\*\*\*

(3) Certain Destroyers.

(a) The McKEE and HARRISON which entered Leyte Gulf with TF 78 arrived in FS Area CHARLIE at approximately 0710 and during the forenoon fired at selected targets in Lipata, Samar. At approximately 1258 the firings were completed. At 1348 the McKEE proceeded to FS Area DOG and relieved the ARUNTA there while, at approximately 1430, the HARRISON relieved the WARRAMUNGA. At 1825 the McKEE having been ordered to join the ARIADNE from TG 78.3 for retirement from Leyte Gulf, rendezvoused with that ship.

(b) The FLETCHER and LA VALLETTE which entered Leyte Gulf with TG 78.2, arrived in FS Area BAKER at approximately 0800 and remained there throughout the day. Neither of these destroyers did any firing against shore targets.

(d) Operations of CTG 78.3 (Panaon Attack Group),  
October 20th.\*\*\*\*

At the start of the day CTG 78.3, in the HUGHES with the ARIADNE in company, was patrolling in the vicinity of Point EST (Plate IV) awaiting arrival of the Panaon Attack Group (TG 78.3), which he was to command. It will be recalled that his mission was to land the TWENTY-FIRST Infantry Regiment Reinforced, together with its supplies and equipment, on GREEN Beaches ONE and TWO and to provide air and gunfire support to the landings in order to seize control of the Panaon Strait area. The Commander Support Aircraft was in the HUGHES.

At 0200 he intercepted a voice radio message from CTF 78 directing the transports, screen, LCI's and PC's of the Panaon Attack Group to proceed as previously directed. At about the same time he observed these units on his radar screen, bearing 080°(T), distant 10,500 yards, indicating that their entry into Leyte Gulf had been made ahead of schedule.

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\* Action Report PHOENIX, Bombardment of Tacloban Area, Leyte Island, P.I., October 20th, and Subsequent Actions in Leyte Gulf, October 21st, 22nd, 23rd and 24th, 1944, Serial 090, October 25th, 1944.

\*\* Deck Log BOISE, October 20th, 1944.

\*\*\* Action Report SHROPSHIRE, Report of Bombardment of Leyte Island, Philippines on October 20th, 1944, Serial Scl251/194, November 20th, 1944.

\*\*\*\* All information here except as otherwise indicated obtained from Action Report, CTG 78.3, Report of Panaon Group, Serial 0019, undated (probably early November 1944).

At 0215 he was joined by the following units of the Panaon Attack Group: LSI's (Australian) (MANOORA, KANIMBLA, WESTRALIA); DD's (RINGGOLD (F), SIGSBEE, SCHROEDER (FD), DASHIELL) and PC's (1122, 1123), LCI(C)'s (68, 70 (F)), LCI(R)'s (31 (F), 342), LCI(D) (29).

At 0230 he requested permission from CTF 78 (CTF 78 at 0346 correctly forwarded the request to CTF 77 for decision)\* to advance the GREEN Beach landing-hour to 0930 (originally scheduled for 1000). This request was granted.

At 0527 the LANG and STACK, escorting Sweep Unit SIX (YMS's 39, 49, 52, 340(F), 342), arrived in the transport area off GREEN Beach\*\* and at 0627 Sweep Unit SIX commenced sweeping the transport area. At 0914 the minesweeping was completed, with negative results.\*\*\*

At 0700 he decided to cancel the scheduled pre-landing bombardment for the following reasons: (a) intelligence information he had received from guerrilla sources while en route to the objective area reporting no Japanese on Panaon Island had been confirmed during the night by two Filipino patriots who had boarded his flagship the previous evening and who he had reason to believe were reliable and (b) he had been directed by COMSOWESPAC that, where practicable, unless essential to insure military success, to avoid naval gunfire on the native villages or in areas where the natives might suffer unnecessarily.

He therefore directed his fire support units to take their firing stations but not to fire unless enemy counterbattery was encountered or call fire was requested by the shore fire control party.

THIS DECISION TO LAND HIS TROOPS WITHOUT CONDUCTING THE SCHEDULED PRELIMINARY BOMBARDMENTS WAS CORRECT AND WAS IN ACCORDANCE WITH (A) THE SPIRIT OF COMSOWESPAC'S INSTRUCTIONS AND (B) HIS OWN INHERENT AUTHORITY AS A TASK GROUP COMMANDER OF AN ASSAULT LANDING OPERATION WHICH WAS (1) MUCH SMALLER IN SCOPE THAN THE LANDINGS OFF DULAG AND TACLOBAN AND (2) SEPARATED BY SOME FORTY-FIVE MILES FROM THE DULAG LANDING.

HOWEVER IT WOULD BE INTERESTING TO KNOW WHY HE DID NOT INFORM CTF 77 OR CTF 78 (HIS IMMEDIATE SUPERIOR) OF HIS CHANGE IN PLAN.

IT IS NOT INTENDED HERE TO IMPLY ANY RESTRICTION ON THE EXERCISE OF INITIATIVE ON THE PART OF AN ATTACK GROUP COMMANDER SHOULD A FAVORABLE OPPORTUNITY ARISE. HOWEVER, IT IS INTENDED TO POINT OUT CURRENT DOCTRINE WHICH PROVIDES THAT "SUBORDINATES SHOULD ALWAYS KEEP THEIR SUPERIORS INFORMED."\*\*\*\*

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\* CTF 78 Dispatch 191846 October 1944 to CTG 77.

\*\* War Diary LANG, October 20th, 1944.

\*\*\* Deck Log YMS 340, October 20th, 1944.

\*\*\*\* Naval Warfare (NWP 10), Department of the Navy, Office of the Chief of Naval Operations, 1954, Chapter 6, Paragraph 601.



At 0712 fighter direction duties were assumed by the SCHROEDER at Point OTT where she took control of the CAP of twelve VF assigned to the Panaon Attack Group.\* During this time the only enemy activity in opposition to the landings occurred at 0713 when an army-type fighter dropped a bomb near the LCI(R) 31 without causing any damage.

At 0845 CTG 78.3 executed the signal to land the landing forces at 0930. This was done and the landing forces reached GREEN Beaches ONE and TWO on schedule without opposition, being met there by numerous friendly natives who thronged the beaches.

At 1100 the Regimental Commander assumed command of the ground forces ashore.\*\* Also at 1100 all transports were directed to unload bulk cargo.

At 1138, in accordance with the basic movement schedule, the ARIADNE, which had completed discharging troops and cargo, departed the Panaon area.

At 1200 a delay in unloading the bulk cargo (general unloading) occurred because the Army unloading troops stopped for lunch. As a result, twenty-four LCVP's collected near the control vessels. This was an undesirable situation which was quickly rectified when the nature of the delay became known.\*\*\*

IT SHOULD BE POINTED OUT HERE THAT DELAYS OF THE ABOVE NATURE SHOULD NOT BE PERMITTED TO OCCUR IN ASSAULT OPERATIONS. PRESENT DAY DOCTRINE STATES THAT GENERAL UNLOADING, WHICH IS INITIATED BY THE AMPHIBIOUS TASK FORCE COMMANDER ON THE RECOMMENDATION OF THE AMPHIBIOUS TROOP COMMANDER, IS THE UNLOADING OF UNITS AND CARGO FROM THE TRANSPORTING SHIPS AS RAPIDLY AS FACILITIES ON THE BEACH CAN HANDLE THEM.\*\*\*\* THIS MEANS THAT THE AMPHIBIOUS TROOP COMMANDER IS PREPARED TO HANDLE UNITS AND CARGO AS RAPIDLY AS RECEIVED. ALTHOUGH THE SITUATION AT GREEN BEACH, WHERE THE LANDING HAD BEEN UNOPPOSED, WAS RELATIVELY STABLE, THE GENERAL SITUATION IN THE AREA WAS NOT AS YET SO STABLE AS TO PERMIT UNNECESSARY DELAYS IN THE RECEPTION OF STORES ON ANY ONE BEACH.

At 1555 the ARIADNE rendezvoused in the vicinity of Point "C" (Plate IV) with the destroyers STACK and LAND, and the APD's CROSBY and KILTY. At 1705 the LSD's OAK HILL, EPPING FOREST, CARTER HALL, GUNSTON HALL and WHITE MARSH joined; at this time the Commanding Officer

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\* War Diary SCHROEDER, October 20th, 1944.

\*\* Lieutenant Colonel Frederick R. Weber, USA.

\*\*\* Action Report CTG 78.3, Report of Panaon Group, Serial 0019, undated (probably early November 1944).

\*\*\*\* Amphibious Operations (NWP 22), Department of the Navy, Office of the Chief of Naval Operations, Section 1765, Initiation and Control of General Unloading.

ARIADNE formed TG 78.9 and departed for Hollandia in accordance with CTF 78 instructions.\*

By 1800 CTG 78.3, having completed unloading (approximately 3,900 troops and 1,500 tons of supplies and equipment),\*\* departed the Panaon area in company with his transports and escort unit less the DASHIELL, which he had ordered to remain off the beach area to provide anti-aircraft protection until after sunset and then rejoin, which she did at 1900.\*\*\* He headed for Point EST where he was to rendezvous at 2200 with the unloaded transports of TF 78 and was to assume command for movement from Leyte Gulf.\*\*\*\*

During this time (between 1805 and 1825) an enemy two-engine land bomber, apparently on a reconnaissance mission, made several runs over the formation without attacking and then retired.\*\*\*\*\*

At 1825, LANG, which had been ordered to rejoin CTF 78, was replaced by McKEE.

At 2206 CTG 78.3 arrived at the rendezvous position but the expected transports (twelve APA's and three AP's) had not as yet arrived. He consequently awaited their arrival in this vicinity.\*\*\*\*\*

(e) Operations of CTG 78.5 (Harbor Entrance Control Group), October 20th.\*\*\*\*\*

CTG 78.5 in BISBEE, continued to regulate the flow of traffic through the entrance to Leyte Gulf and provide latest information on swept areas of the minefield, tide and current data, and other aids to navigation.

By 0530 all D-day assault forces were clear of Area SWEEP and safely inside the gulf.

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- \* War Diary ARIADNE, October 20th, 1944; CTF 78 Operation Plan 101-44, Annex B, Serial 0008, October 3rd, 1944; CTF 78 Dispatch 200630 October 1944 to LSTGRP 3, McKEE, info ARIADNE, CTG 78.3; CTF 78 Dispatch 200640 October 1944 to CTU 78.3.3, info CTG's 78.2, 78.3, CTF's 77, 79, etc.
  - \*\* 6TH U.S. Army Report of Leyte Operations, October 17th - December 25th, 1944, Page 106.
  - \*\*\* Action Report DASHIELL, October 20th-25th, 1944, Serial 0138, October 25th, 1944.
  - \*\*\*\* CTF 78 Dispatch 200852 October 1944 to CTG's 78.1 and 78.3; also Action Report CTG 78.3, Report of Panaon Group, Serial 0019, undated (probably early November 1944).
  - \*\*\*\*\* War Diary SCHROEDER, October 20th, 1944.
  - \*\*\*\*\* War Diary SIGSBEE, October 20th, 1944.
  - \*\*\*\*\* Action Report CTG 78.5, Report of Operations of the Harbor Entrance Control Group, October 18th - 24th, 1944, No Serial, November 22nd, 1944.



At 0900 his command, as previously planned, was augmented by four LCI's (343, 344, 430, 432) from TF 78 which had proceeded to Leyte with that force. He designated these craft as dispatch boats.

Shortly before dark he stationed the BISBEE at Point "E" to control all outgoing traffic and the GALLUP at Point FIN to control incoming traffic and to assist in routing outgoing ships (Plate IV).

At this point the operations of CTG 78.5 will be dropped from further discussion since his primary mission of routing the assault forces through the enemy minefields at the entrance to Leyte Gulf had been accomplished.

(f) Operations of CTG's 78.6, 78.7 and 78.8  
(Reinforcement Groups ONE, TWO and THREE), October 20th.\*

(1) Operations of CTG's 78.6 and 78.7.

At the beginning of the day CTG's 78.6 and 78.7 were respectively 385 and 825 miles, bearing  $115^{\circ}(T)$  and  $125^{\circ}(T)$ , from the entrance to Leyte Gulf, proceeding along routes ALBATROSS and SHEARWATER to the objective area at nine knots SOA in accordance with the movement schedule (Plate VI).

At 0200, in accordance with his routing instructions, CTG 78.7 detached the merchant ships JAMES KING, OVID BUTLER, EDWARD S. HOUGH and ESCANABA VICTORY to proceed to Kossol Passage, escorted by the SAN PEDRO, which latter vessel was directed to rejoin the formation as soon as possible after completing her escort assignment.

Nothing further of importance occurred this day and, at midnight, CTG's 78.6 and 78.7 were bearing respectively  $112^{\circ}(T)$  and  $120^{\circ}(T)$ , distant 185 and 645 miles from Leyte Gulf.

(2) Operations of CTG 78.8.

Meanwhile, CTG 78.8 was still in Hollandia making ready to depart for Leyte at 0700 October 23rd.

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\* Action Report CTG 78.6 (Reinforcement Group ONE), Leyte Island Operation, October 16th - 27th, 1944, Serial 0154, October 31st, 1944; Action Report CTG 78.7 (COMLSTFLOT 14), Attack on Leyte, Serial 086, undated (probably early November 1944); Action Report CTG 78.8 (COMCORTDIV 29)(Reinforcement Group THREE), Central Philippine Operation, Serial 071, November 16th, 1944.

(3) Operations of CTF 79 (Southern Attack Force),  
October 20th.\*

Before discussing the D-day operations of CTF 79 (Commander Southern Attack Force) it is pertinent to review briefly the tasks that had been assigned him in connection with KING II. These tasks were:\*\*

(a) At 1000 on D-day to land the TWENTY-FOURTH Corps, U.S. SIXTH Army, composed of the SEVENTH and NINETY-SIXTH Infantry Divisions on VIOLET-YELLOW Beaches (Dulag) and ORANGE-BLUE Beaches (San Jose) respectively.

Included in this corps were two marine artillery battalions\*\*\* and one Marine Headquarters and Headquarters Battery, FIFTH Amphibious Corps Artillery. These units, which had been substituted by CINCPAC for the designated army artillery units which were still engaged with the enemy in the Marianas, actually did not land until D+2 day.\*\*\*\*

(b) On arrival at the objective area to assume control of TU 77.2.2 (Fire Support Unit SOUTH) for bombardment, night harassing fire and close fire support on D-day and subsequent thereto as required.

(c) On D-day, and subsequent thereto, to control and direct the operations of UDT Unit South as required.

(d) To control such support aircraft as had been specifically assigned by CTF 77.

(e) To provide antisubmarine, antimotor torpedo boat and antiaircraft protection in own area of responsibility (Plate VIII).

In the furtherance of the above assigned tasks he had organized his forces into two principal attack groups for the main assault viz., Attack Group ABLE (TG 79.1) to land the SEVENTH Infantry Division on VIOLET-YELLOW Beaches in the vicinity of Dulag and Attack Group BAKER (TG 79.2) to land the NINETY-SIXTH Infantry Division on ORANGE-BLUE Beaches

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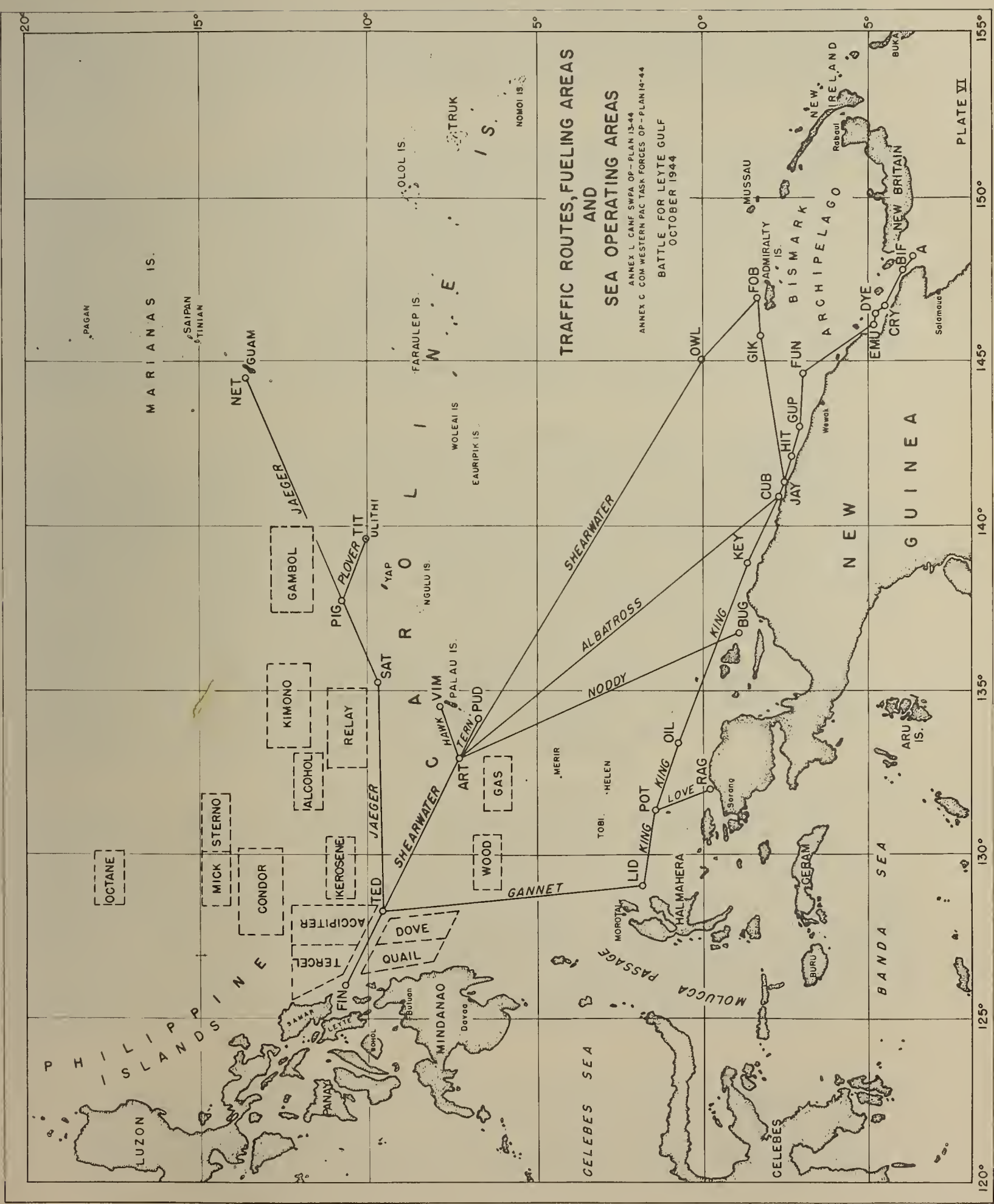
\* Action Report CTF 79, Seizure of Leyte, Serial 00323, November 13th, 1944.

\*\* CANF SOWESPAC Operations Plan No. 13-44, Serial 00022A, September 26th, 1944.

\*\*\* 11TH 155MM Gun Battalion USMC and 5TH 155MM Howitzer Battalion USMC.

\*\*\*\* 6TH U.S. Army, Report of Leyte Operation, October 17th - December 25th, 1944, Chapter VIII, Page 223-224; also ltr of March 28th, 1956 from Colonel C. W. Harrison, USMC, Head Historical Branch G-3, HQ, USMC, Washington, D. C. to Colonel R. McC. Tompkins, USMC, Naval War College, Newport, R.I.





**TRAFFIC ROUTES, FUELING AREAS  
AND  
SEA OPERATING AREAS**

ANNEX L. CANF SWPA OP-PLAN 13-44  
ANNEX C. COM WESTERN PAC TASK FORCES OP-PLAN 14-44  
BATTLE FOR LEYTE GULF  
OCTOBER 1944





in the vicinity of San Jose. In contrast to CTF 78 who, in addition to commanding TF 78 also commanded TG 78.1, CTF 79 had assigned individual commanders to each of his two task groups, while he himself functioned as the overall commander of the Southern Attack Force in his own separate flagship, the MOUNT OLYMPUS.

THE SHIFT OF THE OBJECTIVE FROM YAP TO LEYTE (DISCUSSED IN VOLUME I) HAD ENTAILED A RADICAL CHANGE IN THE LANDING CONDITIONS. EFFORTS IN PREPARING FOR THE FORMER OPERATION HAD BEEN DIRECTED TOWARD OVERCOMING THE DIFFICULTIES IN CROSSING EXTENSIVE AND DIFFICULT REEF-FRINGED BEACHES. EXTENSIVE USE OF AMPHIBIAN VEHICLES (DUKW'S) AND TANKS (LVT'S) HAD BEEN PLANNED, AND THE INITIAL BEACHING OF LST'S AND OTHER LANDING CRAFT HAD NOT BEEN CONTEMPLATED. ALL THE ASSAULT UNITS OF THE AMPHIBIOUS TROOPS WERE TO HAVE BEEN EMBARKED IN LST'S AND THE SHIP-TO-SHORE MOVEMENT ENVISAGED THE NECESSITY OF A TRANSFER LINE OFF THE REEFS WHERE THE TROOPS FOLLOWING THE INITIAL WAVES WOULD DEBARK FROM SMALL BOATS AND RE-EMBARK IN THE LVT'S FOR THE FINAL MOVEMENT TO THE BEACH.

THE CONDITIONS AT LEYTE WERE ENTIRELY DIFFERENT. THE LANDING AREA CONSISTED OF A LONG STRETCH OF SMOOTH SANDY BEACHES WITH NO CORAL PRESENT WHERE LANDINGS IN SMALL BOATS DIRECTLY ON THE BEACH WERE POSSIBLE AND LCT'S AND LST'S COULD BE BEACHED SUCCESSFULLY. DESPITE THESE CHANGED CONDITIONS, CTF 79 AND HIS AMPHIBIOUS TROOP COMMANDER (C.G. TWENTY-FOURTH CORPS) AGREED THAT IT WAS IMPRACTICABLE AT THIS LATE DATE (LATE SEPTEMBER) TO CHANGE THE METHOD OF LANDING SINCE THIS WOULD HAVE INVOLVED NOT ONLY A REDISTRIBUTION OF TROOPS BUT ALSO A CONSIDERABLE SHIFT OF SUPPLIES AND CARGO ALREADY LOADED IN THE LANDING CRAFT AND TRANSPORTS. THEREFORE, HE DECIDED TO CONDUCT THE LANDINGS ON THE SOUTHERN BEACHES OF LEYTE IN ACCORDANCE WITH THE GENERAL SCHEME OF MANEUVER PLANNED FOR YAP\* WHILE THE LANDING ON THE NORTHERN BEACHES CONFORMED TO THE CONVENTIONAL (SOWESPAC) PATTERN OF BEACHING THE LST'S AFTER THE INITIAL ASSAULT WAVES IN BOATS FROM THE TRANSPORTS HAD SECURED A BEACHHEAD.

HE REALIZED THAT THE EMPLOYMENT OF AMPHIBIAN TANKS AND VEHICLES AS PLANNED FOR THE YAP OPERATION PROVIDED DISADVANTAGES AND ADVANTAGES. ON THE ONE HAND, IT (A) REQUIRED THE ARRIVAL OF THE LST'S AT THEIR LAUNCHING AREA OFF THE SOUTHERN BEACHES PRIOR TO OR COINCIDENT WITH THE TRANSPORTS WITH THE ENSUING DIFFICULTIES IN THE APPROACH, AND (B) WOULD RESULT IN SLOWER MOVEMENT OF THE ASSAULT WAVES IN ATTACKING THE BEACH. ON THE OTHER HAND, IT (A) PERMITTED THE EMPLOYMENT OF THE OFFENSIVE PROPERTIES OF AMPHIBIAN TANKS IN THE FIRST ASSAULT WAVE, (B) GAVE BETTER PROTECTION FOR THE TROOPS IN CROSSING THE BEACH, AND (C) PROVIDED READILY AVAILABLE AMPHIBIAN VEHICLES FOR OPERATIONS ACROSS RIVERS AND SWAMPS BEHIND THE BEACHES.\*\*

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\* Action Report CTF 79, Seizure of Leyte, Serial 00323, November 13th, 1944, Paragraph 9, 10.

\*\* Action Report CTF 79, Seizure of Leyte, Serial 00323, November 13th, 1944, Paragraph 11.

THE DECISION TO EMPLOY THE YAP METHOD WAS, OF COURSE, CORRECT FOR THE REASONS GIVEN. IT WAS OF PARTICULAR INTEREST BECAUSE IT GAVE A REASONABLE COMPARISON WITH ANOTHER METHOD OF CONDUCTING A LANDING OPERATION.

At the beginning of the day CTF 79, in MOUNT OLYMPUS with Transport Group ABLE, was thirty miles from the entrance to Leyte Gulf. Meanwhile, his Landing Craft Movement Group, without difficulty in regard to mines or predicted strong currents, had just about completed a safe passage through the swept portion of the enemy minefield at the entrance.

Commencing at 0155 he intercepted several voice radio communications between CTG 78.5 (Harbor Entrance Control Group) and CTG 79.1 (the OTC of the two transport groups for movement and approach to Leyte) wherein (a) the former (1) requested the estimated time of arrival of TG 79.1 at Point FIN, and (2) stated that minesweepers would precede him, (b) the latter replied that he was making fourteen knots and expected to reach Point FIN at 0230, and (c) the former then advised CTG 79.1 that the approach speed would make it impossible to station minesweepers ahead before reaching the seaward end of the swept channel and requested that the speed be reduced. As a result he noted that CTG 79.1 promptly reduced speed to eight knots. Then at about this same time, he intercepted another TBS voice radio dispatch from CTG 78.5 to the effect that it would be one and three quarter hours before the minesweepers could join\* and that their best sweeping speed would be nine knots.\*\*

He now watched with interest the decision of his OTC (CTG 79.1) in this matter. He had been receiving disquieting reports that the sweeping of the minefield at the entrance had not been completed and the anticipation of strong ebb tides opposing and delaying the progress of his vessels on entry into the gulf had caused him considerable concern.\*

At 0249 he had his answer for at that time he noted that CTG 79.1 had increased speed and indicated a plan to enter the gulf without employing minesweepers. That he agreed with this decision seems clear for he took no action in the matter.

In connection with the above it should be pointed out here that he might have reduced his entrance problems had he advised CTG 78.5 whether or not the transport groups would require minesweepers in passing through Area SWEEP (CTG 78.5 had already queried him in this regard stating that he (CTG 78.5) could have minesweepers at Point FIN on two hours notice.).\*\*\*

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\* Action Report CTG 79.1, Participation in Amphibious Operations for the Capture of Leyte, Serial 00454, October 26th, 1944.

\*\* Action Report CTU 79.3.3, Leyte Operation, Serial 0118, October 31st, 1944.

\*\*\* CTG 78.5 Dispatch 191212 October 1944 to CTF's 77, 78 and 79.



Why he did not do this is not known. It is possible that he thought that it was more important to maintain radio silence than to reply to this important dispatch. It will be recalled that, although his command had been discovered by Japanese planes at noon of the preceding day,\* he did not know it and thought that he had approached undetected.

At 0430 in the MOUNT OLYMPUS he entered Leyte Gulf.\*\* He was gratified to note that contrary to some reports indicating a possible ebb of six knots, and other reports of an expected ebb of four to five knots, these strong currents were not met. Instead the maximum current he encountered appeared to be about one and one-half knots. This was perhaps due to the fact that the convoys passed well to the southward of the axis of the entrance to avoid the unswept portion of the minefield.

At 0625 one enemy two-engine plane was observed northwest of the Southern Attack Force but did not attack. This plane apparently was the same one that had dropped a bomb at 0620 on TF 78's LST formation with negative results.

Since, in addition to the normal activities of the landing and protection of the assault shipping, CTF 79 had been assigned an area of responsibility which included all of Surigao Strait and that part of Leyte Gulf south of the Tacloban-Dulag approach channel (Plate VIII), and had been directed to provide antisubmarine, antimotor torpedo boat, and antiaircraft protection in this area, he had assigned this responsibility to CTG 79.11. At 0635 he noted that the destroyers were proceeding to their screening stations.

At 0707 he proceeded independently in the MOUNT OLYMPUS to the vicinity of the Southern Transport Area.\*\*

At this same time he noted that (a) TU 77.2.2, was conducting the prearranged bombardment of the selected target areas and (b) enemy reaction thus far had consisted only of sporadic and generally ineffective mortar and small arms fire.

At 0750 he arrived off the line of departure to observe the progress of the operation. He no doubt was pleased to note that everything was proceeding as planned. The Landing Craft Movement Group had already arrived and anchored in its assigned area, and the Transport Groups were arriving and anchoring in their respective areas on schedule. All vessels on arrival initiated preparations for landing (lowering boats, embarking landing force and forming boat waves, etc.).

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\* Commander 5TH Base Air Force Dispatch 191336 October 1944 to 5TH Base Air Force Battle Report Addressees, War Diary 103RD Attack Unit (701ST Air Group), October 1944, WDC Document 160258, NA 12592.

\*\* War Diary MOUNT OLYMPUS, October 20th, 1944; also Action Report MOUNT OLYMPUS, Assault on Leyte, Serial 005, November 18th, 1944.

At this time he received word that the fast carriers would strike the beaches from 0830 - 0845. He therefore directed that Plan VICTOR be put in effect during this time. This plan, as employed by CTF 79, restricted all ships to a maximum ordinate of 1,200 feet for gunfire during air strikes.\* It also provided for the releasing of gunfire from the plan in effect (in this case, Plan VICTOR) through the employment of a white flare or other pre-arranged signal.

At 0800 he observed that the heavy ships of TU 77.2.2 were relieving each other according to plan and that those ships scheduled to fire at this time had already commenced firing.

At 0828 he learned, through the CSACP in the WASATCH, that the scheduled air strike was then going in and CSACP would advise when all was clear.

At this time he observed the air strikes hit the southern beaches.

At 0912, after having received reports from CTG 79.1 and CTG 79.2 that they would be able to land as scheduled, CTF 79 advised CTF 77, as well as his own command, that the 1000 landing-hour was confirmed, thereby advising CTF 77 that TF 79 was prepared to land on schedule.\*\*

At 0930 he observed that the bombardment ships had intensified their fire against the southern beaches in final preparation for the scheduled landing at 1000.

At 1000 the first assault waves reached the beaches, meeting only minor opposition from enemy mortar and small arms fire which continued until about noon. There were practically no casualties to the troops. Although, according to CTG 79.1, the pre-landing gunfire and air preparation had been fully in accordance with expectations and the rocket and mortar LCI's were particularly effective (they suffered some casualties during withdrawal),\*\*\* actually there were other reasons as well for the lack of opposition to the landings. These are discussed under "Operations of CTF 77 (Central Philippines Attack Force), October 20th".

At 1230 CTF 79 learned that the BENNION had been hit by

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\* Action Report CTF 79, Seizure of Leyte, Serial 00323, November 13th, 1944.

\*\* Action Report CTG 79.1, Participation in Amphibious Operations for the Capture of Leyte, Serial 0454, October 26th, 1944; also Action Report CALIFORNIA, Participation in Operations off Island of Leyte, Philippine Islands, October 19th - 24th, 1944, Serial 0025, November 8th, 1944; Action Report CTG 79.2, Leyte Operation, Serial 0032, November 4th, 1944.

\*\*\* Action Report CTG 79.1, Participation in Amphibious Operations for the Capture of Leyte, Serial 0454, October 26th, 1944; also Action Report CTG 79.2, Leyte Operation, Serial 0032, November 4th, 1944.



counterfire from enemy shore batteries resulting in injuries to three personnel (one seriously) although sustaining no material damage to impair her battle efficiency.

At 1240 he shifted the five screening destroyers occupying Screening Stations Nos. 3, 4, 5, 6, 7 (Plate VIII) to 27, 28, 29, 30, 31 in lower Surigao Strait in order to cover the operations of CTG 78.3 (Panaon Attack Group) largely against PT boats and submarines.\* These destroyers were to patrol in a figure eight track.\*\*

By 1400, a beachhead having been secured, the transports commenced moving to the inner transport area 2,000 yards from shore and the LST's and LSM's started beaching for immediate unloading.\*\*\*

At 1452 CTF 79 sent CTF 77 a detailed report concerning the favorable progress and situation at the southern beaches as of 1400, the contents of which have been included under the "Operations of CTF 77 (Central Philippines Attack Force), October 20th."\*\*\*\*

About mid-afternoon he was faced with an important decision. He had by this time received reports of minor sporadic air attacks in the objective area but he had placed confidence in the ability of the day fighter cover to prevent serious and threatening air attacks. However, he felt grave concern as to dusk and night air attacks, particularly since there was no night fighter protection available. Enemy airfields were within easy reach and the location of his force and individual vessels was clearly known to enemy ground observers. He visualized two alternatives--(a) to get underway and take evasive action, both to avoid discovery and to counter air attack by maneuver, or (b) to remain at anchor with smoke protection.\*\*\*\*\* He realized that (a) if he got underway he would encounter the difficulty of maneuvering a large force in darkness within the limited waters of Leyte Gulf and the possibility of mines in the yet unswept waters through which the force would pass in such maneuvers and (b) if he remained at anchor he could provide smoke over his force in accordance with his pre-arranged smoke plan\*\*\*\*\* and at the same time continue unloading so as to expedite the departure of assault shipping from the objective area, thereby reducing its period of vulnerability to enemy attack. He wisely decided not to retire and at 1530

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\* Action Report CTG 79.11 (COMDESRON 54), Attack on Leyte Island, Central Philippines, October 20th - 26th, 1944, Serial 059, November 12th, 1944.

\*\* CTF 79 Attack Plan 304-44, Annex I, Appendix 3.

\*\*\* Action Report CTG 79.1, Participation in Amphibious Operations for the Capture of Leyte Serial 00454, October 26th, 1944; also Action Report CTG 79.2, Leyte Operation, Serial 0032, November 4th, 1944.

\*\*\*\* CTF 79 Dispatch 200552 October 1944 to CTF 77, C.G. 6TH Army.

\*\*\*\*\* Action Report CTF 79, Seizure of Leyte, Serial 00323, November 13th, 1944.

issued orders accordingly.\* He stationed an inner screen of LCI gunboats near the shore to prevent attack by enemy torpedo boats and placed an outer screen of destroyers around the entire transport area for antiaircraft protection. A heavy and effective smoke cloud was made before sunset which persisted throughout the critical dusk period and was replenished periodically during the night.

CTF 79'S DECISION TO EMPLOY SMOKE SCREENS IN DEFENSE OF THE SHIPS AT ANCHOR AT NIGHT WAS A STEP IN THE CONTINUING EVOLUTIONARY PROCESS OF SMOKE DEFENSE FOR ANCHORED SHIPPING WHICH HAD BEEN EMPLOYED MOST SUCCESSFULLY IN THE SEIZURE OF SAIPAN, JUNE 1944.\*\*

TODAY'S DOCTRINE (1957) WHICH WAS, OF COURSE, DEVELOPED FROM WORLD WAR II OPERATIONS SIMILAR TO THE ABOVE, INDICATES CONCURRENCE IN THE EFFECTIVENESS OF SMOKE FOR THE PROTECTION OF ANCHORAGES AGAINST ENEMY AIR ATTACK AT NIGHT, PROVIDING THAT ADEQUATE RADAR COUNTERMEASURES ARE EMPLOYED.\*\*\* IT STRESSES THE FACT THAT, DURING TWILIGHT AND DARKNESS, SMOKE IS EFFECTIVE BECAUSE (A) AN ECONOMICAL AMOUNT OF SMOKE PROVIDES ADEQUATE COVER, AND (B) OTHER MEANS OF DEFENSE ARE HANDICAPPED BY DARKNESS.\*\*\*\*

During the afternoon, commencing at about 1530, CTF 79 transferred six LCT's from CTG 79.1 and four LCT's and three LST's (with pontoon causeways) from CTG 79.2 to CTF 78 to assist in the unloading on RED Beach.

The transfer of this shipping to TF 78, while helpful to TF 78, was, as will be shown later, a handicap to TF 79.

At 1615 he learned that the HONOLULU had just been torpedoed by an enemy plane.

At 1736, in order to expedite (a) the delivery of supplies to the army forces ashore, and (b) thereby the departure of the assault shipping from the objective area, he directed CTG's 79.1 and 79.2 to prosecute general unloading with utmost vigor commencing at daylight.\*\*\*\*\*

At 1830 he advised his command that the night assignment of the fire support ships was as follows: For TG 79.1, PENNSYLVANIA, MINNEAPOLIS, DENVER, BLACK, ABBOT, and WALKER; for TG 79.2, PORTLAND,

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- \* Action Report CTG 79.1, Participation in Amphibious Operations for the Capture of Leyte, Serial 00454, October 26th, 1944.
  - \*\* Action Report Commander Joint Expeditionary Force, Marianas Operation, Report of Amphibious Operations for the Capture of the Marianas Islands, Serial 00704, August 25th, 1944, Annex H.
  - \*\*\* Smoke Screen Manual (NWIP 1-2), Department of the Navy, Office of the Chief of Naval Operations, 1953, Chapter 1, Paragraph 104.
  - \*\*\*\* Ibid Chapter 6, Paragraph 601.
  - \*\*\*\*\* CTF 79 Visual Dispatch 200836 October 1944 to CTG's 79.1 and 79.2.



COLUMBIA, CLAXTON, BRAINE, and GANSEVOORT.\*

At the end of the day CTF 79 derived considerable satisfaction from the successful results of the D-day landings. He had (a) met his schedule, (b) had landed all combat serials of the TWENTY-FOURTH Corps less the 381st Regimental Combat Team (SIXTH Army Floating Reserve) comprising about 40,000 troops and 6,314 tons of supplies and equipment,\*\* and (c) had firmly established a beachhead against only light enemy opposition.

IT IS TO BE NOTED THAT THE ABOVE TONNAGE UNLOADED ON THE SOUTHERN BEACHES WAS CONSIDERABLY LESS THAN THAT DISCHARGED AT THE NORTHERN BEACHES BY CTF 78 IN SPITE OF THE DIFFICULTIES ENCOUNTERED THERE IN BEACHING THE LST'S WHICH HAD MADE IT NECESSARY TO PROCURE CAUSEWAYS AND LCT'S FROM TF 79. THIS VARIANCE IS ATTRIBUTED PRIMARILY TO THE FACT THAT THE TRANSPORTS AND CARGO SHIPS OF TF 79 HAD NOT BEEN TRULY COMBAT LOADED, DUE IN A LARGE MEASURE TO THE NECESSITY OF CARRYING ADDITIONAL EQUIPMENT. SINCE NO GARRISON SHIPPING SPACE HAD BEEN ASSIGNED THE SEVENTH AND NINETY-SIXTH INFANTRY DIVISIONS, THE SUPPLIES AND EQUIPMENT NORMALLY CARRIED IN THE FOLLOW-UP SHIPPING HAD TO BE INCLUDED IN THE ASSAULT SHIPPING. FOR INSTANCE, EACH TRANSPORT HAD BEEN LOADED WITH AN EXCESS OF ABOUT 350 TONS OF BULK CARGO WHICH PRECLUDED VERTICAL LOADING AND CONSEQUENTLY DELAYED OFF-LOADING.\*\*\* AS A RESULT, NONE OF THE TRANSPORTS OR CARGO VESSELS OF TF 79 WERE UNLOADED BY THE END OF D-DAY, WHEREAS ALL OF TF 78 TRANSPORTS EXCEPT THE FREMONT WERE UNLOADED AND RETIRED FROM THE AREA.

SUCH UNLOADING WAS HOPED FOR BUT WAS NOT ANTICIPATED BY CTF 79 BECAUSE HIS SHIPS HAD BEEN LOADED FOR YAP WHERE NO SERIOUS THREAT FROM THE ENEMY AIR AND NAVAL FIRES WAS EXPECTED AND, THEREFORE, HAD BEEN LOADED ON SUCH A BASIS AS TO REQUIRE POSSIBLY MORE THAN ONE DAY UNLOADING TIME. THE ASSAULT DIVISIONS FOR YAP WERE TO BE THE GARRISON DIVISIONS AS WELL AND THE SHIPS HAD BEEN LOADED ACCORDINGLY.\*\*\*\*

THE CONVENIENCE OF HAVING THE GARRISON EQUIPMENT READILY AVAILABLE IS RECOGNIZED AND THE REASONS FOR HAVING IT IN THIS CASE ARE UNDERSTANDABLE. IT SHOULD BE POINTED OUT, HOWEVER, THAT THIS FAILURE TO COMPLETE UNLOADING COULD HAVE HAD SERIOUS CONSEQUENCES IN THE EVENT OF

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- \* CTF 79 (Naval Gunfire Control Net) Voice Radio Message 201830/I October 1944 to TF 79.
  - \*\* Report of Leyte Operations, October 17th - December 25th, 1944, HQ 6TH U.S. Army.
  - \*\*\* Action Reports CTG 79.1, Participation in Amphibious Operations for the Capture of Leyte, Serial 00454, October 26th, 1944; Action Report CTG 79.2, Leyte Operation, Serial 0032, November 4th, 1944; Action Report COMTRANSDIV 10 (CTU 79.4.1), Serial 00276, October 28th, 1944.
  - \*\*\*\* CTF 79's First Endorsement, Serial 00338, November 20th, 1944 to Action Report CTG 79.2, Leyte Operation, Serial 0032, November 4th, 1944.

STRONG JAPANESE REACTION TO THE LANDING, I.E., HAD THE JAPANESE FIRST STRIKING FORCE BEEN ABLE TO PENETRATE THE LANDING AREAS ON D-DAY (ONE OF THE FEATURES OF THE ORIGINAL SHO ONE PLAN). FORTUNATELY FOR CTF 79, THE JAPANESE REACTION WAS VERY WEAK INDEED AND, THEREFORE, THE DELAY IN THE UNLOADING OF THE TRANSPORTS BECAME NOTHING MORE THAN A MINOR HINDRANCE.

THIS BRINGS FORTH THE CONCEPT OF "COMBAT LOADING". THIS CONCEPT IS THAT, WHENEVER POSSIBLE, THE ARRANGEMENT OF PERSONNEL AND THE STOWAGE OF SUPPLIES AND EQUIPMENT ABOARD SHIP SHOULD BE DESIGNED IN SUCH A MANNER AS TO CONFORM TO THE ANTICIPATED TACTICAL OPERATION OF THE ORGANIZATION EMBARKED. EACH INDIVIDUAL ITEM OF EQUIPMENT AND SUPPLIES MUST BE SO STOWED ABOARD THE SHIP THAT IT CAN BE DISCHARGED AND DISPATCHED TO THE BEACH AT THE TIME AND IN THE SEQUENCE WHICH IT HAS BEEN PREVIOUSLY DETERMINED WILL MOST EFFECTIVELY PROMOTE THE SUCCESSFUL COMPLETION OF THE MISSION.\*

IN THIS CASE IT APPEARS THAT A CONSIDERABLE AMOUNT OF GARRISON EQUIPMENT FOR THE LATER STAGES OF THE GARRISON PHASE OF THE YAP OPERATION HAD BEEN INCLUDED IN THE YAP ASSAULT SHIPPING IN ORDER FULLY TO UTILIZE THE SHIPPING AVAILABLE FOR THAT OPERATION. EVEN IN THE CASE OF YAP THIS COULD EASILY HAVE BEEN A FALSE ECONOMY FOR WAR EXPERIENCE HAS SHOWN THAT A TOO EARLY UNLOADING OF GARRISON FOLLOW-UP SUPPLIES MAY SERIOUSLY INTERFERE WITH THE EFFICIENCY OF THE GARRISON FORCES. THIS, IN TURN, MAY HAVE THE FURTHER RESULT OF SLOWING DOWN THE UNLOADING OF SHIPS SUBSEQUENTLY ARRIVING, WITH ALL THE MAJOR WASTE OF OVERSEAS SHIPPING SPACE THAT THEN TAKES PLACE.\*\*

FROM THIS, IT SHOULD BE CLEAR THAT ONLY THAT PART OF GARRISON EQUIPMENT WHICH IS ESSENTIAL TO THE IMMEDIATE NEEDS OF THOSE GARRISON ELEMENTS WHICH ARE AN ESSENTIAL AND INTEGRATED PART OF THE ASSAULT FORCES SHOULD EVER BE CARRIED IN THE ASSAULT ECHELONS OF AN AMPHIBIOUS ATTACK (OPERATION). ALL EQUIPMENT REQUIRED FOR THE SUBSEQUENT GARRISON BUILD-UP SHOULD BE CAREFULLY PHASED INTO LATER ECHELONS SO AS (A) NOT TO INTERFERE WITH THE SUPPORT OF COMBAT FORCES, AND (B) TO PROVIDE FOR THE RAPID AND ORDERLY DEVELOPMENTS OF THE GARRISON FORCES.\*\*

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\* Dictionary of United States Military Terms for Joint Usage (Third Revision), Departments of the Army, the Navy, and the Air Force, May 1955.

\*\* Written Statement by Rear Admiral H.E. Eccles, USN (Ret), Consultant to the George Washington University Logistics Research Project, April 20th, 1955.



(a) Operations of CTG 79.1 (Attack Group ABLE),  
October 20th.\*

CTG 79.1 had been assigned the task of landing the SEVENTH Infantry Division on VIOLET and YELLOW Beaches (Plate VII). For this purpose he had been allotted fourteen transports, four cargo vessels, thirty-one LST's, two LSD's and a number of control, rocket and mortar craft.\*\*

In addition to the above, he had been designated as OTC to exercise overall tactical command and coordination of Attack Groups ABLE (TG 79.1) and BAKER (TG 79.2) and of TU 77.4.14 (Escort Carrier Unit) for safe passage and approach to the objective area until their entry inside Leyte Gulf, at which time the respective task group and unit commanders were to take charge.\*\*\*

In view of predicted strong currents, he had decided to anticipate his arrival at Point FIN (the seaward end of the Tacloban-Dulag Approach Channel) by forty-five minutes to arrive at this point at 0230 October 20th instead of 0315 as set forth in the basic movement plan.\*\*\*\*

At 0130 he commenced forming cruising disposition (6-T) which reduced the front of his formation to 3,000 yards and thereby reduced the danger from mines. It seems to have taken some time to form this disposition, possibly because of speed differentials, for it was not until about the time of passing Point FIN that the disposition was finally formed.

At 0155 he received a voice radio communication from CTG 78.5 requesting his estimated time of arrival at Point FIN and stating that minesweepers could precede him. To this query he replied that he was making fourteen knots and expected to reach Point FIN at 0230.\*\*\*\*\*

CTG 78.5 now informed him that his present approach speed would make it impossible to station minesweepers ahead before reaching the seaward end of the swept channel and requested that speed be reduced.

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- \* Action Report CTG 79.1, Participation in Amphibious Operations for the Capture of Leyte, Serial 00454, October 26th, 1944.
  - \*\* CTG 79.1 (Commander Attack Group ABLE) Attack Order No. A172-44, Serial 00096, October 9th, 1944.
  - \*\*\* CTF 79 (COM3RDPHIBFOR) Attack Plan No. A304-44, October 2nd, 1944, Annex B.
  - \*\*\*\* CTG 79.1 (Commander Attack Group ABLE) Movement Order No. A173-44, Annex C, Serial 00095, October 9th, 1944; CANF SOWESPAC Operation Plan 13-44, Annex C, Serial 00022A, September 26th, 1944.
  - \*\*\*\*\* Action Report CTU 79.3.3, Leyte Operation, Serial 0118, October 31st, 1944.

At 0229 he reached Point FIN where he slowed to eight knots temporarily to await more definite information concerning the minesweepers.\*

He now learned, presumably from CTG 78.5, that the minesweepers could not arrive before one and three-quarters hours, and that their best sweeping speed would be nine knots.

He now had an important decision to make. Should he wait for the minesweepers and risk delaying the landing-hour or should he proceed without them? He had been receiving disquieting reports that the sweeping of the minefield at the entrance had not been completed and the anticipation of strong ebb tides opposing and delaying the progress of his vessels on entry into the gulf had naturally caused him some concern.

After estimating the situation he decided to proceed on schedule, informed CTG 78.5 that he could not wait for the minesweepers, and at 0249 increased speed to fourteen knots.\*

While the reasons for this decision are nowhere given by CTG 79.1 it seems clear that he based it on the following sound considerations:

(a) the area had been reported swept;

(b) since he had heard nothing to the contrary, he had reason to believe that the Landing Craft Movement Group and the Northern Attack Force (TF 78) had entered ahead of him without mishap;

(c) his larger ships were protected by paravanes which had been streamed the night before; and

(d) it was necessary to maintain his present time schedule in order to arrive in the transport area as planned.

It may be wondered why he did not employ the three minesweepers SAUNTER, SCRIMMAGE, SALUTE which were making passage with TG 79.2.\*\* The reason seems clear and correct. These minesweepers, which were in the rear of TG 79.2,\*\* (in disposition LCS), were at this time about twelve miles astern of the leading ship of TG 79.1 (in disposition 6-T), and since they were capable of a maximum speed of but fifteen knots he could not accept the delay incident to their movement to the head of his disposition.

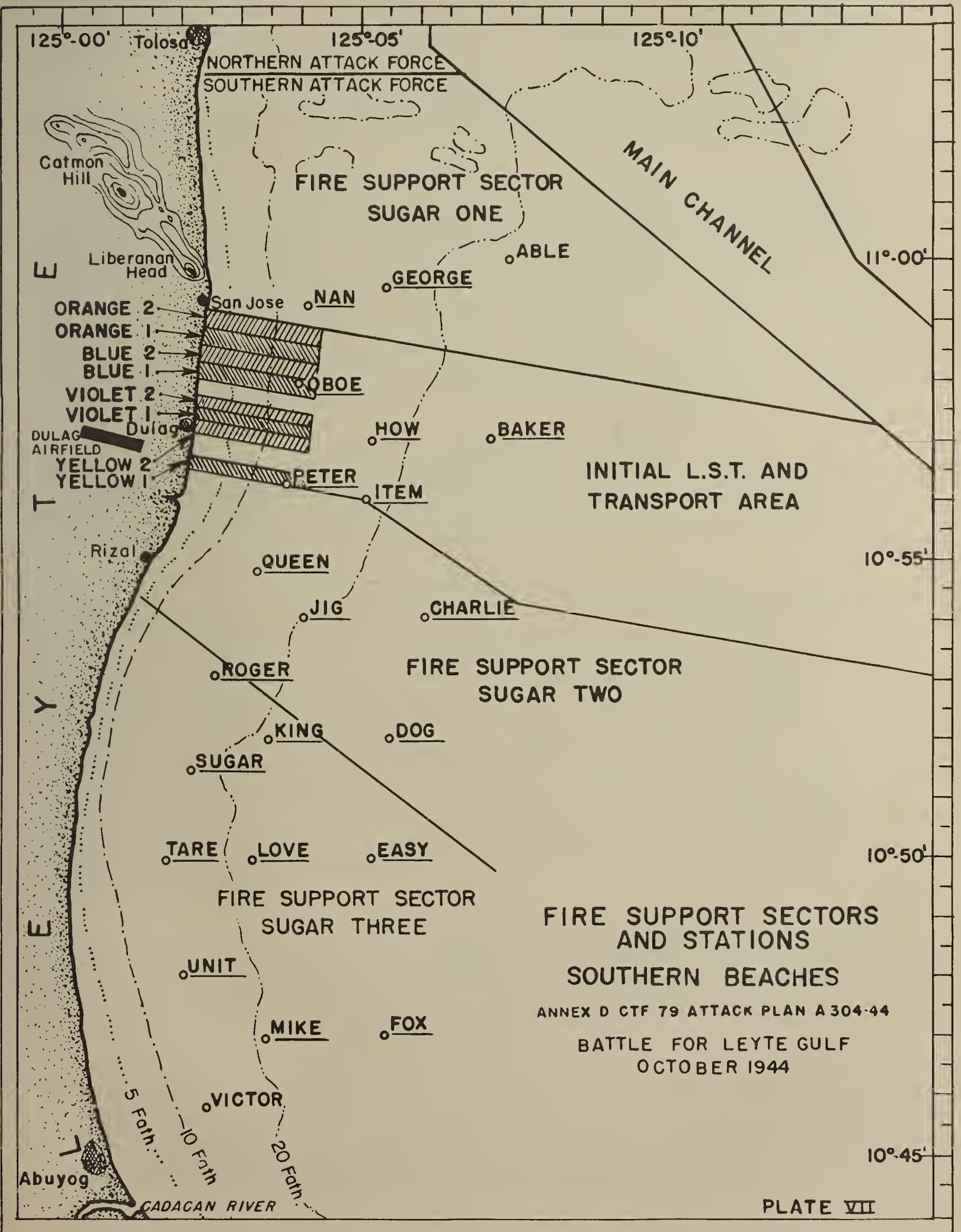
At 0305 he informed the command that he planned to

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\* Action Report CTU 79.3.3, Leyte Operation, Serial 0118, October 31st, 1944.

\*\* War Diary SAUNTER October 20th, 1944; also CTG 79.2 Dispatch 120932, October 1944 to SCRIMMAGE, SAUNTER, SALUTE, etc.





### FIRE SUPPORT SECTORS AND STATIONS

### SOUTHERN BEACHES

ANNEX D CTF 79 ATTACK PLAN A 304-44

BATTLE FOR LEYTE GULF  
OCTOBER 1944





pass DESOLATION Point on the port hand at a distance of two and one-half miles.\*

At 0346 he passed the northern tip of Dinagat Island abeam to port, distant 3,800 yards (from the centerline of the formation).\*\*

At 0700, upon reaching Point "C" (Plate IV), he released Transport Group BAKER to deploy to its assigned anchorage off ORANGE and BLUE Beaches and directed Transport Group ABLE to form approach disposition for anchoring off VIOLET and YELLOW Beaches. At 0721 he ordered TG 79.1 to deploy in accordance with the approach plan. At 0745 he arrived, in his flagship, in the outer transport area off Dulag Town and lay to in this general area the remainder of the day so that he could observe the assault operations.\*\*\* He was pleased to learn that his Landing Craft Movement Group had arrived on schedule at 0617. By 0800 all units of his Transport Group had anchored and were lowering their boats.\*

At 0851 he received a report that CTG 79.5, the commander of his LST Unit, was ready for landing on schedule, and at 0900 he received a similar report from CTG 79.3, the commander of Transport Group ABLE. At 0930 he received a message from CTF 79 confirming the landing-hour at 1000 as originally scheduled.

The landing was made exactly on schedule with practically no casualties to the troops, although some mortar fire was initially encountered from the right flank of the beach. CTG 79.1 attributed the light enemy resistance to the effectiveness of the pre-arranged fires that took place according to CTF 79's gunfire schedule. Battleships, cruisers and destroyers of TU 77.2.2 had increased their rates of fire at the landing-hour minus forty-five minutes and had continued an intensive bombardment around YELLOW and VIOLET Beach areas until the leading assault waves were 800 yards from the beach (landing-hour minus five minutes) at which time fire was shifted inland and to the flanks in compliance with a flare signal released by an aerial observer. Rocket, mortar and automatic weapon barrages executed by the LCI's and LCS's just prior to the landing-hour left little to be desired both as to timing and intensity.

While there is no doubt that the pre-arranged fires contributed greatly to the ease of landing, they were not the sole reason for the light enemy resistance. A partial reason was that the Japanese had retired temporarily from the beach defenses in order to avoid being subjected to Allied naval and air bombardment and had failed to return to

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\* Action Report CTU 79.3.3, Leyte Operation, Serial 0118, October 31st, 1944.

\*\* Action Report CTG 79.1, Participation in Amphibious Operations for the Capture of Leyte, P.I., Serial 00454, October 26th, 1944.

\*\*\* Action Report APPALACHIAN, Serial 1274, November 14th, 1944.

their defenses in time to oppose seriously the Allied landings. This is discussed more fully under "Operations of CTF 77 (Central Philippines Attack Force), October 20th".

As soon as the assault landing had been completed, unloading was pushed with utmost vigor. All beaches, fortunately proved to be excellent for beaching LST's and this greatly simplified the problem. At 1232 the first LST's were directed to proceed to the beach to discharge artillery as desired by troop commanders.

At 1414, however, CTG 79.1 received a report from CTG 79.5 that no LST's would complete unloading their initial cargoes in time to be used for moving vehicles from the transports to the beach at 1600 as had been tentatively planned.

At about 1530 he transferred half of his LCT's (738, 749, 819, 861, 863, 864) to TF 78 to assist in the unloading at RED Beach.

By 1800 all assault echelons, except one of the three battalions of the SEVENTEENTH Infantry Regiment (TWENTY-FOURTH Corps Reserve), had been landed.

By 2400 the LST's were twenty-four per cent unloaded and the transports, cargo vessels and LSD's had discharged twenty-seven per cent of their cargo. In accordance with instructions from CTF 79, the assault shipping did not retire but remained at the beach area and continued unloading under smoke cover throughout the night.

(b) Operations of CTG 79.2 (Attack Group BAKER),  
October 20th.\*

CTG 79.2, in ROCKY MOUNT, in company with Transport Group BAKER, followed 4,000 yards astern of Transport Group ABLE in approach disposition for entering Leyte Gulf. The group was composed of thirteen transports, four cargo vessels, three LSD's, one LSV, and nine screening destroyers, plus three minesweepers from MINDIV THIRTY-FOUR which had been assigned for movement to the objective area. His LST's and other landing craft units (twenty-four LST's, six LSM's, twenty-one rocket and mortar craft, and eight control craft) had entered Leyte Gulf at 2327 the previous evening with the Landing Craft Movement Group of TF 79.\*\* His mission was to land and establish elements of the NINETY-SIXTH Infantry Division on designated beaches (ORANGE and BLUE) at Leyte commencing at 1000 this day.\*\*\*

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\* Action Report CTG 79.2, Leyte Operation, Serial 0032, November 4th, 1944.

\*\* War Diary McGOWAN, October 19th, 1944.

\*\*\* CTG 79.2 (COMPHIBGRP 6) Attack Order No. A604-44, Serial 0010, October 8th, 1944.



He maintained his group on station astern of Attack Group ABLE, conforming to the Tacloban-Dulag Approach Channel, until reaching Point "C" at 0700, at which time the two groups proceeded independently to their respective anchorage areas on signal from CTG 79.1. At about this time having (a) noted that no enemy gunfire was being received by the LST's which had anchored well inshore of the middle transport area, and (b) realizing that early movement to this area would facilitate arrival of the control boats at the line of departure and would expedite the movement of the boated reserve battalions, he correctly decided to anchor his transports in the middle transport area instead of the outer area. The outer area had been set up to provide a safe transport area in case hostile fire from the shore made the closer area untenable.

At 0711 he released COMMINDIV THIRTY-FOUR, in SAUNTER, to proceed with SALUTE and SCRIMMAGE to report to CTG 77.5.

At 0750 he proceeded independently in his flagship and anchored in the forward part of the middle transport area.

At 0828 his LST Unit commander reported that the amphibious tanks were ready to be launched, and at 0835 the unit commanders of his control craft, rocket and mortar-gunboats reported that their units were on station at the line of departure. At 0840 he noted that his transport group had anchored on schedule in their assigned anchorages. Thereupon at 0842 he ordered his attack group to land the landing force and advised CTF 79 that he would be able to meet the landing-hour.

At 0930 he received a message from CTF 79 confirming 1000 as the landing-hour; the first assault wave, in amphibious tanks, left the line of departure for the beaches, followed by succeeding waves in accordance with the plan. These waves landed on BLUE and ORANGE Beaches respectively at 0958 and 0959.

Initially, minor mortar fire and some sniper fire was experienced and intermittent mortar fire continued until about noon causing sixteen casualties. One LCM received a direct hit from an enemy mortar projectile.

At noon the Group Beachmaster reported the beaches secure and ready for general unloading, and at 1300 CTF 79 ordered vigorous unloading of general supplies and equipment. At 1400 CTG 79.2 moved his transports to the inner transport area within 2,000 yards of the beach. The first LST was beached at 1420.

At about 1553, in accordance with a request from CTF 78, three LST's (745, 1013(F), 1024) with pontoon causeways,\* and at

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\* Action Report CTU 79.6.11 (COMLSTGRP 8), Leyte Operation, October 20th - 24th, 1944, Serial 038-44, October 31st, 1944.

1558, in accordance with the basic plan, four LCT's (747, 830, 898, 992) were transferred to TF 78 to assist in the unloading at RED Beach.\*

The diversion of this shipping, and notably of the LCT's, interfered with the unloading of TG 79.2. In this connection, CTG 79.4 (Commander Transport Group BAKER) reported that "perhaps the above diversion was justified by the overall demands of the whole operation but it embarrassed Transport Group BAKER considerably; as the result, several heavy dozers and trucks were not gotten to the beach nearly as early as planned or desired."\*\*

By 1700 a total of three LST's and two LSM's were beached.

At 1724 the C.G. NINETY-SIXTH Infantry Division\*\*\* and his staff left the ROCKY MOUNT to establish the division command post (CP) ashore.\*\*\*\* Meanwhile the Assistant Division Commander had already set up the CP and at 1500 had assumed command ashore.

At 1750 the division commander arrived at his CP and assumed command of operations. Unfortunately he failed to communicate his readiness to assume command to his naval superior for, as will be shown at 1345 the following day, CTG 79.2 queried C.G. NINETY-SIXTH Infantry Division as to when he had assumed command ashore.

General unloading of the transports was very slow at first due to the fact that priority had been given to unloading other elements and associated supplies and equipment of the TWENTY-FOURTH Corps and NINETY-SIXTH Infantry Division that had been loaded aboard the same vessels as the SIXTH Army Floating Reserve. For the Yap operation, the 381st Regimental Combat Team had been designated as reserve for the NINETY-SIXTH Infantry Division, but, on arrival at Manus, it was decided for the Leyte operation to use this Regimental Combat Team as floating reserve for the SIXTH Army. The problem arose then as to where and when it would be committed. SIXTH Army Headquarters put the probable time as D+1 day and the most probable place as behind the Northern Landing Force and the next

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- \* CTG 79.2 (COMPHIBGRP 6) Attack Order No. A604-44, Serial 00010, October 8th, 1944; also Action Report CTG 79.4 (COMTRANSDIV 18), Leyte Operation, October 20th - 24th, 1944, Serial 0126, October 28th, 1944.
  - \*\* Action Report CTG 79.4, Leyte Operation, Serial 0126, October 28th, 1944.
  - \*\*\* Major General James L. Bradley, USA.
  - \*\*\*\* HQ's 96TH Infantry Division, G-3 Journal - entry 157, dated 1750 October 20th, 1944; contained in letter, Office of TAG AGAW-A 313.5 to President Naval War College, March 21st, 1957; also Action Report 96TH Infantry Division, Action Against Enemy, KING-TWO Operation 1944, March 1945, Page 35.



probable place behind the NINETY-SIXTH Infantry Division.\* However, time did not allow completion of the necessary transfers prior to departure from Manus. Consequently, they had to be made after arrival at the objective area in order to give mobility to the reserve Regimental Combat Team without involving other troop elements. Therefore, eighty-six boats of two transport divisions had to be used for this purpose while those boats of the remaining division, in which the reserve Regimental Combat Team was embarked, had to be held in readiness to land the reserve troops if and when required.\*\* By 2300 the three transport divisions were twenty-seven per cent unloaded. All assault troops, except the reserve Regimental Combat Team had been landed, and the unloading of cargo continued under smoke cover throughout the night.\*\*\*

By the end of the day, except for the unloading and discharge of amphibious tanks and vehicles, only four LST's and two LSM's had completely unloaded their original cargo. In general, the sand on the beach was extremely soft, making it difficult for amphibian tractors, vehicles, bulldozers and cranes to operate. In most cases, vehicles discharging from LST's had to be towed ashore not only because of the depth of the water but because the wheels sank in the soft sand. The beach was not entirely suitable for beaching LST's because the water was approximately four and one-half feet deep at the end of their ramps after beaching. Bulldozers were used to build sand ramps out to the LST's but these required continual repair as the waves washed the sand away. The area immediately behind the beach at a depth of 300 yards was swampy, thereby limiting the space available for supply dumps. In addition, the use of the limited dry area available was so wasteful that the beach itself became congested.\*\*

UNLIKE THE SMOOTH, WELL-ORGANIZED AND COORDINATED UNLOADING ACROSS CTG 79.1'S VIOLET AND YELLOW BEACHES, THE UNLOADING AND DISPERSAL AT CTG 79.2'S ORANGE AND BLUE BEACHES WAS VERY POOR. THIS WAS DUE, PRIMARILY, TO POOR SHORE PARTY ORGANIZATION AND EXECUTION. FOR EXAMPLE, THE AMPHIBIAN TRACTORS (LVT'S) AND VEHICLES (DUKW'S) WERE VERY SLOW IN RETURNING AFTER THE INITIAL ASSAULT FOR UNLOADING DUTIES, DESPITE THE FACT THAT GREAT DEPENDENCE HAD BEEN PLACED ON THEM FOR HANDLING CARGO ON THE BEACHES AND FROM THE LST'S. AS HAS BEEN POINTED OUT, THE CANCELLED YAP OPERATION HAD ENVISAGED A "REEF" LANDING, AND THE SAME PATTERN HAD TO BE ADOPTED FOR THE LEYTE OPERATION, SINCE THERE WAS NOT TIME TO CHANGE THE LOADING. CONSEQUENTLY, THE USUAL TRUCKS AND OTHER VEHICLES NORMALLY SUPPLIED THE SHORE PARTY FOR "BEACH" LANDINGS WERE NOT AVAILABLE IN ANYWHERE NEAR THE USUAL NUMBERS.\*\*\*

It was also due, in part, to the failure of the beach lighting systems which caused the ORANGE and BLUE Beaches to be

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\* Action Report CTG 79.2, Leyte Operation, Serial 0032, November 4th, 1944, Part 4, Section 1, Paragraph 6.

\*\* Ibid., Part 4, Section 4, Paragraph 2.

\*\*\* Action Report CTG 79.4, Leyte Operation, Serial 0126, October 28th, 1944.

relatively dark whereas the neighboring beaches (YELLOW and VIOLET) were lighted up like Christmas trees.\*

(c) Operations of CTU 77.2.2 (Fire Support Unit South), CTG 79.11 (Commander Screen), October 20th.

(1) Operations of CTU 77.2.2.

At 0707 CTU 77.2.2, who had already reported for duty with CTF 79, was conducting the pre-arranged bombardment of the selected target areas. At this time the PENNSYLVANIA, TENNESSEE, MINNEAPOLIS, LOUISVILLE, DENVER were firing and at 0740 the BRYANT commenced firing. Enemy reaction thus far had consisted only of sporadic and generally ineffective mortar and small arms fire.

TU 77.2.2, at this time, consisted of two groups--ABLE and BAKER.

Group ABLE, which was to provide fire support for CTG 79.1, consisted of the PENNSYLVANIA, LOUISVILLE, MINNEAPOLIS, DENVER, NEWCOMB, BENNION, HEYWOOD L. EDWARDS, RICHARD P. LEARY, HALFORD (the latter two destroyers had completed night harassing fires) and LEUTZE (the latter from TG 79.11); Group BAKER, which was to provide fire support for CTG 79.2, consisted of TENNESSEE, CALIFORNIA, HONOLULU, COLUMBIA, PORTLAND, ROBINSON (the latter destroyer had returned from operating with TG 77.5), BLACK (which had replaced the damaged ROSS), ALBERT W. GRANT, CLAXTON (the latter two destroyers had returned from operating with TU 77.2.1), BRYANT, THORN and WELLES.\*\* The fire support missions were assigned by CTG's 79.1 and 79.2.\*\*\*

At approximately 0800 the CALIFORNIA, COLUMBIA and PORTLAND relieved the PENNSYLVANIA, TENNESSEE, MINNEAPOLIS, LOUISVILLE and HONOLULU, and with the HALFORD and WELLES commenced firing. Meanwhile, the relieved ships retired and, preparatory toward resuming fire, reserviced their aircraft which they were employing for spotting.\*\*\* At 0900 the HALFORD ceased firing.

At 0915 all of the heavy ships either continued or resumed their fire against the southern beaches in final preparation for the scheduled landing at 1000. The HEYWOOD L. EDWARDS and the RICHARD P. LEARY soon followed.

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\* Report of CTU 79.4.5 (Transport Group Beachmaster), Leyte Operation, October 20th - 22nd, 1944 to CTG 79.4, Enclosure (B) to Action Report CTG 79.4, Leyte Operation, Serial 0126, October 28th, 1944.

\*\* CTG 77.2 Operation Plan No. 2-44, Serial 00081, October 5th, 1944.

\*\*\* Action Report COMCRUDIV 4 (CTG 77.2), Bombardment and Capture of Leyte Island, Philippine Islands, October 16th - 24th, 1944, Serial 00147, November 5th, 1944.



At 0955 those ships of TU 77.2.2 which had been firing on the landing beaches and which had no assigned targets at this time, ceased firing. The CALIFORNIA, PENNSYLVANIA, LOUISVILLE, MINNEAPOLIS, HONOLULU, PORTLAND, and THORN continued firing but shifted fire to targets inland and to the flanks.

At 1000 the TENNESSEE, NEWCOMB, BENNION, HEYWOOD L. EDWARDS, and RICHARD P. LEARY likewise resumed scheduled fire on targets inland and to the flanks. At this time the DENVER, COLUMBIA, ROBINSON, BLACK, ALBERT W. GRANT and BRYANT stood by for call fire.

At approximately 1040 the CALIFORNIA, HEYWOOD L. EDWARDS, and, at 1050, the PORTLAND ceased firing. The CALIFORNIA and PORTLAND then stood by for call fire.

The above call fire ships were assigned as follows: (1) the CALIFORNIA, DENVER, ROBINSON and BLACK to Attack Group ABLE (TG 79.1) for call fire from SEVENTH Infantry Division Shore Fire Control Parties established at the beachhead, and (2) the PORTLAND, COLUMBIA, ALBERT W. GRANT and BRYANT to Attack Group BAKER (TG 79.2) for call fire from NINETY-SIXTH Infantry Division Shore Fire Control Parties.

At approximately 1100 the LOUISVILLE, PENNSYLVANIA, TENNESSEE, MINNEAPOLIS, NEWCOMB, BENNION and RICHARD P. LEARY ceased scheduled fires.

Meanwhile, the HONOLULU and the THORN continued firing. The THORN ceased firing at 1200, at which time the WELLES commenced firing.\* The HONOLULU ceased scheduled firing at 1220, at which time the TENNESSEE commenced firing.\*\*

For the most part, this completed all scheduled fire support for TU 77.2.2. The TENNESSEE, however, completed firing at 1440, at which time the CLAXTON commenced firing. The WELLES then completed firing at 1540 while the CLAXTON continued firing until 1609. Other support firing was accomplished by these ships during the day as requested by the call fire method.

At 1615, learning that the HONOLULU had just been torpedoed by an enemy plane, CTU 77.2.2 proceeded, in the LOUISVILLE, to render assistance, although en route he found that COMCRUDIV NINE, in HONOLULU, had the salvage situation under control. At this same time he learned that CTG 79.2 had relieved the COLUMBIA of her fire support mission

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\* Action Report THORN, Leyte Bombardment, October 18th - 24th, 1944, Serial 044, October 30th, 1944.

\*\* Action Report HONOLULU, Bombardment and Fire Support of Leyte, Philippine Islands, October 12th - 29th, 1944, Serial 0249, November 11th, 1944.

at her own request to assist the HONOLULU.\* (After receiving the HONOLULU plane, the COLUMBIA by 1721 had returned to her fire support station).

During the late afternoon the HEYWOOD L. EDWARDS, HALFORD, LEUTZE and WELLES relieved the WALKER, ABBOT, BRAINE, GANSEVOORT and HALE in the antisubmarine screen around the Southern Transport Area\*\* and the latter five destroyers were ordered to report to CTF 79 for FS duty.

At 1830 CTU 77.2.2 received a message by voice radio (from CTF 79) that the night assignment of FS ships was as follows: For TG 79.1, PENNSYLVANIA, MINNEAPOLIS, DENVER, BLACK, ABBOT and WALKER; for TG 79.2, PORTLAND, COLUMBIA, CLAXTON, BRAINE and GANSEVOORT.\*\*\* The HALE, although omitted from this dispatch, later joined this group.\*\* Of these ships the PENNSYLVANIA, MINNEAPOLIS, DENVER, PORTLAND, COLUMBIA and CLAXTON were from his own task unit whereas the remaining five destroyers (BLACK, ABBOT, BRAINE, GANSEVOORT and WALKER) as well as the HALE were from TG 79.11. As will be shown later, he was somewhat surprised at receiving this message because he was under the impression that, in accordance with CTF 79's Attack Plan,\*\*\*\* he (CTU 77.2.2) would assign harassing and FS ships to TG's 79.1 and 79.2.

It seems clear that he not only expected to assign the harassing and gunfire support ships as requested by the attack group commanders but also expected that any changes in the composition of his fire support unit would be made through him. Thus, in his opinion, the destroyers from CTG 79.11 should have been directed to report to him for fire support mission assignment. This concept was based on CTF 79's Attack Plan wherein CTG 79.11 was instructed: "When directed transfer ships to Fire Support Unit South in exchange for ships whose bombardment ammunition has been expended."\*\*\*\* Instead, he now found himself completely by-passed with no authority whatsoever in the designation of what ships should be assigned as gunfire support ships. He became concerned over the situation and deliberated as to whether or not to query CTF 79 in regard to the matter.

At 1943 he directed (a) his heavy ships (less those assigned to Attack Groups ABLE and BAKER for call fire) to lie to during the night in an area generally south and southeast of the Southern Transport Area and inside the transport screen, (b) COMDESRON FIFTY-SIX to dispatch one destroyer to cover the mouth of the Cadacan River near Abuyog against possible enemy torpedo boat activity, the remaining destroyers (except those assigned for call fire) and SAN CARLOS to lie to in an area to the southeast of the outer transport screen, and (c) all ships to be on the alert against attacks coming from the south.

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- \* Action Report COLUMBIA, Bombardment Report, Leyte Island, October 17th - 24th, 1944, Serial 012, November 1st, 1944.  
 \*\* Action Report CTU 79.11.1 (COMDESRON 48), Leyte Gulf, October 20th - 24th, 1944, Serial 080, October 30th, 1944.  
 \*\*\* CTF 79 (Naval Gunfire Control Net) Voice Radio Message 1830/I October 20th, 1944 to TF 79.  
 \*\*\*\* CTF 79 Attack Plan No. A304-44, No Serial, October 2nd, 1944.



Accordingly, the fire support ships operated as indicated above during the night. The only enemy activity, aside from that on the ground, in opposition to the landings occurred at about dusk when numerous bogeys were reported in the vicinity, a number of which were fired upon with negative results.\*

(2) Operations of CTG 79.11, October 20th.

CTG 79.11 (COMDESRON FIFTY-FOUR) had been directed by CTF 79 to screen TF 79 in Leyte Gulf. In this same directive, he, as well as his subordinate commanders (COMDESRON's FORTY-EIGHT and FORTY-NINE), were advised to make this screening plan effective upon the arrival of the transports in the transport area. Therefore, at 0722 the units of TG 79.11 proceeded to assigned stations (Plate VIII) as follows:\*\*

(a) Stations One to Seven inclusive, units of DESRON FIFTY-FOUR as follows:

(1) Stations One and Two, but to seaward of Area SWEEP - McNAIR and MERTZ.

(2) Station Three - MELVIN.

(3) Stations Four to Seven inclusive - McGOWAN, REMEY, MONSSEN and McDERMUT in that order.\*\*\*

(b) Stations Nine to Eighteen inclusive units of DESRON FORTY-EIGHT (TU 79.11.1), as follows:\*\*\*\*

(1) Stations Nine to Thirteen inclusive - KIDD, CHANNING, ABBOT, GANSEVOORT, and HALE in that order.\*\*\*\*\*

(2) Stations Fourteen to Eighteen inclusive - ERBEN, WALKER, BLACK and BRAINE, but exact stations, not fully known.

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\* Action Report CALIFORNIA, Participation in Operations off Island of Leyte, P.I., October 19th - 24th, 1944, Serial 0025, November 8th, 1944; also Action Report COLUMBIA, Bombardment Report, Leyte Island, October 17th - 24th, 1944, Serial 012, November 1st, 1944; Action Report LOUISVILLE, Seizure and Occupation of Leyte Area, October 17th-24th, 1944, Serial 0044, November 1st, 1944; War Diary SCHROEDER, October 20th, 1944; War Diary PORTLAND, October 20th, 1944.

\*\* Action Report COMDESRON 48 (CTU 79.11.1), Leyte Gulf, Philippine Islands, October 20th - 24th, 1944, Serial 0800, October 20th, 1944.

\*\*\* Action Report COMDESRON 54 (CTG 79.11), Attack on Leyte Island, Central Philippines, October 20th - 24th, 1944, Serial 059, November 12th, 1944.

\*\*\*\* CTF 79 Attack Plan A304-44, October 2nd, 1944, Annex "I".

\*\*\*\*\* Action Report and War Diaries of the ships concerned.

(c) Stations Nineteen to Twenty-Six inclusive, units of DESRON FORTY-NINE (TU 79.11.2), as follows:\*

HALLIGAN, TWIGGS, HARADEN, SPROSTON, PICKING, ISHERWOOD, MacDONOUGH, and CHARLES J. BADGER in that order.\*\*

(d) Radar Picket Station Number Two (sometimes listed as Screening Station No. 8) was occupied by the WICKES.\*

\* \* \*

The above shows that the basic plan provided for three screens (1) the outermost to be maintained by DESRON FIFTY-FOUR (2) the intermediate to be maintained by DESRON FORTY-EIGHT and (3) the inner to be maintained by DESRON FORTY-NINE. No difficulty was encountered in maintaining the outermost screen. However, due to the necessity for providing destroyers from both DESRON FORTY-EIGHT and DESRON FORTY-NINE for FS missions it was not possible at all times to maintain the intermediate screen. Therefore, it was considered more advisable to maintain the inner screen with about twelve destroyers than to sacrifice inner protection in order to maintain the intermediate screen. COMDESRON FORTY-NINE (CTU 79.112) as the senior officer took active charge of the disposition of ships in the inner screen and maintained this control for about four and one half days. Although he succeeded in general in maintaining the changing twelve ship screen throughout these days he had no permanency of detail and therefore the composition of the screen was repeatedly changing. This was because the ships of the screen were being constantly ordered by CTF 79 to various independent assignments.\*\*\*

In general the inner screen then was composed of the ships of DESRONs FORTY-EIGHT and FORTY-NINE although, on occasions, the screen was reinforced by ships of DESRON FIFTY-SIX and even by APD's and DMS's.

Because of this the screens will be dropped as independent units in this study and will be referred to only in relation to the operations of other commanders and notably of CTF 79.

(d) Operations of CTG 70.1 (Motor Torpedo Boat Group), October 20th.

CTG 70.1 continued without incident toward Leyte Gulf along Route SHEARWATER and at 2400 was bearing 110°(T), distant seventy miles from the entrance.

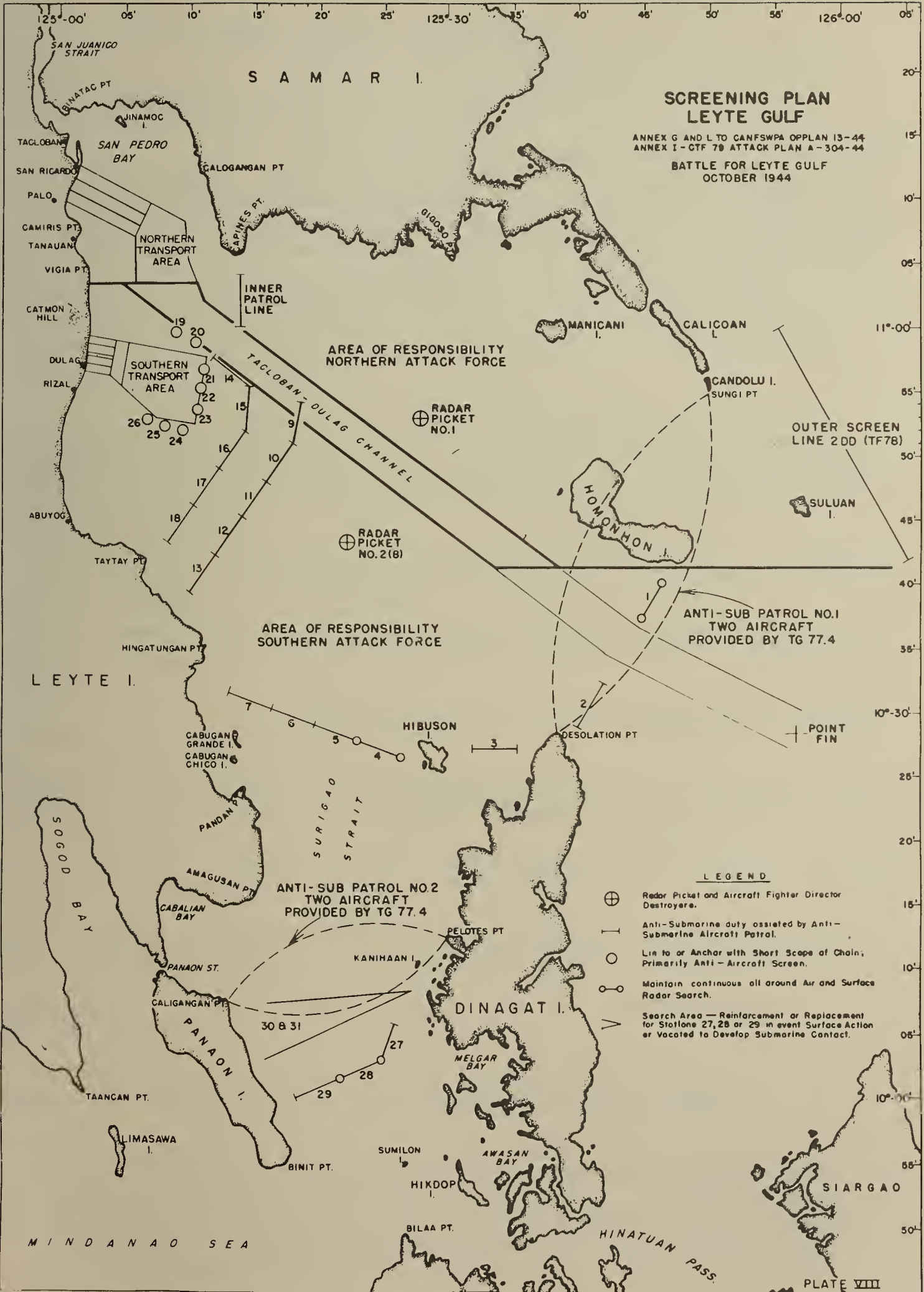
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\* CTF 79 Attack Plan A304-44, October 2nd, 1944, Annex "I".

\*\* Action Report and War Diaries of the ships concerned.

\*\*\* Action Report CTU 79.11.2, Report on the Assault on Leyte Island, Philippines, Serial 0121, October 30th, 1944.





**SCREENING PLAN  
LEYTE GULF**

ANNEX G AND L TO CANFSWPA OPPLAN 13-44  
ANNEX I - CTF 78 ATTACK PLAN A-304-44  
**BATTLE FOR LYTE GULF  
OCTOBER 1944**

**LEGEND**

- ⊕ Radar Picket and Aircraft Fighter Director Destroyers.
- Anti-Submarine duty assisted by Anti-Submarine Aircraft Patrol.
- Line to or Anchor with Short Scope of Chain; Primarily Anti-Aircraft Screen.
- Maintain continuous all around Air and Surface Radar Search.
- ▷ Search Area — Reinforcement or Replacement for Stations 27, 28 or 29 in event Surface Action or Votated to Develop Submarine Contact.





## (b) Submarine Force, SEVENTH Fleet.

(1) Operations of CTF 71 (Submarines, West Australia)  
October 20th, 1944 (Plates IX, X, XI, XII, XIII).

The submarines of TF 71 operated normally. CTF 71 gave no new instructions to any of his command which would make any important change in the general overall deployment for this day, and therefore the comments made in Volume I\* concerning the inadequacy of the SOWESPAC submarine deployment to accomplish adequately the assigned objectives still obtained, but with greater force because of the fact that as will be shown later (a) some of the submarines were not on station and (b) some had already retired without replacement. No contacts of unusual importance were made, although Japanese aircraft on patrol were observed by submarines operating off central Luzon.

It may seem surprising but, if any credence can be given to his War Diary, CTF 71 was either not entirely familiar with the above facts, or chose to ignore them. In support of this view it seems wise, at this point, to quote from his War Diary as to the location of his submarines on D-day.\*\*

"(a) COD, out of torpedoes, but retained for reconnaissance patrol north of Lingayen Gulf.

"(b) BREAM and GUITARRO covering west and northwest approaches to Manila.

"(c) ANGLER and BLUEGILL covering southwest approaches to Manila and Verde Island Passage.

"(d) ROCK and BERGALL patrolling on line between Cape Varella and northwest corner of Dangerous Ground.

"(e) DARTER covering southern entrance Palawan Passage and DACE covering western approaches Balabac Strait.

"(f) HAMMERHEAD covering southwest approaches Brunei Bay. GURNARD, en route same area, in vicinity Great Natoena Island.

"(g) LAPON east of Coron Bay. RATON southbound in Sulu Sea.

"(h) PADDLE assigned Balikpapan lifeguard, patrolling between Cape Mangkalahat and North Watcher when not so engaged.

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\* Volume I, Battle for Leyte Gulf (NavPers 91973) Naval War College, 1953, Chapter II(e) 2(b), Pages 80-81.

\*\* War Diary CTF 71, October 1944, Summary of Operations of Submarines TF 71 in Support of KING II (Leyte) October 9th - 27th, 1944, Serial 00328, November 17th, 1944.

"(i) BATFISH northbound in Makassar Strait headed for patrol eastern Sulu Sea.

"(j) HMS TANTIVY patrolling lower Makassar Strait; HMS STOIC patrolling Java Sea, and HMS STORM patrolling east of Saleier Strait. HMS SIRDAR patrolling southern approaches Sunda Strait.

What are the facts? The facts are "Plate IX" that, of the above stations, only (c) ANGLER and BLUEGILL, (d) ROCK and BERGALL, (f) HAMMERHEAD and GURNARD, (g) LAPON and RATON, (h) PADDLE, and (j) TANTIVY, STOIC, STORM and SIRDAR, were correct. The other stations: (a) COD, (b) BREAM and GUITARRO, (e) DARTER and DACE, and (i) BATFISH, were incorrect, and the BONEFISH, which was off NW Luzon, was not mentioned at all. Actually, (1) the COD, as shown on Diagram B, was well south of Lingayen Gulf and more nearly in the vicinity of Subic Bay, whereas the BONEFISH was in the station listed as being occupied by the COD, (2) the BREAM and GUITARRO were at midnight (0000 October 20th) in the southern Sulu Sea at which time the BREAM was 480 miles from her station off Manila, and the GUITARRO, which was to the southward of the BREAM, was just transiting Sibutu Passage, (3) the DARTER, which, rather than the DACE, was assigned the patrol of Balabac Strait, had departed Balabac Strait for a rendezvous with the DACE in central Palawan Passage and at midnight (0000 October 20th) was about eighty miles to the northward of her assigned station. (Diagram B, also Plate IX). At this time the Japanese FIRST Striking Force was but 245 miles to the westward (Diagram B) and (4) the BATFISH, instead of being in Makassar Strait, was just entering the Flores Sea and, instead of being en route patrol the Sulu Sea, was en route to A-8.\*

Why was this so? The answer seems to have been that (a) the stations indicated in the War Diary were, in general, the stations originally reported to CTF 77 (Commander Central Philippines Attack Force) as those which his submarines would occupy for the period October 15th - 25th,\*\* (b) CTF 71, except for minor modifications, appears to have considered that these stations were, ipso facto, so occupied whether or not it was humanly possible for some of his submarines to arrive on schedule (Plate X), (c) several submarines notably RAY and RATON had retired from the area without replacement and without conducting the planned patrols as regards the duration,\*\*\* and (d) several other submarines, notably the DARTER and the DACE, which were in northern Palawan Passage where they were searching for merchant shipping, were not on station.\*\*\*\*

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\* CTG 71.1 Dispatch 181122 October 1944 to All Submarines.

\*\* CTF 71 Dispatch 101426 October 1944 to COM7THFLT and COMSOWESPAC.

\*\*\* War Patrol Report RAY, Report of 6TH War Patrol, Serial 018, December 8th, 1944; War Patrol Report RATON, Report of 6TH War Patrol, No Serial, December 1st, 1944.

\*\*\*\* War Patrol Report DARTER, Report of 4TH War Patrol, Serial 020, November 5th, 1944; War Patrol Report DACE, Report of 5TH War Patrol Serial 09, November 6th, 1944.















There were three coordinated attack groups (wolf packs). These were the BREAM and GUITARRO, the BLUEGILL and ANGLER, and the DACE and DARTER. As pointed out above, the BREAM and GUITARRO had not as yet arrived on station but, instead, were proceeding independently to their stations.

IT SEEMS WELL AT THIS TIME TO POINT OUT THAT THIS PRACTICE, WHICH WAS IN VOGUE IN SOWESPAC, OF HAVING THE SUBMARINES, WHICH WERE TO COMPRISE A COORDINATED ATTACK GROUP (WOLF PACK), PROCEED TO THE DESIGNATED AREA INDEPENDENTLY, AND NOT FORM THE ATTACK GROUP UNTIL THEIR ARRIVAL IN THE AREA, DIFFERED MATERIALLY FROM THE PRACTICE IN SUBPAC. THE SUBPAC SUBMARINES PROCEEDED INDEPENDENTLY TO A DESIGNATED RENDEZVOUS, WHICH RENDEZVOUS WAS IN RELATIVELY SAFE WATERS, AND THENCE PROCEEDED TOWARD THE DESIGNATED AREA AS A COORDINATED ATTACK GROUP (WOLF PACK). CERTAINLY, OTHER THINGS BEING EQUAL, THE SUBPAC PRACTICE WAS CLEARLY THE BETTER PRACTICE. WHY, THEN, WAS THIS LATTER PRACTICE NOT FOLLOWED IN SOWESPAC? WHILE THE ANSWERS ARE NOT ENTIRELY APPARENT, EXPERIENCED SOWESPAC SUBMARINE OFFICERS STATE THAT AMONG THEM MUST BE INCLUDED THE FACT THAT THESE SUBMARINES PRIOR TO ARRIVING IN THEIR DESIGNATED AREAS, WERE FORCED (A) TO TRANSIT ENEMY WATERS FOR LONG DISTANCES (B) TO PASS THROUGH NARROW, SHALLOW AND RESTRICTED WATERS IN SEVERAL PLACES WHERE THEY WERE WELL WITHIN RANGE OF ENEMY AIRCRAFT (C) SINCE EACH SOWESPAC SUBMARINE COMMANDING OFFICER HAD HIS OWN PREFERRED METHOD OF PASSING THROUGH SUCH DANGEROUS WATERS, IT WAS CONSIDERED ADVISABLE TO PERMIT HIM TO PROCEED INDEPENDENTLY, AND (D) SIMILAR CONDITIONS DID NOT OBTAIN IN GENERAL IN SUBPAC.

CTF 71 was aware of the fact that the Allied main landings were to occur this day on Leyte Island. He does not appear to have issued any instructions thereon to his command, presumably in order to maintain security.

During the forenoon he issued information and instructions as follows: (a) at 0024 he informed the TANTIVY that a plane had reported many large ships stationary in a bay (Latitude  $04^{\circ} - 02'S$ , Longitude  $119^{\circ} - 37'E$ ) at 1300 on the preceding day,\* and (b) as CTG 71.1, he advised the Commanding Officer, STOIC at 1156 that (1) since the ZWAARDVISCH had departed Area E-8, that area was available to him, and (2) the TANTALUS would enter his area en route patrol station on October 23rd, which day was the scheduled departure date for the STOIC.\*\*

At 1446 he received a dispatch from CTF 17 to the effect that (a) the COBIA would pass to CTF 71 at 1800 October 21st in the vicinity of Latitude  $18^{\circ} - 30'N$ , Longitude  $118^{\circ} - 00'E$ , and, from there on, would be operating under CTF 71's dispatch 191147, and (b) (1) the BARBEL was out of torpedoes and, since she required fuel, he planned to send her to Saipan for fuel, torpedoes and any vital repairs prior to sending her to

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\* CTF 71 Dispatch 191524 October 1944 to TG 71.7 Z4L/1

\*\* CTG 71.1 Dispatch 200256 October 1944 to TG 71.1, TG 71.7, Z4L/2.

Fremantle for refit, (2) he believed the BARBEL should be capable of approximately ten days patrol en route and therefore he requested patrol instructions for her.\*

Since this dispatch was highly cooperative and indicated a clear appreciation of the necessity for employing submarines to the fullest whenever practicable, it seems likely that CTF 71 received this dispatch with satisfaction and commenced estimating the situation to determine where the BARBEL might best be employed during the ten days in question. Of course, he realized that she would not be available immediately as the time required for the voyage to Saipan, the delay there for needed repairs, and the time required to return to the SOWESPAC area would likely be a matter of several weeks.

At 1712 he informed all submarines SEVENTHFLT that submarines on patrol had recently reported there had been three battery explosions of Mark 18 torpedoes in the tubes, due to the concentration of hydrogen, and prescribed certain technical remedial measures to be observed.\*\*

During the afternoon and early evening he issued information and instructions as follows: (a) as CTG 71.1 he advised his command at 1211 that the CERO (of TF 72) on a special mission was routed through SOWESPAC area passing through Sibutu Passage, Mindoro Strait and north along Longitude 119° - 00'E to Area A-2 where she was scheduled to arrive on October 25th,\*\*\* (b) advised CTF 17 at 1651 that (1) BONEFISH would shift his Op-control to him at 0900 October 21st, (2) COD would shift his Op-control at 2100 October 26th in Latitude 18° - 30'N, Longitude 120° - 00'E, and (3) both had been instructed in the CTF 17 procedures relating thereto,\*\*\*\* (c) at 1808 he advised the Naval Officer-in-Charge Fremantle and the Air Officer Commanding Western Australia that, upon completion of exercises in submarine Exercise Area ABLE at about midnight, the submarines HAKE and GROWLER would proceed northward,\*\*\*\*\* and (d) at 1924 he (1) advised the PADDLE that, although his information thereon was meager, he knew that air strikes on Balikpapan were planned for October 23rd and 27th and he planned to order her home as soon as possible after October 27th, (2) directed her when not on lifeguard duty to conduct her patrol between Cape Mangkalahat and North Watcher Island.\*\*\*\*\*

WHAT ACTION HE TOOK IN THE MATTER OF A LACK OF INFORMATION REGARDING AIR STRIKES IN THE BALIKPAPAN AREA IS NOT KNOWN. IT SEEMS CLEAR, HOWEVER, FROM THIS DISPATCH THAT HE TOOK LITTLE, IF ANY ACTION. IF

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\* CTF 17 Dispatch 200233 October 1944 to CTF 71, info CINCPAC, CTF 72, COM7THFLT.  
 \*\* COMSUBS7THFLT Dispatch 200812 October 1944 to U.S. Submarines 7THFLT, info COMSUBRONS 12, 16, 18, and CTF 72.  
 \*\*\* CTG 71.1 Dispatch 200311 October 1944 to TG 71.1 (CERO).  
 \*\*\*\* CTF 71 Dispatch 200751 October 1944 to CTF 17, info CINCPAC, CTF 72, COM7THFLT.  
 \*\*\*\*\* CTF 71 Dispatch 200908 October 1944 to NOIC Fremantle, AOC WA.  
 \*\*\*\*\* CTF 71 Dispatch 201024 October 1944 to CTG 71.1 (PADDLE).



THIS WAS SO IT WAS UNWISE FOR NO COMMANDING OFFICER CAN BE EXPECTED TO PERFORM LIFEGUARD DUTIES EFFICIENTLY IF HE IS NOT SUPPLIED WITH ADEQUATE INFORMATION THEREON. IN THIS CONNECTION, PRESENT DAY INSTRUCTIONS (1957) STATE, AMONG OTHER THINGS, THAT REQUESTS FOR LIFEGUARD DUTIES SHOULD INCLUDE (A) PLANNED DATE OR DATES OF MISSION, (B) ESTIMATED TIME SCHEDULE OF FLIGHTS, (C) TYPE OF AIRCRAFT INVOLVED, (D) PRIMARY AND ALTERNATE TARGETS, (E) ROUTES TO BE FLOWN TO AND FROM TARGETS, AND (F) RADIO CALLS OF FLIGHT LEADERS (EXCEPT FOR LARGE SCALE FLIGHTS).\*

At 2037, realizing that the date of the BARBEL's return from Saipan was indeterminate, he replied to CTF 17 to the effect that the BARBEL, upon passing the Op-Control position (where she passed to the control of CTF 71), Latitude 18° - 30'N, Longitude 118° - 00'E, (a) was to proceed to Area A-7 (Which area was bounded by Latitudes 14° - 15'N and 16° - 30'N and Longitudes 118° - 00'E and 115° - 00'E), and (b) at dark on the tenth day after passing to CTF 71 was to proceed to Fremantle\*\* as instructed in CTF 71's 191147 October 1944.\*\*\*

At 2051 he advised CTG 30.1\*\*\*\* that at 0900 the following morning his submarines would be patrolling as follows: (a) the COD, BREAM, GUITARRO, ANGLER, BLUEGILL off west Luzon; (b) the ROCK and BERGALL west of Dangerous Ground; (c) the DACE and DARTER west of Balabac Strait; (d) the HAMMERHEAD and GURNARD off northwest Borneo; (e) the RATON and LAPON southbound in the Sulu Sea; (f) the STOIC in the Java Sea; (g) the PADDLE and TANTIVY in Makassar Strait; (h) the STORM in the Flores Sea; (i) the SIRDAR south of Sunda Strait; (j) the ZWAARDVISCH southbound south of Lombok Strait; (k) the BATFISH northbound through Makassar Strait; (l) the TANTALUS northbound in Latitude 15° - 00'S, Longitude 114° - 45'E.\*\*\*\*\*

IT SHOULD BE CLEAR FROM THE DISCUSSION GIVEN PREVIOUSLY CONCERNING THE LOCATION OF TF 71 SUBMARINES THAT THIS DISPATCH SHOWS A SIMILAR LACK OF CORRECT INFORMATION.

At about 2100 he received a dispatch from the Commanding Officer BLUEGILL that he had expended his torpedoes in an abortive attack against at least two cargo ships and one subchaser skirting Cape Calavite on course 240°(T), speed ten knots, and that his fuel on board was 43,000 gallons.\*\*\*\*\*

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\* Submarine Operations (NWP 23), Department of the Navy, Office of the Chief of Naval Operations, 1953, Paragraph 961(a).  
 \*\* CTF 71 Dispatch 201137 October 1944 to CTF 17, info CTF 72, COM7THFLT.  
 \*\*\* CTF 71 Dispatch 191147 October 1944 to CTF 17, info CTF 72, COM7THFLT.  
 \*\*\*\* TG 30.1 was the Flagship Group 3RDFLT, commanded by Captain Carl F. Holden, USN.  
 \*\*\*\*\* CTF 71 Dispatch 201151 October 1944 to CTG 30.1.  
 \*\*\*\*\* War Diary CTF 71, October 20th, 1944; also War Patrol Report BLUEGILL, Report of 3RD War Patrol, Serial 039, November 25th, 1944.

During the night and until midnight he issued information and instructions as follows:

(a) At 2201 he advised (1) the HAMMERHEAD, that the GURNARD was assigned patrol areas D4 and D7 and (2) the GURNARD, that the HAMMERHEAD was reconnoitering off Brunei Bay.\*

(b) At 2213, as CTG 71.1, he notified his task groups that the HAKE and the GROWLER had departed Fremantle on this day en route Area A4 where they would form a wolf pack with the HARDHEAD, and gave the route via Exmouth Gulf, Lombok and Makassar Straits, Sibutu Passage and Mindoro Strait.\*\*

(c) At 2343 he (a) cancelled his dispatch orders to CTG 71.5 (Commander Advance Base Group ABLE) based at Mios Woendi, to make voyage repairs there on the RAY for her further movement to Pearl Harbor and (b) directed that commander to complete the repairs at Mios Woendi and to return the RAY to patrol.\*\*\*

Finally, since on the previous day he had issued two orders to the lifeguard submarines and had issued additional instructions to them he knew that the BONEFISH, COD and LAPON had completed, as of sunset, their lifeguard assignments and that he would have only three submarines left on lifeguard duty. One of these was the PADDLE, which as pointed out previously, was to conduct lifeguard duties in Makassar Strait on at least October 23rd and October 27th. The other two were the ROCK and BERGALL, which had been directed to act, in a sense, as lifeguards for the China-based planes searching the sea areas to the northward of their patrol line.\*\*\*\* He did not know that just before midnight these two submarines had departed this area and had headed toward the sea areas south of Saigon.

The operations of the submarines in this volume will generally be discussed as groups assigned to a particular area or as individual submarines depending on which arrangement appears the more desirable. They will be discussed chronologically as presented in CTF 71's dispatch of October 10th, wherein he advised COMSEVENTHFLT as to the planned disposition of TF 71 submarines, as discussed in Volume I of this analysis and as shown on Plate X. However, submarines operating in areas south of the Java Sea such as the SIRDAR, which was operating in Sunda Strait, and the submarines which had broken down, such as the RAY, which was approaching Mios Woendi for repairs, will not normally be included. Contacts on shipping will be indicated only if important -- in general, over 500 tons.

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\* CTF 71 Dispatch 201301 October 1944 to TG 71.1 (GURNARD, HAMMERHEAD).

\*\* CTG 71.1 Dispatch 201313 October 1944 to TG's 71.1, 71.7, Z4L/2.

\*\*\* CTF 71 Dispatch 201443 October 1944 to CTG 71.5, info COMINCH, CINCPAC, COM7THFLT.

\*\*\*\* CTF 71 Dispatch 160656 October 1944 to TG 71.1, Z4L.



In discussing the submarine operations the following considerations have been guiding factors:

(1) Effective average contact ranges.\*

(a) On independent merchant ships.

(1) Radar.

(a) Surface - six miles.

(b) Submerged - none.

(2) Periscope - five miles.

(3) Sonar - QB/JK two and one-half miles. JP three and three-quarter miles.

(b) On escorted combatant ships.

(1) Radar.

(a) Surface - ten miles.

(b) Submerged - none.

(2) Periscope - six miles.

(3) Sonar - QB/JK five and one-half miles. JP seven and one-half miles.

(2) Basic instructions by dispatch:

(a) At 0052 October 11th all submarines of SOWESPAC were directed as follows:

Events next fifteen days necessitate that you do not depart assigned areas without giving us prior notice. Some adjustments of areas and extensions of patrol will probably be necessary. Those now en route home, keep on coming.\*\*

(b) This was followed at:

(1) 1418 October 11th by instructions to RAY, info others, which included the phrase "early advice movements enemy combatant ships is extremely important",\*\*\*

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\* Submarine Warfare Instructions, USF-9, Navy Department 1946, Page 16-5, Paragraph 1604.

\*\* CTF 71 Dispatch 101552 October 1944 to TG 71.1, Z4L.

\*\*\* CTF 71 Dispatch 110518 October 1944 to CTG 71.1, Z4L.

(2) 1707 October 11th by instructions to BLUEGILL and ANGLER, info others, which included the phrase "early advice movements combatant units important",\*

(3) 2129 October 16th by instructions to TANTIVY, info others, which included the phrase "advise earliest feasible any enemy combatant vessel contacts",\*\*

(4) 1723 October 17th by additional instructions to the TANTIVY, info others, which included the phrases, "break radio silence to advise any contact with enemy combatant ships such as cruisers or larger. If a large task force is sighted sending a contact report is primary importance. If a lesser contact is made attack first, if possible".  
\*\*\*

(c) The above messages under (a) and (b) should have clearly indicated to all submarine commanders the nature of forthcoming events even if, as seems most likely, they did not know of the Leyte operation.

(a) BREAM and GUITARRO:

It will be recalled (from Volume I) that (a) three submarines (BREAM, RATON and GUITARRO) had been originally ordered to proceed independently to form a coordinated attack group (wolf pack) under the Commanding Officer BREAM, upon their arrival in Areas A3 - A7, and (b) the GUITARRO had been detached from this group on October 14th to patrol the Sulu Sea, south of Latitude 11° - 00'N.\*\*\*\* This had reduced the group to two.

It will also be recalled (from Volume II) that, because of the fact that the RATON, which had expended all but four of her torpedoes against a convoy during the night of October 18th - 19th, had been directed on October 19th to retire to Mios Woendi to reload and await orders, the GUITARRO's orders to patrol the Sulu Sea had been cancelled and she had been ordered to carry out her original orders to form a coordinated attack group (wolf pack) with the BREAM in Areas A3 - A7.\*\*\*\*\*

(1) The BREAM, which at the commencement of this day was in lower Sulu Sea and was on a northerly course, continued on toward her patrol station. She remained on the surface at all times except when forced to submerge by aircraft. The days' operations were, in general, uneventful. At 0735 she sighted what she took to be an unfamiliar periscope

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\* CTF 71 Dispatch 110807 October 1944 to CTG 71.1, Z4L.  
 \*\* CTF 71 Dispatch 161229 October 1944 to TG's 71.1, 71.7, Z4L/2.  
 \*\*\* CTF 71 Dispatch 170823 October 1944 to TG 71.7, Z4L/1.  
 \*\*\*\* Volume I, Battle for Leyte Gulf (NavPers 91973), Naval War College, 1953, Operations of BREAM, RATON and GUITARRO.  
 \*\*\*\*\* Volume II, Battle for Leyte Gulf (NavPers 92194), Naval War College, 1955, Operations of BREAM, RATON and GUITARRO, October 19th.



**SUBMARINE OPERATING AREA CLASSIFICATIONS**

SOUTHWEST PACIFIC & ADJACENT CENTRAL PACIFIC


OCTOBER 8 th. - 31 st. inc. 1944


(APPENDIX 5 TO ANNEX "L" TO CANF, SWPA OP-PLAN 13-44)


COMSOWESPAC ZONE NOTICES 3,4,5,6,7,8,9,11

BATTLE FOR LEYTE GULF  
OCTOBER 1944

All areas submarine patrol zones unless otherwise indicated:

Dotted areas indicate air surface zone 

Hatched areas indicate joint zone 

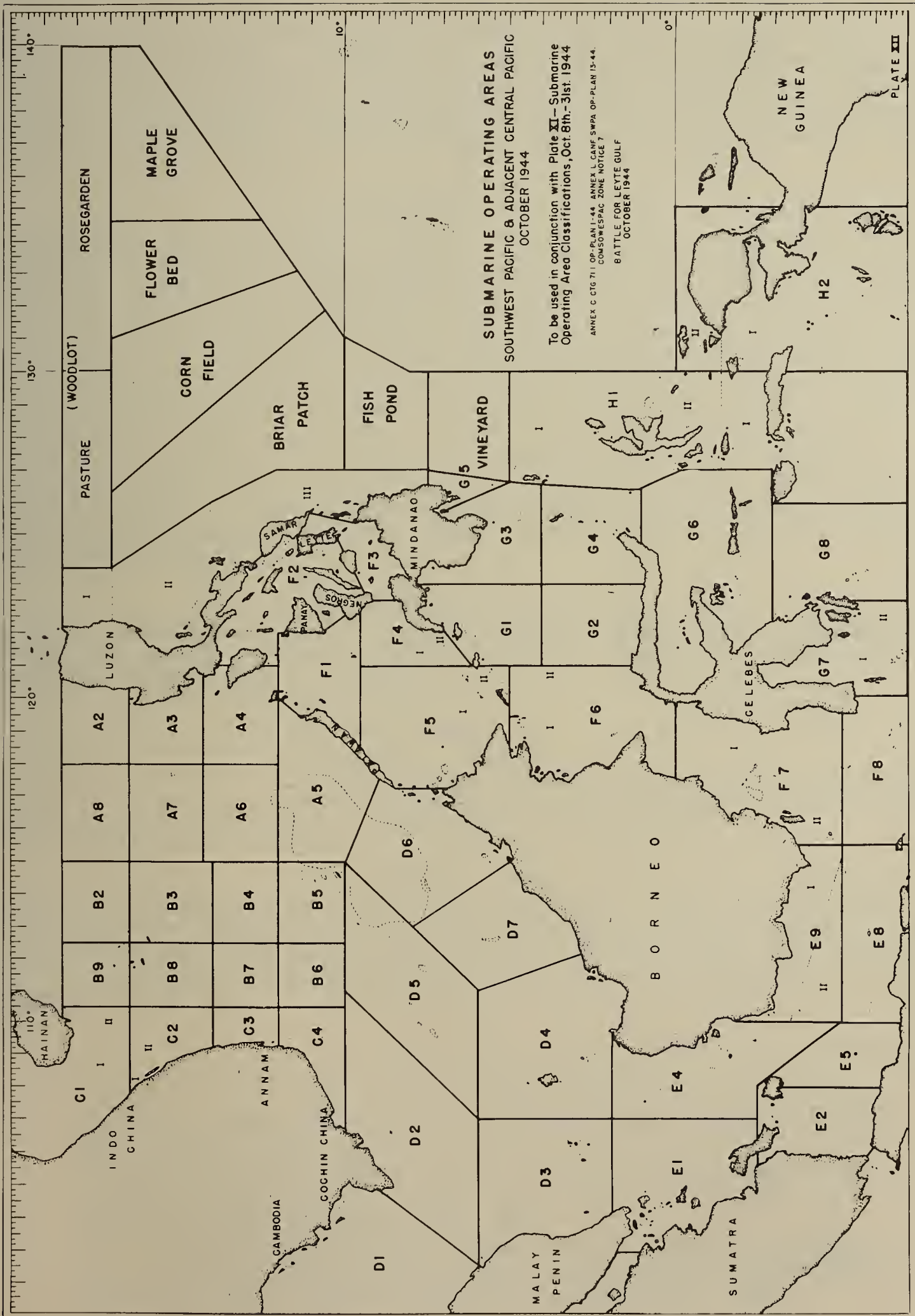
Mottled areas indicate blind bombing zone 

OCTOBER	8	9	10	11	12	13	14	15	16	17	18	19	20	21	22	23	24	25	26	27	28	29	30	31
A2 to A8																								
B2 to B9																								
C1-C2																								
C3 - C4																								
D1 to D7																								
E1- E2-E4-E5-E8																								
E9																								
F1 to F3-F8																								
F4 to F7																								
G1 to G6 - G8																								
G7																								
HI - H2																								
★ PASTURE (WOODLOT) ROSEGARDEN																								
MAPLEGROVE																								
FLOWERBED																								
CORN - FIELD																								
BRIAR - PATCH																								
FISH - POND																								
VINEYARD																								
BETWEEN EAST COAST PHILIPPINES AND AREAS PASTURE, BRIAR - PATCH AND FISH - POND																								

★ Woodlot divided into Pasture and Rosegarden 0928 October 12th.











and therefore took avoiding action. Actually, since no Japanese or Allied submarines were nearby, it seems clear that this contact was false. However, later in the day (at 1748) she sighted another submarine also on the surface. She recognized it as an Allied submarine which an exchange of calls proved to be the RATON. She then exchanged information after which she set course for Mindoro Strait. On this day she steamed 283 miles.\*

(2) The GUITARRO, which at the commencement of the day had just entered the lower Sulu Sea, and was now on a northerly course, continued on toward her patrol station. She was about sixty miles astern of the BREAM, (Diagram B). She remained on the surface during most of the day. However, for reasons not explained but presumably because of enemy aircraft, she submerged from 0705 until 1426. Then at 1445, having sighted a ship believed to be a heavy cruiser making twenty-two knots, she submerged at 1457 and endeavored to close the ship. At 1525 she surfaced and unsuccessfully trailed at high speed.\*\* It seems likely that this contact was on a warship smaller than a cruiser; probably an escort type. That the GUITARRO was doubtful of the character of this ship is clear enough for, in her patrol report, she refers to it in one place as a "warship at sixteen knots" and in another place as a CA at twenty-two knots, and in her deck log as a "ship". Also she made no contact report although the instructions in general were to report such contacts.

The remainder of the day was uneventful excepting that (a) at 1609 she sighted a friendly submarine (NARWHAL) on a southerly course and (b) at 2130 she exchanged recognition signals with the RATON, which was retiring from the area.\*\*\*

(b) ROCK and BERGALL:

These submarines were stationed on their patrol line between Cape Varella and North Danger Shoal with the BERGALL to the westward and the ROCK to the eastward of Longitude 112° - 00'E.\*\*\*\*

(1) The BERGALL, which had returned to her patrol station about midnight, was patrolling along a 105° - 285°(T) patrol line reversing course every hour on the half hour. She operated at speeds of eleven knots until 0500, and at about fifteen knots thereafter, and remained on the surface during daylight as well as darkness. Her patrol was uneventful.\*\*\*\*\*

At about 2300, for reasons entirely unknown, the

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\* War Patrol Report BREAM, Report of 3RD War Patrol, Serial 021-44, November 22nd, 1944.

\*\* War Patrol Report GUITARRO, Report of 3RD War Patrol, Serial 044, November 16th, 1944.

\*\*\* Deck Log GUITARRO, October 20th, 1944.

\*\*\*\* CTF 71 Dispatch 160456 October 1944 to CTG 71.1 (ROCK and BERGALL).

\*\*\*\*\* Deck Log BERGALL October 20th, 1944; also War Patrol Report BERGALL, Report of 1ST War Patrol, Serial 0102, November 8th, 1944.

Commanding Officer BERGALL departed his patrol station and headed for the area south of Saigon.\* Since (a) this area was at least 300 miles to the southwest of his assigned patrol line (b) there apparently were no contact reports on shipping in the Saigon area, and (c) he had received no orders directing him to that area, it would be interesting to discover what motivated him to take this unusual action.

At 2400 the BERGALL on course 220°(T), speed fifteen, was bearing 120°(T), distant eighty miles from Cape Varella.

(2) The ROCK, operating at various speeds, was patrolling her station on course 275°(T) from midnight until 0700 at which time she changed course to 115°(T) and remained on this course until 1700 at which time she changed course to 280°(T). She operated on the surface until 1148 when she was forced to submerge by enemy aircraft. At 1721 she surfaced and operated on the surface the remainder of the day. Her patrol was uneventful.\*\*

Sometime before 2328 the Commanding Officer ROCK apparently learned from the BERGALL that that ship was heading to a sea area south of Saigon and decided to do likewise for, at that hour, he also departed his station and headed for the same general area as the BERGALL.\*\*

(3) IN SO DEPARTING THEIR ASSIGNED AREAS WITHOUT EVEN NOTIFYING CTF 71 AND OTHER INTERESTED COMMANDS OF THEIR ABSENCE FROM THEIR PATROL STATIONS, IT WOULD APPEAR THAT BOTH OF THESE COMMANDING OFFICERS HAD NOT ONLY DISREGARDED THEIR INSTRUCTIONS FROM CTF 71 TO REMAIN ON STATION ON THE LINE CAPE VARELLA TO NORTH DANGER SHOALS UNTIL FURTHER ORDERS, BUT HAD ALSO REMOVED THEMSELVES FROM THEIR LIFEGUARD RESPONSIBILITIES ASSIGNED BY CTF 71.\*\*\* IN THIS LATTER CONNECTION, NO LIFEGUARD CALLS WERE RECEIVED ON THIS DAY BY EITHER SUBMARINE.\*\*\*\*

(c) BLUEGILL and ANGLER:

The two submarines operated as a coordinated attack group (wolf pack) under the Commanding Officer BLUEGILL. The BLUEGILL at this time was patrolling between Lubang Island and Cape Calavite while the ANGLER was on a NW - SE line from the northwest coast of Lubang Island to the northern boundary of Area A4 and thereby guarding the SW approaches to Manila Bay.

\* Deck Log BERGALL October 20th, 1944; also War Patrol Report BERGALL, Report of 1ST War Patrol, Serial 0102, November 8th, 1944.

\*\* Deck Log ROCK, October 20th, 1944; also War Patrol Report ROCK, Report of 4TH War Patrol, Serial 016, November 11th, 1944.

\*\*\* CTF 71 Dispatch 160656 October 1944 to CTG 71.1 (ROCK, BERGALL).

\*\*\*\* Deck Logs ROCK and BERGALL, October 20th, 1944; also War Patrol Report ROCK, Report of 4TH War Patrol, Serial 016, November 11th, 1944; War Patrol Report BERGALL, Report of 1ST War Patrol, Serial 0102, November 8th, 1944.



(1) It will be recalled from Volume II\* that the BLUEGILL, which at dark on October 18th, had completed her normal patrol, was low on fuel and had but three torpedoes in working condition remaining,\*\* had been directed on October 19th to remain in Area A4 for a few more days.\*\*\* She had therefore continued her patrol as ordered.

On this day she operated on the surface until 0510 when in position about ten miles northwest of Cape Calavite she submerged. She sighted nothing of importance until 1325 when having sighted smoke, her commanding officer closed and contacted two medium oilers in ballast with one subchaser escort. At 1541, in position bearing 036°(T), distant seven miles from Cape Calavite, he fired four torpedoes (he had succeeded in repairing one torpedo which increased the operating torpedoes from three to four) at one of the oilers all of which, owing to radical maneuvers by the oiler, missed. He was now attacked by the subchaser. At 1547 he underwent an ineffective depth charge attack.\*\*\*\*

At 2030 he surfaced and made a contact report to CTF 71\*\*\*\* which included the fact that he had fired all remaining torpedoes at two cargo ships--he apparently had changed his estimate of the targets from oilers to cargo ships.\*\*\*\*\* In the same dispatch he reported that his oil remaining was 43,000 gallons. Thereafter he continued his patrol on the surface. At 2350 he contacted the ANGLER and issued patrol instructions for the following day.\*\*\*\*

(2) The ANGLER patrolled submerged during daylight and on the surface during darkness. At 2240 she intercepted BLUEGILL's dispatch reporting her abortive attack on the two cargo ships and joined in the hunt for the convoy.\*\*\*\*\* At 2350 she contacted the BLUEGILL and received information from the wolf pack commander relative to the next day's patrol.

Except for the above the day was uneventful.

(d) DACE and DARTER:

These two submarines which constituted a coordinated attack group (wolf pack) under the Commanding Officer DARTER had been assigned stations in the western approaches to Balabac Strait and in southern Palawan Passage.\*\*\*\*\* They (a) alternated their stations from time to time

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\* Volume II Battle for Leyte Gulf (NavPers 92194), Naval War College, 1955.  
 \*\* War Diary CTF 71, October 18th, 1944.  
 \*\*\* CTF 71 Dispatch 190357 October 1944 to BLUEGILL.  
 \*\*\*\* War Patrol Report BLUEGILL, Report of 3RD War Patrol, Serial 039, November 25th, 1944.  
 \*\*\*\*\* War Diary CTF 71, October 21st, 1944.  
 \*\*\*\*\* War Patrol Report ANGLER, Report of 5TH War Patrol, Serial 09(10), November 9th, 1944.  
 \*\*\*\*\* CTF 71 Dispatch 110504 October 1944 to CTG 71.1 (DARTER, DACE, HAMMERHEAD).

as directed by the wolf pack commander, and (b) on this day patrolled submerged during daylight and on the surface during darkness.\*

It will be recalled from Volume II that (a) at midnight (0000 October 20th) the DARTER was patrolling in the vicinity of Royal Captain Shoal and the DACE was patrolling about sixty miles to the northward of the DARTER,\*\* (b) the wolf pack commander had originally assigned these new patrol stations in order to locate the convoy which the BLUEGILL had attacked on the night of October 18th and 19th,\*\*\* and (c) while moving to the northward to accomplish this task, he had unexpectedly encountered two southbound Japanese destroyers (AKISHIMO and HAYASHIMO) which he had endeavored unsuccessfully to torpedo and which, in return, had unsuccessfully attacked the DARTER. Feeling that enemy heavy units might be following these destroyers he had assigned an additional task to his two submarines to discover such heavy units. However this latter task had not been accomplished by midnight, and therefore the task of locating the BLUEGILL convoy became his paramount concern.

AT THIS TIME IT SEEMS WELL TO REAFFIRM THE POINT WHICH WAS EMPHASIZED IN VOLUME II; I.E., THAT THIS MOVEMENT OF THE TWO SUBMARINES BY THE WOLF PACK COMMANDER FROM THEIR ORIGINAL STATIONS TO THEIR NEW STATIONS WHERE THE NEAREST SUBMARINE (DARTER) WAS SOME NINETY MILES TO THE NORTHWARD OF HER ORIGINAL STATION, IS NOT CONSIDERED TO HAVE BEEN CORRECT. THIS IS SO BECAUSE THIS MOVEMENT LEFT BALABAC STRAIT COMPLETELY UNGUARDED AND THEREFORE DID NOT CONTRIBUTE TO THE ACCOMPLISHMENT OF THE OBJECTIVE; I.E., THE PREVENTION OF AN UNDETECTED PASSAGE OF THE STRAIT BY ENEMY FORCES MOVING GENERALLY FROM WEST TO EAST.\*\*\*\* WHILE IT IS RECOGNIZED THAT THE URGE TO SINK MERCHANT SHIPPING WAS STRONG WITHIN THE SUBMARINE COMMAND, WAS THIS URGE TO HAVE PRIORITY OVER REASONED JUDGEMENT? IN THIS CONNECTION IT SHOULD BE NOTED THAT THE JAPANESE FIRST STRIKING FORCE COULD HAVE PASSED THROUGH BALABAC STRAIT BY EARLY AFTERNOON WITHOUT ANY SUBMARINE INTERFERENCE WHATSOEVER. THE ABSENCE OF THE DARTER FROM THIS STATION WAS

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\* Deck Log DACE October 20th, 1944.

\*\* Volume II, Battle for Leyte Gulf (NavPers 92194), Naval War College 1955, Operations of CTF 71 (Submarines West Australia) October 19th, 1944, (4) DACE and DARTER.

\*\*\* War Patrol Report DARTER, Report of 4TH War Patrol, Serial 020, November 5th, 1944.

\*\*\*\* Captain (then Commander) David H. McClintock, USN, who was the wolf pack commander, stated later (May 18th, 1956) to Commodore R.W. Bates, USN(Ret), Head, World War II Battle Evaluation Group, Naval War College, that he did not consider that he was off station--that he felt that from customary operating procedures he was authorized to seek out and destroy reported enemy shipping even if he had to depart from his assigned station. He further stated that he had "tried out his commander" by sending him a dispatch after seeking a merchant convoy and not having received any instructions against it (i.e, he had not been directed to return to station) he had concluded that he was at liberty to operate as he chose.



NOT KNOWN TO CTF 71 OR TO CTF 77. THE PRINCIPLES INVOLVED HERE ARE DISCUSSED IN CONSIDERABLE DETAIL IN VOLUME II UNDER THE "OPERATIONS OF CTF 17, OCTOBER 18TH".\*

## (1) DARTER:

At 0500 the DARTER while still on the surface contacted two northbound destroyers making seventeen knots. She attempted to close but was unable to do so. However, she did send a contact report to the DACE which was to the north of her.\*\* It is not known what Japanese ships these were since Japanese reports available to this analysis do not mention this contact, but it seems likely that, if they were destroyers, they belonged to the escort command, and, if not, they were escort vessels smaller than destroyers. Except for the above the day was uneventful.

## (2) DACE:

At 0535 the DACE having received the DARTER's contact report above referred to and realizing that if the destroyers continued on their northerly course she would be in an intercepting position, prepared for this contact. However not having intercepted them by 0625 she decided that the destroyers "must have gone south so submerged on station".\*\*\* She remained in her new general area throughout the remainder of the day and operated submerged until 1925 when she surfaced.\*\*\*\* She made no contacts of consequence.

## (e) HAMMERHEAD:

This submarine, which was conducting a routine patrol in the SW approaches to Brunei Bay, had been operating well to the SW and never nearer than fifty miles to Palau Kuraman Light, at the entrance to the bay. At the commencement of this day (0000 October 20th) she was some 120 miles SW of the above light. A discussion of her reasons for assuming such distant positions is contained in Volume II.\*\*\*\*\*

At 0242, while surfaced, the commanding officer made radar contact on a convoy which, ten minutes later, he determined were six large cargo ships with three escorts. Although interfered with by the escorts he succeeded in making two separate attacks during the next two hours during which time he fired ten torpedoes, and claimed sinking three of the six cargo ships. Actually he sank two cargo ships, one at 0338, the UGO MARU (3684 tons) in Latitude 04° - 52'N, Longitude 113° - 24'E, the other at 0437, the OYO MARU (5458 tons) in Latitude 04° - 41'N, Longitude 113° - 22'E.\*\*\*\*\*

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\* Volume II, Battle for Leyte Gulf (NavPers 92194), Naval War College 1955, Chapter III, Paragraph B(2)(f)(1), Approaches to Bungo Suido (BESUGO, RONQUIL, GABILAN).

\*\* War Patrol Report DARTER, Report of 4TH War Patrol, Serial 020, November 5th, 1944.

\*\*\* War Patrol Report DACE, Report of 5TH War Patrol, Serial 09, November 6th, 1944.

\*\*\*\* Deck Log DACE October 20th, 1944.

\*\*\*\*\* Volume II, Battle for Leyte Gulf (NavPers 92194), Naval War College 1955, Chapter I, Operations of CTF 71, (HAMMERHEAD).

\*\*\*\*\* Japanese Naval and Merchant Losses during World War II by United States Submarines, February 1947, Prepared by the Joint Army-Navy Assessment Committee.

Immediately upon completion of his attacks, and having cleared the area in a northwesterly direction, the commanding officer at 0623 submerged. At this time he decided that it would be wise to "make a tour of the Luconia Shoals and let Brunei cool off for a day or two as I figured it might get a little warm for any close patrolling".\* He therefore, in accordance with this decision, headed for the above shoals on course 345°(T) to pass to the eastward of the shoal with the intention of heading back toward Brunei Bay the following day.\* At 2035 he surfaced and at 2047 he changed course to 282°(T) to round the shoal counter clockwise to the northward. At about 2231 he received a dispatch from CTF 71 advising that the GURNARD had also been assigned Areas D4 - D7 and that the HAMMERHEAD was conducting reconnaissance off Brunei Bay.\*\* At 2331 he reported to CTF 71 the details of his attack and announced that if permitted he would depart the area on October 23rd and would refuel at Exmouth Gulf.\*\*\* At 2400 he was due north of the shoal and therefore some 170 miles almost due west of Brunei Bay.

ALTHOUGH BY TAKING SUCH RADICAL EVASIVE MEASURES THE COMMANDING OFFICER HAMMERHEAD REMOVED HIMSELF FROM THE AREA IN WHICH HE HAD BEEN OPERATING, HIS ACTION IN SO DOING APPEARS TO HAVE BEEN IN ACCORDANCE WITH SUBMARINE PRACTICE. HE WAS BUT FORTY MILES FROM THE JAPANESE AIRFIELD AT MIRI AND ABOUT 120 MILES FROM THE SEAPLANE BASE AT LABUAN ISLAND. CERTAINLY, HE COULD EXPECT IN THE MORNING THAT THE ENEMY WOULD LAUNCH AN AIR - SURFACE SEARCH AGAINST HIM AND WITH THE LIMITED DEPTHS OF WATER IN THE AREA (AVERAGING ABOUT FIFTY FATHOMS) AND THE CLEARNESS OF THE WATER, HE WAS FORCED BY THE VERY CIRCUMSTANCES TO LEAVE THAT IMMEDIATE AREA.

BUT WAS HE CORRECT IN DEPARTING FROM THE SW APPROACHES? WAS NOT HIS OBJECTIVE AS ASSIGNED BY DISPATCH THE COVERING OF THE SW APPROACHES TO BRUNEI BAY\*\*\*\* AND HAD HE NOT BEEN WARNED IN HIS PATROL ORDERS THAT JAPANESE FLEET UNITS MOVING FROM SINGAPORE TO THE MANILA AREA, WHERE THEY WERE EXPECTED TO ASSEMBLE, MIGHT USE BRUNEI BAY AS A FUELING BASE?\*\*\*\*\* COULD HE NOT HAVE ACCOMPLISHED HIS OBJECTIVE, AT LEAST TO A LESSER DEGREE, BY DEPARTING TEMPORARILY THE ATTACK AREA ON A SOUTHWESTERLY COURSE SO THAT EVEN THOUGH HE WAS NOT "EFFECTIVELY COVERING" HE WAS NEVERTHELESS IN THE GENERAL SECTOR PRESCRIBED BY HIS BASIC DIRECTIVE? THEN ONCE HE FELT THAT HE COULD RETURN TO HIS GENERAL OPERATING AREA HE COULD STILL DO SO AND YET REMAIN WITHIN THE SW APPROACHES. IS IT NOT CLEAR THAT, IN SO DOING, THE NEARER HE CLOSED BRUNEI THE MORE EFFECTIVELY HE WOULD COVER THE SW APPROACHES AND THE MORE NEARLY HE WOULD ACCOMPLISH HIS OBJECTIVE?

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\* War Patrol Report HAMMERHEAD, Report of 2ND War Patrol, No Serial, November 2nd, 1944.

\*\* CTF 71 Dispatch 201301 October 1944 to TG 71.1 (GURNARD, HAMMERHEAD).

\*\*\* HAMMERHEAD Dispatch 201431 October 1944 to CTF 71.

\*\*\*\* CTF 71 Dispatch 110504 October 1944 to CTG 71.1

\*\*\*\*\* CTG 71.1 Operation Order No. 127-44 September 8th, 1944 to HAMMERHEAD.









It is of interest at this time to discuss the effect that this torpedoing had on Japanese operations. Japanese reports show that some time after 0338 the Commander FIRST Striking Force—who was closing Brunei Bay (Diagram B) on course 130°(T)—knew of this attack and promptly issued instructions relative thereto.\* He was naturally quite concerned for his two oilers--YUHO MARU and HAKKO MARU (Brunei Fueling Group)--were about 220 miles from the point of sinking where they could arrive in about twenty-four hours. The loss of both of these oilers might well have either forced a cancellation of the present penetration plans or caused a serious modification therein. He therefore directed (a) at 1112 that the surface escort of the fueling groups was to be reinforced by two destroyers\*\* which destroyers (ASAGUMO and YAMAGUMO) at 1150 departed Brunei Bay on this mission, (b) at 1300 the cruisers YAHAGI and NOSHIRO to provide one plane each for antisubmarine protection of this group,\*\*\* and (c) at 1425 COMCRUDIV SEVEN to make a sweep attack against the Allied submarines employing night radar equipped aircraft.\*\*\*\* Apparently the Brunei Fueling Group was not being given antisubmarine coverage by the three planes based at Miri for the reports of this detachment show no coverage of this group on this day.\*\*\*\*\* The actions of Commander FIRST Striking Force, as commented on above, are discussed more fully under "Operations of Commander FIRST Striking Force, October 20th, 1944".

## (f) TANTIVY:

The TANTIVY, which was on patrol in Area F7 (Makassar Strait) south of Latitude 02° - 00'S, was at 0000 off Kabala Island.

At 0116 she headed for Bonthain Roads at the southern end of Celebes Island. Although it is not known whether she operated on the surface or submerged, the distance covered from 0116 to 2400 (about 240

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- \* Infra., Chapter II, (A)(1)(a), Operations of Commander 1ST Striking Force October 20th, 1944.
- \*\* Commander 1ST Striking Force Visual Dispatch 201112 October 1944 to COMDESRON 10 (1ST Striking Force SpSigOrd No. 140), War Diary DESRON 10, October 1944, WDC Document 161638, NA 11739.
- \*\*\* Commander 1ST Striking Force Visual Dispatch 201300 October 1944 to YAHAGI, NOSHIRO (1ST Striking Force SpSigOrd No. 141), October 16th - 28th, 1944, Detailed Action Report BATDIV 1, SHO No. 1 Operations, October 18th - 28th, 1944, WDC Document 161005, NA 11744.
- \*\*\*\* Commander 1ST Striking Force Visual Dispatch 201425 October 1944 to COMCRUDIV 7, Detailed Action Report 1ST Striking Force, SHO Operations, October 16th - 28th, 1944, WDC Document 161641, NA 11839.
- \*\*\*\*\* Detailed Action Report 901ST Air Group (Miri Detachment), October 1944, WDC Document 160369, NA 12366.

miles) would indicate that she was largely on the surface. She made no contacts.\*

At 2400 she was bearing 250°(T), distant forty miles from the entrance to the Roads.

(g) STOIC:

This submarine continued patrolling the Java Sea in Area E5. Sometime during the late afternoon the commanding officer likely received a dispatch from CTG 71.1 advising him that (a) since the ZWAARDVISCH had departed Area E8 that area was also available to him, and (b) the TANTALUS would transit the area about October 23rd—the day of the scheduled departure of the STOIC.\*\* It is not known whether the STOIC operated on the surface during darkness and submerged during daylight, but it is presumed she conducted a normal patrol.

(h) GURNARD:

The GURNARD, which was headed on the surface for patrol Areas D4 - D7 where among other duties she was to mine a designated area in the vicinity of Point Datoe, SW Borneo at 0123 made radar contact on Pengiki Island.\*\*\* This established her navigational position. At 0842, having recently sighted several native sailboats which she had avoided, her commanding officer submerged to avoid radar contact. He continued on submerged, and at 1400 entered patrol Area D4.\*\*\* He then at 1943 surfaced and headed for the traffic route off Point Datoe. He made no contacts of consequence throughout the day. At about 2231 he received a dispatch from CTF 71 advising both the HAMMERHEAD and GURNARD that the GURNARD would be operating in Patrol Areas D4 - D7 and that the HAMMERHEAD was conducting reconnaissance off Brunei Bay.\*\*\*\* At 2400 he was about twelve miles north-west of Soebi Ketjil.\*\*\*

(i) BATFISH:

This submarine was in the Banda Sea where, prior to midnight, she had been unsuccessfully attacking a "Q" ship accompanied by two small escorts. Although she had fired six torpedoes, all had missed.\*\*\*\*\* At 0136, having a fine solution of the firing problem, the commanding officer

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\* War Patrol Report TANTIVY, Report of 7TH War Patrol, No Serial, November 4th, 1944.  
 \*\* CTG 71.1 Dispatch 200256 October 1944 to TG 71.1, 71.7, Z4L/2.  
 \*\*\* War Patrol Report GURNARD, Report of 7TH War Patrol, Serial 030, November 17th, 1944.  
 \*\*\*\* CTF 71 Dispatch 201301 October 1944 to TG 71.1 (GURNARD, HAMMERHEAD).  
 \*\*\*\*\* War Patrol Report BATFISH, Report of 5TH War Patrol, Serial 057, December 1st, 1944.



fired one additional torpedo, which also missed. As the target took evasive action, he was unable to fire more torpedoes. At 0641 he decided to employ his deck gun as his torpedo results had been unsatisfactory, and therefore commenced closing the enemy. However, before he could open fire the "Q" ship and the escorts turned toward him and opened fire so effectively that at 0720 he submerged.\* He then underwent a depth charge attack which, while close, was ineffective. He remained submerged until 1435 at which time he surfaced and headed through the Flores Sea toward his patrol station in Area A8.

## (j) STORM:

The STORM at 0400 arrived in her assigned patrol area (G7). She appears to have chosen first that portion of G7 which embraced the Gulf of Boni. This patrol station had not been occupied since the departure of the STURDY three days earlier. She did not remain in this vicinity very long for, having been bombed by aircraft, her position was known to the enemy and her commanding officer decided to move southward and patrol off the southern point of Saleier Island which was also in Area G7. No contacts of importance were recorded for this day.\*\*

## (k) TANTALUS:

The TANTALUS was south of the NEI barrier and continued toward Lombok Strait en route her patrol station, likely in Area E1.\*\*\* Her records are not available, but it is presumed that she proceeded generally on the surface conducting training exercises, as did other submarines in this area.

## (l) MUSKALLUNGE:

The MUSKALLUNGE was off western Australia\*\*\* en route Area A6 via Darwin. She sighted friendly submarines which were not named. Although she did not so state, it is presumed she operated generally on the surface conducting training exercises.\*\*\*

## (m) GROWLER, HAKE and HARDHEAD:

These three submarines comprised a coordinated attack group (wolf pack) under the command of the Commanding Officer GROWLER. The GROWLER and HAKE departed at 1400 for their patrol Area A4 off Mindoro

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\* War Patrol Report BATFISH, Report of 5TH War Patrol, Serial 057, December 1st, 1944.

\*\* War Patrol Report STORM, Report of 1ST War Patrol, COMSUBS7THFLT War Diary, Serial 00355, December 11th, 1944.

\*\*\* CTF 71 War Diary, October 20th, 1944.

\*\*\*\* War Patrol Report MUSKALLUNGE, Report of 5TH War Patrol, Serial 038, December 14th, 1944.

Island.\* They were directed to proceed via Exmouth Gulf, Lombok and Makassar Straits, Sibutu Passage, the Sulu Sea and Mindoro Strait.\*\* The HARDHEAD, which would not be ready for sea until the following day, remained at Fremantle.\*\*\* All of these submarines after departing Exmouth Gulf were to proceed independently.

## (n) RATON:

This submarine, en route to Mios Woendi for reload, cleared Mindoro Strait at 0418 and entered the Sulu Sea on southerly courses.\*\*\*\* During the day, while transiting the above sea, she exchanged recognition signals with the LAPON, BREAM and GUITARRO. She remained on the surface during daylight and darkness and made no important contacts.\*\*\*\*

(o) Lifeguard Submarines (BONEFISH, COD, LAPON and PADDLE).

(1) The BONEFISH, which on the previous day had received an extension of lifeguard duties to sunset on this day, was re-suming her station off Cape Bolinao, Luzon, after retiring to the northward during the night. She arrived on station at 0900 and commenced a figure eight patrol on the surface. She sighted numerous planes during the day which forced her to submerge for short intervals.\*\*\*\*\* At sunset, having received no lifeguard calls and having completed her patrol, the commanding officer set a northerly course for the CONVOY COLLEGE Safety Lane. At 0900 on the following morning he was to report to CTF 17 for return routing to Pearl Harbor.\*\*\*\*\* While awaiting orders from CTF 17 he was to remain west of Longitude 122° - 00'E.\*\*\*\*\* At 1955 he sighted a steady red light which was later identified as a hospital ship. No important contacts were made.\*\*\*\*\*

(2) The COD, off Subic Bay, was also patrolling to conform to lifeguard duties which would expire at sunset on this day. She patrolled on the surface during daylight hours, but due to numerous aircraft contacts, was forced to submerge for short intervals. At sunset, having

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\* War Patrol Report HAKE, Report of 7TH War Patrol, Serial 0149, No Date, but likely December 1944; also CTF 71 Dispatch 200908, October 1944 to NOIC Fremantle.  
 \*\* CTG 71.1 Dispatch 201313 October 1944 to TG 71.1, 71.7, Z4L/2.  
 \*\*\* War Patrol Report HARDHEAD, Report of 2ND War Patrol, No Serial, December 5th, 1944.  
 \*\*\*\* War Patrol Report RATON, Report of 6TH War Patrol, No Serial, December 1st, 1944; also Deck Log RATON, October 20th, 1944.  
 \*\*\*\*\* Deck Log BONEFISH, October 20th, 1944.  
 \*\*\*\*\* CTF 71 Dispatch 191121 October 1944 to BONEFISH.  
 \*\*\*\*\* CTF 71 Dispatch 151014 October 1944 to CTG 71.1.  
 \*\*\*\*\* War Patrol Report BONEFISH, Report of 6TH War Patrol, No Serial, December 8th, 1944.



TABLE 1  
 LIFEGUARD SUBMARINES RESCUING AIRMEN DURING THE PERIOD  
 0719 OCTOBER 17TH to OCTOBER 31ST

TASK FORCE 17											
	0719	18	19	20	21	22	23	24			
OCTOBER	17										
SAURY		0-1									
TASK FORCE 71											
BONEFISH				0-1							
				E-1							

TASK FORCE 17											
NONE											
TASK FORCE 71											
	25	26	27	28	29	30	31				
OCTOBER											
HARDHEAD										0-1	

0 - Officer      E - Enlisted





received no lifeguard calls, her commanding officer terminated his lifeguard duties and headed northward toward patrol Area A2, off west central Luzon,\* where he had been directed to patrol until October 26th.\*\* Except for a possible sound contact and periscope sighting, no contacts of importance were made during the day.\*\*\* This contact was apparently false as no enemy or friendly submarines were known to be in the vicinity.

(3) The LAPON patrolled her station north of Quiniluban Island. She was performing lifeguard duties which expired at sunset.\*\*\*\* At 0430 while on the surface she contacted the RATON which was returning to Mios Woendi. At 0615 she submerged for the day and remained submerged until 1933 when she surfaced. Having received no lifeguard calls, her commanding officer now considered his lifeguard duty completed. He therefore, also having completed his entire patrol, at 2033 set course for Sibutu Passage en route to Fremantle.\*\*\*\*\*

(4) The PADDLE on this day was performing two tasks, (a) during the day, lifeguard duties off Balikpapan, and (b) during the night a patrol across Makassar Strait to the northeastward of her lifeguard station.\*\*\*\*\* At 0512 having arrived at her lifeguard station from her patrol across the strait, her commanding officer commenced circling on station on the surface about fifty miles east of Balikpapan. At 1430, having received no indication of air strikes, he commenced his patrol to the eastward. At 1655 he destroyed a floating mine. At 1945 he received a dispatch which (a) confirmed his opinion that there had been little if any air activity over Balikpapan that day, (b) advised him that (1) air strikes were planned for October 23rd and 27th, (2) he would be ordered home as soon as possible after the 27th, and (c) directed him, when not lifeguarding, to conduct his patrol between Cape Mangkalahat and North Watcher Island.\*\*\*\*\* He therefore headed for this patrol station.\*\*\*\* While he was away on this patrol there was an air strike at 2330 on Balikpapan by one B-24 from the THIRTEENTH Air Force.\*\*\*\*\*

(p) Submarines Retiring from the area.

Submarines retiring from the area, in addition to those discussed above, were BAYA, CAVALLA, HOE, SEA ROVER, SPITEFUL, TELEMACHUS, STURDY and ZWAARDVISCH. These submarines, since they were beyond

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\* Deck Log COD October 20th, 1944.  
 \*\* CTF 71 Dispatch 191016 October 1944 to TG 71.1 (COD).  
 \*\*\* War Patrol Report COD, Report of 5TH War Patrol, Serial 06, November 20th, 1944.  
 \*\*\*\* CTF 71 Dispatch 190924 October 1944 to CTG 71.1 (LAPON).  
 \*\*\*\*\* War Patrol Report LAPON, Report of 6TH War Patrol, Serial 044, October 31st, 1944.  
 \*\*\*\*\* War Patrol Report PADDLE, Report of 6TH War Patrol, Serial 018, November 1st, 1944.  
 \*\*\*\*\* CTF 71 Dispatch 201024 October 1944 to CTG 71.1 (PADDLE).  
 \*\*\*\*\* C.G. 13TH Air Force Dispatch 221153/I October 1944 to CAAF SOWESPAC.

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the NEI barrier, are, for the purpose of this analysis, considered as no longer participating in the KING II operations.

(2) Operations of CTF 72 (Submarines, East Australia),  
October 20th.

As stated in Volumes I\* and II\*\*, and since the submarines NAUTILUS, NARWHAL and CERO, which operated in SOWESPAC north of the NEI barrier islands, were engaged in special missions only, the operations of these submarines will be omitted from this analysis.

(2) Operations of CAAF SOWESPAC, October 20th.

At 0655 CAAF SOWESPAC, aboard the NASHVILLE, arrived in Leyte Gulf. At 1247 he went ashore at the northern beachhead with COMSOWESPAC to observe the progress of the operations. He returned aboard the NASHVILLE with the observing party at 1600.\*\*\* Meanwhile, the operations of his aircraft in support of KING II were controlled from his headquarters at Hollandia.

(a) Operations of C.G. FIFTH Air Force, October 20th.

At 0438 C.G. FIFTH Air Force in his headquarters at Biak (Owi) received a directive from COMSOWESPAC to verify by photo interpretation the report contained in his 1651/I of the 19th wherein he had reported that a Darwin reconnaissance plane had sighted at 1240 on the previous day at Pare Pare (Celebes) "sixteen large naval vessels and numerous smaller".\*\*\*\* As a result of this he gave instructions to the RAAF to comply.

Meanwhile having assigned among other tasks the following to his subordinate commanders he awaited the results:\*\*\*\*\*

(1) C.G. FIFTH Bomber Command:

(a) Strike Davao headquarters area using eight squadrons of B-24's.

(b) Ferret Moro Gulf night October 19th/20th using two B-24's.

(c) Conduct sea searches in Philippines area night October 19th/20th using two B-24's.

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\* Volume I, Battle for Leyte Gulf (NavPers 91973), Naval War College, 1953, Operations of CTF 72.  
\*\* Volume II, Battle for Leyte Gulf (NavPers 92194), Naval War College, 1955, Operations of CTF 72, October 17th.  
\*\*\* War Diary NASHVILLE, October 20th, 1944.  
\*\*\*\* C.G. 5TH Air Force Dispatch 191651/I October 1944 to COM7THFLT, CAAF SOWESPAC, etc.  
\*\*\*\*\* Headquarters 5TH Air Force Fragmentary Field Order No. 294, October 20th, 1944.



(d) Reconnoiter Sarangani Bay area (southern Mindanao) night October 19th/20th using one B-24.

(2) Commanding Officer 310th Bombardment Wing, October 20th.

(a) Conduct armed reconnaissance of Mindanao using one squadron of P-38's.

(b) Strike Cebu airdrome using one squadron B-25's.

(c) Strike San Jose, Fabrica and Bacolod airdromes using one squadron of P-47's.

(3) Commanding Officer NINETY-FIRST Photo Reconnaissance Wing.

(a) Photo-reconnoiter northern Mindanao, Davao Area, Jolo and Tawi Tawi Islands.

(b) Map Mindoro and Luzon.

(4) CTG 73.4 (Commander Fleet Air Wing SEVENTEEN)

(a) Carry out Search Plan FOX using ten PB4Y's.

THE EMPLOYMENT OF THE ACTION VERB "FERRET" IN THE SECOND TASK ABOVE IS QUESTIONABLE. THIS IS BECAUSE THE USE OF THE WORD IS UNUSUAL AND REQUIRES INTERPRETATION. IT APPEARS TO HAVE MEANT THEN (1944) WHAT IT MEANS TODAY (1957), "THE DETECTION, LOCATION, RECORDING AND ANALYZING OF ELECTRO-MAGNETIC RADIATION";\* I.E., "ELECTRONICS RECONNAISSANCE",\*\* ALTHOUGH IN 1944 IT HAD AN ADDITIONAL CONNOTATION; I.E., "ELECTRONIC COUNTERMEASURES". HOWEVER, BASED ON INTERROGATION OF NUMEROUS AVIATORS BOTH NAVAL AND AIR FORCE, THERE IS CONSIDERABLE DOUBT THAT UNITS IN OTHER THEATERS WERE FAMILIAR WITH IT AND, SINCE COMMANDS FROM OTHER THEATERS WERE OPERATING IN THE AREA, THERE COULD HAVE BEEN, AND OFTEN WERE, MISUNDERSTANDINGS. PERHAPS, FROM BASIC ORDERS, PAST EXPERIENCE AND ORAL DISCUSSION, IT WAS GENERALLY UNDERSTOOD WITHIN AAF SOWESPAAC, AND EVEN WITH ALL COMMANDS IN SOWESPAAC AS WELL.\*\*

IN CONNECTION WITH THE USE OF WORDS OF THIS NATURE, CTF 79, WHO HAD BEEN TEMPORARILY ASSIGNED TO THE SEVENTHFLT FOR THIS OPERATION FROM THE THIRDFLT (OF THE PACIFIC FLEET), STATED:

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\* Dictionary of United States Military Terms for Joint Usage, May 1955, Department of the Army Regulations (AR-320-1), Department of the Navy Publication (OPNAVINST 3020.1A), Department of the Air Force Pamphlet (AFP 5-1-1).

\*\* Letter from Research Studies Institute, Air University, Maxwell AFB, Alabama to Colonel R.C. Kugel, USAF, Senior Air Force Advisor, Naval War College, dated December 7th, 1955.

"EXPRESSIONS OF AIR INTENT WERE DIFFICULT TO INTERPRET BECAUSE OF TERMINOLOGY WHICH WAS MEANINGLESS TO THIS COMMAND. THE ABOVE DEFICIENCIES IN INFORMATION (REFERRING TO OTHER MATTERS AS WELL) WERE NOT CRITICAL BUT MIGHT HAVE BECOME SO IF CTF 79, IN HIS CAPACITY AS SECOND IN COMMAND, HAD BEEN REQUIRED TO ASSUME COMMAND IN THE EVENT OF CASUALTY TO CTF 77. FOR FUTURE OPERATIONS IN SOWESPAC IT IS RECOMMENDED THAT THIS COMMAND BE ASSIGNED AN EXPERIENCED LIAISON OFFICER FROM THE ALLIED AIR FORCES."\*

THIS BRINGS FORTH THE FUNDAMENTAL FACT THAT AN ORDER MUST BE SO WRITTEN THAT IT WILL BE UNDERSTOOD (A) WITHOUT QUESTION BY ALL THOSE WHO RECEIVE IT, AND (B) WITHOUT THE NECESSITY FOR EMPLOYING A DICTIONARY.

IT IS THE COMMANDER'S RESPONSIBILITY TO SET FORTH CLEARLY THE TASKS TO BE ACCOMPLISHED BY EACH SUBDIVISION OF HIS FORCE. IN SO DOING HE SHOULD BEAR IN MIND THAT A DIRECTIVE WILL BEST CONVEY HIS WILL AND INTENT AND WILL BE MOST EASILY UNDERSTOOD BY HIS SUBORDINATES IF IT IS CLEAR, BRIEF AND POSITIVE. WHILE THE SECOND TASK WAS BRIEF AND POSITIVE, THERE IS CONSIDERABLE DOUBT AS TO ITS CLARITY OUTSIDE THE AAF SOWESPAC.

IN THIS CONNECTION, IT SHOULD BE EMPHASIZED THAT IF MISUNDERSTANDINGS ARISE ON THE PART OF TRAINED SUBORDINATES THE CHIEF FAULT OFTEN LIES WITH THE COMMANDER WHO ISSUED THE DIRECTIVE. "AN ORDER WHICH CAN BE MISUNDERSTOOD WILL BE MISUNDERSTOOD".\*\* IT WAS FOR THIS REASON THAT THE DICTIONARY OF UNITED STATES MILITARY TERMS FOR JOINT USAGE WAS COMPILED.\*\*\* IT IS EXPECTED THAT THE PRINCIPAL MILITARY TERMS THEREIN DEFINED WILL BE WELL KNOWN TO ALL SERVICES.

Action Reports\*\*\*\* indicate that the above tasks were carried out except that the B-25 squadron attacked Negros instead of Cebu, probably because of the paucity of suitable targets remaining on Cebu, as confirmed by the fighter sweeps and attacks by TG's 38.1, 38.4 and 77.4 over the western Visayas this date. No air activity of any consequence on the part of the enemy was encountered; good ground targets were very sparse. Likewise, the sea searches were equally negative.\*\*\*\*\* There was no indication that the enemy, at least for the time being, would oppose the Leyte campaign from the southern flank or rear of the objective area; his airfields had either been abandoned or neutralized and no reinforcement shipping or naval task units had been observed.

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- \* Action Report CTF 79, Seizure of Leyte, Serial 00323, November 13th, 1944.
  - \*\* Sound Military Decision, Naval War College, 1942, Page 186.
  - \*\*\* Dictionary of United States Military Terms for Joint Usage, May 1955, Department of the Army Regulations (AR 320-1), Department of the Navy Publication (OPNAVINST 3020.1A), Department of the Air Force Pamphlet (AFP 5-1-1).
  - \*\*\*\* 5TH Air Force Weekly Intelligence Review, No. 47, October 15th - 21st, 1944.
  - \*\*\*\*\* Reconnaissance, GHQ SOWESPAC, October 20th, 1944, prepared by Military Intelligence Section, General Staff.



(b) Operations of CTF 73 (Naval Air Force, SEVENTH Fleet)  
October 20th.\*

CTF 73 in his flagship CURRITUCK escorted by HMAS HAWKESBURY, continued en route to Morotai. It will be recalled from Volume II that he was en route from Manus to Morotai Island to deliver to the TANGIER at Morotai Island, aviation spares, supplies and personnel. From his flagship he was operating generally under CAAF SOWESPAC but maintained administrative control over his land and tender based aircraft.\*\*

Meanwhile (a) CTG 73.4 (Commander Search and Support Group), under the operational control of C.G. FIFTH Air Force,\*\*\* continued (1) flying Search Plan FOX (Plate XIV) which had been inaugurated on the previous day, employing the PB4Y's of VPB 101 and 115 and PV's of VPB 146, and (2) making strikes against targets in Northern Mindanao and the Sulu Archipelago employing PV-1's of VP 146 also under the operational control of C.G. FIFTH Air Force,\*\*\*\* and (b) CTG 73.2 (Commander Striking and Rescue Group) (1) flying night searches over the Sulu Sea employing the PBY's of VPB 29\*\*\*\*\* and covering Sectors ONE, TWO, THREE of Search Plan FOX to 700 miles\*\*\*\*\* and (2) flying air sea rescue missions employing PBY's of VPB 11 for the FIFTH Air Force strikes against Mindanao and the Western Visayas, providing antisubmarine patrols in the Morotai area and providing cover for the fighter sweeps of Moro Gulf.\*\*\*\*\*

No enemy shipping of any consequence was found as a result of the above searches. However (a) one enemy land attack plane, apparently on a search mission, was shot down at 1100 off Catanduanes Island in Latitude 13° - 36'N, Longitude 124° - 15'E,\*\*\*\*\* (b) another was destroyed at 1400 over Iwawig Airfield (Puerto Princesa) on the central east coast of Palawan,\*\*\*\*\* and (c) eight enemy army type fighters were attacked on the ground at Dumaguete Airfield on the southeastern tip of Negros, of which four

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- \* War Diaries CURRITUCK, VPB 11, 29, 146, October 20th, 1944, Aircraft Action Report No. 32, October 20th, 1944 forwarded by VPB 101, Serial 0107, December 23rd, 1944; Aircraft Action Report Nos. 73, 74, 75, October 20th, 1944, forwarded by VPB 115, Serial 0193, November 5th, 1944.
- \*\* Volume II, Battle for Leyte Gulf (NavPers 92194), Naval War College, 1955, Operations of CTF 73 (Naval Air Force 7TH Fleet) October 19th, 1944.
- \*\*\* War Diary COMAIR7THFLT, October 20th, 1944.
- \*\*\*\* War Diary VPB 146, October 20th, 1944.
- \*\*\*\*\* War Diary VPB 29, October 20th, 1944.
- \*\*\*\*\* CTF 73 Dispatch 180900 October 1944 to CTG's 73.2 and 73.4.
- \*\*\*\*\* War Diary VPB 11, October 20th, 1944.
- \*\*\*\*\* Aircraft Action Report No. 32, October 20th, 1944, forwarded by VPB 101, Serial 0107, December 23rd, 1944.
- \*\*\*\*\* Aircraft Action Report No. 73, October 20th, 1944, forwarded by VPB 115, Serial 0193, November 5th, 1944.

were claimed destroyed and four severely damaged.\* The above attacks were all made by PB4Y search planes from Morotai, the primary mission of which was to conduct long-range daylight searches in accordance with Search Plan FOX.

No Japanese information on the above strikes is available to this study.

THE ABOVE ACTION OF THE PLANE COMMANDERS OF THE PB4Y'S WAS SIMILAR TO THAT (A) OF THE PILOTS FROM TG'S 38.1 AND 38.2 WHO DEVIATED FROM THEIR SEARCH MISSIONS ON OCTOBER 16TH TO ATTACK ENEMY AIRCRAFT,\*\* AND (B) OF THE PLANE COMMANDERS OF TF 73 WHO DEVIATED FROM SEARCH PLAN FOX ON OCTOBER 19TH TO ATTACK ENEMY SHIPPING AND AIRCRAFT.\*\*\* SINCE, IN THE ABOVE CASE, SUCH ACTION WAS CONTRARY TO THE DOCTRINES OF THE DAY\*\*\*\* (IT IS ALSO CONTRARY TO THE DOCTRINES OF TODAY (1957)),\*\*\*\*\* THE WISDOM OF SUCH CONDUCT WAS SERIOUSLY QUESTIONED IN VOLUMES I AND II.

THEIR CONDUCT WAS A MARKED DEVIATION FROM THEIR BASIC INSTRUCTIONS WHICH HAD BEEN ISSUED JUST FIVE DAYS EARLIER BY CTF 73 WHICH STATED IN THIS CONNECTION:

"THE PRIMARY MISSION OF SEARCH PLANES IS LOCATING AND REPORTING ENEMY SURFACE FORCES AND AIRCRAFT, HOWEVER, DESTRUCTION OF ENEMY TARGETS WITHIN THE CAPABILITY OF THE SEARCH PLANE IS DESIRABLE IF IT DOES NOT INTERFERE WITH THE PRIMARY MISSION. DURING PERIODS EITHER PRECEDING OR DURING CERTAIN PHASES OF AN OPERATION, INFORMATION, EVEN NEGATIVE INFORMATION, IS ESSENTIAL. ACCORDINGLY, WHEN SUCH A PERIOD OF OPERATION IS ANNOUNCED, SEARCH PLANES WILL AVOID ACTION WITH ENEMY SURFACE OR AIR FORCES UNLESS THE ENEMY FORCE IS IN POSITION TO HARM OUR OWN SURFACE FORCES AND FULL CONTACT AND AMPLIFYING REPORTS HAVE BEEN SENT AND HAVE BEEN RECEIPTED FOR".\*\*\*\*\*

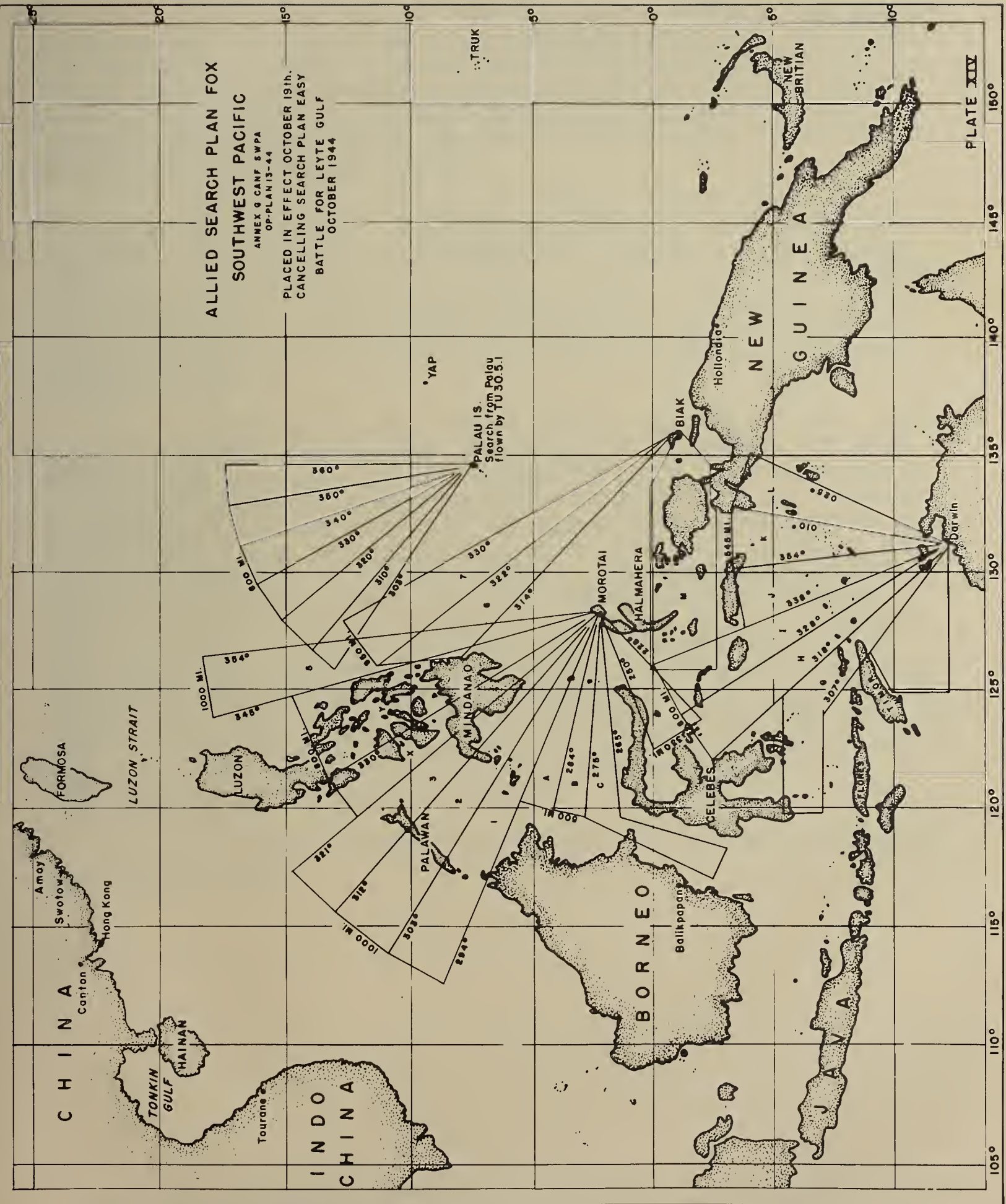
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- \* Aircraft Action Report No. 75, October 20th, 1944, forwarded by VPB 115, Serial 0193, November 5th, 1944.
- \*\* Volume I, Battle for Leyte Gulf (NavPers 91973), Naval War College, 1953, Operations of CTG's 38.2 and 38.3, October 16th, 1944.
- \*\*\* Volume II, Battle for Leyte Gulf (NavPers 92194), Naval War College, 1955, Operations of CTF 73, October 19th, 1944.
- \*\*\*\* Tactical Operational Instructions Carrier Aircraft (USF 73), 1948, Paragraph 307; Current Tactical Orders and Doctrine, U.S. Fleet Aircraft (USF 74B), Volume I, Carrier Aircraft, prepared by Commander Air Force, Pacific Fleet, U.S. Fleet, Headquarters of the Commander-in-Chief, November 1944, Paragraph 2133; Current Tactical Orders and Doctrine, U.S. Fleet Aircraft, (USF 73 Revised), Volume III, Patrol Aircraft, prepared by Commander Aircraft Scouting Force, February 1942, Paragraph 8-102.
- \*\*\*\*\* Naval Air Operating Procedures (NWP 41), Department of the Navy, Office of the Chief of Naval Operations, 1954, Section 372.
- \*\*\*\*\* COM7THFLT ltr "Special Instructions for Search Planes - Aircraft SEVENTH Fleet", Serial 000167, October 15th, 1944, Paragraph 1.



ALLIED SEARCH PLAN FOX  
SOUTHWEST PACIFIC

ANNEX G CANF SWPA  
OP-PLAN 13-44

PLACED IN EFFECT OCTOBER 19th.  
CANCELLING SEARCH PLAN EASY  
BATTLE FOR LEYTE GULF  
OCTOBER 1944







IT IS CONCEIVABLE THAT THE SUBSTANCE AND INTENT OF THE FOREGOING HAD NOT REACHED THE LEVEL OF THE PLANE COMMANDER BY THIS DATE, BUT IT SEEMS MOST PROBABLE THAT CTF 73'S DISPATCH INSTRUCTIONS THEREON TO CTG'S 73.2 (STRIKE AND RESCUE GROUP) AND 73.4 (SEARCH AND SUPPORT GROUP) HAD REACHED THESE TWO COMMANDERS. THIS DISPATCH INCLUDED THE FOLLOWING: "PRIMARY MISSION IS SEARCH WITH ATTACK SECONDARY."\* HEREIN WAS THE PRIMARY ROLE EMPHASIZED WITH UNMISTAKABLE CLARITY.

SINCE A PLOT OF THE CONTACTS REPORTED ON THIS DATE, I.E., CATANDUANES ISLAND, PALAWAN AND NEGROS, SHOWS THAT HAD THE PLANES MAKING THESE ATTACKS BEEN SHOT DOWN THE SEARCHES WOULD HAVE BEEN SERIOUSLY INTERFERRED WITH, IT SEEMS CORRECT TO SAY THAT THE CONDUCT OF THE PLANE COMMANDERS IN MAKING THE ATTACKS DID NOT SUPPORT THE OBJECTIVE OF THE SEARCHES. THIS WAS PARTICULARLY SO ON THIS DAY (OCTOBER 20TH) FOR THE ALLIED LANDINGS ON LEYTE WERE OCCURRING AND INFORMATION OF JAPANESE REACTION, IF ANY, WAS OF PRIMARY IMPORTANCE.

HOWEVER THE PLANE COMMANDERS WERE NOT ENTIRELY AT FAULT. THIS SEEMS SO FOR THE UNIT WAR DIARIES, ACTION REPORTS AND HISTORY (COMMANDER FLEET AIR WING SEVENTEEN), AND PARTICULARLY THE LATTER, LIST THE SUCCESSES OF THEIR SEARCH AIRCRAFT IN THESE ECCENTRIC OPERATIONS. IT CAN THEREFORE BE ASSUMED THAT SUCH OPERATIONS WERE NOT ONLY CONDONED, BUT ENCOURAGED BY THE SQUADRON AND TASK UNIT COMMANDERS. WHY THIS WAS SO IS NOT CLEAR, BUT IT MAY HAVE BEEN DUE TO THE BELIEF, MENTIONED REPEATEDLY IN THIS ANALYSIS, THAT NO MAJOR ELEMENTS OF THE JAPANESE FLEET WOULD BE INVOLVED IN THE PRESENT OPERATIONS. HOWEVER, WHETHER OR NOT THIS WAS SO IS NOT IMPORTANT. WHAT IS IMPORTANT IS THE FACT THAT THE ORDERS AS PRESENTLY WRITTEN WERE BEING INTERPRETED SO BROADLY AS TO TEND TO MAKE THEM INEFFECTIVE. IN SUCH CASE THEY SHOULD HAVE BEEN MODIFIED OR CANCELLED. IT IS A FUNDAMENTAL MILITARY TENET THAT A LAWFUL ORDER MUST BE OBEYED. FAILURE TO DO SO CAN BE EXPECTED TO LEAD EVENTUALLY TO A HAPHAZARD AND FREQUENT DISREGARD OF ORDERS. THIS LEADS TO THE FURTHER CONCLUSION THAT A COMMANDER SHOULD NOT ISSUE AN ORDER WHICH HE DOES NOT EXPECT TO BE OBEYED.

At 2400 the CURRITUCK was bearing 110°(T), distant 730 miles from Morotai Island.

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\* CTF 73 Dispatch 180900 October 1944 to CTG's 73.3 and 73.4, info C.G. 5TH Air Force, CAAF SOWESPAC, CTF's 77, 71 and 72.

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(B) Operations of CINCPAC-CINCPOA, October 20th.

On this day CINCPOA made an estimate\* which indicated that the following Japanese ships were operational and were distributed as follows:

	<u>BB</u>	<u>CV</u>	<u>BB/XCV</u>	<u>CVL</u>	<u>CVE</u>	<u>CA</u>	<u>CL</u>	<u>DD</u>
Empire-Formosa	3	6	2	5	3	4	7	20
Singapore	4				1	11	2 to 3	20

This estimate was incorrect. Actually the distribution of the Japanese surface forces at this time was:

	<u>BB</u>	<u>CV/XCV</u>	<u>BB/XCV</u>	<u>CVL</u>	<u>CVE</u>	<u>CA</u>	<u>CL</u>	<u>DD</u>
Empire-Formosa		4	2	5	2	2	8	30
Brunei	7					12	3	20

It will be noted that this estimate listed:

(a) in the Empire-Formosa area a number of ships which were not included in the sortie orders for the Main Force and the SECOND Striking Force. The Main Force to sortie this day consisted of one CV, three CVL's, two BB/XCV's, three CL's, eight DD's; the SECOND Striking Force en route Mako consisted of two CA's, one CL, seven DD's,

(b) in the Singapore area the units of the FIRST Striking Force. These units were not in this area but were instead fast approaching Brunei, having sortied Lingga-Singapore two days earlier. This indicates clearly that CINCPOA Intelligence had not as yet discovered that this force had sortied from Lingga-Singapore.

(1) Western Pacific Task Forces, October 20th.

(a) Operations of COMTHIRDFLT.

On October 20th COMTHIRDFLT, in the NEW JERSEY with TG 38.2, employed TG's 38.1 and 38.4 in the vicinity of Latitude 11° - 30'N, Longitude 126° - 30'E, to provide support to the Leyte landings and to neutralize enemy airfields in northern Mindanao and the western Visayas (Plate XV) while TG's 38.2 and 38.3 operated in a covering position in the vicinity of Latitude 15° - 00'N, Longitude 127° - 00'E.\*\*

\* Operations in the Pacific Ocean Areas October 1944, CINCPAC-CINCPOA, May 31st, 1945, Page 55.

\*\* COM3RDFLT Dispatch 191329 October 1944 to CTF 38, CTG's 38.1, 38.2, 38.3 and 38.4.



At 0417 he received his first contact report of the day from COMNAVGRPCHINA of five large unidentified ships in Latitude 18° - 42'N, Longitude 113° - 15'E, course East, speed thirteen knots\* (Plate III, Contact 3).

At 0420 he received a weather forecast from COMSEVENTHFLT which indicated that a probable depression was moving west out of the central Philippines into the South China Sea and that generally favorable flying conditions, except for scattered showers in the afternoon, were expected over Leyte, Mindanao, Luzon and the Visayas.\*\*

At 0558 he received a report repeated by COMSUBPAC\*\*\* of the TRIGGER's contact, which he had already received at about 1645 the previous day (Contact 2), on four heavy cruisers and five destroyers northeast of Formosa. This was on the SECOND Striking Force en route from Amami O Shima to Mako the composition of which was actually two heavy cruisers, one light cruiser and six destroyers.

At 0653 he received a disappointing dispatch from COMNAVGRPCHINA to the effect that the FOURTEENTH Air Force search planes then in the air over the South China Sea were making their coverage 200 miles short and that the next flight, scheduled for daylight October 20th, had been cancelled due to a temporary fuel shortage.\*\*\*\* This situation had developed at an inopportune time because COMTHIRDFLT was depending on these aircraft to (a) provide him further information on the enemy task force of one carrier, two cruisers and three destroyers which had reportedly been sighted at 1403 the previous day in Latitude 18° - 00'N, Longitude 112° - 11'E, course 330°(T), speed twenty-five knots,\*\*\*\*\* and (b) advise him in the event the other enemy task force of four cruisers and five destroyers, i.e., TRIGGER contact\*\*\*\*\* reported above, might head south into the South China Sea in an attempt to penetrate to the Leyte area from the west, perhaps as a "Tokyo Express" operation.

It will be recalled that at 2229 on the previous evening he had decided to keep TF 38 intact mainly as a result of these two enemy contacts but also as a result of the BREEM contact in Makassar Strait at 0300 October 18th,\*\*\*\*\* and had cancelled orders for certain groups to retire to Manus

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- \* COMNAVGRPCHINA Dispatch 191716 October 1944 to CINCPAC, info COMSUBPAC.
  - \*\* COM7THFLT Dispatch 191559 October 1944 to all TFC's 3RDFLT.
  - \*\*\* COMSUBPAC Dispatch 191826 October 1944 to all submarines, 3RDFLT.
  - \*\*\*\* COMNAVGRPCHINA Dispatch 191729 October 1944 to COM3RDFLT, info COMSOWESPAC, COM7THFLT, etc.
  - \*\*\*\*\* CINCPAC Dispatch 190726 October 1944 to COM3RDFLT, COM7THFLT, COMSOWESPAC, etc. (Re-encypherment of COMNAVGRPCHINA Dispatch 190558 October 1944).
  - \*\*\*\*\* TRIGGER Dispatch 190715 October 1944 to COMSUBPAC, info COM3RDFLT.
  - \*\*\*\*\* CTF 71 Dispatch 172248 October 1944 to COM3RDFLT.

and Ulithi for replenishment and repairs.\* He would now have to rely entirely on Allied submarines to provide him information on enemy movements through the South China Sea, except for that area covered by FIFTH Air Force daylight searches from Morotai.

At 0805 he received, as an information addressee, CINCPAC's reply to C.G. FOURTEENTH Air Force's query forwarded by COMNAVGRPCINA as to how much longer he would be required to conduct searches over the South China Sea.\*\* In this reply CINCPAC stated that he (a) was unable to estimate the duration of the searches required, and (b) considered that they should be maintained until COMSOWESPAC considered them no longer necessary.\*\*\* Since CINCPAC's reply embraced, in general, the substance of his (COMTHIRDFLT's) opinion on this matter as forwarded to CINCPAC, he was probably pleased at this reply, as the nature of the Japanese reaction to the Allied landings scheduled for this day was not as yet apparent.

At 0816 he received, as an information addressee, a dispatch wherein CTF 77 requested that CTG 38.1 the senior task group commander and OTC of the two groups (TG's 38.1 and 38.4) scheduled to provide direct support to the Leyte landings this day, also launch fighter sweeps against enemy airfields on northern Mindanao north of Latitude 08° - 45'N and the western Visayas.\*\*\*\* Since he took no action himself, he apparently considered this request appropriate and felt confident that CTG 38.1 would comply.

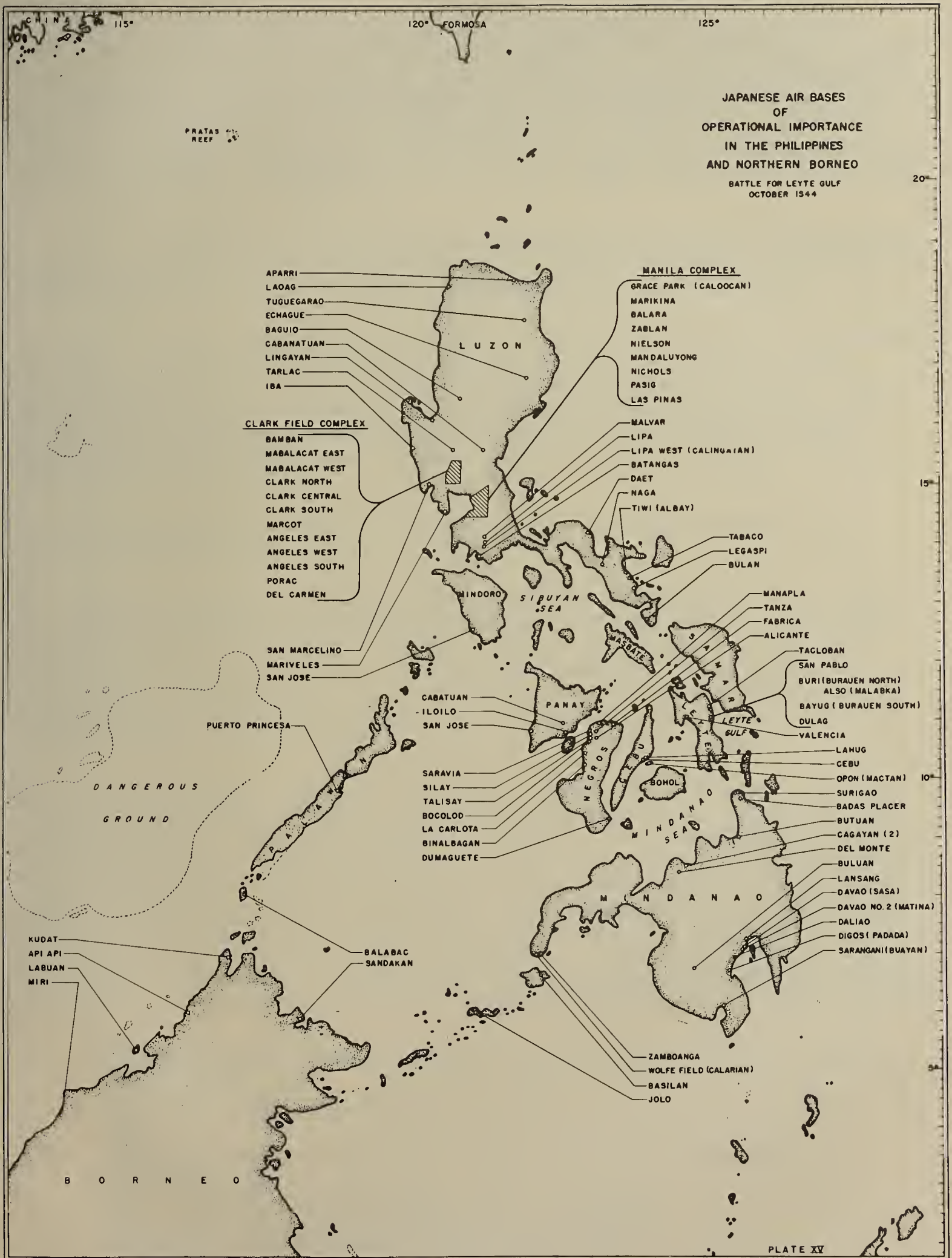
At 0903 he advised CTG 30.7 (Commander Hunter Killer Group) that (a) a submarine sighting on October 19th and a direction finder report on October 18th indicated that there was a possibility that at least three submarines were approaching CTG 30.3 from the north and (b) these submarines could be in his (CTG 30.7's) immediate vicinity on this day (October 20th). He then directed CTG 30.7 to get them if they came near.\*\*\*\*\*

This dispatch shows how closely COMTHIRDFLT was maintaining his running estimate of the situation. Actually, at this time (October 20th) there were four enemy submarines (I-26, 45 54 and 56) closing this area.

At 0927, because he felt that the COWPENS could now be used to better advantage to augment the other carriers of TG 38.1 which were getting low on bombs, he issued instructions to CTG 30.3 to detach the COWPENS and

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- \* COM3RDFLT Dispatch 191329 October 1944 to CTF 38, CTG's 38.1, 38.2, 38.3 and 38.4.
  - \*\* COMNAVGRPCINA Dispatch 190441 October 1944 to CINCPAC (Readdressed as 190856 by CINCPAC for action to COM3RDFLT, info CTF 38, COMSOWESPAC).
  - \*\*\* CINCPAC Dispatch 191904 October 1944 to COMNAVGRPCINA, info COM3RDFLT, COMSOWESPAC.
  - \*\*\*\* CTF 77 Dispatch 191917 October 1944 to CTG 38.1, info COM3RDFLT.
  - \*\*\*\*\* COM3RDFLT Dispatch 200003 October 1944 to CTG 30.7, info COMINCH, CINCPAC, all Task Force and Task Group Commanders 3RDFLT.









GRAYSON in time to rejoin TG 38.1 at Point MICK 0800 October 21st.\* In doing this he felt that TG 30.3 was now relatively secure from enemy air or surface attack since he had taken action previously to provide antisubmarine protection for this group after departure of the COWPENS by ordering (a) CTG 30.7 (Hunter Killer Group), consisting of the HOGGATT BAY, BEBAS, SEID, STEELE and SAMUEL S. MILES, to join it on this day, and (b) CTG 30.5 to provide continuous antisubmarine cover for the group commencing October 22nd until its arrival at Ulithi.\*\*

At 0940 he received, as an information addressee, a request from CTF 77 to CTG 38.1 for a dusk CAP of eight VF over the objective area from 1730 until 1900 on D and D+1 days and thereafter as practicable.\*\*\*

At 0953 he received a dispatch from CTF 77 wherein that commander, in view of the fact that present orders did not indicate that the fast carrier groups would be available to support operations after D-day, requested that one fast carrier group be retained at the objective area after D-day for the purpose of keeping enemy airfields in the western Visayas neutralized and in order to be prepared against enemy air attacks until the situation clarified.\*\*\*\*

As will be shown presently, he sent a combined reply to the above two dispatches.

At 1050 he received information from CINCPAC to the effect that he (CINCPAC) believed that Commander Main Force was planning to sortie his command either on the 19th or the 20th. What consideration he gave this information is not known, but, from his later actions, it seems unlikely that he was concerned about it at this time. Perhaps he was relying on the submarines and on the air searches from Tinian to keep him informed should the Main Force actually sortie.

At 1214 he replied to CTF 77's request (a) for dusk CAP in the objective area (TCAP) addressed to CTG 38.1, and (b) for air support at the objective area after D-day addressed to himself. He stated that TG's 38.1 and 38.4 were low on bombs and would have to retire about 1700 October 20th to fuel October 21st, and that TG's 38.2 and 38.3, then operating in strategic support in the vicinity of Latitude 15° - 00'N, Longitude 127° - 00'E, would strike the western Visayas on the 21st from San Bernardino Strait area unless a change in the strategic situation prevented, in which case CTF 77 would be notified. He then requested target priorities and instructions regarding air coordination with other aircraft that might be attacking in the same area.\*\*\*\*\*

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\* COM3RDFLT Dispatch 200027 October 1944 to CTG 30.3 info all TFC's and TGC's 3RDFLT.

\*\* War Diaries CTG 30.7, HOGGATT BAY, VPB's 17, 21 and 216, October 20th, 1944.

\*\*\* CTF 77 Dispatch 191930 October 1944 to CTG 38.1, info CTG 38.4, COM3RDFLT, etc.

\*\*\*\* CTF 77 Dispatch 191921 October 1944 to COM3RDFLT, info CTG's 38.1, 38.2, 38.3, 38.4, 77.4 and CTF's 38, 78 and 79.

\*\*\*\*\* COM3RDFLT Dispatch 200314 October 1944 to CTF 77, info CINCPAC, COM7THFLT, all TFC's 3RD and 7TH Fleets, etc.



IN THIS ANSWER HE ACCOMPLISHED THREE THINGS: HE (A) INDICATED THAT HE WAS COGNIZANT OF CTF 77'S REQUEST TO CTG 38.1 FOR A DUSK TCAP BY REFERRING TO THIS REQUEST IN HIS REPLY, (B) NOTIFIED CTF 77 OF THE PLANNED EMPLOYMENT OF HIS COMMAND ON THE FOLLOWING DAY, AND (C) BY EMPLOYING THE PHRASE "UNLESS A CHANGE IN THE STRATEGIC SITUATION PREVENTED", ALERTED CTF 77 TO THE POSSIBILITY THAT HE MIGHT BE UNABLE TO MAKE THE WESTERN VISAYAN STRIKES.

WHILE HE DID NOT EXPLAIN THE REASONING BY WHICH HE ARRIVED AT THE DECISIONS IN THE ABOVE DISPATCH, IT SEEMS CLEAR THAT HE FELT THAT (A) IT WAS NO LONGER WITHIN THE PROVINCE OF CTG 38.1 TO DETERMINE EVEN, IN PART, THE FUTURE EMPLOYMENT OF THE TASK GROUPS OPERATING IN DIRECT SUPPORT, BUT RATHER FOR HIMSELF TO DO SO AND HE THEREFORE, BY THIS DISPATCH, ADVISED CTF 77 OF THE PLANNED EMPLOYMENT OF TF 38 WHICH WOULD DENY THE DUSK TCAP ON D+1 DAY, (B) SINCE TWO OF HIS CARRIER GROUPS WOULD BE REFUELING ON D+1 DAY, AND WOULD, THEREFORE, NOT BE IMMEDIATELY AVAILABLE TO SUPPORT OR COVER KING II, HE COULD BETTER ACCOMPLISH HIS OBJECTIVE BY STATIONING HIS REMAINING TWO GROUPS IN A COVERING POSITION OFF SAN BERNARDINO STRAIT. FROM THIS POSITION HE COULD (A) PREVENT ANY ENEMY SURFACE FORCES FROM PENETRATING THE OBJECTIVE AREA VIA SAN BERNARDINO STRAIT OR NORTHEAST OF THE PHILIPPINES\* (TG'S 77.2 AND 77.4 WERE IN A POSITION TO GUARD THE APPROACHES FROM THE SOUTHEAST OR VIA SURIGAO STRAIT) AND (B) PROVIDE INDIRECT PROTECTION AGAINST ENEMY AIR ATTACKS ON THE OBJECTIVE AREA BY (1) STRIKING THE WESTERN VISAYAS AND (2) RESUMING AIR ATTACKS AGAINST ENEMY AIRFIELDS ON LUZON AS NECESSARY TO KEEP THEM NEUTRALIZED AND THUS, INTERDICT THE MOVEMENT OF AIRCRAFT FROM THE EMPIRE AND FORMOSA TO THE OBJECTIVE AREA. CTF 77, BEING SO ALERTED TO THE POSSIBILITY THAT COMTHIRDFLT MIGHT NOT BE ABLE TO STRIKE THE WESTERN VISAYAS, WOULD NOW BE PREPARED TO TAKE ALTERNATE ACTION.

At 1256, in accordance with this plan, he directed CTF 38 to proceed in company with TG's 38.2 and 38.3 in sufficient time on this day to arrive in the vicinity of Latitude 13° - 30'N, Longitude 125° - 30'E, about dawn October 21st where, in order to neutralize enemy air activity in the central Philippines and to support SOWESPAC operations, he was to (a) launch a fighter sweep and two deck load strikes against the Bicol-Visayas area with target priorities and coordination measures as supplied by CTF 77; and (b) conduct on the same day, a morning and afternoon search of sector 310-020°(T) to a distance of three hundred miles, with the exception that the left sectors were to extend only to the east coast of Luzon.\*\*

Based on the concepts above expressed, the above directive seems sound.

At 1309 he intercepted a contact report of one medium freighter

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\* Action Report COM3RDFLT, Operations of Western Pacific Task Forces and 3RDFLT, Serial 0085, January 25th, 1945.

\*\* COM3RDFLT Dispatch 200356 October 1944 to CTF 38, info CTG's 38.2, and 38.3.



and one oiler escorted by one destroyer, on course 050°(T) (Contact 6).\*

At 1333 he received, as an information addressee, a dispatch wherein COMNAVGRPCHINA stated that the FOURTEENTH Air Force had informed him (COMNAVGRPCHINA) that (a) gasoline difficulties had been overcome, (b) a full search had been made and would continue to be made until orders were received from COMSOWESPAC to cease.\*\*

At 1511 he received a contact report from a SEVENTHFLT antisubmarine unit of a submarine just west of Halmahera (Contact 4).\*\*\*

At 1516 he suggested to CTF 38 that he make a small sweep and strike against Coron Bay as there was a possibility of valuable oilers there.\*\*\*\*

AT 1542 HE RECEIVED A DISPATCH FROM CTG 38.2 (QUOTED IN FULL UNDER "OPERATIONS OF CTG'S 38.2 AND 38.3, OCTOBER 20TH") TO THE GENERAL EFFECT THAT HIS FIGHTER SQUADRON (FITERON EIGHT) "IS PRACTICALLY 100% SUFFERING FROM COMBAT FATIGUE" AND SHOULD BE REPLACED IMMEDIATELY.\*\*\*\*\*

This dispatch seems to have come as a surprise. In this connection, it seems wise to insert here the fact that at 1440 on the preceding day he (COMTHIRDFLT) had indicated by dispatch his intentions concerning the complement of aircraft for "near future operations". In this dispatch, he had stated that (a) for near future operations, it was his intention to increase the fighter complement of each large carrier to fifty-four with the exception of the BUNKER HILL which was to have a special complement of 100 VF, (b) he planned to accomplish this as follows: (1) TG 38.1. The HORNET and the WASP were to receive the necessary VF by fly aboard delivery from Guam about November 2nd; (2) TG 38.2. The BUNKER HILL was to proceed to Manus with TG 38.3 and was to leave there all VB and VT of CVG EIGHT for return to Pearl. The necessary VF to build her fighter complement to 100 were to come from Saipan by fly aboard delivery about November 4th. The INTREPID and HANCOCK were to obtain the necessary VF from the CVE's in the Ulithi area after October 29th; (3) TG 38.3. The ESSEX and the LEXINGTON were to obtain their necessary VF during their availability period at Manus; (4) TG 38.4. The FRANKLIN and the ENTERPRISE were to obtain their necessary VF from the CVE's in the Ulithi area after October 31st, (c) he (COMTHIRDFLT) would arrange for the CVE's in Ulithi to cover the requirements for TG 38.2 and TG 38.4 and would also issue the necessary movement orders for the replenishment of TG 38.1 and the BUNKER HILL near Saipan - Guam as

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\* Search Plane Sector 1, from Morotai, Dispatch 200245 October 1944 to 5THBOMCOM.

\*\* COMNAVGRPCHINA Dispatch 200356 October 1944 to COMSOWESPAC, info CINCPAC, COM3RDFLT.

\*\*\* CTU 70.2.1 Dispatch 200202 October 1944 to CTG 70.2, COM7THFLT, info CTF 77.

\*\*\*\* COM3RDFLT TBS Voice Radio Message 201516/I October 1944 to CTF 38.

\*\*\*\*\* CTG 38.2 Visual Dispatch 200345 October 1944 to CTF 38, info COM3RDFLT.



indicated above, (d) it was intended that the resultant air groups of each large carrier, except the BUNKER HILL and the ENTERPRISE, would be approximately fifty-four VF, twenty-four VB, and eighteen VT, and (e) the task force and task group commanders were to take necessary action to facilitate the accomplishment of this plan by (1) effecting redistribution of aircraft within the task groups, and (2) instituting liaison with the replenishment sources above indicated.\*

SINCE, IN THIS DISPATCH, HE HAD INDICATED THAT THE BUNKER HILL WAS TO PROCEED TO MANUS WHERE SHE WAS TO RECEIVE A SPECIAL COMPLEMENT OF 100 VF AND WAS TO LEAVE AT MANUS THE VB AND VT OF CVG EIGHT FOR RETURN TO PEARL HARBOR, IT IS NOT UNLIKELY THAT THE THOUGHT CROSSED HIS MIND THAT THIS SUDDEN REPORT ON FITERON EIGHT'S CONDITION HAD BEEN TRIGGERED BY THE ABOVE DISPATCH. HIS GREAT CONCERN NOW MUST HAVE BEEN AS TO WHETHER OR NOT THIS UNREST WAS CONFINED SOLELY TO THE BUNKER HILL OR WHETHER IT WAS DEVELOPING IN OTHER CARRIER AIR GROUPS AS WELL, AND, IF SO, TO WHAT EXTENT.

The fact that he did not issue any dispatches thereon on this day shows that he desired to (a) await further information from CTG 38.2, and (b) to study this development and its implications on his present and future operations.

At 1517 he received a contact report on two destroyers off the west coast of Palawan on course 090°(T), speed 15 knots (Contact 7).\*\*

At 1613 he received a copy of CTG 30.5's dispatch instructions directing that his seaplanes based at Kossol Passage locate TG 30.3 on October 22nd and then provide continuous ASW coverage for that group between Longitudes 131° - 00'E and 135° - 00'E, and that Ulithi-based seaplanes provide similar cover between Longitude 135° - 00'E and Ulithi.\*\*\*

At 1615 he notified CTG 30.9 (COMSERVRON TEN - COMSERVPAC representative at Ulithi) that it now appeared that the CANBERRA and HOUSTON could be brought into Ulithi about October 27 or 28th "if luck held out" and directed that arrangements be made to expedite emergency repairs to these vessels to permit their early return to Pearl on a basis not to interfere with essential repairs to other THIRDFLT vessels.\*\*\*\* It is presumed that COMTHIRDFLT had in mind three things when he used the expression "if luck holds out", namely (1) continued favorable weather (2) successful progress of en route salvage operations, and (3) protection against attack by enemy submarines (he had just estimated the day before, as a result of three submarine sightings, that the enemy might be deploying these submarines to attack TG 30.3).\*\*\*\*\*

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\* COM3RDFLT Dispatch 190540 October 1944 to CTF 38, CTG's 38.1, 38.2, 38.3 and 38.4.

\*\* 5TH BOMCOM Dispatch 201435/I October 1944 to AOIC.

\*\*\* CTG 30.5 Dispatch 200017 October 1944 to CTU 30.5.1 and 30.5.4, CTG 30.3, etc., info COM3RDFLT, etc.

\*\*\*\* COM3RDFLT Dispatch 200715 October 1944 to CTG 30.9, info COMSERVPAC, CTG 30.3, etc.

\*\*\*\*\* War Diary CINCPAC, October 20th, 1944.



At 1625 he received a dispatch from CTF 38 recommending in light of CTG 38.2's 200345 that (a) the entire air group (Air Group EIGHT) be relieved in its entirety by Air Group FOUR, or (b) VF EIGHT be relieved by (1) VF EIGHTY-ONE, now in reserve at Pearl, or (2) by the VF squadrons from two operating CVL's.\*

At 1650 he received a contact report on two destroyers in the western Celebes Sea on course 080°(T) (Contact 5).\*\*

At 1743 he sent to COMSOWESPAC an additional report concerning the results of the attacks against northern Luzon by TG 38.2 on October 18th stating, among other things, that (a) three planes had been destroyed on the ground at Aparri, (b) one large transport or cargo vessel and one patrol vessel had been sunk at Lapog Bay (northwest coast of Luzon) and (c) the runway at Aparri, and the barracks and fuel dump at Laoag, had been hit.\*\*\* The original report has been discussed under "Operations of CTG 38.2, October 18th".

At 1744 he directed CTG 38.1 to delay shifting of the MARSHALL to TG 38.2 until October 22nd.\*\*\*\*

At 1809 he directed CTG 38.4 to delay transferring BILOXI to TG 38.2 until October 22nd.\*\*\*\*\*

At 1915 he received a dispatch from COMNAVGRPCHINA reporting that, based on a photographic reconnaissance mission flown on the 18th, there were about 184 operational aircraft in the two southern Formosa airfields (Tainan and Okayama) photographed.\*\*\*\*\*

This information was not a surprise to him for he had already been advised that the Japanese might decide to move air reinforcements into the Philippines from the Empire and Formosa. This report, however, gave indications that many aircraft were being concentrated in the Takao area, from whence it was but a short flight into Luzon.

At 2022 he received the announcement that GHQ SOWESPAC Advance Echelon had been established at Leyte at 1200 and GHQ SOWESPAC and Rear

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- \* CTF 38 Visual Dispatch 200615 October 1944 to COM3RDFLT, CTG 38.2.
  - \*\* Radio Hollandia Dispatch 201100/I October 1944 to all concerned SOWESPAC current operations.
  - \*\*\* COM3RDFLT Dispatch 200843 October 1944 to COMSOWESPAC and CINCPAC, info COMINCH, COM7THFLT, etc.
  - \*\*\*\* COM3RDFLT Dispatch 200844 October 1944 to CTG 38.1, info CTG 38.2.
  - \*\*\*\*\* COM3RDFLT Dispatch 200909 October 1944 to CTG 38.4, info CTG 38.2, BILOXI.
  - \*\*\*\*\* ALUSLO 14THBOMCOM Dispatch 190202 October 1944 to COMNAVGRPCHINA passed to CINCPAC for action who re-encyphers and passes to COMINCH, COMSOWESPAC, CTF 77, COM3RDFLT, etc. for info.

Echelon GHQ SOWESPAC remained at Hollandia and Brisbane, respectively.\*

At 2122 he amplified his previous operation orders for the employment of TF 38 on October 21st and promulgated the schedule for October 22nd as follows: (a) CTG's 38.1 and 38.4 proceed after fueling October 21st to Point READY (Latitude 15° - 00'N, Longitude 127° - 00'E) to arrive 0600 October 22nd and operate within fifty miles of this point; (b) CTG 38.2 proceed after making the Visayas strikes October 21st to join TG's 38.1 and 38.4 at 0600 October 22nd; conduct 300 mile sector search between 290° - 360° (T) during morning and afternoon October 22nd; (c) CTG 38.3 proceed on October 21st after the Visayas strikes to fuel in Area MICK at 0700 October 22nd; (d) CTG 38.1\*\* assume tactical command of task groups in company.\*\*\*

THIS MEANT THAT ALL THREE CARRIER GROUPS AVAILABLE OCTOBER 22ND WOULD BE OPERATING IN STRATEGIC SUPPORT ABOUT 270 MILES NORTH-NORTHEAST OF THE OBJECTIVE AREA (THE FOURTH GROUP CANNOT BE CONSIDERED AS READILY AVAILABLE SINCE IT WOULD BE FUELING IN AREA MICK SOME 300 MILES NORTHEAST OF THE OBJECTIVE AREA). BY THIS ACTION COMTHIRDFLT HAD DISREGARDED CTF 77'S REQUEST FOR THE RETENTION OF ONE FAST CARRIER GROUP AT THE OBJECTIVE AREA AFTER D-DAY "UNTIL THE SITUATION CLARIFIED". WHY DID HE DO SO? PERHAPS HE REASONED THAT THE BOMBARDMENT SHIPS AND THE ESCORT CARRIERS COULD HANDLE THE SITUATION AT THE OBJECTIVE AREA. MOREOVER, CTG 77.4, IN ACCORDANCE WITH THE BASIC AIR PLAN,\*\*\*\* WAS RESPONSIBLE FOR AIR DEFENSE AND AIR SUPPORT AT THE OBJECTIVE AREA AND COMTHIRDFLT WAS TO PROVIDE STRATEGIC SUPPORT AND STRIKES SUBSEQUENT TO D-DAY AS REQUESTED BY EITHER CTF 77 OR COMSOWESPAC. THEREFORE, AIR PROTECTION AND SUPPORT AT THE OBJECTIVE AREA AS REQUESTED BY CTF 77, EXCEPT FOR A NIGHT CAP, HAD NOT BEEN INCLUDED IN HIS ASSIGNED TASKS AND HIS STRIKES AGAINST ENEMY AIRFIELDS IN THE WESTERN VISAYAS THIS DAY DID NOT INDICATE A NEED FOR FURTHER NEUTRALIZATION AFTER D+1 DAY AS IS POINTED OUT UNDER "OPERATIONS OF CTG'S 38.1 AND 38.4, OCTOBER 20TH".

IN ADDITION TO THE ABOVE, AND POSSIBLY FLOWING OUT OF THE GENERAL SITUATION, WAS THE FACT THAT COMTHIRDFLT WAS BECOMING MORE AND MORE CONCERNED OVER (A) OPERATION HOTFOOT,\*\*\*\*\* AND (B) THE FATIGUE OF HIS PILOTS, AND FELT THAT HIS COMMAND SHOULD NOT BE REQUIRED TO SUPPLY TASK GROUPS FOR LOCAL SUPPORT WHEN THE INDICATIONS OF ENEMY REACTION IN STRENGTH CONTINUED TO BE MEAGER. HE LIKELY FELT THAT HIS ACTIONS WERE IN ACCORDANCE WITH HIS AGREEMENT WITH COMSOWESPAC COMPLETED ON SEPTEMBER 30TH WHEREIN IT WAS ESTABLISHED THAT SHOULD HE BE REQUESTED BY EITHER COMSOWESPAC OR COMSEVENTHFLT TO PROVIDE CARRIER STRIKES IF NECESSITATED BY THE EXISTING SITUATION, HE WAS TO

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- \* GHQ SOWESPAC Dispatch 200519 October 1944 to COM3RDFLT, CANF and CAAF SOWESPAC, C.G. 6TH Army, etc.
  - \*\* CTF 38 aboard LEXINGTON in TG 38.3 to be absent this date while fueling; CTG 38.1 in WASP next senior command, excluding COM3RDFLT aboard NEW JERSEY in TG 38.2.
  - \*\*\* COM3RDFLT Dispatch 201222 October 1944 to CTF 38, CTG 30.8 and all TGC's TF 38, info CINCPAC, COMSOWESPAC, CTF 77, etc.
  - \*\*\*\* CANF SOWESPAC Operation Plan No. 13-44, Serial 00022A, September 26th, 1944, Appendix G.
  - \*\*\*\*\* Air Strikes against the Japanese mainland.



CONFIDENTIAL

COMTHIRDFLT  
October 20th

COMPLY OR IMMEDIATELY REPORT INABILITY. HE APPEARS TO HAVE FELT THAT HE HAD REPORTED HIS ABILITY HERE, ALBEIT BY IMPLICATION.

THE FACT THAT HE HAD ORDERED AIR SEARCHES IN THE DIRECTION OF LUZON STRAIT BUT SEEMS TO HAVE TAKEN NO OTHER ACTION SUGGESTS THAT HE WAS NOT CONCERNED OVER MOST OF THE CONTACTS RECEIVED THIS DAY BUT WAS SOMEWHAT CONCERNED ABOUT A POSSIBLE TRANSIT THROUGH THIS PASSAGE BY THE SECOND STRIKING FORCE IN AN ATTEMPT TO REINFORCE THE LEYTE GARRISON FORCES VIA "TOKYO EXPRESS" TACTICS. HE KNEW THAT THIS ENEMY FORCE HAD LAST BEEN OBSERVED AT 1400 OCTOBER 19TH OFF NORTHERN FORMOSA HEADING TOWARD FORMOSA STRAIT, (CONTACT 2). NEVERTHELESS, THE REPORTED COMPOSITION OF THIS FORCE (FOUR HEAVY CRUISERS AND FIVE DESTROYERS) WAS HARDLY SUCH AS TO REQUIRE THE OVERWHELMING SUPERIORITY OF THREE FAST CARRIER TASK GROUPS TO OPPOSE IT. DOES IT NOT SEEM LOGICAL TO SAY THAT HE COULD HAVE STATIONED ONE OF HIS CARRIER GROUPS OFF SAMAR ABOUT MIDWAY BETWEEN SAN BERNARDINO AND SURIGAO STRAITS SO AS TO BE IN A GOOD POSITION TO INTERCEPT ANY ATTEMPT BY THE ENEMY TO PENETRATE THE OBJECTIVE AREA VIA THESE PASSAGES AND AT THE SAME TIME LEND AIR SUPPORT AND PROTECTION TO THE ASSAULT FORCES IF SO REQUIRED?

IT IS OF PARTICULAR INTEREST TO NOTE THAT HE ORDERED NO CARRIER-BASED AIR SEARCHES IN THE DIRECTION OF THE EMPIRE WHERE, ACCORDING TO HIS INTELLIGENCE INFORMATION, THE ENEMY CARRIERS WERE LOCATED. HE LIKELY WAS DEPENDING ON (A) THE TF 17 SUBMARINES STATIONED OFF BUNGO SUIDO AND KII SUIDO (DIAGRAM B) TO GIVE HIM EARLY WARNING OF THE DEPARTURE OF THE CARRIERS--THEY HAD ALREADY REPORTED THE SORTIE OF THE SECOND STRIKING FORCE ON OCTOBER 15TH,\* AND (B) THE LAND AND TENDER-BASED DAYLIGHT AIR SEARCHES FROM THE MARIANAS AND PALAU (DIAGRAM B) TO GUARD AGAINST AN APPROACH TO THE PHILIPPINES FROM THE EASTERN SEMI-CIRCLE. NEVERTHELESS, THE SUBMARINES OFF THE EMPIRE WERE TOO THINLY DISPOSED TO GUARANTEE POSITIVE DETECTION OF AN ENEMY SORTIE AND THE AIR SEARCHES FROM TINIAN AND PALAU WERE TOO INFREQUENT--ONCE EVERY TWENTY-FOUR HOURS.

It is also of interest to note that, despite the fact he now knew of Japanese air concentrations in southern Formosa, he had ordered no air searches over northern Luzon, and over the Clark Field complex in particular, on either October 21st or 22nd to ascertain whether or not Japanese aircraft were likewise being concentrated there. While his reason for not making the above air searches are not known, it seems likely that, in addition to those which have been discussed earlier--i.e., his concern over Operation HOTFOOT and the fatigue of his pilots--they included (a) his belief that he had so heavily damaged the Japanese land-based air arms in his strikes in the Nansei Shoto, Formosa, and northern Luzon that they were not ready yet to take further immediate action of consequence, and (b) his knowledge that Japanese reaction by sea and air to the Allied landings had so far been very meager and gave no indication of counteraction in strength.

WHATEVER MAY HAVE BEEN HIS REASONS FOR NOT SEARCHING NORTHERN

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\* BESUGO Dispatch 151014 October 1944 to CTF 17, info COM3RDFLT.



LUZON ON THESE DAYS, THEY ARE NOT CONSIDERED SOUND BECAUSE THE MOST LIKELY AND MOST DANGEROUS ENEMY REACTION AT THIS TIME AGAINST THE SOWESPAC FORCES IN LEYTE GULF COULD BE EXPECTED TO BE ENEMY AIRCRAFT OPERATING LARGELY OUT OF LUZON. THAT THE JAPANESE EXPECTED HIM TO ATTEMPT TO PREVENT SUCH CONCENTRATIONS, EVEN ON FORMOSA, IS CLEAR WHEN IT IS RECALLED THAT THEY DAILY CONDUCTED NIGHT SEARCHES BY SEAPLANES OF THE 901ST AIR GROUP IN A SOUTH-EASTERLY DIRECTION FROM GARAN BI TO PREVENT SURPRISE ATTACKS BY CARRIERS OF TF 38 ON THEIR CONCENTRATIONS IN SOUTHERN FORMOSA.

THE ABOVE SEARCH COULD HAVE BEEN EASILY EFFECTED ON THE 21ST AND 22ND BY INCREASING SLIGHTLY THE ARC OF SEARCH IN THE NORTHWEST QUADRANT TO COVER THE ARC ABOUT 270° - 360°(T) AND BY MOVING THE TASK GROUPS CONCERNED ABOUT SIXTY MILES TO THE WESTWARD IN ORDER TO MAINTAIN THE RADIUS OF SEARCH AT 300 MILES. THIS WESTWARD MOVEMENT CLEARLY WOULD NOT PREVENT ADEQUATE COVER OF SOWESPAC FORCES.

During the late evening he received two dispatches (discussed in full under "Operations of CTG 30.5, October 20th") as follows: at 2213 a report from CTU 30.5.3 and at 2327 a report from CTU 30.5.1, both reporting all searches negative.\*

At 2355 he received, from CTF 77, a report that (a) the Leyte operation was proceeding according to schedule, (b) Allied troops had landed at Panaon Strait at 0930 without opposition, (c) the landings had been made on the southern and northern beaches at 1000 with only minor opposition at the beachheads and moderate opposition as the troops moved inland, and (d) only four enemy planes had been reported in the area with no attacks pressed home until 1620 (actually 1602) at which time a single enemy plane torpedoed the HONOLULU, extent of damage not yet determined.\*\*

He derived great satisfaction from the above report, particularly in regard to the lack of any appreciable enemy air activity at the objective area for two reasons: (1) it signified the success of his pre-D-day carrier strikes against Formosa and Luzon, which strikes had clearly contributed greatly toward neutralizing the respective airfields and had assisted in preventing the Japanese from reinforcing, in any appreciable number, their sadly depleted air strength in the Philippines;\*\*\* and (2) it supported his estimate in regard to the weakness of Japanese air power, based on his September strikes against the Philippines as a result of which he had recommended that KING II be inaugurated immediately.\*\*\*\*

At 2400 COMTHIRDFLT's flagship with TG 38.2, was bearing 082°(T), distant 105 miles from Catanduanes Island.

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\* CTU 30.5.3 Dispatch 201010 October 1944 to COM3RDFLT, info CTG 30.5, CTF's 57, 59, all TFC's 3RDFLT; CTU 30.5.1 Dispatch 201146 October 1944 to COM3RDFLT, info CTG 30.5, all TFC's 3RDFLT.

\*\* CTF 77 Dispatch 200755 October 1944 to COMSOWESPAC info CINCPAC, COMINCH, COM3RDFLT, all TFC's 3RD and 7TH Fleets, etc.

\*\*\* Action Report COM3RDFLT, Operations of Western Pacific Task Forces, and 3RDFLT, Serial 0085, January 25th, 1945.

\*\*\*\* COM3RDFLT Dispatch 130300 September 1944 to CINCPAC, info COMSOWESPAC and COMINCH.



CONFIDENTIAL

TF 38 and  
CTG's 38.1 and 38.4  
October 20th

(1) TF 38 (Fast Carrier Force) October 20th.\*

(a) Operations of CTG's 38.1 and 38.4 (Fast Carrier Groups), October 20th.

At the beginning of the day CTG's 38.1 and 38.4 were heading on course 155°(T) at twenty-three knots toward their dawn launching position in Latitude 11° - 30'N, Longitude 126° - 30'E to launch pre-landing-hour air strikes in direct support of the Leyte landings, and also to provide fighter sweeps of the western Visayas and northern Mindanao airfields north of Latitude 08° - 45'N as necessary to destroy enemy aircraft.\*\* This latter had been requested by COMSEVENTHFLT on October 8th,\*\*\* at which time the latter commander had sent to COMTHIRDFLT his target assignments for the period D-4 to D-day.

At this time TG 38.1 consisted of WASP, HORNET, MONTEREY, CHESTER, PENSACOLA, SALT LAKE CITY, SAN DIEGO, OAKLAND, MARSHALL, CASSIN, DOWNES, DUNLAP, FANNING, CASE, CUMMINGS, McCALLA, WOODWORTH, IZARD, CONNER, BROWN, and TG 38.4 consisted of FRANKLIN, SAN JACINTO, ENTERPRISE, BELLEAU WOOD, BILOXI, NEW ORLEANS, MAURY, GRIDLEY, HELM, MUGFORD, RALPH TALBOT, PATTERSON, BAGLEY, WILKES, NICHOLSON, SWANSON.

During the early morning, and probably at 0130 (when it was received by CTF 79), both CTG's 38.1 and 38.4 received a dispatch from COMTHIRDFLT (quoted in full under "Operations of COMTHIRDFLT, October 20th") which indicated COMTHIRDFLT's intentions concerning changes in the complements of aircraft within the carriers of TF 38 for "near future operations". This dispatch did not appear to cause, at this time, any unusual tensions within the above task groups.

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\* At the beginning of the day TF 38 exclusive of the CABOT and COWPENS which had not as yet rejoined had a total of 533 VF, 217 VB and 206 VT. These figures are less by approximately 40 VF than those contained in Volume II of "The Battle for Leyte Gulf" inasmuch as new and more reliable records have been acquired subsequent to the promulgation of Volume II.

\*\* War Diary CTG 38.1, October 20th, 1944; also Deck Log, FRANKLIN, October 20th, 1944.

\*\*\* COM7THFLT Dispatch 080329 October 1944 to COM3RDFLT.

Accordingly, the two task groups arrived on station at about dawn and commenced launching aircraft as follows:\*

<u>Time</u>	<u>Strike Designation</u>	<u>Composition</u>	<u>Sorties</u>
0559	Fighter Sweep	36 VF	36
0610	Strike ABLE	34 VF, 1 VF (P), 3 VFB, 32 VB, 31 VT	101
0700	Strike BAKER	31 VF, 6 VF (P), 3 VFB, 33 VB, 28 VT	101
1207	Fighter Sweep	8 VF	<u>8</u>
		Total Sorties	246

The armament for the above strikes consisted generally of bombs, rockets and napalm, in addition to the normal loading of machine gun ammunition.

Ideal weather conditions prevailed throughout the day. In the operating area the ceiling and visibility were unlimited, with a smooth sea and moderate northwesterly winds. Over Leyte and the western Visayas there were a few scattered cirrus and cumulus clouds, with light

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\* Action Report HORNET, Ryukyu Islands, Formosa and Philippine Operations October 2nd - 27th, 1944, Serial 0031, October 28th, 1944; Action Report MONTEREY, Operations Against Nansei Shoto, Sakishima Shoto, Formosa, Luzon, Visayas, etc., October 2nd - 28th (EL), 1944, Serial 0029, October 27th, 1944; also Aircraft Action Reports Air Group 14, forwarded by WASP, Serial 0238, November 9th, 1944; Action Report ENTERPRISE, Operations Against the Enemy, Nansei Shoto, Formosa, Philippine Islands, October 7th - 21st, 1944, Serial 0053, October 31st, 1944; Action Report BELLEAU WOOD, Action Against Nansei Shoto, Formosa, Luzon and the Visayas, October 7th - 21st, 1944, Serial 0170, November 3rd, 1944; Action Report SAN JACINTO, Operations Against Okinawa Jima, Formosa, Luzon, and Visayas, etc., October 7th - 21st, 1944, Serial 0043, October 31st, 1944; also Aircraft Action Report Air Group 13, forwarded by FRANKLIN, Serial 0193, November 7th, 1944; Aircraft Action Report Air Group 51, Serial 0056, October 23rd, 1944, no forwarding endorsement.



haze at the lower levels, visibility ten to twelve miles.\* The sun rose at 0629 and set at 1819.

The fighter sweeps against northern Mindanao were launched by CTG 38.1 and those against the western Visayas by CTG 38.4. The Visayas sweeps were recovered at 0938 and the Mindanao sweeps at 1020. The afternoon fighter sweep (Visayas) landed aboard at 1620. Except on the Del Monte airfield in northern Mindanao, where one plane was reportedly destroyed and six others damaged,\*\* no evidence of any enemy activity either in the air or on the ground was observed.

Strikes ABLE and BAKER reported on station over the objective area to CSACP and attacked ground targets behind the southern landing beaches as designated by him by grid system, commencing at 0815 and ending at 0915. These attacks were directed against enemy mortar batteries and trenches along the beach at San Pablo airfield, on Catmon Hill, at Liberanan Head, in Dulag Town and Dagami Town. The latter town was attacked because it was reportedly the site of the Japanese headquarters for the defense of Leyte. Actually, the results of the pre-landing-hour strikes were for the most part unobserved, owing to the dense foliage and smoke that obscured many of the targets. However, Dagami Town was leveled, large fires were observed among the buildings in Dulag Town, and installations at San Pablo airfield received numerous bomb hits.\*\*\* Available Japanese accounts, while mentioning these attacks, do not elaborate.\*\*\*\*

THERE WAS CONSIDERABLE CONGESTION IN THE AIR OVER THE OBJECTIVE AREA, CAUSED LARGELY BY THE LARGE NUMBER OF PLANES FROM THE ESCORT CARRIER GROUPS AND THE TWO FAST CARRIER GROUPS, WHICH OVERLOADED THE LIMITED COMMUNICATION CHANNELS AND DELAYED THE ASSIGNMENT OF TARGETS BY COMMANDER

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- \* Deck Logs WASP and FRANKLIN, October 20th, 1944; Action Report BELLEAU WOOD, October 7th - 21st, 1944, Action Against Nansei Shoto, Formosa, Luzon and the Visayas, Serial 0170, November 3rd, 1944; Action Report WASP, Operations Against Okinawa Jima, Miyako Jima, Northern Luzon, Formosa, Manila Bay Area, Leyte, etc., October 2nd - 27th, 1944, Serial 0040, October 28th, 1944; Action Report FRANKLIN, Operations Against the Enemy at Nansei Shoto, Formosa and the Philippine Islands, October 7th - 21st, Serial 0039, October 31st, 1944.
- \*\* Aircraft Action Reports Air Group 14, forwarded by WASP, Serial 0238, November 9th, 1944; also Action Report HORNET, October 2nd - 27th, 1944, Serial 0031, October 28th, 1944; Action Report MONTEREY, October 2nd - 28th (EL), 1944, Serial 0029, October 27th, 1944.
- \*\*\* Action Report CTG 38.1, Operations Against Okinawa, Formosa, Northern Luzon, Leyte, etc., October 2nd - 29th, 1944, Serial 00101, December 15th, 1944; also Action Report CTG 38.4, Operations Against Okinawa Jima, Formosa, Luzon, Visayas, etc., October 7th - 21st, 1944, Serial 00263, November 16th, 1944.
- \*\*\*\* 14TH Area Army Operations on Leyte, Japanese Studies in World War II, Office of the Chief of Military History, Historical Section G-2, GHQ, FEC, File No. 8-5, JS-7, 851-7.

SUPPORT AIRCRAFT. IN SOME CASES, SUPPORT GROUPS HAD TO ORBIT OVER THEIR DESIGNATED REFERENCE POINTS FOR ALMOST TWO HOURS BEFORE RECEIVING TARGET ASSIGNMENTS. THIS WAS CAUSED, IN PART, BY THE FACT THAT THE PRIOR COORDINATION AND PLANNING BETWEEN CTF 77 AND THE FAST CARRIER GROUPS HAD ONLY BEEN OF A GENERAL NATURE. FOR EXAMPLE, IN THE CASE OF TG 38.1, THE DETAILED ORDERS REGARDING THE NUMBERS, ARMAMENT AND COMPOSITION OF THE VARIOUS STRIKE GROUPS FOR D-DAY HAD NOT BEEN ISSUED UNTIL THE PREVIOUS EVENING NOR HAD COMMANDER SUPPORT AIRCRAFT BEEN INFORMED PREVIOUSLY AS TO THE AIRCRAFT TO BE EXPECTED FROM THE TWO FAST CARRIER GROUPS.\*

At 0816 he received a dispatch from CTF 77 requesting, in part, that, in addition to his bombing attacks on the beach installations, he also make fighter sweeps of the western Visayas and Mindanao airfields north of Latitude 08° - 45'N.\*\* Since his fighters were already executing the latter task, he took no further action thereon.

At 1453 CTG 38.4 directed CTG 30.8 (Fleet Oiler and Transport Carrier Group) to detach the McCALL, which had been left to operate with the oiler group since October 16th due to an engineering casualty during fueling, to rejoin his carrier group at Point MICK at 0700 the following day.\*\*\*

CTG 38.1 stationed a night CAP of four VF(N) over his task group from 0431 until 0727, and a daylight CAP of twenty VF, plus a SNASP of four VF and four VT, from 0615 until 1800. In addition, in compliance with a request he had received from CTF 77 at 0935,\*\*\*\* he provided at the objective area a dusk CAP of six VF(N), which he launched at 1757 and recovered at 2112.\*\*\*\*\*

CTG 38.4 maintained over his task group from 0558 until 1748 a daylight CAP of eight VF and a SNASP of four VF and four VB/VT, except that between 1159 and 1538 he increased his CAP to twelve VF.

The only enemy air activity encountered during the day by either task group occurred at 0841 when the CAP from TG 38.4 shot down a

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- \* Action Reports HORNET, Ryuku Islands, Formosa and Philippine Operations, October 2nd -27th, 1944, Serial 0031, October 28th, 1944; BELLEAU WOOD, Action Against Nansei Shoto, Formosa, Luzon, Visayas, October 7th - 21st, 1944, Serial 0170, November 3rd, 1944; Report of Support Aircraft Operation, KING II, Commander Support Aircraft, 7THFLT, letter November 2nd, 1944, No Serial.
- \*\* CTF 77 Dispatch 191917 October 1944 to CTG 38.1, info C.G. 5TH Air Force, CTU 77.4.3, CTF 38, CTG 77.4, etc.
- \*\*\* CTG 38.4 Dispatch 200553 October 1944 to CTG 30.8; also War Diary McCALL, October 16th, 1944.
- \*\*\*\* CTF 77 Dispatch 191930 October 1944 to CTG 38.1, info CTG 38.4, etc.
- \*\*\*\*\* War Diary CTG 38.1, October 20th, 1944; also Action Report WASP, Operation Against Okinawa Jima, Miyako Jima, Northern Luzon, Formosa, Manila Bay Area, Leyte, etc., October 2nd - 27th, 1944, Serial 0040, October 28th, 1944.



carrier-type reconnaissance plane bearing 185°(T), distant thirty-eight miles.\*

Total aircraft losses for both groups consisted of one VF from the BELLEAU WOOD hit by enemy antiaircraft fire over Cebu airfield during the morning fighter sweep, and one VB from the WASP lost operationally. The pilot of the VF was rescued by the McDERMUT;\* the pilot and aircrewman of the VB were picked up by the CONNER.\*\*

At 1910 CTG 38.1 received instructions from COMTHIRD-FLT to delay shifting the MARSHALL to TG 38.2 until October 22nd.\*\*\*

At 1915 CTG's 38.1 and 38.4 set course 035°(T), speed eighteen knots, toward their fueling rendezvous with TG 30.8 at Point MICK at 0700 the following day.\*\*\*\*

At 1953 CTG 38.4 received instructions from COMTHIRD-FLT to delay shifting the BILOXI to TG 38.1 until October 22nd.\*\*\*\*\*

At 2400 CTG 38.1 was bearing 217°(T), distant 140 miles from Point MICK, and CTG 38.4 was bearing 225°(T), distant 130 miles from Point MICK. At this time TG 38.1 had a total of 124 VF, 46 VB and 42 VT and TG 38.4 a total of 110 VF, 44 VB and 46 VT.

(b) Operations of CTG 38.2 and CTG 38.3 (Fast Carrier Groups), October 20th.

During the early morning, and probably at 0150 (when it was received by CTF 79), both CTG's 38.2 and 38.3, which were heading independently toward their noon rendezvous in the vicinity of Point READY (Latitude 15° - 00'N, Longitude 127° - 00'E), received a dispatch from COMTHIRDFLT, who, it will be recalled, was in the NEW JERSEY with TG 38.2 (quoted in full under "Operations of COMTHIRDFLT, October 20th"), which indicated COMTHIRDFLT's intentions concerning changes in the complements of aircraft within the carriers of TF 38 for "near future operations". This dispatch did not appear to cause at this time any unusual tensions within TG 38.3, but, as will be shown later, it seems to have caused considerable tension within TG 38.2 and notably within the BUNKER HILL, which carrier, it will be recalled, was to (a) have a complement of 100 VF, and (b) transfer ashore her present VB and VT complement.\*\*\*\*\*

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\* Action Report BELLEAU WOOD, Action Against Nansei Shoto, Formosa, Luzon and the Visayas, October 7th - 21st, 1944, Serial 0170, November 3rd, 1944.

\*\* Deck Log WASP, October 20th, 1944.

\*\*\* COM3RDFLT Dispatch 200844 October 1944 to CTG 38.1, info CTG 38.2.

\*\*\*\* War Diary MONTEREY, October 20th, 1944.

\*\*\*\*\* COM3RDFLT Dispatch 200909 October 1944 to CTG 38.4, info CTG 38.2, BILOXI.

\*\*\*\*\* COM3RDFLT Dispatch 190540 October 1944 to CTF 38, CTG's 38.1, 38.2, 38.3 and 38.4.

The weather in the operating area was overcast, with low cumulus clouds and showers, flying conditions generally undesirable.\* Although the seas were slight and the winds moderate from the northeast, the cloud and shower activity, in addition to a falling barometer,\*\* indicated that the influence of the tropical typhoon that was scheduled to pass slightly to the northwest through Area OCTANE\*\*\* this day was being felt. Fortunately, these two task groups missed the full effect of the typhoon because COMTHIRD-FLT, being on the alert to avoid bad weather, had accordingly moved their operating area 120 miles south of the area originally assigned.\*\*\*\*

At 0915 the CABOT, STEPHEN POTTER, MILLER and THE SULLIVANS, which had been operating temporarily with TG 30.3 to protect the crippled HOUSTON and CANBERRA, rejoined TG 38.2.\*\*\*\*\*

Sometime during the forenoon CTG 38.2 received a visual dispatch from the Commanding Officer BUNKER HILL to the effect that FITERON EIGHT was suffering from combat fatigue. The substance of this dispatch is indicated below in CTG 38.2's dispatch to CTF 38 and COMTHIRDFLT. CTG 38.2 now re-estimated the situation and decided on certain recommendations. These, together with the substance of the Commanding Officer BUNKER HILL's dispatch, he forwarded by visual dispatch at 1245 to both CTF 38 and COMTHIRDFLT as follows:

"FOLLOWING RECEIVED FROM BUNKER HILL QUOTE THIS IS THE SAD PICTURE. FITERON EIGHT IS PRACTICALLY 100 PER CENT SUFFERING FROM COMBAT FATIGUE. OF FORTY-FOUR FIGHTER PILOTS INCLUDING FOUR RECENT REPLACEMENTS, TWENTY GROUNDED ON RECOMMENDATION TWO FLIGHT SURGEONS. BELIEVE FIFTEEN OF THESE TWENTY COULD BE USED IN EMERGENCY DURING NEXT FEW DAYS ONLY. URGENTLY RECOMMEND FOLLOWING (1) THAT IMMEDIATE STEPS BE TAKEN GET A REPLACEMENT FITERON POSSIBLY FLOWN OUT BY COMAIRPAC, (2) THAT PRESENT AGC (AIR GROUP COMMANDER) REMAIN ON SHIP, (3) COMMANDER COLLINS\*\*\*\*\* FITERON, REMAIN AS HIS ASSISTANT UNQUOTE. FROM PERSONAL OBSERVATION COVERING SIX WEEKS IN BUNKER HILL KNOW CONDITIONS STATED EXIST. STRONGLY RECOMMEND COMPLETE DETACHMENT AIR GROUP EIGHT RETAINING AGC DURING NEXT OPERATIONS".  
\*\*\*\*\*

THIS DID NOT APPEAR TO SURPRISE CTG 38.2 FOR, AS NOTED ABOVE, THAT COMMANDER, FROM HIS SIX WEEKS EXPERIENCE IN THE BUNKER HILL, BELIEVED THE CONDITIONS STATED ACTUALLY EXISTED. WHILE IT IS NOT CLEAR WHETHER OR NOT CTG 38.2 OR THE COMMANDING OFFICER BUNKER HILL HAD PREVIOUSLY

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- \* Action Report HANCOCK, October 6th - 31st, 1944, Serial 0100, November 3rd, 1944.
  - \*\* Deck Log ESSEX, October 20th, 1944.
  - \*\*\* COM3RDFLT Dispatch 180326 October 1944 to CTG's 38.2, 30.8, 30.7, info COMINCH, CINCPAC, COMSOWESPAC, etc.
  - \*\*\*\* COM3RDFLT Dispatches 170022, 180452 and 191329 October 1944.
  - \*\*\*\*\* War Diary CTG 38.2, October 20th, 1944.
  - \*\*\*\*\* Commander William M. Collins, Jr., USN.
  - \*\*\*\*\* CTG 38.2 Visual Dispatch 200345 October 1944 to CTF 38, COM3RDFLT.



MADE ANY OFFICIAL REPRESENTATIONS IN THIS MATTER TO HIGHER AUTHORITY, THE EVIDENCE SEEMS TO INDICATE THAT, DESPITE THE KNOWLEDGE OF THIS INCREASING DETERIORATION, NO SUCH REPRESENTATIONS HAD BEEN MADE.

THIS BRINGS FORTH THE COMMENT THAT ANY FLAG OR COMMANDING OFFICER WHO IS AWARE THAT THE COMBAT EFFICIENCY OF HIS COMMAND IS BEING APPRECIABLY AFFECTED BY MORALE DETERIORATION SHOULD TAKE IMMEDIATE AND POSITIVE ACTION TO REMOVE THE CAUSES OF SUCH MORALE DETERIORATION. IF THE ACTION TAKEN IS NOT EFFECTIVE HE SHOULD THEN (1) TRANSFER THOSE PERSONNEL ADVERSELY AFFECTED, AND (2) ADVISE HIS IMMEDIATE SUPERIOR OF THE SITUATION, SINCE THIS COULD HAVE A SERIOUS EFFECT ON THAT COMMANDER'S RUNNING ESTIMATE AND UPON HIS DECISIONS.

IN THIS CONNECTION, WAR INSTRUCTIONS, 1944, STATES, "THE COMMANDER STRIVES TO HAVE HIS MEN AT THEIR GREATEST MORAL AND PHYSICAL STRENGTH AT THE MOMENT WHEN THEIR UTMOST CAPABILITIES ARE DEMANDED".\*

WHILE THE NAVY REGULATIONS IN EFFECT AT THAT TIME (1944) MAKE NO SPECIFIC MENTION OF THE COMMANDER'S RESPONSIBILITIES IN THIS MATTER,\*\* NAVY REGULATIONS IN EFFECT IN 1957 ARE VERY SPECIFIC AND STATE THAT,

"THE COMMANDING OFFICER SHALL:

(1) EXERT EVERY EFFORT TO MAINTAIN HIS COMMAND IN A MAXIMUM STATE OF EFFECTIVENESS FOR WAR SERVICE CONSISTANT WITH THE DEGREE OF READINESS PRESCRIBED BY PROPER AUTHORITY;

(2) REPORT TO HIS APPROPRIATE SENIOR ANY DEFICIENCY WHICH APPRECIABLY LESSENS THE EFFECTIVENESS OF THE COMMAND".\*\*\*

During the first half of the day both task groups steamed on various courses toward their rendezvous. Despite the fact that CTG 38.3 had been a little slow in heading toward the rendezvous as he had not received the directive to do so until 0432 that morning, both task groups reached the reference position on schedule and then the two groups operated together in this area in a covering capacity for the Leyte landings in compliance with COMTHIRDFLT orders\*\*\*\* (CTF 38 in LEXINGTON, OTC: COMTHIRDFLT in NEW JERSEY, SOPA).\*\*\*\*\*

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\* War Instructions, U.S. Navy, 1944 (FTP 143(A)), Paragraph 106.  
 \*\* United States Navy Regulations, 1920, corrected through Change No. 25, October 4th, 1944.  
 \*\*\* United States Navy Regulations, 1948, Chapter 7, The Commanding Officer, Paragraph 0704, "Effectiveness for Service".  
 \*\*\*\* COM3RDFLT Dispatch 191329 October 1944 to CTF 38 and CTG's 38.1, 38.2, 38.3 and 38.4.  
 \*\*\*\*\* War Diary COMCRUDIV 13, October 20th, 1944.

At this time TG 38.2 consisted of BUNKER HILL, HANCOCK, INDEPENDENCE, INTREPID, IOWA, NEW JERSEY, VINCENNES, MIAMI, TINGEY, OWEN, HICKOX, HUNT, LEWIS HANCOCK, HALSEY POWELL, CUSHING, COLAHAN, UHLMANN, BENHAM, YARNALL, TWINING, STOCKHAM, WEDDERBURN, CABOT, STEPHEN POTTER, MILLER, THE SULLIVANS, and TG 38.3 consisted of ESSEX, LEXINGTON, PRINCETON, LANGLEY, WASHINGTON, MASSACHUSETTS, SOUTH DAKOTA, ALABAMA, SANTA FE, BIRMINGHAM, MOBILE, RENO, COGSWELL, CAPERTON, INGERSOLL, KNAPP, CLARENCE K. BRONSON, COTTEN, DORTCH, GATLING, HEALY, PORTERFIELD, CALLAGHAN, CASSIN YOUNG, IRWIN, PRESTON, LAWS, LONGSHAW, MORRISON.

In compliance with COMTHIRDFLT dispatch 191329, CTG 38.3 flew morning and afternoon searches in sector 270° - 340°(T) to 300 miles, keeping away from land but sighting the coast line so as to contact any enemy vessels that might be passing close to the shore. These searches, each consisting of seven VF and seven VB from the ESSEX, were launched at 0746 and 1331 and recovered at 1215 and 1755 with negative results as regards enemy contacts, but with positive results as regards contacts on friendly forces. In this connection, the morning search reported contacting four friendly submarines.\* These were the PARCHE and SAILFISH from TF 17, which were retiring to Saipan from their areas; the BLACKFIN also from TF 17, which was en route to station in the SW Pacific Area; and the NAUTILUS from TF 72, which was on a special mission to the Luzon guerillas in the vicinity of Cape San Ildefonso (Luzon). The afternoon search reported contacting a submarine presumed to be friendly.\* This also appears to have been the NAUTILUS.

Each task group maintained routine local patrols consisting of a CAP of eight VF and an ASP of four VB/VT from sunrise until sunset.\*\* In addition, CTG 38.2 flew a night CAP of four VF(N) from 0335 until after the daylight patrols were launched, and a night CAP of two VF(N) from 1800 until midnight.\*\*\*

Total losses for both groups consisted of one VT from INDEPENDENCE that crashed on landing aboard.\*\*\*\* There were no personnel losses.

Except for the above, both task groups spent a very quiet day and encountered no enemy activity, which provided an opportunity for rest for a number of pilots--notably in the BUNKER HILL—who were beginning to experience combat fatigue.\*\*\*\*\*

At 1730, in accordance with COMTHIRDFLT's visual

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\* War Diary CTG 38.3, October 1944.  
 \*\* War Diaries CTG 38.3, INTREPID, BUNKER HILL, INDEPENDENCE, HANCOCK, LEXINGTON, and LANGLEY, October 20th, 1944.  
 \*\*\* Deck Logs ESSEX and INDEPENDENCE, October 20th, 1944.  
 \*\*\*\* War Diary and Deck Log INDEPENDENCE, October 20th, 1944.  
 \*\*\*\*\* War Diary BUNKER HILL, October 20th, 1944.



dispatch 200356, CTG's 38.2 and 38.3 headed, on course 210°(T) at seventeen knots, toward Latitude 13° - 30'N, Longitude 125° - 30'E (this position was bearing 042°(T), distant sixty miles from San Bernardino Strait), to arrive by dawn the following day to launch neutralization fighter sweeps and strikes against enemy airfields in the Bicol-Visayas area.\*

At 2400 the two task groups were bearing 045°(T), distant seventy-five miles from their dawn launching position. At this time TG 38.2 had a total of 182 VF, 71 VB and 73 VT and TG 38.3 a total of 139 VF, 55 VB and 54 VT.

(2) Operations of CTG 30.3 (Salvage Group), October 20th.

CTG 30.3, in BOSTON, continued his retirement toward Ulithi on course 115°(T). The weather remained favorable and the salvage operations aboard the HOUSTON and CANBERRA were proceeding satisfactorily.

At 0043 CTG 30.7 (Hunter-Killer Group), consisting of the HOGGATT BAY, BEBAS, SEID, STEELE and SAMUEL S. MILES, reported to CTG 30.3 for duty.\*\* This group had been ordered to provide antisubmarine protection for TG 30.3 by COMTHIRDFLT in anticipation of the return of the CABOT and COWPENS from TG 30.3 to TF 38.\*\*\*

At 0630 CTG 30.3, in accordance with COMTHIRDFLT orders detached the CABOT, THE SULLIVANS, STEPHEN POTTER and MILLER, in time to join TG 38.2 during the forenoon.\*\*\*\*

At 0705 the TREVER, escorting the merchant tug WATCH HILL from Ulithi, joined TG 30.3 in accordance with COMTHIRDFLT directive,\*\*\*\*\* the TREVER taking position in the screen of TU 30.3.1 and the WATCH HILL standing by to pick up tow on MUNSEE.\*\*\*\*\*

At 0941 the NICHOLSON reported to CTG 30.3 to escort the WICHITA to TG 38.4 in accordance with COMTHIRDFLT and CTG 38.4 directives.\*\*\*\*\*

At 0946 the BOSTON went alongside the CANBERRA and delivered 33,000 gallons of much-needed fresh water, completing by 1610.\*\*\*\*\*

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\* War Diary CTG 38.3 October 20th, 1944; also Deck Logs NEW JERSEY, ESSEX and INTREPID, October 20th, 1944.

\*\* War Diary and Deck Log BOSTON, October 20th, 1944.

\*\*\* COM3RDFLT Dispatch 190104 October 1944 to CTG 30.7, info CTG 30.3, etc.; also War Diary HOGGATT BAY, October 19th/20th, 1944.

\*\*\*\* War Diary CABOT, October 20th, 1944; also COM3RDFLT Dispatch 190211 October 1944 to CTG 30.3.

\*\*\*\*\* COM3RDFLT Dispatch 190135 October 1944 to TREVER, info CTG 57.4, etc.

\*\*\*\*\* Deck Log BOSTON, October 20th, 1944.

\*\*\*\*\* COM3RDFLT Dispatch 190150 October 1944 to CTG 38.4 and COMCRUDIV 6, info CTG 30.3, etc.; also War Diary NICHOLSON, October 19th, 1944.

\*\*\*\*\* Deck Log BOSTON, October 20th, 1944; also War Diary COMCRUDIV 10, October 20th, 1944.

At 1010 the WATCH HILL received the tow wire from the MUNSEE and both tugs towed the CANBERRA in tandem. Similarly, the ZUNI, which joined TG 30.3 at 1105, picked up tandem tow on the PAWNEE to HOUSTON at 1131. The speed of advance of the formation was thereby increased about one knot.\*

At 1218 he received a dispatch from COMTHIRDFLT to CTG 30.7 (Hunter Killer Group) reporting in part the possibility of at least three Japanese submarines approaching from the north.\*\*

At 1450 the ATR 50, escorted by the CHARRETTE, reported to CTG 30.3 for duty and was directed to assist the CURRENT in salvage operations.\*

At 1813 CTG 30.3, in compliance with COMTHIRDFLT's 190150 and 200027\*\*\* detached the WICHITA, COWPENS, NICHOLSON and GRAYSON; WICHITA and NICHOLSON to join TG 38.4, COWPENS and GRAYSON to join TG 38.1; rendezvous in Latitude 15° - 00'N, Longitude 130° - 00'E, (Point MICK) the next morning.

On departure of the above group TU 30.3.2 (Support Unit) was dissolved and the BURNS and CHARRETTE, the remaining vessels of this task unit, joined the Towing Unit (TU 30.3.1).\* TG 30.3 now consisted of the BOSTON(F), CANBERRA in tow of MUNSEE and WATCH HILL, HOUSTON in tow of PAWNEE and ZUNI, BELL, BOYD, BURNS, CHARRETTE, COWELL, TREVER, CURRENT and ATR 50.

From 0603 until 1743 CTG 30.3 maintained a CAP of eight VF from COWPENS over his task group, while the Hunter Killer Group operated independently about five to ten miles ahead and provided antisubmarine cover. No enemy activity was observed.\*\*\*\*

At 2400 CTG 30.3 was bearing 115°(T), distant 645 miles from Ulithi.

He now estimated that, if luck held out, he would reach Ulithi October 27th or 28th. Since the operations of TG 30.3 have no further bearing on this study, they will be dropped at this point, except to say that the HOUSTON and CANBERRA finally arrived safely at Ulithi October 27th.

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\* Deck Log BOSTON, October 20th, 1944; also War Diary COMCRUDIV 10, October 20th, 1944.

\*\* COM3RDFLT Dispatch 200003 October 1944 to CTG 30.7, info COMINCH, CINCPAC, all TFC's and TGC's 3RDFLT.

\*\*\* COM3RDFLT Dispatch 190150 October 1944 to COMCRUDIV 6, CTG 38.4; also COM3RDFLT Dispatch 200027 October 1944 to CTG 30.3.

\*\*\*\* War Diaries BOSTON, COWPENS and COMCRUDIV 10, October 20th, 1944.



(3) Operations of CTG 30.5 (Air Search, Reconnaissance and Photographic Group), October 20th.

CTG 30.5, in the HAMLIN (AV-15) at Ulithi, on this day continued his air searches from Kossol Passage (TU 30.5.1), Saipan (TU 30.5.2) and Tinian (TU 30.5.3) in accordance with Commander Forward Area Central Pacific (CTF 57) Operation Plan No. 6-44 as indicated in Plate X and in Diagram B. The results were uniformly negative except that the PB4Y in sector 335° - 344°(T) was attacked at 0955 without damage by two enemy carrier-type fighters ten miles southwest of Kita Iwo Jima.\*

At 0917 he implemented prior orders from COMTHIRDFLT directing him to provide antisubmarine protection for TG 30.3 by issuing the following instructions: he directed (a) CTU 30.5.1, in Kossol Passage, to locate TG 30.3 on October 22nd and then provide continuous air anti-submarine coverage for that group between Longitudes 131° - 00'E and 135° - 00'E, and (b) CTU 30.5.4; in Ulithi, to provide similar cover between Longitude 135° - 00'E and Ulithi.\*\*

At 2211, he modified the foregoing instructions by ordering CTU 30.5.1 to commence covering TG 30.3 on the 21st.\*\*\*

At 2213 he received a report from CTU 30.5.3 stating that all searches from Tinian (Plate XVI) had been made with eighty-five to ninety-five per cent coverage, except sectors 344° - 353°(T) (to 700 miles, sixty-five per cent coverage) and 335° - 344°(T) (890 miles, eighty per cent coverage).\*\*\*\*

At about 2327 he received a report from CTU 30.5.1 to the effect that all searches from Kossol Passage this day had been negative, although sectors 310° - 320°(T) and 350° - 360°(T) (Plate XVI) had been covered eighty-five and ninety per cent respectively, because of weather while the searches in the remaining sectors went to full distance and cover.\*\*\*\*\*

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- \* War Diary COMFWDAREACENTPAC (CTF 57), October 1944; also CINCPAC Daily Location and Plot, Allied and Enemy Forces, Underlay No. 1, 1630Z October 20th - 1630Z October 21st, 1944.
  - \*\* CTG 30.5 Dispatch 200017 October 1944 to CTU's 30.5.1 and 30.5.4, etc., info COM3RDFLT, CTG 30.3, etc.
  - \*\*\* CTG 30.5 Dispatch 201311 October 1944 to CTU 30.5.1, info COM3RDFLT.
  - \*\*\*\* CTU 30.5.3 Dispatch 201010 October 1944 to COM3RDFLT, info CTG 30.5, CTF's 57, 59, all TFC's 3RDFLT.
  - \*\*\*\*\* CTU 30.5.1 Dispatch 201146 October 1944 to COM3RDFLT, info CTG 30.5, CTF 57, all TFC's 3RDFLT.

(2) Operations of CTF 17 (Submarine Force Pacific), October 20th, (Plates XVII, XVIII, XIX, XX).

In this volume, in a manner similar to that employed in Volume II, the operations of TF 17 submarines connected with KING II will be discussed under the various groups, such as CONVOY COLLEGE, rather than by individual submarines.\* Since many of the orders issued to the submarines throughout KING II by CTF 17 or by the coordinated attack group (wolf pack) commanders are not available to this study and were probably destroyed by burning, this analysis as did that of Volume II must necessarily comment more upon the dispositions from day to day than upon the orders received which resulted in such dispositions, although whenever the orders are available--whether in dispatch form or found in the patrol reports--they will be commented upon.

At 0000 October 20th the submarines were either on station in compliance with previous orders or were proceeding to their new stations as had been ordered by CTF 17 (Plate XVII).

A study of the submarine disposition here depicted shows that no specific deployments were underway which would provide adequate intelligence relative to the movements of Japanese combatant forces to or from the Empire or in the approaches to the Philippines. This was because, as pointed out in Volume II, under "Operations of CTF 17, October 19th",\*\* CTF 17 had (a) discontinued his special submarine barriers for guarding against passage by enemy surface combatant forces in (1) the approaches to Bungo Suido, (2) the approaches to Shimonoseki Suido, (3) MARU MORGUE, and (4) Luzon Strait, (b) permitted the BARBEL to retire when she had sufficient fuel to remain on station for several more days and (c) had directed his submarines to return to their normal antishipping operations.

DOES THIS NOT SEEM SURPRISING, FOR AN ALLIED LANDING ON EASTERN LEYTE WAS TO BE MADE AT 1000 ON THIS DAY WHICH LANDING, BASED ON THE STRATEGICAL PRINCIPLE THAT THE WAY TO ENTICE AN ENEMY INTO ACTION IS TO HIT SOMETHING WHICH YOU FEEL HE WILL BE FORCED TO PROTECT, MIGHT NORMALLY BE EXPECTED TO PRODUCE A STRONG REACTION ON THE PART OF THE JAPANESE?

THAT THIS PRINCIPLE WAS RECOGNIZED THOROUGHLY BY CINCPAC IS EVIDENT FROM HIS DISPATCH OF OCTOBER 6TH TO COMSEVENTHFLT WHEREIN HE STATED, IN PART "DURING KING II AND THE PERIOD IMMEDIATELY FOLLOWING THAT OPERATION INFORMATION AS TO THE MOVEMENTS OF IMPORTANT ENEMY UNITS WILL BE OF THE GREATEST IMPORTANCE. MY SUBMARINE DISPOSITIONS WILL BE SUCH AS TO COVER MOVEMENTS OF THE ENEMY CARRIERS WHICH ARE BELIEVED TO BE IN THE EMPIRE".\*\*\* CTF 17 WAS OF COURSE THOROUGHLY FAMILIAR WITH THIS DISPATCH. WHY THEN, IN THE LIGHT OF THE ABOVE CONSIDERATIONS, DID HE DISCONTINUE HIS SPECIAL SUB-

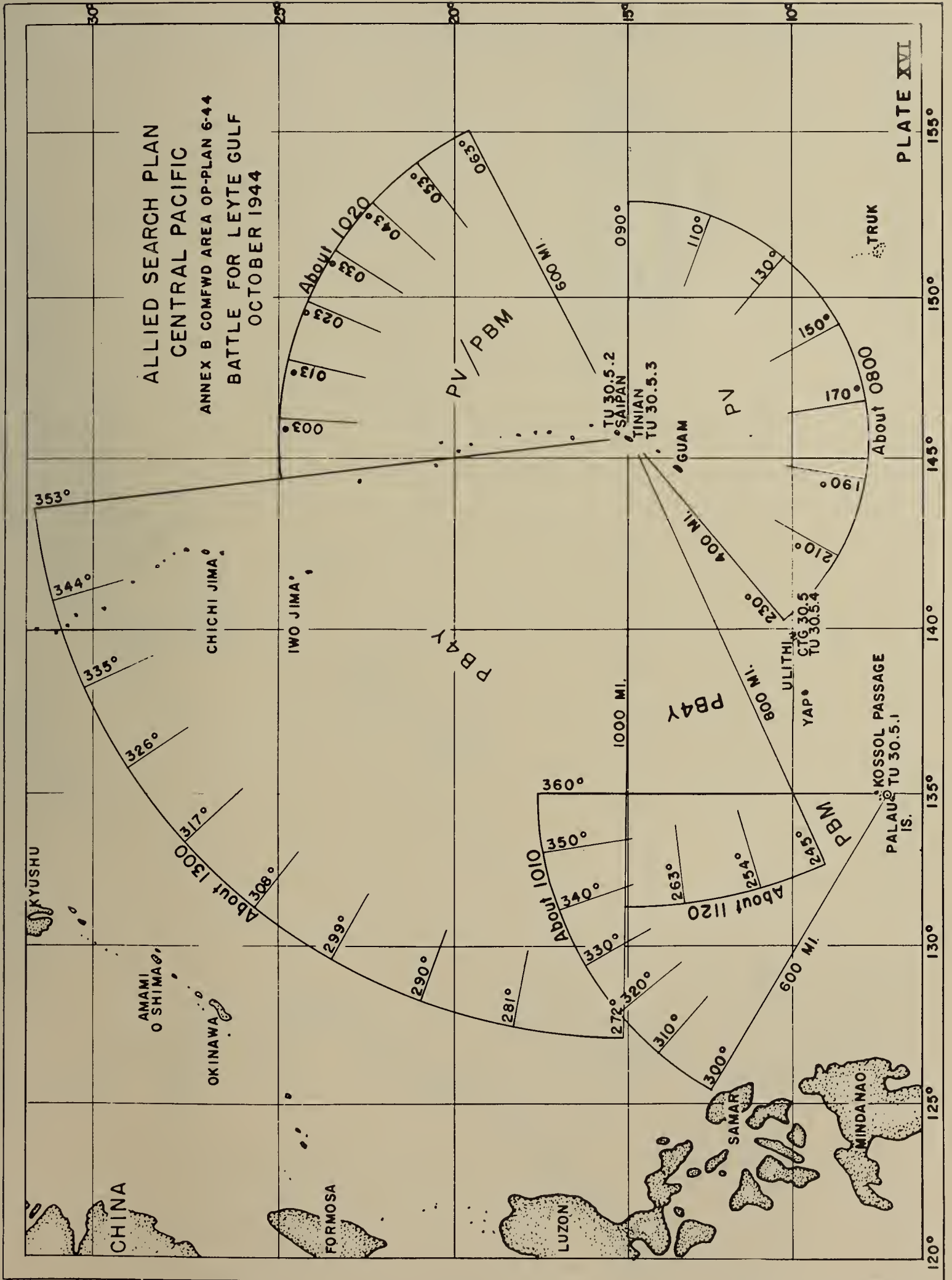
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\* Volume II Battle for Leyte Gulf (NavPers 92194), Naval War College, 1955, Chapter I(B) (2).

\*\* Ibid. Chapter V(B) (2).

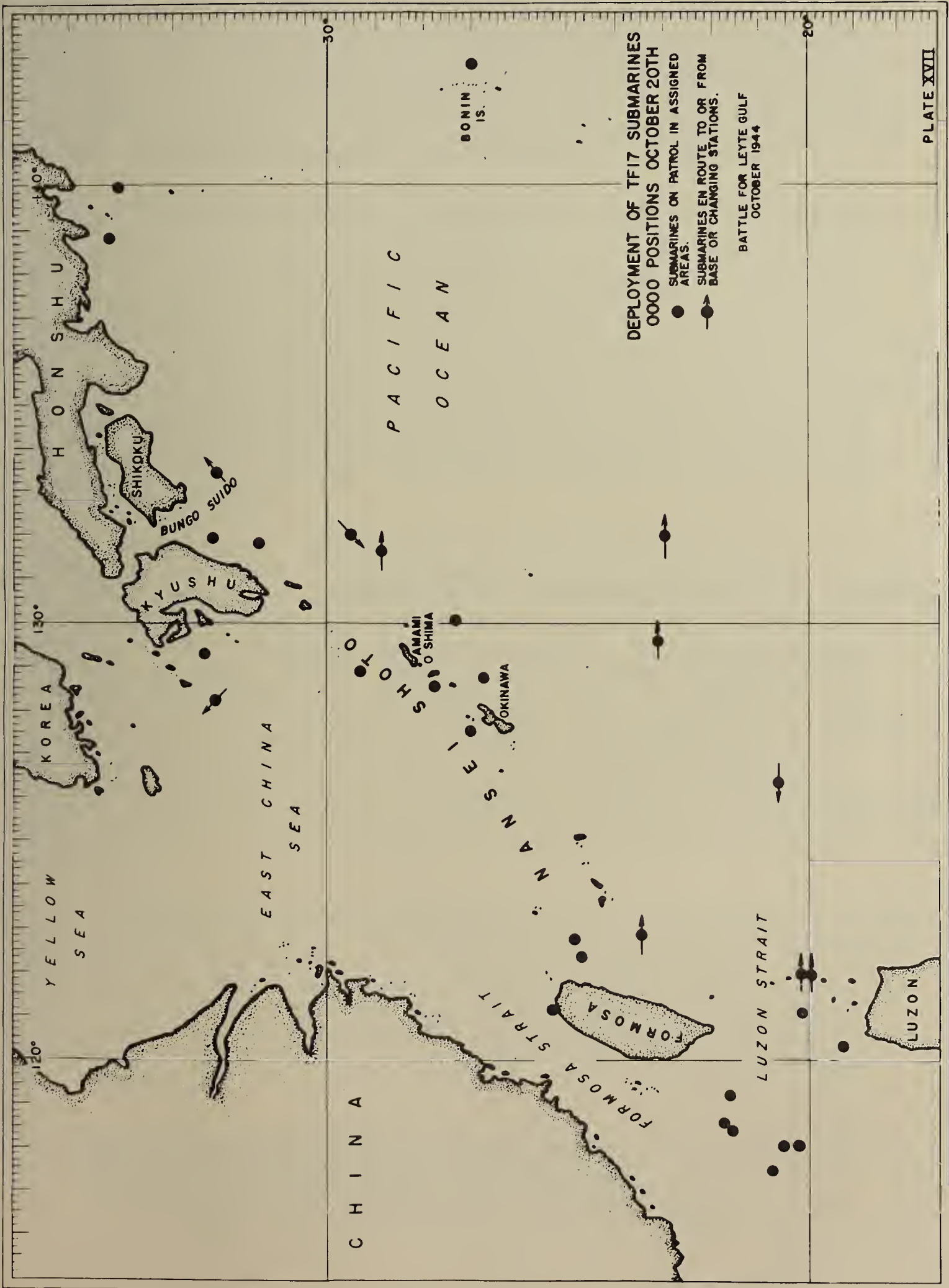
\*\*\* COM7THFLT Dispatch 090158 October 1944, info CTF's 71 and 72, (Re-encypherment of CINCPAC's 060202 October 1944 to COM7THFLT, info CTF 71 and CTF 72).















MARINE BARRIERS FOR GUARDING AGAINST PASSAGE BY ENEMY SURFACE COMBATANT FORCES IN SUCH MANNER THAT THEIR EFFECTIVENESS IN RECONNAISSANCE AGAINST IMPORTANT ENEMY UNITS BECAME MORE A MATTER OF FORTUNE THAN OF GOOD MILITARY JUDGEMENT? WHILE HIS REASONS FOR DOING THIS ARE NOT APPARENT, IT SEEMS PROBABLE THAT HE HAD DECIDED THAT (A) THE SEIZURE OF LEYTE WOULD NOT BE OF SUFFICIENT IMPORTANCE TO CAUSE SUCH A REACTION ON THE PART OF THE JAPANESE AND (B) ANTISHIPPING OPERATIONS SHOULD THEREFORE HAVE PRIORITY.

WHATEVER MAY HAVE BEEN HIS REASONS THEY WERE HIGHLY ERRONEOUS FOR AS SHOWN (PLATE XX), THE JAPANESE MAIN FORCE AT 1735 ON THIS DAY SORTIED FROM BUNGO SUIDO ENTIRELY UNOBSERVED BY THE ALLIED SUBMARINES (BESUGO, RONQUIL AND GABILAN) WHICH HAD BEEN INITIALLY STATIONED IN THE APPROACHES TO BUNGO SUIDO FOR THE PRIMARY PURPOSE OF PREVENTING SUCH AN UNDETECTED SORTIE OF SUCH A FORCE, BUT WHICH NOW, AS DISCUSSED UNDER "HIT PARADE", WERE OPERATING WITH THE APPROVAL OF CTF 17 UNDER A DESTRUCTION OBJECTIVE IN THE WATERS OFF THE EAST COAST OF KYUSHU (BESUGO AND RONQUIL)\* AND, BY ORDERS OF CTF 17, IN THE APPROACHES TO KII SUIDO (GABILAN).\*\* IT IS APPARENT THAT THIS NEW DISPOSITION NECESSARILY LEFT THE SUNGO SUIDO, EXCEPT IN ITS WESTERN SECTOR, COMPLETELY UNCOVERED. THE RESULT OF THIS WAS THAT AT THE TIME OF THE SORTIE OF THE MAIN FORCE THE NEAREST ALLIED SUBMARINE (BESUGO) WAS ABOUT FIFTY-FOUR MILES AWAY.

It seems likely that CTF 17 was interested in learning what action, if any, had been taken by the submarines of CONVOY COLLEGE relative to (a) the contact report of the previous day on a naval task force in the vicinity of Hainan Island, and (b) his orders to "smack them".\*\*\* He appears to have expected little, if anything, for an evaluation of this report would show that (a) the contact had been made in a position about 300 miles to the southwest, (b) the enemy was travelling at a speed far greater than the maximum speed of his submarines, (c) he (the enemy) appeared to be heading in the direction of Hainan Island--which was but ninety miles away--or for the sea areas off the China coast, and (d) he had not designated any particular wolf pack commander or individual submarine to execute the task. In this, he would have been correct for the submarines concerned took no action although the TANG, operating off Kiirun, may have moved in that direction.

Why then did he send this dispatch? It was done because it was the usual practice within TF 17 (and in TF 71 as well) to designate a target of this nature in this manner. This alerted the submarines (a) to this contact, (b) to the fact that it might suddenly appear in their operating area, and (c) to the fact that CTF 17 had no definite information of its probable destination. Had CTF 17 had definite information thereon, instead of alerting the whole CONVOY COLLEGE, he would have simply alerted the submarine most affected.

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\* BESUGO Dispatch 181424 October 1944 to CTF 17.

\*\* CTF 17 Dispatch 191007 October 1944 to GABILAN.

\*\*\* CTF 17 Dispatch 190701 October 1944 to CONVOY COLLEGE.

It seems well to point out here that if he actually expected little from this contact he was correct, for it was not sighted on this day by Allied sources.

During the day he received dispatches and issued instructions as follows:

(1) Sometime just before or at about midnight, in reply to the BARBEL's dispatch of the previous evening, requesting routing to Midway\*—she was originally scheduled to return on October 23rd\*\*--he directed her to proceed to Fremantle, instead of Midway, for refit.\*\*\*

(2) About this same time he received a dispatch from the SALMON to the effect that she had departed her patrol station in search of medical aid for an officer in great pain.\*\*\*\* From this dispatch, which gave the SALMON's course and speed, he could see that the submarine was well out of position and was steadily increasing this deviation. He now pondered over the situation to determine what action he should take for it was clear that, if he permitted the SALMON to continue on her course, it would be some days before she could return to station.

(3) At 0326 he advised all submarines that the position given in the TRIGGER's contact report 190715\*\*\*\*\* should have been Latitude 25° - 30'N, Longitude 122° - 45'E.\*\*\*\*\* He sent this dispatch because he thought that the TRIGGER's contact report had been received in error by everyone. Actually the error was within his own headquarters and the dispatch as received by other commands was received correctly. This contact report was to the effect that four heavy cruisers, five destroyers (SECOND Striking Force) had been sighted at 1400 on the previous day in Latitude 25° - 30'N, Longitude 122° - 45'E, on course 270°(T), speed sixteen knots.\*\*\*\*\*

(4) At 0417, as an information addressee, he received a dispatch from COMNAVGRPCHINA to CINCPAC reporting that at 2250 on the previous evening five large unidentified ships had been sighted in Latitude 18° - 42'N, Longitude 113° - 15'E, course east, speed thirteen.\*\*\*\*\*

(5) At 0443, since CINCPAC was an information addressee, he received COMTHIRDFLT's dispatch 191329 wherein that commander stated that (a) several enemy surface contacts had been made on that day east and north of Formosa,

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\* BARBEL Dispatch 191006 October 1944 to CTF 17.  
 \*\* CTF 17 Operation Order 316-44, Serial 00830, September 12th, 1944 to STERLET.  
 \*\*\* War Patrol Report BARBEL, Report of 2ND War Patrol, Serial 040, October 24th, 1944.  
 \*\*\*\* War Patrol Report SALMON, Report of 11TH War Patrol, Serial 0-16, November 10th, 1944.  
 \*\*\*\*\* TRIGGER Dispatch 190715 October 1944 to CTF 17, info COM3RDFLT.  
 \*\*\*\*\* CTF 17 Dispatch 191826 October 1944 to all submarines.  
 \*\*\*\*\* COMNAVGRPCHINA Dispatch 191716/I October 1944 to CINCPAC, info CTF 17.



China and the Celebes Seas, and (b) TF 38 would be kept intact pending developments.\* He was of course interested in this dispatch because it might be possible for his submarines to be so interposed as to provide reconnaissance or attack.

(6) Shortly after this, and clearly in reply to his instructions to her to proceed to Fremantle, he received a second dispatch from the BARBEL wherein, after stating that she was out of torpedoes and short of fuel, she requested fuel at Saipan. He now envisaged a solution to his problem relating to the SALMON. He would direct the BARBEL to (a) rendezvous with the SALMON, (b) remove the ill officer and (c) return to Saipan. He therefore issued instructions to this effect to both submarines and gave them a rendezvous position in Latitude 24° - 00'N, Longitude 130° - 00'E.\*\* While his reasons for not establishing the rendezvous farther to the westward to enable the SALMON to return to station earlier are not known, it seems probable that his primary reason was his feeling that any considerable movement to the westward might reduce the fuel on board the BARBEL to an unacceptable minimum. (These submarines were directed to terminate their patrols prior to the time specified when the fuel remaining was reduced to an amount which permitted their return to Midway or Johnston Island at an economical speed with ten per cent of their capacity remaining as a reserve, or when they had insufficient torpedoes remaining to conduct a successful attack).\*\*\*

(7) Having issued the above instructions to the BARBEL, he then at 1133 notified CTF 71 that (a) the COBIA would pass to CTF 71 at 1800 October 21st in vicinity Latitude 18° - 30'N, Longitude 118° - 00'E, (b) (1) the BARBEL would proceed to Saipan for fuel and any vital repairs thence would proceed to Fremantle for which voyage he requested patrol instructions, and (2) he believed the BARBEL should be capable of approximately ten days patrol en route.\*\*\*\*

(8) At 1153 he advised all commands interested that his submarines (a) eastbound were (1) ASPRO in Latitude 20° - 30'N, Longitude 171° - 00'E, (2) WHALE and SEAHORSE in Latitude 22° - 00'N, Longitude 140° - 00'E, (3) SAILFISH and PARCHE in Latitude 19° - 30'N, Longitude 136° - 00'E, (b) southeastbound, the TREPANG in Latitude 19° - 30'N, Longitude 170° - 00'E, (c) westbound were (1) BLACKFIN in Luzon Strait, (2) HADDOCK, HALIBUT and TUNA in Saipan.\*\*\*\*\* (Note: Of the above submarines, only the WHALE,

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\* COM3RDFLT Dispatch 191329 October 1944 to CTF 38, and all TGC's of TF 38, info COMINCH, COMSOWESPAC, CINCPAC, etc.

\*\* War Patrol Report BARBEL, Report of 2ND War Patrol, Serial 040, October 24th, 1944; also CTF 17 Dispatch 191822 October 1944 to all submarines, info CINCPAC.

\*\*\* CTF 17 Operation Plan No. 1-43, June 24th, 1943, Annex B, Paragraph 2.

\*\*\*\* CTF 17 Dispatch 200233 October 1944 to CTF 71.

\*\*\*\*\* CTF 17 Dispatch 200253 October 1944 to all commands interested in friendly submarines.

SEAHORSE, SAILFISH, PARCHE and BLACKFIN are shown on the diagrams. It is to be noted on Diagram B that the position given for the PARCHE and SAILFISH is about 500 miles too far to the eastward).

(9) At 1834 he notified the wolf pack commander of the submarines off Bungo Suido that the GABILAN had acknowledged his (CTF 17's) orders detaching her from the wolf pack and ordering her to patrol Area SIX.\* (Actually she had been ordered to Area SIX to guard the approaches to Kii Suido).\*\* This dispatch was of course designed to inform the wolf pack commander that the GABILAN (a) was no longer within the approaches to Bungo Suido or even in Area SEVEN and (b) was no longer under his (wolf pack commander's) orders.

(10) At 1841 he directed the COBIA which was to proceed to Fremantle to (a) discontinue her CONVOY COLLEGE patrol in sufficient time to reach Latitude 18° - 30'N, Longitude 118° - 00'E at 1800 the next day, at which time she would pass to the Op-control of CTF 71, (b) proceed south along Longitude 118° - 00'E thence via Mindoro Strait, Sibutu Passage, Makassar Strait, and Lombok Strait and then through certain designated points and (c) as safety measures against possible enemy submarines, employ wide discretion in choice of routes between Latitudes 18° - 00'S and 30° - 00'S and east of Longitude 110° - 00'E. Also in this dispatch he advised the BARBEL to note the above as she would likely be assigned the same routing.\*\*\*

(11) Sometime in the early evening he received a dispatch from CTF 71 to the effect that (a) in position Latitude 18° - 30'N, Longitude 120° - 00'E, the BONEFISH would shift to his Op-control at 0900 the following day, and the COD at 2100 October 26th and (b) these two submarines had both been instructed as to his (CTF 17's) desires that in order to insure safe passage through surface forces they remain west of Longitude 122° - 00'E until onward routing had been received.\*\*\*\*

(12) At 2000 he received a dispatch from CTG 17.7 (COMSUBRON TEN and Commander Submarine Advance Base)\*\*\*\*\* who, in the SPERRY, had arrived at Guam at 1118 this day,\*\*\*\*\* informing the Joint Army Navy Communication Center there that (a) the HADDOCK, HALIBUT and TUNA escorted by PGM 9 would depart Saipan at 1430 the following afternoon at SOA thirteen knots, and (b) this coordinated attack group (wolf pack) would arrive in Latitude 18° - 30'N, Longitude 140° - 00'E, at 2100 October 22nd.\*\*\*\*\* Although not stated in



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\* CTF 17 Dispatch 200934 October 1944 to Wolf Pack Commander in BESUGO.  
 \*\* CTF 17 Dispatch 191007 October 1944 to all submarines (GABILAN, info BESUGO).  
 \*\*\* CTF 17 Dispatch 200941 October 1944 to COBIA, info SNOOK, BARBEL.  
 \*\*\*\* CTF 71 Dispatch 200751 October 1944 to CTF 17.  
 \*\*\*\*\* Captain George L. Russell, USN.  
 \*\*\*\*\* War Diary COMSUBRON 10, October 20th, 1944.  
 \*\*\*\*\* CTG 17.7 Dispatch 200719 October 1944 to CINCPAC, COM3RDFLT, CTF 17, all TFC's 3RDFLT, CTG 30.5.



**SUBMARINE OPERATING AREA CLASSIFICATIONS  
WESTERN PACIFIC**

OCTOBER 8 th. - 31 st. inc. 1944  
CINCPOA ZONE NOTICES 35,38,40,42,44,45,47

All areas submarine patrol zones unless otherwise indicated  
Dotted areas indicate air surface zone.   
Hatched areas indicate joint zone. 

BATTLE FOR LEYTE GULF  
OCTOBER 1944

OCTOBER	8	9	10	11	12	13	14	15	16	17	18	19	20	21	22	23	24	25	26	27	28	29	30	31
<b>MARU MORGUE</b>																								
ABANDON																								
ABDUCT																								
ABLAZE																								
ABOLISH																								
ABRIDGE																								
ABUSE																								
★ COKE																								
<i>W. of 136° E. I</i> CORRIDOR <i>E. of 136° E. II</i>																								
CLOSET																								
<b>CONVOY COLLEGE</b>																								
DEFER																								
<i>W. of 123° E. I</i> DELETE <i>E. of 123° E. II</i>																								
<i>W. of 123° E. I</i> DEPART <i>E. of 123° E. II</i>																								
DESTROY																								
DETAIN																								
☆☆ DETECT																								
<b>DUNKERS DERBY</b>																								
HIT PARADE <i>W. of 136° E. I</i> <i>S. of 32° N. II</i>																								
KITCHEN																								
PARLOR																								
☆☆☆ VESTIBULE I II III																								
9																								
II-A																								
II-B																								
II-C <i>W. of 125° E. I</i> <i>E. of 125° E. II</i>																								
12																								

★ COKE is a fueling area. (Lat. 19°N, Long. 139°E) Not shown on Plate XIX

☆☆ Until 0001 October 16th. DETECT divided at 122°E. After that date divided at 123°E.

☆☆☆ Until 0001 October 16th. VESTIBULE divided at 21°N. After that date Lane (II) established between 20°-30'N. and 21°N.





this dispatch this wolf pack was scheduled to operate in CONVOY COLLEGE, where it was to arrive October 24th.\*

(13) It seems probable that at about midnight he received (a) a dispatch from the SNOOK requesting an extension of his patrol to November 10th,\*\* (b) a dispatch from the PARCHE reporting the present position and future movements of the PARCHE and SAILFISH and rendezvous for entering Saipan on October 24th,\*\*\* and (c) a dispatch from CTF 71 (quoted in full under "Operations of CTF 71, October 20th") giving the patrol instructions for the BARBEL upon her reporting to CTF 71, after her visit to Saipan.\*\*\*\*

From the above, he could see that the day's operations had been very unfruitful both in reconnaissance and in attacks. While his reactions thereto are not known it seems likely that, insofar as the reconnaissance was concerned, he considered that this was to have been expected since on the previous two days, feeling that the enemy was retiring, he had disposed his submarines in general in antishipping stations, which stations they continued to occupy on this day.

As midnight approached, and with it the hour for the rotation of his submarines in CONVOY COLLEGE and MARU MORGUE--the rotating patrol plan called for the submarines to rotate in clockwise direction 0001 October 21st\*\*\*\*\*--he knew that, by that hour, his submarines would have rotated patrol areas as follows (Plate XIX):

(1) CONVOY COLLEGE.

SAWFISH, ICEFISH, DRUM from DETECT to DELETE.

SHARK, BLACKFISH, SEADRAGON from DESTROY to DETECT.

SNOOK, COBIA from DELETE to DESTROY.

(2) MARU MORGUE.

SKATE from ABLAZE to ABDUCT.

SAURY from ABDUCT to ABOLISH.

BURRFISH from ABOLISH to ABRIDGE.

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\* CTF 17 Operation Order No. 343-44, Serial 00864, October 7th, 1944 to Coordinated Attack Group Commander (HADDOCK, HALIBUT, TUNA).  
 \*\* War Patrol Report SNOOK, Report of 7TH War Patrol, Serial 053, November 18th, 1944.  
 \*\*\* PARCHE Dispatch 201226 October 1944 to CTF 17, CTG 17.7.  
 \*\*\*\* CTF 71 Dispatch 201137 October 1944 to CTF 17, info COM3RDFLT, CTF 72, CINCPAC.  
 \*\*\*\*\* Submarine Operational History World War II by Commander Submarine Force, U.S. Pacific Fleet, Volume I, Pages 74 and 87.

STERLET from ABRIDGE to ABUSE.

SEA DOG from ABUSE to ABANDON.

This would leave Area ABLAZE vacant.

(a) CONVOY COLLEGE.

It will be recalled (from Volume II)\* that (a) on October 18th all submarines of CONVOY COLLEGE had been directed to (1) discontinue their special dispositions--they had been patrolling small rectangles in a north and south line across Luzon Strait between Formosa and Luzon, (2) resume normal rotating patrols, and (3) remain to the westward of Longitude 123° - 00'E,\*\* (b) as a result of this order, the submarines had departed their rectangles and had headed for their new stations where most of them had arrived by the beginning of this day.

By early morning the submarines of CONVOY COLLEGE received a dispatch from CTF 17 (a) reporting a contact evaluated and forwarded by COMNAVGRPCHINA on one carrier (CV), two cruisers (type not given) and three destroyers in Latitude 18° - 40'N, Longitude 112° - 11'E, on course 330°(T), speed twenty-five, and (b) directing them to "smack them".\*\*\* This contact, which was made by a plane of the FOURTEENTH Air Force, is discussed under "Operations of C.G. FOURTEENTH Air Force, October 19th, 1944" in Volume II.

The CONVOY COLLEGE submarines at this time consisted of (a) two principal coordinated attack groups (wolf packs) (1) the SAWFISH (F), ICEFISH, DRUM, (2) SHARK (F), BLACKFISH, SEADRAGON, and (b) a reduced wolf pack consisting of the SNOOK and COBIA. The remaining two CONVOY COLLEGE submarines PARCHE and SAILFISH, which had commenced retiring from the area on the evening of October 18th, continued to do so.

The above submarines operated as follows:

(1) SAWFISH, ICEFISH, DRUM.\*\*\*\*

These submarines (Diagram B), having arrived on their normal stations, were now patrolling Area DETECT. They operated on the surface during darkness and submerged during daylight. However, since these three submarines had been operating independently, the coordinated attack group

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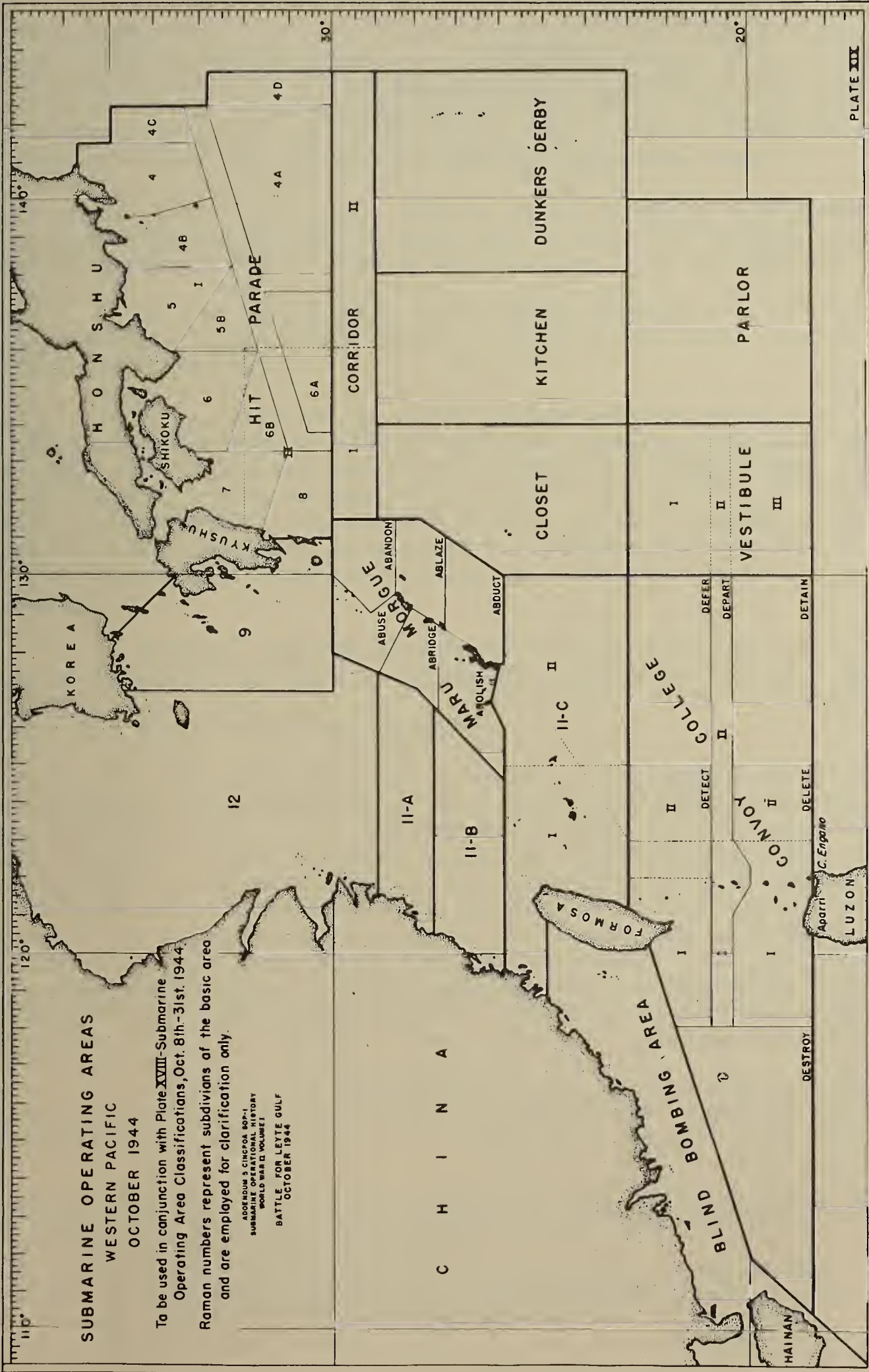
\* Volume II, Battle for Leyte Gulf (NavPers 92194), Naval War College, 1955, Chapter III (B)(2).

\*\* CTF 17 Dispatch 181003 October 1944 to all submarines in CONVOY COLLEGE and MARU MORGUE.

\*\*\* CTF 17 Dispatch 190701 October 1944 to CONVOY COLLEGE.

\*\*\*\* War Patrol Report SAWFISH, Report of 8TH War Patrol, Serial 88-44, November 8th, 1944; also War Patrol Report ICEFISH, Report of 1ST War Patrol, Serial 011, November 13th, 1944; also War Patrol Report DRUM, Report of 11TH War Patrol, Serial 056, no date, but likely early November 1944.





**SUBMARINE OPERATING AREAS**  
**WESTERN PACIFIC**  
**OCTOBER 1944**

To be used in conjunction with Plate XVIII-Submarine  
 Operating Area Classifications, Oct. 8th-31st, 1944.  
 Roman numbers represent subdivisions of the basic area  
 and are employed for clarification only.

ADDENDUM 5 CIRCPOA 807-1  
 SUBMARINE OPERATING HISTORY  
 WORLD WAR II (VOLUME I)  
 BATTLE FOR LEYTE GULF  
 OCTOBER 1944





(wolf pack) commander in the SAWFISH had been endeavoring to contact the ICEFISH and DRUM to issue his new patrol schedule for Area DETECT. He had succeeded in contacting the ICEFISH on the previous evening, at which time he had received a request from the Commanding Officer ICEFISH for permission to remain on patrol beyond his scheduled departure date (October 26th) providing no contacts of consequence had been encountered before that time.

After departing the ICEFISH, he had commenced closing the DRUM. He contacted her at 0105, at which time he received a request from the Commanding Officer DRUM similar to that received from the ICEFISH.

He then issued patrol instructions covering area DETECT, westward from Luzon Strait, after which he headed for his patrol station where he arrived presently.

Since, based on the CONVOY COLLEGE rotating patrol curriculum, these three submarines were to rotate their patrol stations this night and were to enter their new patrol areas at midnight\* all of them, (Diagram B) headed on southerly courses as necessary to arrive at midnight. As stated in Volume I the purpose of this rotation was to vary the intensity of action experienced by the submarines, to equalize their attack opportunities and to vary the intensity of enemy air coverage and other antisubmarine activities.

Although the DRUM encountered patrolling aircraft, no contacts of importance were made by any of the submarines of this wolf pack.

(2) SHARK, BLACKFISH, SEADRAGON.

These three submarines belonged in Area DESTROY. Since they had proceeded very slowly indeed from their special rectangular disposition in Luzon Strait, it seems likely that only the BLACKFISH had succeeded in reaching the above area.\*\* The facts are not entirely clear regarding the SHARK since that submarine, with all of her records, was lost on October 24th. It seems probable therefore that, on occasions, the tracks and the positions of the SHARK, which, in general, are assumed, may be somewhat in error. However, since they are based on the best available information, which includes reports from the other two submarines as well as the special report of the Commanding Officer BLACKFISH, who, with the loss of the SHARK, had become the wolf pack commander, they should not be greatly in error.

Soon after the commencement of the day, the SHARK and the SEADRAGON moved into Area DESTROY so that during the entire day the entire wolf pack was on station. Since the wolf pack was scheduled to move into

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\* Submarine Operational History World War II, Commander Submarine Force, U.S. Pacific Fleet, Volume I, Page 74.

\*\* War Patrol Report BLACKFISH, Report of 9TH War Patrol, Serial 001, November (n) 1944; also War Patrol Report SEADRAGON, Report of 11TH War Patrol, Serial 194, November 8th, 1944.

October 20th

CONFIDENTIAL

Area DETECT immediately after midnight and was then to commence operating in that area, the wolf pack commander appears to have directed them to move as shown on Diagram B.

During daylight these submarines operated submerged and during darkness they operated on the surface.\* They made no contacts.

(3) SNOOK and COBIA.\*\*

The units of this reduced wolf pack were patrolling independently in Area DELETE and were working their way westward in order to be in a position to change their patrol station to Area DESTROY at midnight.

The COBIA submerged at 0818 on the Takao - Manila trade route. At 1035 she surfaced and headed toward the northwest end of her patrol area. She submerged again at 1541 and at 1851 surfaced for the night.

Sometime after surfacing she received (a) orders from CTF 17 to discontinue CONVOY COLLEGE patrol at such time as to reach Latitude 18° - 30'N, Longitude 118° - 00'E, at 1800 on October 21st (the following day) at which time she was to pass to operational control of CTF 71; routing instructions to Fremantle were included,\*\*\* and (b) a contact report of a convoy due to pass north of Pratas Reef (report not available to this analysis). She promptly set course to intercept the convoy. During the day she made no contacts.\*\*

The SNOOK patrolled uneventfully on the surface during darkness and submerged during daylight. At 2100, since (a) her patrol was to expire at dark on the following day, (b) her patrol had been unfruitful, and (c) she had all of her torpedoes and adequate fuel, she sent a message to CTF 17 requesting an extension of patrol until November 10th.

(4) PARCHE and SAILFISH.

These submarines were proceeding to Saipan in company, remaining on the surface both during darkness and daylight except as forced to submerge by patrolling aircraft.\*\*\*\* They made no contacts of importance.

At 2126 the Commanding Officer PARCHE sent a dispatch to CTF 17 (a) reporting that the PARCHE and SAILFISH, in Latitude 21° - 00'N, Longitude 126° - 00'E, would enter the Saipan western safety lane at 0300, October 23rd, (b) requesting a rendezvous presumably with the escort for entering Saipan for 0500 October 24th, and (c) forwarding the names of the

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\* Deck Logs SEADRAGON and BLACKFISH, October 20th, 1944.

\*\* War Patrol Report COBIA, Report of 2ND War Patrol, Serial 035, November 5th, 1944; also War Patrol Report SNOOK, Report of 7TH War Patrol, Serial 053, November 18th, 1944.

\*\*\* CTF 17 Dispatch 200941 October 1944 to COBIA, info SNOOK, BARBEL.

\*\*\*\* Deck Logs PARCHE and SAILFISH, October 20th, 1944.



flyers--seven officers and five airmen--recovered, all of whom were from the WASP, ESSEX, and ENTERPRISE.\*

Since these submarines took no further part in KING II operations, they will be dropped from further discussion, but will be plotted on the Diagrams to indicate their relative locations.

(5) BLACKFIN.

The BLACKFIN, on westerly courses at 0000, was about eighty miles from the eastern boundary of CONVOY COLLEGE and was en route to Latitude 18° - 30'N, Longitude 117° - 00'E (Area DESTROY), where she was to report to CTF 71 and thence to patrol Area A8. At about 0600 she entered CONVOY COLLEGE. At 1034 she sighted the PARCHE. She remained on the surface during daylight as well as darkness, except when forced to submerge because of patrolling aircraft. At 2320 she entered Balintang Channel, having made no contacts of importance during the day.\*\* At 2400 she was bearing 350°(T), distant eighty miles from Cape Engano.

(b) Northwest Coast of Formosa.

(1) TANG.\*\*\*

This submarine was proceeding at full speed to intercept an enemy task force reported to be heading north along the China coast. As mentioned under "Northwest Coast of Formosa, October 19th" in Volume II, it is not known of what this enemy task force consisted, but it is believed that it was likely a local convoy.\*\*\*\* What it actually was will probably never be known because the TANG was lost a few days after this.\*\*\*\*\*

The source of the above contact report is not known. It is possible that the Commanding Officer TANG intercepted the contact report on a carrier task force off Hainan which CTF 17, at 1601 on the previous day, had sent to his submarines in CONVOY COLLEGE.\*\*\*\*\* He may then have decided that, since he had had poor hunting off Kiirun and station keeping there had been difficult, he could do no worse than move once again into Formosa Strait where he might be fortunate enough to encounter this task force should it change course to that area.

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\* PARCHE Dispatch 201226 October 1944 to CTF 17, CTG 17.7.  
 \*\* War Patrol Report BLACKFIN, Report of 1ST War Patrol, Serial 021, December 4th, 1944.  
 \*\*\* War Patrol Report TANG, Report of 5TH War Patrol, No Serial, September 25th, 1945.  
 \*\*\*\* Volume II, Battle for Leyte Gulf (NavPers 92194), Naval War College, 1955, (B)(2)(b).  
 \*\*\*\*\* War Patrol Report TANG, prepared from memory about one year later by the Commanding Officer TANG, who had been a prisoner of the Japanese until the termination of the war. The tracks shown (Diagram B) are merely evaluations based on the War Patrol Report.  
 \*\*\*\*\* CTF 17 Dispatch 190701 October 1944 to CONVOY COLLEGE.

His action in so doing seems sound and was in accordance with his instructions from CTF 17, which directed that (a) he was to operate in area 11C, and (b) was to join the coordinated attack group there (SILVERSIDES, TRIGGER, SALMON) if he so desired, or when directed to do so by dispatch.\* He had not desired to do so but, instead, had chose to operate independently.

At 0400 he made a radar contact on an enemy force which was making very erratic zigzags and was heading south instead of north (Diagram B). He estimated this force to consist of one KATORI-Class cruiser and two destroyers and he tracked it at nineteen knots. He endeavored to close and, in so doing, may have entered the Blind Bombing Zone, which embraced most of Formosa Strait. However, before he could gain an attack position, he was illuminated by an enemy searchlight, was forced to submerge, and broke off the attack. To his surprise, he was not attacked by the destroyers. What the above Japanese force actually was and where it was going is not known since no Japanese records available to this study mention the above contact.

As dawn was breaking he now retired to the northward clear of the strait for a rest, and to effect repairs, particularly to radar.

(c) Northeast Coast of Formosa.

The three submarines in Area 11C were a coordinated attack group (wolf pack) of three submarines, the SILVERSIDES (F), TRIGGER and SALMON. However, only the first two of these submarines were on station as the SALMON on the previous evening had departed the immediate operating area and had headed eastward to report, among other things, the illness of an officer.\*\*

(1) The SILVERSIDES and TRIGGER were presently operating off Kiirun (Keelung) Harbor, northern Formosa, where they hoped to encounter the task force (Japanese SECOND Striking Force) which had been reported on the previous evening to the wolf pack commander in the SILVERSIDES by the TRIGGER as headed for that harbor. As pointed out in Volume II under "Northeast Coast of Formosa, October 19th", this was an idle patrol as the SECOND Striking Force was heading for Mako rather than Kiirun.\*\*\* At 1025 the SILVERSIDES sighted a mine and cleared the area to the eastward. The commanding officer promptly notified the TRIGGER by sound gear\*\*\*\* and the TRIGGER likewise cleared the area to the eastward.\*\*\*\*\* Both of these

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\* CTF 17 Operation Order No. 326-44, September 24th, 1944 to TANG.

\*\* War Patrol Report SALMON, Report of 11TH War Patrol, Serial O-16, November 10th, 1944.

\*\*\* Volume II, Battle for Leyte Gulf (NavPers 92194), Naval War College, 1955, Chapter V(B)(2)(c).

\*\*\*\* War Patrol Report SILVERSIDES, Report of 11TH War Patrol, Serial O45, November 23rd, 1944.

\*\*\*\*\* War Patrol Report TRIGGER, Report of 10TH War Patrol, Serial O33, November 3rd, 1944.



submarines contacted numerous planes but otherwise their patrols were uneventful.

At 1915 the wolf pack commander directed the TRIGGER to patrol the approach to Kiirun south of Latitude 25° - 15'N on the following day.\* Since the SILVERSIDES remained in the vicinity of Kiirun the next day also, it seems likely that the wolf pack commander advised the TRIGGER to this effect.

(2) Meanwhile, the SALMON continued to the eastward at fifteen knots. At 0608 she received a dispatch from CTF 17 assigning her a rendezvous for the next day with the BARBEL\*\* in Latitude 24° - 00'N, Longitude 130° - 00'E.\*\*\* She continued on toward this rendezvous. However, at 2020 she received the BARBEL's ETA as 0830 the following day. Since she was well advanced along her course, she slowed to eight knots.

Her movement to the eastward was uneventful.\*\* At 2400 the SALMON was bearing 265°(T), distant sixty miles from the designated rendezvous.

(3) The WHALE and SEAHORSE, which were retiring from the area and were en route to Midway Island, proceeded independently. They operated on the surface both during darkness and daylight.\*\*\*\* Their operations on this day were uneventful, the only contacts being on patrolling aircraft, both friendly and unidentified.\*\*\*\*\*

Since these submarines took no further part in KING II operations, they will be dropped from further discussion, but will be plotted on the diagrams to indicate their relative locations.

(d) MARU MORGUE.

The five submarines in the MARU MORGUE operated as follows: The SKATE in south central portion of Area ABLAZE; the SAURY in Area ABDUCT at a mean distance of about thirty miles to the northeast of the northern tip of Okinawa; the BURRFISH in the northern portion of Area ABOLISH; the STERLET in Area ABRIDGE operating to the westward of the southern tip of Amami O Shima and the SEA DOG operating in the northeastern portion of Area ABUSE. No submarine was in Area ABANDON on this day because the BARBEL, which had operated in this area, was retiring to the eastward toward Midway and no relief had been provided.

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- \* War Patrol Report SILVERSIDES, Report of 11TH War Patrol, Serial 045, November 23rd, 1944.
  - \*\* War Patrol Report SALMON, Report of 11TH War Patrol, Serial 0-16, November 10th, 1944.
  - \*\*\* War Patrol Report BARBEL, Report of 2ND War Patrol, Serial 040, October 24th, 1944.
  - \*\*\*\* Deck Logs WHALE and SEAHORSE, October 20th, 1944.
  - \*\*\*\*\* War Patrol Report WHALE, Report of 9TH War Patrol, Serial 017, October 30th, 1944; also War Patrol Report SEAHORSE, Report of 6TH War Patrol, Serial C-5, November 1st, 1944.

These submarines, with the exception of the BARBEL, were carrying out normal rotating patrols operating on the surface during darkness and submerged during daylight.\* As they were expected to rotate clockwise into the neighboring area at midnight, they advanced to close the border between the areas by that hour. It will be noted that, owing to the limited number of submarines assigned to the MARU MORGUE and to the freedom of action accorded to each submarine in its own area, the MARU MORGUE was necessarily loosely patrolled.

Of the above submarines the only one which encountered any surface target was the STERLET. This submarine, at 2205 contacted a small 1,000 ton ship which she endeavored to destroy by firing at her, at 2236, three torpedoes, all of which missed. She immediately endeavored to make a second and more productive approach but since the target had succeeded in getting on the other side of Tokuna Shima, she was forced to break off the chase.\*\* The STERLET also made contacts on enemy aircraft.\*\*

With regard to the BARBEL, this submarine at 0030 received orders from CTF 17 to proceed to Fremantle for refit.\*\*\* Upon receipt of this dispatch the commanding officer immediately informed CTF 17 that he was out of torpedoes, had a shortage of fuel,\*\*\*\* and requested fuel at Saipan.\*\*\* To his surprise, instead of receiving orders to proceed directly to Saipan, he received at 0530 orders to rendezvous with the SALMON in Latitude 24° - 00'N, Longitude 130° - 00'E, to pick up a patient from that submarine, and then to proceed to Saipan.\*\*\*

Therefore at 0620 he proceeded toward the rendezvous on the surface. At 2000 he advised the SALMON by dispatch, over the area frequency, that his ETA at the rendezvous would be 0830 the following morning.\*\*\*

About this time he received, as an information addressee, a dispatch from CTF 17 to the COBIA wherein the COBIA received orders regarding her transfer to CTF 71 and the routing to be followed en route to Fremantle. In this dispatch the BARBEL was directed to note the routing as she would probably be assigned such routing after fueling at Saipan.\*\*\*\*\*

Except for this, the BARBEL's operations this day was uneventful.

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- \* Deck Logs SKATE, SAURY, BURRFISH, STERLET and SEA DOG, October 20th, 1944.
  - \*\* War Patrol Report STERLET, Report of 2ND War Patrol, Serial 0120, November 30th, 1944.
  - \*\*\* War Patrol Report BARBEL, Report of 2ND War Patrol, Serial 040, October 24th, 1944.
  - \*\*\*\* CTF 17 Dispatch 200233 October 1944 to CTF 71, info CINCPAC, CTF 72, COM7THFLT.
  - \*\*\*\*\* CTF 17 Dispatch 200941 October 1944 to COBIA, info SNOOK, BARBEL.



The BILLFISH, which (a) was to relieve the SKATE at sunset on the following day in Area ABDUCT was standing by in Latitude 29° - 30'N, Longitude 132° - 00'E, where she had arrived at 1130 the previous morning. Since that time she had been patrolling in this vicinity to await sunset of the following day when she was to enter Area ABDUCT. She remained on the surface during both daylight and darkness except for some hours during the forenoon when she submerged to do some overhaul work on her main motor brushes.\*

She continued her patrol in this vicinity until 2300 when she headed on course 180°(T), speed about ten knots for Area ABDUCT.\*\*

(e) Nagasaki - Sasebo.

It will be recalled that the ESCOLAR (F), PERCH and CROAKER, which had been assigned to Areas NINE and TWELVE (Plate XIX) and which had been operating as a coordinated attack group (wolf pack) in those areas, had, upon receiving orders on the evening of October 17th from CTF 17 to patrol the waters off Nagasaki, departed those areas and had, upon orders of the wolf pack commander, endeavored to block the passage between Fukae Shima and Kyushu employing only the PERCH and CROAKER while the ESCOLAR operated in the eastern channel between Shimono Shima and Uku Shima.\*\*\* Meanwhile, entirely unknown to the commanding officers of these two submarines, the ESCOLAR had been lost, apparently on the night of October 17th-18th.

The PERCH and the CROAKER had remained on these new stations during October 18th and 19th and then, on the evening of October 19th having received word from CTF 17 that their services were no longer required in that area,\*\*\*\* the Commanding Officer PERCH had headed for the vicinity of Danjo Gunto,\*\*\*\*\* and the Commanding Officer CROAKER for the west coast of Korea.\*\*\*\*\* Both were seeking more fruitful targets especially in merchant shipping, and in so doing, both were within their basic operating areas (NINE and TWELVE).

These new stations were so apart--about 270 miles--that the wolf pack feature; i.e., the ability to make a coordinated attack, which had been seriously weakened when the wolf pack commander in the ESCOLAR had decided to operate in the eastern channel above referred to, now became completely ineffective.

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- \* War Patrol Report BILLFISH, Report of 6TH War Patrol, Serial 088, November 27th, 1944.
  - \*\* Deck Log BILLFISH, October 20th, 1944.
  - \*\*\* Volume II, Battle for Leyte Gulf (NavPers 92194), Naval War College, 1955, Chapter I (B)(2)(e), Chapter III (B)(2)(e), Chapter V (B)(2)(e).
  - \*\*\*\* CTF 17 Dispatch 190941 October 1944 to all submarines #3, info CINCPAC.
  - \*\*\*\*\* War Patrol Report PERCH, Report of 3RD War Patrol, No Serial, November 8th, 1944.
  - \*\*\*\*\* War Patrol Report CROAKER, Report of 2ND War Patrol, Serial 027, November 10th, 1944.

It is not understood by what authority these commanding officers departed their stations in the passage between Fukae Shima and Kyushu since they (a) were units of a wolf pack commanded by the Commanding Officer ESCOLAR, and (b) had received no orders at this time from the wolf pack commander relieving them of that responsibility. Perhaps, the commanding officers felt that since they had received, as information addressees, CTF 17's dispatch 190941 to their wolf pack commander releasing that commander (a) from the requirement of guarding the approaches to Nagasaki and Sasebo, and (b) authorizing him to work areas NINE and TWELVE at his discretion,\* no special authority was required and this was the correct action for them to take. This idea is implied in the War Patrol Report CROAKER where the Commanding Officer CROAKER stated, "Having received word that our services were no longer required off Nagasaki, we headed for the west coast of Korea and sent a dispatch to ESCOLAR and PERCH informing them of our intentions. Received a prompt receipt from PERCH, but no word from ESCOLAR on two attempts. Before leaving port, ESCOLAR stated he did not intend to go into the Yellow Sea because of his smaller fuel capacity. Therefore, we felt safe in assuming that since the PERCH knew of our plan we would not encroach or be encroached upon by other boats".\*\*

BUT WOULD IT NOT HAVE BEEN MORE CORRECT HAD THE COMMANDING OFFICER CROAKER, WHO WAS SECOND IN COMMAND TO THE COMMANDING OFFICER ESCOLAR AND CERTAINLY WAS THE SENIOR IN THE FUKAE SHIMA - KYUSHU AREA, ON FAILING TO CONTACT THE ESCOLAR, ASSUMED COMMAND OF THE REDUCED WOLF PACK AND ADVISED CTF 17 TO THIS EFFECT? AS WILL BE SHOWN IN A SUCCEEDING VOLUME, THIS WAS THE PROCEDURE ADOPTED BY THE COMMANDING OFFICER BLACKFISH ON OCTOBER 24TH, WHEN HE WAS UNABLE TO CONTACT THE SHARK, WHOSE COMMANDING OFFICER WAS THE WOLF PACK COMMANDER.\*\*\*

Both the PERCH and the CROAKER patrolled submerged during daylight and on the surface during darkness.\*\*\*\* Their patrol was uneventful, excepting that the CROAKER sighted a properly marked enemy hospital ship.

By midnight the (a) PERCH was bearing 035°(T), distant forty miles from Danjo Gunto and was therefore on station on the Shanghai - Nagasaki convoy route which was her reason for selecting this area,\*\*\*\*\* whereas (b) CROAKER was in the vicinity of Cheju Do and was therefore far from the west coast of Korea--she still had about 225 miles to go.

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- \* CTF 17 Dispatch 190941 October 1944 to all submarines, info CINCPAC.
  - \*\* War Patrol Report CROAKER, Report of 2ND War Patrol, Serial 027, November 10th, 1944.
  - \*\*\* Report of Coordinated Patrol of TG 17.11 (SHARK, BLACKFISH, SEADRAGON), Serial 002, No Date, but probably November 1944, Enclosure C.
  - \*\*\*\* Deck Logs PERCH and CROAKER, October 20th, 1944.
  - \*\*\*\*\* War Patrol Report PERCH, Report of 3RD War Patrol, No Serial, November 8th, 1944.



## (f) HIT PARADE.

## (1) The Approaches to Bungo Suido and Kii Suido.

It will be recalled from Volumes I and II that the coordinated attack group (wolf pack) consisting of the BESUGO, RONQUIL and GABILAN (a) had been ordered by CTF 17 to take station in the approaches to Bungo Suido in Area SEVEN with orders "to conduct your patrol in such manner as to prevent the undetected sortie of enemy task forces through Bungo Suido;"\* (b) had been so stationed by the wolf pack commander across the entrance of Bungo Suido commencing with October 12th when all three submarines were first on station,\*\* (c) had then on October 18th, also by the wolf pack commander, been removed from their initial stations across Bungo Suido and had been positioned with the BESUGO and RONQUIL along the east coast of Kyushu (west of Longitude 132° - 10'E) with the BESUGO north of and the RONQUIL south of Latitude 32° - 00'N, and the GABILAN in the vicinity of Okino Shima, which caused a wide separation between the BESUGO and RONQUIL on the one hand and the GABILAN on the other.\*\*\* (This had been done because the wolf pack commander having formed the opinion that the enemy was returning (to the Inland Sea) had decided that his primary objective--the prevention of the undetected sortie of enemy task forces through Bungo Suido--no longer obtained, and had replaced it with a destruction objective),\*\*\*\* and (d) had been separated even farther when, on October 19th, CTF 17 had detached the GABILAN from the wolf pack and had ordered her to guard the approaches to Kii Suido.\*\*\*\*\*

As a consequence of the above, at the beginning of this day (0000, October 20th) the reduced wolf pack (BESUGO and RONQUIL) was on station along the eastern coast of Kyushu and the GABILAN was en route to her new station off Kii Suido, with the average distance between them of about seventy-five miles and rapidly increasing as the GABILAN closed Kii Suido.

The submarines will be discussed in the two units indicated above.

## (a) BESUGO and RONQUIL.

These two submarines remained in their assigned stations patrolling on the surface during darkness and submerged during daylight. Although they composed a reduced wolf pack, they operated rather freely in their assigned areas.

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\* CTF 17 Operation Order No. 328-44, Serial 00847, September 25th, 1944, to TG 17.17 (BESUGO, RONQUIL, GABILAN).

\*\* Volume I, Battle for Leyte Gulf (NavPers 91973), Naval War College, 1953, Chapter II (e)(3)(b)(2).

\*\*\* Volume II, Battle for Leyte Gulf (NavPers 92194), Naval War College, 1955, Chapter III (B)(2)(f)(1).

\*\*\*\* BESUGO Dispatch 181424 October 1944 to CTF 17.

\*\*\*\*\* CTF 17 Dispatch 191007 October 1944 to all submarines (GABILAN), info BESUGO.

The BESUGO, which was operating north of Latitude 32° - 00'N along the 100-fathom curve, except for contacting twenty-one planes and having a sound contact (which she thought was the RONQUIL), experienced an uneventful patrol.\* This undoubtedly disappointed the commanding officer (wolf pack commander) because (a) feeling that the enemy was retiring, he had notified CTF 17 to this effect and had stationed the submarines accordingly, and (b) since his operation order stated that an important amount of enemy shipping, to and from Japanese Empire ports, passed close to the beach along the east and SE coast of Kyushu, Shikoku and Honshu, he had reason to expect some success against both combatant and merchant shipping.\*\* At 1920 he surfaced, and during the evening likely received CTF 17's dispatch wherein that commander advised him that the "GABILAN has acknowledged her orders to leave your pack and patrol Area SIX".\*\*\*

The RONQUIL, which was operating south of Latitude 32° - 00'N, along the 100-fathom curve, except for encountering (a) numerous enemy planes, all on southerly courses, and (b) land haze which made piloting difficult, also had an uneventful patrol. At 1930 she surfaced and exchanged calls on her radar with the BESUGO.\*\*\*\*

\* \* \*

During the early evening, as stated above under BESUGO, the wolf pack commander (if he had not already learned it) now knew that the GABILAN had departed and that with her departure the eastern approaches to Bungo Suido were entirely open. Whether or not he considered the advisability of sending the RONQUIL to replace the GABILAN is not known, but this seems unlikely since he knew that CTF 17, in moving the GABILAN, was aware of the fact that the eastern approaches were now open and had issued no instructions thereon, thereby implying approval of the new disposition.

It was unfortunate that this was so for, at 1735, the Main Force sortied from Bungo Suido, passing close to Okino Shima in the eastern approaches (Plate XX) and therefore passed close to the area where the GABILAN had been operating on the previous day.

Sometime after this, since the RONQUIL received it, he likely received the news of the Allied landing at Leyte.

(b) GABILAN.

During the early morning the GABILAN, operating on the surface, continued on toward Kii Suido. The commanding officer had previously

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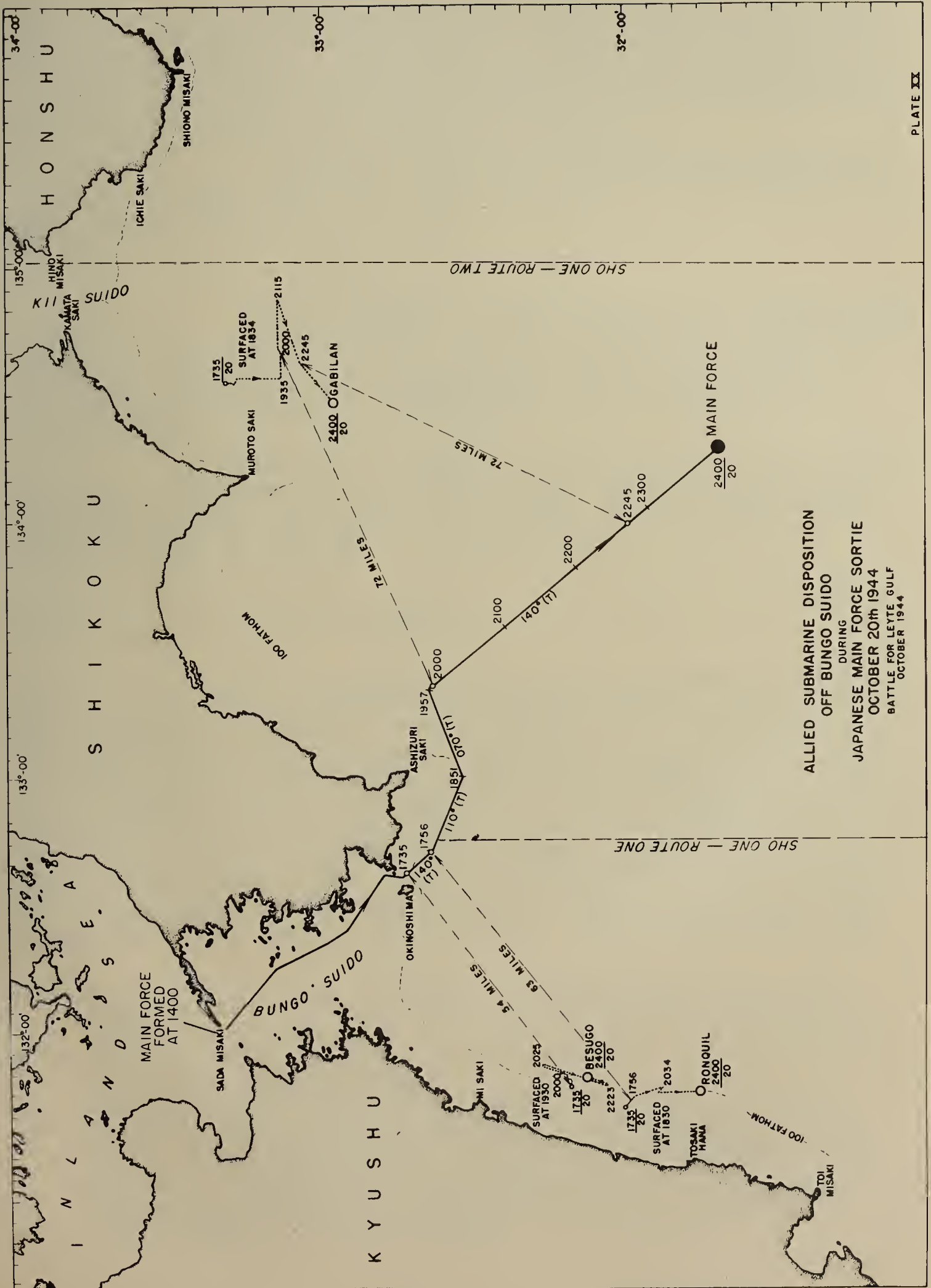
\* War Patrol Report BESUGO, Report of 1ST War Patrol, Serial 027, November 4th, 1944.

\*\* CTF 17 Operation Order 328-44, September 25th, Serial 00847 to TG 17.17 (BESUGO, RONQUIL, GABILAN).

\*\*\* CTF 17 Dispatch 200934 October 1944 to Wolf Pack Commander in BESUGO.

\*\*\*\* War Patrol Report RONQUIL, Report of 2ND War Patrol, Serial 038, November 8th, 1944.





ALLIED SUBMARINE DISPOSITION  
OFF BUNGO SUIDO  
DURING  
JAPANESE MAIN FORCE SORTIE  
OCTOBER 20th 1944  
BATTLE FOR LEYTE GULF  
OCTOBER 1944





decided (a) that there were only two places in the approaches to Kii Suido which would give him the best opportunities for destroying shipping; i.e., Muroto Saki and Ichie Saki\* (Note comment in Volume II in disagreement with this concept),\*\* and (b) to operate first in the vicinity of Muroto Saki. Therefore, at 0422, when in position about twenty miles south of the latter point, he submerged and headed slowly to the northward.\*

His patrol, except for sighting of one small float plane, and some radar difficulties, was uneventful. At 1834 he surfaced and headed slowly southward.\*

(2) The Approaches to Tokyo Bay.

These approaches were being guarded by the GREENLING and the TAMBOR. Both of these submarines operated on the surface during darkness and submerged during daylight.\*\*\* As shown on Diagram B, the TAMBOR was operating to the northeastward of Miyake Shima while the GREENLING was operating between Omai Zaki and Kozu Shima.

Except for the sighting during the day (a) by the GREENLING, of one enemy plane and three small sailing fishing boats, and (b) by the TAMBOR, of three enemy planes and five patrol vessels in four separate contacts, neither the TAMBOR nor the GREENLING made any contacts of importance during the day.\*\*\*\*

At 1746 the TAMBOR surfaced and headed for a new patrol station between Mikura Shima and Zeni Su.

WHY, IN CHOOSING A NEW SECTION OF HIS AREA IN WHICH TO OPERATE, THE COMMANDING OFFICER TAMBOR CHOSE THIS SECTION IS NOT UNDERSTOOD FOR, AS POINTED OUT IN VOLUME I,\*\*\*\*\* TO ADEQUATELY GUARD THE APPROACHES TO TOKYO BAY REQUIRED A MINIMUM OF THREE SUBMARINES; I.E., TWO TO THE EASTWARD OF O SHIMA, AND ONE TO THE WESTWARD. CERTAINLY, THE TAMBOR, IN THIS NEW STATION, WOULD BE EVEN LESS ABLE ADEQUATELY TO GUARD THE EASTERN APPROACHES TO TOKYO BAY THAN SHE WAS IN HER PRESENT STATION TO THE NORTHEASTWARD OF MIYAKE SHIMA. SINCE THE COMMENTS MADE IN VOLUME II, RELATING TO THE INADEQUACY OF THE TAMBOR STATION OFF MIYAKE SHIMA, AS WELL AS THE GREENLING'S STATION BETWEEN OMAI ZAKI AND KOZU SHIMA, APPLY EVEN MORE FORCIBLY TO THE TAMBOR'S NEW STATION, THEY ARE REPEATED HERE: "WHY THEY CHOSE THESE POOR

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\* War Patrol Report GABILAN, Report of 3RD War Patrol, Serial 031, November 13th, 1944.

\*\* Volume II, Battle for Leyte Gulf (NavPers 92194), Naval War College, 1955, Chapter V, (B)(2)(f)(1).

\*\*\* Deck Logs GREENLING and TAMBOR, October 20th, 1944.

\*\*\*\* War Patrol Report GREENLING, Report of 11TH War Patrol, No Serial, November 23rd, 1944; also War Patrol Report TAMBOR, Report of 12TH War Patrol, Serial 08019, November 30th, 1944.

\*\*\*\*\* Volume I, Battle for Leyte Gulf (NavPers 91973), Naval War College, 1953, Chapter II (e)(3)(b)(2)(f)(3).

STATIONS IS NOT KNOWN SINCE THEY HAD BEEN ORDERED TO OPERATE IN WATERS 100 FATHOMS OR GREATER AND IF NECESSARY TO PURSUE THE ENEMY INTO SHALLOW WATER. THEY HAD BEEN FURTHER ORDERED, IN THEIR GENERAL INSTRUCTIONS, THAT, WHERE THE ENEMY WAS TAKING ADVANTAGE OF THE SHALLOW WATERS CLOSE TO THE COAST, THEIR PATROLS SHOULD BE CONDUCTED CLOSE INSHORE AT COASTAL FOCAL POINTS. THE ENEMY WAS OPERATING IN THIS FASHION IN THIS AREA; THEREFORE, SHOULD NOT THE TAMBOR HAVE BEEN OPERATING IN THE WATERS EAST OF O SHIMA AS DID HER IMMEDIATE PREDECESSOR, THE SEA DEVIL, AND SHOULD NOT THE GREENLING HAVE BEEN OPERATING TO THE WESTWARD OF O SHIMA?"\*

At 2400 the GREENLING was bearing 223°(T), distant forty miles from O Shima and the TAMBOR was bearing 171°(T), distant fifty-five miles from O Shima.

(C) China - Burma - India Theater, October 20th.

(1) Operations of C.G. FOURTEENTH Air Force.

On this day C.G. FOURTEENTH Air Force, because of adverse weather and a temporary fuel shortage, curtailed the search operations in support of KING II.

At 0229 he advised COMTHIRDFLT, COMSEVENTHFLT and COMSOWESPAC via COMNAVGRPCHINA that his search planes then in the air were making their coverage 200 miles short and that the next flight, scheduled for daylight that day (October 20th), due to a temporary fuel shortage,\*\* had been cancelled. As a matter of fact, the night search planes in flight at this time had not been able to proceed even to the outer limit of the reduced coverage because of bad weather and had turned back about 0000 (Diagram B) to return to their base at Liuchow, landing there at 0300.\*\*\*

THE CURTAILMENT OF THE FOURTEENTH AIR FORCE SEARCHES CAME AT A MOST CRITICAL TIME--D-DAY AT LEYTE. THE ALLIED COMMANDERS INVOLVED IN KING II WERE QUITE ANXIOUS TO OBTAIN FROM THESE SEARCHES FURTHER INFORMATION OF THE TWO ENEMY NAVAL TASK FORCES THAT HAD BEEN REPORTED THE DAY BEFORE, VIZ., (A) FOUR HEAVY CRUISERS AND FIVE DESTROYERS SIGHTED BY THE TRIGGER AT 1400 OFF NORTHERN FORMOSA HEADING INTO THE SOUTH CHINA SEA\*\*\*\* AND (B) ONE CARRIER, TWO CRUISERS AND THREE DESTROYERS SIGHTED AT 1405 BY A CHINA-BASED SEARCH

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\* Volume II, Battle for Leyte Gulf (NavPers 92194), Naval War College, 1955, Chapter I, (b)(2)(f)(2).

\*\* COMNAVGRPCHINA Dispatch 191729 October 1944 to COM3RDFLT, info COMSOWESPAC, COM7THFLT, etc.

\*\*\* "AAF Operations from China Bases in Support of the Leyte Campaign", letter from Historical Division, Air University Library, USAF Air University, Maxwell AFB, Alabama, to President, Naval War College, November 8th, 1950.

\*\*\*\* TRIGGER Dispatch 190715 October 1944 to COMSUBPAC, info COM3RDFLT.



PLANE 120 MILES SOUTHEAST OF HAINAN ISLAND.\* HOWEVER, C.G. FOURTEENTH AIR FORCE HAD MORE PRESSING PROBLEMS OF HIS OWN FOR, AT THIS VERY TIME, THE JAPANESE GROUND OFFENSIVE TOWARD SOUTHEAST CHINA WAS GAINING MOMENTUM AND HE HAD TO DEVOTE WHAT LIMITED FUEL HE HAD TO HIS PRIMARY TASK OF SUPPORTING ALLIED TROOPS IN CHINA.

Despite the curtailment of the searches for the night of October 19th/20th, the following contacts were made:\*\*

(a) By the plane on the east course--at 0015, five ships (two large) heading east or west, Latitude 20° - 14'N, Longitude 111° - 31'E;

(b) By the plane on the west course--at 0124, five large ships heading east at thirteen knots, Latitude 18° - 42'N, Longitude 113° - 15'E.

Sometime before 0800 C.G. FOURTEENTH Air Force received a dispatch from CINCPAC, quoted in full under "Operations of COMTHIRDFLT, October 20th", stating, in part, that the FOURTEENTH Air Force searches should be maintained until COMSOWESPAC deemed them no longer necessary.\*\*\*

He now re-estimated the situation and decided that he had sufficient gasoline to continue the searches. Therefore, since the weather had cleared, he continued the day searches as originally scheduled. What caused him to change his mind is not known. Perhaps he had received additional gasoline; perhaps, in view of CINCPAC's request, he had re-allocated his available gasoline.

During the forenoon he appears to have advised COMNAVGRPCHINA that the gasoline difficulties had been overcome and that "full search has been made and will continue to be made until orders (sic) are received from COMSOWESPAC to cease", for at 1256 that commander so advised COMSOWESPAC.\*\*\*\*

The day searches made no contacts of importance.\*\*

The night searches departed their base at about 2000, and, at 2400 each of the two search planes was slightly beyond the middle of the outbound leg of its respective sector (Diagram B).

The plane on the west course by midnight had made three contacts as follows:

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\* CINCPAC Dispatch 190726 (re-encipherment of COMNAVGRPCHINA 190558) October 1944 to COMSOWESPAC, CTF 77, COM3RDFLT, all TFC's 3RD and 7TH Fleets.

\*\* "AAF Operations from China Bases in Support of the Leyte Campaign", letter from Historical Division, Air University Library, USAF Air University, Maxwell AFB, Alabama, to President, Naval War College, November 8th, 1950.

\*\*\* CINCPAC Dispatch 191930 October 1944 to COMNAVGRPCHINA.

\*\*\*\* COMNAVGRPCHINA Dispatch 200356 October 1944 to COMSOWESPAC, info CINCPAC, COM3RDFLT.

- (a) At 2148, eight ships, Latitude 20° - 40'N, Longitude 111° - 20'E.
- (b) At 2215, one ship, Latitude 18° - 45'N, Longitude 111° - 35'E.
- (c) At 2231, ten ships (four or five large), Latitude 18° - 25'N, Longitude 111° - 31'E.

The plane on the east course made no contacts.

It is evident that neither C.G. FOURTEENTH Air Force nor COMNAVGRP-CHINA attached much significance to the contacts received on this day since, except for the 0124 contact, the information was not relayed to CINCPAC, COMTHIRDFLT or COMSEVENTHFLT. The 0124 contact, because it was important information for submarines, was transmitted at 0216 and, for some unknown reason was given by COMNAVGRPCHINA a contact time of 2250 October 19th\* rather than 0124 October 20th. The above contacts were apparently evaluated correctly as coastal convoys. Japanese records available to this study do not indicate that there were any enemy naval surface forces in the area at this time.

In addition to the above, C.G. FOURTEENTH Air Force also reported that on this day one of his armed snoopers (LAB-24) had located two convoys, one of eleven ships and one of six, but, unfortunately, he failed to give the location possibly because his radar had failed and he had jettisoned his bombs.\*\*

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\* COMNAVGRPCHINA Dispatch 191716 October 1944 to CINCPAC, COMSUBPAC.

\*\* "AAF Operations from China Bases in Support of the Leyte Campaign", letter from Historical Division, Air University Library, USAF Air University, Maxwell AFB, Alabama, to President, Naval War College, November 8th, 1950.



October 20th

CONFIDENTIAL

CHAPTER II - JAPANESE OPERATIONS, October 20th

## (A) Operations of CinC Combined Fleet.

Owing to the continuance of the bad weather which had forced him to stop at Omura on the evening of October 18th and to remain there throughout October 19th, CinC Combined Fleet was unable to depart for Hiyoshi throughout the night of October 19th - 20th. He therefore remained at Omura.

At about 0051 he received Commander Mobile Force's dispatch to the Mobile Force wherein that commander directed in detail the employment of the Mobile Force in the SHO Operation once the SECOND Striking Force had been returned to the Mobile Force. In this dispatch Commander Mobile Force stated that the SECOND Striking Force was to advance to the area east of Luzon Strait, where it was to operate in conjunction with the Main Force in order to divert to the north enemy task forces from the area east of the Philippines and thereby contribute to the success of the penetration operation of the FIRST Striking Force. In furtherance of this thought he directed, in part, that (a) the Main Force was to advance to the area northeast of the Philippines by X-1 or X-2 and launch an air attack, (b) the SECOND Striking Force was to advance to the area east of Luzon Strait by X-2 where it was to divert the enemy (resorting to radio deception) thereby contributing to the success of the Main Force's flank attack from the north, (c) both forces were to enter into decisive battle with a part of the enemy forces should a favorable opportunity arise and (d) CARDIV FOUR, together with DESDIV's FORTY-ONE and SIXTY-ONE, was to be assigned to the SECOND Striking Force to conduct a decisive engagement with enemy surface forces.\*

Since this dispatch (a) conformed in general to the SHO Plan, and (b) provided not only a lure (by the SECOND Striking Force) but also an air strike (by the Main Force) which was more than had been visualized by CofS Combined Fleet on October 18th, it seems likely that he was satisfied with it.

During the early morning he seriously considered the views of the CofS SW Area Force concerning the employment of CRUDIV TWENTY-ONE and DESRON ONE which had been forwarded by dispatch just before midnight. In this dispatch the CofS SW Area Force had stated that, since (a) there were only limited army forces to be moved at this time and (b) these could be readily handled by other forces (CRUDIV SIXTEEN and two transports, screened by two destroyers as a direct screen), he had no objection to the employment of CRUDIV TWENTY-ONE and DESRON ONE, less the above two destroyers, in support of the FIRST Striking Force or the Main Force.\*\*

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\* Commander Mobile Force Dispatch 200021 October 1944 to Mobile Force (Mobile Force DesOpOrd No. 62), Detailed Action Report Main Force, SHO No. 1 Operation, October 20th - 29th, 1944, WDC Document 161005, NA 11744.

\*\* CofS SW Area Force Dispatch 192230 October 1944 to CinC Combined Fleet, Detailed Action Report CRUDIV 16, SHO Operation, October 17th - 27th, 1944, WDC Document 161005, NA 11744.

Since he (a) was apparently still hopeful that the army would decide to defend Leyte with maximum ground forces despite the disagreements of the previous evening, (b) did not desire to remove the SECOND Striking Force from counterlanding operations until the matter had been finally settled, and (c) sensed from the above dispatch a reluctance to employ the entire SECOND Striking Force in such counterlanding operations, he decided that it would be well to put an end to the indecision in this matter at least for the present and therefore advised Commander SW Area Force in substance as follows: "Commander SW Area Force, after consultations with FOURTEENTH Area Army, will have the SECOND Striking Force carry out counterlanding operations as speedily as possible."\*

Sometime during the early morning he received Commander SIXTH Base Air Force's dispatch giving the essentials of his attack organization and making provisions for an expected 330 aircraft to be moved to the Philippines.\*\*

It seems probable that, shortly after dawn, the Japanese High Command in Tokyo and Hiyoshi, and possibly CinC Combined Fleet at Omura, learned that the main Allied landing in Leyte Gulf would occur presently because the Allied amphibious forces, which had been observed on the previous day approaching the Leyte area, had arrived off the Dulag - Tacloban area during the night, and therefore great numbers of ships of all types could be seen from the shore or from the air. This would be so alarming as to require a special report from that area. Whether or not such a report was made is not known but it is assumed that it was, for Imperial General Headquarters (Army Section) received an erroneous report that at 0610 the Allies had landed at Tacloban. That this report was incorrect was, of course, unknown to Imperial General Headquarters.\*\*\*

This must have been disheartening to CinC Combined Fleet because he knew that the prospect of making the penetration operation effective at the time of landing, as called for in his SHO One Plan, had collapsed. In fact, it was plain that the Allies would have five days in which to establish their beachhead, land their reserve troops and stores, and retire their empty

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\* Combined Fleet DesOpOrd No. 362. This dispatch is not available to this study in its original form but the above is the best opinion as to its composition. (Letter from Captain Toshikazu Ohmae, ex-IJN, formerly Senior Staff Officer Mobile Force to Mr. Clarke Kawakami, World War II Battle Evaluation Group, Naval War College, undated, but received Washington, D.C., April 13th, 1953).

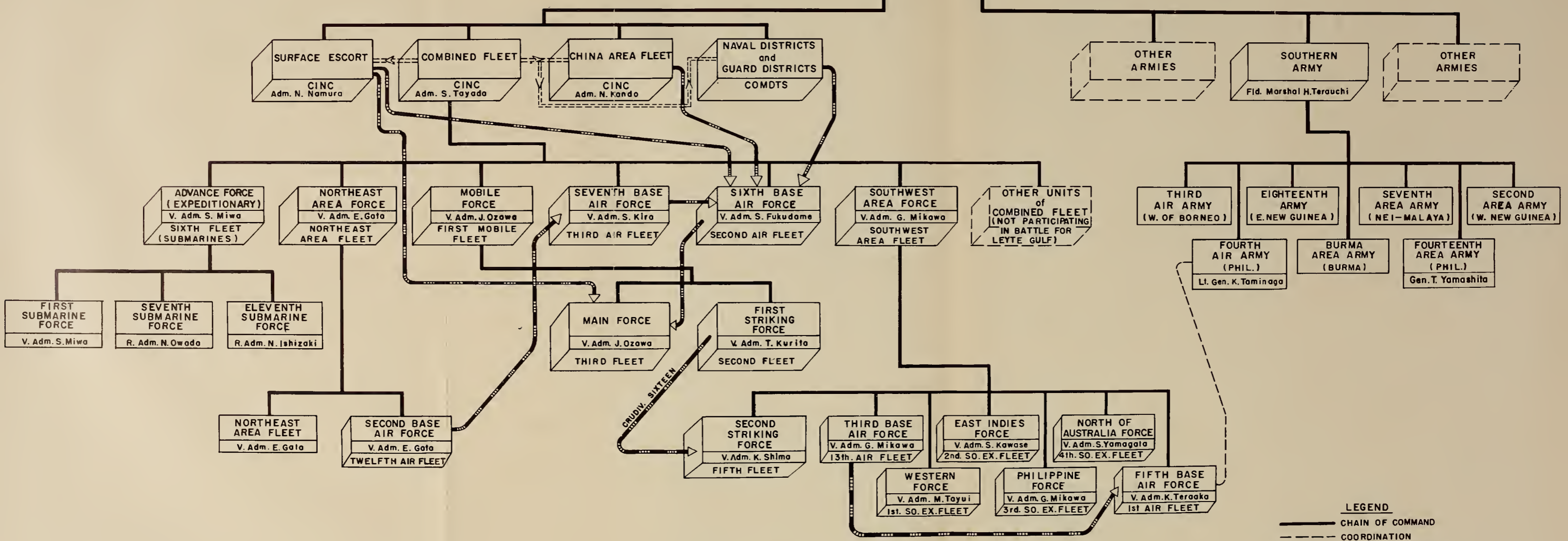
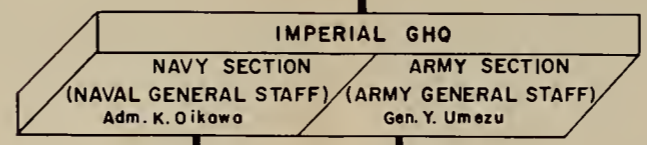
\*\* Commander 6TH Base Air Force Dispatch 200002 October 1944 to 6TH Base Air Force, (6TH Base Air Force DesOpOrd No. 83), War Diary 103RD Attack Unit, 701ST Air Group, (Kokubu Detachment), October 13th - 31st, 1944, WDC Document 160258, NA 12592.

\*\*\* Daily Record of the War Situation, 4TH Air Army, October 20th, 1944, GHQ, FEC, Special Historical Collection, Supporting Documents to General of the Army Douglas MacArthur's Historical Report on Allied Operations in the Southwest Pacific Area (Item 4, Footlocker 10 of 10, SWPA Series, Volume II).



JAPANESE COMMAND RELATIONS  
181101 - 201802 OCTOBER 1944

BATTLE FOR LEYTE GULF  
OCTOBER 1944



**LEGEND**  
 — CHAIN OF COMMAND  
 - - - COORDINATION  
 ——— MOVEMENT OF FORCES  
 - - - - - OPERATIONAL CONTROL





transports and cargo ships to Manus, Hollandia, Kossol Passage, etc. He was, of course, not surprised by this landing for, as early as 1201 October 17th, he had assumed that the Allies would land in the Leyte - Samar area and had endeavored to set X-day as October 22nd,\* and at 1110 October 18th he had issued a tentative outline of future operations based on a possible landing in the Tacloban area and tentatively had set X-day as October 24th.\*\* Now he would be forced finally by circumstances beyond his control to defer X-day until October 25th.\*\*\*

During the early forenoon, and possibly before he departed for Hiyoshi, he received word of Allied air strikes on various central Philippine bases. It is likely that the number of attacking planes reported to him was far below actuality, for naval intelligence estimates for this day record a total of only fifty aircraft attacking the central Philippines.\*\*\*\* This number is considerably below the number reported by C.G. FOURTH Air Army (310 planes) \*\*\*\*\* and actually the Allies (carrier-based) struck the Philippines with 246 planes from TF 38 and 305 planes from TG 77.4 or a total of 551 planes. In addition, there were a number (exact number not known) of air strikes by B-25's, P-38's and P-47's on Cebu, Mindanao, Negros and Mindoro. These latter strikes are discussed under "Operations of CAAF SOWESPAC, October 20th".

The weather had now cleared sufficiently for his plane to take off, so sometime between 0700 and 0800 he departed for Hiyoshi which was about 530 miles away. He was very anxious now to return to his headquarters as soon as possible (he had been absent for about twenty days)\*\*\*\*\* for it was clear that an invasion in strength in the Leyte area was underway and he knew that

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- \* CofS Combined Fleet Dispatch 171201 October 1944 to Commanders Mobile Force, 1ST Striking Force, etc., Detailed Action Report HYUGA, SHO Operations, October 20th-29th, 1944, WDC Document 161006, NA 12604.
  - \*\* CofS Combined Fleet Dispatch 181110 October 1944 to CsofS Mobile Force, 1ST Striking Force, etc., Detailed Action Report 1ST Striking Force SHO Operation, October 16th-28th, 1944, WDC Document 161641, NA 11839.
  - \*\*\* CinC Combined Fleet Dispatch 200813 October 1944 to Combined Fleet, CinC Southern Army, Imperial GHQ, China Area Fleet, etc., (Combined Fleet DesOpOrd No. 363), Battle Summary of 1ST Striking Force in Operation SHO, WDC Document 161641, NA 11839.
  - \*\*\*\* Material for Situation Estimates, 1ST Section, Naval General Staff, October 1944, WDC Document 216764 (Microfilm), Page 7.
  - \*\*\*\*\* Daily Record of the War Situation, 4TH Air Army, GHQ, FEC, Special Historical Collection, Supporting Documents to General of the Army Douglas MacArthur's Historical Report on Allied Operations in the Southwest Pacific Area (Item 4, Footlocker 10 of 10, SWPA Series, Volume II), Page 5.
  - \*\*\*\*\* Admiral Soemu Toyoda, ex-IJN, "The End of the Imperial Navy" (Tokyo, April 1950), Pages 149 - 154.

only a tentative overall plan had been issued as yet by his headquarters. He realized that time was of the essence as his own forces were now, or were soon to be, underway. In this connection, he knew that (a) the FIRST Striking Force was due to arrive at Brunei that morning for fuel, (b) the SECOND Striking Force was due to arrive at Mako that morning also for fuel, and (c) the Main Force was due to sortie from the Inland Sea that afternoon.\* It was therefore very important that he issue his final outline plan at once in order that any misunderstandings or questions could be discussed readily through shore-based communications.

In addition, he wished to be in position to direct other counteraction by the Combined Fleet. He, of course, realized that during the flight to Hiyoshi, which would require about four hours, he would be out of contact with the developing situation but he obviously felt that this handicap would have to be accepted.

About this time the Chief of the Naval General Staff, and through him the Chief of Staff Combined Fleet, was advised by the Chief of the Army General Staff that the army had decided to defend Leyte with all of the ground forces which could be brought into the area in a manner similar to that which had been originally planned for Luzon.\*\* Since this reversal of the army's position was of great importance to the navy and completely supported the navy's position, it is of interest to follow the sequence of events within the Army General Staff which led to the change.

During the morning of this day (October 20th) the Chief of the Army General Staff was advised of the negative results obtained by his representatives at the meeting with the naval representatives the preceding evening. It will be recalled that at this meeting the navy had refused the army request that the navy conserve its strength and refrain from executing the penetration operation in defense of Leyte. When the Chief of the Army General Staff learned of the navy's determined attitude, he expressed the following view:

"IF THE COMBINED FLEET WERE TO SUFFER DEFEAT, THE CONSEQUENCES WOULD INDEED BE SERIOUS. HOWEVER, SINCE THIS MATTER IS UP TO THE NAVY AND SINCE NAVY MINISTER YONAI\*\*\* HAS ALREADY APPROVED IT, THERE IS NO GROUND FOR THE ARMY TO PUT UP ANY FURTHER OPPOSITION. LET US REFRAIN, THEREFORE, FROM VOICING ANY FURTHER DISAGREEMENT."\*\*

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\* Material for Situation Estimates, 1ST Section, Naval General Staff, October 1944, WDC Document 216764 (Microfilm).

\*\* Letter from Captain Toshikazu Ohmae, ex-IJN, formerly Senior Staff Officer Mobile Force to Mr. Clarke Kawakami, World War II Battle Evaluation Group, Naval War College, undated, but received Washington, D.C. April 13th, 1953.

\*\*\* Admiral Mitsumasa Yonai, IJN.



SOON AFTER MAKING THIS STATEMENT THE CHIEF OF THE ARMY GENERAL STAFF RECONSIDERED THE ARMY'S POSITION AND DECIDED TO DEFEND LEYTE WITH ALL GROUND FORCES WHICH COULD BE BROUGHT TO THE AREA. HE ADVISED CINC SOUTHERN ARMY OF THIS DECISION BY DISPATCH AND SENT A LIAISON GROUP FROM THE ARMY GENERAL STAFF TO CONVEY THIS DECISION TO CINC SOUTHERN ARMY AND TO BE AVAILABE FOR CONFERENCES WITH THAT COMMANDER AND HIS STAFF.\*

CinC Southern Army did not issue any instructions immediately to make this decision effective within his command but instead commenced preparing his plan. In doing so he consulted Headquarters FOURTEENTH Area Army and advised that headquarters of the decision to defend Leyte with maximum ground forces.\*

In making this decision Japanese Army histories indicate that the Chief of the Army General Staff was motivated by the following considerations:

(1) He believed that since the main part of the enemy carrier strength had been destroyed during the Battle off Formosa,\*\* the Allies were attacking with badly crippled carrier air power which could not be as readily replaced as could Japanese land-based air power, and therefore, would require support from Allied land-based air which was not available in any strength since the Palaus and Morotai were a little too distant.\*

(2) He considered that the army air operations had been successful in the early stages of the Allied landing operations (October 17th - 20th).\*\*

(3) He considered, that owing to the loss of Japanese naval air power in the Battle off Formosa, (a) army air power would have to bear the brunt of the air defense; and (b) this air power, although not too adequate, was sufficient in both quality and quantity to defeat the enemy's landing operations.\*

(4) He considered, that owing to the above, the mobility of the Japanese ground forces in the central and southern Philippines areas was now considered to have been greatly increased and that it would be possible to carry out decisive battle in those areas.\*

However, despite the Japanese Army histories, these reasons are not believed to have been the motivating ones at all but instead seem more likely to have been considerations advanced much later and possibly postwar because:

(a) (1) By evening of October 16th the Japanese had sighted thirteen carriers. These carriers were not considered to have been seriously damaged for the Chief of Staff Combined Fleet advised the Combined Fleet in part that "the remaining enemy strength is relatively large. It is, therefore, not impossible that the enemy will continue to operate within range of our base

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\* Colonel Takushiro Hattori, ex-IJA, "History of the Greater East Asia War, Volume II, Tokyo, June 1953.

\*\* Imperial GHQ High Command Record, Mid-1941 to August 1945, GHQ, FEC, Military History Section, Japanese Research Division, Japanese Monograph No. 45.

air forces in order to assist his damaged ships or that he may actively resume the offensive..."\* This dispatch, as pointed out in Volume I, showed that the Chief of Staff at Hiyoshi as well as CinC Combined Fleet in Takao, who sent out a message similar in content,\*\* were familiar with the fact that their air forces had not succeeded in damaging effectively the Allied carrier force.

(2) Between 1600 October 15th and 2400 October 19th the Japanese had not attacked the Allied carrier force and, therefore, that force had been enabled to rest, to repair damage, and to receive reinforcements without interruption.

(3) By evening of the 19th the Japanese High Command, both army and navy, knew that large numbers of Allied carriers had been either sighted by Japanese planes off the Philippines (sixteen carriers and five escort carriers, a total of twenty-one carriers)\*\*\* or reported there by other intelligence sources (twenty-eight large carriers, fourteen small carriers, forty escort carriers, a total of eighty-two carriers).\*\*\*\* Therefore, since even the smaller number of twenty-one carriers was far in excess of anything expected at this time, it should have been clear to the Army General Staff that the Allies had lost few, if any, carriers in the Battle off Formosa and that the Navy claims of sinkings and of damage inflicted were vastly exaggerated, if not completely in error. This concept would have been supported by the large number of Allied carrier sorties against the Philippines on October 19th, i.e., 720 planes reported to Imperial General Headquarters (Army Section) by C.G. FOURTH Air Army,\*\*\*\* since this was a larger number of planes than had been reported in the day by day strikes on Formosa (600 planes).\*\*\*\*\*

(4) FROM THE ABOVE IT SEEMS CLEAR THAT IF THE NAVAL HIGH COMMAND ON OCTOBER 16TH WAS CONCERNED OVER THE LARGE NUMBER OF ALLIED CARRIERS SIGHTED THAT DAY AND WAS FORCED TO THE CONCLUSION THAT THEY WERE QUITE CAPABLE OF RESUMING THE OFFENSIVE HOW MUCH MORE CONCERNED MUST IMPERIAL GENERAL HEADQUARTERS (ARMY AND NAVY SECTIONS) HAVE BEEN WHEN THE INTELLIGENCE REPORTS

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- \* Philippine Area Naval Operations, Part II, October - December 1944, 2ND Demobilization Bureau, Japanese Government, October 1947, Department of the Army, Historical Division File No. 8-5, JS-104.
- \*\* CinC Combined Fleet Dispatch 161209 October 1944 to Commanders 5TH and 6TH Base Air Force, etc., (Combined Fleet Special DesOpOrd No. 11), War Diary DESRON 1, October 1944, WDC Document 161638, NA 11739.
- \*\*\* Commander 5TH Base Air Force Dispatch 191336 October 1944 to 5TH Base Air Force Battle Report Addressees, War Diary 103RD Attack Unit, (701ST Air Group), October 1944, WDC Document 160258, NA 12592.
- \*\*\*\* Daily Record of the War Situation, 4TH Air Army, GHQ, FEC, Special Historical Collection, Supporting Documents to General of the Army Douglas MacArthur's Historical Report on Allied Operations in the Southwest Pacific Area (Item 4, Footlocker 10 of 10, SWPA Series, Volume II).
- \*\*\*\*\* Material for Situation Estimates, 1ST Section, Naval General Staff, October 1944, WDC Document 216764 (Microfilm).



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INDICATED IN PARAGRAPH (a) (3) ABOVE WERE RECEIVED. DO NOT THESE REPORTS INDICATE CLEARLY "LARGE NUMBERS OF UNDAMAGED CARRIERS"? HOW, THEN, COULD THE IMPERIAL GENERAL HEADQUARTERS (ARMY SECTION) STATE THAT THE ALLIES WERE ATTACKING WITH BADLY CRIPPLED AIR POWER?\*

(b) THE NUMBER OF JAPANESE PLANES, BOTH ARMY AND NAVY, OPERATIONAL WITHIN THE PHILIPPINES AREA WAS SMALL, AND ONLY A FEW AIR STRIKES HAD BEEN MADE. HOW, THEN, COULD THE CHIEF OF THE ARMY GENERAL STAFF HAVE CONSIDERED THAT HIS AIR STRIKES FROM OCTOBER 17TH TO OCTOBER 20TH HAD BEEN SUCCESSFUL ENOUGH TO WARRANT OPTIMISM?

(c) THE FOURTH AIR ARMY AT THIS TIME NUMBERED BUT FIFTY-FIVE OPERATIONAL PLANES IN THE PHILIPPINES,\*\* AND EVEN WITH THE SUPPORT OF THE FIFTH BASE AIR FORCE, WHICH NUMBERED ROUGHLY FORTY PLANES, WAS UNABLE TO BEAR THE BRUNT OF ALLIED AIR ATTACK. IT IS REALIZED, OF COURSE, THAT THE JAPANESE WERE MAKING PLANS TO AUGMENT THE FOURTH AIR ARMY BUT, SINCE ALLIED SHIPPING IN GREAT STRENGTH HAD BEEN OBSERVED CLOSING LEYTE GULF ON THE PREVIOUS DAY, AND SINCE THE ARMY AIR FORCE (EIGHTH AIR DIVISION) IN FORMOSA HAD LOST MOST OF ITS OPERATIONAL STRENGTH, IT SHOULD HAVE BEEN CLEAR TO THE ARMY GENERAL STAFF THAT THEY COULD NOT PROVIDE ADEQUATE AIR STRENGTH FROM OTHER SOURCES IN TIME TO COUNTER THE AIR STRENGTH THAT WAS AVAILABLE IN THE ALLIED CARRIERS.

THE REAL REASONS FOR ACCEPTING THE NAVY'S POINT OF VIEW AT THIS LATE DATE APPEAR TO HAVE BEEN THE BELATED RECOGNITION BY IMPERIAL GENERAL HEADQUARTERS (ARMY SECTION) (A) OF THE FACT THAT, IN THE LIGHT OF THE CONTACTS ON THE PREVIOUS DAY WHICH HAD DISCLOSED ALLIED FORCES IN GREAT STRENGTH APPROACHING LEYTE, THE JAPANESE CLAIMS OF CARRIER SINKINGS WERE GROSSLY EXAGGERATED, AND (B) OF THE TRUE STRATEGIC SITUATION WHICH WOULD OBTAIN IN THE PHILIPPINES ONCE ALLIED LAND-BASED AIR POWER HAD BEEN ESTABLISHED IN THE VISAYAS. THE CHARACTER OF THE APPROACHING ALLIED FORCES INDICATED THAT SUCH LAND-BASED AIR POWER WOULD SOON BE ESTABLISHED UNLESS IMMEDIATE AND MAXIMUM ACTION WAS TAKEN BY THE ARMY GROUND TROOPS IN SUPPORT OF THE ALL-OUT EFFORT BY THE NAVY AND THE ARMY AIR FORCES.

IMPERIAL GENERAL HEADQUARTERS (ARMY SECTION) REALIZED THAT, ONCE THE ALLIES HAD MASSED BOTH LAND-BASED AND CARRIER-BASED AIR STRENGTH FOR ANY SUBSEQUENT BATTLE IN THE PHILIPPINES, ALLIED AIR SUPREMACY WOULD BE ASSURED AND IT WOULD THEREFORE BE IMPOSSIBLE TO FIGHT A SUCCESSFUL DECISIVE BATTLE ON LUZON. THE SOUTHERN ARMY STAFF HAD REACHED THIS CONCLUSION IN LATE SEPTEMBER AFTER SEEING THE DEADLY EFFECTIVENESS OF ALLIED AIR ATTACKS IN THE CENTRAL AND

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\* Either because the correct information had not as yet (a) reached them, or (b) been released to them by Tokyo, it seems quite likely that many of the generals in the Philippines believed the navy's claims concerning the sinkings of numerous Allied carriers. (Philippine Operation, The 14TH Area Army Command in Leyte, 1ST Demobilization Ministry, October 1946, Volume II, Phase 3).

\*\* Daily Record of the War Situation, 4TH Air Army, GHQ, FEC, Special Historical Collection, Supporting Documents to General of the Army Douglas MacArthur's Historical Report on Allied Operations in the Southwest Pacific Area (Item 4, Footlocker 10 of 10, SWPA Series, Volume II).



SOUTHERN PHILIPPINES BUT HAD NOT TRANSMITTED IT OFFICIALLY TO TOKYO.\*  
ALTHOUGH THE ARMY HIGH COMMAND HAD LONG BEEN AWARE THAT THE SOUTHERN ARMY STAFF HAD CONCLUDED THAT IT WAS UNREALISTIC TO PRESCRIBE A DECISIVE BATTLE AREA FOR THE GROUND FORCES SEPARATE FROM THAT DESIGNATED FOR THE SEA AND AIR FORCES, IT HAD BEEN UNTIL THIS DATE UNWILLING TO CHANGE THE ORIGINAL PLAN. WHEN C.G. FOURTEENTH AREA ARMY\*\* DEPARTED TOKYO IN EARLY OCTOBER TO TAKE COMMAND OF THAT ARMY IN MANILA HE HAD BEEN ADVISED BY THE ARMY HIGH COMMAND THAT THE DECISIVE BATTLE FOR THE PHILIPPINES WOULD BE WAGED ON LUZON.\*

It was therefore to be expected that the decision of the Chief of the Army General Staff to defend Leyte with maximum ground forces would not be satisfactory to C.G. FOURTEENTH Area Army who (a) continued to be of the opinion that the established policy to defend Luzon with the maximum ground strength and Leyte with only local forces should not be changed, and (b) strongly but unsuccessfully (he argued this matter for several days) urged that the original plan be retained, giving as his reasons:

(1) That from his knowledge of the sound manner in which the Allies had operated heretofore, he felt sure that they would not have appeared in one corner of the Philippines unless they were confident of their strength and of the completeness of their preparations. Therefore, whether or not the Japanese had succeeded in damaging the carriers in the Battle off Formosa was of little importance.

(2) That even if large forces were to be ordered transferred to Leyte it would be difficult to move them now because of the transport problem, the necessary operational preparations, and other related items; and

(3) That should, by any chance, the Leyte operation fail then the defense of Luzon would also fail because of the transfer of ground strength to Leyte.  
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THESE COMMENTS OF C.G. FOURTEENTH AREA ARMY, IN SO FAR AS ITEMS (1) AND (2) ABOVE ARE CONCERNED, SHOWED, IN GENERAL, A SOUND APPRECIATION OF ALLIED CAPABILITIES AND AN EQUALLY SOUND UNDERSTANDING OF ALLIED CONDUCT OF AMPHIBIOUS OPERATIONS. CERTAINLY (A) WHILE NOT PERHAPS TRUE AT THE TIME OF THE SEIZURE OF GUADALCANAL IN 1942, IT WAS IN FACT TRUE IN OCTOBER 1944, THAT THE ALLIES CONDUCTED THEIR OPERATIONS EXACTLY AS POINTED OUT IN PARAGRAPH (1) ABOVE—I.E., WITH STRENGTH, CONFIDENCE AND COMPLETENESS OF PREPARATIONS; AND (B) IT WOULD BE DIFFICULT TO MOVE GROUND TROOPS NOT ONLY BECAUSE OF THE LACK OF TRANSPORT BUT ALSO BECAUSE OF THE OPPOSITIONS TO BE EXPECTED FROM ALLIED NAVAL AND AIR FORCES.

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\* Statement by Lieutenant General Jo Iimura, ex-IJA, former CofS Southern Army, Semi-Final Galley of Chapter XII (Prelude to Decisive Battle), Volume II, SWPA Series, (Item 34, Footlocker 2 of 2, Supplementary Materials, Volume II), GHQ, FEC, Special Historical Collection, Supporting Documents to General of the Army Douglas MacArthur's Historical Report on Allied Operations in the Southwest Pacific Area, Pages 330-331.

\*\* General Tomoyuki Yamashita, IJA.

\*\*\* Colonel Takushiro Hattori, ex-IJA, "History of the Greater East Asia War," Volume III, Tokyo, June 1953.



Further, as regards item (2) (the lack of transport), a member of the staff of the FOURTEENTH Area Army stated later that the C.G. FOURTEENTH Area Army felt that (a) the primary obstacle to carrying out the defense of Leyte with maximum ground forces was the problem of transporting men and materials there, and (b) since he had no planes or ships under his command, it was too late to start the wheels moving to acquire the ships and planes necessary to reinforce Leyte. He felt that this was so because, in order to obtain (a) transports, it was necessary to make a request on Commander THIRD Shipping Headquarters in Manila who was responsible to Imperial General Headquarters in Tokyo and had little contact with C.G. FOURTEENTH Area Army, (b) air cover for the movement of the transports to Leyte, it was necessary to make a request on CinC Southern Army, and (c) escort shipping, it was necessary to make a request on Commander SW Area Force.\*

As regards the THIRD Shipping Headquarters, which was an army unit, the above was not exactly correct. Actually CinC Southern Army exercised limited operational control over these headquarters, and transportation requests of the FOURTEENTH Area Army were normally routed through him. However, for the amount of transportation required for an operation of the magnitude of the Leyte operation (the first request from C.G. FOURTEENTH Area Army, made on November 3rd, was for 150,000 gross tons),\*\* the request for shipping support would have to be routed through Imperial General Headquarters (Army Section) to the Shipping Command and thence to the THIRD Shipping Headquarters, which was under the Shipping Command.\*\*\*

THIS WOULD ENTAIL DELAYS BUT THESE DELAYS WERE UNAVOIDABLE BECAUSE "IN THE COMPLEX COMMAND STRUCTURE OF THE JAPANESE ARMY, COMMAND CHANNELS WERE RIGIDLY ADHERED TO AND A DIRECT APPROACH FROM THE FOURTEENTH AREA ARMY TO THE THIRD SHIPPING HEADQUARTERS WOULD NOT HAVE BEEN POSSIBLE EVEN THOUGH INFORMATION COPIES OF REQUESTS TO HIGHER HEADQUARTERS WOULD HAVE BEEN PASSED TO THE THIRD SHIPPING HEADQUARTERS. ALL ARMY SHIPPING WAS CONTROLLED BY THE SHIPPING COMMAND".\*\*\*

AS REGARDS ITEM (3) ABOVE, WHILE IT IS TRUE THAT SHOULD THE LEYTE OPERATION FAIL, THEN THE DEFENSE OF LUZON WOULD ALSO FAIL, IT IS NOT BELIEVED THAT THE REASONS GIVEN BY C.G. FOURTEENTH AREA ARMY--I.E., THE TRANSFER OF GROUND TROOPS TO LEYTE--WAS THE SOLE REASON. HERE C.G. FOURTEENTH AREA ARMY HAD CLOSED HIS MIND TO SEA AND AIR POWER AND WEIGHED HIS DEFENSE CAPABILITIES ON GROUND POWER ALONE.

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\* USSBS Interrogation No. 506, Major General Toshio Nishimura, Staff Officer of the 14TH Area Army at the time of the Leyte Campaign, Lieutenant Colonel Matsumae, Staff Officer of the 4TH Air Army, Commander Otani, Staff Officer of the 2ND Fleet.

\*\* Colonel Takushiro Hattori, ex-IJA, "History of the Greater East Asia War", Volume III, Tokyo, June 1953.

\*\*\* Statement regarding the Leyte Operation by Major General Toshio Nishimura, Staff Officer of the 14TH Area Army, December 16th, 1948, HQ, USAFFE/8A(Rear), Military History Office letter of December 1st, 1956 to President, Naval War College.

Meanwhile the Chief of Staff at Hiyoshi, decided that he could not wait the arrival of CinC Combined Fleet since time was precious and therefore, with the approval of the Naval General Staff, at 0813 issued the long-delayed over-all plan. Whether or not he communicated with CinC Combined Fleet at Omura is not known but since telephone, telegraph, and presumably radio facilities were available, it seems quite likely that he did so. This dispatch, in view of its importance, is quoted in full as follows:

- "1. The enemy, while carrying out a diversionary move in the Indian Ocean area with an element of his forces, is boldly landing with his main strength in the central Philippines.
- "2. The Combined Fleet, in cooperation with the Army, will employ its full strength to annihilate the enemy attacking the central Philippines.
- "3. The FIRST Striking Force will penetrate to the Tacloban area at dawn on October 25th, X-day, and after destroying enemy surface forces in the area, will annihilate his landing forces.
- "4. The Main Force, in cooperation with the penetration of the FIRST Striking Force, will maneuver in the area east of Luzon so as to divert the enemy to the north and, if a favorable opportunity arises, will attack and destroy him.
- "5. Commander Southwest Area Force will command all naval air forces concentrated in the Philippines and will cooperate with the penetration of the FIRST Striking Force by attacking and destroying the enemy carrier and invasion forces. He will also cooperate with the Army in order to effect speedy counter landings and destroy the enemy landing forces.
- "6. The SIXTH Base Air Force will advance to the Philippines where it will be under the command of Commander Southwest Area Force. With its main strength, it will launch an all-out offensive against the enemy task forces on October 24th, Y-day.
- "7. The Advance Expeditionary Force will continue to operate in accordance with previous orders.
- "8. Other forces involved in the SHO Operations will continue their present missions unless specifically ordered to do otherwise."\*

This final plan is of interest in that it is a modification not only of the basic SHO One Plan but also of the tentative plan issued by the Chief of

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\* CinC Combined Fleet Dispatch 200813 October 1944 to Combined Fleet, CinC Southern Army, Imperial GHQ, China Area Fleet, etc., (Combined Fleet DesOpOrd No. 363), War Diary BATDIV 1, October 1944, WDC Document 161638, NA 11739.



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Staff Combined Fleet two days earlier.\* The principal variations will now be commented on:

(a) This plan clearly shows that the Japanese High Command considered that the Allied operations off the Nicobar Islands were diversionary. There was no comment on these operations in the tentative plan.

(b) It set X-day for the first time as October 25th. This was done because it was not possible to make a dawn penetration on October 24th without refueling after leaving Brunei.

(c) (1) The basic SHO One Plan provided that the FIRST Striking Force would penetrate to the landing area (without specifying the route), and, after annihilating in decisive battle the Allied surface forces which opposed its entry into the landing area, would then attack and wipe out the enemy transports and their embarked troops at the landing point (beachhead).\*\*

(2) The tentative plan contemplated an advance through San Bernardino Strait and the annihilation of the enemy invasion force,\* which could and probably did mean the support force (SEVENTHFLT), the transports and the embarked troops.

(3) The final plan like the original SHO One Plan did not specify the route. It called for the destruction of all Allied surface forces in the area, after which the landing forces were to be destroyed.

THIS APPEARS TO HAVE BEEN THE CORRECT OBJECTIVE AND THE ORDER OF DESTRUCTION OF THE ALLIED SHIPPING; I.E., FIRST, SURFACE FORCES AND, SECOND; LANDING FORCES (TRANSPORTS), APPEARS CORRECT.

This seems so because, by the time the penetration operation becomes effective (October 25th), five days will have elapsed by which time most of the transports should have landed their forces and retired from the area and, therefore, the destruction of those transports remaining in the area is no longer of primary importance. This differs from the situation discussed under "Incorrect Objective" in Volume I,\*\*\* where, although the designated objectives for the FIRST Striking Force were exactly the same as in this final plan,

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\* CofS Combined Fleet Dispatch 181110 October 1944 to CsofS Major Commands Combined Fleet, Detailed Action Report 1ST Striking Force, SHO Operations October 16th - 28th, 1944, WDC Document 161641, NA 11839.

\*\* Commander Mobile Force Operation Order No. 76, August 10th, 1944, Chapter II, Concrete Operational Policy, Section A, Paragraph 1, ATIS Document No. 39, Part I, April 22nd, 1945 (NACHI Document).

\*\*\* Volume I, Battle for Leyte Gulf (NavPers 91973), Naval War College, 1953, Japanese Plan - Incorrect Objectives, Chapter III, Section (h).

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they were determined to be incorrect. In Volume I it was pointed out that the correct objective should have been the destruction of the Allied transports and embarked troops at the time of landing with Allied surface forces being engaged only as necessary to attack the transports. If successful, this would have effectively stopped the entire operation.

Of course, if CinC Combined Fleet, in preparing this final plan, continued to believe that the transports at this late date carried troops in strength then the comments of Volume I to the effect that the correct objective was properly the destruction of the Allied transports still obtained.

(d) (1) The basic SHO One Plan provided that, when an element or a major part of the SIXTH Base Air Force advanced to the Philippines, it would come under the command of Commander FIFTH Base Air Force,\* who on X-1 (Y-day), and X-day would make all-out attacks on the Allied carrier forces and on the Allied invasion forces.\*\*

(2) The tentative plan was not so specific as regards the operations in the Philippines area as was the final plan. The tentative plan merely stated that the full strength of the base air forces was to be concentrated in the Philippines and was to then wipe out the Allied carriers.\*\*\*

(3) The final plan placed the base air forces under Commander SW Area Force and directed that commander (a) to support the penetration operations of the FIRST Striking Force by destroying the Allied carriers and invasion forces, and (b) to cooperate with the army in order to effect speedy counter-landings and to destroy the Allied landing forces.

The final plan was designed to place all naval land-based aircraft in the Philippines under Commander SW Area Force. Previous directives did not define adequately this command relationship.

(e) (1) The basic SHO One Plan provided that when the main strength of the SIXTH Base Air Force advanced to the Philippines Commander SIXTH Base Air Force would have either unified command of all air operations in the Philippines or would operate in cooperation with Commander FIFTH Base Air Force.\*\*\*\*

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\* Army-Navy Central Agreement concerning SHO Air Operations concluded July 24th, 1944, Supplement to Imperial GHQ (Navy Section) Directive No. 435, July 26th, 1944, WDC Document 216769 (Microfilm).

\*\* Mobile Force Operations Order No. 76, August 10th, 1944, Chapter II, Concrete Operational Policy, Section A, Paragraph 1, ATIS Document No. 39, Part I, April 22nd, 1945 (NACHI Document).

\*\*\* CofS Combined Fleet Dispatch 181110 October 1944 to CsofS Major Commands Combined Fleet, Detailed Action Report 1ST Striking Force, SHO Operations, October 16th - 28th, 1944, WDC Document 161641, NA 11839.

\*\*\*\* 6TH Base Air Force OpOrd No. 6, File of 6TH Base Air Force Operation Orders and Supplemental Material obtained from Captain Bunzo Shibata, IJN, Senior Staff Officer, 6TH Base Air Force, GHQ, FEC, Military History Section Microfilm (unnumbered).



There all forces, in cooperation with the FOURTH Air Army, would launch attacks against Allied carriers and invasion forces\* as specified under (d) (1) above.

(2) The tentative plan, as pointed out above under (d) (2), provided for the concentration in the Philippines of the full strength of the base air forces, with the objective "the destruction of the enemy carriers".\*\*

(3) The final plan, in addition to directing an all-out attack on both Allied carriers and invasion forces on D-day, specifically directed that the SIXTH Base Air Force was to advance to the Philippines, was to report for duty to Commander SW Area Force and was to make an all-out attack against Allied carrier forces on October 24th, X-1 day.\*\*\*

THIS FINAL PLAN WAS ESSENTIALLY A RETURN TO THE BASIC SHO ONE PLAN. HOWEVER, BY SPECIFICALLY DESIGNATING THE SIXTH BASE AIR FORCE TO LAUNCH AN ALL-OUT ATTACK ON THE ENEMY CARRIER FORCE ON X-1 DAY, CINC COMBINED FLEET RETAINED THE EMPHASIS ON THE DESTRUCTION OF THE ALLIED CARRIER FORCE WHICH HE HAD INCLUDED IN HIS TENTATIVE PLAN TWO DAYS PREVIOUSLY. THE SIXTH BASE AIR FORCE, WHICH WAS EXPECTED TO HAVE ABOUT 330 PLANES, REPRESENTED THE MAJOR PORTION OF THE ANTICIPATED TOTAL JAPANESE AIR STRENGTH IN THE PHILIPPINES. HIS ASSIGNMENT OF THIS BASE AIR FORCE TO THIS CARRIER DESTRUCTION TASK INDICATES THAT HE WAS OF THE OPINION THAT WITH THE AIR BATTLE OFF FORMOSA LOST, HE WOULD HAVE TO ATTACK THE ALLIED CARRIER FORCE EFFECTIVELY PRIOR TO THE PENETRATION OPERATION OR THAT OPERATION WOULD MOST LIKELY FAIL. (CinC Combined Fleet's concept of the utilization of his air strength here expressed is considered of doubtful correctness. This concept is discussed more fully under "Operations of Commander SIXTH Base Air Force, October 21st" where its discussion is considered more appropriate).

In discussing the soundness of this plan, attention is invited to the discussion in Volume I of the modified SHO Plan as it stood at 0719 October 17th. Here it was pointed out that the difficulties of the execution of the plan were so great as to make it of doubtful feasibility. Among these difficulties were:

(a) The ability of the Main Force in the Inland Sea and the FIRST Striking Force at Lingga - Singapore to arrive in the objective area in sufficient time to permit their coordination at the time of the Allied landings continued to be very doubtful indeed, and if anything, owing to the reduction in the land-based air power and the carrier air power, had become even less possible.

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\* Army-Navy Central Agreement concerning SHO Air Operations concluded July 24th, 1944, Supplement to Imperial GHQ (Navy Section) Directive No. 435, July 26th, 1944, WDC Document 216769 (Microfilm).

\*\* CofS Combined Fleet Dispatch 181110 October 1944 to Major Commands Combined Fleet, Detailed Action Report 1ST Striking Force, SHO Operations, October 16th - 28th, 1944, WDC Document 161641, NA 11839.

\*\*\* CinC Combined Fleet Dispatch 200813 October 1944 to Combined Fleet, CinC Southern Army, Imperial GHQ, China Area Fleet, etc., (Combined Fleet DesOpOrd No. 363), War Diary BATDIV 1, October 1944, WDC Document 161638, NA 11739.



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(b) The ability of the land-based aircraft to maintain full-scale attacks upon the Allied carrier force, and the invasion force, had seriously lessened. The Japanese had lost about 965 of their best aircraft, divided as follows: SIXTH Base Air Force--584 (including about 100 planes of the EIGHTH Air Division), FIFTH Base Air Force--191, FOURTH Air Army--190. Moreover, many of their most experienced pilots had also been lost. They knew it was highly probable that, in view of the replacement program in effect within TF 38, the Allied carriers were in full strength in air power. They knew that, since their land-based air power had been so ineffective against TF 38, it stood little chance in its weakened and demoralized condition of being effective in the future until it had been reorganized and refitted. This would require considerable time.

(c) (1) The ability of the FIRST Striking Force to move from Lingga - Singapore to the objective area had been lessened since the ability of land-based air presently in the Philippines to provide it with proper air cover had been seriously reduced, if not made entirely ineffective. In fact, as has been pointed out previously, this ability had always been more of a concept than of a fact since Japanese communications at this time were such as to deny, in general, communications between land-based aircraft and ships. It was probably for this reason, in part, that Commander Mobile Force had recommended that the basic SHO Plan be changed to permit Commander FIRST Striking Force to have his own planes for air cover, and for offensive operations against the Allied amphibious forces at the point of landing.

(2) The ability of the FIRST Striking Force to accomplish its assigned objectives, even should it succeed in reaching the landing area, was open to serious question. The Japanese well knew at this time that strong support forces composed of battleships, cruisers and destroyers, supported by carrier air power, were employed by the Allies in landing operations. As has been pointed out earlier Commander FIRST Striking Force had been directed to destroy in decisive battle those surface support forces which opposed him after which he was to destroy the transports. This was admittedly a difficult assignment. However, if the Main Force failed to divert the Allied carrier force away from the objective area, it became more difficult since the FIRST Striking Force would then be opposed not only by the powerful Allied surface support forces but by the planes and ships of the carrier force as well. Its feasibility was open to serious question.\*

If this then was the situation concerning the feasibility of the modified SHO One Plan at 0719 October 17th, how much more was it so on October 20th? By 0000 October 20th the Japanese had learned of the (a) great strength of carrier-based air power and (b) strength of Allied amphibious forces approaching and in Leyte Gulf. In fact, as pointed out in Volume II,\*\*CinC Combined Fleet knew from contact and intelligence reports that the Allies had (a) in the Leyte area, six carriers, five escort carriers, ten battleships and a minimum of thirty cruisers and destroyers, and (b) off Lamon Bay (Luzon)

\* Volume I, Battle for Leyte Gulf (NavPers 91973), Naval War College, 1953, Modified SHO Plan 0719 October 17th, 1944, Chapter III, Section (h).

\*\* Volume II, Battle for Leyte Gulf (NavPers 92194), Naval War College, 1955, Operations of CinC Combined Fleet, October 19th, Chapter VI.



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ten carriers, five battleships and a minimum of two destroyers which was obviously erroneous since the carrier task groups would be screened by many more destroyers. Thus he knew that (a) in the Philippines area alone the Allies reportedly had sixteen carriers, five escort carriers, fifteen battleships and a minimum of thirty-five cruisers and destroyers, and (b) based on the assumption that eight carriers were large carriers (CV) with ninety-six planes, eight small carriers (CVL) with thirty-three planes and five escort carriers (CVE) with thirty planes, he would be opposed by approximately 1182 planes, manned by experienced pilots. He also knew that one hundred transports had been observed approaching Leyte Gulf and twenty had been observed in the gulf.

To oppose these forces in the Philippines area he had (a) in the FIRST Striking Force (including CRUDIV SIXTEEN still in company and including oiler escorts MICHISHIO and NOWAKI), seven battleships, thirty five cruisers and destroyers, (b) in the SECOND Striking Force (less CRUDIV SIXTEEN), three cruisers, seven destroyers, (c) in the Main Force, four carriers (the other five carriers were not ready for sea), two hermaphrodite battleships, and eleven cruisers and destroyers, or (d) a total of four carriers, seven battleships, two hermaphrodite battleships and fifty-six cruisers and destroyers.

He had in aircraft at least 104 in the Main Force carriers\* and a total of 545 in the FIFTH (forty planes) and SIXTH (505 planes) Base Air Forces; a total of 649 operational aircraft, which aircraft were manned in general by pilots of limited experience.

Thus the known Allied forces in the Philippine area were much stronger than the Japanese forces in and en route to the area. This was particularly so as regards air power. Therefore, as stated by COMBATDIV ONE on this day, "We, together with this strength (land-based air), are going to have to destroy the enemy. Our responsibility is indeed heavy."\*\*

It will be observed that the final SHO One Plan had been forced to discard the concept of attacking the Allied forces at the time of the assault landings. The new concept called for an attack on the Allied forces on the morning of the sixth day after the assault landings had been effected.

What effect, if any, did this five-day delay have on the overall concept of SHO One? To discuss this adequately, it seems necessary to return to the basic SHO Plan. As pointed out in Volume I, this plan had as its objective the prevention of an Allied landing through the destruction of the Allied invasion forces in the vicinity of the landing area.\*\*\* In other words, the

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\* Volume II, Battle for Leyte Gulf (NavPers 92194), Naval War College, 1955, Operations of Commander Mobile Force, October 19th, Chapter VI, Section (a) (1), Number of Aircraft Assigned.

\*\* Vice Admiral Matome Ugaki, IJN (COMBATDIV 1), Personal Diary, SENSOROKU, Nippon Shuppan Kyodo Kabushiki Kaisha, Tokyo, March 15th, 1953), Volume II.

\*\*\* Volume I, Battle for Leyte Gulf (NavPers 91973), Naval War College, 1953, Chapter III, Section (h), Japanese Plan.

objective was the denial of a foothold in the areas designated by the plan. In the case of the Leyte operation, it was the prevention of a landing on Leyte Island. In accomplishing this, the FIRST Striking Force was to penetrate to the landing area on D-day and was to destroy, first, the enemy surface forces opposing it, and, second, the Allied transports. Meanwhile, commencing on D-1 day the (a) Main Force was to divert the Allied carrier force away from the objective area, and (b) Japanese land-based aircraft were to initiate and maintain full scale attacks upon both the Allied carrier force and the Allied invasion force, and (c) the ground troops were to defend Leyte with the forces presently there or in the nearby areas.

Now as pointed out above the situation had changed. The penetration operations could not occur before October 25th, or the morning of the sixth day. Since Allied forces had been observed closing Leyte on the previous day (October 19th), it was likely that the Allied landings would have occurred—probably on this day, October 20th—and that by the sixth day, unless the army ground forces could defeat the Allied landing forces, the Allies would have already obtained a foothold—the very thing the basic SHO Plan was designed to prevent.

IF THIS IS SO, WHY, THEN, WERE THE ORDERS ISSUED TO EXECUTE THE PENETRATION OPERATION? THE ANSWER SEEMS CLEAR—BECAUSE IMPERIAL GENERAL HEADQUARTERS (NAVY SECTION) REALIZED, AS POINTED OUT IN VOLUME II, THAT, SHOULD THE ALLIES GAIN A FOOTHOLD ON LEYTE AND ESTABLISH AIRFIELDS THERE, PERMANENT COMMAND OF THE AIR OVER LEYTE WOULD AUTOMATICALLY FOLLOW SINCE JAPANESE LAND-BASED AIR POWER HAD PROVEN INEFFECTIVE. WITH THE LOSS OF COMMAND OF THE AIR AND WITH ALLIED SEAPOWER CONTROLLING THE SEA AREA AROUND THE PHILIPPINES AND THE SOUTH CHINA SEA WITHIN RANGE OF THE PHILIPPINE-BASED FIGHTER AIRCRAFT, THE FALL OF LUZON WOULD OCCUR IN DUE TIME OR LUZON MIGHT BE COMPLETELY BY-PASSED BY THE ALLIES.\* ALSO, IMPERIAL GENERAL HEADQUARTERS (NAVY SECTION) REALIZED THAT IF THE NAVY DID NOT TAKE THE OFFENSIVE NOW AND WIN A DECISIVE VICTORY THE WAR WOULD BE LOST BECAUSE THE SHORTAGE OF OIL WOULD FORCE THE FLEET BACK TO JAPANESE WATERS, THERE TO MEET THE FATE OF THE ITALIAN NAVY.\*\* This shortage of oil would result from the above mentioned control of the sea areas of the South China Sea which would cut the lines of communication between the Southern Resources Area (Southeast Asia, i.e., Malaya, Burma, Netherlands East Indies) and the Japanese main islands. As pointed out in Volume I, Chapter I, one of the prime reasons for the war from the Japanese viewpoint was the necessity for improving the Japanese economy by obtaining the vast natural resources of the Southern Resources Area. This had necessitated not only the seizure of the Netherlands East Indies, Malaya and Burma, which were the principal sources of vital strategic materials, but

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\* Volume II, Battle for Leyte Gulf (NavPers 92194), Naval War College, 1955, Operations of CinC Combined Fleet, October 18th, Chapter IV, Section (A).

\*\* Ibid., Operations of CinC Combined Fleet, October 19th, Chapter VI, Section (A).



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also the keeping open of the sea lanes from these areas to the homeland itself. These two requirements had necessitated the capture of the Philippines also.\*

THE QUESTION NOW ARISES WHETHER, IN VIEW OF THE ABOVE CONSIDERATIONS, THE DECISION TO EXECUTE THE PENETRATION OPERATION WAS SOUND. THE ANSWER APPEARS TO BE IN THE AFFIRMATIVE. IN GENERAL, IT IS (A) THE DUTY OF TACTICS TO INSURE THAT ITS RESULTS ARE APPROPRIATE TO THE STRATEGIC AIM, AND (B) THE DUTY OF STRATEGY TO INSURE THAT THE ATTAINMENT OF TACTICAL OBJECTIVES FURTHERS THIS STRATEGIC AIM AS WELL AS INSURES THAT THE TACTICAL STRUGGLE IS INITIATED UNDER FAVORABLE CONDITIONS. THERE ARE, OF COURSE, OCCASIONS WHEN THE DEMANDS OF STRATEGY REQUIRE THAT THE TACTICAL STRUGGLES BE INITIATED UNDER CONDITIONS WHICH DO NOT APPEAR FAVORABLE, BUT WHERE IT IS SO IMPORTANT TO ACHIEVE A STRATEGICAL AIM THAT SEVERE TACTICAL SACRIFICES ARE NECESSARY AND ACCEPTABLE. WAS NOT THIS SITUATION AS CASE IN POINT? HERE IT WAS SO IMPORTANT TO THE STRATEGIC AIM TO PREVENT (A) ALLIED RETENTION OF A FOOTHOLD ON LEYTE ISLAND AND (B) THE ESTABLISHMENT OF AIRFIELDS THERE, THAT IT BECAME NECESSARY TO ACCEPT BATTLE DESPITE ITS DOUBTFUL FEASIBILITY WITH THE CONSEQUENT HEAVY SACRIFICES.

A situation similar to this, although perhaps not fraught with such serious consequences occurred during July 1942 when COMSOPAC,\*\* who had been assigned by the Joint Chiefs of Staff the task of seizing Santa Cruz, Tulagi and adjacent positions in order to assist in the seizure of the New Britain - New Guinea - New Ireland areas, and COMSOWESPAC,\*\*\* who was to support the operation, jointly recommended that the operation be deferred. They made this recommendation because the recently developed strength of the enemy positions, the shortage of transports and airplanes for the continued maintenance of strong air support throughout the operation and the continued lack of sufficient shipping made successful accomplishment open to the gravest doubts.\*\*\*\* To this the Joint Chiefs of Staff replied that despite this unfavorable situation it was necessary to go ahead with the operation because (a) it was essential to stop without delay the enemy's southward advance from Tulagi, and (b) enemy airfields at Guadalcanal would seriously hamper if not prevent the Allied establishment of bases at Santa Cruz and Espiritu Santo.\*\*\*\*\* In other words the strategic aim required that the tactical struggle be initiated even though the conditions were unfavorable.

At 0834 the Chief of Staff Combined Fleet directed Commander SECOND Striking Force to consult with Commander SIXTH Base Air Force regarding assignment of one to three destroyers from the SECOND Striking Force to

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\* The Campaigns of the Pacific War, Responsibility of Imperial GHQ, USSBS Naval Analysis Division, 1946, Page 3; also Summary Report (Pacific War), USSBS, July 1st, 1946, Pages 1 and 2.

\*\* Vice Admiral Robert L. Ghormley, USN.

\*\*\* General Douglas MacArthur, USA.

\*\*\*\* COMSOPAC and COMSOWESPAC Dispatch 081012 July 1942 to Joint Chiefs of Staff (COMINCH).

\*\*\*\*\* COMINCH Dispatch 102100 July 1942 to COMSOPAC.

duty escorting a convoy carrying personnel and equipment of the SIXTH Base Air Force from Formosa to the Philippines.\*

THIS DISPATCH SHOWS ONCE AGAIN THE JAPANESE METHOD OF ISSUING ORDERS DIRECT TO A SUBORDINATE COMMANDER AND THEREBY BY-PASSING THE IMMEDIATE SUPERIOR IN COMMAND, IN THIS CASE COMMANDER SW AREA FORCE, WHO WAS AN INFORMATION ADDRESSEE. PARENTHETICALLY, IT MIGHT BE NOTED THAT COMTHIRDFLT EMPLOYED THE SAME PRACTICE.\*\* It is assumed that the Chief of Staff Combined Fleet felt justified in this action since the Chief of Staff SW Area Force had stated on the previous day that he saw no objection to CRUDIV TWENTY-ONE and DESRON ONE less two destroyers being employed in support of the FIRST Striking Force or the Main Force.\*\*\* However, the dispatch if received by Commander Mobile Force, who was not an action nor an information addressee, would have been of considerable interest since Commander Mobile Force had been advised earlier that the SECOND Striking Force under certain circumstances might be returned to his command, and, as a consequence, had issued as of 0021 that morning his orders relating thereto. In any case, it seems clear that CinC Combined Fleet had not as yet arrived at any decision concerning the future employment of the SECOND Striking Force.

At 0859 the Chief of Staff Combined Fleet requested, among others, the Chief of Staff FIRST Striking Force to enforce strict vigilance against large enemy aircraft while anchored at Brunei.\*\*\*\* Since no Allied aircraft had been operating in the Brunei area, it is assumed that this warning was purely precautionary and may have originated with the radio intelligence organization of the Combined Fleet.

At 0939 the Chief of Staff Combined Fleet advised all commands that since many Japanese planes on various missions had been attacked by Allied fighter aircraft in unexpected areas it was concluded that the Allies were carrying out air patrols over a wide area employing fighter planes in groups of about four. He also advised all commands that even when attacking the main strength of the Allied carrier force it was necessary to exercise caution against surprise attacks by enemy fighter planes throughout one's flight since Allied escort carriers were scattered throughout the battle area.\*\*\*\*\*

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- \* CinC Combined Fleet Dispatch 200834 October 1944 to Commander 2ND Striking Force (Combined Fleet DesOpOrd No. 460), War Diary DESRON 1, October 1944, WDC Document 161638, NA 11739.
- \*\* Volume II, Battle for Leyte Gulf (NavPers 92194), Naval War College, 1955, Chapter I, Section (B)(1)(a), Discussion of Change in Command.
- \*\*\* CofS SW Area Force Dispatch 192230 October 1944 to CinC Combined Fleet, Detailed Action Report CRUDIV 16, SHO Operations, October 17th - 27th, 1944, WDC Document 161005, NA 11744.
- \*\*\*\* CofS Combined Fleet Dispatch 200859 October 1944 to CsofS 1ST Striking Force, SW Area Force, 5TH Base Air Force, Detailed Action Report No. 3, YAMATO, SHO No. 1, Anti-air and Surface Actions, October 17th - 28th, 1944, WDC Document 161639.
- \*\*\*\*\* CofS Combined Fleet Dispatch 200939 October 1944 to all Air Groups, etc., War Diary 101ST Air Flotilla, October 1944, WDC Document 160304, NA 12542.



The above analysis was incorrect because (a) the Allied carriers did not normally employ fighter aircraft in groups for searches; instead, they generally employed teams of one VF and one VB/VT in each ten-degree sector, and (b) Allied CVE's were not scattered throughout the whole battle area but were concentrated off the entrance to Leyte Gulf.

WHAT THEN CAUSED THIS ERRONEOUS CONCEPT? THE ANSWER SEEMS TO LIE IN THE FAILURE OF THE JAPANESE TO REALIZE (A) THE EXCELLENCE OF ALLIED RADAR, (B) THE ALLIED CAPABILITY OF LONG-RANGE AIR INTERCEPTION AND (C) THE METHOD OF CONDUCTING SUCH LONG-RANGE INTERCEPTIONS. THE ALLIED RADARS OFTEN CONTACTED ENEMY AIRCRAFT AT DISTANCES AS GREAT AS 100 MILES FROM THE TASK GROUP AND THEN FIGHTER AIRCRAFT WERE VECTORED OUT TO INTERCEPT THEM. THE NUMBER OF FIGHTERS SO VECTORED WAS DETERMINED BY THE SIZE OF THE CONTACT (RAID), BY THE SIZE OF THE CAP AND BY THE NUMBER OF RAIDS DETECTED, AND WAS OFTEN A DIVISION OF FOUR FIGHTERS. IT WAS THE FACT THAT NUMEROUS JAPANESE AIRCRAFT, WHETHER ON ATTACK MISSIONS OR MERELY ON SEARCH OR OTHER ROUTINE MISSIONS, WERE BEING CONSTANTLY INTERCEPTED BY FOUR FIGHTERS ANYWHERE WITHIN THE PHILIPPINES BATTLE AREA WHICH LED THE JAPANESE TO BELIEVE THAT THE ALLIES WERE COVERING THIS AREA BY FIGHTER PATROLS CONSISTING OF FOUR VF, AND HAD CVE'S SCATTERED THEREIN.

Evidently, the Japanese, when on the above missions, had not heretofore anticipated encountering Allied fighter aircraft except in the immediate vicinity of an Allied carrier force or within an Allied strike group.

At about 1000 he received a dispatch from the Chief of Staff Mobile Force advising all interested commands that the Main Force would sortie from Bungo Suido at 1800 October 20th, would pass through certain designated points and requested that he not be confused with the enemy.\*

In connection with this message, it is well to recall two facts; i.e. (a) on September 10th Commander Mobile Force, realizing that localized action by widely separated forces would characterize the SHO operation and once underway he would be unable adequately to exercise operational control over the entire Mobile Force, had recommended that the FIRST Striking Force be removed from his command and placed directly under CinC Combined Fleet,\*\* and (b) on October 17th the Chief of Staff Combined Fleet had advised force commanders, in essence, that from the time a sortie was ordered for the Main Force the operations of all forces were to be placed under direct command of CinC Combined Fleet.\*\*\*

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\* CofS Mobile Force Dispatch 200930 October 1944 to All Commands Concerned, Detailed Action Report No. 2, OYODO, SHO No. 1 Operation, October 20th - 28th, 1944, WDC Document 161007.

\*\* Mobile Force Headquarters Memorandum Concerning Tactical Organization of Mobile Force, September 10th, 1944, Department of the Army, Historical Division Microfilm HS-26, Item A.

\*\*\* CofS Combined Fleet Dispatch 171201 October 1944 to Commanders Mobile Force, 1ST Striking Force, etc., Detailed Action Report HYUGA, SHO Operation, October 20th - 29th, 1944, WDC Document 161006, NA 12604.

The foregoing considerations must have been in the mind of CinC Combined Fleet as he received the above message and prepared to modify the command arrangements accordingly. However, he did not make the command transfer effective immediately but delayed until about 1800 at which time the Main Force was scheduled to sortie from Bungo Suido.

As a result of his running estimate of the situation, the Chief of Staff Combined Fleet at 1002 told Commander Advance Expeditionary Force (Submarines) that, if the "A" Group of submarines (I-26, 45, 54, 56) was unable to contact the Allied forces which it was pursuing, he was to redeploy at the appropriate time all of his submarines to dispersed stations off Leyte in Area KO-3 (discussed under "Operations of Commander Advance Expeditionary Force, October 20th") in order to attack and destroy enemy task forces and invasion forces in cooperation with Japanese surface and air forces.\*

AT 1006 THE CHIEF OF STAFF COMBINED FLEET ADVISED COMMANDER FIRST STRIKING FORCE BY DISPATCH IN SUBSTANCE THAT "THE STAFF OF COMBINED FLEET HEAD-QUARTERS HAD CONCLUDED THAT IT WOULD BE PREFERABLE TO PROCEED TO, AND BREAK INTO, THE ENEMY ANCHORAGE IN TWO GROUPS--ONE FROM THE NORTH THROUGH SAN BERNARDINO STRAIT AND THE OTHER FROM THE SOUTH THROUGH SURIGAO STRAIT (IN OTHER WORDS, A DOUBLE PENETRATION)--RATHER THAN TO APPROACH WITH THE WHOLE FORCE AS A UNIT".\*\* THIS WAS NOT AN ORDER DESPITE THE STRANGE WORDING, BUT WAS INSTEAD A SUGGESTION, AND THE FINAL DECISION AS TO WHETHER OR NOT TO ACCEPT THE SUGGESTION WAS LEFT TO COMMANDER FIRST STRIKING FORCE.

The above is not a quote from the original dispatch since that dispatch is not available, either here or in Tokyo, but is instead a reconstruction based on the recollections of Japanese officers concerned in this phase of the operation. The fact that this vitally important dispatch is not available in its original form seems very surprising. Except for a reference to this dispatch by COMBATDIV ONE in his personal diary,\*\*\* there is no record of it whatsoever in any of the Japanese action reports or other reports made at the time and which are available to this analysis. Even COMBATDIV ONE's reference to it is most unusual in its vagueness since it refers to "the items to be studied with regard to the penetration of the FIRST Striking Force" and

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\* CinC Combined Fleet Dispatch 201002 October 1944 to Commander Advance Expeditionary Force (Combined Fleet DesOpOrd No. 365), Detailed Action Report, ZUIKAKU, SHO No. 1 Operation, October 20th - 25th, 1944, WDC Document 161008.

\*\* CofS Combined Fleet Dispatch 201006 October 1944 (addressees unknown), Information compiled by Captain Toshikazu Ohmae, ex-IJN, Japanese Research Division, HQ, USAFFE, Military History Section, relating to Penetration Operations of 1ST Striking Force, Battle for Leyte Gulf, contained in HQ, USAFFE, Military History Section letter March 30th, 1954 to President, Naval War College.

\*\*\* Vice Admiral Matome Ugaki, IJN, (COMBATDIV 1), Personal Diary, SENSOROKU, Nippon Shuppan Kyodo Kabushiki Kaisha, (Tokyo, March 15th, 1953), Volume II.



gives no further information thereon, i.e., does not even mention the double penetration. Certainly it can be said that this dispatch was not sent to Commander FIRST Striking Force alone for the diary states "the Chief of Staff Combined Fleet has notified us" and further states "I consider it particularly meaningful that COMBATDIV ONE has been included among the info addressees."\*

Although the source material states that the original dispatch was released with the approval of CinC Combined Fleet this seems doubtful for, as discussed later, CinC Combined Fleet did not officially return to Hiyoshi until 1145. Of course it is possible that the Chief of Staff Combined Fleet discussed the matter by telephone during the night with CinC Combined Fleet while this officer was still at Omura but this seems unlikely because (a) in view of the limited time available and the importance of the dispatch, the dispatch would likely have been released then and there, (b) the Japanese state that, prior to the transmittal of the 1006 message, no information on this subject had been made available to the fleet since (1) there appear to be no records extant thereon, and (2) none of the officers concerned have any recollections of such information having been made available to them,\*\* and (c) the dispatch, if correctly reconstructed, is worded as a staff suggestion rather than as an opinion of either CinC Combined Fleet or his Chief of Staff. In this connection it is important to point out that no other Chief of Staff, Combined Fleet or any other command, dispatch available to this study--there are a number of them--is worded in this manner.

WHY THIS DISPATCH WAS SENT AT THIS TIME AND IN THIS MANNER IS NOT UNDERSTOOD FOR IT RECOMMENDED AT THIS VERY LATE DATE A CHANGE IN THE BASIC SHO ONE PLAN--A CHANGE, IF ACCEPTED, OF SUCH PROPORTIONS AS TO REQUIRE (A) IMMEDIATE MODIFICATION OF THE BASIC PLAN FOR THE FIRST STRIKING FORCE WITH ALL OF THE ATTENDANT PROBLEMS, NOTABLY AIR COVER, LOGISTICS, COORDINATION WITH OTHER COMMANDS, ETC., AND (B) SINCE IT WOULD AFFECT THE PLANS OF THE COORDINATE COMMANDS, IMMEDIATE MODIFICATION OF THEIR BASIC PLANS AS WELL.

WHAT COULD HAVE BEEN THE MOTIVATION? PERHAPS IT WAS COMMANDER SW AREA FORCE'S DISPATCH 192230 WHEREIN HE STATED THAT HE SAW NO OBJECTION TO EMPLOYING CRUDIV TWENTY-ONE AND DESRON ONE IN SUPPORT OF THE FIRST STRIKING FORCE (OR THE MAIN FORCE);\*\*\* PERHAPS THE ADVOCATES OF THE CONCEPT THAT THE CORRECT WAY TO WIN THE LEYTE ACTION WAS THROUGH ENVELOPMENT ON BOTH FLANKS RATHER THAN ON ONE FLANK, I.E., DOUBLE PENETRATION (PINCERS), HAD PREVAILED TO THE EXTENT

\* Vice Admiral Matome Ugaki, IJN, (COMBATDIV 1), Personal Diary SENSOROKU, Nippon Shuppan Kyodo Kabushiki Kaisha, (Tokyo, March 15th, 1953), Volume II.

\*\* Information compiled by Captain Toshikazu Ohmae, ex-IJN, Japanese Research Division, HQ, USAFFE, Military History Section, relating to Penetration Operations of 1ST Striking Force, Battle for Leyte Gulf, contained in HQ, USAFFE, Military History Section letter March 30th, 1954 to President, Naval War College.

\*\*\* CofS SW Area Force Dispatch 192230 October 1944 to CinC Combined Fleet, info Commanders 2ND, 5TH and 1ST Mobile Fleets, etc., Detailed Action Report CRUDIV 16, SHO Operations, October 17th - 27th, 1944, WDC Document 161005, NA 11744.



AT LEAST OF MAKING THEIR IDEAS KNOWN TO COMMANDER FIRST STRIKING FORCE;\* PERHAPS (JAPANESE POSTWAR COMMENTS STRESS IT) THEY FELT THAT SINCE THEY WERE DEFINITELY THE INFERIOR FORCE (THEY KNEW QUITE ACCURATELY AT THIS TIME—AND MUCH EARLIER AS WELL—THROUGH CAPTURED DOCUMENTS FROM CAPTURED PILOTS AND STATEMENTS FROM THEM, THE COMPOSITION OF THE ALLIED FORCES AND THEREFORE KNEW THAT THE ALLIED NAVAL FORCES OUTNUMBERED THE JAPANESE, ESPECIALLY IN CARRIERS AND BATTLESHIPS AND THAT THE ALLIES HAD AIR SUPREMACY)\*\* THE BEST WAY TO ACCOMPLISH THEIR OBJECTIVE WAS TO EMPLOY DIVERSIONARY TACTICS, ADDITIONAL TO THE MAIN FORCE, BY DIVIDING THE FIRST STRIKING FORCE WITH THE HOPE THAT ONE OF THESE UNITS MIGHT DRAW ALLIED HEAVY FORCES OUT OF THE LEYTE GULF.\*\*\* PERHAPS IT WAS DESIGNED TO GIVE COMMANDER FIRST STRIKING FORCE AN OPPORTUNITY TO ADJUST HIS COMMAND STRUCTURE SO THAT COMBATDIV TWO,\*\*\*\* WHO HAD ORIGINALLY BEEN SENIOR TO COMBATDIV ONE,\*\*\*\*\* WOULD NOT BE FORCED TO SERVE UNDER THE LATTER COMMANDER SHOULD THAT OFFICER SUCCEED TO COMMAND. THIS WOULD BE IN ACCORDANCE WITH JAPANESE NAVAL CUSTOM WHEREIN "AN OFFICER FROM AN EARLIER (NAVAL ACADEMY) CLASS WOULD BE TRANSFERRED FROM A POSITION SUBORDINATE TO AN OFFICER OF A LATER CLASS EXCEPT IN CASE OF EMERGENCY"\*\*\*\*\* THIS QUESTION OF MOTIVATION IS DISCUSSED MORE FULLY UNDER "OPERATIONS OF COMMANDER FIRST STRIKING FORCE, OCTOBER 21ST".

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\* Addendum to CINCPAC - CINCPA Weekly Intelligence Bulletin, Volume I, No. 10, September 15th, 1944, Japanese Striking Force Tactics, "KNOW YOUR ENEMY"; also letter from Captain Toshikazu Ohmae, ex-IJN, formerly Senior Staff Officer Mobile Force to Mr. Clarke Kawakami, World War II Battle Evaluation Group, Naval War College, undated, but received Washington, D.C., April 13th, 1953.

\*\* This statement is inserted here because all of the Japanese information from prisoners available to this analysis shows that the Japanese during the Battle off Formosa had captured Allied pilots who revealed excellent and accurate intelligence on the organization and composition of TF 38. The Japanese, in disseminating this information, did not release any evidence that these prisoners had disclosed information concerning the non-destruction of the Allied carriers. In other words, the Japanese implied that the Allied prisoners had told them all things excepting the vital fact that no Allied carriers had been sunk—a fact which a "talking" prisoner would probably have revealed under interrogation. Vice Admiral Takao Kurita, ex-IJN, who made the above statement, has thereby acknowledged that the Japanese had considerably more information concerning the Allied forces than they have heretofore admitted.

\*\*\* Information compiled by Captain Toshikazu Ohmae, ex-IJN, Japanese Research Division, HQ, USAFFE, Military History Section, relating to the Penetration Operations of 1ST Striking Force, Battle for Leyte Gulf, contained in HQ, USAFFE, Military History Section letter March 30th, 1954 to President, Naval War College.

\*\*\*\* Vice Admiral Shoji Nishimura, IJN.

\*\*\*\*\* Vice Admiral Matome Ugaki, IJN.

\*\*\*\*\* Military History Office, HQ, USAFFE/8A(Rear), 1ST Endorsement MH 314.8, December (undated), 1956 to President, Naval War College letter Serial 2804-56, December 7th, 1956.



At 1044 he advised all commanders of the SIXTH and SEVENTH Base Air Forces by dispatch that, owing to the transfer of their operational air strength to the Philippines, they need no longer patrol the "E" sector (based at Kizarasu, Honshu and covering the waters east of Honshu);\* "Q" sector (based at Kanoya, Kyushu and covering the waters east of Kyushu and Nansei Shoto);\* and "O" sector (based at Naha, Okinawa and also covering waters east of Nansei Shoto).\* He then directed in the same dispatch (a) Commander "T" Force to make the patrols in those areas employing the flying boats of the 801st Air Group, and (b) the Commandants of the Yokosuka, Kure and Sasebo Naval Districts and the Osaka Guard District to carry out the coastal patrols employing for this purpose the antisubmarine and training strength of their commands.\*\* This appears to have been done for two reasons: (1) to relieve the Commanders of the SIXTH and SEVENTH Base Air Forces, but especially the former, of the responsibility for patrolling these areas at a time when their principal forces were preparing to move into the Philippines (it will be recalled that the major portion of the SEVENTH Base Air Force had been incorporated into the SIXTH Base Air Force) and (2) to increase the strength of the SIXTH Base Air Force. The fact that he considered it necessary to divert this patrol strength to the decisive battle area is an indication of the shortage of planes, or at least of trained pilots, in the Combined Fleet at this time.

At 1145 CinC Combined Fleet arrived at Hiyoshi from Omura and announced to the Combined Fleet that he had returned to his headquarters.\*\*\* His arrival at Hiyoshi must have been quite a relief to him for to be responsible for fleet operations and not be in position adequately to exercise that responsibility could not have been other than frustrating.

Meanwhile Combined Fleet Headquarters which had been awaiting further information of an Allied landing received word that (a) two to three enemy task groups with a nucleus of six - ten CVE's (escort carriers) had been observed southwest of Samar, and (b) the enemy (believed to be three battalions of marines)\*\*\*\* had landed at 1130 at Tacloban.\*\*\*\*\* At this time Imperial General Headquarters (Army Section) received word that (a) the enemy at 1130 had commenced landing with limited forces (about 300 men) at San Jose

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\* Combined Fleet Operation Order No. 82, August 1st, 1944, ATIS Document No. 39, Part VIII, June 4th, 1945 (NACHI Document).

\*\* CinC Combined Fleet Dispatch 201044 October 1944 to All Commanders 6TH and 7TH Base Air Forces (Combined Fleet DesOpOrd No. 366), Detailed Action Report No. 2, Northern Attack Force (2ND Base Air Force), October 10th - November 15th, 1944, WDC Document 161645, NA 12262.

\*\*\* CinC Combined Fleet Dispatch 201145 October 1944 to All Fleet and Squadron Commanders, Detailed Action Report, BATDIV 1, SHO No. 1 Operation, October 18th - 28th, 1944, WDC Document 161005, NA 11744.

\*\*\*\* Memorandum of Vice Admiral Gunichi Mikawa, IJN, CinC SW Area Fleet, GHQ, FEC, Special Historical Collection, Supporting Documents to General of the Army Douglas MacArthur's Historical Report on Allied Operations in the Southwest Pacific Area (Item 31, Footlocker 7 of 10, SWPA Series, Volume II).

\*\*\*\*\* Material for Situation Estimates, 1ST Section, Naval General Staff, October 1944, WDC Document 216764 (Microfilm).

(near Tacloban) (with the intention of seizing the airfield there known as Tacloban Airdrome), and (b) the SIXTEENTH Infantry Division was attempting to destroy the enemy.\* It seems clear that both the army and navy reports of landing being made at 1130 referred to the same landing. However, landings were also being made in the Dulag area (some twenty-eight miles to the south) but, surprisingly enough, Japanese records do not indicate any landing in this area until later in the day although they do indicate Allied warships in this area exchanging gunfire with the shore batteries.\*

Soon after CinC Combined Fleet's arrival he received all of the dispatches which he had failed to receive while en route Hiyoshi and any other dispatches which it had not been the practice to forward to him at Omura. Among these dispatches was one from Commander 901st Air Group reporting search 100° - 110° (T) from Garan Bi to 350 miles was negative and search 120° - 130° (T) from Garan Bi was not made,\*\* and one at 0815 reporting an Allied Force of six escort carriers and four battleships about eighty-five miles east of the northern tip of Dinagat Island\*\*\* (Contact C) which contact may have been included in the report of six - ten CVE's above.

He clearly received some other contacts, source not recorded, for two postwar sources\*\*\*\* indicate that on the morning of October 20th he had information as follows: fourteen - fifteen battleships and cruisers, seven carriers (CV's) and fifty small ships and craft near Leyte Island with eighty transports and twenty small ships and craft near Samar Island, with a landing of about three divisions in prospect.

This information, as regards carriers, was incorrect in that there were no Allied carriers in Leyte Gulf. It was almost exactly correct as regards battleships and cruisers since, at this time, there were six old battleships (WEST VIRGINIA, MARYLAND, CALIFORNIA, TENNESSEE, PENNSYLVANIA, MISSISSIPPI) and ten cruisers (LOUISVILLE, PORTLAND, MINNEAPOLIS, HONOLULU, DENVER, COLUMBIA, PHOENIX, BOISE, HMAS SHROPSHIRE, HMAS AUSTRALIA), a total of sixteen battleships and cruisers in Leyte Gulf.

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\* Daily Record of the War Situation, 4TH Air Army, GHQ, FEC, Special Historical Collection, Supporting Documents to General of the Army Douglas MacArthur's Historical Report on Allied Operations in the Southwest Pacific Area (Item 4, Footlocker 10 of 10, SWPA Series, Volume II).

\*\* Commander 901ST Air Group Dispatch 200815 October 1944 to CinC Combined Fleet, 6TH Base Air Force, Detailed Action Report, 901ST Air Group, Night Searches, October 10th - 28th, 1944, WDC Document 160551, NA 12402.

\*\*\* Vice Admiral Matome Ugaki, IJN, (COMBATDIV 1), Personal Diary SENSOROKU, Nippon Shuppan Kyodo Kabushiki Kaisha, (Tokyo, March 15th, 1953), Volume II.

\*\*\*\* Ibid.; also USSBS Interrogation of Japanese Officials, Nav No. 36, Interrogation of Captain Toshikazu Ohmae, IJN, Volume I, Page 56.



He may have received word at this time that the FIRST Striking Force had arrived at Brunei at 1000.\*

He also may have received certain important contact reports by army aircraft on Allied carrier forces off Leyte Gulf and which are shown under "Operations of C.G. FOURTH Air Army, October 20th", but the indications are that these contacts were not made available to him.

He now considered the running estimate which was being maintained at Combined Fleet Headquarters. Here, for the first time since the Allies had commenced their carrier strikes against Okinawa on October 10th, he had available all of the intelligence from all sources which had been available to his chief of staff and to the Naval General Staff during the preceding ten days. He had an opportunity to review the decisions made at that time and to prepare himself for making those new decisions which he knew would be required by the fast developing situation. He knew, of course, that the penetration operation order (DesOpOrd No. 363) which had been issued that forenoon, included the FIRST Striking Force and the Main Force, but did not include the SECOND Striking Force. He also knew that the SECOND Striking Force, which now included CRUDIV SIXTEEN, had been transferred to the SW Area Force where it was to be employed in counterlanding operations. But a question had now arisen as to whether all of the ships of the SECOND Striking Force were required for these operations at this time. Commander SW Area Force thought not and had recommended that only CRUDIV SIXTEEN plus two destroyers from DESRON ONE be so employed. (In this connection, it will be recalled that the Chief of Staff Combined Fleet had advised Commander Mobile Force that under certain circumstances he might return the SECOND Striking Force to the Main Force. Commander SW Area Force had then interposed the thought that perhaps the FIRST Striking Force should be considered along with the Main Force).

At about 1310 he received a 1240 contact report on two carriers (CV) and five other vessels east of Tacloban, distant about seventy miles\*\* (Contact E).

At 1359 (it was received by CRUDIV SIXTEEN at this time) he received word that the SECOND Striking Force had arrived at Mako at 0800 and expected to complete fueling and sortie preparations by 0800 the following morning, October 21st.\*\*\*

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\* Material for Situation Estimates, 1ST Section, Naval General Staff, October 1944, WDC Document 216764 (Microfilm).

\*\* Appended Chart I, Enemy Fleet Dispositions, October 20th, 1944, Detailed Action Report Main Force, SHO No. 1 Operation, October 20th - 29th, 1944, WDC Document 161005, NA 11744.

\*\*\* Commander 2ND Striking Force Dispatch 201040 October 1944 to CinC Combined Fleet, etc., Detailed Action Report CRUDIV 16, SHO Operation, October 17th - 27th, 1944, WDC Document 161005, NA 11744.

During the afternoon he received numerous dispatches, generally as an information addressee, concerning (a) the counterlanding operations above referred to and (b) the penetration operation as well. He also received a 1330 contact report on four escort carriers, two battleships, two cruisers and six destroyers, bearing 080°(T), distant eighty miles from Tacloban on a southerly course, speed twenty (Contact F).\*

In his review of the tasks assigned in DesOpOrd No. 363 issued by his Chief of Staff that morning, CinC Combined Fleet determined that the task assigned to the Main Force required amplification in order to provide for certain contingencies. It is apparent that he wished to provide the maximum surface action force available in the event that either (a) the air attacks scheduled for October 24th and particularly the all-out air attack to be made by the SIXTH Base Air Force against the Allied carrier force or (b) the diversionary operations by the Main Force to lure the Allied carrier force away from the objective area were successful in seriously reducing Allied strength. The surface action forces of the Main Force would in that event be utilized to augment the other forces in the area; i.e., the FIRST Striking Force, and possibly the SECOND Striking Force as well depending upon its ultimate assignment, in order to insure the greatest possible destruction of Allied forces.

In accordance with his wishes, his Chief of Staff at 1412 advised the Chief of Staff Main Force that after the diversionary operations had been completed CARDIV FOUR (HYUGA, ISE) and DESDIV's FORTY-ONE and SIXTY-ONE depending on the situation, might be detached from the Main Force and directed to proceed immediately to the combat area east of Samar to destroy enemy remnants. He further advised the Chief of Staff Main Force to keep this tentative plan in mind.\*\*

Exactly how CinC Combined Fleet expected to carry out this plan is not clear because the diversionary plan for the Main Force called for that force to lure the Allied carrier force to the north\*\*\* "without regard for its own possible losses."\*\*\*\* Thus, unless the air attacks by land-based air and carrier-based air (from the Main Force) succeeded in heavily damaging such

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\* Vice Admiral Matome Ugaki, IJN, (COMBATDIV 1), Personal Diary SENSOROKU, Nippon Shuppan Kyodo Kabushiki Kaisha, (Tokyo, March 15th, 1953), Volume II.

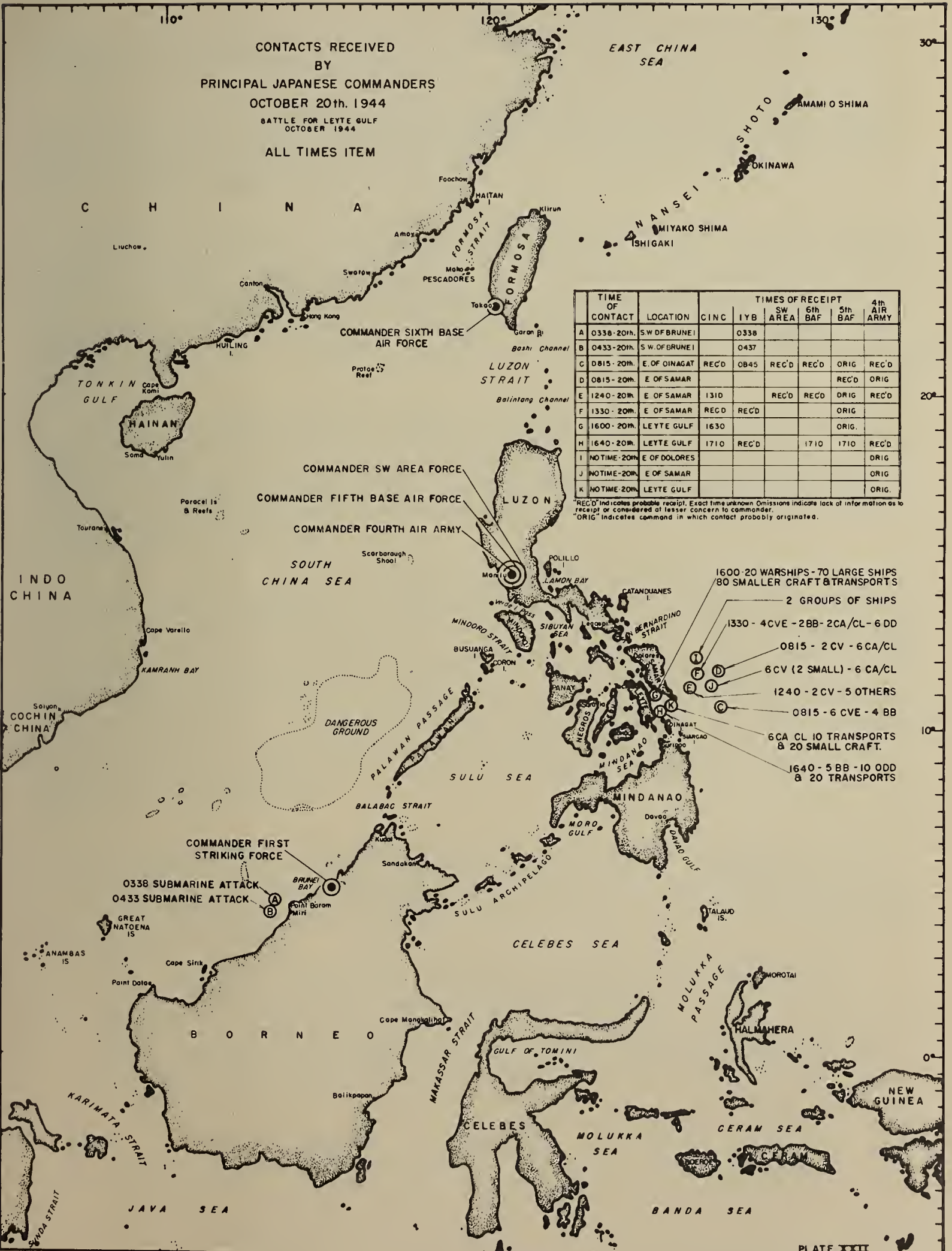
\*\* CofS Combined Fleet Dispatch 201412 October 1944 to CofS Main Force, Detailed Action Report Main Force, SHO No. 1 Operation, October 20th - 29th, 1944, WDC Document 161005, NA 11744.

\*\*\* CinC Combined Fleet Dispatch 200813 October 1944 to Combined Fleet, CinC Southern Army, Imperial GHQ, China Area Fleet, etc., (Combined Fleet DesOpOrd No. 363), War Diary BATDIV 1, October 1944, WDC Document 161638, NA 11739.

\*\*\*\* Detailed Action Report No. 2, OYODO, SHO No. 1 Operation, October 20th - 28th, 1944, WDC Document 161007.



CONTACTS RECEIVED  
BY  
PRINCIPAL JAPANESE COMMANDERS  
OCTOBER 20th, 1944  
BATTLE FOR LEYTE GULF  
OCTOBER 1944  
ALL TIMES ITEM



TIME OF CONTACT	LOCATION	TIMES OF RECEIPT					
		CINC	IYB	SW AREA	6th BAF	5th BAF	4th AIR ARMY
A	0338-20th. S.W. OF BRUNEI		0338				
B	0433-20th. S.W. OF BRUNEI		0437				
C	0815-20th. E. OF OINAGAT	REC'D	0845	REC'D	REC'D	ORIG	REC'D
D	0815-20th. E. OF SAMAR					REC'D	ORIG
E	1240-20th. E. OF SAMAR	1310		REC'D	REC'D	ORIG	REC'D
F	1330-20th. E. OF SAMAR	REC'D	REC'D				ORIG
G	1600-20th. LEYTE GULF	1630					ORIG
H	1640-20th. LEYTE GULF	1710	REC'D		1710	1710	REC'D
I	NO TIME-20th. E. OF DOLORES						ORIG
J	NO TIME-20th. E. OF SAMAR						ORIG
K	NO TIME-20th. LEYTE GULF						ORIG

"REC'D" indicates probable receipt. Exact time unknown. Omissions indicate lack of information as to receipt or considered of lesser concern to commander.  
"ORIG" indicates command in which contact probably originated.

- 1600-20 WARSHIPS - 70 LARGE SHIPS  
80 SMALLER CRAFT & TRANSPORTS
- 2 GROUPS OF SHIPS
- 1330 - 4 CVE - 2 BB - 2 CA/CL - 6 DD
- 0815 - 2 CV - 6 CA/CL
- 6 CV (2 SMALL) - 6 CA/CL
- 1240 - 2 CV - 5 OTHERS
- 0815 - 6 CVE - 4 BB
- 6 CA CL 10 TRANSPORTS  
& 20 SMALL CRAFT.
- 1640 - 5 BB - 10 ODD  
& 20 TRANSPORTS





October 20th

Allied carrier force, it would be practically impossible for the Main Force to evade the enemy carrier force.

In as much as he made no mention of the SECOND Striking Force, it seems clear that he had either decided not to return it to the Main Force or was withholding any specific action pending further information on the extent of counterlanding operations proposed.

At 1430 (it was received by CRUDIV SIXTEEN at this time) he received, as an information addressee, a dispatch from the Chief of Staff SW Area Force to COMCRUDIV SIXTEEN wherein the Chief of Staff advised that commander that SW Area Force headquarters was conferring with army headquarters concerned regarding the execution of mobile counterattack operations and requested an immediate report from COMCRUDIV SIXTEEN as to landing craft and troop carrying capacities.\*

At 1515 (it was received by ISUZU at that time) he received word from Commander Mobile Force that the Main Force had sortied as scheduled.\*\* He knew from this (a) the Main Force had departed the Inland Sea anchorages at 1300, was heading for Bungo Suido, (b) had the available aircraft on board (most of which had been recovered that morning), and (c) was ready insofar as practicable for battle.

At 1520 (it was received by COMCRUDIV SIXTEEN at that time) he received, as an information addressee, a dispatch from the Chief of Staff SW Area Force to Commander SECOND Striking Force wherein the Chief of Staff (a) stated that (1) the headquarters of the SW Area Force was conferring with the MANJU MARU and RAKUYO MARU concerning the execution of counterattack operations, and (2) that Commander SW Area Force thought it advisable for the SECOND Striking Force headquarters to confer directly with the FOURTEENTH Area Army concerning details, and (b) consequently requested either the transfer of the SECOND Striking Force from Mako to Manila or the dispatch of a staff officer immediately to Manila.\*\*\*

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\* CofS SW Area Force Dispatch 201340 October 1944 to COMCRUDIV 16, info CinC Combined Fleet, Imperial GHQ, (Navy Section), etc., Detailed Action Report CRUDIV 16, SHO Operation, October 17th - 27th, 1944, WDC Document 161005, NA 11744.

\*\* Commander Mobile Force Dispatch 201349 October 1944 to CinC Combined Fleet, Detailed Action Report ISUZU, Battle off the Philippines, October 20th - 29th, 1944, WDC Document 161007.

\*\*\* CofS SW Area Force Dispatch 201425 October 1944 to Commander 2ND Striking Force, Detailed Action Report CRUDIV 16, SHO Operation, October 17th - 27th, 1944, WDC Document 161005, NA 11744.

Soon thereafter (at 1630--the time of receipt by COMDESRON ONE) he received, as an information addressee, another dispatch from Commander SW Area Force to Commander SECOND Striking Force (a) cancelling orders for CRUDIV TWENTY-ONE and DESRON ONE to stand by at Mako and CRUDIV SIXTEEN to stand by at Brunei and (b) directing that the SECOND Striking Force (including CRUDIV SIXTEEN) was to move henceforth as ordered by its commander.\*

He could see that this dispatch had been issued so that Commander SECOND Striking Force could control directly the counterattack operations and thereby have freedom of action--in this regard--to move as the situation warranted.

Sometime during the afternoon he received intelligence information,\*\* presumably largely from Allied broadcasts but likely from prisoners or Filipino agents as well, that:

(a) General MacArthur had landed four hours after the start of the landing operations. Actually, he had landed at 1300 which was three hours after the troop landing but at 1400 he had made a broadcast of his return.

(b) Four American divisions had landed on Leyte. This was, in general, correct but the Japanese FOURTH Air Army, despite this, listed but three divisions as of this date,\*\*\* and the Japanese THIRTY-FIFTH Army, which was charged with the defense of Leyte (as well as of the other Visayan Islands, Mindanao and the Sulu Archipelago), stated that not more than two divisions had landed although a study of its reports shows that later they had information that four divisions had landed.\*\*\*\*

(c) While supporting the Leyte landing the AUSTRALIA, flagship of the Australian Navy, had been hit by a bomb, her "commander", Collins, wounded and her "skipper" killed. This was incorrect\*\*\*\*\* since the AUSTRALIA was not hit until the following day. Actually the ship hit on this day was the HONOLULU. It seems probable that the Japanese, learning on the following day that the AUSTRALIA had been hit, confused this ship with the HONOLULU.

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- \* Commander SW Area Force Dispatch 201428 October 1944 to COMCRUDIV 16, Commander 2ND Striking Force, CinC Combined Fleet, All Fleet and Squadron Commands, SW Area Force (SW Area Force DesOpOrd No. 672), War Diary DESRON 1, October 1944, WDC Document 161638, NA 11739.
- \*\* Material for Situation Estimates, 1ST Section, Naval General Staff, October 1944, WDC Document 216764 (Microfilm).
- \*\*\* Daily Record of the War Situation, 4TH Air Army. GHQ, FEC, Special Historical Collection, Supporting Documents to General of the Army Douglas MacArthur's Historical Report on Allied Operations in the Southwest Pacific Area (Item 4, Footlocker 10 of 10, SWPA Series, Volume II).
- \*\*\*\* 35TH Army Operations, 1944-45, Japanese Studies in World War II, Special Staff, U.S. Army Historical Division, File 8-5, JS-11, 851/1-11.
- \*\*\*\*\* Actually the Unit Commander Was Commodore John A. Collins, RAN, and the Commanding Officer was Captain Emile F.V. Dechaineux, RAN.



October 20th

(d) A convoy had left New Guinea. This was true but the convoy had left on October 18th or two days earlier so the report was delayed in transmission or was made after the convoy had sailed.

(e) Pacific Fleet Headquarters had announced that Ulithi had been occupied September 21st - 22nd. This was approximately correct. Actually it was occupied September 23rd.

(f) Aachen had been captured. This was correct. However, the German Army Commander did not surrender until the following day.

THE ABOVE INTELLIGENCE WAS OF CONSIDERABLE IMPORTANCE TO THE JAPANESE AND TO CINC COMBINED FLEET. IN THE FIRST PLACE IT ESTABLISHED THAT GENERAL MACARTHUR HAD RETURNED TO THE PHILIPPINES. THIS WAS NOT EXPECTED SINCE THE JAPANESE THOUGHT THAT LEYTE WAS IN ADMIRAL NIMITZ'S AREA OF RESPONSIBILITY.\* SECONDLY, IT INDICATED THAT THE TROOPS IN LEYTE (SIXTEENTH JAPANESE DIVISION) WERE TOO FEW IN NUMBER TO DEFEND LEYTE ADEQUATELY SINCE FOUR ALLIED DIVISIONS HAD BEEN LANDED AND THEREFORE ADDITIONAL GROUND FORCES WERE URGENTLY NECESSARY. THIRDLY, IT INDICATED THAT THE ALLIES WERE PLANNING TO LAND EVEN GREATER FORCES SINCE ANOTHER CONVOY HAD LEFT NEW GUINEA. FOURTHLY THE CAPTURE OF AACHEN, WHICH WAS THE FIRST GERMAN CITY OF ANY SIZE TO FALL TO THE ALLIES, CLEARLY SHOWED THE JAPANESE HIGH COMMAND THAT THEIR GERMAN ALLY WAS IN AN EVER DETERIORATING SITUATION.

About 1630 he received a report, source unknown, that at 1600 twenty warships (battleships and others), seventy large ships and eighty smaller craft and transports had been noted inside Leyte Gulf\*\* (Contact G). As regards the large ships, smaller craft and transports, it is of interest that this report was exactly equal to the forenoon reports, i.e., a total of 150 ships.

At about 1700 he received a dispatch from the Chief of Staff Mobile Force (to be hereafter referred to as Main Force) wherein the Chief of Staff, realizing that it might be necessary to provide a "lure" from his own forces, (a) indicated that the OYODO and either the ISE or HYUGA might be ordered to carry out radio deception, (b) gave the characteristics of this radio deception and (c) requested that Commander Main Force be kept immediately informed at all times via Tokyo Number ONE Radio as to the effectiveness of the above deception.\*\*\*

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\* Daily Record of the War Situation, GHQ, FEC, Special Historical Collection, Supporting Documents to General of the Army Douglas MacArthur's Historical Report on Allied Operations in the Southwest Pacific Area (Item 4, Footlocker 10 of 10, SWPA Series, Volume II).

\*\* Material for Situation Estimates, 1ST Section, Naval General Staff, October 1944, WDC Document 216764 (Microfilm).

\*\*\* CofS Mobile Force Dispatch 201630 October 1944 to CinC Combined Fleet, Detailed Action Report KUWA, Battle off the Philippines, October 20th - 26th, 1944, WDC Document 161717, NA 11801.

October 20th

This action by Commander Main Force showed CinC Combined Fleet that Commander Main Force was fully conversant with the necessity for creating a diversion employing only his own forces since it was quite probable that the SECOND Striking Force would not be returned to him.

At about 1710 he received a 1640 report, source unknown, that five battleships, ten old destroyers (or cruisers\*) and twenty transports were in Leyte Gulf\*\* (Contact H). This report may have covered the same units which the army reported at 1600 as consisting of five - six battleships and over twenty destroyers and transports off Dulag and Tacloban exchanging fire with the shore.\*\*\* These reports were referring, of course, to the Allied fire support ships which were conducting call fire, all prearranged fires having been completed.

SOMETIME DURING THE DAY HE ADVISED THE COMBINED FLEET THAT (A) THE COMPOSITION OF THE ENEMY TASK FORCE WHICH HAD ATTACKED FORMOSA WAS, FROM "POW INTERROGATION (EXCLUDING THAT PREVIOUSLY MENTIONED):

(1) First group: four carriers, three cruisers and eleven - twelve destroyers.

(2) Second group: four carriers, two battleships (IOWA-class and NEW JERSEY-class), five cruisers and sixteen destroyers.

(3) Third group: four carriers, five battleships (two SOUTH DAKOTA-class, one IOWA-class and two NORTH CAROLINA-class), two cruisers and thirteen destroyers.

(4) Fourth group: three - four carriers, one - two battleships (one SOUTH DAKOTA-class and one NORTH CAROLINA-class), two - three cruisers and twelve - fifteen destroyers.

(5) Total strength: sixteen carriers, eight - nine battleships, twelve-thirteen cruisers and forty - forty-five (sic) destroyers. (Actually, the destroyers totaled a maximum of fifty-six.) In addition, there were five replacement carriers"\*

and (b) there were, "in addition to the above in TF 38 the following eight battleships which are directly attached to the THIRDFLT: COLORADO, TENNESSEE, CALIFORNIA, NEVADA, NEW MEXICO, PENNSYLVANIA, TEXAS and ARKANSAS."\*

THIS INFORMATION, AS POINTED OUT BELOW, WAS NOT EXACT. IT WAS, HOWEVER, EXACT ENOUGH TO PROVIDE AN ACCURATE PICTURE OF ALLIED NAVAL POWER.

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\* COMBATDIV 1 recorded this contact as ten cruisers rather than ten old destroyers. Vice Admiral Matome Ugaki, IJN (COMBATDIV 1) Personal Diary SENSOROKU, Nippon Shuppan Kyodo Kabushiki Kaisha, (Tokyo, March 15th, 1953), Volume II.

\*\* Appended Chart I, Enemy Fleet Dispositions, October 20th, 1944, Detailed Action Report Main Force, SHO No. 1 Operation, October 20th - 29th, 1944, WDC Document 161005, NA 11744.

\*\*\* Daily Record of the War Situation, 4TH Air Army, GHQ, FEC, Special Historical Collection, Supporting Documents to General of the Army Douglas MacArthur's Historical Report on Allied Operations in the Southwest Pacific Area (Item 4, Footlocker 10 of 10, SWPA Series, Volume II).



Actually, referring to item (a) above, the groups on October 14th were composed about as follows:

(1) First group (TG 38.1): four carriers, three cruisers, eleven destroyers.

(2) Second group (TG 38.2): five carriers, two battleships, five cruisers, seventeen destroyers.

(3) Third group (TG 38.3): four carriers, four battleships, four cruisers, eight destroyers.

(4) Fourth group (TG 38.4): four carriers, two cruisers, eleven destroyers.

and referring to item (b) above, whereas it is true that these battleships were a fundamental part of the Pacific Fleet, it is not true that they were all with the THIRDFLT at this time. Instead, four of them (TENNESSEE, CALIFORNIA, NEVADA, PENNSYLVANIA) and two others (MARYLAND, MISSISSIPPI) not mentioned in item (b) had been temporarily assigned to COMSEVENTHFLT for KING II and at the present time were in Leyte Gulf as a part of TG 77.2.

WHY THIS INFORMATION, AND NOTABLY THAT CONCERNING TF 38 WHICH HAD BEEN AVAILABLE FOR SOME TIME IN THE SIXTH BASE AIR FORCE AND MOST LIKELY IN TOKYO AS WELL, WAS RELEASED AT THIS LATE DATE IS NOWHERE EXPLAINED. COULD IT HAVE BEEN A TACIT ADMISSION BY THE JAPANESE HIGH COMMAND IN TOKYO THAT THEIR CLAIMS OF DESTRUCTION OF ALLIED CARRIERS HAD BEEN FALLACIOUS AND THAT THE UNITS HERE LISTED WERE THE UNITS WHICH WOULD MOST LIKELY BE ENCOUNTERED BY THE DEFENDING JAPANESE FORCES? IS NOT THIS VIEW SUPPORTED BY THE STATEMENT ATTRIBUTED TO COMMANDER FIRST STRIKING FORCE (MENTIONED EARLIER IN THIS SECTION) TO THE EFFECT THAT "THE FIRST STRIKING FORCE (ON OCTOBER 20TH) KNEW THE ACCURATE COMPOSITION OF THE U.S. FORCE THROUGH THE CAPTURED DOCUMENTS FROM CAPTURED PILOTS AND STATEMENTS FROM THEM",\* AND IS NOT THIS VIEW REINFORCED BY THE FACT THAT THE COMPOSITION OF TF 38 AS REPORTED BY THE POW'S IN CARRIERS (SIXTEEN) AND ESCORT CARRIERS (FIVE) WAS EXACTLY THE SAME AS THAT CONTACTED ON THE PREVIOUS DAY (OCTOBER 19TH) LARGELY BY PLANES OF THE FIFTH BASE AIR FORCE? IN OTHER WORDS, CINC COMBINED FLEET WAS NOW ADVISING HIS COMMANDERS--INDIRECTLY, IT IS TRUE--THAT THEY WERE BEING OPPOSED BY THE WHOLE UNDAMAGED ALLIED CARRIER FORCE, THEREBY IMPLYING THAT THE AIR BATTLE HAD BEEN A FAILURE.

AS POINTED OUT IN VOLUME I, THESE POW INTERROGATIONS WERE OBTAINED IN THE MAJOR PART, IF NOT ENTIRELY, FROM ONE OR MORE CAPTURED PILOTS.

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\* Information compiled by Captain Toshikazu Ohmae, ex-IJN, Japanese Research Division, HQ, USAFFE, Military History Section, relating to Penetration Operations of 1ST Striking Force, Battle for Leyte Gulf, contained in HQ, USAFFE, Military History Section letter March 30th, 1954 to President, Naval War College.

CONFIDENTIAL

THE INFORMATION THUS OBTAINED WAS TIMELY AND OF CONSIDERABLE VALUE TO THE JAPANESE. WHAT MEANS THE JAPANESE EMPLOYED TO OBTAIN THIS INFORMATION IS NOT KNOWN BUT IT IS CLEAR THAT THEY WERE SURPRISINGLY SUCCESSFUL. HOW MANY PILOTS DIVULGED INFORMATION IS NOT KNOWN BUT IT SEEMS LIKELY THAT THE NUMBER WAS BUT A LIMITED FEW FOR THE ORIGINAL DATA WAS REPORTED AS COMING FROM A PILOT FROM THE WASP.\* HOWEVER, ONE PILOT IS ENOUGH IF HE HAS THE INFORMATION DESIRED. THIS HIGHLIGHTS THE HIGHLY IMPORTANT FACT THAT:

SINCE UNSCRUPULOUS ENEMIES HAVE MEANS OF FORCING INFORMATION OUT OF ALL BUT THE HARDIEST, IT IS UNWISE TO BRIEF PERSONNEL ON OPERATIONS ANY MORE THAN IS NECESSARY TO ENABLE THEM TO CARRY OUT INTELLIGENTLY THEIR ASSIGNED TASKS. ALTHOUGH THIS APPLIES PARTICULARLY TO AIRCRAFT PERSONNEL AND TO MEMBERS OF UNDERWATER DEMOLITION TEAMS WHO ARE MORE SUBJECT TO POSSIBLE CAPTURE THAN ARE MOST NAVAL PERSONNEL, IT APPLIES WITH ALMOST EQUAL FORCE TO ALL NAVAL PERSONNEL. OF COURSE, ANY INTELLIGENT MAN WILL ABSORB BY SIGHT AND HEARING A GREAT DEAL OF GENERAL AND EVEN OF PARTICULAR INFORMATION CONCERNING HIS OWN SHIP, BASE OR UNIT. IT IS WISE THEREFORE TO REDUCE THIS INFORMATION TO THE MINIMUM, WHEN PRACTICABLE AND SENSIBLE TO DO SO, AS IT MAY ALSO BE DIVULGED TO THE ENEMY. ON OCCASIONS, AS INDICATED ABOVE, INFORMATION SO DIVULGED CAN BE OF VITAL IMPORTANCE.

At 1712 CinC Combined Fleet, who had been studying the supply problem of the Main Force, assigned two oilers (JINEI MARU and TAKANE MARU) to that command.\*\* He then at 1715\*\*\* and at 1745\*\*\* issued instructions--what these were is not known--regarding the general movements of supply ships.

At 1802 he took direct command of the FIRST Striking Force.\*\*\*\* By so doing he now had direct command over his two major surface forces--FIRST Striking Force and Main Force. The SECOND Striking Force still remained under Commander SW Area Force. It is considered for the purpose of this analysis that the Mobile Force as such was dissolved at this time.

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\* Volume I, Battle for Leyte Gulf (NavPers 91973), Naval War College, 1953, Chapter III, Section (e), Information of Composition of TF 38 from POW.

\*\* CinC Combined Fleet Dispatch 201712 October 1944 to Main Force (Combined Fleet DesOpOrd No. 480), Detailed Action Report Main Force, SHO No. 1 Operation, October 20th - 29th, 1944, WDC Document 161005, NA 11744.

\*\*\* CinC Combined Fleet Dispatches 201715 and 201745 October 1944 to Commander Main Force (Combined Fleet DesOpOrds No. 479 and 481), Detailed Action Report Main Force, SHO No. 1 Operation, October 20th - 29th, 1944, WDC Document 161005, NA 11744.

\*\*\*\* CinC Combined Fleet Dispatch 201802 October 1944 to Commanders Mobile Force, 1ST Striking Force, SW Area Force and 2ND Striking Force (Combined Fleet DesOpOrd No. 367), War Diary BATDIV 1, October 1944, WDC Document 161638, NA 11739.



JAPANESE COMMAND RELATIONS  
201802-221700 OCTOBER 1944

BATTLE FOR LEYTE GULF  
OCTOBER 1944

BOARD OF  
FIELD MARSHALS  
and  
FLEET ADMIRALS

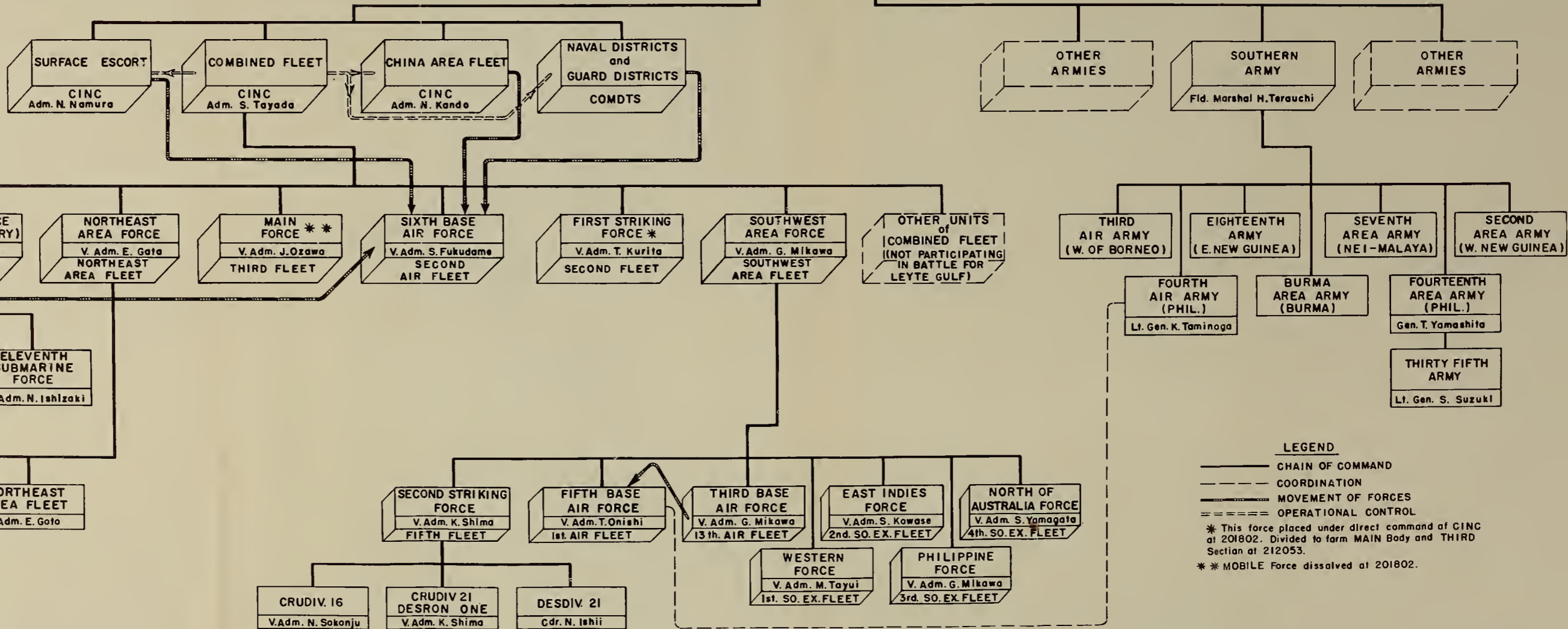
Consultation

EMPEROR

Consultation

SUPREME  
WAR  
COUNCIL

IMPERIAL GHQ  
NAVY SECTION (NAVAL GENERAL STAFF)  
Adm. K. Okawa  
ARMY SECTION (ARMY GENERAL STAFF)  
Gen. Y. Umezu



LEGEND

- CHAIN OF COMMAND
- - - COORDINATION
- MOVEMENT OF FORCES
- ==== OPERATIONAL CONTROL

\* This force placed under direct command of CINC at 201802. Divided to form MAIN Body and THIRD Section at 212053.

\*\* MOBILE Force dissolved at 201802.





CINC COMBINED FLEET'S ASSUMPTION OF DIRECT COMMAND WAS CORRECT AND LOGICAL. HIS FORCES APPROACHING LEYTE WOULD BE OPERATING UNDER RADIO SILENCE, AND AS POINTED OUT PREVIOUSLY BY COMMANDER MOBILE FORCE,\* SHOULD PROPERLY BE UNDER THE DIRECT COMMAND OF CINC COMBINED FLEET WHO WOULD BE SHORE-BASED WHERE ALL COMMAND FACILITIES WERE AVAILABLE INCLUDING RADIO AND NOT UNDER COMMANDER MOBILE FORCE WHO, BEING AT SEA AS COMMANDER MAIN FORCE, WOULD BE UNABLE TO ADEQUATELY EXERCISE COMMAND.

IT SHOULD BE POINTED OUT HERE THAT CINC COMBINED FLEET REALIZED THAT FOR HIM TO COMMAND FROM HIYOSHI WOULD BE DIFFICULT AND WAS NOT IN ACCORDANCE WITH COMBINED FLEET DOCTRINE. THIS DOCTRINE PRESCRIBED THAT WHERE MAJOR FLEET OPERATIONS WERE CENTERED AROUND THE OPERATIONS OF THE BASE AIR FORCES, WHICH WAS TO BE THE CASE IN SHO ONE, CINC COMBINED FLEET "WILL BE ASHORE AT THE MAIN AREA OF OPERATIONS OR ABOARD HIS FLAGSHIP; HE WILL BE IN OVERALL COMMAND OF OPERATIONS AND WILL PRESCRIBE THE STANDARD PROCEDURE REGARDING EXECUTION OF OPERATIONS BY THE VARIOUS FORCES AND PARTICULARLY REGARDING CONTROL OF OPERATIONS OF AIR FORCES, SURFACE FORCES AND SUBMARINE FORCES."\*\* CLEARLY, THEN, CINC COMBINED FLEET SHOULD HAVE BEEN AT SEA OR ASHORE IN MANILA. HE REALIZED, OF COURSE, THAT HE COULD NOT EXERCISE EFFECTIVE COMMAND AT SEA FOR THE SAME REASONS WHICH HAD FORCED COMMANDER MOBILE FORCE TO RECOMMEND THAT HE BE RELIEVED OF THE FIRST STRIKING FORCE. WHY, THEN, WAS HE NOT ASHORE IN MANILA? THE REASONS SEEM PLAIN; (A) HE COULD NOT SET UP HEADQUARTERS IN THE AREA OF OPERATIONS UNTIL THAT AREA HAD BEEN DETERMINED, (B) THE DETERMINATION OF THE AREA HAD NOT BEEN MADE UNTIL OCTOBER 18TH ALTHOUGH IT HAD BEEN SURMISED ON THE 17TH, (C) HE WAS NOT AVAILABLE TO MAKE ANY DECISION BECAUSE HE WAS EN ROUTE HIYOSHI, AND (D) THE TRANSFER OF HEADQUARTERS FROM HIYOSHI TO MANILA WOULD TAKE TIME AND TIME WAS NOT AVAILABLE.

His only choice, then, was to exercise command himself from Hiyoshi.

Although there is no evidence available to this effect, it seems likely that, about this time, he received word from the local coast defense forces that the Main Force had succeeded in sortieing from Bungo Suido on schedule without mishap and that there had been a number of submarine contacts (one by a coast defense plane) during the sortie which gave an indication that possibly the sortie had been observed by Allied submarines.

At about 1826, as an information addressee, he received a dispatch from Commander SECOND Striking Force to COMCRUDIV SIXTEEN directing that commander, in direct consultation with the FOURTEENTH Area Army, to move the first reinforcements to Leyte.\*\*\*

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\* Mobile Force Headquarters Memorandum Concerning Tactical Organization of Mobile Force, September 10th, 1944, Department of the Army, Historical Division, Microfilm HS-26, Item A.

\*\* Combined Fleet Standing Order 81, Combined Fleet Doctrine 1943, Book ONE, Combat Chapter I, Section C, Major Fleet Engagements, ATIS Document No. 39, Part VII, June 3rd, 1945 (NACHI Document).

\*\*\* Commander 2ND Striking Force Dispatch 201756 October 1944 to COMCRUDIV 16 (2ND Striking Force DesOpOrd No. 8), War Diary DESRON 1, October 1944, WDC Document 161638, NA 11739.

At about 1836, as an information addressee, he received a dispatch\* from the Chief of Staff SECOND Striking Force to Commander SW Area Force setting forth his opinions concerning the employment of the SECOND Striking Force. These opinions were, in part, that he thought that (a) troop transport should be carried out by CRUDIV SIXTEEN concurrent with or shortly after the penetration operation, (b) any involvement in the troop transport problem by CRUDIV TWENTY-ONE and DESRON ONE would be highly undesirable and (c) the proper employment of the above forces was not in the counterlanding operation but rather in the penetration operation immediately after the FIRST Striking Force. This dispatch is set forth in full under "Operations of Commander SECOND Striking Force, October 20th."

CinC Combined Fleet could see at this point that Commander SECOND Striking Force was so convinced that his command should be employed in the penetration operation and not in a counterlanding operation, that he was willing to go to extreme lengths even to opposing not only Commander SW Area Force's orders as given in his 201455, but also CinC Combined Fleet's instructions as given in his DesOpOrd 362. He must therefore have watched with interest the reaction of Commander SW Area Force to this dispatch.

At about 1853, as an information addressee, he received COMCRUDIV SIXTEEN's dispatch reply to Commander SW Area Force's 201340 (a) giving the number of boats, troops and cargo which could be carried in the AOBA, KINU and URANAMI, and (b) stating that (1) owing to the heavy air opposition expected it was essential to load and unload the troops and supplies in a single operation, (2) the boat-carrying capacity was inadequate, and (3) additional boats at the loading and unloading points were necessary.\*\*

At about 1921 he received a dispatch from Commander SECOND Striking Force reporting that CRUDIV TWENTY-ONE and DESRON ONE would sortie from Mako at 0700 the following morning (October 21st) and would proceed south.\*\*\*

At 2045 (it was received by COMCRUDIV SIXTEEN at this time) he received, as an information addressee, a dispatch from the Chief of Staff SW Area Force to Commander SECOND Striking Force wherein the Chief of Staff stated that CinC Southern Army had made a request to Central Headquarters that the SECOND

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\* CofS 2ND Striking Force Dispatch 201806 October 1944 to Commander SW Area Force, Detailed Action Report CRUDIV 16, SHO Operation, October 17th - 27th, 1944, WDC Document 161005, NA 11744.

\*\* COMCRUDIV 16 Dispatch 201823 October 1944 to Commander SW Area Force, Detailed Action Report CRUDIV 16, SHO Operation, October 17th - 27th, 1944, WDC Document 161005, NA 11744.

\*\*\* Commander 2ND Striking Force Dispatch 201851 October 1944 to CinC Combined Fleet (2ND Striking Force SigOrd No. 134), War Diary BATDIV 1, October 1944, WDC Document 161638, NA 11739.



October 20th

Striking Force be directed to transport the SIXTY-EIGHTH Brigade presently in Formosa for use in counterattack operations and that Commander SECOND Striking Force was to bear this in mind.\*

If he had any concern over the attitude of Commander SECOND Striking Force relative to the Southern Army counterlanding operations, that concern was now dispelled for it was plain that Commander SW Area Force had not forgotten this task and was determined that Commander SECOND Striking Force should likewise not forget it.

At about 2100 he likely received a dispatch from the Chief of Staff SIXTH Base Air Force to the Chief of Staff SECOND Striking Force requesting that three destroyers be ordered to proceed immediately to Takao in accordance with CinC Combined Fleet's earlier instructions.\*\*

At about 2123 he received a dispatch from Commander Advance Expeditionary Force wherein that commander directed the "A" Submarine Group (I-26, 45, 54 56) and the "B" Submarine Group (I-38, 41, 46, 53, RO-41, 43, 46) to deploy in certain specific areas, discussed under "Operations of Commander Advance Expeditionary Force, October 20th".\*\*\*

Sometime before 2138, since at that time Commander Main Force received the dispatch, he received a dispatch from Imperial General Headquarters (Navy Section) to the effect that the enemy had landed at two points on Leyte and had occupied Panaon Island, the northern tip of Dinagat Island, and Homonhon Island.\*\*\*\* This was an accurate review of Allied operations although, surprisingly enough, no reference was made to the specific locations of the landings on Leyte; i.e., Tacloban and Dulag.

At 2245 (it was received by COMCRUDIV SIXTEEN at this time) he received, as an information addressee, a dispatch from the Chief of Staff SW Area Force

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\* CofS SW Area Force Dispatch 201958 October 1944 to Commander 2ND Striking Force, info CinC Combined Fleet, COMCRUDIV 16, etc., Detailed Action Report CRUDIV 16, SHO Operation, October 17th - 27th, 1944, WDC Document 161005, NA 11744.

\*\* CofS 6TH Base Air Force Dispatch 202030 October 1944 to CofS 2ND Striking Force, War Diary DESRON 1, October 1944, WDC Document 161638, NA 11739.

\*\*\* Commander Advance Expeditionary Force Dispatch 202053 October 1944 to Advance Force, Detailed Action Report BATDIV 1, SHO No. 1 Operation, October 18th - 28th, 1944, WDC Document 161005, NA 11744.

\*\*\*\* Imperial GHQ (Navy Section) Dispatch (Date-Time-Group and Addressees Unknown) received by Commander Main Force at 202138 October 1944, Detailed Action Report Main Force, SHO No. 1 Operation, October 20th - 29th, 1944, WDC Document 161005, NA 11744.

to Imperial General Headquarters (Navy Section) (a) advising the Navy Section that CinC Southern Army had requested Imperial General Headquarters (Army Section) to make arrangements for the SECOND Striking Force to transport the SIXTY-EIGHTH Brigade, presently in Formosa, for counterlanding operations, and (b) stating that Commander SW Area Force did not approve of this employment of the SECOND Striking Force; rather, he considered it more advantageous to employ CRUDIV TWENTY-ONE and DESRON ONE as a support force in the decisive battle operations. In this dispatch, the Chief of Staff SW Area Force also stated that, since there was no other transport strength available in Formosa, acceptance of CinC Southern Army's request would involve serious risk of losing the tactical opportunity and was therefore considered infeasible. He then announced that he was going to discuss the matter further with the CinC Southern Army, but requested that Imperial General Headquarters (Navy Section) weigh his recommendations in making any decision.\*

IF HE HAD NOT DONE SO EARLIER, CINC COMBINED FLEET COULD NOW SEE FROM THE TENOR OF THE DISPATCHES CONCERNING COUNTERLANDING OPERATIONS THAT THERE WAS A MARKED DIVERGENCE OF OPINION BETWEEN COMMANDER SW AREA FORCE AND CINC SOUTHERN ARMY CONCERNING THE EMPLOYMENT OF THE SECOND STRIKING FORCE. THAT THE DIVERGENCE OF VIEWS WAS TOO STRONG TO BE SETTLED BETWEEN THE TWO COMMANDERS WAS EVIDENCED BY THE FACT THAT EACH HAD APPEALED DIRECTLY TO IMPERIAL GENERAL HEADQUARTERS AND THAT IN SO DOING COMMANDER SW AREA FORCE HAD BYPASSED HIS IMMEDIATE SUPERIOR (CINC COMBINED FLEET). THE DIFFERENCE APPEARS TO HAVE BEEN SIMPLE. CINC SOUTHERN ARMY WISHED TO TRANSPORT THE SIXTY-EIGHTH BRIGADE FROM FORMOSA TO LEYTE, BECAUSE THERE WAS NO OTHER SUITABLE FORCE IMMEDIATELY AVAILABLE IN THE FORMOSA AREA, THIS WOULD MAKE NECESSARY THE USE OF CRUDIV TWENTY-ONE AND DESRON ONE. COMMANDER SW AREA FORCE ON THE OTHER HAND BELIEVED, WITH COMMANDER SECOND STRIKING FORCE, THAT THESE UNITS SHOULD NOT BE EMPLOYED IN THE ABOVE FORMOSA - LEYTE OPERATION AT THIS TIME BUT SHOULD INSTEAD PARTICIPATE IN THE PENETRATION OPERATION. HE, THEREFORE, INSISTED THAT CINC SOUTHERN ARMY RESTRICT HIS FIRST ECHELON OF REINFORCEMENTS TO THE NUMBER OF TROOPS THAT COULD BE TRANSPORTED BY OTHER FORCES AVAILABLE (CRUDIV SIXTEEN PLUS SOME TRANSPORTS) AND ALSO TO TROOPS LOCATED NEARER LEYTE SO THAT IT WOULD BE UNNECESSARY TO EMPLOY IMMEDIATELY CRUDIV TWENTY-ONE AND DESRON ONE IN COUNTERLANDING OPERATIONS.

CinC Combined Fleet, of course, knew from Commander SW Area Force dispatches 201958 and 202137 previously referred to, that that commander was withholding action in the matter pending a decision from him or from Imperial General Headquarters (Navy Section). He undoubtedly realized that an early decision was necessary otherwise the opportunity to employ these naval forces in the furtherance of either the army's or the navy's operations would be lost. It seems likely therefore that he conferred with Imperial General Headquarters (Navy Section) and made his views, whatever they were, known to that headquarters.

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\* CofS SW Area Force Dispatch 202137 October 1944 to Imperial GHQ (Navy Section), Detailed Action Report CRUDIV 16, SHO Operation, October 17th - 27th, 1944, WDC Document 161005, NA 11744.



However, even if he supported the views of his Commander SW Area Force, which is highly probable since all naval forces available were required in the forthcoming penetration operations, it is doubtful if he was optimistic. He could readily see, in view of the intelligence information referred to previously, that there was a strong possibility that the army would now consider that large numbers of troops would be required immediately to oppose the Allied divisions already landed.

On the other hand, there was also the possibility that, since the army had so recently decided to defend Leyte with maximum strength, the above troop reinforcements would not be ready for movement for some days. In this event, the army might not oppose the suggested employment of CRUDIV TWENTY-ONE and DESRON ONE.

PERHAPS THE ARMY REALIZED BY NOW THAT, SHOULD THE NAVY WIN A DECISIVE SEA VICTORY, GROUND REINFORCEMENTS COULD BE LANDED WITHOUT DIFFICULTY, IN WHICH CASE THE GROUND BATTLE AGAINST THOSE ALLIED FORCES WHICH HAD SUCCEEDED IN LANDING WOULD BE SPEEDILY AND SUCCESSFULLY TERMINATED.

It seems likely that about midnight CinC Combined Fleet received a dispatch from the Minister of the Navy and the Chief of the Naval General Staff jointly which stated:

"We have been greatly stirred by the action of the Combined Fleet which at the time the intensity of the enemy's counterattack was increasing daily and the situation was gradually becoming critical, engaged the enemy's main fleet in the waters east of Taiwan (Formosa) and the Philippines and destroyed a large part of the enemy. We would like to express here our heartfelt appreciation and at the same time to pray for the continued valor of CinC Combined Fleet and all his officers and men."\*

This dispatch, while it undoubtedly pleased him, must have been of considerable concern to him because now he had every reason to believe that the aviators' claims had been heavily exaggerated and that far from destroying a large part of the enemy, they had in reality accomplished little, for twenty-one carriers and other large forces had been sighted on the previous day and enemy landings in strength under a powerful umbrella of Allied carrier-based airpower had occurred that day at Tacloban. He probably wondered whether this information was being made available to the Emperor.

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\* Minister of the Navy, Chief of Naval General Staff, Navy Secretarial Dispatch 201855 October 1944 to CinC Combined Fleet, info Commanders of All Fleets and Squadrons, Detailed Action Report HYUGA, SHO Operation, October 20th - 29th, 1944, WDC Document 161006, NA 12604.

October 20th

## (1) Operations of Commander Mobile Force, October 20th.

Commander Mobile Force remained in the ZUIKAKU at Oita and continued preparations for departure that day. It will be recalled that, in addition to the ZUIKAKU, he had with him at Oita the other three carriers of CARDIV THREE (ZUIHO, CHITOSE and CHIYODA). The remaining units of his forces that were scheduled to depart with him were in the vicinity of Yashima Anchorage.

At 0021 he released his DesOpOrd No. 62 which he had prepared the previous evening to cover the situation should the SECOND Striking Force, which at the moment was approaching Mako, be returned to him. In this order he stated that after the return of the SECOND Striking Force the Mobile Force would follow the outline of the SHO Operation with the exception that:

"The SECOND Striking Force will advance to the area east of Luzon Strait and will operate in conjunction with the Main Force to divert enemy task forces from the area east of the Philippines to the north, thereby contributing to the success of the penetration attack of the FIRST Striking Force. The SECOND Striking Force will also engage in mopping up enemy remnants.

"1. The plan of movement of the Main Force is outlined in dispatch 190831: The Main Force will advance to the area northeast of the Philippines by X-1 or X-2 and will launch an air attack. (The date of the FIRST Striking Force penetration is designated as X-day).

"2. The SECOND Striking Force will advance to the area east of Luzon Strait by X-2 and will divert the enemy (resorting to radio deception) so as to aid the success of the Main Force's flank air attack from the north. Subsequently, it will operate as advance guard for the Main Force.

"3. If a favorable opportunity arises, the Main Force and the SECOND Striking Force will commit their entire strength in decisive battle against a part of the enemy's forces.

"4. Depending on the enemy situation, the SECOND Striking Force may be ordered to advance to the waters east of Luzon.

"5. Should a favorable situation develop, CARDIV FOUR and DESDIV's FORTY-ONE and SIXTY-ONE will be incorporated in the SECOND Striking Force to permit a decisive engagement with enemy surface forces."\*

THAT PORTION OF THIS DISPATCH WHICH DIRECTED THE SECOND STRIKING FORCE TO ADVANCE TO THE AREA EAST OF LUZON STRAIT BY X-2 AND THERE TO DIVERT THE ENEMY (RESORTING TO RADIO DECEPTION) IN ORDER TO CONTRIBUTE TO THE SUCCESS

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\* Commander Mobile Force Dispatch 200021 October 1944 to Mobile Force (Mobile Force DesOpOrd No. 62), Detailed Action Report Main Force, SHO No. 1 Operation, October 20th - 29th, 1944, WDC Document 161005, NA 11744.



OF THE MAIN FORCE'S FLANK ATTACK FROM THE NORTH IS OF SINGULAR INTEREST IN THAT IT BEARS A MARKED RESEMBLANCE TO COMTHIRDFLT'S PLAN ISSUED ON OCTOBER 15TH. ON THAT DATE COMTHIRDFLT, WHO HAD PREVIOUSLY FORMED TG 30.3 AROUND THE DAMAGED CRUISERS CANBERRA AND HOUSTON, DIRECTED CTG 30.3 (A) TO PROCEED TOWARD ULITHI, (B) TO REPRESENT EN ROUTE THE "BEATEN REMNANTS" OF THE THIRDFLT, AND (C) TO GIVE CREDENCE TO THIS IMPRESSION BY TRANSMITTING FREQUENT URGENT DUMMY MESSAGES IN ORDER TO APPEAR DESPERATE.\* IN EACH CASE, A MINOR FORCE WAS DESIGNED AS A LURE IN ORDER TO ATTRACT A MAJOR ENEMY FORCE INTO A DISADVANTAGEOUS POSITION WHERE IT COULD BE SUCCESSFULLY ATTACKED BY A STRONG FORCE OPERATING IN SUPPORT OF THE LURE.

IT IS CONSIDERED THAT THE PLAN ABOVE PROPOSED FOR THE SECOND STRIKING FORCE TO ACT AS A LURE FOR THE MAIN FORCE WAS SOUND. IT WOULD PERHAPS HAVE BEEN PREFERABLE TO HAVE HAD THE SECOND STRIKING FORCE REJOIN THE MAIN FORCE FORMATION AND RELIEVE THE FOUR MATSU-TYPE DESTROYERS (MAKI, KIRI, SUGI AND KUWA) WHICH HAD SHORT CRUISING RADII (2500 MILE AT TWENTY KNOTS)\*\* AS WELL AS A MAXIMUM SPEED OF BUT 27.8 KNOTS,\*\*\* THUS INCREASING THE OVERALL MOBILITY OF THE MAIN FORCE. HOWEVER, AS HAS BEEN POINTED OUT IN VOLUME II,\*\*\*\* OWING TO THE FACT THAT THE SECOND STRIKING FORCE WAS AT SEA, EN ROUTE TO MAKO, IT WAS SCARCELY POSSIBLE FOR THE SECOND STRIKING FORCE TO REJOIN THE MAIN FORCE BECAUSE (A) THE FUTURE MANEUVERS INCIDENT TO ENTICING THE ALLIED CARRIER FORCE TO THE NORTHEAST COULD NOT BE FORECAST WITH DEFINITE ASSURANCE NOW OR LATER, AND (B) ONCE HE HAD SORTIED, IT WAS LIKELY THAT HE COULD NOT BREAK RADIO SILENCE TO DESIGNATE A RENDEZVOUS LEST HE GIVE AWAY HIS POSITION PREMATURELY TO THE ENEMY. THE ACCURACY OF THESE COMMENTS WILL BE SHOWN LATER WHEN THE MOVEMENTS OF THE MAIN FORCE ARE DISCUSSED.

During the early forenoon he likely received most of the reports which were received by CinC Combined Fleet. Among these were reports that at 0610 the Allies had landed at Tacloban and the the central Philippines had been hit by Allied aircraft.

At 0925 he issued instructions regarding radio deception measures to be taken by his command. Unfortunately, this dispatch is not available to this study, although reference to it is made in ZUIHO's action report.\*\*\*\*\*

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- \* COM3RDFLT Dispatch 150256 October 1944 to CTG 30.3.
  - \*\* Detailed Action Report Main Force, SHO No. 1 Operation, October 20th - 29th, 1944, WDC Document 161005, NA 11744.
  - \*\*\* Japanese Naval Vessels at the End of the War, April 25th, 1945, Administrative Division, 2ND Demobilization Bureau (Compiled by Shizuo Fukui, Constructor Lieutenant Commander, ex-IJN).
  - \*\*\*\* Volume II, Battle for Leyte Gulf (NavPers 92194), Naval War College, 1955, Chapter VI (A) (1), Operations of Commander Mobile Force, October 19th.
  - \*\*\*\*\* Commander Mobile Force Dispatch 200925 October 1944, apparently to Mobile Force, info All Fleet and Squadron Commanders Combined Fleet, Detailed Action Report ZUIHO, SHO 1 Operation, October 20th - 25th, 1944, WDC Document 161008.

At 0930 he informed all principal commanders of the Combined Fleet, and asked them to disseminate it thoroughly, that the Main Force (CARDIV THREE, composed of four carriers, the HYUGA, ISE, OYODO, two light cruisers and eight destroyers) would sortie Bungo Suido at 1800 October 20th and would then proceed to the south as follows:

(a) 0600 October 21st, Latitude 29°-15'N, Longitude 133°-46'E.

(b) 0600 October 22nd, Latitude 25°-20'N, Longitude 129°-15'E. During this day the command would be replenished at sea.

(c) 0600 October 23rd, Latitude 22°-10'N, Longitude 127°-00'E. After passing through this point, which was about 350 miles northeast of Cape Engano, the Main Force would proceed to the eastward of Luzon Strait. He requested care in the recognition of friendly ships in carrying out searches and defensive patrols to the eastward.\*

The track was well chosen in that it was between the outer limit of the air searches from the Marianas and the normal operating areas of the submarines in the Nansei Shoto (MARU MORGUE) area. Thus, unless he was detected on sortie, there was an excellent possibility that he would succeed in moving into CONVOY COLLEGE undiscovered. It is clear from Plate XXIV that the Japanese knew or estimated that Allied air searches from Saipan were normally to a radius of 1000 miles, which was correct. They also seemed to be familiar with the eastern limits of the submarines operating in the Nansei Shoto (MARU MORGUE) area.

Commander Mobile Force stated in his action report that he had originally intended to follow Sortie Route ONE but had changed his mind after sortieing because of later submarine information. However, the above dispatch, which was issued prior to sortie, shows that he really had not intended to follow Sortie Route ONE. Instead, he had planned to follow a track between Sortie Route ONE and Sortie Route TWO for the first day and then a track to the westward of Sortie Route ONE for the following days. As will be discussed later, his final tracks were neither of the above routes, but, as shown on Plate XXIV, were to the eastward of both these tracks. The above routes ONE and TWO were two of the three original sortie routes designated in the basic SHO Plan.\*\*

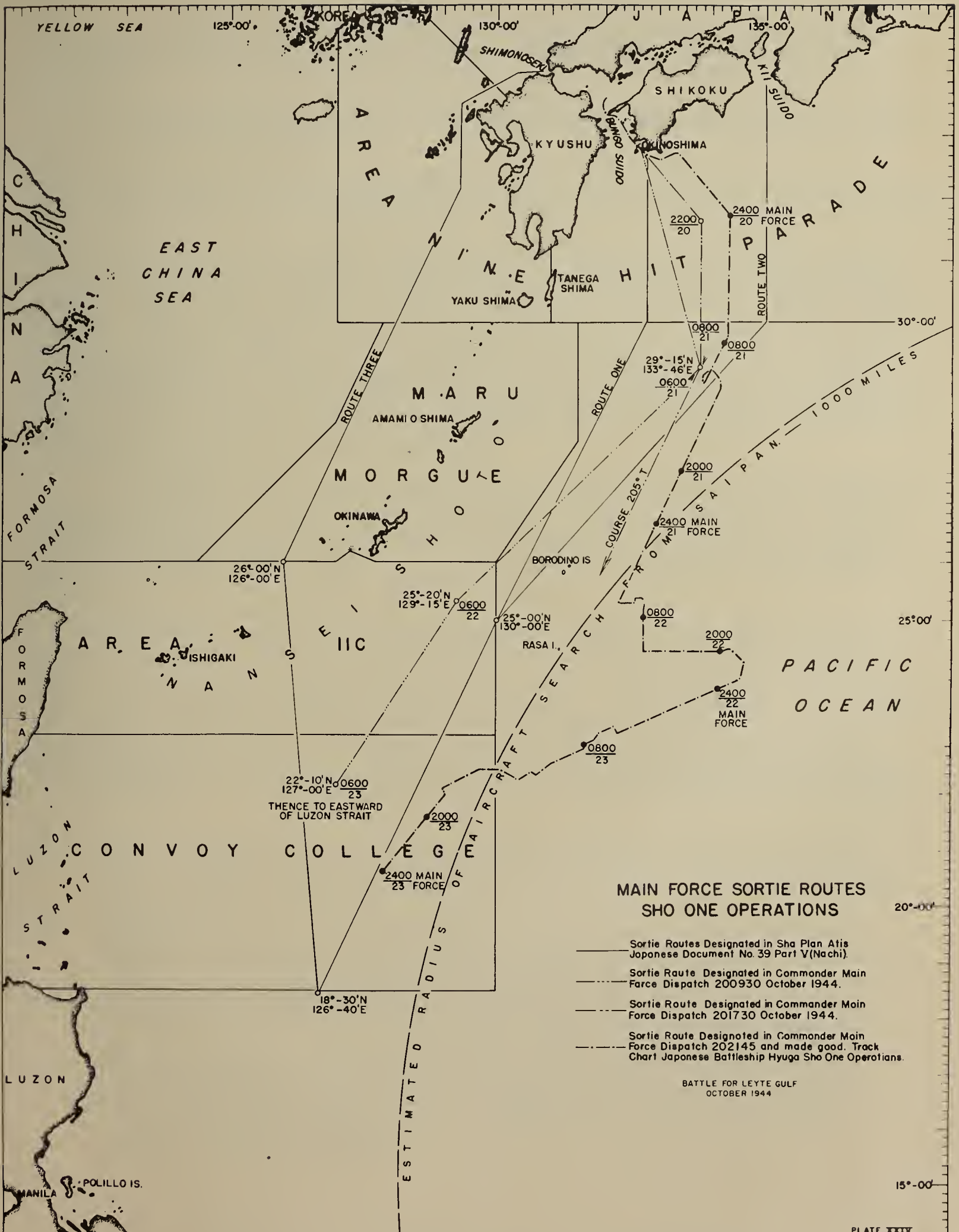
At about 1009 he received the Chief of Staff Combined Fleet's dispatch advising all commands that, because of surprise air attacks on unexpected areas, he believed the Allies were carrying out air patrols over a wide area

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\* CofS Mobile Force Dispatch 200930 October 1944 to All Commands, Detailed Action Report No. 2, OYODO, SHO No. 1 Operation, October 20th - 28th, 1944, WDC Document 161007.

\*\* Chart attached to Commander Mobile Force Operation Order No. 76, August 10th, 1944, ATIS Document No. 39, Part I, April 22nd, 1945 (NACHI Document).









employing fighter planes in groups of four and, therefore, it was necessary to exercise caution at all times even when attacking the Allied carrier force.\*

At about 1215 he learned that CinC Combined Fleet had returned to his headquarters at Hiyoshi.\*\*

At 1349 he advised CinC Combined Fleet that the Main Force had sortied from the Inland Sea as scheduled.\*\*\*

During the afternoon he received CinC Combined Fleet's long delayed overall plan which directed in part that the Combined Fleet, in conjunction with the army, would employ its full strength to annihilate the enemy attacking the central Philippines, and then assigned tasks to the principal commanders. He observed that in so far as the Main Force was concerned, (a) X-day had been delayed to October 25th and (b) the Main Force would, in cooperation with the penetration of the FIRST Striking Force, maneuver in an area east of Luzon so as to divert the enemy to the north and, if a favorable opportunity arose, was to attack and destroy him.\*\*\*\*

He could see from these orders that the Main Force's orders were, in general, similar to those heretofore issued, in that in cooperation with the penetration of the FIRST Striking Force he was still to maneuver so as to divert the enemy to the north or northeast and, if a favorable opportunity arose, he was to attack and destroy the enemy.

However, there was one very important change. This was the delay of X-day from October 24th to October 25th. Since he had scheduled the Main Force to sortie from Bungo Suido on October 20th he now had to decide whether the sortie should be delayed one day to conform to the new X-day. He decided to continue as originally scheduled. The reasons seem clear. He had noted that TF 38, which had been operating (a) on October 17th in mean Latitude 20°-00'N, and (b) on October 18th and 19th in mean Latitude 17°-30'N, could be expected to move farther south to give more direct support to the Allied

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- \* CofS Combined Fleet Dispatch 200939 October 1944 to All Air Groups, etc., War Diary 101ST Air Flotilla, October 1944, WDC Document 160304, NA 12542.
  - \*\* CinC Combined Fleet Dispatch 201145 October 1944 to All Fleet and Squadron Commanders, Detailed Action Report BATDIV 1, SHO 1 Operation, October 18th - 28th, 1944, WDC Document 161005, NA 11744.
  - \*\*\* Commander Mobile Force Dispatch 201349 October 1944 to CinC Combined Fleet, Detailed Action Report No. 3, YAMATO, SHO No. 1, Antiair and Surface Actions, October 17th - 28th, 1944, WDC Document 161639.
  - \*\*\*\* CinC Combined Fleet Dispatch 200813 October 1944 to Combined Fleet, CinC Southern Army, Imperial GHQ, China Area Fleet, etc., (Combined Fleet DesOpOrd No. 363), War Diary BATDIV 1, October 1944, WDC Document 161638, NA 11739.

landing operations at Leyte which had commenced that day. Therefore, since he would probably be forced to move farther south than he had anticipated when he originally set his day of departure as October 20th, he could now see that it might be dangerous to delay his sortie another day since this might adversely affect the successful accomplishment of his diversion objective.

Also during the afternoon, he likely received the Chief of Staff Combined Fleet dispatch to Commander FIRST Striking Force in which a double penetration of Leyte Gulf was suggested for consideration.\* Although this was a new concept which, if made effective, would entail a considerable change in plans for the FIRST Striking Force, he took no action because it was clear that it would not affect the planned operations of the Main Force.

By 1600, since it was very important that he be constantly informed of Allied forces in the Philippine operations, it is likely that he knew that twenty warships (battleships and others), seventy large ships and eighty small ships and transports were inside Leyte Gulf.\*\*

At 1630 his Chief of Staff advised CinC Combined Fleet that, in order to divert and lure the enemy, it might be necessary to order the OYODO and either the ISE or HYUGA to carry out radio deception. He further gave the methods, the frequency, the call letters and the code to be employed, and requested that he be informed of the effectiveness of his deception by Tokyo Number ONE Radio.\*\*\*

As pointed out under "Operations of CinC Combined Fleet, October 20th" the Mobile Force was dissolved at 1802 and, therefore, will be dropped from further discussion.

(a) Operations of FIRST Striking Force, October 20th.

At midnight the FIRST Striking Force less the destroyers MICHISHIO, NOWAKI, AKISHIMO and HAYASHIMO plus CRUDIV SIXTEEN, all operating under radio silence, was steaming on course 070°(T), making a speed of advance of sixteen knots and zigzagging. At this time it was about 309° (T), distant 165 miles from Brunei.

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\* CofS Combined Fleet Dispatch 201006 October 1944 (Addressees Unknown), Information compiled by Captain Toshikazu Ohmae, ex-IJN, Japanese Research Division, HQ, USAFFE, Military History Section, relating to Penetration Operations of 1ST Striking Force, Battle for Leyte Gulf, contained in HQ, USAFFE, Military History Section letter March 30th, 1954 to President, Naval War College.

\*\* Material for Situation Estimates, 1ST Section, Naval General Staff, October 1944, WDC Document 216764 (Microfilm).

\*\*\* CofS Mobile Force Dispatch 201630 October 1944 to CinC Combined Fleet, Detailed Action Report KUWA, Battle off the Philippines, October 20th - 26th, 1944, WDC Document 161717, NA 11801.



The MICHISHIO and NOWAKI plus the ETOROFU were escorting the oilers YUHO MARU and HAKKO MARU (Brunei Fueling Group) from Singapore to Brunei where they were to fuel the FIRST Striking Force. The oilers were slow and therefore the fueling group was not scheduled to arrive until the following day, October 21st.

The AKISHIMO and HAYASHIMO which had been temporarily operating under orders of Commander SW Area Force but had been returned to Commander FIRST Striking Force October 18th were en route from Manila and were due to arrive Brunei Bay that forenoon.

CRUDIV SIXTEEN which since October 18th had been assigned to Commander SECOND Striking Force,\* had continued on with the FIRST Striking Force until arrival at Brunei where COMCRUDIV SIXTEEN was to await orders for counterlanding operations.\*\*

Shortly after midnight the FIRST Striking Force commenced changing course to 130°(T) in accordance with dispatch instructions issued at 1903 the previous day.\*\*\*

Sometime after 0338 Commander FIRST Striking Force appears to have received, presumably by distress signal, a report that, at that time, the cargo ship UGO MARU in SAMA-13 convoy en route Brunei Bay to Singapore had been torpedoed and sunk by submarine attack in Latitude 04°-45'N, Longitude 113°-30'E\*\*\*\* (bearing 255°(T), distant 100 miles from Brunei). (Contact A). This sinking had been effected by the Allied submarine HAMMERHEAD which was stationed in the southwest approaches to Brunei Bay.\*\*\*\*\*

While his thought process with relation to this contact is not known, it is believed that he reasoned somewhat as follows:

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- \* CofS Combined Fleet Dispatch 181101 October 1944 to Commanders 1ST Striking Force, Main Force, 2ND Striking Force, (Combined Fleet DesOpOrd No. 359), Detailed Action Report CRUDIV 16, SHO Operation, October 17th - 27th, 1944, WDC Document 161005, NA 11744.
  - \*\* Commander SW Area Force Dispatch 181540 October 1944 to Commander 2ND Striking Force, COMCRUDIV 16, info CinC Combined Fleet (SW Area Force DesOpOrd No. 662), War Diary DESRON 1, October 1944, WDC Document 161638, NA 11739.
  - \*\*\* Commander 1ST Striking Force Visual Dispatch 191903 October 1944 to 1ST Striking Force, Detailed Action Report BATDIV 1, SHO No. 1, Operation, October 18th - 28th, 1944, WDC Document 161005, NA 11744.
  - \*\*\*\* Detailed Action Report 901ST Air Group (Miri Detachment), October 1944, WDC Document 160369, NA 12366.
  - \*\*\*\*\* War Patrol Report HAMMERHEAD, Report of 2ND War Patrol, No Serial, November 2nd, 1944.

He had every reason to expect submarine action against both the FIRST Striking Force and the Brunei Fueling Group as they approached Brunei Bay. This was so for he had already encountered a possible submarine on October 18th\* and again at 1800 on October 19th,\*\* the latter being considered likely a true contact.\*\*\* This possibility of submarine action presented a serious situation, for his FIRST Striking Force was of only limited strength relative to the Allied forces already sighted off the Philippines and he therefore could not afford to have any of his major ships so damaged as to prevent their continuation toward Leyte with the FIRST Striking Force. On the other hand it was of primary importance that the fueling group arrive at Brunei Bay on schedule in order that the penetration operation could be accomplished on October 25th as planned.

He realized that he was confronted with a problem of considerable importance relating both to the safety of the FIRST Striking Force and of the Brunei Fueling Group. He had previously estimated that the latter group was approaching Brunei Bay at about nine knots.\*\*\*\* Therefore, he could readily estimate that at 0338 (a) the fueling group was in Latitude 03°-39'N, Longitude 109°-56'E, or about 220 miles from the point of sinking where it could arrive in about twenty-four hours, and (b) his own command was about 120 miles from Brunei.

What then should he do? Should he maintain the screening forces for the FIRST Striking Force intact until he had arrived at Brunei or should he detach some of the screening forces to join the fueling group as soon as possible?

He estimated the situation and clearly arrived at the opinion that:

(1) His fueling group was so far away (275 miles) that even should he detach destroyers now from the FIRST Striking Force they could not reach the fueling group before dawn.

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- \* Detailed Action Report No. 3, YAMATO, SHO No. 1 Antiair and Surface Actions, October 17th - 28th, 1944, WDC Document 161639.
- \*\* Appended Track Chart, 0100 October 18th, 1944 - 0000 October 29th, 1944, Detailed Action Report TONE, SHO Operation, (Battle off the Philippines), October 24th - 26th, 1944, WDC Document 161747.
- \*\*\* Vice Admiral Matome Ugaki, IJN, (COMBATDIV 1), Personal Diary SENSOROKU, Nippon Shuppan Kyodo Kabushiki Kaisha, (Tokyo, March 15th, 1953), Volume II.
- \*\*\*\* This speed of nine knots is obtained from the fact that at 1025 Commander 1ST Striking Force stated that the fueling group would arrive at Brunei at 1700 October 21st. (This dispatch will be discussed later). Since the time of departure from Eastern Singapore Strait (Pedra Branca Light) had been 1000 October 18th it was clear that the fueling group would be underway about seventy-nine hours. The distance from Singapore Strait to Brunei was 711 miles. This gave an expected speed of advance of about nine knots.



(2) The submarines during daylight hours would be kept submerged by aircraft from Miri, in which case the three escorts presently with the fueling group would be sufficient.

(3) He should be in Brunei Bay by 1200\* (about eight and one half hours) at which time the fueling group would be about 145 miles from the point of sinking.

(4) Upon arrival at Brunei Bay he could detach destroyers which at twenty-five knots could join the fueling group at about 1900 October 20th or some 9.3 hours (or eight-four miles) prior to its arrival at the point of sinking.

In view of the above he decided to retain his screening forces intact.

It is believed that this was the correct decision. His FIRST Striking Force would likely be in submarine waters long before the fueling group and therefore required the maximum protection. While the fueling group also required maximum protection it seems correct to say that it was at this time in considerably less danger, based on the known situation, than was the FIRST Striking Force.

While making the above estimate Commander FIRST Striking Force possibly at about 0437, learned, also presumably by some form of distress signal, that at 0433, a submarine in the same general area in which the UGO MARU had been sunk, had sunk another cargo ship, the OYO MARU out of the same convoy.\*\* (Contact B). This ship was also sunk by the HAMMERHEAD.\*\*\*

He could now estimate from previous experience, that the UGO MARU convoy would be the attraction for the Allied submarines in the area, at least during the remainder of the night, and therefore the Brunei Fueling Group would less likely be a target. In view of this he probably felt that the losses suffered by the UGO MARU convoy, although most unfortunate, were actually a blessing for he was now alerted to the fact that (a) Allied submarines were operating in the approaches to Brunei, (b) one or more was operating in the waters through which the Brunei Fueling Group was to pass and (c) since to divert the oilers from their prearranged track adequately might delay

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\* This was the actual time of arrival at Brunei, which he could, of course have forecast (Detailed Action Report, 1ST Striking Force, SHO Operations, October 16th - 28th, 1944, WDC Document 161641, NA 11839).

\*\* Commander 1ST Striking Force Visual Dispatch 201425 October 1944 to CRUDIV 7 (1ST Striking Force SigOrd No. 142), Detailed Action Report BATDIV 1, SHO No. 1 Operation, October 18th - 28th, 1944, WDC Document 161005, NA 11744.

\*\*\* War Patrol Report HAMMERHEAD, Report of 2ND War Patrol, No Serial, November 2nd, 1944.

them overmuch, and would force him to break radio silence, he was forewarned to the need for giving this convoy added protection before it arrived in what, at the moment, was a danger area. He likely was impressed with the operations of fortune for it was clear that had the UGO MARU convoy not been in the area, the fueling group might well have become the first target of the attacking submarines. Now he was prepared to do his utmost to prevent any attacks whatsoever.

At about 0700 he crossed the 100 fathom curve and continued on until 0918 when, as he approached Brunei he directed his commanders to proceed into the harbor independently. He did this because the entrance through the reef was some forty miles from the anchorage and because the channel was very narrow in some places. It is assumed that a number of destroyers remained in the vicinity of the channel entrance as an antisubmarine screen.

At about 0845 he appears to have received an 0815 contact report on six escort carriers and four battleships in Latitude 10°-40'N, Longitude 127°-00'E\*\* (Contact C). However, it is possible that he did not receive this report until the following day.\*\*\*

At 0930 the AKISHIMO and HAYASHIMO arrived at Brunei Bay from Manila and anchored.\*\*\*\*

At 1012 his Chief of Staff received a dispatch from the Chief of Staff Combined Fleet warning that large Allied aircraft might be operating in the vicinity and requesting that he enforce strict vigilance against them. \*\*\*\*\* He had already taken prescribed defensive measures. These included (a) picket boat patrols of the anchorage by landing barges of the battleships, augmented by destroyers, (b) air patrols by cruiser aircraft,\*\*\*\*\* and (c)

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- \* Detailed Action Report No. 3, YAMATO, SHO No. 1 Antiair and Surface Action, October 17th - 28th, 1944, WDC Document 161639.
  - \*\* Appended Chart I, Enemy Fleet Dispositions on October 20th, Detailed Action Report Main Force, SHO No. 1 Operations, October 20th - 29th, 1944, WDC Document 161005, NA 11744.
  - \*\*\* Vice Admiral Matome Ugaki, IJN, (COMBATDIV 1), Personal Diary SENSOROKU, Nippon Shuppan Kyodo Kabushiki Kaisha, (Tokyo, March 15th, 1953), Volume II.
  - \*\*\*\* War Diary AKISHIMO, October 1944, WDC Document 161636, NA 11973.
  - \*\*\*\*\* CofS Combined Fleet Dispatch 200859 October 1944 to CofS FIRST Striking Force, SW Area Force, 5TH Base Air Force, Detailed Action Report No. 3, YAMATO, SHO No. 1 Antiair and Surface Action, October 17th - 28th, 1944, WDC Document 161639.
  - \*\*\*\*\* COMCRUDIV 7 Visual Dispatch 191710 October 1944 to CRUDIV 7, info ATAGO, YAMATO, NAGATO, War Diary CRUDIV 7, October 1944, WDC Document 161638, NA 11739.



radar searches from one hour before sunrise until thirty minutes after sunset.\* He now studied the situation to see what additional measures were necessary.

At 1025 he issued his fueling plan. This plan was based on the assumption that the two oilers would not arrive at Brunei at 1100 October 21st as scheduled\*\* but would arrive instead at 1700. Ships were to be fueled as follows:

(a) Prior to the arrival of the oilers; (1) DESRON TWO from YAMATO, (2) DESRON TEN less MICHISHIO and NOWAKI plus CHOKAI from MUSASHI, (3) ATAGO and TAKAO from MAYA, (4) MYOKO and HAGURO from MOGAMI, (5) KUMANO, SUZUYA and CHIKUMA from TONE.

(b) After the arrival of the two oilers; the MICHISHIO from the KONGO, the NOWAKI from HARUNA, the MUSASHI and MOGAMI from HAKKO MARU, the YAMATO and MAYA from YUHO MARU.

(c) The fueling of the remaining battleships, NAGATO, FUSO, YAMASHIRO, KONGO and HARUNA was to be ordered later.\*\*\*

It will be observed that there was no provision in this plan for fueling (a) CRUDIV SIXTEEN because (1) she was under another command and could make her own arrangements and (2) she was to remain at Brunei temporarily and would likely not sortie at the same time as the FIRST Striking Force, and (b) AKISHIMO and HAYASHIMO, which fueled with DESRON TWO which they rejoined.

The time of 1700 given in the above dispatch is most baffling. There is no information whatsoever which indicates where Commander FIRST Striking Force obtained the 1700 time of arrival for the Brunei Fueling Group, which time of arrival, as will be shown later, was erroneous. Actually, as will be shown later, the group was almost exactly on schedule (1100) as originally planned. That he had obtained it from some responsible source and believed it is clearly evident from his 1425 dispatch to COMCRUDIV SEVEN wherein he advised that the Brunei Fueling Group would pass through a point bearing 275°(T), distant thirty-two miles from Point Baram at 0400 the following morning. Naturally, it had an effect on his planning and may have been in part accountable for the long time it took to prepare his movement plan for the penetration operations.

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\* COMDESRON 10 Visual Dispatch 191700 October 1944 to DESRON 10, War Diary DESRON 10, October 1944, WDC Document 161638, NA 11739.

\*\* COMDESDIV 4 Dispatch 172245 October 1944 to Commander 1ST Striking Force, War Diary DESRON 10, October 1944, WDC Document 161638, NA 11739.

\*\*\* Commander 1ST Striking Force Visual Dispatch 201025 October 1944 to 1ST Striking Force, (1ST Striking Force SigOrd No. 83), Detailed Action Report, BATDIV 1, SHO No. 1 Operation, October 18th - 28th, 1944, WDC Document 161005, NA 11744.

At 1112 he directed COMDESRON TEN to reinforce immediately the surface escort of the Brunei Fueling Group by two destroyers.\* COMDESRON TEN then designated the ASAGUMO and YAMAGUMO to comply, and at 1150 these destroyers departed to rendezvous with that group.\*\*

Sometime during the forenoon he received information of considerable interest since it concerned Allied forces inside Leyte Gulf which he might be forced to engage. This information was to the effect that fourteen - fifteen battleships and cruisers, seven large carriers (CV) and fifty small ships and craft had been sighted near Leyte Island; eighty transports and twenty small ships and craft (about three divisions) near Samar Island.\*\*\*

Meanwhile, at 1200 units of the FIRST Striking Force commenced arriving at Brunei,\*\*\*\* and by 1230 the larger portion was at anchor. AA Alert Number THREE was set. Engineroom standby was set as follows: (a) daytime--sixteen knots on thirty minutes notice; (b) nighttime--sixteen knots on two hours notice.\*\*\*\*\*

Fueling of the lighter units was commenced immediately from the heavy units.

Upon his arrival at Brunei it seems highly probable that Commander FIRST Striking Force learned that the fueling group was not being given anti-submarine protection by Miri-based planes for at 1300 he directed the YAHAGI and NOSHIRO to provide immediately one plane each for such protection, gave the base course of the fueling group as 070°(T), and, in order to maintain radio silence, stated that when the fueling group was sighted its position was to be reported to the reinforcement destroyers (ASAGUMO and YAMAGUMO) by dropping a message container on the deck of the destroyer flagship.\*\*\*\*\*

At 1325 he alerted his command to the danger of large enemy aircraft.

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- \* Commander 1ST Striking Force Visual Dispatch 201112 October 1944 to COMDESRON 10 (1ST Striking Force Special SigOrd No. 140), War Diary DESRON 10, October 1944, WDC Document 161638, NA 11739.
  - \*\* War Diary DESRON 10, October 1944, WDC Document 161638, NA 11739.
  - \*\*\* Vice Admiral Matome Ugaki, IJN, (COMBATDIV 1), Personal Diary SENSOROKU, Nippon Shuppan Kyodo Kabushiki Kaisha, (Tokyo, March 15th, 1953), Volume II.
  - \*\*\*\* Detailed Action Report BATDIV 1, SHO No. 1 Operation, October 18th - 28th, 1944, WDC Document 161005, NA 11744.
  - \*\*\*\*\* Commander 1ST Striking Force Visual Dispatch 201149 October 1944 to 1ST Striking Force, War Diary BATDIV 1, October 1944, WDC Document 161638, NA 11739.
  - \*\*\*\*\* Commander 1ST Striking Force Visual Dispatch 201300 October 1944 to YAHAGI, NOSHIRO, (1ST Striking Force Special SigOrd No. 141), Detailed Action Report BATDIV 1, SHO No. 1 Operation, October 18th - 28th, 1944, WDC Document 161005, NA 11744.



At 1359 he received a dispatch from Commander SECOND Striking Force announcing his arrival at Mako at 0800 that morning and stating that his fueling and sortie preparations were expected to be completed by 0800 the following morning.\*

At 1405 he was advised by COMDESRON TEN as to the plans for operating the north picket ships.\*\*

At 1410 he directed the command that, while at the anchorage, complete radio silence would be in effect except as regards urgent and unavoidable communications by aircraft and enemy sightings by picket boats.\*\*\*

At 1425 he advised COMCRUDIV SEVEN and all squadrons that the 0437 position of the enemy submarine was bearing 275°(T), distant thirty-two miles from Point Baram, and that the fueling group would pass through vicinity as of 0400 the following morning. (This dispatch, as pointed out earlier, confirms his expected time of arrival for the Brunei Fueling Group as 1700). He then directed COMCRUDIV SEVEN to make a sweep attack against this submarine employing night radar equipped aircraft.\*\*\*\*

In accordance with this order COMCRUDIV SEVEN directed his ships to make such a search commencing with the KUMANO plane which was to reach the objective area at 2000. Planes of the other three cruisers were to follow at two hour intervals. Each plane was to search an area sixty miles in radius from a point bearing 285°(T), distant thirty-two miles from Point Baram. In order that a day search of this area might be made COMCRUDIV SEVEN further directed that the KUMANO dispatch a reconnaissance seaplane at 1700 to search the area.\*\*\*\*\*

At 1533 Commander FIRST Striking Force received CinC Combined Fleet's dispatch 200813 which gave the long awaited overall plan which, among

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\* Commander 2ND Striking Force Dispatch 201040 October 1944 to CinC Combined Fleet, etc., Detailed Action Report CRUDIV 16, SHO Operation, October 17th - 27th, 1944, WDC Document 161005, NA 11744.

\*\* COMDESRON 10 Visual Dispatch 201405 October 1944 to Commander 1ST Striking Force, COMBATDIV 1, Detailed Action Report BATDIV 1, SHO No. 1 Operation, October 18th - 28th, 1944, WDC 161005, NA 11744.

\*\*\* Commander 1ST Striking Force Visual Dispatch 201410 October 1944 to 1ST Striking Force, Detailed Action Report BATDIV 1, SHO No. 1 Operation, October 18th - 28th, 1944, WDC Document 161005, NA 11744.

\*\*\*\* Commander 1ST Striking Force Visual Dispatch 201425 October 1944 to COMCRUDIV 7, Detailed Action Report BATDIV 1, SHO No. 1 Operation, October 18th - 28th, 1944, WDC Document 161005, NA 11744.

\*\*\*\*\* COMCRUDIV 7 Visual Dispatch (Date-Time-Group Unknown) October 1944 to CRUDIV 7, Detailed Action Report BATDIV 1, SHO No. 1 Operation, October 18th - 28th, 1944, WDC Document 161005, NA 11744.

other items, directed the FIRST Striking Force to penetrate to the Tacloban area at dawn October 25th, X-day, and, after destroying enemy surface forces in the area, to annihilate his landing forces.\*

This dispatch was of considerable importance to him primarily because it delayed X-day one day. It will be recalled that at 2103 October 17th he had indicated that he would be able to reach the eastern entrance to San Bernardino Strait (a) at twenty knots by morning of October 24th and (b) at sixteen knots by night of October 24th.\*\*

It was now clear to him that CinC Combined Fleet realized that since there were 220 miles between the eastern entrance to San Bernardino Strait and Leyte Gulf (a) it would be unwise to arrive at the eastern entrance to San Bernardino Strait by morning of October 24th as this would require that he move to Leyte under the concentrated air power of whatever carrier aircraft had not been drawn to the north by the Main Force and (b) that it would be wiser to arrive at the eastern entrance to Leyte Gulf by night of October 24th as this would permit passage of the 220 miles during the remainder of the night.

He further realized that, since the SHO One Plan called for a dawn penetration, this could only be effected by delaying X-day to October 25th and this had now been done.

It seems to have been about this time, and probably after he received Combined Fleet DesOpOrd No. 363, that Commander FIRST Striking Force received an unusual dispatch. This dispatch, from Chief of Staff Combined Fleet, suggested consideration of a double penetration into Leyte Gulf.\*\*\* This was remarkable because (a) the plans and orders for the FIRST Striking Force operation had undoubtedly been prepared on the basis of a single penetration into the Leyte area and (b) this "suggestion" was contrary to the studies which had been undertaken by both Commander Mobile Force at Kure in

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\* CinC Combined Fleet Dispatch 200813 October 1944 to Combined Fleet, CinC Southern Army, Imperial GHQ, China Area Fleet, etc., (Combined Fleet DesOpOrd No. 363), Detailed Action Report 1ST Striking Force, SHO Operations, October 16th - 28th, 1944, WDC Document 161641, NA 11839.

\*\* Commander 1ST Striking Force Dispatch 172103 October 1944 to CinC Combined Fleet, Detailed Action Report 1ST Striking Force, SHO Operations, October 16th - 28th, 1944, WDC Document 161641, NA 11839.

\*\*\* CofS Combined Fleet Dispatch 201006 October 1944, (Addressees Unknown), Information compiled by Captain Toshikazu Ohmae, ex-IJN, Japanese Research Division, HQ, USAFFE, Military History Section, relating to Penetration Operations of 1ST Striking Force, Battle for Leyte Gulf, contained in HQ, USAFFE, Military History Section letter March 30th, 1954 to President, Naval War College; also Vice Admiral Matome Ugaki, IJN, (COMBATDIV 1), Personal Diary SENSOROKU, Nippon Shuppan Kyodo Kabushiki Kaisha, (Tokyo, March 15th, 1953), Volume II.



September and by Commander FIRST Striking Force at Lingga Anchorage also in September. In this connection, it (1) will be recalled that Commander Mobile Force, as a result of his studies at Kure, had stated: "In order to assure the success of the penetration operations it is necessary to augment the surface combat strength of that force as much as possible and at the same time to provide it with directly cooperating air strength;"\* (2) is now important to point out that, in the studies conducted at Lingga Anchorage by Commander FIRST Striking Force (there were three war games; one from September 4th to 6th (incl.), one on September 9th and one from September 14th to 16th (incl.)), the penetration operation in each war game was carried out as a unit against the possible Allied invasion of Mindanao\*\* (it is not known whether or not BATDIV TWO, which was to report presently (October 5th), but which was at this time in the Empire, was represented), (3) will be recalled that as late as 2103 October 17th, Commander FIRST Striking Force had notified CinC Combined Fleet, in part, that "if the force takes shortest central route and proceeds at actual speed of sixteen knots it will reach the waters east of Philippines (vicinity of eastern entrance of strait) night of October 24th--if it proceeds at actual speed of twenty knots it will reach the same point by morning, October 24th"\*\*\* (here it is clear that he was operating his command as a unit and not as a divided command) and, finally, (4) will be noted that the Chief of Staff Combined Fleet, in his tentative outline for future operations, dispatch 181110, directed "The FIRST Striking Force will advance through San Bernardino Strait and will annihilate the enemy invasion force".\*\*\*\*

THIS SHOWS THAT THERE HAD BEEN NO SERIOUS STUDIES MADE PRIOR TO THE RECEIPT OF THE CHIEF OF STAFF COMBINED FLEET'S SUGGESTION WHICH GAVE CONSIDERATION TO THE IDEA OF DOUBLE PENETRATION BY THE FIRST STRIKING FORCE AND INDICATES THE PROBABLE SURPRISE WITH WHICH THE CHIEF OF STAFF COMBINED FLEET'S DISPATCH 201006 WAS RECEIVED BY COMMANDER FIRST STRIKING FORCE.

THE CONCLUSION, THAT NO SERIOUS CONSIDERATION TO THE IDEA OF A DOUBLE PENETRATION BY THE FIRST STRIKING FORCE HAD BEEN GIVEN BY COMMANDER

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\* Mobile Force HQ Memorandum concerning Tactical Organization of Mobile Force, September 10th, 1944, Department of the Army, Historical Division Microfilm HS-26, Item A.

\*\* Information compiled by Captain Toshikazu Ohmae, ex-IJN, Japanese Research Division, HQ, USAFFE, Military History Section, relating to Penetration Operations of 1ST Striking Force, Battle for Leyte Gulf, contained in HQ, USAFFE, Military History Section letter March 30th, 1954 to President, Naval War College; also Vice Admiral Matome Ugaki, IJN, (COMBATDIV 1), Personal Diary SENSOROKU, Nippon Shuppan Kyodo Kabushiki Kaisha, (Tokyo, March 15th, 1953), Volume II.

\*\*\* Commander 1ST Striking Force Dispatch 172103 October 1944 to CinC Combined Fleet, Detailed Action Report FIRST Striking Force, SHO Operations, October 16th - 28th, 1944, WDC Document 161641, NA 11839.

\*\*\*\* CofS Combined Fleet Dispatch 181110 October 1944 to CsofS Major Commands Combined Fleet, Detailed Action Report 1ST Striking Force, SHO Operations, October 16th - 28th, 1944, WDC Document 161641, NA 11839.



FIRST STRIKING FORCE, IS SUPPORTED BY THE FACT THAT NO DECISION RELATING THERETO APPEARS TO HAVE BEEN MADE ON THIS DAY BY THAT COMMANDER. INSTEAD, IT APPEARS THAT HE SPENT THE REMAINDER OF THIS DAY (AND, AS WILL BE SHOWN LATER, MOST OF THE NEXT DAY) IN STAFF CONFERENCES FOR THE PURPOSE OF DECIDING (A) WHETHER OR NOT TO ACCEPT THE CHIEF OF STAFF COMBINED FLEET'S SUGGESTION AND (B) WHICH UNITS (IF THE SUGGESTION WAS ACCEPTED) WOULD CONSTITUTE THE SAN BERNARDINO STRAIT GROUP AND WHICH THE SURIGAO STRAIT GROUP, AND OF FURTHER DECIDING THE CHANGES IN COVER, LOGISTICS, ETC., REQUIRED. DOES IT NOT SEEM LIKELY THAT, HAD SERIOUS CONSIDERATION BEEN GIVEN TO THE IDEA OF A DOUBLE PENETRATION PRIOR TO THIS DATE, THE DECISION, OWING TO THE PREVIOUSLY CONDUCTED STAFF STUDIES, COULD AND SHOULD HAVE BEEN PROMPTLY MADE AND THE COORDINATE AND SUBORDINATE COMMANDERS, WHO WERE ENTITLED TO KNOW, JUST AS PROMPTLY INFORMED? COULD THIS NOT HAVE BEEN DONE BY AN EARLY DISPATCH GIVING THE TENTATIVE PLAN WITH THE STATEMENT THAT THE FINAL PLAN WOULD BE RELEASED WHEN FULLY PREPARED? WAS THIS NOT IN ACCORDANCE WITH JAPANESE NAVAL PRACTICE AND DID NOT THE CHIEF OF STAFF COMBINED FLEET ADOPT THIS PRACTICE IN HIS 18110 DISPATCH ABOVE REFERRED TO?

THAT THIS IS A LOGICAL ANALYSIS SEEMS CLEAR WHEN IT IS REALIZED THAT, ON THE RECEIPT OF ORDERS FROM CTF 77 TO DEFEND LEYTE GULF, CTG 77.2, THE ALLIED COMMANDER AT THE BATTLE OF SURIGAO STRAIT, WAS ABLE, BECAUSE OF PREVIOUSLY CONDUCTED STAFF STUDIES ON THIS VERY MATTER TO ISSUE HIS FINAL BATTLE PLAN IN A MATTER OF HOURS.

THIS POINT HAS BEEN STRESSED AT LENGTH HERE TO EXPLAIN THE INTERPRETATION IN THIS STUDY GIVEN TO THE STATEMENTS MADE (A) IN THE MANUSCRIPT WRITTEN IN 1951 BY THE CHIEF OF STAFF FIRST STRIKING FORCE THAT THE "COMBINED FLEET SUGGESTION THAT WE APPROACH THE ENEMY ANCHORAGE IN TWO GROUPS, ONE FROM THE NORTH AND THE OTHER FROM THE SOUTH COINCIDED WITH OUR STUDIES OF THE OPERATION",\* AND (B) IN 1954 BY COMMANDER FIRST STRIKING FORCE THAT "SINCE THE CHIEF OF STAFF COMBINED FLEET HAD SUGGESTED THAT IT WOULD BE PREFERABLE TO LET THE THIRD SECTION OPERATE SEPARATELY AND SINCE THIS COINCIDED WITH HIS VIEWS HE DECIDED TO DIVIDE HIS FORCES WITH RATHER AN EASY MIND".\*\*

IN VIEW OF THE FACT THAT ALL OF THE EVIDENCE AND ANALYSIS SHOWS THAT THERE HAD BEEN NO SERIOUS STUDIES MADE PRIOR TO THE RECEIPT OF THE DISPATCH SUGGESTING THE DOUBLE PENETRATION, IT HAS BEEN CONCLUDED THAT THE WORDING "COINCIDED WITH HIS VIEWS" AND "COINCIDED WITH OUR STUDIES" LIKELY REFERRED TO THE STUDIES MADE AFTER THE RECEIPT OF THE ABOVE DISPATCH AND NOT PRIOR THERETO.

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- \* Rear Admiral Tomiji Koyonagi, ex-IJN, "The Battle of Leyte Gulf in Retrospection", MS Translation by Captain Toshikazu Ohmae, ex-IJN, edited by Mr. Roger Pineau, Office of the Chief of Naval Operations (Op-291), 1952.
- \*\* Information compiled by Captain Toshikazu Ohmae, ex-IJN, Japanese Research Division, HQ, USAFFE, Military History Section, relating to Penetration Operations of 1ST Striking Force, Battle for Leyte Gulf, contained in HQ, USAFFE, Military History Section letter March 30th, 1954 to President, Naval War College.



During the afternoon Commander FIRST Striking Force received the few contact reports made on Allied forces in the objective area. One of these referred to the landing at 1100 of three battalions of marines south of Tacloban (this report was incorrect because no marines landed on this day (discussed under "Operations of CTF 79, October 20th")); another referred to four escort carriers, two battleships, two cruisers and six destroyers at 1330 on a southerly course, bearing 080°(T), distant eighty miles from Tacloban (Contact F); a third referred to five battleships, ten cruisers and twenty transports in Leyte Gulf (Contact H).\* He also received information on air attacks to the effect that (a) between 0726 - 1415 Manila had been attacked by 220 planes with only slight damage to three ships, and (b) between 1025 - 1155 Davao had been attacked by fifty B-24's and eleven P-38's.\*

At 1730 (it was received by Commander Main Force at this time) he received a dispatch from the Chief of Staff Combined Fleet (quoted in full under "Operations of CinC Combined Fleet, October 20th") to the effect that after carrying out the diversionary operation, depending upon the circumstances, the ISE and HYUGA with four destroyers might be sent south to the waters east of Samar to destroy enemy remnants.\*\* That his dispatch was pleasing to him seems likely for COMBATDIV ONE, in his personal diary, stated "This gets better and better".

However, the most important information he received was a dispatch, quoted in full under "Operations of CinC Combined Fleet, October 20th", giving (a) the composition of the Allied task force (TF 38) which had attacked Formosa and (b) a listing of eight battleships, additional to those in TF 38, which were directly attached to the THIRDFLT.\*

There is no direct information anywhere concerning Commander FIRST Striking Force's reaction to items (a) and (b) in the paragraph above. However, from his statement made some years later and referred to previously, also under "Operations of CinC Combined Fleet, October 20th", it seems correct to say that he not only believed these forces to be the principal surface forces he would encounter in his penetration but realized also that the Japanese forces were clearly outnumbered by the U.S. forces not only in carriers and battleships, but also in the air.\*\*\*

Since, on the day before, he had received word of four battleships and six cruisers in Leyte Gulf (a total of ten) and today had received two indications of approximately fifteen battleships and cruisers in Leyte Gulf,

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\* Vice Admiral Matome Ugaki, IJN, (COMBATDIV 1), Personal Diary, SENSOROKU, Nippon Shuppan Kyodo Kabushiki Kaisha, (Tokyo, March 15th, 1953), Volume II. (Commander Main Force recorded this contact as ten old destroyers rather than ten cruisers. It is so recorded on Plate XXII).

\*\* CofS Combined Fleet Dispatch 201412 October 1944 to CofS Main Force, Detailed Action Report Main Force, SHO No. 1 Operation, October 20th - 29th, 1944, WDC Document 161005, NA 11744.

\*\*\* Information compiled by Captain Toshikazu Ohmae, ex-IJN, Japanese Research Division, HQ, USAFFE, Military History Section, relating to Penetration Operations of 1ST Striking Force, Battle for Leyte Gulf, contained in HQ, USAFFE, Military History Section letter March 30th, 1954 to President, Naval War College.

he could see that the number there had increased in one day by one battleship and four cruisers. He now was likely alerted to the fact that it was possible that he might encounter all eight battleships. Of course, he knew that these were the older American battleships and in no way equal to the YAMATO and MUSASHI.

Sometime during the evening he was also told of the operations of the enemy on the beaches. Imperial General Headquarters (Navy Section) stated that the enemy had landed at two points on Leyte and had occupied Panaon Island, Homonhon Island and the northern tip of Dinagat Island.\*

At 1824 he changed the fueling plan and directed the SUZUYA to fuel from the MUSASHI instead of the TONE,\*\* and also directed COMBATDIV TWO to fuel CRUDIV SIXTEEN which was done that evening.\*\*\*

At 1925 he received a Combined Fleet dispatch transferring the FIRST Striking Force to operational control of CinC Combined Fleet.\*\*\*\* This was probably expected and should have caused no concern.

At 2000 he advised the FIRST Striking Force that (a) at 1700 October 21st the picket boats would be withdrawn and at 1900 October 21st the picket ships would also be withdrawn and (b) the large landing barges of BATDIV TWO and NAGATO would be transferred to the Brunei Expeditionary Unit of the TENTH Special Base Force.\*\*\*\*\*

The presence of these large landing boats within the FIRST Striking Force is not explained. Perhaps they were transported to Brunei Bay to have them nearer the Philippines should landing operations in strength be determined on; perhaps, since it seems clear that there was no adequate harbor defense from the Brunei Bay area, they were so transported in order that they might be employed as picket boats in that area during the time that the FIRST Striking Force would be at anchor there; perhaps, and this is an interesting speculation, they were so transported in order that they might be available

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- \* Imperial GHQ (Navy Section) Dispatch, (Date-Time-Group and Addressees Unknown), received by Commander Main Force at 202138 October 1944, Detailed Action Report Main Force, SHO No. 1 Operation, October 20th - 29th, 1944, WDC Document 161005, NA 11744.
  - \*\* Commander 1ST Striking Force Visual Dispatch 201824 October 1944 to COMCRUDIV 7, MUSASHI, War Diary TONE, October 1944, WDC Document 160144, NA 11841.
  - \*\*\* Detailed Action Report CRUDIV 16, SHO Operation, October 17th - 27th, 1944, WDC Document 161005, NA 11744.
  - \*\*\*\* CinC Combined Fleet Dispatch 201802 October 1944 to Commanders Main Force, 1ST and 2ND Striking Forces, SW Area Force, Detailed Action Report 1ST Striking Force, SHO Operations, October 16th - 28th, 1944, WDC Document 161641, NA 11839.
  - \*\*\*\*\* Commander 1ST Striking Force Dispatch 202000 October 1944 to 1ST Striking Force, Detailed Action Report BATDIV 1, SHO No. 1 Operation, October 18th - 28th, 1944, WDC Document 161005, NA 11744.



should Imperial General Headquarters' (Army Section) view that the penetration operation be delayed be accepted, in which case the heavy ships might have been required for "Tokyo Express" operations in support of the Leyte garrison, even though limited in scope.

At 2145 COMBATDIV ONE sent a visual dispatch to BATDIV ONE instructing the ships of the first section (YAMATO and MUSASHI) to retain on board at time of sortie, two large landing barges each.\* Why he thought it necessary to carry these barges into a surface and anti-aircraft action is not explained and will never be explained since he (a) issued no orders thereon, (b) did not communicate his plans concerning their use to his staff, and (c) is now deceased.\*\*

During the night the various units of the FIRST Striking Force fueled from the YAMATO, MUSASHI, MAYA, MOGAMI and TONE in accordance with the fueling plan.

(b) Operations of Commander Main Force, October 20th.

Commander Main Force, in the ZUIKAKU, who was also Commander Mobile Force, continued preparations for departure.

At 0535 the Commanding Officer ISUZU, who was Commander Anti-Submarine Sweep Unit which was to sweep the scheduled route of the Main Force off Bungo Suido at the time of sortie, directed the unit which consisted of the ISUZU (F), KUWA, MAKI, KIRI, SUGI, to sortie at 0700.\*\*\* At 0910 he gave amplifying orders concerning the sweep sectors, zigzag maneuvers and speed (fourteen knots).\*\*\*\*

During the forenoon the four carriers of CARDIV THREE got underway and recovered aircraft. The following number of planes by types were either landed aboard or had been loaded aboard earlier:

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- \* COMBATDIV 1 Visual Dispatch 202145 October 1944 to BATDIV 1, info ATAGO, Detailed Action Report BATDIV 1, SHO No. 1 Operation, October 18th - 28th, 1944, WDC Document 161005, NA 11744.
  - \*\* HQ, USAFFE/8A, Military History Office letter July 14th, 1955 to President, Naval War College.
  - \*\*\* Commander Anti-Submarine Sweep Unit Dispatch 200535 October 1944 to Anti-Submarine Sweep Unit, Detailed Action Report ISUZU, Battle off the Philippines, October 20th - 29th, 1944, WDC Document 161007.
  - \*\*\*\* Ibid., Dispatch 200910 October 1944.

CONFIDENTIAL

COM MAIN FORCE

October 20th

	<u>ZUIKAKU</u>	<u>ZUIHO</u>	<u>CHITOSE</u>	<u>CHIYODA</u>	<u>TOTAL</u>
Fighter	28 (16)	8	8	8	52
Fighter - Bomber	16	4	4	4	28
Carrier Attack	14 (2)	5	6	4 (2) <sup>@</sup>	29
Carrier Recco	7 (7)	-	-	-	7
<hr/>					
Total	65 (25)	17	18	16 (2)	116

(Numbers in parentheses are aircraft and crew from CARDIV ONE).

@ Other two attack aircraft (not crews) were from 931st Air Group.

In addition to the carrier aircraft above, the OYODO carried two recco seaplanes used for antisubmarine patrols.

Twenty-seven of the carrier planes were from the 601st Air Group;\* eighty-seven from the 653rd Air Group;\*\* two from the 931st Air Group;\*\*\* and none from the 634th Air Group.\*\*

Why this was so is not explained since planes from the 634th Air Group had been ordered added to CARDIV THREE (653rd Air Group) planes by Commander Main Force on October 17th. Perhaps, as stated by the former operations officer of the Mobile Force, the full strength of the 634th Air Group had been transferred to the SIXTH Base Air Force and therefore no planes were available;\*\*\*\* perhaps it was not possible to get them to Oita in time to be embarked.

The normal operating complements of these carriers was seventy-eight for the ZUIKAKU-class and thirty for each of the three CVL's or a total of 168 planes.\*\*\*\*\* COMCARDIV THREE thus had sixty-nine per cent of the normal air complement of his carriers. However, the effectiveness of these planes was considerably less than that indicated by the percentages because

\* War Diary 601ST Air Group, (ZUIKAKU Detachment), October 18th - 31st, 1944, WDC Document 160295, NA 12535.

\*\* Detailed Action Report No. 1, 653RD Air Group, SHO Operation, October 20th - 25th, 1944, WDC Document 161004, NA 12605.

\*\*\* War Diary 931ST Air Group, October 1944, WDC Document 160151, NA 12319.

\*\*\*\* Letter from Captain Toshikazu Ohmae, ex-IJN to Mr. Clarke Kawakami, World War II Battle Evaluation Group, Naval War College, undated, but about May 23rd, 1952.

\*\*\*\*\* HQ, USAFFE, Military History Section letter October 14th, 1953 to President, Naval War College.



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(a) the planes and pilots were a composite group hastily assembled\* from that portion of his air strength which had not been operating under the SIXTH Base Air Force, and (b) the lack of competence of many of his pilots. Commander Main Force, after the war, referred to his flying strength as consisting "only of poorly trained inexperienced men".\*\* But this was not entirely so. Some of the pilots were well trained, and had been retained as instructors.\*\*\*

During the forenoon, as well as during the noon hour, the various units of the Main Force headed toward the designated rendezvous north of Sada Misaki where at 1400 the command formed cruising disposition with CARDIV THREE in the van followed by CARDIV FOUR and headed for Bungo Suido.\*\*\*\* The following ships were present: CARDIV THREE (ZUIKAKU (FF), ZUIHO, CHITOSE, CHIYODA); CARDIV FOUR (ISE, HYUGA); DESDIV SIXTY-ONE (AKITSUKI, HATSUZUKI, WAKATSUKI) less SUZUTSUKI which had been torpedoed on October 16th; DESDIV FORTY-ONE (SHIMOTSUKI) less FUYUTSUKI which had been torpedoed on October 12th; and elements of CORTRON THIRTY-ONE (OYODO (F), TAMA, ISUZU, KUWA, MAKI, KIRI, SUGI).\*\*\*\*

Sometime in the early afternoon it seems likely that he learned that he was to be given antisubmarine protection by the 901st Air Group (Tateyama Detachment), under the command of Commander Sasebo Naval District and based at Ibusuki, near Kanoya (one flying boat) and Oroku, Okinawa (four land attack planes).\*\*\*\*\*

At 1405 he directed that beginning at 1800 Number THREE Radar Alert was in effect,\*\*\*\*\*, and at 1406 he advised the command that a speed of eighteen knots would obtain until the force had reached Okinoshima at the

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- \* Detailed Action Report Main Force, SHO No. 1 Operation, October 20th - 29th, 1944, WDC Document 161005, NA 11744.
  - \*\* Postwar Impressions of the SHO Operation, Southwest Area Operations, GHQ, FEC, Special Historical Collection, Supporting Documents to General of the Army Douglas MacArthur's Historical Report on Allied Operations in the Southwest Pacific Area (Item 22, Footlocker 5 of 10, SWPA Series, Volume II).
  - \*\*\* Letter from Captain Toshikazu Ohmae, ex-IJN to Mr. Clarke Kawakami, World War II Battle Evaluation Group, Naval War College, undated, but about May 23rd, 1952.
  - \*\*\*\* Detailed Action Report ISE, SHO No. 1 Operation, October 25th, 1944, WDC Document 161006, NA 12604.
  - \*\*\*\*\* Commander Combined Escort Force Dispatch 201231 October 1944 to Commanders Kure, Yokosuka and Sasebo Naval Districts, etc., Detailed Action Report 901ST Air Group, Night Searches, October 10th - 28th, 1944, WDC Document 160551, NA 12402.
  - \*\*\*\*\* Commander Main Force Visual Dispatch 201405 October 1944 to Main Force, Detailed Action Report ZUIKAKU, SHO No. 1 Operation, October 20th - 25th, 1944, WDC Document 161008.

entrance to Bungo Suido.\* However, he encountered maneuvering difficulties and it was not until 1541 that he was finally able to establish eighteen knots as the cruising speed.\*\*

At 1630 his Chief of Staff sent a dispatch to CinC Combined Fleet on radio deception referred to under "Operations of Commander Mobile Force." \*\*\* This dispatch was the last dispatch sent from the Main Force by radio for two days because the Main Force thereafter assumed radio silence.

At 1640 he (Commander Main Force) issued modifying instructions for the employment of radio frequencies during an antisubmarine alert.\*\*\*\*

His passage through the Inland Sea and through Bungo Suido proved uneventful. Although a submarine was reported at 1530, this contact proved to be false.

At 1720 he received word from the Anti-Submarine Sweep Unit in the ISUZU that the antisubmarine sweep had been completed and that it was negative.\*\*\*\*\*

At 1730 he advised the Main Force that his present intentions were to steer course 180°(T) from 2200 until 0600 the following morning at which time course would be changed to 205°(T).\*\*\*\*\* This was the first change from the route planned and issued at 0930 that morning by himself as Commander Mobile Force.\*\*\*\*\* It will be noted that this planned change was not the result of submarine contacts, as stated by Commander Main Force, but was a result of a new estimate of the situation.

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- \* Commander Main Force Visual Dispatch 201406 October 1944 to Main Force, War Diary ZUIHO, October 1st - 25th, 1944, WDC Document 161636, NA 11973.
  - \*\* Commander Main Force Visual Dispatch 201541 October 1944 to Main Force, War Diary ZUIHO, October 1st - 25th, 1944, WDC Document 161636, NA 11973.
  - \*\*\* CofS Mobile Force Dispatch 201630 October 1944 to CinC Combined Fleet, Detailed Action Report KUWA, Battle off the Philippines, October 20th - 26th, 1944, WDC Document 161717, NA 11801.
  - \*\*\*\* Commander Main Force Visual Dispatch 201640 October 1944 to Main Force, Detailed Action Report ISE, SHO No. 1 Operation, October 25th, 1944, WDC Document 161006, NA 12604.
  - \*\*\*\*\* Commander Anti-Submarine Sweep Unit Visual Dispatch 201720 October 1944 to OYODO, Detailed Action Report ISUZU, Battle off the Philippines, October 20th - 29th, 1944, WDC Document 161007.
  - \*\*\*\*\* Commander Main Force Visual Dispatch 201730 October 1944 to Main Force, War Diary ZUIHO, October 1st - 25th, 1944, WDC Document 161636, NA 11973.
  - \*\*\*\*\* Commander Mobile Force Dispatch 200930 October 1944 to CinC Combined Fleet, War Diary DESRON 10, October 1944, WDC Document 161638, NA 11973.



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Also at 1730 his Chief of Staff received Chief of Staff Combined Fleet's dispatch 201412 which (a) stated that after the diversionary operations had been completed and depending on circumstances the ISE and HYUGA escorted by the AKITSUKI, HATSUZUKI, WAKATSUKI and SHIMOTSUKI might be detached and sent at high speed to the combat area off Samar to destroy enemy remnants, and (b) requested the Chief of Staff Main Force to keep this tentative plan in mind.\*

At 1735 (at which time he passed Okinoshima), while continuing on at eighteen knots, he commenced forming Number ONE Alert Cruising Disposition\*\* and changed course to 140°(T).\*\*\* Since this was an "alert cruising" disposition (Plate XXV), all ships were expected to operate under radio silence. This was so for Japanese doctrine (Combined Fleet) specified in part that, "while cruising under an alert, radio transmission will be controlled strictly and visual communications will normally be used."\*\*\*\*

This alert cruising disposition is interesting in that it gives an insight into the Japanese concepts of antisubmarine defense at this period of the war (October 1944). Certain differences are noteworthy in comparison with U.S. naval antisubmarine measures.

(a) The heavy ships were not integrated into the formation with the carriers. In a U.S. antisubmarine disposition, the heavy ships would have been disposed in a single group in order that all of the screening ships might be disposed around the main body in suitable screen. While this Japanese arrangement had the undesirable effect of (1) minimizing the contribution to anti-aircraft defense of the AA armament of the capital ships, and (2) failing to provide in the CARDIV FOUR screen more than one of the destroyers designated to join that CARDIV in the event of surface action (this appears to have been done because of the slow speed relative to the carriers of the destroyers KUWA, MAKI and KIRI and the XCV's), it also had the beneficial effect of having the heavy ships already separated from the carriers so that a surface action element could readily be formed at night without the necessity of withdrawing from the midst of the carrier disposition. This latter feature was an obvious advantage.

(b) The Japanese disposition emphasized depth (6600 yards) over frontage (2200 yards) whereas corresponding U.S. naval dispositions emphasized width rather than depth.\*\*\*\*\*

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- \* CofS Combined Fleet Dispatch 201412 October 1944 to CofS Main Force, Detailed Action Report Main Force, SHO No. 1 Operation, October 20th - 29th, 1944, WDC Document 161005, NA 11744.
- \*\* Detailed Action Report ZUIKAKU, SHO No. 1 Operation, October 20th - 25th 1944, WDC Document 161008.
- \*\*\* Commander Main Force Visual Dispatch 201735 October 1944 to Main Force, Detailed Action Report ZUIHO, SHO No. 1 Operation, October 20th - 25th, 1944, WDC Document 161008.
- \*\*\*\* Combined Fleet Standing Order No. 81, Combined Fleet Doctrine 1943, Book One, Combat, Chapter III, Section A, Paragraph ii, ATIS Document No. 39, Part VII, June 3rd, 1945 (NACHI Document).
- \*\*\*\*\* Current Tactical Orders and Doctrine (USF 10A), U.S. Fleet, U.S. Fleet Headquarters of the Commander in Chief, Navy Department, 1944, Paragraph 3241.

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(c) The Japanese screening ships were stationed at a uniform interval from the nearest heavy ship screened of 1650 yards (except in the case of the OYODO--about 1800 yards) whereas corresponding U.S. naval doctrine prescribed that (1) the screen should, if practicable, be on the locus of the outer limit of enemy (submarine) favorable firing points,\* and (2) the interval between the screen and the circle of screened ships should never be less than 4000 yards (from 4500 to 5000 yards being a normal optimum), particularly for screened formations which are within a circle of over 1500 yards radius.\*\* (It should be remembered that the U.S. screening interval was based on a Japanese submarine torpedo range of 6000 yards.\*\*\* Since the U.S. submarine torpedo had a high speed range of but 4500 yards,\*\*\*\* the interval above should therefore be reduced by one-quarter to be comparable and then would never be less than 3000 yards with a normal optimum of 3400 to 3750 yards.)

(d) The screening distances varied from a minimum of 1650 yards (on the flanks of CARDIV THREE) to a maximum of 2890 yards (on the flanks of CARDIV FOUR), whereas corresponding U.S. doctrine limited the screening distance (at this time) to one and one-half times the assured sonar echo-range.\*\*\*\*\* With assumed assured sonar ranges of 1000, 1500 and 2000 yards, the screening distances should have been 1500, 2250 and 3000 yards respectively, so that only under favorable bathythermal conditions would the greatest screening distance in this disposition have been acceptable.

(e) It should be noted that the most effective echo-ranging was achieved when the screening ships' speed was ten knots or less, with twelve knots as the maximum effective searching speed.\*\*\*\*\* Consequently, the Main Force was dependent primarily on aircraft ASP, visual lookout and radar for submarine detection.

\* \* \*

In connection with the above, the Operations Evaluation Group in the Office of the Chief of Naval Operations stated:

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- \* Current Tactical Orders and Doctrine (USF 10A), U.S. Fleet, U.S. Fleet Headquarters of the Commander in Chief, Navy Department, 1944, Paragraph 3253 (b) (1).
  - \*\* Current Tactical Orders and Doctrine (USF 10B), U.S. Fleet, U.S. Fleet Headquarters of the Commander in Chief, Navy Department, 1945, Paragraph 3252 (a) (3).
  - \*\*\* Japanese Torpedoes, prepared by the Identification and Characteristics Section, Division of Naval Intelligence, Navy Department, Washington, D.C., December 1943.
  - \*\*\*\* U.S. Navy Torpedoes, Ordnance Pamphlet 1634, prepared by Bureau of Ordnance, Navy Department, Washington D.C., October 15th, 1945, Pages 10 - 12.
  - \*\*\*\*\* Current Tactical Orders and Doctrine (USF 10A), U.S. Fleet, U.S. Fleet Headquarters of the Commander in Chief, Navy Department, 1944, Paragraph 3253 (b) (2).
  - \*\*\*\*\* CINCPAC - CINCPA Weekly Intelligence Bulletin, Volume I, No. 4, August 4th, 1944, Addendum "KNOW YOUR ENEMY", Japanese Underwater Sound Gear and Methods.

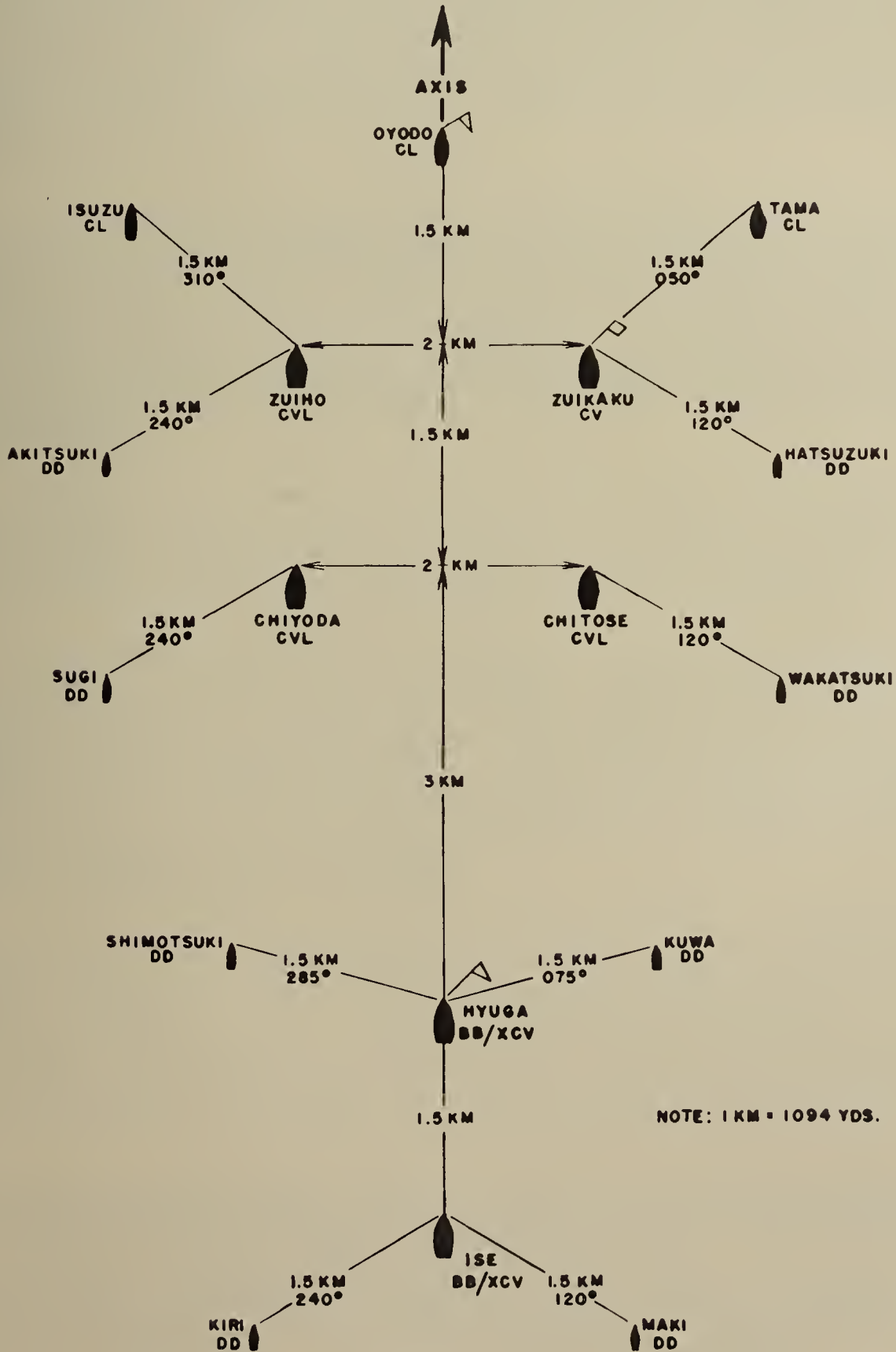


### MAIN FORCE NO. 1 ALERT CRUISING DISPOSITION

(EMPLOYED FOR A/S ALERT)

DETAILED ACTION REPORT ISE, SHO NO. 1 OPERATION, OCTOBER 25TH, 1944

BATTLE FOR LEYTE GULF  
OCTOBER 1944







"No. One Alert Cruising Disposition (a) resembles dispositions in common use before World War II, when the principal threat during night steaming was a surprise torpedo attack by destroyers. In this earlier period, concentration of the rapid fire guns of the light cruisers ahead of the capital ships in the sector of maximum threat, and use of destroyers for flank coverage would have been appropriate. Before the advent of radar, station-keeping problems would have favored relatively long and narrow dispositions, like the one here considered", and (b) "poorly employed available sonars and radars to meet the dominant threat of submarine attack. Specific reasons for this failure cannot be determined from the disposition alone, but it should be recalled that the vital electronic devices, radar and sonar, were still relatively new at the time."\*

\* \* \*

THE CONSIDERABLE DIFFERENCE IN ANTISUBMARINE WARFARE CONCEPTS BETWEEN THE U.S. AND THE JAPANESE NAVIES AT THIS TIME POINTS UP THE FACT THAT IN PERIODS OF RAPIDLY CHANGING TECHNOLOGY COMMANDERS FREQUENTLY MEET CONDITIONS WITH WHICH THEY HAVE HAD NO PREVIOUS EXPERIENCE AND TO WHICH PREWAR AND EVEN WARTIME TACTICAL PUBLICATIONS ARE NOT RELEVANT. IT THEREFORE IS OF THE UTMOST IMPORTANCE THAT WARTIME LESSONS LEARNED BY THE WHOLE FLEET BE "POOLED" AS RAPIDLY AS POSSIBLE AND INCORPORATED INTO DEPARTMENTAL, FLEET AND OTHER TACTICAL PUBLICATIONS.\*

REVISIONS IN TACTICAL DOCTRINES MUST REFLECT IMPROVEMENTS IN OWN AND ENEMY WEAPONS SYSTEMS WHEREIN THE LATTER MAY CHANGE THE NATURE OF THE THREAT; THE FORMER MAY MAKE NEW DEFENSIVE TECHNIQUES POSSIBLE. SUCH REVISIONS, IF TIMELY, SHOULD ENHANCE GREATLY THE VALUE OF THE PUBLICATIONS.\*

IN DETERMINING HOW BEST TO EMPLOY HIS FORCES, THE COMMANDER SHOULD NOT RELY ENTIRELY UPON THE ABOVE DEPARTMENTAL, FLEET AND OTHER TACTICAL PUBLICATIONS BUT, UNDERSTANDING THEIR BASES, SHOULD EMPLOY THEM AS GENERAL GUIDES IN THE PREPARATION OF HIS OWN DISPOSITIONS, AND IN ARRIVING AT HIS OWN TACTICAL DECISIONS.\* HE SHOULD BEAR IN MIND THAT THESE GENERAL GUIDE LINES MUST BE MODIFIED BY LOCAL FACTORS SUCH AS THE (A) NATURE OF THE THREAT, (B) SPECIFIC CAPABILITIES AND THE STATE OF TRAINING OF THE FORCES AT HAND AND (C) OCEANOGRAPHIC AND METEOROLOGICAL CONDITIONS.\*

Also at 1735 he issued his air instructions for the following day. These called for: (a) a search departing at 0545 by six planes from the ZUIKAKU and three from the ZUIHO with the base line 178°(T); (b) an antisubmarine patrol from 0600 to 1750 by planes from OYODO and CHITOSE; (c) an air attack group "standing by" from 0600 to 1800 consisting of eight fighter bombers, eight fighters and two carrier attack planes all from ZUIKAKU; (d) a CAP of four fighters from ZUIKAKU on alert from 0600 to 1800 but not airborne.\*\*

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\* Operations Evaluation Group, Office of the Chief of Naval Operations letter May 8th, 1957 to Commodore R. W. Bates, USN, Ret., Head, World War II Battle Evaluation Group, Naval War College.

\*\* Commander Main Force Visual Dispatch 201735 October 1944 to Main Force, (Main Force SigOrd No. 2), Detailed Action Report ZUIHO, SHO No. 1 Operation, October 20th - 25th, 1944, WDC Document 161008.

October 20th

In making this air plan it seems likely that he knew Commander SIXTH Base Air Force had directed that aircraft from Nansei Shoto and Formosa commencing October 20th were to fly antisubmarine searches for his command.\*

Commander Main Force was probably pleased at his good fortune in having successfully completed his antisubmarine operations since his Anti-Submarine Sweep Unit had made no contacts; neither had shore-based air. However, commencing at 1745, he received several contact reports. The first was from a shore-based plane which reported having sighted an enemy submarine bearing 170°(T), distant fifteen kilometers from the ZUIKAKU.\*\* The Commanding Officer ZUIKAKU immediately took neutralizing action and Commander Main Force at 1756 increased speed to twenty knots,\*\*\* and changed course to 110°(T).\*\*\*\*

The 1745 contact was followed at 1759 by one from the ZUIKAKU which detected a submarine bearing 130°(T). No avoiding action appears to have been taken.\*\*\*

At 1830 the CHITOSE reported a radar contact on a submarine bearing 110°(T),\*\*\* and at 1851 Commander Main Force changed course to 070°(T).\*\*\*\* Actually all submarine contacts were false. Although Commander Main Force did not know it he had succeeded in sortieing undetected.

At 1957 he changed course to 140°(T).\*\*\*\*

At 2130\*\* he was advised by CinC Combined Fleet that the FIRST Striking Force had been removed from the Mobile Force and had been placed under the direct command of CinC Combined Fleet.\*\*\*\*\* Since this was in accordance with his previous recommendations as Commander Mobile Force he no doubt was very gratified as it left him with the sole responsibility of the Main Force as Commander Main Force. Certainly, he could not properly exercise operational control of the FIRST Striking Force while he was operating in radio silence and, besides, the forces were so separated that the close command of fleet forces normally connection with fleet action would not obtain.

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\* Commander 6TH Base Air Force Dispatch 182012 October 1944 to 6TH Base Air Force, (6TH Base Air Force DesOpOrd No. 80), War Diary 25TH Air Flotilla, (Western Attack Force 2), October 1944, WDC Document 160137, NA 12278.

\*\* Detailed Action Report Main Force, SHO No. 1 Operation, October 20th - 29th, 1944, WDC Document 161005, NA 11744.

\*\*\* Detailed Action Report ZUIKAKU, SHO No. 1 Operation, October 20th - 25th, 1944, WDC Document 161008.

\*\*\*\* Track Chart ZUIHO, October 20th - 25th, 1944, Detailed Action Report ZUIHO, SHO No. 1 Operation, October 20th - 25th, 1944, WDC Document 161008.

\*\*\*\*\* CinC Combined Fleet Dispatch 201802 October 1944 to Commanders Mobile Force, 1ST Striking Force, SW Area Force, 2ND Striking Force, (Combined Fleet DesOpOrd No. 367), War Diary BATDIV 1, October 1944, WDC Document 161638, NA 11739.



At 2138 he received a dispatch from Imperial General Headquarters (Navy Section) that the Allies had landed at two points on Leyte and had occupied Panaon Island, the northern tip of Dinagat Island and Homonhon Island\*

As a result of his submarine contacts he had been forced to change course to the eastward more than he had originally planned. During this eastward movement he became convinced that the Allies were gradually concentrating submarines along Sortie Route ONE. He therefore decided that he would follow Sortie Route TWO.\* Actually (Plate XXIV), he did not follow Sortie Route TWO, but instead kept to the westward of it during the remainder of this day. Realizing this, at 2145, he advised his command that his planned movements for the following day were:

(a) At 0000, course 180°(T), speed eighteen.

(b) At 0600, speed sixteen.

(c) At 0800, course 205°(T).\*\*

The above route was well chosen in that it was also beyond the range of Allied air searches from Saipan and east of the submarine operating areas of the Nansei Shoto (MARU MORGUE) submarines. It was a superior course to that originally designated in that it was less likely to encounter Allied submarines.

It would appear from the action of Commander Main Force and from his tracks on sortie, that, although he had hoped to sortie undetected, he did not really expect such good fortune. Instead, the most that he could hope for would be to create the impression that he was en route Tokyo Bay. This would account in part for his movements to the eastward referred to previously; 110°(T) at 1756 and 070°(T) at 1851, after contacting what he thought were Allied submarines.\*\*\*

He had every reason to expect to encounter Allied submarines off the entrance to Bungo Suido because not only was this the principal exit to the Pacific Ocean from the Inland Sea but also only four days earlier the SUZUTSUKI had been torpedoed in that very area. The fact that he had succeeded in sortieing undetected was not due to any of the antisubmarine measures which he had adopted but was due almost entirely to the fact that the Allied submarines which had been patrolling the entrance to Bungo Suido from October 10th, had been removed from that immediate area. It will be recalled that the wolf pack commander on October 18th having decided that (a) his

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\* Detailed Action Report Main Force, SHO No. 1 Operation, October 20th - 29th, 1944, WDC Document 161005, NA 11744.

\*\* Commander Main Force Visual Dispatch 202145 October 1944 to Main Force, Detailed Action Report ZUIHO, SHO No. 1 Operation, October 20th - 25th, 1944, WDC Document 161008.

\*\*\* Track Chart ZUIHO, October 20th - 25th, 1944, Detailed Action Report ZUIHO, SHO No. 1 Operation, October 20th - 25th, 1944, WDC Document 161008.

objective "the prevention of the undetected sortie of enemy task forces through Bungo Suido"\* no longer obtained and (b) his primary mission now was to attack,\*\* had removed his submarines from across the entrance to Bungo Suido and had positioned (1) the BESUGO and the RONQUIL off Kyushu north and south of Latitude 32°-00'N, along the 100 fathom curve and (2) had ordered the BAGILAN to patrol off Okinoshima.\*\* Had the GABILAN remained off Okinoshima she might have sighted the Main Force sortieing. However, she was not on this station because at 2150 October 19th she had received a dispatch from CTF 17 detaching her from the wolf pack and ordering her to a new station off Kii Suido,\*\*\* and had promptly departed for the new area. Thus Bungo Suido was left unobserved except for the extreme western portion where the BESUGO and RONQUIL were stationed as above indicated.

Although Commander Main Force had reason to believe that the sortie of his command had been observed by Allied submarines he correctly continued to operate as though this had not occurred and maintained radio silence.\*\*\*\*

During the day he received numerous sight contact reports from the base air forces, as well as even more numerous radio direction finder fixes from the Japanese communication system (Plate XXII). It was important that he be kept informed as to the movements of the Allied carriers in particular since his own movements would be governed thereby.

In connection with the contact reports and other information, it is assumed that Commander Main Force received most of the information received by Commander FIRST Striking Force and entered under the "Operations of Commander FIRST Striking Force, October 20th".

While he was interested in the sight contacts off Leyte he was not primarily concerned about them because they lay in the province of CinC Combined Fleet, Commander SW Area Force and Commander FIRST Striking Force. His particular concern lay in the radio direction finder fixes which indicated that there were Allied carrier task groups operating in the sea areas to the eastward of the Philippines (Luzon).\*\*\*\*\* He probably wondered what their composition was and was disappointed because the FIFTH Base Air Force searches over this area (actually the searches had not been made) had made no sight contacts and therefore, he had to make an educated guess.

IT IS OF COURSE NOT KNOWN WHAT WEIGHT HE GAVE TO THE INFORMATION ON THE COMPOSITION OF TF 38 WHICH HAD BEEN OBTAINED FROM PRISONERS OF WAR. HOWEVER, SINCE ON THE PREVIOUS DAY, AS POINTED OUT ABOVE, JAPANESE PLANES HAD

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\* CTF 17 Operation Order 328-44, Serial 00847, September 25th, 1944.  
 \*\* BESUGO Dispatch 181424 October 1944 to CTF 17.  
 \*\*\* CTF 17 Dispatch 191007 October 1944 to GABILAN.  
 \*\*\*\* USSBS Interrogation of Japanese Officials, Nav No. 55, Interrogation of Vice Admiral Jisaburo, Ozawa, ex-IJN, Volume I, Page 221.  
 \*\*\*\*\* Detailed Action Report Main Force, SHO No. 1 Operation, October 20th - 29th, 1944, WDC Document 161005, NA 11744.



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COM ADVANCE EXPEDITIONARY FORCE  
October 20th

REPORTED SIXTEEN LARGE AND SMALL CARRIERS AND FIVE ESCORT CARRIERS OFF THE PHILIPPINES,\* AND SINCE THE COMPOSITION OF TF 38 AS REPORTED BY PRISONERS OF WAR WAS LIKEWISE SIXTEEN CARRIERS WITH FIVE REPLACEMENT CARRIERS HE MUST HAVE BEEN STRUCK WITH THE SIMILARITY OF THESE REPORTS AND MAY HAVE FELT THAT HE WAS TO BE CONFRONTED WITH TF 38 IN FULL STRENGTH.

At 2400 the Main Force was bearing 124°(T), distant 108 miles from Okinoshima (Bungo Suido).

(2) Operations of Commander Advance Expeditionary Force, October 20th.

During the day one additional submarine, the RO-41, which had finally completed preparations—it will be recalled that this submarine with RO-43 and RO-46 had but recently (about October 15th) returned from the Palau Operation—departed the Inland Sea for the operating area to the eastward of the Philippines.\*\* Commander Advance Expeditionary Force, in addition to the above submarine, had nine submarines at sea en route the battle area. Four of these submarines (I-26, 45, 54, 56) comprising the "A" Group, were to the eastward of Luzon with orders to attack the supply routes of the enemy. The remaining five submarines (I-38, 41, 46, 53, RO-43) (which with the RO-41 and RO-46 comprised the "B" Group), had departed on the previous two days, and were now en route to the same area with the same instructions as those of the "A" Group. An additional submarine, the I-44, was returning to the Inland Sea having developed engine trouble.\*\*\*

At about 1032, Commander Advance Expeditionary Force received CinC Combined Fleet Dispatch Operation Order No. 365, which provide that if the "A" Group was unable to establish contact with enemy forces, Commander Advance Expeditionary Force for the purpose of destroying enemy task forces and invasion forces, in cooperation with friendly surface and air units, was to redeploy his entire strength in accordance with the A-3 deployment.\*\*\*\*

He now studied the intelligence, estimated the situation and finally, at 2053, directed the "A" and "B" Groups as follows:

"1. The "A" Group will speedily proceed in secrecy to the following deployment:

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\* Commander 5TH Base Air Force Dispatch 191336 October 1944 to Battle Report Addressees, 5TH Base Air Force, War Diary 103RD Attack Unit, (701ST Air Group), October 1944, WDC Document 160258, NA 12592.

\*\* Merit Rating Reports of Naval Ship Units, (Submarine Operations, October 1944), WDC Document 161001.

\*\*\* Submarine Operations in Philippine Waters, 1944-1945, Department of the Army, Historical Division File No. 8-5, JS-15, ATIS Document, October 30th, 1947.

\*\*\*\* CinC Combined Fleet Dispatch 201002 October 1944 to Advance Expeditionary Force, Imperial GHQ (Navy Section), etc., (Combined Fleet DesOpOrd No. 365), Detailed Action Report ZUIKAKU, SHO No. 1 Operation, October 20th - 25th, 1944, WDC Document 161008.

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No. 3 dispersed deployment (rectangular); base point YA-KI-U-00\* (10°-00'N, 130°-00'E); deployment line 350°; distance fifty miles; in the order of I-54, I-26, I-56 and I-45; TO, RU, WA, RE.

"2. The "B" Group will endeavor to sortie in force to the following deployment:

No. 3 dispersed deployment (rectangular); base point YA-HA-KU-00 (14°-00'N, 129°-00'E); deployment line 350°; distance fifty miles; in the order of RO-41, I-38, RO-46, I-53, RO-43, I-46 and I-41; TO, RI, RU, WA, RE, TSU, NE."\*\*

By this order he directed the submarine to take stations shown in Plate XXVI.\*\*\*

Prior to discussing the above deployment it seems wise to insert here the following considerations which will be the guiding factors regarding the effectiveness of Japanese submarine operations:

(a) (1) The I type submarines carried both air search and surface search radars.

(2) The RO type submarines, with the exception of the RO-109 and RO-112, were not equipped with radar. The RO-109 and RO-112 were equipped with air search radar only.

(b) The essential characteristics of these radars were:

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\* YA-KI-U-00 was a code which enabled the submarine commander to locate a reference point and referred to standing grids of the Pacific area for 1944. YA being the largest grid square, KI being one of the grid squares within the YA grid, and U being one of the grid squares within the KI grid. 00 was a point on the U grid. YA-KI-U-00 was, therefore, used to determine the base point which in this case was Latitude 10°-00'N, Longitude 130°-00'E. Upon determining that point by the use of the YA, KI, and U grids, the submarine commander then overlaid his fifty mile square plotting grid on the navigational plotting sheet of the area with the upper right corner of the grid on the base point. He then swung the grid to determine the 350° offset and located the directed position of his submarine within the designated square of his plotting grid. HQ, USAFFE/8A, Military History Office letter July 14th, 1955 to President, Naval War College.

\*\* Map No. 6, Disposition of KO and OTSU Submarine Divisions, October 20th, 1944; Submarine Operations in the Third Phase Operations, Part IV, September 1944 - February 1945, Japanese Monograph No. 184, compiled by the Second Historical Records Section of the Repatriation Relief Bureau of the Welfare Ministry, June 1954.

\*\*\* Commander Advance Expeditionary Force Dispatch 202053 October 1944 to Advance Force and Commander of Combined Fleet, (Advance Expeditionary Force DesOpOrd No. 1), Detailed Action Report BATDIV 1, SHO No. 1 Operation, October 18th - 28th, 1944, WDC Document 161005, NA 11744.









(1) Surface search: although capable of detecting a carrier at twenty miles and a surfaced submarine at five miles, this was rare. In fact some records gave it a detection range as low as two and one-half miles on a 1200 ton ship. However, the radar, although a great technical advance, was difficult to maintain in an operating condition and required great attention. For this reason it was only employed on dark nights and in reduced visibility.

(2) Air search: capable of reliable ranges of detection as follows: a single fighter plane at thirty miles and a single B-29 at sixty-five miles. It was considered by the Japanese to be an excellent radar, and was employed by them (a) prior to surfacing, as a warning device, and (b) when surfaced, as a general air search radar.

(3) All submarines were equipped with radar intercept (ECM) equipment.

(c) The Japanese periscopes were of the same general characteristics as those of the U.S. Navy at the same time.\*

(d) Because of the lack of definite data regarding the general reliable ranges to be expected with the surface search radars, and although the make up and performance of Japanese submarine radars was inferior to corresponding U.S. Navy equipment,\* it will be considered for this analysis that the surface search radars had the same general characteristics as those of the U.S. Navy. This meant that the effective average contact ranges were:\*\*

(1) On independent merchant ships

(a) Radar

(1) Surface - six miles

(2) Submerged - none

(b) Periscope - five miles.

(2) On escorted combatant ships

(a) Radar

(1) Surface - ten miles

(2) Submerged - none

(b) Periscope - six miles

\* Letter from Rear Admiral W. D. Leggett, Jr., USN, Chief of the Bureau of Ships to Commodore R. W. Bates, USN, Ret., Head, World War II Battle Evaluation Group, September 11th, 1953.

\*\* Submarine Warfare Instructions (USF 9), Navy Department, Office of the Chief of Naval Operations, 1946, Page 16-5, Paragraph 1604.

In the deployment given above, it should be apparent that Commander Advance Expeditionary Force's plan was inadequate for the purpose of destroying Allied carrier and invasion forces. This was so for the submarines were stationed (a) so far apart (fifty miles between centers of grid squares) as to make it possible for an Allied surface force to pass through the patrol lines without detection, and (b) so that even if the surface force were detected not more than one submarine would be likely to gain an attack position. In this connection, Submarine Warfare Instructions (1946) state that a scouting distance (along a line normal to the expected enemy course) of from twenty to forty miles is recommended for usual conditions of area search.\*

It seems highly probable that Commander Advance Expeditionary Force realized the above weaknesses but, in view of his limited number of submarines, did not desire to move them into the congested waters off Samar and Leyte Gulf unless the situation required it.

Commander Advance Expeditionary Force expected that all submarines would be on station by the 24th or 25th.\*\*

Sometime during the day (as had been determined on October 17th), in an effort to deploy as many submarines as possible, the submarines RO-109 and RO-112 were transferred from the Kure Naval District Force to the Advance Expeditionary Force.\*\*\* Although the transfer was effective today (October 20th), the submarines were not yet ready for sea. Actually, neither submarine would be in the Philippine area by October 25th.

During the day Japanese submarines do not appear to have made any contacts on Allied surface or air forces nor were they contacted by them.

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- \* Submarine Warfare Instructions (USF 9) Navy Department, Office of the Chief of Naval Operations, 1946, Page 16-8, Paragraph 1614.
- \*\* Submarine Operations in Philippine Waters, 1944-45, ATIS Document, October 30th, 1947, Department of the Army, Historical Division File No. 8-5, JS-15.
- \*\*\* Submarine Operations in the Third Phase Operations, Part IV, September 1944 - February 1945, Japanese Monograph No. 184, compiled by the Second Historical Records Section of the Repatriation Relief Bureau of the Welfare Ministry, June 1954; also the Imperial Japanese Navy in World War II, prepared by GHQ, FEC, Military History Section, Special Staff, February 1952.



## (3) Operations of Commander SIXTH Base Air Force, October 20th.

Commander SIXTH Base Air Force was at his headquarters at Takao. At 0002 his Chief of Staff sent a dispatch giving the essentials of his attack organization.\* It was issued to his subordinate units apparently for planning purposes and included 330 aircraft composed of thirty interceptor fighters, 162 carrier-type fighters, sixty-seven carrier-type attack bomber and reconnaissance planes, eighteen land reconnaissance (night fighters), twelve land attack, six two-engine land bombers, twenty-nine reconnaissance seaplanes and six flying boats. This number can be taken logically as the approximate number of operational aircraft which Commander SIXTH Base Air Force expected to have in the Philippines at the start of his general offensive from a total of 505 planes operational in his force.

He knew, of course, since it was Japanese policy to so advise him, that one of the radar equipped flying boats of the 901st Air Group, which was to have searched from Garan Bi, had cancelled its flight because of engine trouble, but by dawn he knew that the other plane which had taken off just before midnight had searched the sector 100°-110°(T) from Garan Bi to a distance of 350 miles with negative results.\*\* He now awaited the results of his morning searches. He appears to have been concerned lest the enemy, which appeared to be moving south to the Philippines, might reverse its tracks and attack Formosa instead. Such an attack would seriously handicap the concentration and reorganization of his units and their further deployment to the Philippines. It could so reduce his combat strength as to prove fatal to his hope of accomplishing his mission under the SHO Plan.

At about 0843 he received a dispatch from CinC Combined Fleet wherein that commander, after announcing that the Allies were landing with their main strength in the central Philippines, set the date for the penetration operation as October 25th, and among orders to his other commanders directed Commander SIXTH Base Air Force to advance to the Philippines where, under the command of Commander SW Area Force, he was to launch an all-out offensive against the Allied carrier forces on October 24th, Y-day.\*\*\*

Commander SIXTH Base Air Force had been waiting for this plan. On the previous day, having not received a final plan of operation—it will be recalled that it was Japanese policy to follow up an activation order with an overall plan—he had issued his own plan based on the Chief of Staff Combined Fleet's tentative plan of that date but he had reason to feel that this tentative plan would be changed. Now the new plan had been promulgated and he

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\* CofS 6TH Base Air Force Dispatch 200002 October 1944, (addressees unknown), War Diary 103RD Attack Unit, (701ST Air Group), Kokubu Detachment, October 13th - 31st, 1944, WDC Document 160258, NA 12592.

\*\* Detailed Action Report 901ST Air Group, Night Searches, October 10th - 28th, 1944, WDC Document 160551, NA 12402.

\*\*\* CinC Combined Fleet Dispatch 200813 October 1944 to Combined Fleet, (Combined Fleet DesOpOrd No. 363), War Diary DESRON 1, October 1944, WDC Document 161638, NA 11739.

could see that, except for delaying X-day twenty-four hours, that is from October 24th to October 25th, there was no other change as regards his command that could be considered vital. The attack scheduled for October 24th was new in that his orders to accomplish this with his whole force had come from Combined Fleet Headquarters; still, the SHO One Plan provided for attacks by the base air forces commencing on X-1 day which was, of course, October 24th.\*

He was gratified at his commander in chief's understanding of the command difficulties incident to the movement of the SIXTH Base Air Force to the Philippines, which difficulties were cleared up, in part, in this order by ordering him, upon arrival in the Philippines, to report to Commander SW Area Force for duty. However, there still remained a confusion because he knew that while in the Philippines he would either operate in cooperation with Commander FIFTH Base Air Force or he would command both air forces,\*\* and this had not as yet been settled. The former appeared more likely.

At 0858 he issued a dispatch order setting up the command organization of the various units to be deployed to the Philippines.\*\*\* The units were organized as Western Attack Force ZERO under the direct command of Commander SIXTH Base Air Force. This organization was to be applicable principally to ground activities while air operations would follow the command structure in his tactical organization.

At about 0904 he received a dispatch from CinC Combined Fleet which directed Commander SECOND Striking Force to consult with him regarding the assignment of one to three destroyers as required to escort the convoy carrying SIXTH Base Air Force personnel and equipment from Formosa to the Philippines.\*\*\*\* Records available do not indicate whether or not the above conference occurred.

At about 1000 he received a dispatch from Commander Main Force wherein that commander advised all commands that (a) the Main Force would sortie from Bungo Suido at 1800 October 20th, (b) gave the planned route that the force

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\* Mobile Force Operation Order No. 76, August 10th, 1944, Chapter II, Concrete Operational Policy, Section A, Paragraph 1, ATIS Document No. 39, Part I, April 22nd, 1945 (NACHI Document).

\*\* 6TH Base Air Force OpOrd No. 6, File of 6TH Base Air Force Operation Orders and Supplemental Material obtained from Captain Bunzo Shibata, IJN, Senior Staff Officer, 6TH Base Air Force, GHQ, FEC, Military History Section Microfilm (unnumbered).

\*\*\* Commander 6TH Base Air Force Dispatch 200858 October 1944 to 6TH Base Air Force, (6TH Base Air Force DesOpOrd No. 83), War Diary 103RD Attack Unit, (701ST Air Group), Kokubu Detachment, October 13th - 31st, 1944, WDC Document 160258, NA 12592.

\*\*\*\* CinC Combined Fleet Dispatch 200834 October 1944 to Commanders 2ND Striking Force, DESRON 1, (Combined Fleet DesOpOrd No. 460), War Diary DESRON 1, October 1944, WDC Document 161638, NA 11739.



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would follow, and (c) requested that this information be given wide dissemination in order to assist in identification.\* He had probably received previously Commander Mobile Force dispatch 200021 in which he had outlined the deployment of the Main Force and the SECOND Striking Force if these two forces were to be joined.\*\*

These dispatches were of considerable importance to him because on October 16th CinC Combined Fleet had (a) placed certain elements of the 901st, 953rd and Okinawa Air Groups, located in the Formosa and Nansei Shoto areas, under Commander SIXTH Base Air Force effective October 10th, for the SHO Operation, and (b) had provided, at the same time, that these units would retain some responsibility to their former commander with respect to surface escort operations.\*\*\* Because he was operating these units, Commander SIXTH Base Air Force necessarily had to insure that they would not fail to provide escort for the Main Force. He had accomplished this when, on October 18th, he had directed, in part, that that portion of the 901st and 953rd Air Groups which was originally disposed in the Formosa and Nansei Shoto areas was to return to these areas from its dispersal bases and was to provide antisubmarine patrols for the FIRST\*\*\*\* and SECOND Striking Forces commencing October 20th.\*\*\*\*\*

At about 1009 he received a dispatch from the Chief of Staff Combined Fleet pointing out that Japanese aircraft had been attacked in unexpected areas and advising caution.\*\*\*\*\*

At about 1032 he received a dispatch originated by the Chief of Staff Combined Fleet to Commander Advance Expeditionary Force (Submarines) which

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- \* Commander Mobile Force Dispatch 200930 October 1944 to CinC Combined Fleet, Commanders 1ST and 2ND Striking Forces, 5TH, 6TH and 7TH Base Air Forces, SW Area Force, etc., Detailed Action Report No. 2, OYODO, SHO No. 1 Operation, October 20th - 28th, 1944, WDC Document 161007.
- \*\* Commander Mobile Force Dispatch 200021 October 1944 to Commanders 1ST and 2ND Striking Forces, Imperial GHQ (Navy Section), 5TH, 6TH and 7TH Base Air Forces, CinC Combined Fleet, etc., (Mobile Force DesOpOrd No. 62), Detailed Action Report Main Force, SHO No. 1 Operation, October 20th - 29th, 1944, WDC Document 161005, NA 11744.
- \*\*\* CinC Combined Fleet Dispatch 161400 October 1944 to Combined Fleet, (Combined Fleet SpDesOpOrd No. 12), War Diary 25TH Air Flotilla, October 1944, WDC Document 160137, NA 12278.
- \*\*\*\* Likely an error--should properly have been Main Force since only the Main Force and the 2ND Striking Force would be in the same area covered by Formosa and Nansei Shoto-based planes at this time.
- \*\*\*\*\* Commander 6TH Base Air Force Dispatch 182012 October 1944 to 6TH Base Air Force, (6TH Base Air Force DesOpOrd No. 80), War Diary 25th Air Flotilla, October 1944, WDC Document 160137, NA 12278.
- \*\*\*\*\* CofS Combined Fleet Dispatch 200939 October 1944 to All Air Groups, etc., War Diary 101ST Air Flotilla, October 1944, WDC Document 160304, NA 12542.

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stated that if unable to contact the enemy he was, at his discretion, to re-deploy all of his submarines to dispersed stations off Leyte in Area KO-3.\*

This dispatch was likewise of considerable importance to him because he now knew where friendly submarines would be operating during the forthcoming crucial days. Although he realized that there were only a limited number of submarines available, he had reason to believe that he might get certain reconnaissance information from them.

At about 1114 he received a dispatch from CinC Combined Fleet which, among other items, relieved the SIXTH and SEVENTH Base Air Forces of responsibility for patrols east of Honshu, Kyushu and Okinawa.\*\* Whether or not this action was a result of the dispatch\*\*\* which his Chief of Staff had sent the day previously is not known. However, since it made available larger forces to his command, it is assumed that it met with his thorough approval.

During the forenoon he learned of the Allied air attacks in the Philippines and that his morning searches had all been negative.

At about 1215 he learned that CinC Combined Fleet had returned to his headquarters at Hiyoshi.\*\*\*\*

By early afternoon he had received reports that (a) the enemy had landed at 1130 at Tacloban and (b) that two to three Allied task groups containing six to ten CVE's (escort carriers) had been observed southeast of Samar.\*\*\*\*\* Two of these sightings were apparently made at 0815 (Contact C) and 1240 (Contact E)\*\*\*\*\* These were on task units of TG 77.4 which were operating to the eastward of Leyte Gulf in support of the landings.

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- \* CinC Combined Fleet Dispatch 201002 October 1944 to Commander Advance Expeditionary Force (Submarines), Imperial GHQ (Navy Section), etc., (Combined Fleet DesOpOrd No. 365), Detailed Action Report ZUIKAKU, SHO No. 1 Operation, October 20th - 25th, 1944, WDC Document 161008.
- \*\* CinC Combined Fleet Dispatch 201044 October 1944 to All Commanders 6TH and 7TH Base Air Forces, (Combined Fleet DesOpOrd No. 366), Detailed Action Report No. 2, Northern Attack Force, (2ND Base Air Force), October 10th - November 15th, 1944, WDC Document 161645, NA 12262.
- \*\*\* CofS 6TH Base Air Force Dispatch 190030 October 1944 to Commanders 25TH and 51ST Air Flotillas, Shinchiku Air Base, Detailed Action Report No. 2, Northern Attack Force, (2ND Base Air Force), October 10th - November 15TH, 1944, WDC Document 161645, NA 12262.
- \*\*\*\* CinC Combined Fleet Dispatch 201145 October 1944 to All Fleet and Squadron Commanders, Detailed Action Report, BATDIV 1, SHO No. 1 Operation, October 18th - 28th, 1944, WDC Document 161005, NA 11744.
- \*\*\*\*\* Material for Situation Estimates, 1ST Section, Naval General Staff, October 1944, WDC Document 216764 (Microfilm).
- \*\*\*\*\* Appended Chart I, Enemy Fleet Dispositions on October 20th, 1944, Detailed Action Report Main Force, SHO No. 1 Operation, October 20th - 29th, 1944, WDC Document 161005, NA 11744.



HE NOW, IN PREPARATION FOR HIS MOVEMENTS TO THE PHILIPPINES AND THE ROLE OF THE SIXTH BASE AIR FORCE THERE, HELD A COORDINATION CONFERENCE OF HIS ATTACK UNIT COMMANDERS AT DAIKOZAN.\*

THIS WAS A VERY WISE ACTION ON HIS PART BECAUSE MANY OF HIS COMMANDERS WERE NEW, HAVING REPORTED WITH THE REINFORCEMENTS, SOME HAD SUCCEEDED TO COMMAND BECAUSE THEIR UNIT COMMANDERS HAD BEEN KILLED OR DISABLED, AND OTHERS HAD HAD THE UNHAPPY EXPERIENCE OF OBSERVING THE VERY HEAVY LOSSES, AND CONSEQUENT LESSENING OF THE MORALE OF THE BASE AIR FORCES DURING THE BATTLE OFF FORMOSA. HOWEVER, THERE HAD BEEN NO ALLIED CARRIER-BASED AIR ATTACKS ON OKINAWA SINCE OCTOBER 14TH, AND NO B-29 AIR ATTACKS SINCE OCTOBER 17TH, WHICH LATTER ATTACKS HAD BEEN LOCALIZED IN SW FORMOSA.

Commander SIXTH Base Air Force had made the most of the resulting opportunity to regroup his shattered force, to complete the movement to Formosa, and to prepare for the SHO One deployment to the Philippines. He was now almost ready for the latter deployment and therefore it was correct to discuss his plans with his subordinates.

AS HAS BEEN POINTED OUT IN VOLUME II\*\* THERE IS NO SUBSTITUTE FOR PERSONAL CONFERENCES AND FREE DISCUSSIONS BECAUSE IN SUCH CONFERENCES THE SUBORDINATES MAY BE FAMILIARIZED WITH THE PLANS AND HOPES OF THE COMMANDER AND MAY DISCUSS THEIR PROBLEMS AMONG THEMSELVES AND WITH THE COMMANDER. IF THIS IS ADEQUATELY ACCOMPLISHED, THEN, IN THE ABSENCE OF THE COMMANDER, THEY CAN BE EXPECTED TO ACT AS HE WOULD HAVE THEM ACT. THIS WOULD BE PARTICULARLY IMPORTANT IN THE PHILIPPINES BECAUSE IT WAS TO BE EXPECTED THAT THE AIR POWER OF THE ALLIED CARRIER TASK FORCES WOULD INTERFERE WITH COMMUNICATIONS AND WOULD FORCE MANY LESSER COMMANDERS TO MAKE DECISIONS WITHOUT ANY REFERENCE WHATSOEVER TO THEIR IMMEDIATE SUPERIOR.

Having completed the conference he took action as follows: (a) he sent a senior staff officer in the afternoon to the Philippines to confer with the commanders there to firm up details of basing, servicing, and operational plans,\*\*\* (b) he transferred the FIFTH and 256th Attack Units from the 752nd Air Group to the 701st Air Group.\* He appears to have done this for the purpose of simplifying administrative control because the above units were the only units of the 752nd Air Group still remaining under his command; the other two units were in the "T" Force.

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\* War Diary 252ND Attack Unit, October 14th - November 15th, 1944, WDC Document 160258, NA 12592.

\*\* Volume II, Battle for Leyte Gulf (NavPers 92194), Naval War College, 1955, "Operations of Commander Mobile Force, October 18th", Chapter IV (A) (1).

\*\*\* Memorandum Notes of Captain Bunzo Shibata, IJN, Senior Staff Officer, 6TH Base Air Force, October 10th - 23rd, 1944, Department of the Army, Historical Division, Microfilm HS-22, Item B.

Sometime during this day, although the text of the order\* is not available to this study; he received word that CinC Combined Fleet had transferred the 702nd Attack Unit from the "T" Force to the SIXTH Base Air Force. This attack unit had been deployed too late to be included in the "T" Force attacks from Kyushu. Since it consisted of at least twenty-nine land attack planes it was a significant addition to his command.

It seems clear that at this time and possibly in the same dispatch he received other "T" Force units as well, notably the 701st and 303rd Fighter Units and the 301st Reconnaissance Unit.\*\* This seems so because these units are included together with the 702nd Attack Unit in an attack organization which Commander SIXTH Base Air Force issued the following day.

From the above Commander SIXTH Base Air Force could see that for the accomplishment of his objective, he was being provided with maximum forces available in the Combined Fleet.

It seems likely that at about 1419, because of his covering responsibilities, he received word that the Main Force had sortied.\*\*\* Since he knew that the Main Force was not expected to sortie from Bungo Suido until 1800 it seems reasonable to say that he realized that this dispatch merely referred to the departure of that command from its anchorages in the Inland Sea.

At 1442 he ordered search and attack operations for the SIXTH Base Air Force for the next day. Since he had been relieved of responsibility for other sectors he was now concerned only with searches from Formosa prior to his move to the Philippines. His order, which was issued as SIXTH Base Air Force DesOpOrd No. 84, was:

1. Search

a. F patrol sector

(1) FS-27, F-23 (search radius 450 miles, lateral search ninety miles), 901st Air Group.

(2) FS-31, F-20 (search radius 450 miles).

b. FS patrol sector

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\* CinC Combined Fleet DesOpOrd No. 349, (Date-Time-Group not available), War Diary 752nd Air Group, October 1944, WDC Document 161634, NA 13230.

\*\* 6TH Base Air Force Operation Order No. 110, October 21st, 1944, File of 6TH Base Air Force Operations Orders and Supplemental Material obtained from Captain Bunzo Shibata, IJN, Senior Staff Officer, 6TH Base Air Force, GHQ, FEC, Military History Section Microfilm (unnumbered).

\*\*\* Commander Mobile Force Dispatch 201349 October 1944 to CinC Combined Fleet, Detailed Action Report No. 3, YAMATO, SHO No. 1 Antiair and Surface Actions, October 17th - 28th, 1944, WDC Document 161639.



(1) Base point: Karenko FS-27 (search radius 300 miles), EIGHTH Air Division.

(2) Base point: Ishigaki Island, FS-26 (search radius 200 miles), TWENTY-FIRST Air Flotilla.

## 2. Attack

SHO No. 1 attack forces--from 0600 to be ready to take off on thirty minutes notice, from 1000 to be ready to take off one hour's notice.\*

Note: In connection with the above, F-20 was 095°(T); F-23, 110°(T); F-26 and FS-26, 125°(T); F-27 and FS-27, 130°(T); F-31, 150°(T).

He may also have ordered another search to be flown from Garan Bi in the morning to cover the approximate sector between 110°-163°(T) to a distance of about 450 miles, but the records concerning it are not too specific. It is shown in a daily diagrammatic intelligence summary of enemy positions kept by Commander Main Force\*\* and also indicated in one other document which records at least one plane searching in that sector.\*\*\*

Sometime in the late afternoon he received a dispatch from Chief of Staff Combined Fleet in which a double penetration into Leyte Gulf was suggested for consideration by Commander FIRST Striking Force.\*\*\*\* This dispatch likely caused him considerable concern for if the FIFTH and SIXTH Base Air Forces were to furnish air cover to the FIRST Striking Force, the division of this latter force into two units would require a double covering effort. On the other hand, if the air support was to consist only of offensive attacks against the Allied carrier task forces then the division of forces would result in few changes in his plans. It can be safely assumed, that he closely watched future developments.

At 1655 his Chief of Staff sent a dispatch to the surface force commanders and to the SIXTH Base Air Force which dispatch stated (a) that an

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\* Commander 6TH Base Air Force Dispatch 201442 October 1944 to 6TH Base Air Force, (6TH Base Air Force DesOpOrd No. 84), Detailed Action Report 901st Air Group, Night Searches, October 10th - 28th, 1944, WDC Document 160551, NA 12402.

\*\* Appended Chart II, Enemy Fleet Dispositions on October 21st, Detailed Action Report Main Force, SHO No. 1 Operation, October 20th - 29th, 1944, WDC Document 161006, NA 11744.

\*\*\* Detailed Action Report No. 1, 263RD Attack Unit, (653RD Air Group), SHO Operations, October 14th - 21st, 1944, WDC Document 161004, NA 12605.

\*\*\*\* CofS Combined Fleet Dispatch 201006 October 1944, (Addressees Unknown except info COMBATDIV 1), Information compiled by Captain Toshikazu Ohmae, ex-IJN, Japanese Research Division, HQ, USAFFE, Military History Section, relating to Penetration Operations of 1ST Striking Force, Battle for Leyte Gulf, contained in HQ, USAFFE, Military History Section letter March 30th, 1954 to President, Naval War College.

attack had been scheduled by Commander Western Attack Force TWO against the "enemy task force east of Lamon Bay" on the night of October 22nd employing the 702nd Attack Unit and flying boats of the 901st Air Group, and (b) requested that surface force commanders make necessary arrangements.\*

From this dispatch, it is apparent that Commander SIXTH Base Air Force had earlier in the day informed the major fleet commanders of the essential elements of his operation order,\*\* which he was to promulgate the following day since the attack referred to is contained in that order. However, since none of the above surface forces were expected to be in the Lamon Bay area, the precise meaning of the dispatch is far from clear.

About 1710 he probably received a report of a 1640 contact on five battleships, ten old destroyers and twenty transports near Homonhon Island (Contact H).\*\*\* It is also likely that during the day he received, at least in summary, reports of the numerous radio direction finder fixes on enemy forces to the eastward of the northern and central Philippines, which indicated the presence of large forces--a number obviously with carriers as a nucleus.\*\*\*

The senior staff officer whom he had sent to Manila arrived there at sundown and immediately went into an operational conference with the staff of Commander FIFTH Base Air Force relative to the movement of the SIXTH Base Air Force to the Philippines. Matters discussed were deployment bases, location of headquarters and the state of readiness of the deployment bases.\*\*\*\*

At 2030 his Chief of Staff sent a dispatch to Commander SECOND Striking Force requesting that three destroyers proceed to Takao immediately in accordance with Combined Fleet DesOpOrd No. 378.\*\*\*\*\* Although the DesOpOrd number does not agree with the recorded number (DesOpOrd No. 460) of CinC Combined Fleet's dispatch sent that morning,\*\*\*\*\* it is presumed that the

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- \* CofS 6TH Base Air Force Dispatch 201655 October 1944 to 1ST and 2ND Striking Forces, Main Force, War Diary ZUIHO, October 1st - 25th, 1944, WDC Document 161636, NA 11739.
- \*\* 6TH Base Air Force Operation Order No. 110, October 21st, 1944, File of 6TH Base Air Force Operation Orders and Supplemental Material obtained from Captain Bunzo Shibata, IJN, Senior Staff Officer, 6TH Base Air Force, GHQ, FEC, Military History Section Microfilm (unnumbered).
- \*\*\* Appended Chart I, Enemy Fleet Dispositions on October 20th, 1944, Detailed Action Report Main Force, SHO No. 1 Operation, October 20th-29th, 1944, WDC Document 161005, NA 11744. (COMBATDIV 1 recorded ten cruisers rather than ten old destroyers).
- \*\*\*\* Memorandum Notes of Captain Bunzo Shibata, IJN, Senior Staff Officer, 6TH Base Air Force, October 10th - 23rd, 1944, Department of the Army, Historical Division Microfilm HS-22, Item B.
- \*\*\*\*\* CofS 6TH Base Air Force Dispatch 202030 October 1944 to CofS 2ND Striking Force, War Diary DESRON 1, October 1944, WDC Document 161638, NA 11739.
- \*\*\*\*\* CinC Combined Fleet Dispatch 200834 October 1944 to Commander 2ND Striking Force, (Combined Fleet DesOpOrd No. 460), War Diary DESRON 1, October 1944, WDC Document 161638, NA 11739.



three destroyers requested were for convoy escort to protect the movement of SIXTH Base Air Force units to the Philippines.

By this time he probably knew that Vice Admiral Takijiro Onishi, who had arrived in Manila from Takao on October 17th, had relieved Vice Admiral Kimpei Teraoka as Commander FIFTH Base Air Force.\* It will be recalled from Volume I that Vice Admiral Onishi had accompanied CinC Combined Fleet to Takao on October 16th at which time CinC Combined Fleet had also transferred his personal headquarters there from Shinchiku.\*\* When CinC Combined Fleet departed for Hiyoshi the following day (October 17th) Vice Admiral Onishi departed for Manila. It seems logical to believe that both Vice Admiral Onishi and Commander SIXTH Base Air Force, during the visit to Takao, discussed the planned movement of the SIXTH Base Air Force to the Philippines and the numerous problems (command was one) which would arise.

Prior to midnight he was aware that the two radar equipped flying boats had taken departure from Garan Bi on search at 2150 and 2240.\*\*\* No other action of Commander SIXTH Base Air Force is recorded for this day.

(4) Operations of Commander SW Area Force, October 20th.

Commander SW Area Force, as on previous days, remained at his headquarters in Manila. He knew from the large numbers of carriers which had been observed on the previous day (at least ten off Lamon Bay, and eleven carriers and escort carriers in the vicinity of Leyte Gulf),\*\*\*\* and from the fact that there were at least three large convoys, composed largely of transports, converging on Leyte Gulf that an Allied landing in strength was about to occur in the Leyte area.

At about 0032 he received Commander SIXTH Base Air Force's dispatch which established an attack organization comprised of about 330 aircraft.\*\*\*\*\*

During the early morning he received CinC Combined Fleet's DesOpOrd No. 362 directing him after consultations with the FOURTEENTH Area Army to

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\* Philippine Area Naval Operations, Part II, October - December 1944, 2ND Demobilization Bureau, Japanese Government, October 1947, Department of the Army, Historical Division File No. 8-5, JS-104.

\*\* Volume I, Battle for Leyte Gulf (NavPers 91973), Naval War College, 1953, "Operations of CinC Combined Fleet, October 16th", Chapter III (e) (7) (a).

\*\*\* Detailed Action Report 901st Air Group, Night Searches, October 10th - 29th, 1944, WDC Document 160551, NA 12402.

\*\*\*\* Commander 5TH Base Air Force Dispatch 191336 October 1944 to 5TH Base Air Force Battle Report Addressees, War Diary 103RD Attack Unit, (701st Air Group), October 1944, WDC Document 160258, NA 12592.

\*\*\*\*\* Commander 6TH Base Air Force Dispatch 200002 October 1944, (Addressees Unknown), War Diary 103RD Attack Unit, (701ST Air Group), Kokubu Detachment, October 13th - 31st, 1944, WDC Document 160258, NA 12592.

order the SECOND Striking Force to expedite counterlanding operations. From this, he could see that there was little likelihood that CRUDIV TWENTY-ONE and DESRON ONE would be employed in support of either the FIRST Striking Force or the Main Force.

At 0432 he ordered the local defense forces in the Malay area to prepare to execute the "U" Operation.\* While details of this plan are not available to this study, it appears to have prescribed the tasks to be undertaken by the SW Area Forces against the British force attacking in the Car Nicobar Islands area.

He awaited reports from his reconnaissance planes on the movements of the Allied forces concentrating in the Leyte area. Long range air searches had been cancelled due to lack of aircraft, as discussed later under Commander FIFTH Base Air Force. Therefore, he had to depend upon his area reconnaissance planes for contact reports. These reports would perforce only cover the Allied units in or near Leyte Gulf. However, because of the convergence of Allied forces in Leyte Gulf, he expected that the reconnaissance reports would cover most of the Allied forces in the area.

During the early forenoon he received word from the army that at 0610 the Allies had landed at Tacloban.\*\* At the same time he received word of the large Allied forces off Tacloban and Dulag, and of the fact that two to three enemy task groups with a nucleus of six - ten CVE (escort carriers) were operating SE of Samar (likely Contacts C and E).\*\*\* and of the further fact that heavy bombardment operations were underway from Tacloban to Dulag.

Shortly thereafter he received Commander SIXTH Base Air Force's DesOp-Ord No. 83 which allocated forces to Commander Western Attack Force ZERO, mainly from Western Attack Force ONE.\*\*\*\*

At about 0929 he received a dispatch from the Chief of Staff Combined Fleet directing the FIRST Striking Force to enforce strict vigilance against large enemy aircraft while anchored in Brunei Bay.\*\*\*\*\*

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- \* Commander SW Area Force Dispatch 200432 October 1944 to SW Area Force, (SW Area Force DesOpOrd No. 670), War Diary 23RD Air Flotilla, October 1944, WDC Document 160264, NA 12546.
  - \*\* Detailed Action Report 254TH Air Group, (Taiwan Detachment), October 13th - 27th, 1944, WDC Document 161429, NA 12432.
  - \*\*\* Material for Situation Estimates, 1ST Section, Naval General Staff, October 1944, WDC Document 216764 (Microfilm).
  - \*\*\*\* Commander 6TH Base Air Force Dispatch 200858 October 1944 to 6TH Base Air Force, (6TH Base Air Force DesOpOrd No. 83), War Diary 103RD Attack Unit, (701ST Air Group), Kokubu Detachment, October 13th - 31st, 1944, WDC Document 160258, NA 12592.
  - \*\*\*\*\* CofS Combined Fleet Dispatch 200859 October 1944 to CsofS 1ST Striking Force, SW Area Force, 5TH Base Air Force, Detailed Action Report No. 3, YAMATO, SHO No. 1 Antiair and Surface Actions, October 17th - 28th, 1944, WDC Document 161639.



At about 1009 he received another dispatch from the Chief of Staff Combined Fleet which cautioned all commanders to be alert to the possibility of interception by enemy fighters in groups of about four at any and all times. \* These facts were not unfamiliar to him. However, this dispatch does show the concern with which the Combined Fleet staff viewed the difficulty of obtaining adequate search information from search aircraft continually under harassment.

Meanwhile, as Commander Philippine Force, he had been in continuous communication with CinC Southern Army relative to the reinforcements the army planned to move to Leyte from the Visayas. On the previous day he had been advised that the army planned to move two battalions, and was studying whether to land these two battalions on Leyte on the east coast as a counterlanding or on the west coast as reinforcements.\*\* Today he had been advised that the army now planned to land three battalions instead of two and to land them on the west coast. At 0945 his Chief of Staff advised Commander THIRTY-THIRD Special Base Force (who was based at Cebu) to that effect and requested him to report the number of small craft in his area which could be concentrated at the disembarkation point and employed in unloading operations.\*\*\*

At about 1000 he received Commander Main Force's dispatch advising all commands that he planned to sortie through Bungo Suido that evening at 1800 and giving his planned track until 0600 October 23rd.\*\*\*\*

At 1017 he directed (a) Commander FIFTH Base Air Force to transfer five carrier attack planes from his reserve to an active air group and (b) Commander THIRD Base Air Force to provide the crews.\*\*\*\*\*

This dispatch seems unusual in that it merely represented a transfer of five aircrews from the THIRD to the FIFTH Base Air Force. Why Commander SW Area Force exercised such intimate control over individual air units is not known. Perhaps his air strength was so reduced that he deemed it necessary to control it in the greatest detail; perhaps, and this seems the more likely,

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- \* CofS Combined Fleet Dispatch 200939 October 1944 to All Fleet and Squadron Commanders, Combined Fleet, War Diary 101ST Air Flotilla, October 1944, WDC Document 160304, NA 12542.
  - \*\* CofS SW Area Force Dispatch 192230 October 1944 to CinC Combined Fleet, Detailed Action Report CRUDIV 16, SHO Operation, October 17th - 27th, 1944, WDC Document 161005, NA 11744.
  - \*\*\* CofS Philippine Force Dispatch 200945 October 1944 to Commander 33RD Special Base Force, Detailed Action Report CRUDIV 16, SHO Operation, October 17th - 27th, 1944, WDC Document 161005, NA 11744.
  - \*\*\*\* Commander Mobile Force Dispatch 200930 October 1944 to All Commands, Detailed Action Report No. 2, OYODO, SHO No. 1 Operation, October 20th - 28th, 1944, WDC Document 161007.
  - \*\*\*\*\* Commander SW Area Force Dispatch 201017 October 1944 to Commanders 5TH Base Air Force, and Western Attack Force, (SW Area Force DesOpOrd No. 671), Detailed Action Report No. 3, 253RD Attack Unit, (331ST Air Group), October 20th - November 13th, 1944, WDC Document 160354, NA 12378.

the fact that the incumbent commander of the FIFTH Base Air Force was about to be relieved caused him to feel that, in order to preserve continuity in command during the changeover, it was necessary for him to issue orders which would normally be issued by the air force commander. Regardless of the reason Commander FIFTH Base Air Force was no doubt cognizant of it and should not have been overly disturbed by the procedure.

During the forenoon he received reports from the Leyte area of enemy action, culminating in reports of enemy landings at both Tacloban (believed to consist of three battalions of marines)\* and Sogod Bay areas.\*\* He also knew of the heavy Allied air attacks against the Philippines.

About noon he learned that the enemy had landed at Tacloban and that the SIXTEENTH Division was doing its utmost to destroy the landing forces.

RECORDS AVAILABLE TO THIS STUDY DO NOT INDICATE THAT HE ISSUED SPECIAL INSTRUCTIONS TO COUNTER THE LANDINGS. AT THIS TIME, EXCEPT FOR THE SECOND STRIKING FORCE, WHICH WAS TO BE EMPLOYED FOR SPECIFIC PURPOSES, HE HAD EXTREMELY LIMITED SURFACE FORCES WITH WHICH TO COUNTER THIS LANDING CONSISTING OF SUBCHASERS, MINECRAFT, ONE GUNBOAT, THREE TRANSPORT GROUPS, A LARGE NUMBER OF SUICIDE BOATS AND A FEW MIDGET SUBMARINES. THE SUICIDE BOATS WERE REPORT-EDLY STILL IN CORREGIDOR AND THE MIDGET SUBMARINES AT CEBU BUT, BECAUSE OF THE DATA THEREON IS INCONCLUSIVE, IT IS NOT KNOWN WHETHER THEY WERE THERE OR NOT. IN EITHER CASE, THERE WAS LITTLE OPPORTUNITY FOR THEIR EMPLOYMENT IN VIEW OF THE SITUATION. FROM THE ABOVE IT CAN BE ASSUMED THAT THE NAVAL SURFACE FORCES AVAILABLE TO COMMANDER SW AREA FORCE AS COMMANDER PHILIPPINE FORCE WERE OF NUISANCE VALUE ONLY.\*\*\*

At about 1215 he learned that CinC Combined Fleet had returned to his headquarters at Hiyoshi.\*\*\*\*

During the forenoon he continued his consultations with the army relative to (a) the number of troops and supplies to be transported to Leyte,

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- \* Memorandum of Vice Admiral Gunichi Mikawa, IJN, (CinC SW Area Fleet), GHQ, FEC, Special Historical Collection, Supporting Documents to General of the Army Douglas MacArthur's Historical Report on Allied Operations in the Southwest Pacific Area, (Item 31, Footlocker 7 of 10, SWPA Series Volume II).
  - \*\* Material for Situation Estimates, 1ST Section, Naval General Staff, October 1944, WDC Document 216764 (Microfilm).
  - \*\*\* Philippine Area Naval Operations, Part I, May 1942 - September 1944, 2ND Demobilization Bureau, Japanese Government, August 1947, GHQ, FEC, Historical Section File No. 8-5, JS-14; also The Imperial Japanese Navy in World War II, prepared by G-2, GHQ, FEC, Military History Section, Special Staff, February 1952.
  - \*\*\*\* CinC Combined Fleet Dispatch 201145 October 1944 to All Fleet and Squadron Commanders, Detailed Action Report BATDIV 1, SHO No. 1 Operation, October 18th - 28th, 1944, WDC Document 161005, NA 11744.



(b) from where and (c) when. He now knew that three battalions were to be moved from the Visayas to the west coast of Leyte to be landed there at dawn October 25th. Perhaps there were other troops to be moved as well. He had to be prepared. So, at 1340, he advised COMCRUDIV SIXTEEN that he was conferring with the army regarding counterattack operations and required an urgent report as to the (1) numbers of large and small landing craft which each ship could load, (2) types and numbers of craft presently on board and (3) numbers of troops which could be carried.\*

At 1425 he told Commander SECOND Striking Force that he (a) was presently conferring with the MANJU MARU and RAKUYO MARU concerning counterattack operations (since these two ships were to be employed as transports), and (b) considered it advisable for Commander SECOND Striking Force to confer directly with the FOURTEENTH Area Army concerning details.\*\* In this dispatch he referred to CinC Combined Fleet's DesOpOrd No. 362 which directed Commander SW Area Force to order the SECOND Striking Force to carry out counterlanding operations as quickly as possible.\*\*\*

At 1428 he notified Commander SECOND Striking Force that (a) the orders to CRUDIV TWENTY-ONE and DESRON ONE to standby at Mako and to CRUDIV SIXTEEN to standby at Brunei were cancelled, (b) the SECOND Striking Force (henceforth including CRUDIV SIXTEEN) would move as directed by Commander SECOND Striking Force.\*\*\*\*

At 1533 he received Combined Fleet DesOpOrd No. 363 which, among other things, (a) established X-day as October 25th, (b) directed (1) the FIRST Striking Force to penetrate to the Tacloban area at dawn of that date, (2) Commander SW Area Force, in command of all shore-based naval air forces in the Philippine area, to carry out destructive attacks against enemy carrier and invasion forces in coordination with FIRST Striking Force penetration operations, to transport troops to the battle area in cooperation with the army and (3) directed the SIXTH Base Air Force to proceed to the Philippines where, under the tactical command of Commander SW Area Force, it was to execute an all-out attack against the enemy carriers on October 24th (Y-day).\*\*\*\*\*

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\* CofS SW Area Force Dispatch 201340 October 1944 to COMCRUDIV 16, Detailed Action Report CRUDIV 16, SHO Operation, October 17th - 27th, 1944, WDC Document 161005, NA 11744.

\*\* CofS SW Area Force Dispatch 201425 October 1944 to Commander 2ND Striking Force, Detailed Action Report CRUDIV 16, SHO Operation, October 17th - 27th, 1944, WDC Document 161005, NA 11744.

\*\*\* Letter from Captain Toshikazu Ohmae, ex-IJN, formerly Senior Staff Officer Mobile Force to Mr. Clarke Kawakami, World War II Battle Evaluation Group, Naval War College, undated, but received Washington, D.C. April 13th, 1953.

\*\*\*\* Commander SW Area Force Dispatch 201428 October 1944 to Commander 2ND Striking Force, (SW Area Force DesOpOrd No. 672), War Diary DESRON 1, October 1944, WDC Document 161638, NA 11739.

\*\*\*\*\* CinC Combined Fleet Dispatch 200813 October 1944 to Combined Fleet, CinC Southern Army, Imperial GHQ, China Area Fleet, etc., (Combined Fleet DesOpOrd No. 363), War Diary BATDIV 1, October 1944, WDC Document 161638, NA 11739.



This dispatch was of particular importance because it (a) established a new X-day and (b) clearly and specifically directed Commander SIXTH Base Air Force to report to him for duty. He now would have direct command of the THIRD Base Air Force and command of the FIFTH and SIXTH Base Air Forces through their respective commanders. Thus, he would be able to coordinate all naval air operations with the operations of other forces within his area, and would be able better to coordinate SW area operations with those of other forces of the Combined Fleet. He could estimate that the SIXTH Base Air Force planes, which had been scheduled to move up to the Philippines on the 21st and 22nd,\* were now presumably delayed one day because of the delay in X-day.

Also during the afternoon he received Chief of Staff Combined Fleet dispatch concerning the penetration of the FIRST Striking Force and suggesting consideration of a double penetration.\*\* This dispatch undoubtedly lent weight to the dispatches which followed between Commander SECOND Striking Force, himself and Imperial General Headquarters (Navy Section) regarding the employment of the SECOND Striking Force, less CRUDIV SIXTEEN, as an attacking force through Surigao Strait. At about 1600 (it was received by COMDESRON ONE at this time) he received, as an information addressee, a dispatch from CinC Combined Fleet regarding assignment of one to three destroyers from the SECOND Striking Force to duty escorting a convoy carrying personnel and equipment of the SIXTH Base Air Force from Formosa to the Philippines.\*\*\* This was a welcome dispatch since all material and personnel required for operations in the Philippines could not be transferred from Formosa by air and therefore sea transport was very necessary.

At 1815 he cancelled his order to prepare to execute the "U" Operations.

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At about 1826 he likely received Commander SECOND Striking Force's dispatch to COMCRUDIV SIXTEEN directing that Commander to consult directly with the FOURTEENTH Area Army and then to carry out the first movement of troop reinforcements to Leyte.\*\*\*\*\*

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\* Commander 6TH Base Air Force Dispatch 191050 October 1944 to 6TH Base Air Force, War Diary 103RD Attack Unit, (701ST Air Group), Kokubu Detachment, October 13th - 31st, 1944, WDC Document 160258, NA 12592.

\*\* CofS Combined Fleet Dispatch 201006 October 1944, (addressees unknown except info COMBATDIV 1), Information compiled by Captain Toshikazu Ohmae, ex-IJN, Japanese Research Division, HQ, USAFFE, Military History Section, relating to Penetration Operations of 1ST Striking Force, Battle for Leyte Gulf, contained in HQ, USAFFE, Military History Section letter March 30th, 1954 to President, Naval War College.

\*\*\* CinC Combined Fleet Dispatch 200834 October 1944 to Commander 2ND Striking Force, (Combined Fleet DesOpOrd No. 460), War Diary DESRON 1, October 1944, WDC Document 161638, NA 11739.

\*\*\*\* Commander SW Area Force Dispatch 201815 October 1944 to SW Area Force, (SW Area Force DesOpOrd No. 674), War Diary 23RD Air Flotilla, October 1944, WDC Document 160264, NA 12546.

\*\*\*\*\* Commander 2ND Striking Force Dispatch 201756 October 1944 to COMCRUDIV 16, (2ND Striking Force DesOpOrd No. 8), War Diary DESRON 1, October 1944, WDC Document 161638, NA 11739.



October 20th

At about 1832 he learned that the FIRST Striking Force had been placed under the direct command of CinC Combined Fleet.

At about 1836 he received a dispatch 201806 (quoted in full under "Operations of Commander SECOND Striking Force, October 20th") from the Chief of Staff SECOND Striking Force to Commander SW Area Force, wherein the Chief of Staff made important recommendations concerning the employment of CRUDIV SIXTEEN, on one hand, and of CRUDIV TWENTY-ONE and DESRON ONE on the other.\*

At about 1853 he received a dispatch from COMCRUDIV SIXTEEN replying to his 201340 and giving (a) the number of large and small landing craft which could be loaded on the AOBA (none), KINU (two small) and URANAMI (none); (b) the number of boats presently on board AOBA (four boats and one small landing craft), KINU (four boats), URANAMI (three boats); (c) the number of troops and supplies which could be loaded AOBA (1200 men, 250 cubic meters), KINU (500 men, 200 cubic meters), URANAMI (200 men, twenty cubic meters). After providing the above information COMCRUDIV SIXTEEN stated that, since the projected operations were to be carried out under heavy air attack, it was essential that the loading and unloading be completed in a single operation. He further stated that, under these conditions, the boats listed above were inadequate in number and capacity and therefore he considered it vital to dispatch additional boats in advance to the scheduled loading and unloading points.\*\*

At about 1921 he should have received information that the SECOND Striking Force would sortie from Mako at 0700 on the 21st of October and head south.\*\*\*

At 1958 his Chief of Staff sent a dispatch to Commander SECOND Striking Force telling him that CinC Southern Army had requested Imperial General Headquarters (Army Section) to make arrangements for the SECOND Striking Force to transport the SIXTY-EIGHTH Brigade in Formosa for use in counterattack operations.\*\*\*\*

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\* CofS 2ND Striking Force Dispatch 201806 October 1944 to Commander SW Area Force, Detailed Action Report CRUDIV 16, SHO Operation, October 17th - 27th, 1944, WDC Document 161005, NA 11744.

\*\* COMCRUDIV 16 Dispatch 201823 October 1944 to Commander SW Area Force, Detailed Action Report CRUDIV 16, SHO Operation, October 17th - 27th, 1944, WDC Document 161005, NA 11744.

\*\*\* Commander 2ND Striking Force Dispatch 201851 October 1944 to CinC Combined Fleet, War Diary BATDIV 1, October 1944, WDC Document 161638, NA 11739.

\*\*\*\* CofS SW Area Force Dispatch 201958 October 1944 to Commander 2ND Striking Force, info CinC Combined Fleet, COMCRUDIV 16, etc., Detailed Action Report CRUDIV 16, SHO Operation, October 17th - 27th, 1944, WDC Document 161005, NA 11744.

Commander SW Area Force was now required to weigh the advice of his subordinate commander, Commander SECOND Striking Force, with the desires of CinC Southern Army to move troops to Leyte from Formosa. He decided to refer this serious disagreement to a higher echelon. At 2137, through his Chief of Staff, he sent a dispatch to Imperial General Headquarters (Navy Section). This dispatch (a) reported that CinC Southern Army was endeavoring to obtain the support of the Imperial General Headquarters (Army Section) for the employment of the SECOND Striking Force in the transportation of the SIXTY-EIGHTH Brigade from Formosa to the Philippines, (b) stated that Commander SW Area Force considered it more advantageous to employ CRUDIV TWENTY-ONE and DESRON ONE as a support force in the decisive battle operations, (c) since there was no other suitable transportation available in the area (Formosa) acceptance of the request of CinC Southern Army would risk losing the tactical opportunity and was therefore considered infeasible, and (d) stated that he would conduct further direct liaison with the Southern Army but requested that Imperial General Headquarters (Navy Section) consider the above in arriving at any decision.\*

While his other forces were grouping for the battle ahead Commander SW Area Force now awaited orders from Imperial General Headquarters regarding the SECOND Striking Force.

By this time he knew that at 2000 Vice Admiral Onishi had relieved Vice Admiral Teraoka as Commander FIFTH Base Air Force.\*\*

Meanwhile he had been receiving information presumably from Army Headquarters, concerning the situation confronting the SIXTEENTH Division. At midnight he estimated the situation as of that hour as follows:

(a) One hundred ships of various types were (operating off shore) between Palo and San Jose (Tacloban area).

(b) The estimated strength of the landing force (in the Tacloban area) was about one division.

(c) There appears to be a possibility that about one division was making a landing in the Dulag area as well.

(d) At about 2000 the THIRTY-THIRD Infantry Regiment was holding the hill positions northeast, west and north of Palo, and the hill positions west of Tacloban.

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\* CofS SW Area Force Dispatch 202137 October 1944 to Imperial GHQ (Navy Section), Detailed Action Report CRUDIV 16, SHO Operation, October 17th - 27th, 1944, WDC Document 161005, NA 11744.

\*\* Diary of Vice Admiral Kimpei Teraoka, IJN, August 1st - November 1st, 1944, 5TH Base Air Force in SHO Operation, GHQ, FEC, Special Historical Collection, Supporting Documents to General of the Army Douglas MacArthur's Historical Report on Allied Operations in the Southwest Pacific Area, (Item 30, Footlocker 7 of 10, SWPA Series, Volume II).



(e) Apparently no enemy landings had been made as yet (1) in the Dulag area where the TWENTIETH Infantry Regiment's main strength was located and (2) in the Catmon area where the NINTH Infantry Regiment was located.\*

THIS INFORMATION WAS IN GENERAL INCORRECT AND SHOWS PLAINLY THE GREAT DIFFICULTY IN OBTAINING CORRECT INFORMATION UNDER THE CONDITIONS OF SURPRISE AND INFERIORITY IN BOTH GROUND AND AIR STRENGTH. The estimate of the number of ships operating between Palo and San Jose was about forty per cent too low; two infantry divisions instead of one (FIRST Cavalry and TWENTY-FOURTH Infantry) had landed between Palo and San Jose; the Allies held some of the hill positions northeast, west and north of Palo and notably held Hill No. 522; it was not a possibility but was instead a fact that two Allied infantry divisions (SEVENTH and NINETY-SIXTH) had landed in the Dulag area. (There was no intention of landing opposite Catmon Hill but, instead, it was planned to out-flank it from the south).\*\*

During the night and until past midnight he held an operational conference at his headquarters with, among others, Commander FIFTH Base Air Force, a senior staff officer from the SIXTH Base Air Force,\*\*\* and a naval liaison officer with the FOURTH Air Army.\*\*\*\* Here the Clark Plan (what this plan was is not known), among other items also not known, was discussed.\*\*\*\*\*

(a) Operations of Commander SECOND Striking Force, October 20th.

At 0000 October 20th Commander SECOND Striking Force, with the SECOND Striking Force consisting of CRUDIV TWENTY-ONE and DESRON ONE, less the HATSUHARU and CRUDIV SIXTEEN, was proceeding through Formosa Strait en route Mako. The HATSUHARU was also in Formosa Strait proceeding independently to Mako.\*\*\*\*\* CRUDIV SIXTEEN in company with the FIRST Striking Force was en route Brunei under instructions to await orders there.\*\*\*\*\*

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\* Memorandum of Vice Admiral Gunichi Mikawa, IJN, (CinC SW Area Fleet), GHQ, FEC, Special Historical Collection, Supporting Documents to General of the Army Douglas MacArthur's Historical Report on Allied Operations in the Southwest Pacific Area, (Item 31, Footlocker 7 of 10, SWPA Series, Volume II).

\*\* 6TH U.S. Army, Report of the Leyte Operation, October 20th - December 25th, 1944, undated.

\*\*\* Captain Bunzo Shibata, IJN.

\*\*\*\* Commander Michitaka Hiramoto, IJN.

\*\*\*\*\* Memorandum Notes of Captain Bunzo Shibata, IJN, Senior Staff Officer, 6TH Base Air Force, October 10th - 23rd, 1944, Department of the Army, Historical Division Microfilm HS-22, Item B.

\*\*\*\*\* Commander 2ND Striking Force Dispatch 181555 October 1944 to HATSUHARU, War Diary DESRON 1, October 1944, WDC Document 161638, NA 11739.

\*\*\*\*\* Commander SW Area Force Dispatch 181540 October 1944 to 2ND Striking Force, COMCRUDIV 16, (SW Area Force DesOpOrd No. 662), War Diary DESRON 1, October 1944, WDC Document 161638, NA 11739.

It appears that sometime around 0030, at which time it was received by COMCRUDIV SIXTEEN, he received a dispatch from the Chief of Staff SW Area Force (a) discussing the Southern Army plans for reinforcement of Leyte, (b) indicating that since the first echelon would number but two battalions only CRUDIV SIXTEEN and about two transports would be required and (c) stating that he saw no objection to the employment of remainder of the SECOND Striking Force (CRUDIV TWENTY-ONE and DESRON ONE) in support of either the FIRST Striking Force or the Main Force.\*

At 0200 he received a dispatch from Commander Takao Guard District directing the Luzon Strait Force to provide antisubmarine patrol for the SECOND Striking Force.\*\*

Sometime during the early morning he likely intercepted CinC Combined Fleet's DesOpOrd No. 362 to Commander SW Area Force wherein that commander was directed to order the SECOND Striking Force to carry out counterlanding operations as quickly as possible. From this, he could see that (a) his command was definitely committed to counterlanding operations and (b) the possibility that he might be employed in support of the FIRST Striking Force or the Main Force was remote indeed.

Shortly after 0800 he arrived at Mako where he was rejoined by the HATSUHARU. Beginning at 0730 and continuing through the day until 1700 there was a four-plane CAP over his force, furnished by special orders from a unit of the SIXTH Base Air Force.\*\*\*

At about 0904 he received orders from CinC Combined Fleet to consult with Commander SIXTH Base Air Force and then to provide from one to three destroyers, as required, for escort of a convoy transporting ground personnel and material of the SIXTH Base Air Force from Formosa to the Philippines.\*\*\*\* After consulting with Commander SIXTH Base Air Force, he decided to assign this task to the three destroyers of DESDIV TWENTY-ONE (WAKABA, HATSUSHIMO and HATSUHARU).\*\*\*\*\*

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- \* CofS SW Area Force Dispatch 192230 October 1944 to CinC Combined Fleet, Detailed Action Report CRUDIV 16, SHO Operation, October 17th - 27th, 1944, WDC Document 161005, NA 11744.
  - \*\* Commander Takao Guard District Dispatch 192000 October 1944 to Luzon Strait Force, info 2ND Striking Force, Main Force, War Diary, DESRON 1, October 1944, WDC Document 161638, NA 11739.
  - \*\*\* Detailed Action Report 254TH Air Group, (Formosa Detachment), October 13th - 27th, 1944, WDC Document 161429, NA 12432.
  - \*\*\*\* CinC Combined Fleet Dispatch 200834 October 1944 to Commander 2ND Striking Force, COMDESRON 1, (Combined Fleet DesOpOrd No. 460), War Diary DESRON 1, October 1944, WDC Document 161638, NA 11739.
  - \*\*\*\*\* War Diary DESRON 1, October 1944, WDC Document 161638, NA 11739.



Commencing at 1000 he began fueling all ships from the oiler RYOEI MARU which, escorted by the MANJU and MIYAKE,\* had arrived at 0930\*\*. He established new engine room standbys for his ships at Mako as follows: (a) While not fueling, from thirty minutes before sunrise until thirty minutes after sunset, of twelve knots in fifteen minutes and twenty-four knots in thirty minutes; and (b) for ships fueling, of twelve knots immediately and twenty-four knots in thirty minutes.\*\*\*

At about 1032 he received information that Commander Advance Expeditionary Force was at his discretion to redeploy the four submarines concerned to dispersed stations off Leyte in Area KO-3.\*\*\*\*

At 1040 he broke radio silence to inform interested commands of his arrival, stating that he expected to be ready for sea at 0800 October 21st.\*\*\*\*\*

At about 1215 he learned that CinC Combined Fleet had returned to his headquarters at Hiyoshi.\*\*\*\*\*

At 1430 (when it was received by COMCRUDIV SIXTEEN) he received, as an information addressee, a dispatch to COMCRUDIV SIXTEEN from the Chief of Staff SW Area Force which (a) stated that his headquarters was conferring with the army concerning counterattack operations, and (b) requested information concerning (1) the large and small landing craft each ship could load, and (2) types and numbers of craft on board, and (c) the number of troops which could be carried.\*\*\*\*\*

During the afternoon he received CinC Combined Fleet's DesOpOrd No. 363 prescribing the tasks of the fleet forces during the forthcoming decisive

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- \* CofS Combined Fleet Dispatch 190914 October 1944 to NICHIEI MARU, KURABACHI, Escort 25, RYOEI MARU, Commanders 1ST Striking Force and Escort Force, War Diary NICHIEI MARU, October 1944, WDC Document 160148, NA 11838.
  - \*\* War Diary DESRON 1, October 1944, WDC Document 161638, NA 11739.
  - \*\*\* Commander 2ND Striking Force Visual Dispatch 200950 October 1944 to 2ND Striking Force, War Diary DESRON 1, October 1944, WDC Document 161638, NA 11739.
  - \*\*\*\* CinC Combined Fleet Dispatch 201002 October 1944 to Commander Advance Expeditionary Force, (Combined Fleet DesOpOrd No. 365), Detailed Action Report ZUIKAKU, SHO No. 1 Operation, October 20th - 25th, 1944, WDC Document 161008.
  - \*\*\*\*\* Commander 2ND Striking Force Dispatch 201040 October 1944 to CinC Combined Fleet, etc., Detailed Action Report BATDIV 1, SHO No. 1 Operation, October 18th - 28th, 1944, WDC Document 161005, NA 11744.
  - \*\*\*\*\* CinC Combined Fleet Dispatch 201145 October 1944 to All Fleet and Squadron Commanders, Detailed Action Report BATDIV 1, SHO No. 1 Operation, October 18th - 28th, 1944, WDC Document 161005, NA 11744.
  - \*\*\*\*\* CofS SW Area Force Dispatch 201340 October 1944 to COMCRUDIV 16, Detailed Action Report CRUDIV 16, SHO Operation, October 17th - 27th, 1944, WDC Document 161005, NA 11744.

battle, and assigning October 25th as X-day. In this dispatch he observed that while no specific task had been assigned the SECOND Striking Force, Commander SW Area Force, under whose command he was operating, was charged with conducting counterlanding operations.\* As the SECOND Striking Force was the only combatant force of any consequence under Commander SW Area Force's command, he could expect that such a task would be carried out by his ships, especially so since (a) his command had been placed in the SW Area Force for this express purpose,\*\* and (b) Commander SW Area Force had been directed to employ him in such operation as quickly as possible.\*\*\*

Also during the afternoon, possibly at about 1455 or later, he received a dispatch (received by COMCRUDIV SIXTEEN at 1520) from the Chief of Staff SW Area Force. This dispatch (a) referred to CinC Combined Fleet's DesOpOrd No. 362, (b) advised that his headquarters was conferring with the MANJU MARU and RAKUYO MARU concerning the execution of counterattack operations, (c) stated that he considered it advisable for SECOND Striking Force headquarters to confer directly with the FOURTEENTH Area Army, and (d) requested that he either proceed with his force to Manila or send a staff officer to Manila for the purpose of arranging directly with the army authorities for the transport of troops.\*\*\*\*

He was clearly opposed to these orders because he realized that, with the existing indecision of the army and because of the limited ground forces (two battalions) the army planned to move from the Visayas to Leyte, his command at Mako was not required in counterlanding operations. This had been pointed out by Commander SW Area Force in his 192230, mentioned previously wherein that commander stated that only CRUDIV SIXTEEN with two transports and two escorting destroyers from DESRON ONE was required to transport the first echelon of army forces.\*\*\*\*\* HE APPEARS TO HAVE CONSIDERED IT THEREFORE UNWISE

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- \* CinC Combined Fleet Dispatch 200813 October 1944 to Combined Fleet, CinC Southern Army, Imperial GHQ, China Area Fleet, etc., (Combined Fleet DesOpOrd No. 363), War Diary BATDIV 1, October 1944, WDC Document 161638, NA 11739.
- \*\* CofS Combined Fleet Dispatch 181103 October 1944 to Commander SW Area Force, etc., Detailed Action Report CRUDIV 16, SHO Operation, October 17th - 27th, 1944, WDC Document 161005, NA 11744.
- \*\*\* Combined Fleet DesOpOrd No. 362. This dispatch is not available to this study in its original form but the above is the best opinion as to its composition. (Letter from Captain Toshikazu Ohmae, ex-IJN, Senior Staff Officer, Mobile Force to Mr. Clarke Kawakami, World War II Battle Evaluation Group, Naval War College, undated, but received Washington, D.C. April 13th, 1953).
- \*\*\*\* CofS SW Area Force Dispatch 201425 October 1944 to Commander SECOND Striking Force, info COMCRUDIV 16, Commanders 1ST Striking Force, Mobile Force, Chief 1ST Section Imperial GHQ (Navy Section), CinC Combined Fleet, Detailed Action Report CRUDIV 16, SHO Operation, October 17th - 27th, 1944, WDC Document 161005, NA 11744.
- \*\*\*\*\* Commander SW Area Force Dispatch 192230 October 1944 to CinC Combined Fleet, Detailed Action Report CRUDIV 16, SHO Operation, October 17th - 27th, 1944, WDC Document 161005, NA 11744.



AND UNECESSARY FOR HIM TO PROCEED TO MANILA WITH THE SECOND STRIKING FORCE OR EVEN TO SEND A REPRESENTATIVE BECAUSE (1) IF HE WAS NOT TO BE PERSONALLY EMPLOYED IN THE COUNTERLANDING OPERATIONS, IT WOULD BE WISER FOR THE COMMANDER WHO WOULD BE SO EMPLOYED TO MAKE THE NECESSARY ARRANGEMENTS, AND (2) IF THERE WAS A POSSIBILITY OF HIS BEING EMPLOYED IN THE PENETRATION OPERATION, HE DESIRED TO REMAIN TEMPORARILY AT MAKO, WHICH WAS SOMEWHAT LESS VULNERABLE TO CARRIER AIR ATTACK THAN WAS MANILA, ALTHOUGH IT WAS MORE VULNERABLE TO AIR ATTACKS FROM CHINA.

It would appear from the above that he had not received Commander Philippine Force's dispatch 200945 to Commander THIRTY-THIRD Special Base Force (not addressed to him), which had increased the number of battalions to be moved from the Visayas from two to three, because, had he done so, he might have understood, in part, why it was that Headquarters SW Area Force wished him to consult with the Army High Command in Manila. Perhaps three battalions were beyond the carrying capacity of CRUDIV SIXTEEN, two transports and two escorting destroyers. However, he seems to have been so anxious to be in the penetration operation that it is quite likely that, even had he received the above message, he would have made every effort to insure that his forces were not required in counterlanding operations.

At 1630 (when it was received by DESRON ONE) he received a second dispatch from Commander SW Area Force which (a) cancelled the existing orders requiring CRUDIV TWENTY-ONE and DESRON ONE to await further orders at Mako and CRUDIV SIXTEEN to await orders at Brunei and (b) directed that the movements of these forces would be as directed by Commander SECOND Striking Force.\* From this dispatch he could see that Commander SW Area Force had delegated to him the control of the counterattack operations in so far as naval forces were concerned.

His mind was now made up. He had the authority necessary to order COMCRUDIV SIXTEEN to consult with the army, and therefore at 1756 he directed that commander to consult directly with C.G. FOURTEENTH Area Army and to carry out the first movements of troop reinforcements.\*\*

Ten minutes later, probably because he realized that Commander SW Area Force might not understand his actions in failing to (a) bring his command to Manila, or (b) send a staff officer, and instead to have ordered COMCRUDIV SIXTEEN to comply, he directed his Chief of Staff to advise Commander SW Area Force as to the employment of the SECOND Striking Force. In this dispatch the Chief of Staff (a) stated that Commander SECOND Striking Force did not think it wise for the SECOND Striking Force headquarters to conduct preliminary consultations on counterattack operations with the Southern Army at this time because to do so might jeopardize the employment

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\* Commander SW Area Force Dispatch 201428 October 1944 to Commander 2ND Striking Force, COMCRUDIV 16, info all Fleet and Squadron Commanders SW Area Force and Combined Fleet, (SW Area Force DesOpOrd No. 672), War Diary DESRON 1, October 1944, WDC Document 161638, NA 11739.

\*\* Commander 2ND Striking Force Dispatch 201756 October 1944 to COMCRUDIV 16, (2ND Striking Force DesOpOrd No. 8), War Diary DESRON 1, October 1944, WDC Document 161638, NA 11739.

of the SECOND Striking Force in the penetration operations, (b) recommended that (1) the counterlanding operations be carried out by CRUDIV SIXTEEN only and that they be made not much later than the time of the penetration by the FIRST Striking Force, and (2) CRUDIV TWENTY-ONE and DESRON ONE be employed in the penetration operation with orders to penetrate Leyte Gulf at dawn October 25th immediately following the FIRST Striking Force. He then requested Commander SW Area Force, after consultation with the Southern Army, to advise him immediately of his views in the above matter.\*

During the late afternoon he probably received the dispatch to Commander FIRST Striking Force in which a double penetration was recommended for consideration.\*\*

At about 1845 he learned that Commander SW Area Force's order to "prepare to execute the 'U' Operation" had been cancelled.\*\*\*

At 1851 he advised CinC Combined Fleet that the SECOND Striking Force (CRUDIV TWENTY-ONE and DESRON ONE) would sortie from Mako at 0700 the following morning and proceed south.\*\*\*\* Also about this time he directed his force to sortie as follows:

(1) This force will sortie from No. 2 swept channel at 0700 tomorrow and will proceed south;

(2) DESRON ONE will sortie as ordered by squadron commander and make A/A sweep of ten-mile area to west of 180° line and south of 270° line passing through Hanashima. (Maximum speed to be employed eighteen knots). After executing above, DESRON ONE will take stations in No. ONE Alert Cruising Disposition as directed by later order;

(3) After sortie, unless special order is issued, No. THREE Alert dispositions and No. TWO Radar Patrol Dispositions will be applied, and

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- \* CofS 2ND Striking Force Dispatch 201806 October 1944 to Commander SW Area Force, Detailed Action Report CRUDIV 16, SHO Operation, October 17th - 27th, 1944, WDC Document 161005, NA 11744.
  - \*\* CofS Combined Fleet Dispatch 201006 October 1944, (addressees unknown, except info O IBATDIV 1). Information compiled by Captain Toshikazu Ohmae, ex-IJN, Japanese Research Division, HQ, USAFFE, Military History Section, relating to Penetration Operations of 1ST Striking Force, Battle for Leyte Gulf, contained in HQ, USAFFE, Military History Section letter March 30th, 1954 to President, Naval War College.
  - \*\*\* Commander SW Area Force Dispatch 201815 October 1944 to SW Area Force, War Diary DESRON 1, October 1944, WDC Document 161638, NA 11739.
  - \*\*\*\* Commander 2ND Striking Force Dispatch 201851 October 1944 to CinC Combined Fleet, War Diary BATDIV 1, October 1944, WDC Document 161638, NA 11739.



engine room standby will be for twenty-two knots immediately and twenty-four knots in thirty minutes.\*

It is not clear where he was planning to go but it seems likely that, since in heading south he was heading toward Manila, he was making himself available should Commander SW Area Force still desire that he bring the SECOND Striking Force to that harbor, and therefore he was complying with the spirit of that commander's instructions even though he had directed COMCRUDIV SIXTEEN to comply.

At about 1853, as an information addressee, he received a dispatch from COMCRUDIV SIXTEEN to Commander SW Area Force replying to that commander's 201340 and giving information concerning the troop and supply carrying capacity of the AOBA, KINU and URANAMI, and the number of boats available and required on the cruisers, and, in view of their inadequacy, the number of boats required at the landing and unloading points.\*\*

At 1925 he learned that the FIRST Striking Force had been placed under the direct command of CinC Combined Fleet.\*\*\*

At 1932 his Chief of Staff (a) informed Commander FIRST Striking Force that, in the event the SECOND Striking Force (CRUDIV TWENTY-ONE, DESRON ONE) were to carry out a penetration attack, it would be done as follows:

"At 1500 October 23rd it will be twenty miles south of Cape Calavite (Mindoro) Light. From there it will proceed south through the northern part of the Sulu Sea at an actual speed of sixteen knots. At about 1500 October 24th it will pass through the western entrance of the Mindanao Sea."; and (b) requested information as to the scheduled course of the FIRST Striking Force.\*\*\*\*

THIS DISPATCH SHOWS CLEARLY THAT COMMANDER SECOND STRIKING FORCE DID NOT VISUALIZE HIS COMMAND AS BEING ATTACHED TO THE MAIN FORCE AS HAD BEEN

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\* Commander 2ND Striking Force Dispatch 202130 October 1944 to 2ND Striking Force, War Diary DESRON 1, October 1944, WDC Document 161638, NA 11739.

\*\* COMCRUDIV 16 Dispatch 201823 October 1944 to Commander SW Area Force, Detailed Action Report CRUDIV 16, SHO Operation, October 17th - 27th, 1944, WDC Document 161005, NA 11744.

\*\*\* CinC Combined Fleet Dispatch 201802 October 1944 to Commanders 1ST and 2ND Striking Forces, SW Area Force, Mobile Force, etc., (Combined Fleet DesOpOrd No. 367), War Diary BATDIV 1, October 1944, WDC Document 161638, NA 11739.

\*\*\*\* CofS 2ND Striking Force Dispatch 201932 October 1944 to Commander 1ST Striking Force, info CinC Combined Fleet, Commander SW Area Force, Imperial GHQ (Navy Section), War Diary DESRON 10, October 1944, WDC Document 161638, NA 11739.

SUGGESTED BY CINC COMBINED FLEET THE PRECEDING DAY,\* OR TO THE FIRST STRIKING FORCE. INSTEAD, HE VISUALIZED HIMSELF AS AN INDEPENDENT COMMANDER OPERATING UNDER COMMANDER SW AREA FORCE IN SUPPORT OF THE FIRST STRIKING FORCE. IT WAS ALSO A PARTIAL ANSWER TO THE CHIEF OF STAFF COMBINED FLEET'S 201006 WHICH SUGGESTED A DOUBLE PENETRATION. IF COMMANDER FIRST STRIKING FORCE (A) DID NOT WISH TO DIVIDE HIS FORCES BUT STILL DESIRED A DOUBLE PENETRATION, HERE WAS A FORCE TO BE THE SOUTHERN GROUP--A DEVELOPMENT WHICH HE EXPECTED,\*\* (B) DID DESIRE TO DIVIDE HIS FORCES, HERE WAS A FORCE WHICH MIGHT BE REINFORCED BY ONE OF THE FIRST STRIKING FORCE UNITS, OR BY IT IN SUPPORT OF THAT UNIT. THIS DISPATCH WAS NOT RECEIVED IN THE FIRST STRIKING FORCE UNTIL 0940 THE FOLLOWING DAY.

At 2045, when it was received by CRUDIV SIXTEEN, he received a dispatch from the Chief of Staff SW Area Force (a) telling him that CinC Southern Army had requested Central Headquarters--Imperial General Headquarters (Army Section)--to make arrangements for the SECOND Striking Force to transport the SIXTY-EIGHTH Brigade, presently on Formosa, for use in mobile counterattack operations, and (b) requesting him "to bear this in mind".\*\*\*

At 2245 (when it was received by CRUDIV SIXTEEN) he received, as an information addressee, a dispatch from the Chief of Staff SW Area Force to Imperial General Headquarters (Navy Section) which reported that (a) CinC Southern Army was endeavoring to obtain the support of Imperial General Headquarters (Army Section) for the employment of the SECOND Striking Force in the transportation of the SIXTY-EIGHTH Brigade from Formosa (to the Philippines), (b) Commander SW Area Force disapproved of this employment because of the possible loss of this force in the penetration operation, and (c) requested that Imperial General Headquarters (Navy Section) give weight to his views before replying to the army.\*\*\*\*

This dispatch must have been a source of considerable satisfaction to him because it not only supported the views he had so boldly and forcibly expressed in his dispatch 201806 to Commander SW Area Force, but by inference, accepted his action in not communicating with the army as correct.

However, he could see from this dispatch that if he were ordered to move the army troops from Formosa to Leyte and he had departed for the

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\* CinC Combined Fleet Dispatch 191220 October 1944 to Commander Main Force, Detailed Action Report Main Force, SHO No. 1 Operation, October 20th - 29th, 1944, WDC Document 161005, NA 11744.

\*\* USS BS Interrogation of Japanese Officials, Nav No. 58, Interrogation of Commander Kokichi Mori, IJN, Volume I, Pages 236 - 237.

\*\*\* CofS SW Area Force Dispatch 201958 October 1944 to Commander 2ND Striking Force, info CinC Combined Fleet, COMCRUDIV 16, etc., Detailed Action Report CRUDIV 16, SHO Operation, October 17th - 27th, 1944, WDC Document 161005, NA 11744.

\*\*\*\* CofS SW Area Force Dispatch 202137 October 1944 to Imperial GHQ (Navy Section), Detailed Action Report CRUDIV 16, SHO Operation, October 17th - 27th, 1944, WDC Document 161005, NA 11744.



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COM SECOND STRIKING FORCE  
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south prior to the receipt of these orders he might well lose vital time by having to return to Formosa. He decided that he would not depart as scheduled but would await further information. He, therefore, at 2330 notified his command at Mako that (a) the sortie for the following day would be delayed, (b) the NACHI and ASHIGARA would depart the fueling ship (RYOEI MARU) at 0630 and return to their previous anchorages and (c) alert dispositions would be as established by his SigOrd No. 133.\*

About ten minutes later he thought that it would be wiser to cancel his projected sortie and to notify those concerned that he had done so. Therefore at 2340, referring to Commander SW Area Force's dispatch 201958 which told him to bear in mind the army's plan to force the employment of the SECOND Striking Force in counterlanding operations,\*\* he told CinC Combined Fleet that he had cancelled his sortie plans.\*\*\*

THIS DECISION OF COMMANDER SECOND STRIKING FORCE WAS SOUND. THE SHO ONE PENETRATION OPERATION WAS UNDERWAY AND THE MAJOR DECISIONS HAD BEEN MADE BUT THE FINAL DECISION REGARDING WHETHER OR NOT HIS ENTIRE COMMAND WAS TO BE EMPLOYED IN THE COUNTERLANDING OPERATIONS OR WHETHER A PORTION OF IT WAS TO BE EMPLOYED IN THE PENETRATION OPERATION HAD NOT BEEN MADE. IN FACT SERIOUS DISAGREEMENT ON THIS MATTER HAD ARISEN BETWEEN HIS IMMEDIATE SUPERIOR IN COMMAND, COMMANDER SW AREA FORCE AND CINC SOUTHERN ARMY, WHICH DISAGREEMENT HAD BEEN REFERRED THAT DAY TO IMPERIAL GENERAL HEADQUARTERS FOR DECISION. AT THE TIME THIS DISAGREEMENT OCCURRED HIS COMMAND WAS AT MAKO. IS IT NOT CLEAR THAT IF HE SORTIE HE (A) WOULD THEREBY CHANGE THE FACTOR OF RELATIVE POSITION WHICH COULD CONCEIVABLY SERIOUSLY AFFECT THE DECISIONS OF IMPERIAL GENERAL HEADQUARTERS, AND (B) MIGHT BE SERIOUSLY OUT OF POSITION IF SAID HEADQUARTERS DECIDED THAT THE SECOND STRIKING FORCE SHOULD TRANSPORT THE SIXTY-EIGHTH BRIGADE?

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\* Commander 2ND Striking Force Visual Dispatch 202330 October 1944 to 2ND Striking Force, War Diary DESRON 1, October 1944, WDC Document 161638, NA 11739.

\*\* CofS SW Area Force Dispatch 201958 October 1944 to Commander 2ND Striking Force, info CinC Combined Fleet, COMCRUDIV 16, etc., Detailed Action Report CRUDIV 16, SHO Operation, October 17th - 27th, 1944, WDC Document 161005, NA 11744.

\*\*\* Commander 2ND Striking Force Dispatch 202340 October 1944 to CinC Combined Fleet, Commander Takao Guard District, info other Combined Fleet Commands, Detailed Action Report CRUDIV 16, SHO Operation, October 17th - 27th, 1944, WDC Document 161005, NA 11744.

## (b) Operations of Commander FIFTH Base Air Force, October 20th.

Commander FIFTH Base Air Force remained at his headquarters in Manila and closely observed the developing situation. He was concerned with the problem of how best to employ his air strength with maximum effectiveness and fewest losses.

He realized that (a) his aircraft were so depleted that his anticipated strength for this day was only about forty planes,\* and (b) he was not yet ready for all-out attack operations against Allied forces nor were such operations planned for earlier than October 22nd or 23rd.

What should he do? Should he (a) in accordance with doctrine endeavor to regain and maintain contact on the Allied forces which had been sighted on the previous day, (b) preserve his strength for the major offensive by dispersing and concealing his aircraft, or (c) conduct limited offensive operations for the purpose of harassment and of inflicting all possible damage? All three of these tasks were his responsibility under the basic SHO Plan.\*\*

While his final decision is not known from the nature and extent of his air operations it seems clear that he decided to curtail general search operations on this day and to utilize his remaining aircraft for offensive operations. This seems so because all task groups of TF 38 and TG 30.3, which were operating within the normal search sector from Manila, were not contacted and because only those in the vicinity of Leyte Gulf encountered Japanese aircraft.\*\*\* Japanese aircraft contacts were made only on Allied carrier groups and other shipping near Leyte Gulf.

From these contacts and from the fact that Commander FOURTH Air Army did not make the short-range air searches for which he was responsible, it seems clear that the only significant Japanese searches from the Philippines on this date consisted of reconnaissance missions and were limited to the vicinity of Leyte Gulf. This view is supported by COMBATDIV ONE who, because he had not received any morning contact reports on Allied forces (in

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\* Memorandum of Vice Admiral Gunichi Mikawa, ex-IJN, (CinC SW Area Fleet), GHQ, FEC, Special Historical Collection, Supporting Documents to General of the Army Douglas MacArthur's Historical Report on Allied Operations in the Southwest Pacific Area, (Item 31, Footlocker 7 of 10, SWPA Series, Volume II).

\*\* Army-Navy Central Agreement concerning SHO Air Operations concluded July 24th, 1944, Supplement to Imperial GHQ (Navy Section) Directive No. 435, July 26th, 1944, WDC Document 216769 (Microfilm); also CinC Combined Fleet Operation Order No. 86, August 4th, 1944, Appendix II, (Outline for Concentration of Base Air Forces for SHO Operations), ATIS Document No. 39, Part VIII, June 4th, 1945 (NACHI Document).

\*\*\* War Diary BUNKER HILL, October 20th, 1944, Action Report BELLEAU WOOD, October 7th - 21st, 1944, Serial 0170, November 3rd, 1944.



the Philippines area), stated in his war diary that it would appear as if no searches or patrols were being carried out except as a last resort.\*

HIS DECISION TO OMIT THE GENERAL SEARCH OPERATIONS ON THIS DAY WAS CLEARLY BASED ON THE FOLLOWING REASONING: (A) AN ATTEMPT TO FLY THE SEARCHES NECESSARY TO MAINTAIN CONTACT WITH THE STRONG ALLIED CARRIER FORCES--JUDGING FROM PAST EXPERIENCE--COULD WELL COST HIM ALL HIS AIRCRAFT AND STILL FAIL TO ACCOMPLISH ITS PURPOSE; (B) IF THESE FORCES WERE TO CONTINUE TO OPERATE TO THE EASTWARD OF THE PHILIPPINES, AS THEY MUST DO IN ORDER TO SUPPORT A LANDING, IT WOULD BE NO MORE DIFFICULT TO LOCATE THEM A DAY OR TWO LATER THAN IT WOULD BE TO MAINTAIN CONTACT; (C) SEARCHES WOULD REQUIRE THE BULK OF HIS AIR STRENGTH AND WOULD THEREFORE PRECLUDE EVEN LIMITED OFFENSIVE OPERATIONS; (D) THE NUMBER OF ALLIED SHIPS OPERATING IN AND NEAR LEYTE GULF PRESENTED A VARIETY OF SUITABLE TARGETS FOR HIS PLANES WITHOUT REQUIRING EXTENSIVE SEARCHES; AND (E) AIR SUPPORT OF THE GARRISON FORCES ON LEYTE IN AN EFFORT TO THWART THE ALLIED LANDINGS WAS CLEARLY THE MOST IMPORTANT AND IMMINENT TASK.

THIS DECISION IS CONSIDERED TO HAVE BEEN SOUND AND IN ACCORDANCE WITH THE SHO PLAN WHICH PRESCRIBED THAT AIR STRENGTH BE PRESERVED, EXCEPT FOR CONDUCTING SURPRISE ATTACKS WITH SMALL ELEMENTS, UNTIL READY TO LAUNCH THE GENERAL OFFENSIVE.\*\*

Sometime during the early morning he received Commander SIXTH Base Air Force dispatch 200002 which established an attack organization comprised of 330 aircraft.\*\*\* From this dispatch he could estimate the strength that that command would have at the start of the general offensive.

Just after dawn he learned that the FOURTH Air Army had launched a dawn attack of some twenty fighters against Allied shipping in Leyte Gulf.\*\*\*\*

At about this time he ordered Commander 253rd Attack Unit to execute a surprise attack on enemy carriers or transports in Leyte Gulf using

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- \* Vice Admiral Matome Ugaki, IJN, (COMBATDIV 1), Personal Diary SENSOROKU, Nippon Shuppan Kyodo Kabushiki Kaisha, (Tokyo, March 15th, 1953), Volume II.
  - \*\* Army-Navy Central Agreement concerning SHO Air Operations concluded July 24th, 1944, Supplement to Imperial GHQ (Navy Section) Directive No. 435, July 26th, 1944, WDC Document 216769 (Microfilm).
  - \*\*\* Commander 6TH Base Air Force Dispatch 200002 October 1944, (Addressees Unknown), War Diary 103RD Attack Unit, (701ST Air Group), Kokubu Detachment, October 13th - 31st, 1944, WDC Document 160258, NA 12592.
  - \*\*\*\* Daily Record of the War Situation, 4TH Air Army, GHQ, FEC, Special Historical Collection, Supporting Documents to General of the Army Douglas MacArthur's Historical Report on Allied Operations in the Southwest Pacific Area, (Item 4, Footlocker 10 of 10, SWPA Series, Volume II).

two carrier-type attack planes from Nichols Field.\* This was a unit of the 331st Air Group which had been transferred to his command from the THIRD Base Air Force by Commander SW Area Force on the 16th.\*\*

He may have also ordered at the same time an attack by three fighter bombers from Cebu\*\*\* which attacked TU 77.4.1 at 0832\*\*\*\* but it seems more likely that this attack was a result of his order of October 18th which directed, in part, that "aircraft of the 201st Unit presently at Cebu Base will continue surprise attack against enemy transports".\*\*\*\*\* This latter attack claimed direct hits on two converted carriers\*\*\* (actually, only the SANGAMON was damaged and she only slightly).\*\*\*\* Allied reports indicate that all three attacking planes were shot down.

At about 0843 he received CinC Combined Fleet's order for the decisive battle operation wherein, among other items, (a) October 25th was designated as X-day, (b) Commander SW Area Force was designated as the commander of all naval air forces in the Philippines with order to cooperate with the penetration of the FIRST Striking Force by destroying enemy task forces and invasion forces, and (c) the SIXTH Base Air Force was to advance to the Philippines where, under Commander SW Area Force, it was to launch an all-out offensive against Allied carrier forces on October 24th, Y-day.\*\*\*\*\* He could see that, whereas this order did not change his basic objectives, it did clarify and simplify the command relationship between the base air force commanders and Commander SW Area Force.

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- \* Commander Philippines Attack Force 1 (Commander 5TH Base Air Force) Dispatch (Date-Time-Group Unknown), October 20th, 1944 to 253RD Attack Unit, info Commanders Philippines Attack Force 2, SW Area Force, (Philippines Attack Force 1 DesOpOrd No. 24), Detailed Action Report No. 3, 253RD Attack Unit, (331ST Air Group), October 20th - November 13th, 1944, WDC Document 160354, NA 12378.
- \*\* Commander SW Area Force Dispatch 161314 October 1944 to CinC Combined Fleet, Commander 5TH Base Air Force, Commander Western Attack Force, (SW Area Force DesOpOrd No. 655), Detailed Action Report No. 3, 253RD Attack Unit, (331ST Air Group), October 20th - November 13th, 1944, WDC Document 160354, NA 12378.
- \*\*\* Philippine Area Naval Operations, Part II, October - December 1944, 2ND Demobilization Bureau, Japanese Government, October 1947, Department of the Army, Historical Division File No. 8-5, JS-104.
- \*\*\*\* Action Report CTG 77.4, Leyte Operation, October 12th - 29th, 1944, Serial 00104, November 8th, 1944.
- \*\*\*\*\* 5TH Base Air Force Dispatch 182142 October 1944 to Commanders Clark, Mabalacat and Cebu Air Bases, info CinC Combined Fleet, Commanders SW Area Force, 1ST Striking Force, 6TH Base Air Force, (5TH Base Air Force DesOpOrd No. 49), Detailed Action Report No. 3, 253RD Attack Unit, (331st Air Group), October 20th - November 13th, 1944, WDC Document 160354, NA 12378.
- \*\*\*\*\* CinC Combined Fleet Dispatch 200813 October 1944 to Combined Fleet, (Combined Fleet DesOpOrd No. 363), War Diary DESRON 1, October 1944, WDC Document 161638, NA 11739.



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At about the same time he received an 0815 contact report on six escort carriers and four battleships about eighty-five miles east of the northern tip of Dinagat Island (Contact C).<sup>\*</sup> This contact was likely on TU 77.4.1 since it was the nearest group, bearing 315°(T), distant forty-three miles from reported position. It was incorrect as regards the number of escort carriers since there were but four of these carriers within the task unit and of course no battleships. Shortly thereafter he may have received another 0815 contact report, this one from the FOURTH Air Army, on two large carriers and six cruisers bearing 078°(T), distant 243 miles from Saravia (Negros Island),<sup>\*\*</sup> which placed the contact to the eastward of Samar (Contact D).

At 0900 he issued an order incorporating the "S" Attack Unit into the 201st Unit.<sup>\*\*\*</sup> Information available does not indicate whether the "S" Unit referred to differs from the "S" Unit of the 331st Air Group which he had placed under the command of Commander 201st Unit late the previous evening<sup>\*\*\*\*</sup> or whether this order was a repeat of his previous action. It should be noted that the "201st Unit", as employed here, designated a tactical organization comprised principally of units of the 201st Air Group--one of the regularly assigned air groups of the FIFTH Base Air Force. It was Japanese practice when air groups had been depleted to consolidate these elements into a tactical organization approximating an air group in size and then to give the unit either a purely arbitrary designation, or the numeral designation of the regular group which had furnished its principal components.<sup>\*\*\*\*\*</sup> As "S" was a designation for fighters, the "S" Unit referred to was most likely a tactical organization of fighters.<sup>\*\*\*\*\*</sup> This was a logical procedure and was practiced in the U.S. Navy as well.

At about 0929, as an information addressee, his Chief of Staff received a dispatch from the Chief of Staff Combined Fleet wherein the Chief

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- <sup>\*</sup> Appended Chart I, Enemy Fleet Dispositions on October 20th, 1944, Detailed Action Report -Main Force, SHO No. 1 Operation, October 20th - 29th, 1944, WDC Document 161005, NA 11744.
  - <sup>\*\*</sup> Daily Record of the War Situation, 4TH Air Army, GHQ, FEC, Special Historical Collection, Supporting Documents to General of the Army Douglas MacArthur's Historical Report on Allied Operations in the Southwest Pacific Area, (Item 4, Footlocker 10 of 10, SWPA Series, Volume II).
  - <sup>\*\*\*</sup> Commander 5TH Base Air Force Dispatch 200900 October 1944 to 5TH Base Air Force, (5TH Base Air Force Special DesOpOrd No. 10), War Diary 23RD Air Flotilla, October 1944, WDC Document 161638, NA 11739.
  - <sup>\*\*\*\*</sup> Commander 5TH Base Air Force Dispatch 192134 October 1944 to 5TH Base Air Force and Commander 331ST Air Group, (5TH Base Air Force DesOpOrd No. 50), War Diary 23RD Air Flotilla, October 1944, WDC Document 161638, NA 11739.
  - <sup>\*\*\*\*\*</sup> CINCPAC-CINCPOA Bulletin 16-45, enclosures to CINCPAC Weekly Intelligence Bulletin, Volume I, No. 28, January 22nd, 1945.

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of Staff FIRST Striking Force was requested to enforce strict vigilance against large enemy aircraft while anchored in Brunei.\*

At about 1009 he received a dispatch from the Chief of Staff Combined Fleet which cautioned all commands to be alert to the possibility of interception by enemy fighters in groups of about four at any and all times. Recent experience had been that planes had been receiving surprise attacks well outside the areas wherein encounters with enemy carrier fighters would normally be expected.\*\*

Since it was his planes and those of the FOURTH Air Army which had been experiencing most of these attacks it seems highly probable that this dispatch had originated within the SW Area, perhaps from Commander FIFTH Base Air Force himself.

At about 1047 he received a dispatch from Commander SW Area Force which directed (a) him to transfer five carrier-type attack planes from the reserve aircraft of the 761st Air Group to the 331st Air Group and (b) Commander THIRD Base Air Force to transfer two crews to Kudat and three crews to ZAMBOANGA to man these planes after which they were to be under him, Commander FIFTH Base Air Force.\*\*\*

At about 1114 he received a dispatch from CinC Combined Fleet which stated that since the entire operational strength of the SIXTH and SEVENTH Base Air Forces was being transferred to the SHO No. One operation area the commanders of these two forces were relieved of responsibility for searches from Honshu, Kyushu and Okinawa.\*\*\*\* He now knew that the strength to be deployed south would likely be somewhat more than the 330 aircraft indicated by Commander SIXTH Base Air Force's dispatch 200002 received early that morning.\*\*\*\*\*

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- \* CofS Combined Fleet Dispatch 200859 October 1944 to CsofS 1ST Striking Force, SW Area Force, 5TH Base Air Force, Detailed Action Report No. 3, YAMATO, SHO No. 1 Antiair and Surface Actions, October 17th - 28th, 1944, WDC Document 161639.
  - \*\* CofS Combined Fleet Dispatch 200939 October 1944 to All Fleet and Squadron Commanders Combined Fleet, War Diary 101ST Air Flotilla, October 1944, WDC Document 160304, NA 12542.
  - \*\*\* Commander SW Area Force Dispatch 201017 October 1944 to Commander 5TH Base Air Force and Western Attack Force, (SW Area Force DesOpOrd No. 671), Detailed Action Report No. 3, 253RD Attack Unit, (331ST Air Group), October 20th - November 13th, 1944, WDC Document 160354, NA 12378.
  - \*\*\*\* CinC Combined Fleet Dispatch 201044 October 1944 to 6TH and 7TH Base Air Forces, (CinC Combined Fleet DesOpOrd No. 366), Detailed Action Report No. 2, Northern Attack Force, 2ND Base Air Force, etc., October 10th - November 15th, 1944, WDC Document 161645, NA 12262.
  - \*\*\*\*\* CofS 6TH Base Air Force Dispatch 200002 October 1944, (Addressees Unknown), War Diary 103RD Attack Unit, (701ST Air Group), Kokubu Detachment, October 13th - 31st, 1944, WDC Document 160258, NA 12592.



During the forenoon he was aware of the Allied operations in Leyte Gulf including the major landing on Leyte. He also knew of the Allied air attacks against the Philippines although there were no attacks on Manila. Records do not indicate that he ordered interception nor did Allied aircraft encounter fighter opposition.

Shortly after noon he learned that CinC Combined Fleet had returned to Hiyoshi.\*

During the afternoon he received contacts from his own planes as follows:

(a) At about 1310 a 1240 contact on two carriers and five other ships (Contact E) approximately thirty-five miles east of SE Samar\*\* (this was TU 77.4.2);

(b) At 1330 a contact on four escort carriers, two battleships, two cruisers and six destroyers (Contact F).\*\*\* What task group this contact was on is not known as the contact plots were about equally distant from TU's 77.4.2 and 77.4.3;

(c) At 1600 a contact in Leyte Gulf on twenty warships, seventy large ships, eighty smaller craft and transports.\*\*\*\* This contact, which is shown in the naval intelligence records, may have been composed in part of a report referred to under 1735 below; and

(d) At about 1710 a report of a 1640 contact on five battleships, ten old destroyers (cruisers) and twenty transports to the eastward of but near Homonhon Island (Contact H).\*\* Since the Allied units in this vicinity were, in general, minesweepers, this contact report seems to have been erroneous.

At about 1735 he learned that the two carrier-type attack planes which he had ordered to make a surprise attack in Leyte Gulf had completed their mission\*\*\*\*\* and had returned to base at 1705. One plane was missing; the other plane which had returned

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\* CinC Combined Fleet Dispatch 201145 October 1944 to Fleet and Squadron Commanders, Detailed Action Report BATDIV 1, SHO No. 1 Operation, October 18th - 28th, 1944, WDC Document 161005, NA 11744.  
 \*\* Appended Chart I; Enemy Fleet Dispositions on October 20th, 1944, Detailed Action Report Main Force, SHO No. 1 Operation, October 20th-29th, 1944, WDC Document 161005, NA 11744. (COMBATDIV 1 recorded ten cruisers rather than ten old destroyers).  
 \*\*\* Vice Admiral Matome Ugaki, IJN, (COMBATDIV 1), Personal Diary SENSOROKU, Nippon Shuppan Kyodo Kabushiki Kaisha, (Tokyo, March 15th, 1953), Volume II.  
 \*\*\*\* Material for Situation Estimates, 1ST Section, Naval General Staff, October 1944, WDC Document 216764 (Microfilm).  
 \*\*\*\*\* Philippines Attack Force 1 (Commander 5TH Base Air Force) Dispatch (no date-time-group), October 20th, 1944 to 253RD Attack Unit, etc., (Philippines Attack Force 1 SigOpOrd No. 24), Detailed Action Report No. 3, 253RD Attack Unit, (331ST Air Group), October 20th - November 13th, 1944, WDC Document 160354, NA 12378.

to Cebu at 1705 claimed sinking one large transport.\* This was apparently the plane which had at 1602 torpedoed the HONOLULU.\*\* At 1800 he sent a dispatch directing this plane to take off early the following morning and proceed to Lubang,\*\*\* an island off the entrance to Manila Bay. He apparently anticipated morning attacks against Cebu and wished to move the plane to a field which was not normally under Allied attack.

At about the same time he learned that Commander SW Area Force was placing the 331st Air Group under his command effective at 1800. The carrier-type attack planes of the 253rd Attack Unit which he had received October 16th were at the same time returned to their parent group, the 331st. This action was confirmed by dispatch the following day.\*\*\*\*

In the late afternoon, about sunset, a senior staff officer,\*\*\*\*\* from the SIXTH Base Air Force arrived in Manila to make detailed arrangements for the deployment of that command to the Philippines. An operational conference was held at the headquarters of Commander FIFTH Base Air Force to reach decisions on: (1) deployment bases; (2) operational preparations at deployment bases; and (3) location of SIXTH Base Air Force Headquarters.\*\*\*\*\*

During the day, at times not indicated, he may have received other information from army sources\*\*\*\*\* and reported under "Operations of FOURTH Air Army, October 20th", but since no information thereon appears to have been given to the Japanese naval high command, this seems most unlikely.

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- \* Detailed Action Report No. 3, 253RD Attack Unit, (331st Air Group), October 20th - November 13th, 1944, WDC Document 160354, NA 12378.
  - \*\* CTF 77 Dispatch 200755 October 1944 to COMSOWESPAC, info COMINCH, CINCPAC, COM3RDLFT, etc.
  - \*\*\* Commander 5TH Base Air Force Dispatch 201800 October 1944 to Commander Cebu Air Base, (5TH Base DesOpOrd No. 51), Detailed Action Report No. 3, 253RD Attack Unit, (331ST Air Group), October 20th - November 13th, 1944, WDC Document 160354, NA 12378.
  - \*\*\*\* Commander SW Area Force Dispatch 211138 October 1944, (SW Area Force DesOpOrd No. 676), to CinC Combined Fleet, Commanders Western Attack Force, 4TH Fleet, 331ST and 531ST Air Groups, Detailed Action Report No. 3, 253RD Attack Unit, (331ST Air Group), October 20th - November 13th, 1944, WDC Document 160354, NA 12378.
  - \*\*\*\*\* Captain Bunzo Shibata, IJN.
  - \*\*\*\*\* Memorandum Notes of Captain Bunzo Shibata, IJN, Senior Staff Officer 6TH Base Air Force, October 10th - 23rd, 1944, Department of the Army, Historical Division Microfilm HS-22, Item B.
  - \*\*\*\*\* Daily Record of the War Situation, 4TH Air Army, GHQ, FEC, Special Historical Collection, Supporting Documents to General of the Army Douglas MacArthur's Historical Report on Allied Operations in the Southwest Pacific Area, (Item 4, Footlocker 10 of 10, SWPA Series, Volume II).



At 2000 Vice Admiral Takijiro Onishi, IJN, relieved Vice Admiral Kimpei Teraoka, IJN, as Commander FIFTH Base Air Force.\*

During the late afternoon, if he was an information addressee, he may have received a dispatch from Chief of Staff Combined Fleet to Commander FIRST Striking Force suggesting a double penetration rather than a single penetration.\*\* This would have been of considerable interest to him since it might affect his air operation in the providing of air support.

During the evening an additional conference was held at the headquarters of Commander SW Area Force which was attended by the new Commander FIFTH Base Air Force as well as by the representatives of the SIXTH Base Air Force, and likely by a naval liaison officer of the FOURTH Air Army. Discussions lasted past midnight.\*\*\* The nature of the discussions excepting that one matter discussed was the Clark Plan is not recorded; however, it seems likely there was (a) some decision on the coordination of the efforts of the FIFTH and SIXTH Base Air Forces in the impending operation, and (b) some discussion as to the readiness of the airfields which were to accommodate the planes of the SIXTH Base Air Force which would be presently moving to the Philippines.

It also seems likely that the dispatch order (quoted below) forming officially the Kamikaze Special Attack Corps was discussed in this meeting and there received the approval of Commander SW Area Force. This seems so since the order was released (2347) during the conference.

This dispatch order which established the Kamikaze Special Attack Corps within the 201st Air Group was as follows:

"1. Commander 201st Air Group will organize special crash attack units with all his presently available strength and, by October 22nd, will be ready to assign these units to the destruction of enemy carriers east of the Philippines.

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\* Diary of Vice Admiral Kimpei Teraoka, IJN, August 1st - November 1st, 1944, 5TH Base Air Force in SHO Operation, GHQ, FEC, Special Historical Collection, Supporting Documents to General of the Army Douglas MacArthur's Historical Report on Allied Operations in the Southwest Pacific Area, (Item 30, Footlocker 7 of 10, SWPA Series, Volume II).

\*\* CofS Combined Fleet Dispatch 201006 October 1944, (Addressees Unknown, except info COMBATDIV 1). Information compiled by Captain Toshikazu Ohmae, ex-IJN, Japanese Research Division, HQ, USAFFE, Military History Section, relating to Penetration Operations of 1ST Striking Force, Battle for Leyte Gulf, contained in HQ, USAFFE, Military History Section letter March 20th, 1954 to President, Naval War College.

\*\*\* Memorandum notes of Captain Bunzo Shibata, IJN, Senior Staff Officer 6TH Base Air Force, October 10th - 23rd, 1944, Department of the Army, Historical Division Microfilm HS-22, Item B.

"2. These attack units will be called Kamikaze Special Attack Units.

"3. Commander 201st Air Group will make advance preparations to organize additional special attack units from future reinforcements."\*

At midnight while still in conference, he knew that Commander SW Area Force had dissolved the "S" Attack Unit and placed its strength under his command (Commander FIFTH Base Air Force).\*\* Inasmuch as this unit was apparently operating under Commander 201st Air Group, its formal dissolution probably represented only a release from the task for which it was originally formed in order to augment the Kamikaze attack potential of the 201st Air Group.

During the day the FIFTH Base Air Force lost about seven operational aircraft. Therefore the number of operational aircraft that Commander FIFTH Base Air Force had with which to carry out his missions on October 21st was about thirty-three aircraft.

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\* Commander 5TH Base Air Force Dispatch 202347 October 1944 to Commander Mabalacat Air Base, (5TH Base Air Force DesOpOrd No. 52), War Diary 61ST Air Flotilla, October 1944, WDC Document 161643, NA 12260.

\*\* Commander SW Area Force Dispatch 211138 October 1944 to CinC Combined Fleet, Commanders Western Attack Force, 4TH Fleet, 331ST and 531ST Air Groups, (SW Area Force DesOpOrd No. 676), Detailed Action Report No. 3, 253RD Attack Unit, (331ST Air Group), October 20th - November 13th, 1944, WDC Document 160354, NA 12378.



## (B) Operations of C.G. FOURTH Air Army, October 20th.

C.G. FOURTH Air Army remained in his Manila headquarters. Because of the proximity of the two headquarters, he is considered to have been aware of most of the more important naval developments which were known to Commander FIFTH Base Air Force. Therefore, these will not be again discussed in detail. Through the navy then, he knew of the attack organization which had been promulgated just after midnight by Commander SIXTH Base Air Force indicating an anticipated strength of about 330 planes.\* Records do not indicate whether or not he knew at this time the extent of his own prospective reinforcements. However, he must have had reasonably accurate information and therefore had reasons to anticipate a strength of from 100 to 200 planes. (An order issued on October 22nd by C.G. SECOND Air Division scheduled a strength of 172 planes for attacks on October 24th.)\*\* At the present time he had fifty-five operational planes out of ninety-two available.

Although the evidence is not conclusive on this point, he had apparently curtailed the short range search operations for which he had been responsible. An order issued on this date from the SECOND Air Division headquarters in the Clark Air Base Complex by C.G. SECOND Air Division, who as his subordinate was responsible for the search operations, states that in order to utilize the full strength of the SECOND Air Regiment to carry out necessary reconnaissance in the vicinity of Leyte Island, reconnaissance of other areas would be dispensed with.\*\*\* Inasmuch as the searches were being flown in accordance with a joint agreement with Commander FIFTH Base Air Force it seems likely that the decision to cancel was made jointly by the two commanders.

As dawn arrived, he was aware that C.G. SECOND Air Division, who was in the process of concentrating his air strength in the Visayas, had launched an attack of about twenty planes against enemy ships in Leyte Gulf.\*\*\*\*

Since it was necessary to assemble these twenty planes from three air regiments (TWENTY-SIXTH, FORTY-FIFTH and 204th) and one air brigade (TWENTY-SECOND) and since there were but fifty-five planes operational in the entire

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\* CofS 6TH Base Air Force Dispatch 200002 October 1944, (Addressees Unknown), War Diary 103RD Attack Unit, (701ST Air Group), Kokubu Detachment, October 13th - 31st, 1944, WDC Document 160258, NA 12592.

\*\* 2ND Air Division OpOrd A-207, October 22nd, 1944, Documents from File of Lieutenant Colonel Katsuo Sato, IJA, Staff Officer, 4TH Air Army, Department of the Army, Historical Division Microfilm HS-7.

\*\*\* 2ND Air Division, "Plan of Operation for Philippines Decisive Battle", October 20th, 1944, Documents from File of Lieutenant Colonel Katsuo Sato, IJA, Staff Officer, 4TH Air Army, Department of the Army, Historical Division Microfilm HS-7.

\*\*\*\* Daily Record of the War Situation, 4TH Air Army, GHQ, FEC, Special Historical Collection, Supporting Documents to General of the Army Douglas MacArthur's Historical Report on Allied Operations in the Southwest Pacific Area, (Item 4, Footlocker 10 of 10, SWPA Series, Volume II).

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FOURTH Air Army,\* the unhappy condition of that air army as regards not only total number of planes but also as regards the strength of the individual commands, which comprised the whole, is apparent. It seems clear therefore that the morale was not of the best and it also seems clear that the air attacks because of the resulting difficulties in coordination must have been loosely conducted. This is borne out, as mentioned later, by the failure of this air attack.

About 0640 he received a report that the enemy had landed at Tacloban at 0610.\*

About 0845 he received a report of a contact made at 0815 on an Allied force including two large carriers and six cruisers bearing 078<sup>0</sup>(T), distant 243 miles from Saravia (Negros Island)(Contact D).\* This report was apparently originated by one of his planes because the distance was expressed in kilometers and the reference point was an army field. The contact was likely either TG 38.1 or 38.4 which were at the time operating in the vicinity of the reported position. Shortly thereafter he may have received a navy 0815 contact report on six escort carriers and four battleships about eighty-five miles east of the northern tip of Dinagat Island (Contact C).\*\*

At about the same time he likely received from Commander FIFTH Base Air Force CinC Combined Fleet dispatch 200813 wherein October 25th was designated as X-day instead of October 24th.\*\*\* He noted that the missions of the naval forces with which he was directly concerned had not been changed. The delay in X-day gave him an additional day in which to concentrate his forces inasmuch as his operations were to be coordinated with those of the navy. However, he must have realized that, if the report that the enemy had commenced landing at 0610 was correct--and this was quite plausible considering the operations of the day before--every additional day given the enemy to unload his shipping would make his destruction of the enemy transports less effective in preventing the establishment of a secure Allied beachhead.

The incomplete records available to this analysis do not contain any orders issued by C.G. FOURTH Air Army on this day. However they do contain the preliminary "Plan of Operations for the Philippines Decisive Battle" issued by C.G. SECOND Air Division, possibly in the forenoon.\*\*\*\* As has

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\* Daily Record of the War Situation, 4TH Air Army, GHQ, FEC, Special Historical Collection, Supporting Documents to General of the Army Douglas MacArthur's Historical Report on Allied Operations in the Southwest Pacific Area, (Item 4, Footlocker 10 of 10, SWPA Series, Volume II).

\*\* Appended Chart I, Enemy Fleet Dispositions on October 20th, 1944, Detailed Action Report Main Force, SHO No. 1 Operation, October 20th - 29th, 1944, WDC Document 161005, NA 11744.

\*\*\* CinC Combined Fleet Dispatch 200813 October 1944 to Combined Fleet, (Combined Fleet DesOpOrd No. 363), War Diary DESRON 1, October 1944, WDC Document 161638, NA 11739.

\*\*\*\* 2ND Air Division, "Plan of Operation for Philippines Decisive Battle", October 20th, 1944, Documents from File of Lieutenant Colonel Katsuo Sato, IJA, Staff Officer 4TH Air Army, Department of the Army Historical Division Microfilm HS-7.



been previously emphasized this division represented virtually all of the air strength of the FOURTH Air Army in the Philippines.

The essentials of this plan were:

(a) General Policy: To commit the entire strength of the division and attached reinforcements against enemy forces landing in the Central Philippines and to annihilate them on the water at any cost. The primary target was to be enemy transports.

(b) Outline of Operations: (1) Units were to expedite concentration in the Visayas area, (2) because the strength of SECOND Air Regiment (to be based in the Bacolod area) consisted of but four to five operational planes, reconnaissance of other areas was to be dispensed with in order to concentrate reconnaissance to the vicinity of Leyte including reconnaissance of follow-up transports convoys, shipping in Leyte Gulf, special reconnaissance prior to dusk attacks, and confirmation of attack results, (3) while dispersed elements were concentrating, small elements were to be committed, and, in order to preserve air strength through impeding the enemy plans, provision was made to shift the attack target temporarily to enemy carriers, (4) when concentration had been completed, the enemy was to be destroyed in Leyte Gulf by continuous day and night attacks, (5) when the THIRTIETH Fighter Group came under the SECOND Air Division, the fighter group commander was to command all fighters in the division, (6) normal practice was for the full strength of the fighter force to cooperate with the bomber force. As regards interception and patrol operations, the annihilation of enemy aircraft was the primary objective, and finally (7) the plan assigned airfields to the various units principally in the Visayas.

(c) The air division was to cooperate closely with the ground forces and with the FIFTH and SIXTH Base Air Forces.

He probably noted that this tentative plan followed, in general, the draft plan which he had issued on October 15th\* and he was therefore satisfied with the preparations being made.

Sometime in the late forenoon he received the results of his dawn attack. As reported to Imperial General Headquarters (Army Section) this twenty plane attack had sunk one destroyer, one transport and two landing craft in addition to a near miss on a destroyer while losing one plane.\*\* He was no doubt pleased with the degree of success achieved by such a relatively small attack. However, the facts are that this attack, as pointed out under "Operations of CTG 77.4, October 20th" was ineffective making only one hit and scoring several near misses.

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\* Documents from File of Lieutenant Colonel Katsuo Sato, IJA, Staff Officer 4TH Air Army, Department of the Army, Historical Division Microfilm HS-7.

\*\* Daily Record of the War Situation, 4TH Air Army, GHQ, FEC, Special Historical Collection, Supporting Documents to General of the Army Douglas MacArthur's Historical Report on Allied Operations in the Southwest Pacific Area, (Item 4, Footlocker 10 of 10, SWPA Series, Volume II).

He was aware of the Allied air attacks in the Philippines but he does not appear to have taken any specific action, although he reported to Imperial General Headquarters (Army Section) that the Philippines had been attacked by a total of 310 planes.\* About noon, he learned that the major Allied landing had commenced. He may also have learned by this time that the 0610 report of a landing had been erroneous.

At 1600 he received an army report of five to six battleships and over twenty destroyers and transports in Leyte Gulf off Dulag and Tacloban exchanging fire with shore batteries and with two ships on fire.

During the afternoon he likely received a navy (a) 1240 contact report on two carriers and five other ships approximately thirty-five miles east of SE Samar (Contact E),\*\* and (b) 1640 contact on five battleships, ten old destroyers (cruisers) and twenty transports near Homonhon Island (Contact H).\*\*

During the day he received other information, at times not indicated, both from his own aircraft reconnaissance and possibly from reports by SIXTEENTH Division relayed by Headquarters FOURTEENTH Area Army.

(1) A contact on six carriers (two small) and six cruisers, 083<sup>0</sup>(T), distant 227 miles from Saravia (Negros Island)(Contact J). This contact by air army planes could have been on TG 38.1, TG 38.4, TU 77.4.1 or TU 77.4.2, all of which during the day operated in the vicinity of the reported position. However, owing to the inference that there were four large carriers, it seems probable that the contacts were either on TG 38.1 or TG 38.4.

(2) A contact report on six cruisers, over ten transports and twenty small craft in Leyte Gulf (Contact K).

(3) Two groups of ships fifty-four miles east of Dolores, Samar (Contact I). This was either (a) a completely false contact because no Allied ships were in that vicinity during the day, or (b) it was a night radar contact made on TG's 38.1 and 38.4 before dawn which had passed well to the eastward of the reported position. No records are available of army night searches. However, it is known that at least one FOURTH Air Army Unit--the 31st Independent Air Company--had radar equipped bombers.

(4) An intelligence estimate, probably from the army, that the enemy landing forces consisted of about three divisions supported by eighteen carriers, twelve battleships, and thirty to forty cruisers. The validity of this estimate can not well be ascertained because it is not clear whether it referred only to immediate support, SEVENTHFLT, or whether it included the "Task Force" as well.

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\* Daily Record of the War Situation, 4TH Air Army, GHQ, FEC, Special Historical Collection, Supporting Documents to General of the Army Douglas MacArthur's Historical Report on Allied Operations in the Southwest Pacific Area, (Item 4, Footlocker 10 of 10, SWPA Series, Volume II).

\*\* Appended Chart I, Enemy Fleet Dispositions on October 20th, 1944, Detailed Action Report Main Force, SHO No. 1 Operation, October 20th - 29th, 1944, WDC Document 161005, NA 11744. (COMBATDIV 1 recorded ten cruisers rather than ten old destroyers).



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C.G. FOURTH AIR ARMY  
October 20th

During the evening he knew (a) of the conferences being held in naval headquarters and, although he was represented in these conferences by a naval liaison staff officer,\* he does not appear to have been officially involved on this date, and (b) of the change in command of the FIFTH Base Air Force.\*\*

He most likely spent the evening preparing his plan for the decisive battle which he was to issue the following day.

During the day his losses in planes appear to have been few. However, these losses were compensated for by the arrival of the THIRD Air Regiment with twenty-five planes at Clark Field. This gave him seventy-five operational planes for the 21st.\*\*\*

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\* Commander Michitaka Hiramoto, IJN.

\*\* Memorandum Notes of Captain Bunzo Shibata, IJN, Senior Staff Officer, 6TH Base Air Force, October 10th - 23rd, 1944, Department of the Army, Historical Division Microfilm HS-22, Item B.

\*\*\* Daily Record of the War Situation, 4TH Air Army, GHQ, FEC, Special Historical Collection, Supporting Documents to General of the Army Douglas MacArthur's Historical Report on Allied Operations in the Southwest Pacific Area, (Item 4, Footlocker 10 of 10, SWPA Series, Volume II).

CHAPTER III - ALLIED OPERATIONS, OCTOBER 21st.

## (A) Operations of COMSOWESPAC, October 21st.

COMSOWESPAC remained aboard his flagship NASHVILLE which returned to San Pedro Bay at dawn from night retirement area in the eastern portion of Leyte Gulf.\*

During the early morning he received (a) as an information addressee, a dispatch from COMTHIRDFLT wherein that commander issued orders for the employment of the fast carrier task groups for D+1 and D+2 days,\*\* and (b) the following congratulatory message from the President:

"The whole American nation today exults at the news that the gallant men under your command have landed on Philippine soil. I know what it cost you to obey my order that you leave Corregidor in February 1942 and proceed to Australia. Since then you have planned and worked and fought with whole-souled devotion for the day when you would return with powerful forces to the Philippine Islands. That day has come. You have the nation's gratitude and the nation's prayers for success as you and your men fight your way back to Bataan."\*\*\*

In regard to item (a) above, these orders, in essence, called for three carrier task groups, on completion of operations on D+1 day, to proceed to an area 270 miles north-northeast of the objective area to arrive by 0600 D+2 day and then to operate in this vicinity in strategic support of KING II; the fourth carrier task group was to proceed to Area MICK to fuel on D+2 day, arriving by 0700.

What reaction, if any, he had to the above schedule, particularly in regard to the non-retention of one fast carrier task group at the objective area after D-day\*\*\*\* as requested by CTF 77,\*\*\*\*\* is not known. Perhaps he felt that (a) this was a naval problem and he would rely on the competence of the naval commanders to handle it, or (b) CTF 77's request for fast carriers to protect and support the operations in the objective area after D-day was not valid inasmuch as (1) this role had been assigned to the escort carriers in the basic plan, (2) the escort carriers were capable of this task, and (3) COMTHIRDFLT was to operate in strategic support of KING II after D-day, effecting air strikes as requested by either COMSOWESPAC or CTF 77 if so necessitated by the existing situation.\*\*\*\*\*

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- \* War Diary NASHVILLE, October 21st, 1944.
  - \*\* COM3RDFLT Dispatch 201222 October 1944 to CTF 38, all TGC's of TF 38, and CTG 30.8, info CTF 77, COMSOWESPAC, etc.
  - \*\*\* President Roosevelt Dispatch 201212 October 1944 to General MacArthur, White House Number 91.
  - \*\*\*\* COM3RDFLT Dispatch 200314 October 1944 to CTF 77, info COMSOWESPAC CINCPAC, all TFC's 3RD and 7TH Fleets.
  - \*\*\*\*\* CTF 77 Dispatch 191921 October 1944 to COM3RDFLT.
  - \*\*\*\*\* CANF SOWESPAC Operation Plan No. 13-44, Serial 00022A, September 26th, 1944, Annexes B and G.



At 0644 he learned that an enemy plane had crashed into the bridge of the AUSTRALIA and that she had suffered serious damage with a considerable number of personnel casualties.\*

At 0856 he replied to the President of the United States' congratulatory dispatch to the effect that this dispatch had only just then been received by him "this Saturday morning, the day following the landing at Leyte; I am releasing it at once through every publicity agency we have available. The message is a magnificent one and will have an electrifying effect. All goes well here.\*\*

At 0948 he went ashore in the vicinity of WHITE Beach at the northern beachhead with members of his staff and the President of the Philippines to inspect conditions on the beach and to see how the ground offensive was progressing.\* On arrival at the beach he again addressed the people of the Philippines by radio and urged them to rise and strike against their Japanese conquerors. This broadcast was transmitted over the major networks of the United States. The Philippine President, Sergio Osmena, who had been evacuated when the Japanese invaded the Philippines in 1942, also spoke and appealed to his people to rally to the cause of freedom.\*\*\*

During his visit ashore COMSOWESPAC accompanied CAAF SOWESPAC on an inspection tour of the Tacloban Airdrome, which had been captured late on the previous afternoon,\*\*\*\* and he was pleased to observe that the C.G. FIRST Cavalry Division already had started putting this airfield into serviceable condition.\*\*\*\*\* He was no doubt anxious to see the project completed at an early date since (a) as he stated later this day, the Leyte Operation marked the first time he had ever attempted to launch an amphibious assault beyond range of his own land-based air cover,\*\*\*\*\* and (b) in the planning phase he had shown concern in regard to the ability of aircraft carriers to provide sustained air support and cover at the objective area.

This anxiety likely stemmed from the representation made by CAAF SOWESPAC, who, as early as July 1944, had stated that he "considered it unwise to rely on carrier units completely accomplishing required support" because, among other reasons, "enemy air, surface, and subsurface action and the physical limitations of carriers creates a constant uncertainty in the maintenance of

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\* War Diary NASHVILLE, October 21st, 1944.  
 \*\* COMSOWESPAC Dispatch 202356 October 1944 to the President of the United States.  
 \*\*\* The New York Times, Sunday, October 22nd, 1944, Section 1, page 5.  
 \*\*\*\* 6TH U. S. Army, Report of Leyte Operation, October 17th - December 25th, 1944, page 32.  
 \*\*\*\*\* George C. Kenney, General Kenney Reports (New York, 1949) page 450.  
 \*\*\*\*\* COMSOWESPAC Dispatch 212240 October 1944 to COM3RDFLT, etc.

this type of fighter cover."\* This matter is discussed in Volume I under "Allied Land and Tender Based Aircraft."\*\*

At 1303 he returned with his observing party aboard the NASHVILLE.\*\*\* Upon his return he likely looked over his dispatch file and learned (a) that CTF 77 had replied to COMTHIRDFLT's dispatch 200314 regarding target priorities and coordination with other air operations in connection with that of TG's 38.2 and 38.3 this day against the Visayas. In this dispatch reply CTF 77 had stated (1) that he desired fighter sweeps made against all airfields as practicable north of Latitude 12°-00'N with enemy aircraft as the primary objective, (2) army aircraft from Morotai were covering all airfields south of this line, and (3) no coordination of these sweeps with air operations of other activities would be required,\*\*\*\* and (b) from COMSEVENTHFLT's Intelligence Summary issued by that headquarters at 1217 that (1) the report of "sixteen large naval vessels and numerous smaller" reported at Pare Pare Bay in the Celebes by C.G. FIFTH Air Force on October 19th\*\*\*\*\* was exceedingly inaccurate, and (2) the units consisted instead of six small cargo ships totalling 2500 tons, numerous small coasters and four float planes.\*\*\*\*\*

SINCE THE ORIGINAL ERRONEOUS REPORT HAD ALREADY CAUSED SOME CONCERN WITHIN SOWESPAC, IT SEEMS WELL AT THIS POINT TO COMMENT NOT ONLY UPON THE NECESSITY FOR ACCURATE CONTACT REPORTS BUT UPON THE NECESSITY FOR THE PROPER EVALUATION OF A CONTACT REPORT (BY THE ORIGINATOR) BEFORE FORWARDING IT TO THE RESPONSIBLE COMMANDER. NAVAL INSTRUCTIONS TODAY (1957) STATE IN PART THAT CONTACT REPORTS ARE OF SUCH VITAL IMPORTANCE THAT (A) NO MORE IMPORTANT DUTY EXISTS THAN THAT OF OBTAINING AND DELIVERING TO THE OTC INFORMATION OF ENEMY FORCES, AND (B) VITAL INFORMATION, BOTH POSITIVE AND NEGATIVE, SUCH AS ENEMY CONTACT REPORTS, MUST GET THROUGH TO THE APPROPRIATE PERSONNEL WITH THE MINIMUM POSSIBLE DELAY. LOSSES OF SHIPS, PLANES, AND PERSONNEL, AS WELL AS MANY LOST OPPORTUNITIES FOR DECISIVE DEFEAT OF THE ENEMY, HAVE BEEN NEEDLESSLY SUSTAINED THROUGH FAILURE TO OBTAIN, AMONG OTHER ITEMS, COMPLETE AND ACCURATE INFORMATION.\*\*\*\*\*

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- \* Allied Air Forces SOWESPAC letter July 11th, 1944 to COMSOWESPAC, contained in Air Evaluation Board SOWESPAC, Leyte Campaign, June 1945, Page 23.
  - \*\* Volume I, Battle for Leyte Gulf (NavPers 91973), Naval War College, 1953, Chapter II(c) Allied Land and Tender Based Aircraft.
  - \*\*\* War Diary NASHVILLE, October 21st, 1944.
  - \*\*\*\* CTF 77 Dispatch 201942 October 1944 to COM3RDFLT, info COMSOWESPAC, all TFC's and TGC's 3RD and 7TH Fleets.
  - \*\*\*\*\* C.G. 5TH Air Force Dispatch 191651 I October 1944 to CAAF SOWESPAC, COM7THFLT, AOIC.
  - \*\*\*\*\* COM7THFLT Dispatch 210317 October 1944 to all interested in COM7THFLT Intelligence Summaries.
  - \*\*\*\*\* Basic Fleet Operational Communication Doctrine (NWP 16), Chapter 5, Office of the Chief of Naval Operations, September 1953.



THAT INSTRUCTIONS SIMILAR TO THESE WERE IN EFFECT WITHIN THE NAVY IN 1944 IS CLEARLY SHOWN FROM COMMANDER AIRCRAFT SEVENTH FLEET'S SPECIAL INSTRUCTIONS IN THIS MATTER. HE ADVISED HIS COMMAND THAT, "PROMPT AND ACCURATE CONTACT REPORTS ARE OF VITAL IMPORTANCE.... THEREFORE, THE UTMOST EFFORTS MUST BE EXERTED TO MAKE SUCH REPORTS COMPLETE, ACCURATE AND PROMPT" AND AGAIN, "VITAL INFORMATION, POSITIVE AND NEGATIVE, SUCH AS CONTACT REPORTS, SEARCH REPORTS, INTELLIGENCE REPORTS, REPORTS OF BATTLE DAMAGE, OPERATIONAL DIRECTIVES, AND OTHER SIMILAR OPERATION INFORMATION, MUST GET THROUGH TO ALL WHO NEED TO KNOW WITH THE MINIMUM POSSIBLE DELAY. GRAVE LOSSES OF SHIPS, PLANES, AND PERSONNEL, AND LOST OPPORTUNITIES FOR DECISIVE DEFEAT OF THE ENEMY, HAVE BEEN NEEDLESSLY SUSTAINED THROUGH FAILURE TO OBTAIN COMPLETE AND ACCURATE INFORMATION, FAILURE TO CLEARLY STATE INFORMATION AT HAND, AND DELAYS IN DELIVERING VITAL INFORMATION TO ALL WHO NEED TO KNOW."\*

AS REGARDS THE RESPONSIBILITY FOR FURTHER HANDLING OF CONTACT REPORTS, NAVAL INSTRUCTIONS TODAY (1957) ALSO PRESCRIBE THAT THE APPROPRIATE COMMANDER IN ANY GIVEN CASE SHALL EVALUATE THE RELATIVE IMPORTANCE OF AVAILABLE INFORMATION TO DETERMINE WHAT INFORMATION SHOULD BE FORWARDED TO THE OTC. THE ORIGINATOR IS RESPONSIBLE FOR THE ACCURACY OF THE REPORT AND MUST INSURE THAT ONLY FACTS ARE INCLUDED.\*\*

In this case the report did not contain facts, but, instead, contained erroneous information which was forwarded as facts.

At this time (1303) he also received a dispatch from CTG 78.5 stating, among other things, that Area SWEEP now had been swept to sixty feet throughout and was considered safe for shallow-draft vessels, and that some portions had been swept to a depth of eighty feet and were deemed safe for all types of vessels.\*\*\*

At 1514 he received a dispatch from COMSEVENTHFLT headquarters at Hollandia which re-encyphered an earlier dispatch (072354 October) from CINCPAC to COMSOWESPAC. This dispatch (a) stated that more destroyers were required in TF 38 to carry out Operation HOTFOOT (air strikes against the Japanese mainland) which operation was scheduled for about November 11th, and (b) requested COMSOWESPAC on or about October 25th to release DESRON FORTY-SEVEN (then included in the screens of the carrier task units of TG 77.4) and to order it to Ulithi where COMDESRON FORTY-SEVEN was to report to COMTHIRDFLT for duty.\*\*\*\*

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- \* Commander Aircraft 7TH Fleet Special Instructions for Search Planes - Aircraft 7TH Fleet Serial 000167, October 15th, 1944.
  - \*\* Basic Fleet Operational Communication Doctrine (NWP 16), Chapter 5, Office of the Chief of Naval Operations, September 1953.
  - \*\*\* CTG 78.5 Dispatch 202224 October 1944 to all concerned with current operations SOWESPAC.
  - \*\*\*\* COM7THFLT Dispatch 210341 October 1944 to CTF 77, info CTF's 78, 79, CTG 77.4.

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At 1645 the NASHVILLE, with COMSOWESPAC aboard, got underway from San Pedro Bay with the ABNER READ and BUSH, and rendezvoused with TU 77.1.1 to form TG 77.1 (Flagship Group). This group then proceeded to patrol area in the eastern portion of Leyte Gulf.\*

At 1702 he made a second response to President Roosevelt's congratulatory message of the preceding day. In this dispatch he thanked the President as follows:

"I am deeply grateful for your fine message. It cannot but serve as a great inspiration to all ranks of this command. We all feel supreme confidence that we can win our way back and I am hopeful of doing so at a minimum cost of American and Filipino blood."\*\*

At 1708, as an information addressee, he received a dispatch from COMTHIRDFLT to CTF 77. In this dispatch COMTHIRDFLT, referring to (a) COMSEVENTHFLT's dispatch 210425 wherein that commander had requested CTF 38 to provide dusk fighter protection over the objective area on D+1, D+2 and thereafter as practicable,\*\*\* and (b) his own dispatch 210645 to COMSOWESPAC (which had not as yet been received by COMSOWESPAC), stated that it was impracticable to comply.\*\*\*\*

At 1727 he received the aforementioned dispatch from COMTHIRDFLT in effect as follows:

Would appreciate early advice regarding withdrawal your transports and other vulnerable overseas movements to safe positions since my present operations in strategic position to meet threat of enemy fleet forces are somewhat restricted by necessity to cover your units. The receipt of this information will permit me to execute an orderly rearming program for my groups and at same time will give me more freedom for further offensive action. Halsey\*\*\*\*\*

THESE TWO DISPATCHES ALARMED HIM AS (A) THEY GAVE A CLEAR INDICATION THAT COMTHIRDFLT WAS DESIROUS OF REDUCING THE THIRDFLT COMMITMENTS TO SOWESPAC AT THE EARLIEST PRACTICABLE MOMENT, (B) HE KNEW THAT UNDER COMTHIRDFLT'S BASIC ORDERS WHICH PRESCRIBED "IN CASE OPPORTUNITY FOR DESTRUCTION OF MAJOR PORTION OF THE ENEMY FLEET OFFER OR CAN BE CREATED SUCH DESTRUCTION BECOMES THE PRIMARY TASK"\*\*\*\*\*--THAT OFFICER WAS AUTHORIZED TO DISCONTINUE SUCH COMMITMENTS WHETHER OR NOT COMSOWESPAC APPROVED--IN FACT, COMTHIRDFLT HAD ALREADY DONE

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- \* War Diary NASHVILLE, October 21st, 1944.
  - \*\* COMSOWESPAC Dispatch 210802 October 1944 to President Roosevelt, info COMINCH.
  - \*\*\* COM7THFLT Dispatch 210425 October 1944 to CTF 38, info COM3RDFLT, CTF's 78, 79, CTG's 77.4, 38.3, 38.4.
  - \*\*\*\* COM3RDFLT Dispatch 210715 October 1944 to CTF 77, info COMSOWESPAC, CTF 38.
  - \*\*\*\*\* COM3RDFLT Dispatch 210645 October 1944 to COMSOWESPAC, info CTF 77, CINCPAC, etc.
  - \*\*\*\*\* CINCPAC Operation Plan No. 8-44, Serial 000851, September 27th, 1944, Paragraph 3(X) (1).



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THIS ON OCTOBER 15TH WHEN, WITH THE CTF 77 ADVANCE FORCES APPROACHING LEYTE, HE HAD NOTIFIED COMSOWESPAC THAT HE WAS DISPERSING HIS FORCES FOR FLEET ACTION AND THAT, EXCEPT FOR THE LUZON STRIKE, NO FAST CARRIERS WOULD BE AVAILABLE TO SUPPORT KING II UNTIL FURTHER NOTICE,\* (C) HE APPEARS TO HAVE FELT THAT COMTHIRDFLT WAS ANXIOUS TO ATTEMPT TO CREATE SUCH OPPORTUNITY, AND (D) HE FELT THAT THIS WOULD ENDANGER SOWESPAC OPERATIONS. HE THEREFORE STUDIED THE SITUATION AND CONSIDERED THE SUBSTANCE OF HIS REPLY.

HIS OBVIOUS CONCERN WAS, OF COURSE, BASED ON THE FACT THAT (A) THERE HAD BEEN SEVERAL CONTACTS ON JAPANESE NAVAL FORCES DURING THE PAST SEVERAL DAYS, (B) COMTHIRDFLT HAD REPEATEDLY WARNED AGAINST TOKYO EXPRESS OPERATIONS BY LIMITED JAPANESE NAVAL FORCES, AND (C) THE COMMAND OF THE WESTERN PACIFIC TASK FORCES (THIRDFLT) OPERATING IN THE SOWESPAC AREA IN SUPPORT OF COMSOWESPAC WAS NOT UNDER HIS (COMSOWESPAC'S) ORDERS EVEN TO THE REMOTEST DEGREE BUT WAS, INSTEAD, AT ALL TIMES UNDER CINCPAC. THERE WAS NO MUTUAL SUPERIOR NEARER THAN THE JOINT CHIEFS OF STAFF IN WASHINGTON. THIS COMMAND SITUATION (ITEM C) HAS BEEN MORE FULLY COMMENTED ON IN VOLUME I UNDER THE HEADING "COORDINATION OF OPERATIONS WITH ADJACENT THEATER COMMANDERS".\*\*

At 1810 he received a dispatch from COMSEVENTHFLT to CAAF SOWESPAC and C.G. FIFTH Air Force requesting, in part, that, since Coron Bay anchorage appeared most likely to be used as an assembly or fueling area for important elements of the Japanese fleet that might attempt to attack Allied forces at Leyte, (a) they maintain the close practicable air observation of that bay, and (b) they report and attack any enemy ships sighted there.\*\*\*

At 1914 he received CTF 77's dispatch 210230 from which he learned that his naval commander had decided to retire the damaged HONOLULU and AUSTRALIA from the objective area.\*\*\*\*

At 2015 he originated a dispatch to COMINCH reporting the progress of the landing through October 20th, including the torpedoing of the HONOLULU but making no mention of the damaged AUSTRALIA.\*\*\*\*\* Among other things, he stated, "no report of activity on 21st". This would indicate that, although he must have received from the NASHVILLE the report concerning the damaged AUSTRALIA, since all of the ships in the vicinity of the NASHVILLE saw the hit, he had not yet received CTF 77's preliminary report of damage.\*\*\*\*\*

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- \* COM3RDFLT Dispatch 150149 October 1944 to CINCPAC, COMINCH, COMSOWESPAC, COM7THFLT, CTF 77, etc.
  - \*\* Volume I, Battle for Leyte Gulf (NavPers 91973), Naval War College, 1953, Chapter II.
  - \*\*\* COM7THFLT Dispatch 210526 October 1944 to C.G. 5TH Air Force, and CAAF SOWESPAC, info COMSOWESPAC, COM3RDFLT.
  - \*\*\*\* CTF 77 Dispatch 210230 October 1944 to CTF's 78, 79, info COMSOWESPAC, TFC's and TGC's 3RD and 7TH Fleets.
  - \*\*\*\*\* COMSOWESPAC Dispatch 211115 October 1944 to COMINCH, COM7THFLT, info CNO, CINCPAC, COMSOPAC.
  - \*\*\*\*\* CTF 77 Dispatch 202345 October 1944 to Australian Commonwealth Naval Board, info COM7THFLT Administration, COMSOWESPAC, CINCPAC, COMINCH.



The above statement also indicates that he had not yet received CTF 77's report of operations for the 21st.\*

At 2037 he received (from CINCPAC) a contact report concerning the sighting (by Allied China-based aircraft) of an enemy task force in Formosa Strait consisting of one carrier, three heavy cruisers, and four destroyers on course 045°(T), speed fifteen knots, Latitude 23°-10'N, Longitude 117°-50'E.\*\*

At 2100 he drafted a reply to COMTHIRDFLT's dispatch 210645 mentioned previously saying, in part, that (a) the basic plan for this operation, in which for the first time he had moved beyond his own land-based air cover, was predicated upon full support by THIRDFLT, (b) as planned, every possible measure was being taken to expedite the installation of land-based air forces in this area but, pending achievement of the mission, shipping was subject during this critical period to raiding enemy elements, both air and surface, (c) two cruisers already had been damaged by air attacking Leyte Gulf, (d) he considered that COMTHIRDFLT's mission to cover this operation was essential and paramount, and (e) finally, he stated, "the method by which you fulfill that responsibility rests, of course, entirely in your judgement. You will be kept fully informed of progress. Withdrawal of our shipping is proceeding according to plan."\*\*\*

THIS DISPATCH, WHICH, OWING TO RADIO SILENCE, WAS NOT TRANSMITTED UNTIL 0740 THE FOLLOWING DAY, SHOWS CLEARLY THAT (A) COMSOWESPAC EXPECTED COMTHIRDFLT TO PROVIDE FULL COVER AND SUPPORT OF THE LEYTE OPERATION UNTIL THE TRANSPORTS HAD BEEN WITHDRAWN AND THE GROUND FORCES FIRMLY ESTABLISHED ASHORE AND, MOST IMPORTANT, UNTIL THE ESTABLISHMENT OF SHORE-BASED AIR COVER AT THE OBJECTIVE AREA (TENTATIVELY SCHEDULED FOR D+5), AND (B) HE WAS EXPECTING ENEMY OPERATIONS—FOR WHICH HE REQUIRED THIRDFLT COVER AND SUPPORT—TO CONSIST MAINLY OF RAIDS\*\*\*\* BY ENEMY AIR AND SURFACE ELEMENTS.\*\*\*\*\*

The latter concept here expressed by COMSOWESPAC is of considerable importance in that it clearly indicates that, as late as 2100 October 21st, the view expressed in his naval commanders operation plan\*\*\*\*\*—that "no major elements of the Japanese fleet would be involved in opposition to the Allied

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- \* CTF 77 Dispatch 210946 October 1944 to COMSOWESPAC info CINCPAC COM3RDFLT, etc.
- \*\* CINCPAC Dispatch 211037 October 1944 to COMSOWESPAC, etc. (Reencypherment of COMNAVGRPCHINA Dispatch 210930 October 1944 to CINCPAC).
- \*\*\* COMSOWESPAC Dispatch 212240 October 1944 to COM3RDFLT.
- \*\*\*\* (1) A raid is an offensive measure swiftly executed, often by surprise, and followed by a withdrawal. (Sound Military Decision, U.S. Naval War College, 1942, Page 73).  
(2) A raid, a sudden attack usually by a small force having no intention of holding the territory invaded. A raid may be made by aircraft, fast naval vessels, mobile ground forces, or amphibious forces (Dictionary of U.S. Military Terms for Joint Usage, May 1955).
- \*\*\*\*\* An element was a subdivision of a command considered as a part of a formation or maneuver (Dictionary of U.S. Army Terms, 1944).
- \*\*\*\*\* CANF SOWESPAC Operation Plan No. 13-44, Serial 00022A, September 26th, 1944, Annex M, paragraph C (1) (d).



landings at Leyte"—still prevailed. This view is emphasized by his intelligence summary of this date which states:

- (1) Enemy Air Forward Area (Nansei Shoto, Northern Luzon, Formosa):  
Defeated in the air, harassment and limited defense only remains.
- (2) Enemy Naval Units:  
No apparent attempt to interfere with our Leyte landings.\*

COMSOWESPAC WAS, OF COURSE, CORRECT (A) IN LEAVING THE MANNER IN WHICH COMTHIRDFLT FULFILLED HIS RESPONSIBILITY TO THE LEYTE OPERATION ENTIRELY UP TO THE COMPETENCE AND PROFESSIONAL JUDGMENT OF THAT NAVAL COMMANDER SINCE THIS MATTER WAS ESSENTIALLY A NAVAL PROBLEM, AND (B) IN BASING THE RETIREMENT OF COMTHIRDFLT'S VARIOUS GROUPS FOR REARMING AND FOR FURTHER FREEDOM FOR OFFENSIVE ACTION UPON THE ESTABLISHMENT OF LOCAL SHORE-BASED AIR RATHER THAN UPON THE WITHDRAWAL OF THE ASSAULT SHIPPING AS COMTHIRDFLT HAD ESTIMATED.

At 2236 he received a dispatch from COMTHIRDFLT wherein that commander stated that the South China Sea might suddenly become a critical area and therefore requested COMSOWESPAC's opinions as to his earliest estimate for a safe route to the South China Sea via Surigao and Mindoro Straits for (a) well-escorted fleet oilers, and (b) major combatant ships.\*\* He did not reply to this dispatch on this day and therefore his reaction to it can only be estimated.

Certainly, this dispatch must have surprised him for the beachheads were in the process of being stabilized and, although the four division commanders and C.G. TENTH Corps had assumed command ashore, C.G. TWENTY-FOURTH Corps and C.G. SIXTH Army had not as yet done so. Also, although the reports on Japanese air operations did not indicate much strong reaction at present, he well knew that, despite Allied successes, many Japanese airfields in the Philippines area were still operational and many of the damaged airfields could be readily repaired. He also knew that the Japanese were flying in air reinforcements, mostly from the Empire.

He clearly felt that COMTHIRDFLT's estimate of the situation, being based as it likely was on the concept that Japanese operations would be confined to air and surface raids and Tokyo Express runs, was anticipating operations against major enemy forces in the South China Sea in order to accomplish that portion of the orders which called upon the THIRDFLT to destroy major enemy forces encountered.

He also clearly felt that such operations were unsound for, if the THIRDFLT should move into the South China Sea via Surigao Strait, or even Luzon Strait, in search of major enemy forces he could visualize enemy raids in

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\* Intelligence Summary No. 20, Periodic Summary of Enemy Trends, GHQ, SOWESPACAREA Military Intelligence Section, General Staff, October 21st, 1944.

\*\* COM3RDFLT Dispatch 210454 October 1944 to COMSOWESPAC, info COMINCH, CINCPAC, CTF's 77 and 38, CTG 38.1.



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strength on the Allied naval forces remaining in the Leyte Gulf area as well as on his line of communications. For example, should the THIRDFLT enter the South China Sea via Surigao Strait, what was to prevent the Japanese carriers from striking through Luzon Strait? In this connection, it seems well to point out that his original planning intelligence estimate (made by his naval staff) of Japanese operations against the SEVENTHFLT had forecast that the Japanese naval reaction would consist of a Tokyo Express run by a strong cruiser force assisted by diversionary operations in the South China Sea by the heavy units of the FIRST Striking Force.\* While these latter operations were designed to draw off the Allied slow battleships, cruisers and destroyers from screening positions in the vicinity of Surigao Strait and thereby facilitate the operations of the cruiser force,\* COMSOWESPAC could visualize that they might equally well draw off the THIRDFLT. Therefore, he could see that if COMTHIRDFLT were released that commander might well be drawn off by the diversionary operations of the Japanese heavy units to the westward of the Philippines and thus place the SEVENTHFLT in a dangerous military situation.

THESE DISPATCHES BY COMTHIRDFLT AND COMSOWESPAC'S REPLY TO THE FIRST DISPATCH GAVE INDICATIONS OF WIDELY DIFFERING OPINIONS AS TO THE EMPLOYMENT OF FAST CARRIER TASK FORCES IN THE COVER AND SUPPORT OF AMPHIBIOUS OPERATIONS. ON THE ONE HAND, COMTHIRDFLT, AS DISCUSSED UNDER "OPERATIONS OF COMTHIRDFLT, OCTOBER 21ST", WAS CLEARLY OF THE OPINION THAT THIS COULD BEST BE ACCOMPLISHED BY SEEKING OUT THE ENEMY AND DESTROYING HIM OR BY CREATING A SITUATION WHICH WOULD CAUSE THE ENEMY TO REACT IN STRENGTH IN WHICH CASE HE (COMTHIRDFLT), WITH HIS EVIDENT SUPERIORITY, EXPECTED TO DESTROY HIM. ON THE OTHER HAND COMSOWESPAC WAS CLEARLY OF THE OPINION THAT THE FAST CARRIER TASK FORCES SHOULD REMAIN IN A POSITION TO SUPPORT HIS (COMSOWESPAC'S) OPERATIONS UNTIL ADEQUATE LAND-BASED AIR POWER HAD BEEN ESTABLISHED IN THE LEYTE AREA.

At 2305 he received from COMTHIRDFLT a report concerning the results of the dawn fighter sweeps and first strikes by TG's 38.2 and 38.3 against the Visayas and southern Luzon this day stating, among other things, that (a) at Coron Bay a previously damaged cargo ship, a small coastal cargo vessel, and a one-hundred foot escort had been destroyed, (b) three patrol boats had been sunk at Batangas Bay in southeastern Luzon and one at Cebu, (c) off Masbate two luggers and two medium cargo ships had been damaged and a number of ammunition barges destroyed, (d) thirteen enemy planes had been shot down in the air and thirty-seven destroyed on the ground, including some previously damaged, (e) own losses were three planes and one pilot and one aircrewman, (f) few worthwhile targets remained in southern Luzon and Coron Bay, (g) a total of forty-four planes (of which some were damaged) remained at Manapla, San Jose, Bulan, Legaspi, and Saravia Airfields.\*\*

At 2333 he received (from CTF 77) a very favorable report on the progress of the Leyte operations of which the factors of principal interest were that (a) the majority of the transports had been unloaded and were departing, and

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\* Intelligence Memorandum Japanese Fleet Possibilities, KING II Operations (Leyte), October 4th, 1944, by Captain Raymond D. Tarbuck, USN, Attached to G-3, GHQ, SOWESPAC.

\*\* COM3RDFLT Dispatch 210857 October 1944 to COMSOWESPAC and CINCPAC, info COMINCH, COM7THFLT, all TFC's 3RDFLT.



that the LST and AK unloading was proceeding well, partially owing to employment of pontoon causeways at RED Beach, and (b) troops ashore were making excellent progress with light casualties.\*

THE ABOVE REPORTS WERE OF CONSIDERABLE VALUE TO HIM BECAUSE THEY SHOWED CLEARLY THAT THE JAPANESE REACTION ON LAND, SEA, AND AIR HAD, AT LEAST FOR THE FIRST TWO DAYS, BEEN OF INSIGNIFICANT PROPORTIONS AND TENDED TO SUPPORT THE GHQ SOWESPAC INTELLIGENCE ESTIMATE OF OCTOBER 17TH THAT KING II COULD NOT BE STOPPED ON LAND, SEA OR AIR.\*\*

During this and the following days he received, in addition to the dispatch from the President of the United States, congratulatory dispatches from other leaders as well notably the Secretary of the Navy,\*\*\* CINCPAC,\*\*\*\* and COMTHIRDFLT.\*\*\*\*\*

(1) Operations of Commander SEVENTH Fleet, October 21st.

COMSEVENTHFLT, who was also CTF 77, was, as pointed out under "Operations of CTF 77, October 21st", operating in the WASATCH in his night retirement area.

As he returned to the objective area off the beaches, he pondered over the reply he should give COMTHIRDFLT in answer to that commanders' 200314. This dispatch, it will be recalled, requested earliest information concerning (a) target priorities for the Visayan strikes by TG's 38.2 and 38.3, and (b) instructions regarding air coordination of these strikes with other air operations. Since he had had this dispatch for many hours, it is not clear why he delayed so long in replying to it. Perhaps he required time to ascertain the plans of the Allied air forces. Whatever may have been the reason for the delay in replying, his reply was not dispatched until 0442, or about fourteen hours after its receipt by CTF 77. In this reply he (a) requested sweeps of all airfields as practicable north of Latitude 12°-00'N, with the destruction of enemy aircraft as the primary objective, (b) advised that army aircraft were covering all airfields south of this line, and (c) stated that no coordination of these attacks with those of other activities would be required.\*\*\*\*\*

THIS REPLY, EXCEPT FOR THE DELAY IN ITS RELEASE, WAS SOUND. CERTAINLY THE MAIN DANGER TO THE ALLIED SHIPPING OFF THE LANDING BEACHES WAS AT THE PRESENT MOMENT THE DANGER FROM JAPANESE AIRCRAFT WHICH ALREADY, THROUGH SNEAK

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\* CTF 77 Dispatch 210946 October 1944 to COMSOWESPAC, info COMINCH, CINCPAC, etc.

\*\* GHQ SOWESPAC Dispatch 171536 October 1944 to COMSOWESPAC (in NASHVILLE) and C.G. 6TH Army (in WASATCH).

\*\*\* SECNAV Dispatch 201954 October 1944 to COMSOWESPAC.

\*\*\*\* CINCPAC Dispatch 201954 October 1944 to COMSOWESPAC.

\*\*\*\*\* COM3RDFLT Dispatch 200005 October 1944 to COMSOWESPAC.

\*\*\*\*\* COM7THFLT Dispatch 201942 October 1944 to COM3RDFLT, info COMSOWESPAC, C.G. 5TH Air Force, all TFC's and TGC's 3RD and 7TH Fleets, etc.



ATTACKS, HAD DISABLED THE HONOLULU AND PRESERVER AND HAD MADE NEAR MISSES ON OTHER CRAFT. THEREFORE, A DESTRUCTION OBJECTIVE AGAINST SUCH JAPANESE AIRCRAFT RATHER THAN AGAINST THE AIRFIELDS THEMSELVES WAS A CORRECT OBJECTIVE FOR ATTACKS BY ALLIED PLANES.

IT WAS WELL KNOWN BY THIS TIME THAT AIRFIELD DAMAGE WAS GENERALLY READILY REPAIRABLE EVEN BY PRIMITIVE MEANS AND THAT MUCH MORE EFFECTIVE RESULTS WERE TO BE OBTAINED BY DAILY SWEEPS OVER THE ENEMY AIRFIELDS TO GET THE PLANES AT THE SOURCE AND TO PREVENT STAGING OF THE PLANES FROM THE CHAIN OF BASES TO THE NORTH AND SOUTH.\* HOWEVER, WITH THE ARRIVAL OF NUCLEAR WARFARE, BECAUSE OF THE HIGHLY DESTRUCTIVE EFFECT OF NUCLEAR WEAPONS, A DESTRUCTION OBJECTIVE AGAINST AIRFIELDS SUITABLE FOR THE OPERATION OF HIGH SPEED JET AIRCRAFT MAY WELL BE CONSIDERED AS A CORRECT OBJECTIVE FOR ATTACK BY ALLIED PLANES.

While there is no explanation of the choice of Latitude 12°-00'N, this latitude seems to have been a rough approximation of the northern limit of CAAF SOWESPAC's attack operations established by COMSOWESPAC in his dispatch 170939 (COMTHIRDFLT was an information addressee). Here the southeastern tip of Masbate was indirectly designated as the northern limit.

As will be shown later under "Operations of COMTHIRDFLT, October 21st", this 201942 dispatch was not received by that commander until after the dawn sweeps and first strikes, thus making interference with the operations of other Allied air forces a distinct possibility. Fortunately, as will be shown later, there were no important instances of mutual interference.

At 1217 his headquarters dispatched an intelligence summary which stated, in general, that (a) operations in Leyte were proceeding satisfactorily against minor ground and weak air opposition, (b) enemy shipping encountered throughout the SOWESPAC area on preceding several days consisted largely of merchant shipping of small size, much of which had been attacked successfully by Allied aircraft and by submarines, (c) enemy airfields had been attacked by Allied aircraft which had destroyed a number of enemy planes, and (d) most important, the sixteen large naval vessels reported previously in Pare Pare Bay (Contact 2) were actually six small cargo ships totalling 2500 tons, numerous small coasters and four float planes.\*\*

Meanwhile, sometime before 1357, his headquarters at Hollandia had received information to the effect that one of the planes (presumably a search plane) had sighted at 1115 one battleship (BB), three light cruisers (CL), three destroyers (DD), and six unidentified ships in Latitude 03°-03'N, Longitude 118°-40'E, course 170°(T), speed fifteen (Celebes Sea) (Contact 6) for at 1357 that headquarters so advised those commanders concerned.\*\*\*

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\* Action Report CTG 77.4, Leyte Operations, October 12th - 29th, 1944, Serial 00120, November 15th, 1944.

\*\* COM7THFLT Dispatch 210317 October 1944 to all interested in 7THFLT Summary.

\*\*\* COM7THFLT Dispatch 210457 October 1944 to CTF's 77, 78, 79, 38, CTG's 38.1, 38.2, 38.3, 38.4 and COM3RDFLT.



During this day, as on previous days, he had received intelligence from various sources which indicated that the Japanese were dispatching oilers to Coron Bay for the purpose of fueling Japanese fleet units and, notably, the FIRST Striking Force, which intelligence indicated may have been at sea. This intelligence concerning the FIRST Striking Force was the only indication up to this time of a possible movement of major fleet units to the Philippines. He was familiar with Coron Bay because, during the September air raids by COMTHIRDFLT, Manila shipping had sought refuge there but to no avail as planes from TF 38, after a flight of 325 miles, had successfully attacked them there on September 24th.\*

As a matter of interest, Coron Bay (in the Calamian Group--western Philippines--between Mindoro Island and Palawan Island) is a large body of water between Coron, Busuanga and Culion Islands which the Japanese had been employing as an important satellite anchorage to Manila,\*\* but which, apparently because of its location with relation to the Leyte operation, they were now planning to employ as an important fleet anchorage at least for fueling. It will be observed that this bay was within the range (a) of carrier-based aircraft from the vicinity of San Bernardino Strait and Lamon Bay but was just beyond the range of carrier-based aircraft from the eastward of Leyte, and (b) of land-based aircraft operating from Morotai Island but, in this case, any attack would necessarily be at nearly the maximum attack range of such aircraft.

Realizing that this bay was highly likely to be used as a "concentration or fueling area for important elements of the Japanese fleet which may attempt to strike against our Leyte forces",\*\*\* he at 1426 notified the C.G. FIFTH Air Force to this effect by dispatch and requested that commander (a) to keep the Coron Bay area under closest practicable air observation by daily search with view of attacking and reporting any shipping sighted, and (b) if no enemy ships were sighted in Coron Bay to attack the harbor facilities in order to discourage its possible use by units of the enemy fleet.\*\*\*

THIS DISPATCH IS OF PARTICULAR CONSEQUENCE BECAUSE IT "SPECIFIES IMPORTANT ELEMENTS OF THE JAPANESE FLEET" RATHER THAN "MAJOR ELEMENTS" THEREOF, OR EVEN THE FLEET ITSELF. THIS GIVES MORE THE IMPRESSION OF RAIDS THAN OF FLEET ACTION AND THEREFORE CONTINUES TO SUPPORT THE CONCEPT ORIGINALLY EXPRESSED THAT MAJOR ELEMENTS OF THE JAPANESE FLEET WOULD NOT BE INVOLVED IN OPPOSITION TO THE ALLIED LANDINGS AT LEYTE.\*\*\*\*

It is of interest that, in replying to COMTHIRDFLT, he did not yet know that COMTHIRDFLT, likely motivated by intelligence similar to that which

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\* Action Report CTF 38, Summary of TF 38 Operations, August 29th - October 30th, 1944, Serial 00505, November 3rd, 1944.

\*\* CINCPAC Weekly Intelligence, Volume I, No. 16, October 27th, 1944.

\*\*\* COMSEVENTHFLT Dispatch 210526 October 1944 to C.G. 5TH Air Force, CAAF SOWESPAC, info COMSOWESPAC, COM3RDFLT.

\*\*\*\* CANF SOWESPAC Operation Plan No. 13-44, Serial 00022A, September 26th, 1944, Annex M, Brought up to date by CTF 77 Dispatch 160611 October 1944.



had motivated himself, had, on this very day, already launched and recovered a morning strike against Coron Bay and had found no worthwhile shipping there except a previously damaged cargo ship, a small coastal cargo vessel, and one small escort, all of which he claimed were destroyed.

At 1535 his headquarters at Hollandia, realizing that the ARIADNE had been directed to fuel at Kossol Roads and that there would be no fuel there after D-day, advised CTF 78 that after D-day no SEVENTHFLT oilers would be at Kossol Roads but that fuel would be available in Area ACCIPITER, 110 miles east at Point FIN, after D+2 day to D+8 day.\*

At 1621 his headquarters at Hollandia in their intelligence summary listed the results of contacts and strikes on the previous day and certain reports for the 19th. The sum total of these results was some damage or sinkings of minor merchant shipping and some effective bombing of certain key sectors, notably Davao and Negros, including Bacolod Airdrome.\*\* Japanese reports do not list the above damagings or strikings on this day.\*\*\*

At 2105 his headquarters advised all commanders concerned of a 1300 contact believed reliable on two light cruisers (CL) of YUBARI-class between Maricaban and Cape Santiago en route from Manila Bay to Verde Island Passage at an SOA of twenty-five knots.\*\*\*\* No information is available as to what ships these were. They were certainly not YUBARI's for there was only one of that class, which had been sunk about six months earlier (April 27th) by the American submarine BLUEGILL.\*\*\*\*\* It is believed that this contact was likely on much smaller ships and possibly on noncombatant ships.

(a) Operations of CTF 77 (Central Philippines Attack Force),  
October 21st.

At the start of the day CTF 77, in WASATCH, was operating in his night retirement area in the eastern portion of Leyte Gulf in company with his own flagship unit (TU 77.1.1) and that of COMSOWESPAC (TU 77.1.2) which included COMSOWESPAC in the NASHVILLE.

He was interested in the operations ashore and at the beachheads which operations he felt were progressing favorably, although he realized that, so far, only the army division commanders with CTF 78 at the northern beaches

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- \* COM7THFLT Dispatch 210635 October 1944 to CTF 78, info CTF's 77, 79, COM3RDFLT, CTU 77.7.1, ARIADNE.
  - \*\* COM7THFLT Dispatch 210721 October 1944 to all concerned with COM7THFLT Intelligence.
  - \*\*\* The Imperial Japanese Navy in World War II, prepared by Military History Section, Special Staff, GHQ, FEC, February 1952.
  - \*\*\*\* COM7THFLT Dispatch 211205 October 1944 to CTF's 77, 78, 79, 71, 72, 73, CTG's 77.2, 77.4, COM3RDFLT, CTF 38, CTG's 38.1, 38.2, 38.3, 38.4, CAAF SOWESPAC.
  - \*\*\*\*\* Japanese Naval and Merchant Losses During World War II by United States Submarines, February 1947, prepared by the Joint Army-Navy Assessment Committee, Page 7.



(C.G. FIRST Cavalry Division and C.G. TWENTY-FOURTH Infantry Division) had assumed command ashore. (Unknown to him and the other principal commanders in the chain of command, the C.G. NINETY-SIXTH Infantry Division had assumed command ashore in the early evening of D-day). He probably believed that one of the principal reasons why the army division commanders in the Southern Attack Force had not as yet assumed command ashore was the fact that the unloading of the transports and cargo ships had not proceeded as rapidly as expected on the previous day. This, as discussed under "Operations of CTF 79, October 20th", was largely due to three factors: (a) the fact that the transports and cargo ships had not been combat loaded; (b) the fact that problems had arisen concerning the mobility of the 381st Regimental Combat Team (SIXTH Army Reserve) which required that certain boats, which otherwise would have been employed in landing cargo, were required to shift cargo; and (c) the fact that the shore party with the NINETY-SIXTH Infantry Division operated inefficiently.

CTF 77 was anxious to expedite the unloading of the assault shipping since this would expedite (a) its departure and thereby reduce its period of vulnerability to enemy attack, (b) the assumption of command ashore (1) by the army division commanders with CTF 79 at the southern beaches and perhaps (2) by both army corps commanders as well.

At 0052 he directed all ships (a) departing Leyte Gulf to report to CTG 78.5, vicinity Point EASY, for routing through Area SWEEP, and (b) arriving Leyte Gulf to report to GALLUP at Point FIN for similar instructions\*

At 0245, as an information addressee, he received a dispatch from CTF 78 to the ARIADNE which, in part, directed that ship to fuel at Kossol Roads.\*\*

At 0449 he requested CTG 77.4 to sweep the western Visayas and the northern Mindanao airfields as practicable that afternoon not to interfere with scheduled air support operations. He gave as the primary objective the "destruction of enemy aircraft".\*\*\*

This was apparently to parallel the request which he as COMSEVENTHFLT had made seven minutes earlier (0442) to COMTHIRDFLT to strike airfields north of Latitude 12°-00'N,\*\*\*\* and was apparently designed to avoid interference with the THIRDFLT planes which he had every reason to believe would be striking the western Visayas this morning since there had been no apparent change in the strategic situation.\*\*\*\*\* The wisdom of choice

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- \* CTF 77 Dispatch 201552 October 1944 to all TFC's and TGC's 7THFLT.
  - \*\* CTF 78 Dispatch 201216 October 1944 to ARIADNE, info CTF 77, 79, etc.
  - \*\*\* CTF 77 Dispatch 201949 October 1944 to CTG 77.4, info COM3RDFLT, CTF's 78, 79.
  - \*\*\*\* COM7THFLT Dispatch 201942 October 1944 to COM3RDFLT.
  - \*\*\*\*\* COM3RDFLT Dispatch 200314 October 1944 to CTF 77, info COMSOWESPAC, etc.

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of the objective is discussed under "Operations of COMSEVENTHFLT October 21st". In view of the Tokyo Express concept, it seems strange, however, that no particular instructions were in either case issued to include incidental searches of the coast lines for concealed enemy combatant ships. Actually, CTG 38.3 this day covered the coast line at the extreme southeast end of the Luzon Peninsula (San Bernardino Strait) with a single VF photo plane between 1200 and 1500.\*

At 0514 he received, as an information addressee, a dispatch from COMTHIRDFLT wherein that commander indicated the employment of the fast carrier task groups on October 21st and 22nd.\*\*

He could see from this employment schedule that COMTHIRDFLT continued to disregard his request for one fast carrier group at the objective area after D-day "until the situation clarified" but, instead, had decided to station all three available groups in a strategic support position about 270 miles to the north-northeast (the fourth group would be fueling in Area MICK some 300 miles northeast of the objective area and, therefore, not readily available). The reasons which may have motivated COMTHIRDFLT to station all his available carriers to the north are discussed under "Operations of COMTHIRDFLT, October 21st."

As he approached the landing area he received a report that an enemy suicide plane had crashed into the bridge of the AUSTRALIA--which ship was operating off the northern beaches--and that she had suffered serious structural damage with a considerable number of personnel casualties.

At 0700 he arrived in the Southern Transport Area. After observing that the unloading operations had continued there throughout the night and that operations on shore were continuing, he departed at 0746 for the Northern Transport Area to observe the progress of the operations off RED Beach where unloading operations had been very slow owing to the shallow water off that beach, and to the delay in the arrival of the pontoon causeways and LCT's from TF 79, and in their employment after their arrival.

Possibly, also about this time, he received word that Commander Parsons (the naval officer with the guerillas ashore)\*\*\* had reported that there was a small enemy concentration at Malitbog, Leyte Island (Latitude 10°-10'N, Longitude 125°-00'E) which should be destroyed. Therefore, at 0758 he advised CTF 78 that (a) he desired an LCI(G) of the Panaon Attack Group (TG 78.3) to destroy this enemy concentration, and (b) Commander Parsons would (1) proceed by air to Panaon with detailed target information and (2) remain on board the designated LCI(G).\*\*\*\*

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\* Aircraft Action Report Air Group 27, October 21st, 1944 forwarded by PRINCETON, Serial 07, November 10th, 1944.

\*\* COM3RDFLT Dispatch 201222 October 1944 to CTF 38, all TGC's of TF 38 and CTG 30.8, info all commands concerned with SOWESPAC operations.

\*\*\* Commander Charles Parsons, USNR.

\*\*\*\* CTF 77 Dispatch 202258 October 1944 to CTF 78, info CTG 77.4.



At 0917, while en route to RED Beach, he received (from CTF 79) a dispatch (a) stating that COMCRUDIV NINE in HONOLULU had reported that that vessel would be ready to proceed under its own power at twelve knots or better by afternoon, and (b) recommending that (1) the HONOLULU proceed to Manus that evening for docking, and (2) in view of the fact that her evaporators had been wrecked by the enemy air attack the day before, she stop at Kossol Passage en route for fuel and water.\*

THIS POSED AN INTERESTING QUESTION. ALTHOUGH NOWHERE IN THE INFORMATION AVAILABLE TO THIS STUDY HAS HE MADE ANY DISCUSSION OF THIS MATTER, THE QUESTION LIKELY AROSE IN HIS MIND AS TO THE ADVISABILITY OF SENDING THE HONOLULU AND AUSTRALIA BACK TO MANUS SINCE (A) BOTH OF THESE, ALTHOUGH DAMAGED, WERE NEVERTHELESS OF CONSIDERABLE VALUE SHOULD A BATTLE ENSUE, AND (B) THERE WAS A PSYCHOLOGICAL FACTOR INVOLVED OF CONSIDERABLE IMPORTANCE TO FUTURE OPERATIONS.

ITEM (A) WAS PROBABLY RATHER READILY RESOLVED FOR (1) THERE WERE STILL NO INDICATIONS THAT THE JAPANESE PLANNED ANY MORE SERIOUS OPERATIONS AGAINST THE ALLIED FORCES THAN TOKYO EXPRESS OPERATIONS AND HE HAD AMPLE FORCES TO COMBAT SUCH OPERATIONS, AND (2) HE WAS BEING COVERED BY THE THIRDFLT. THEREFORE, THE DETACHMENT OF THE TWO CRUISERS WITH THE TWO DESTROYERS WAS AN ACCEPTABLE REDUCTION IN STRENGTH OF HIS COMMAND.

However, item (b) was probably much harder to resolve since this consideration involved suicide plane attacks and the action to be taken with relation thereto. The point at issue was as follows:

Will the detachment of vessels which have been damaged by suicide planes be noted by the Japanese and, if so, will it encourage them to believe that by an increased employment of suicide planes they will be able to force the retirement of the Allied forces? Certainly, if he believed this to be so, he could not authorize such retirement as this would indicate that the suicide plane was successful.

HE MADE THE SOUND DECISION THAT, SINCE THE SUICIDE ATTACKS HAD BEEN VERY LIMITED IN NUMBER AND HAD BEEN GENERALLY INEFFECTIVE, THE DETACHMENT OF THESE TWO CRUISERS (ONLY ONE OF WHICH, THE AUSTRALIA, HAD BEEN HIT BY A SUICIDE PLANE) WOULD NOT UNDULY INCREASE THE JAPANESE SUICIDE PLANE OPERATIONS. THEREFORE, HE PREPARED A DISPATCH ORDERING THE DETACHMENT OF THESE TWO CRUISERS. IT IS OF INTEREST, IN THIS CONNECTION, TO NOTE THAT TWO MONTHS LATER IN THE LINGAYEN OPERATION, CTG 77.2, WHO COMMANDED THE ADVANCE OPERATIONS THERE AND WHO HAD ENCOUNTERED SUICIDE PLANES IN STRENGTH, MADE THE OPPOSITE BUT STILL SOUND DECISION. HERE, HE DECIDED THAT, IN VIEW OF THE INCREASED SUCCESS OF THE JAPANESE SUICIDE PLANE ATTACKS, "THERE COULD BE NO RETIREMENT (OF ALLIED FORCES) IN THE FACE OF THE DAMAGE INFLICTED, BECAUSE TO DO SO WOULD CROWN THE EFFORTS OF THE SUICIDE PLANE WITH SUCCESS."\*\*

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\* CTF 79 Dispatch 202335 October 1944 to CTF 77, info CTG 77.2.

\*\* Action Report CTG 77.2, Bombardment and Occupation of Lingayen Gulf, January 3rd - 18th, 1945, Serial 0018, January 28th, 1945.

At 0955 CTF 77 issued an order to CTG 77.4 to provide a target CAP of at least twelve fighters to be over the objective area at daybreak.\*

At 1010 he anchored off RED Beach and quickly observed that a number of the pontoon causeways were in place and that the unloading operations were proceeding apace.

At 1130 he ordered the damaged HONOLULU and AUSTRALIA to retire from the objective area, and formed for this purpose TG 70.6 consisting of the HONOLULU and AUSTRALIA, plus one Australian DD designated by CTF 78, and one DD designated by CTF 79 from DESRON FIFTY-SIX as escorts. He directed CTG 70.6,\*\* when ready for sea this date, to proceed with this command to Manus where the HONOLULU was to be available for docking, the AUSTRALIA for emergency repairs.\*\*\*

Meanwhile, CTG 70.1, who had entered Leyte Gulf with his group at 0800, reported to him for duty.

At 1150 he directed CTG 70.1 to report to CTF 78 in the Northern Transport Area for assignment of berths.\*\*\*\* Mindful of the fact that, unless otherwise ordered, CTG 70.1, in accordance with basic instructions, would automatically commence PT boat operations this night (D+1) in PT boat operating areas (a) 91, 100M and 101 (Mindanao Sea in the vicinity of the southern entrance to Surigao Strait), and (b) at the southern entrance to San Juanico Strait,\*\*\*\*\* he studied the developing situation to ascertain whether any changes were necessary.

At 1208 he directed the HALF MOON, which had arrived with the motor torpedo boats, to report to CTG 73.7 (Commander Advanced Group Naval Air Force) in the SAN CARLOS for duty.\*\*\*\*\*

At 1239 he received a dispatch from CTG 77.4 recommending that, as soon as the ground support would permit, he be authorized to organize morning and afternoon sweeps in force over Cebu, Negros and northern Mindanao in order to reduce the frequency of the harassing raids by small groups then being experienced.\*\*\*\*\*

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- \* CTF 77 Dispatch 210055 October 1944 to CTG 77.4, info CTF's 78, 79 and CTG 77.2.
  - \*\* Rear Admiral Walden L. Ainsworth, U.S. Navy.
  - \*\*\* CTF 77 Dispatch 210230 October 1944 to CTF's 78, 79, info all TFC's 7THFLT, all TFC's 3RDFLT, all TGC's 7THFLT, COMDESRON 56, etc.
  - \*\*\*\* CTF 77 Visual Dispatch 210250 October 1944 to CTG 70.1, info CTF's 78 and 79.
  - \*\*\*\*\* CANF SOWESPAC Operation Plan No. 13-44, Serial 00022A, September 26th, 1944, Appendix 5 to Annex E; also CTG 70.1 Dispatch 171257 October 1944 to CTF's 77, 78, 79, all interested in PT operations.
  - \*\*\*\*\* CTF 77 Dispatch 210308 October 1944 to HALF MOON, info CTF 79, CTG 77.2.
  - \*\*\*\*\* CTG 77.4 Dispatch 210122 October 1944 to CTF 77.



Since this dispatch was very similar to the dispatch which he had sent earlier to CTG 77.4\* and appeared to have crossed the dispatch, he undoubtedly received this recommendation with satisfaction because it showed that CTG 77.4 was not only experiencing harassing raids similar to those that the units inside the gulf were experiencing, but also had envisaged the same solution.

At 1241 he received a dispatch from CTG 78.5 stating, among other things, that (a) Area SWEEP had now been swept to a depth of sixty feet throughout and was considered safe for shallow draft vessels, (b) some portions had been swept to a depth of eighty feet and were deemed safe for all types of vessels, and (c) traffic entering and leaving Leyte Gulf would be routed south of the line bearing 283°(T) from Point FIN until clear of this point.\*\*

Meanwhile, at 1303 he received a dispatch report from CTF 79 which gave the Allied situation in that commander's area as of 1000. This report was in substance as follows:

(a) Beachheads had been secured by the SEVENTH Division up to 2000 yards in depth and by the NINETY-SIXTH Division up to 1500 yards in depth with only light to moderate casualties;

(b) Several counterattacks (one at 1300 previous day and one at 0600 this day) had been repulsed;

(c) Supplies and equipment were being unloaded rapidly;

(d) All division troops were ashore except for the SIXTH Army Reserve Regiment (381st Regimental Combat Team);

(e) TF 79 was under smoke cover during night;

(f) No attacks had been reported (during the night) except for one plane which dropped a bomb near the antisubmarine screen with negative results;

(g) Reckless firing of 20-mm guns through smoke cover had caused several personnel casualties aboard the HONOLULU; corrective measures had been taken;

(h) He anticipated unloading and retiring several transports from the objective area by nightfall.\*\*\*

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\* CTF 77 Dispatch 201949 October 1944 to CTG 77.4, info COM3RDFLT, CTF's 78 and 79.

\*\* CTG 78.5, Dispatch 202224 October 1944 to all concerned with current operations SOWESPAC.

\*\*\* CTF 79 Dispatch 210212 October 1944 to CTF 77.

Certain features of this dispatch were of primary importance to CTF 77. These were the fact that (a) both divisions were now ashore and had encountered relatively weak opposition, (b) supplies and equipment were being rapidly unloaded with the consequent prospective retirement of shipping from the area, and (c) smoke cover for shipping off the beaches appeared to be highly effective. He was, of course, interested in the above because they indicated that (a) operations were continuing successfully and therefore the army division commanders would soon be assuming command ashore, and (b) smoke cover seemed to have made it possible to conduct night unloading operations successfully. This would expedite the unloading problem.

At 1325 he requested CTF 38 to furnish fighter protection for this day as well as for D+2 day and thereafter as practicable by providing an eight VF cap over the objective area from 1730 to 1900.\*

At 1339, having found that no changes in his motor torpedo boat operating plan were necessary, he advised CAAF SOWESPAC and C.G. FIFTH Air Force that (a) Allied motor torpedo boat operations in the Leyte area would be in accordance with Appendix 5 of Annex E to CANF SOWESPAC Operation Plan No. 13-44, and (b) CTG 70.1 would advise these commanders direct of operations scheduled west of the line prescribed in COMSOWESPAC's dispatch thereon.\*\* He did this because the latter dispatch, among other items, had (a) advanced the air operating areas for the Allied air forces from northern Mindanao to the Visayas west of the line Canauayor Island, east coast Camiguin Island, east coast Bohol Island, Olango Island, northeast tip Cebu Island, southeast tip Masbate Island, and (b) directed CANF SOWESPAC after D+1 day to inform CAAF SOWESPAC of Allied naval surface units operating westward of the above line giving at least twenty-four hours notice of probable location.\*\*\*

HE ALSO DID THIS TO INFORM ALL CONCERNED COMMANDS THAT HE HAD NOW DECIDED THAT, RATHER THAN ADVISE THESE COMMANDS HIMSELF AS CANF SOWESPAC, HE HAD BY THIS ORDER ASSIGNED THIS RESPONSIBILITY TO CTG 70.1, WHO WAS EXPECTED TO COMPLY. THIS DELEGATION OF THIS RESPONSIBILITY, WHICH INDICATES CLEARLY THAT HE WAS NOT UNDULY CONCERNED OVER THESE OPERATIONS AND FELT THAT THE PRESSURE OF THE MAJOR OPERATIONS NOW UNDERWAY REQUIRED HIS COMPLETE ATTENTION, WAS IN ACCORDANCE WITH THE PRINCIPLE OF THE CHAIN OF COMMAND WHEREIN THE COMMANDER MAY ASSIGN TASKS TO HIS IMMEDIATE SUBORDINATES WITHOUT, HOWEVER, DIVESTING HIMSELF OF ANY PART OF HIS RESPONSIBILITY.

The question as to whether or not the existing situation required changes in the motor torpedo boat operating plan is discussed under "Operations of CTG 70.1, October 21st".

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- \* COM7THFLT Dispatch 210425 October 1944 to CTF 38, info COM3RDFLT, etc.
  - \*\* CTF 77 Dispatch 210439 October 1944 to CAAF SOWESPAC and C.G. 5TH Air Force.
  - \*\*\* COMSOWESPAC Dispatch 170939 October 1944 to CAAF SOWESPAC, CANF SOWESPAC, info C.G. 5TH Air Force, COM3RDFLT, CTF 77, etc.



At 1516 he received another dispatch from CTF 79 which bore relatively, but not unexpected, bad news. This dispatch discussed the ammunition situation within TF 79 and pointed out that the bombardment ammunition was now so seriously reduced that two ammunition ships should be brought in daily for replenishment. In addition to the above, the dispatch stated, in effect, that (a) ships with 6-inch guns and larger had only ten per cent of their ammunition remaining, (b) the FS destroyers (5-inch) were empty of bombardment ammunition but still had their service ammunition, and (c) the screening destroyers (5-inch) were one-third empty.\*

At 1541, as a precautionary measure against possible surprise penetration by enemy surface forces into Leyte Gulf from the east or west, he issued instructions placing in effect immediately Harbor Defense Plan Number ONE, which prescribed the following:

(a) Bombardment and Fire Support Group (TG 77.2):

(1) Withdraw from the transport and fire support areas and proceed to the southern area of Leyte Gulf;

(2) During darkness be underway and defend the gulf against the entry of hostile surface forces from either the eastern or southern entrance of Surigao Strait;

(3) Be prepared to sortie from the gulf to attack any enemy forces that are definitely located; and

(4) Return to respective fire support areas during daylight and render close gunfire support on call as directed by CTF's 78 and 79.

(b) Close Covering Group (TG 77.3):

(1) During darkness be underway and provide close protective cover in an area approximately two to five miles east and southeast of the transport areas; and

(2) During daylight be prepared to render close fire support on call.

(c) Northern and Southern Attack Forces (CTF's 78 and 79).

(1) Direct transports and landing ships to remain at anchor during night in the transport areas;

(2) With screening vessels remaining form close protective screen at anchor or underway around the transport areas, prepared to defend the transports against enemy air attack by smoke or antiaircraft fire; and

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\* CTF 79 Dispatch 210248 October 1944 to CTF 77.

(3) Continue to provide antimotor torpedo boat, antisubmarine, and antiaircraft protection in respective areas of responsibility in accordance with paragraph 3(x) of CANF SOWESPAC Operation Plan No. 13-44.

(d) Motor Torpedo Boats (TG 70.1).

Motor torpedo boats pass through and clear the above lines during daylight.\*

THIS ORDER APPEARS SOUND IN GENERAL. HOWEVER, THE CONCEPT EXPRESSED IN SECTION (a) (3) ABOVE, WHERE CTG 77.2 WAS DIRECTED TO BE PREPARED TO SORTIE FROM THE GULF TO ATTACK ANY ENEMY FORCES THAT WERE DEFINITELY LOCATED, DOES NOT APPEAR SOUND. THIS SEEMS SO BECAUSE ANY JAPANESE "IMPORTANT ELEMENT" COULD BE EXPECTED TO BE COMPOSED, IN PART, OF ONE OR MORE FAST BATTLESHIPS. SINCE THE SPEED OF THE ALLIED BATTLESHIPS (OBB) WAS, AT THE BEST, POSSIBLY TWENTY KNOTS, AND LIKELY LESS--THE WEST VIRGINIA HAD BEEN REDUCED TO SIXTEEN KNOTS (EIGHTEEN KNOTS IN EMERGENCIES)\*\*--AND THE SPEED OF THE FASTER JAPANESE BATTLESHIPS WAS POSSIBLY TWENTY-FIVE KNOTS, DOES IT NOT SEEM CLEAR THAT ONCE TG 77.2 HAD DEPARTED THE GULF IT WOULD AUTOMATICALLY LOSE THE ADVANTAGE OF INTERIOR POSITION? IN THIS CASE, WOULD IT NOT BE POSSIBLE FOR THE JAPANESE "IMPORTANT ELEMENT" TO EVADE TG 77.2 ENTIRELY, AND TO ENTER THE GULF WITHOUT MEETING THE OPPOSITION WHICH IT WOULD HAVE MET HAD TG 77.2 REMAINED THERE? IT SHOULD BE STRESSED HERE THAT TG 77.2, UNDER THE ABOVE DIRECTIVE, BECAME DURING DARKNESS A COVERING RATHER THAN A SUPPORT GROUP. AS A COVERING GROUP WITH THE OBJECTIVE OF PREVENTING THE ENTRANCE OF JAPANESE FORCES INTO LEYTE GULF, SUCH A GROUP SHOULD PROPERLY BE DEPLOYED (A) NEAR ENOUGH TO THE TRANSPORT AREAS TO INSURE THAT, SHOULD THE ENEMY ATTEMPT PENETRATION OF THE GULF, INTERCEPTION WAS CERTAIN, AND (B) YET FAR ENOUGH AWAY FROM THE TRANSPORT AREAS TO INSURE THAT SUCH INTERCEPTION WAS MADE AT THE EARLIEST POSSIBLE MOMENT. WHERE THEN, I.E., IN WHAT LOCATION, COULD THESE TWO APPARENTLY OPPOSITE REQUIREMENTS BE BEST RESOLVED? WAS IT NOT WITHIN THE GULF NEAR THE ENTRANCE FOR HERE (A) INTERCEPTION WAS SURE, AND (B) THE ADVANTAGE OF THE ENEMY'S SUPERIOR SPEED AND FREEDOM OF ACTION WOULD BE SO SERIOUSLY REDUCED AS TO EFFECTIVELY REDUCE HIS COMBAT CAPABILITIES? FOR THESE REASONS, THE CONCEPT OF SORTIEING FROM THE GULF DURING THE NIGHT TO MEET ANY ENEMY FORCES DEFINITELY LOCATED SEEMS UNSOUND.

Perhaps CTF 77 felt that the positioning of CTG 77.3 to the east and southeast of the transport areas would adequately protect the transports.

Meanwhile, he studied the fuel and ammunition situation. He knew that (a) CTU 77.7.1 would leave Kossol Passage on the 20th with four oilers (ASHTABULA, SALAMONIE, SARANAC, CHEPACHET), two ammunition ships (MAZAMA, DURHAM VICTORY),\*\*\* and likely knew that it was escorted by BOWERS(F),

\* CTF 77 Dispatch 210641 October 1944 to CTF's 78 and 79, CTG's 77.2 and 77.3, info to all TFC's and TGC's 7THFLT.

\*\* War Diary WEST VIRGINIA, October 21st, 1944.

\*\*\* CTU 77.7.1 Dispatch 182304 October 1944 to COMSERV7THFLT, info COM7THFLT, CTF 77, COM3RDFLT.



WHITEHURST, WITTER, WILLMARTH and MANNING, and (b) CTU 77.7.1 was to operate in the southern part of Area ACCIPITER by D+2 day where it was to be available to supply units of TG 77.2 and other units as required.\* He decided that this plan was unsatisfactory possibly (a) owing to the need for gunfire support from the units of TG 77.2, (b) because such an operation, owing to the distance (about 165 miles) of Area ACCIPITER (about 110 miles east of Point FIN) from the transport area, would require the units fueling to be away from the gulf for as much as one whole day, and (c) because he had information that Japanese submarines were moving into the waters to the eastward of Leyte Gulf and felt that TU 77.7.1 would be less vulnerable in the objective area inside Leyte Gulf to enemy air and surface raiders than it would be outside the gulf to air, surface and submarine raiders. He therefore issued two dispatches thereon:

(a) At 1557 he advised all task force and task group commanders that (1) at about 0900 D+3 day TU 77.7.1, containing fuel, water and ammunition, would anchor Leyte Gulf vicinity 11°-00'N, about five miles from Leyte shore line, (2) priority of replenishment was TG's 77.2, 77.3, 77.5 and 77.6, and (3) CTU 77.7.1 would coordinate and schedule replenishments upon receiving requirements from above group commanders;\*\*

(b) At 1602 he directed CTU 77.7.1 to proceed as indicated in (a) above and further directed him to cease services at 1700 each day and to anchor in the area between the Northern and Southern Transport Areas with spacing in between ships of at least 2000 yards.\*\*\*

If his reasons for moving TU 77.7.1 into the objective area off the beaches were those listed above, his decision certainly seems correct for in the objective area he had much greater facilities for protecting the ships of this unit than he had outside. During daylight this included strong CAP's and intense AA fire; during dusk and at night it included smoke. In addition to the above, the large number of ships within the objective area would make it difficult for an attacking plane to single out any particular type of ships as a target even though oilers are generally easily distinguishable.

Shortly after 1621 he received a dispatch from CTF 79 wherein he learned that the close support requirements for TF 79 because of a scarcity of targets could be reduced to 6 VF from the present 16 VF.\*\*\*\* Whether there was a similar submission of information from CTF 78 is not known, but, in the light of later developments, it seems probable that there was.

At 1645, with his flagship unit--TU 77.1.1 (WASATCH, AMMEN, MULLANY)--he proceeded to clear the transport area and joined with the flagship unit of COMSOWESPAC--TU 77.1.2 (NASHVILLE, ABNER READ, BUSH)--forming TG 77.1. He then proceeded for the night to a patrol area in the eastern portion of Leyte Gulf.\*\*\*\*\*

\* CANF SOWESPAC Operation Plan No. 13-44, Serial 00022A, September 26th, 1944, Annex K.

\*\* CTF 77 Dispatch 210657 October 1944 to all TFC's 7THFLT, info CTU 77.7.1, CTU 77.7.2.

\*\*\* CTF 77 Dispatch 210702 October 1944 to CTU 77.7.1 info CTF's 78, 79.

\*\*\*\* CTF 79 Visual Dispatch 210721 October 1944 to CTF 77.

\*\*\*\*\* War Diary NASHVILLE, October 21st, 1944.

Meanwhile, he was still waiting for a reply from CTF 38 relative to his request that that commander provide a special dusk CAP of eight VF over the objective area from 1730 to 1900. He was concerned about this because, as pointed out previously, the lack of such a TCAP might force his escort carriers into night landings for which they had had little or no training. THEREFORE, IT WAS WITH INCREASED CONCERN THAT HE RECEIVED AT 1723 A REPLY FROM COMTHIRDFLT EXPRESSING REGRET THAT IT WAS IMPRACTICABLE TO COMPLY WITH THE ABOVE REQUEST\* FOR THE REASONS GIVEN TO COMSOWESPAC IN HIS 210645 WHEREIN COMTHIRDFLT STATED, IN PART, THAT HIS PRESENT OPERATIONS IN A STRATEGIC POSITION TO MEET THE THREAT OF ENEMY FLEET FORCES WAS SOMEWHAT RESTRICTED AND REQUESTED THAT HE BE RELIEVED AS SOON AS PRACTICABLE FROM THE NECESSITY OF COVERING TRANSPORTS AND OTHER VULNERABLE OVERSEAS MOVEMENTS.\*\*

At 1727 he received, as an information addressee, COMTHIRDFLT's 210645 above referred to.

In the evening, having prepared a summary report of the day's operations, he, at 1846, sent this summary to COMSOWESPAC. In this dispatch he stated, among other things, that:

- (a) The KING II operation was continuing according to plan;
- (b) Majority of transports unloaded and departing;
- (c) Unloading of AK's and LST's was progressing satisfactorily and that the difficulties encountered at RED Beach had been overcome by the use of pontoon causeways (from the Southern Attack Force);
- (d) There was still some enemy mortar and artillery fire on RED Beach from unlocated sources;
- (e) The troops ashore were still making progress with light casualties;
- (f) Bulldozers were working on Tacloban airstrip;
- (g) 20-mm gunfire from other ships under smoke cover against morning air raids consisting of small numbers of enemy planes, mostly singles, had caused several casualties in the HONOLULU; corrective measures had been taken;
- (h) A low-flying plane under fire from many ships had crashed into the forward stack of the AUSTRALIA causing considerable structural damage and personnel casualties including Commodore Collins and Captain Dechaineux, and
- (i) The HONOLULU and AUSTRALIA had departed Leyte Gulf under escort for Manus for repairs.\*\*\*

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\* COM3RDFLT Dispatch 210715 October 1944 to CTF 77, info COMSOWESPAC, CTF 38.

\*\* COM3RDFLT Dispatch 210645 October 1944 to COMSOWESPAC, info CTF 77.

\*\*\* CTF 77 Dispatch 210946 October 1944 to COMSOWESPAC, info COMINCH, CINCPAC, COM3RDFLT, all TFC's 3RD and 7TH Fleets.



During the day the weather had continued generally favorable with sea conditions calm to slight with no swell, scattered high and low clouds in the morning with increasing cumulus clouds becoming broken to overcast by mid-afternoon; showers in the late afternoon; gentle northeasterly winds except for fresh winds in showers; visibility fair to good except before sunrise and sunset at which time the visibility was reduced intermittently to zero by smoke cover.\*

At 1923 he learned that a group of heavies (B-24's) had been directed to strike Cagayan (northern Mindanao), and that this strike would occur between 1115 and 1130 on the following day.\*\* This was, of course, pleasing to him for it was important to protect his southern flank by neutralizing Mindanao.

At 2010 he received a dispatch to the effect that a B-24 had reported sighting (in the Celebes Sea off the northeast coast of Borneo) at 1115 in Latitude 03°-30'N, Longitude 118°-40'E an enemy force consisting of one battleship, three light cruisers, three destroyers, and six unidentified ships on course 170°(T), speed fifteen knots.\*\*\* (Plate XXVII).

At 2040 he received a contact report from CINCPAC reporting the sighting at 1530 by China-based aircraft of an enemy naval task force in Formosa Strait, consisting of one carrier, three heavy cruisers, and four destroyers on course 045°(T), speed fifteen knots, Latitude 23°-10'N, Longitude 117°-50'E.\*\*\*\* It seems likely that he considered this task force to be the same force reported off Hainan Island on October 19th as consisting of one carrier, two cruisers and three destroyers.\*\*\*\*\* Certainly, it was possible for this task force to have reached the second position (off Formosa) for the distance was but 420 miles, the time elapsed forty-nine hours.

He now had received two contact reports on widely separated (1200 miles) Japanese fleet groups, one of which was on a northerly course, the other on a southerly course, and may have received a third report to the effect that a plane of the FOURTEENTH Air Force at 0240 that day had contacted a naval task force consisting of one CV, one BB, two CL's and three DD's, course unknown, in Latitude 17°-40'N, Longitude 116°-10'E.\*\*\*\*\* None of

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- \* Action Report CTG 79.2, Leyte Operation, Serial 0032, November 4th, 1944.
  - \*\* C.G. 5TH Air Force Dispatch 211732/I October 1944 to 310th Bomb. Wing, COM3RDFLT, CTF's 38, 77, 78, 79, etc.
  - \*\*\* C.G. 13TH Air Force Dispatch 211922/I October 1944 to all interested commands.
  - \*\*\*\* CINCPAC Dispatch 211037 October 1944 to COM3RDFLT, CTF 77, all TFC's and TGC's 3RDFLT (Reencypherment of COMNAVGRPCHINA Dispatch 210930 October 1944 to CINCPAC).
  - \*\*\*\*\* CINCPAC Dispatch 190726 October 1944 to COM3RDFLT, COM7THFLT, COMSO-WESPAC (Reencypherment of COMNAVGRPCHINA 190558).
  - \*\*\*\*\* AAF Operations from China Bases in Support of the Leyte Campaign, letter from Historical Division, Air University Library, USAF Air University, Maxwell AFB, Alabama to President, Naval War College, November 8th, 1950.

these groups were threatening at the moment but, if true, they gave indications of the movement in the South China Sea of increasing numbers of Japanese combatant units. This likely suggested the enemy capability, indicated by COMTHIRDFLT two days earlier, of the enemy deploying his fleet in small dispersed groups near to the Allied landings in such manner that these groups could quickly concentrate for short, fast, unheralded Tokyo Express runs.

What consideration he gave to the contact by the TRIGGER several days previous on the SECOND Striking Force is not known but since he had intelligence information to the effect that this force was probably en route Mako he likely included this force in his estimate.

At 2042 he learned that the C.G. TENTH Corps had at 1600 assumed command ashore. This meant that the Army had now assumed command over all operations ashore on the northern beaches.

At 2200 he received a report from CTG 78.3 that echelon L-1 as planned had departed Leyte Gulf at 0203, despite an air attack at dusk the previous evening and a delay in rendezvous by the northern transports.\*

At 2236 he received, as an information addressee, a dispatch from COMTHIRDFLT to COMSOWESPAC, stating that the South China Sea might suddenly become a critical area, and requesting that commander's estimate of the earliest date on which it would be safe for (a) well-escorted fleet oilers, and (b) major combatant ships to pass through Surigao Strait and Mindoro Strait to the South China Sea.\*\*

He likely awaited COMSOWESPAC's reply to this query with considerable interest for there was little, if any, information available in his flagship which indicated that a very accurate estimate could be made at this time.

At 2242 he intercepted a dispatch from CTF 79 to CTU 77.2.2 approving that officer's fueling schedule providing two cruisers and two destroyers were left behind for each attack group.\*\*\* Although this dispatch was at variance with his (a) 210641 (Harbor Defense Plan Number ONE) which called for TG 77.2 to remain inside the gulf at night as a covering force for the transport areas,\*\*\*\* and (b) 210657 which stated that the fueling group would anchor off the landing beaches at about 0900 October 23rd and would fuel TG 77.2 at that time,\*\*\*\*\* and his (c) 210702 which directed CTU 77.7.1 to enter Leyte Gulf at daylight October 23rd and anchor between the transport areas,\*\*\*\*\* he decided to take no action thereon at present as it was

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- \* CTG 78.3 Dispatch 210646 October 1944 to CTF's 77, 78 and 79.
  - \*\* COM3RDFLT Dispatch 210454 October 1944 to COMSOWESPAC; also War Diary COM3RDFLT, October 21st, 1944.
  - \*\*\* CTF 79 Dispatch 210828 October 1944 to CTU 77.2.2, etc.
  - \*\*\*\* CTF 77 Dispatch 210641 October 1944 to CTF's 78, 79, CTG's 77.2, 77.3.
  - \*\*\*\*\* CTF 77 Dispatch 210657 October 1944 to all TFC's 7THFLT, info CTU's 77.7.1 and 77.7.2.
  - \*\*\*\*\* CTF 77 Dispatch 210702 October 1944 to CTU 77.7.1, info CTF's 78, 79.









possible that CTG 77.2 had not as yet received the above dispatches. Actually, if this was his assumption, it appears correct for CTF 79 received these dispatches at 1808, 2347, and 1946 respectively.

At 2305 he received, as an information addressee, a dispatch from COMTHIRDFLT to CINCPAC and COMSOWESPAC reporting the results of the dawn sweeps and first strikes by CTG's 38.2 and 38.3 against the Visayas.\* He was, of course, particularly interested in that part of the report referring to Coron Bay, not only because of the lack of Japanese shipping observed there but also because this was his first information that the THIRDFLT, despite his 0442 dispatch\*\* thereon as COMSEVENTHFLT to COMTHIRDFLT, was making air strikes below Latitude 12°-00'N. He was probably glad to receive the information about Coron Bay because he knew that the FIFTH Air Force, although it had struck the western Visayas, had not been able to reconnoiter that bay this day.

At the end of the day he no doubt reviewed the day's events with satisfaction for the following reasons: (a) the enemy had thus far not taken any significant action on the ground, in the air, or on the sea against KING II; (b) the damage wrought by the enemy's sparse, uncoordinated and desultory air attacks against the objective area this day had resulted in putting out of action only one ship, the AUSTRALIA; (c) (1) the unloading difficulties encountered at the northern beaches had been overcome and the LST's were now unloading rapidly according to plan; (2) by 2400 all assault shipping in the Northern Attack Force had unloaded and departed the objective area except three cargo vessels and eight LST's; also remaining in the Northern Attack Force were five destroyers and the flagships (BLUE RIDGE and FREMONT) of the attack force and attack group commanders; (3) the army division and the corps commander had assumed command ashore; (d) (1) at the southern beaches CTF 79 had succeeded in unloading and retiring fourteen transports and two LSD's, although all of his LST's still remained; (2) the assault shipping remaining in the Southern Attack Force then consisted of thirteen transports, eight cargo vessels, fifty-five LST's, two LSV's, and three LSD's, plus fourteen destroyers, and the flagships (MOUNT OLYMPUS, APPALACHIAN, and ROCKY MOUNT) of the attack force and attack group commanders.\*\*\*

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\* COM3RDFLT Dispatch 210857 October 1944 to CINCPAC, COMSOWESPAC, info COMINCH, COM7THFLT, All TFC's 3RDFLT.

\*\* COM7THFLT Dispatch 201942 October 1944 to COM3RDFLT, info COMSOWESPAC, C.G. 5TH Air Force, All TFC's and TGC's 3RD and 7TH Fleets, etc.

\*\*\* Action Report CTF 78, Leyte Operation, Serial 00911, November 10th, 1944; Action Report CTF 79, Seizure of Leyte, Serial 00323, November 13th, 1944; also the following dispatches: CTF 77 Dispatch 210230; CTF 78 Dispatch 210658; CTF 79 Dispatches 210538, 210742 and 211036; CTU 79.14.1 Dispatch 211510, all of October 1944.

## (1) Operations of CTF 78 (Northern Attack Force), October 21st.\*

CTF 78, who was also CTG 78.1 in BLUE RIDGE, remained at anchor in San Pedro Bay off RED Beach (Plate V) while the unloading of the AKA's and LST's continued. All of his transports (except the FREMONT, the flagship of CTG 78.2) had completed unloading the previous day and had departed for Hollandia and Palau in accordance with his basic movement plan.\*\* However, his LST's had encountered unloading difficulties and had not been able to depart on D-day as planned.

This delay, as pointed out under his operations on the previous day, was due to (a) the shallow water off the northern beaches, and (b) the lack of pontoon causeways and LCT's in TF 78 which had restricted the unloading of the LST's on RED Beach. Although a number of pontoon causeways had anchored off RED Beach at 1815 the preceding day to assist in expediting unloading, as of midnight they had not been put in place. Therefore, CTF 78, who (a) as CTF 78 was responsible for all landings on the northern beaches, and (b) as CTG 78.1 was particularly responsible for the landings on RED Beach, was directly concerned about the initial bottleneck in unloading here, which had not as yet been remedied.

At 0039 he directed the ARIADNE to return to fuel in Area ACCIPITER with two APD's.\*\*\*

At 0606, since he was in the immediate area, he no doubt observed an enemy carrier-type bomber crash into the bridge of the AUSTRALIA causing serious structural damage and a number of personnel casualties.\*\*\*\* The AUSTRALIA at this time was operating in Fire Support Area DOG providing call fire on beach targets in support of the Northern Attack Force. Thus, to CTF 78, this unfortunate incident signified that one of his gunfire support cruisers had been put out of action. Furthermore, if it should become necessary for her to retire from the objective area, he would probably have to reduce further the number of his combatant vessels by providing one or more destroyers as escorts.

At 0642 he directed the LANG to proceed to station off Palo Town. The LANG then lay to in that area awaiting call fire requests.\*\*\*\*\*

At 0900 he learned that several pontoon causeways had finally been put in place at RED Beach, thereby expediting the unloading operations.

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\* All information here, except as otherwise indicated, obtained from Action Report CTF 78, Leyte Operation, Serial 00911, November 10th, 1944.  
 \*\* CTF 78 Operation Plan No. 101-44, Serial 0008, October 3rd, 1944, Annex B.  
 \*\*\* CTF 78 Dispatch 211539 October 1944 to HMS ARIADNE, info CTF 77, COM7THFLT.  
 \*\*\*\* War Diary MISSISSIPPI, October 21st, 1944; also AUSTRALIA Dispatch 202149 October 1944 to CTF 78, info CTG 77.3.  
 \*\*\*\*\* War Diary LANG, October 21st, 1944.



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Thereupon, he noted that the LST's either beached and unloaded directly over the causeways or used LCM's and LCT's to unload ramp-to-ramp.

ALTHOUGH HE MADE NO COMMENT TO THIS EFFECT IN HIS ACTION REPORT AND ACTUALLY INDICATED THAT THE UNLOADING OPERATIONS HAD PROCEEDED ADMIRABLY, IT SEEMS LIKELY THAT THE DELAY WITH THE PONTOON CAUSEWAYS IN THE NORTHERN AREA, AS WELL AS THE DELAY IN THE ARRIVAL OF THE LCT'S MENTIONED UNDER "OPERATIONS OF CTF 78, OCTOBER 20TH", EMPHASIZED TO CTF 78 THE VITAL NEED FOR AN AMPHIBIOUS COMMANDER TO HAVE WITHIN HIS DIRECT COMMAND IN THE OBJECTIVE AREA THOSE ITEMS OF LOGISTICS WHICH ARE REQUIRED IMMEDIATELY FOR THE ACCOMPLISHMENT OF HIS OBJECTIVE. POSSIBLY, IN PART, BECAUSE OF THE DIFFICULTIES EXPERIENCED HERE BY CTF 78, PRESENT DAY (1957) INSTRUCTIONS ON LOGISTICS PLANNING PROVIDE THAT (A) SHOULD PONTOON CAUSEWAYS AND BARGES BE REQUIRED, THERE SHALL BE A "PONTOON CAUSEWAY AND BARGE PLAN" PREPARED BY THE AMPHIBIOUS TASK FORCE COMMANDER IN CONSULTATION WITH THE AMPHIBIOUS TROOPS COMMANDER, AND (B) THE PONTOON BARGES AND CAUSEWAYS WILL BE UNDER THE CONTROL OF THE AMPHIBIOUS TASK FORCE COMMANDER.\*

At 0935 he received a report that all LST's of TG 78.2 had completed discharging their cargoes on WHITE Beach and were awaiting instructions.\*\* He decided to hold these LST's until evening and then sail them with those LST's of TG 78.1 off RED Beach that had completed unloading by this time. The LST's remaining could then be sailed with TG 78.6 which was scheduled to arrive, unload and depart on D+2 day. It was the general practice to retire all shipping at nightfall so that by daylight it would be well clear of the objective area and less vulnerable to enemy air attack.

At 1034 he received orders from CTF 77 to assign a mortar gunboat (LCI-G) from the Panaon Attack Group (TG 78.3) to destroy a small concentration of enemy troops at Malitbog on Leyte.\*\*\* Although the action he took in this case is not indicated, it is likely that he assigned for this task one of the LCI-G's left off Panaon for protection of that area by CTG 78.3 on his departure the previous evening.

At 1448 he learned that CTF 77 had decided to retire the damaged HONOLULU and AUSTRALIA to Manus for repairs, and that an Australian destroyer from TF 78 was to be designated as one of the escorts.\*\*\*\* Accordingly, he assigned the WARRAMUNGA to this task.

At 1558, after apparently having received favorable unloading reports from the LST commander at RED Beach (CTU 78.1.4), he (a) ordered

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- \* Amphibious Operations, NWP-22, Department of the Navy, December 1952, Paragraphs 1080-1082 inclusive, Page 10-12.
  - \*\* Action Report CTG 78.2, Leyte Operation, Serial 0085, November 29th, 1944.
  - \*\*\* CTF 77 Dispatch 202258 October 1944 to CTF 78, info CTG 77.4.
  - \*\*\*\* CTF 77 Dispatch 210230 October 1944 to CTF's 78 and 79; also Action Report COMCRUDIV NINE, Seizure and Occupation of Leyte Island, October 18th - 21st, 1944, Serial 0091, October 28th, 1944.

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CTU 78.2.4\* in LST 466 to form a convoy consisting of nineteen LST's plus TITANIA, AQUARIUS and escorted by FLETCHER, LA VALLETTE, MURRAY, HARRISON, and (b) gave them route instructions to depart RED Beach area at 1800 for Hollandia.\*\*

At 1600 C.G. TENTH Corps assumed command ashore.\*\*\* This was satisfying information for it signified the completion of the amphibious assault phase of the operation at the northern beaches in so far as he was concerned, and meant that the beachhead was now deemed secure enough for the corps commander to relieve him of the responsibility for the ground offensive.

During the day the army ashore was constantly supported by (a) naval gunfire from the various FS units as discussed under "Operations of CTU 77.2.1 and CTG 77.3, October 21st", and (b) aircraft as discussed under "Operations of CTG 77.4, October 21st."

At 1800 he noted that CTU 78.2.4, as convoy commander, had departed San Pedro Bay for Hollandia in company with certain LST's and AKA's and escorted by four destroyers, in compliance with his 210658.\*\*\*\*

With the departure of these vessels, there remained off the northern beaches eight LST's, two AKA's (ARNEB, ELECTRA), one AK (HERCULES), two flagships (BLUE RIDGE, FREMONT) of CTF 78 and CTG 78.2 and three destroyers, plus a number of LSM's, LCI's and other smaller craft not scheduled for retirement. In addition, two destroyers (JOHN RODGERS, ANDERSON) of TF 78 patrolled on station outside the gulf between Suluan Island and the southeastern tip of Samar (Plate VIII).

At 1808 he received CTF 77's dispatch directing that Harbor Defense Plan Number ONE be placed in effect immediately, which dispatch ordered (among other items not directly applicable to TF 78 and which have been cited under the "Operations of CTF 77, October 21st") that he (a) direct landing ships and transports to remain at anchor during night in the Northern Transport Area, (b) direct screening vessels remaining to form a close screen at anchor or underway around the transport area and be prepared to make smoke and defend this area against air attack, and (c) continue to provide screen in accordance with paragraph 3(x) of CANF SOWESPAC Operation Plan No.

13-44.\*\*\*\*\*

Since, in compliance with this paragraph 3(x) (which directed him to provide antisubmarine, antimotor torpedo boat, and antiaircraft protection in his area of responsibility (Plate VIII)), he had previously stationed (a) two destroyers to patrol the seaward area between Suluan Island

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\* Captain Richard M. Scruggs, USN.

\*\* CTF 78 Dispatch 210658 October 1944 to CTU 78.2.4, info CTF's 77 and 79, CTG 78.2, etc.

\*\*\* Major General Franklin C. Seibert, USA.

\*\*\*\* War Diary FLETCHER, October 21st, 1944.

\*\*\*\*\* CTF 77 Dispatch 210641 October 1944 to CTF's 78 and 79, CTG's 77.2 and 77.3, info all TFC's and TGC's 7THFLT.



and the southeastern tip of Samar, (b) a destroyer screen to the south and southeast of the Northern Transport Area, (c) four LCI(G)'s during darkness at the southern entrance to San Juanico Strait to intercept any enemy surface craft that might attempt to penetrate San Pedro Bay via this route, and (d) six especially equipped LCI's and numerous other small craft around the transport area to provide smoke cover,\* HE COULD READILY SEE THAT THIS HARBOR DEFENSE PLAN IN NO WAY CHANGED ANY OF THE DEFENSIVE MEASURES HE WAS ALREADY TAKING, ALTHOUGH IT DID ALERT HIM TO THE FACT THAT HIS IMMEDIATE SUPERIOR WAS EXPECTING SOME SORT OF SURFACE OR AIR REACTION BY THE JAPANESE, WHO HAD THUS FAR NOT POSED ANY SERIOUS INTERFERENCE TO KING II.

At 2013 he informed CTF 77 that the C.G. TENTH Corps had assumed command ashore at 1600.\*\*

At 2151 he (a) directed the HALF MOON to report as to the earliest possible date she could accommodate three squadrons of navy search Catalinas, and (b) advised the HALF MOON that CTF 77 had requested Commander 308th Bomb Wing to call forward navy search Catalinas to arrive on D+3 day or as soon thereafter as practicable.\*\*\*

At 2200 he received a departure report from CTG 78.3 wherein that commander stated that he had departed Leyte Gulf at 0203 with Echelon ONE (eighteen transports and five destroyers) in accordance with his movement plan and that he considered that the situation at Panaon at the time he departed was satisfactory.\*\*\*\*

At 2347 he received notice from CTF 77 that TU 77.7.1, containing fuel, water and ammunition, would arrive in Leyte Gulf at about 0900 D+3 day to replenish TG's 77.2, 77.3, 77.5 and 77.6 in that order.\*\*\*\*\* This was welcome news for CTG 77.3 and CTU 77.2.1 had been and still were providing gunfire support, under his overall direction, to the ground offensive at the northern beaches and had already expended a considerable amount of their bombardment ammunition.

Nothing of further importance happened throughout the remainder of the day. CTF 78 remained at anchor in San Pedro Bay, while the unloading of his LST's and AKA's continued during the night, and the necessary FS was being furnished by those ships remaining behind for this purpose.

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\* CTF 78 Operation Plan No. 101-44, Serial 0008, October 3rd, 1944, Annex E; Action Report CTG 78.2, Leyte Operation, Serial 0085, November 29th, 1944; Action Report CTU 78.1.6, Leyte Operation, Serial 0114, November 5th, 1944.

\*\* CTF 78 Dispatch 211113 October 1944 to CTF 77.

\*\*\* CTF 78 Dispatch 211251 October 1944 to HALF MOON.

\*\*\*\* CTG 78.3 Dispatch 210646 October 1944 to CTF's 77, 78 and 79.

\*\*\*\*\* CTF 77 Dispatch 210657 October 1944 to all TFC's and TGC's 7THFLT, info CTU's 77.7.1 and 77.7.2.

## (a) Operations of CTG 78.1 (Palo Attack Group), October 21st.

It will be recalled that on the previous day all eight transports and the three LSD's assigned CTG 78.1 had departed the transport areas and were now heading for a rendezvous at Point EST with CTG 78.3 for retirement from the area. Thus, of the larger ships of his command which still required unloading, but three remained with him off RED Beach (TITANIA, HERCULES, AQUARIUS). However, he still had eleven LST's (26, 168, 171, 181, 452, 456, 458, 459, 462, 463 and 465) to complete unloading. Therefore, he realized clearly that his primary objectives on this day were (a) the discharge of the cargoes of the above ships so that the ships might be withdrawn from the area, and (b) the fire support of the ground troops.

He also realized the importance of employing the pontoon causeways and LCT's from CTF 79, which had arrived late in the afternoon on the preceding day. He was concerned at the delay in employing them, but whether or not he took personal action in order to expedite their employment is not known. Suffice it to say that it was not until about 0900 that several of them were finally put in place. He observed now that the LST's either beached and unloaded over the causeways, or employed LCM's and LCT's to unload ramp-to-ramp.

Despite the employment of the above pontoon causeways and LCT's, the unloading at RED Beach was still slow because (a) the left end of the beach, which appeared to have the best gradient, had been evacuated due to mortar and sniper fire, (b) the shore party was unable to move equipment and stores rapidly from the beach to the dump areas, and (c) the shifting of the causeways to compensate for the varying distances from the beach of the different LST's often caused abnormal delays of from one to two hours.\*

At 1558, since he was CTF 78 as well as CTG 78.1, he knew that four of his LST's (26, 168, 452 and 466) and his two AKA's (TITANIA, AQUARIUS), which had now completed unloading, would be departing RED Beach at 1800 for Hollandia in convoy with certain LST's from TG 78.2 and escorted by the destroyers FLETCHER and LA VALLETTE, also from TG 78.2, and the MURRAY and HARRISON from his own command.\*\*

At 1800 he noted that CTU 78.2.4, with TU 78.2.4, had commenced departing RED Beach area for Hollandia.

With the departure of this convoy he now had eight LST's (171, 181, 456, 458, 459, 462, 463, 465) and one cargo ship (HERCULES) remaining to be unloaded.

In addition, he had the BLUE RIDGE (FFF), RUSSELL (relief flagship), JOHN RODGERS, LANG (which had on the previous day been released from the retiring TG 78.3--replaced by McKEE--and reported to CTF 78 for

\* Action Report CTU 78.1.7, Leyte Operations, No Serial, November 1st, 1944.

\*\* CTF 78 Dispatch 210658 October 1944 to CTU 78.2.4, info CTF's 77 and 79, CTG 78.7, etc.



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CTG 78.2  
October 21st

duty),\* and a number of landing and control craft which had not been scheduled for retirement with the D-day assault echelons.

At 2032 the RUSSELL, having been ordered by CTF 78 to report to CTG 78.2, departed her screening position and at 2224 anchored in FS area ABLE for FS duties with TG 78.2.\*\*

The next day he was scheduled to receive in Reinforcement Group ONE (TG 78.6) (due to arrive off RED Beach at 0800) resupply shipping consisting of three APA's and fourteen LST's.

(b) Operations of CTG 78.2 (San Ricardo Attack Group),  
October 21st.\*\*\*

CTG 78.2, in the FREMONT, remained at anchor off WHITE Beach while the unloading of his LST's and AKA's continued throughout the night.

At 0708 he commenced unloading cargo from his flagship, having unloaded the troops embarked therein the day before. The FREMONT had, in addition to serving as the flagship of CTG 78.2, been combat-loaded with troops and supplies for the assault landings.\*\*\*\*

By 0935 he completed unloading all of his LST's and had them standby at anchor off WHITE Beach to await further instructions.

At 1454 he directed four LCI's to patrol off the southern entrance to San Juanico Strait--anchoring as prescribed--to intercept any enemy surface craft that might be heading through the strait in accordance with CTF 78 Operation Plan No. 101-44.

At about 1628 he received a dispatch from CTF 78 which (a) formed TU 78.2.4 consisting of nineteen LST's, the TITANIA and AQUARIUS, the FLETCHER, LA VALLETTE, MURRAY, and HARRISON, and (b) directed CTU 78.2.4 to depart at 1800 for Hollandia.\*\*\*\*\*

At 1653 his flagship completed discharging all cargo.\*\*\*\*

At 1800 he noted that his thirteen LST's (18, 66, 67, 68, 202, 204, 245, 467, 468, 469, 470, 474, 475) were departing San Pedro Bay in company with certain LST's (26, 168, 452, 466) and two AKA's (TITANIA,

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\* War Diary LANG, October 20th, 1944.

\*\* War Diary RUSSELL, October 21st, 1944.

\*\*\* All information here, except as otherwise indicated, obtained from Action Report CTG 78.2, Leyte Operation, Serial 0085, November 20th, 1944.

\*\*\*\* War Diary FREMONT, October 21st, 1944.

\*\*\*\*\* CTF 78 Dispatch 210658 October 1944 to CTU 78.2.4, info CTF's 77, 79, CTG 78.2, etc.

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AQUARIUS) from TG 78.1, and escorted by the four previously mentioned destroyers.\* With the departure of this convoy, he only had two AKA's (ARNEB, ELECTRA) left to complete unloading. In addition, he had the FREMONT (FFF) and ANDERSON (relief flagship), JENKINS (fighter director destroyer in Radar Picket Station No. 1) and a number of landing and control craft (LSM's, LCI's and PC's), which had not been scheduled for retirement with the D-day assault echelons.

At 1808 he received CTF 77 dispatch 210641 placing in effect Harbor Defense Plan Number ONE (addressed to him for information), the contents of which have been discussed under the operations of CTF 77 and CTF 78 this date.

At 2224 he noted that the RUSSELL, which had reported for FS duties from TG 78.1, had anchored in FS Area ABLE.\*\*

With the end of the day he was likely greatly pleased that most of his shipping had unloaded and departed the area for, on the next day, he was scheduled to receive in Reinforcement Group ONE (TG 78.6) (due to arrive off WHITE Beach at 0800) resupply shipping consisting of three APA's, one AP, one AK, one ARL, six XAK, fourteen LST's and twelve LCI's.\*\*\*

Nothing further of importance happened during the remainder of the day.

(c) Operations of CTU 77.2.1 (Fire Support Unit NORTH) and CTG 77.3 (Close Covering Group), October 21st.

(1) Operations of CTU 77.2.1

CTU 77.2.1, with the MISSISSIPPI, MARYLAND, WEST VIRGINIA, was at anchor in FS Area DOG while the destroyers AULICK, CONY and SIGOURNEY were in the immediate vicinity acting as a screen for the battleships or lying to.

At 0409 he directed the three destroyers to proceed to FS Area ABLE for call fires.\*\*\*\*

During the early morning the MARYLAND, at 0531, and the WEST VIRGINIA, at 0601, got underway--the MARYLAND to better avoid air attacks, which developed at 0543 and which heavily damaged the AUSTRALIA;\*\*\*\*\*

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\* Action Report CTU 78.1.4, Leyte Operation, No Serial, November 1st, 1944; also War Diaries FLETCHER and LA VALLETTE, October 21st, 1944.

\*\* War Diary RUSSELL, October 21st, 1944.

\*\*\* CTF 78 Operation Plan No. 101-44, Serial 0008, October 3rd, 1944, Annex B, Action Report CTG 78.6 (Reinforcement Group ONE), Leyte Island, Philippines, October 16th - 27th, 1944, Serial 0154, October 31st, 1944.

\*\*\*\* Deck Log SIGOURNEY, October 21st, 1944.

\*\*\*\*\* War Diaries COMBATDIV THREE and WEST VIRGINIA, October 21st, 1944.



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the WEST VIRGINIA to proceed to FS Area ABLE where, with the three destroyers, she was to standby for call fires.\*

At 0632 the AULICK fired one salvo but the visibility then lowered due to fog and she ceased firing.

At 0642, while the WEST VIRGINIA was en route to her fire support station, she grounded, damaging three of her four propellers and thereby reducing her sustained speed to sixteen knots and her emergency speed to eighteen knots. The commanding officer promptly advised CTF 77, CTG 77.2 and other interested commands of this unhappy damage.\*\* The MARYLAND at 0713 anchored in FS Area DOG. During this time the MISSISSIPPI remained generally at anchor. None of the battleships were called upon for call fire and their sole participation at this time consisted of providing spotting planes for the three destroyers.

Between 0840 and 0910 the three destroyers above mentioned anchored in FS Area ABLE,\*\*\* and at 1111 the WEST VIRGINIA also anchored in this area.

At 1430 CTU 77.2.1 learned that the damaged HONOLULU and AUSTRALIA, escorted by the WARRAMUNGA and RICHARD P. LEARY, were departing the area.\*\* At 1530 he directed the MISSISSIPPI and MARYLAND to shift anchorage to berths more removed from Leyte Island. These two battleships then shifted anchorage as ordered and re-anchored at 1615.\*\*

The WEST VIRGINIA and the three destroyers remained in FS Area ABLE throughout the day awaiting call fires. They fired call fire missions as follows: WEST VIRGINIA, none; CONY, from 1027 to 1035; AULICK, from 1653 to 1707 and from 1710 to 1743; SIGOURNEY, from 0952 to 1130.\*\*\*\*

At approximately 1847 the units of TG 77.2.1 received CTF 77's dispatch 210641 (quoted in full under "Operations of CTF 77, October 21st"), Harbor Defense Plan Number ONE. As a result of this, and of instructions from CTG 77.2 and CTU 77.2.1, the entire unit by 2155 had got underway.\*\* After clearing San Pedro Bay and after forming at 2216 a cruising disposition with the battleships in column and the destroyers ahead as a screen, CTU 77.2.1 commenced maneuvering to the eastward of the transport areas in order to cover the amphibious units against enemy surface raids,\*\*\*\*\* and to rejoin CTG 77.2 should that commander require his assistance.

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\* War Diaries COMBATDIV 3 and WEST VIRGINIA, October 21st, 1944.

\*\* War Diary COMBATDIV 3, October 21st, 1944.

\*\*\* Deck Logs AULICK, CONY, and SIGOURNEY, October 21st, 1944.

\*\*\*\* Deck Logs WEST VIRGINIA, CONY, AULICK, and SIGOURNEY, October 21st, 1944.

\*\*\*\*\* Deck Log MARYLAND, October 21st, 1944.

(2) Operations of CTG 77.3 (Close Covering Group),  
October 21st.

It will be recalled that this group was at anchor or lying to in FS Areas ABLE, CHARLIE, and DOG, providing close fire support for ground forces and neutralization of shore batteries as required by CTF 78's operation plan. Its operations for this day consisted, in general, of call fire and neutralization fire much the same as on the previous day with the exception that there were no scheduled bombardments.

The first air raid of the day developed about 0600 at which time CTG 77.3 observed an enemy plane, which had been hit by antiaircraft gunfire, crash into the superstructure of the AUSTRALIA, a unit of his group, causing serious damage and casualties.\*

Later he learned that (a) as a consequence of this damage, the AUSTRALIA, escorted by the WARRAMUNGA, was to depart the objective area that day in company with the HONOLULU and the R.P. LEARY, and (b) the four ships were to compose TG 70.6.\*\*

At 1339 he observed the above two ships get underway with the other ships of TG 70.6 and head for Manus.\*\*

Later in the afternoon he learned that the MURRAY, which had been with his command since entry into Leyte Gulf, had been directed by CTF 78 to report for duty with TU 78.2.4 (LST convoy returning to Hollandia from Leyte Gulf at 1800).\*\*\*

Sometime before 1846 he received (a) CTF 77's Harbor Defense Plan Number ONE (In this plan he was directed to (1) be underway during darkness, (2) provide close protective cover in the area approximately two to five miles east and southeast of the transport areas, and (3) be prepared to render close fire support during daylight on call),\*\*\*\* and (b) word that those destroyers providing FS missions would be relieved by destroyers from TF 78.\*\*\*\*\* (This latter relief was effected at dusk but only after considerable confusion, due possibly to the numerous ships in the area and the difficulty of locating one another.)

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\* War Diary PHOENIX, October 21st, 1944.

\*\* CTF 77 Dispatch 210230 October 1944 to CTF's 78, 79, info all TFC's 7THFLT, all TFC's 3RDFLT, all TGC's 7THFLT, COMDESRON 56, etc.; also Action Report COMCRUDIV 9, Seizure and Occupation of Leyte Island, October 18th - 21st, 1944, Serial 0091, October 28th, 1944.

\*\*\* Action Report MURRAY, Leyte Operation, Serial 0223, October 27th, 1944; also CTF 78 Dispatch 210658 October 1944 to CTU 78.2.4, info CTF's 77, 79, CTG 78.2, MURRAY.

\*\*\*\* CTF 77 Dispatch 210641 October 1944 to CTF's 78 and 79, CTG's 77.2 and 77.3, info all TFC's and TGC's 7THFLT.

\*\*\*\*\* Action Report CTG 77.3, Leyte Operations, Serial 0359, November 3rd, 1944.



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CTG 78.3  
October 21st

At 1846, in accordance with the above orders, he got underway with the PHOENIX, BOISE, SHROPSHIRE, BEALE, HUTCHINS, DALY, KILLEN, BACHE, and ARUNTA,\* and, at 2130, having arrived on station, commenced patrolling.\*\* As of 2400 the patrol had been uneventful.

(d) Operations of CTG 78.3 (Panaon Attack Group),  
October 21st.

It will be recalled that CTG 78.3, in the HUGHES, with the MANOORA, KANIMBLA, WESTRALIA, RINGGOLD, SIGSBEE, SCHROEDER and DASHIELL, was awaiting the arrival of transports from RED and WHITE Beaches which had been delayed in rendezvousing.\*\*\*

At 0100 these transports, consisting of the LEONARD WOOD, PIERCE, JAMES O'HARA, LA SALLE, HARRIS, BARNSTABLE, HERALD OF THE MORNING, FAYETTE, LEEDSTOWN, DUPAGE, FULLER, ELMORE, WAYNE and JOHN LAND rendezvoused with him and all units in column then proceeded through the swept channel and headed for the entrance to the gulf.\*\*\*\*

At 0203 they commenced passing through the entrance to Leyte Gulf\*\*\*\*\* at which time CTG 78.3 headed for Hollandia, although eight of his transports were several days later to leave the formation at Point ART for Kossol Passage.\*\*\*

It was not until 0500 that CTG 78.3 formed cruising disposition.\*\*\*\*

It was not until 1546 that he made a report of his departure. In this dispatch he stated that (a) the situation ashore at Panaon was satisfactory, (b) an air attack at dusk the previous evening had been repulsed by AA gunfire as the transports and screen were leaving, and (c) although the northern transports had been delayed in arriving at the rendezvous, the first Leyte echelon had departed as scheduled.\*\*\*\*\*

In view of the fact that this command no longer participated in the KING II operations, it will be dropped at this point from further discussion, although, since all retiring groups were, during this time, to be covered by COMTHIRDFLT, the fact that they were retiring cannot be dropped from the mind of that commander.

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\* Deck Log BOISE, October 21st, 1944.  
\*\* War Diary PHOENIX, October 21st, 1944.  
\*\*\* Action Report CTU 78.1.3 (COMTRANSDIV 24), Leyte Assault, Serial 0200, October 24th, 1944.  
\*\*\*\* War Diary HUGHES, October 21st, 1944.  
\*\*\*\*\* CTG 78.3 Dispatch 210646 October 1944 to CTF's 77, 78 and 79.

(e) Operations of CTG's 78.6 (Reinforcement Group ONE), 78.7 (Reinforcement Group TWO), 78.8 (Reinforcement Group THREE), October 21st.\*

(1) Operations of CTG's 78.6 and 78.7, October 21st.

At the beginning of the day CTG's 78.6 and 78.7 (Reinforcement Groups ONE and TWO) were respectively 185 and 645 miles, bearing 112°(T) and 120°(T) from the entrance to Leyte Gulf, proceeding via routes ALBATROSS and SHEARWATER to the objective area at nine knots SOA in accordance with the movement schedule.

At 1600 CTG 78.6, when he was bearing 114°(T), distant fifty-eight miles from the entrance to the gulf, formed approach disposition for entering Leyte Gulf, and at dusk (1827) he detached CTU 77.4.24 (KADASHAN BAY, OMMANEY BAY, RICHARD W. SUESENS and ABERCROMBIE) to proceed independently to join CTU 77.4.2.\*\*

At 2323 the SAN PEDRO, which had been detached at 0200 the previous day to escort four merchant ships from TG 78.7 to Kossol Passage, rejoined, having completed her escort mission.\*\*\*

At 2350 CTG 78.6 entered Leyte Gulf.\*\*\*\*

Nothing further of importance occurred this day and at midnight CTG 78.7 was bearing 114°(T), distant 440 miles from Leyte Gulf.

(2) Operations of CTG 78.8, October 21st.

CTG 78.8 (Reinforcement Group THREE) was at Hollandia where he was completing preparations to depart for Leyte at 0700, October 23rd.\*\*\*\*\*

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- \* Action Report CTG 78.6 (Reinforcement Group 1), Leyte Island Operation, October 16th - 27th, 1944, Serial 0154, October 31st, 1944; Action Report CTG 78.7, Central Philippines Operation, Serial 0176, November 10th, 1944; Action Report CTG 78.8 (COMCORTDIV 29) (Reinforcement Group 3), Central Philippines Operation, October 23rd - November 3rd, 1944, Serial 071, November 16th, 1944.
- \*\* Action Report KADASHAN BAY, Leyte Island, Serial 066, October 31st, 1944.
- \*\*\* War Diary SAN PEDRO, October 21st, 1944.
- \*\*\*\* War Diary CRESCENT CITY, October 21st, 1944.
- \*\*\*\*\* Action Report CTG 78.8 (COMCORTDIV 29) (Reinforcement Group 3), Central Philippine Operation, October 23rd - November 3rd, 1944, Serial 071, November 16th, 1944.



## (2) Operations of CTF 79 (Southern Attack Force), October 21st.\*

CTF 79, in MOUNT OLYMPUS, remained at anchor in the Southern Transport Area while the unloading of his assault shipping at the southern beaches continued throughout the night. HE HAD DECIDED CORRECTLY THE PREVIOUS AFTERNOON NOT TO RETIRE HIS SHIPPING AT DARK IN ORDER TO REDUCE ITS VULNERABILITY TO NIGHT ENEMY AIR ATTACK BUT, INSTEAD, TO REMAIN AT THE BEACH AREA UNDER SMOKE COVER AND PUSH UNLOADING TO THE UTMOST TO INSURE THE EARLIEST RETIREMENT OF HIS TRANSPORTS AND LST'S FROM THE OBJECTIVE AREA. EMPHASIS WAS PLACED ON THE SPEEDY UNLOADING AND WITHDRAWAL OF THE TRANSPORTS.

At 0835 he recommended to CTF 77 that the damaged HONOLULU proceed that evening to Manus for docking, stopping at Kossol Passage en route for fuel and water.\*\* This recommendation is quoted in full and commented on under "Operations of CTF 77, October 21st".

At 0940, since the motor torpedo boats were to take over patrol of the lower strait, he ordered CTG 79.11 to withdraw (at 1500) the screen from Screening Stations TWENTY-SEVEN to THIRTY-ONE, inclusive (in lower Surigao Strait), and to return to Screening Stations THREE to SEVEN, inclusive.\*\*\*

At 0951 he directed CTG 79.11.2 to designate five ships for interchange with FS group.\*\*\*\*

At 1022 he recommended to CTF 77 that the escort for the HONOLULU and AUSTRALIA include the CLEMSON, RATHBURNE and GEORGE E. BADGER, all carrying UDT needing early return.\*\*\*\*\*

At 1112 he made a situation report as of 1000 to CTF 77. This report has already been cited under "Operations of CTF 77, October 21st"\*\*\*\*\*

At 1130 he received a reply (to his 210051) to the effect that the TWIGGS, HALLIGAN, HARADEN, ISHERWOOD and CHARLES J. BADGER were designated.\*\*\*\*\*

At 1140 he received a message from CTG 79.1, that, based on the rate of consumption the previous night, the smoke munitions and fog oil remaining on hand would barely be enough for one more night.\*\*\*\*\* As a

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\* All information here, except as otherwise indicated, obtained from Action Report CTF 79, Seizure of Leyte, Serial 00323, November 13th, 1944.

\*\* CTF 79 Dispatch 202335 October 1944 to CTF 77.

\*\*\* CTF 79 Dispatch 210040 October 1944 to CTG 79.11, info CTF 77, CTG 70.1.

\*\*\*\* CTF 79 Visual Dispatch 210051 October 1944 to CTU 79.11. 2.

\*\*\*\*\* CTF 79 Dispatch 210122 October 1944 to CTF 77.

\*\*\*\*\* CTF 79 Dispatch 210212 October 1944 to CTF 77.

\*\*\*\*\* CTU 79.11.2 Voice Radio Message 210230 October 1944 to CTF 79.

\*\*\*\*\* CTG 79.1 Visual Dispatch 210216 October 1944 to CTF 79.

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result, smoke cover was restricted to dawn and dusk (the most likely periods of enemy air attack) and to those times when enemy planes were reported approaching the area, rather than maintained continuously throughout the night.\*

This was a considerable reduction from the previous evening (D-day) when (a) smoking had been continuous from 1815 until 2042, except for one pause of about twenty minutes, and (b) smoking for the remainder of the night had been made for the first twenty minutes of every hour in order to maintain a smoke curtain over the Southern Transport Area.\*

At 1148 he became gravely concerned that his supply of bombardment ammunition might become exhausted. He so advised CTF 77. The details of the dispatch have been given under "Operations of CTF 77, October 21st."\*\*

At 1150 he received a visual query from CTU 77.2.2 concerning the responsibility for assigning call fire ships to the attack groups of TF 79. In this dispatch CTU 77.2.2 stated, in part, that it was his understanding that after D-day, he (CTU 77.2.2) would assign them.\*\*\*

At 1217 he was no doubt pleased to learn that CTG 79.1 had taken action to retain in the objective area all available smoke munitions and fog oil.\*\*\*\*

At 1239 he intercepted CTG 77.4's dispatch to CTF 77 recommending, in part, that TG 77.4 be authorized to make morning and afternoon sweeps in force over the western Visayas and northern Mindanao in order to reduce the frequency of the harassing raids.\*\*\*\*\*

At 1438 he issued retirement and routing instructions for TU 79.14.1 (a) to be formed from transports to be designated later depending on the progress of unloading, (b) to be escorted by COMDESDIV NINETY-SIX (in BLACK) with WALKER, ABBOT, GANSEVOORT, BRAINE, SANDS, MANLEY, TALBOT, GOLDSBOROUGH, KANE, (c) to depart the Southern Transport Area at 1800, (d) to report to CTG 78.5 at Point "E" for routing through Area SWEEP, (e) then to proceed to Hollandia.\*\*\*\*\*

At 1439 he directed CTU 79.11.2 to station by 1730 the following destroyers as a night screen around the transports and LST's: PICKING, SPROSTON, McDONOUGH, STEMBLE, LUCE, BRYANT, BENNION, NEWCOMB, ERBEN, HEYWOOD L. EDWARDS, HALFORD, LEUTZE, and WELLES.\*\*\*\*\*

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- \* Action Report CTF 79, Seizure of Leyte, Serial 00323, November 13th, 1944.
  - \*\* CTF 79 Dispatch 210248 October 1944 to CTF 77.
  - \*\*\* CTU 77.2.2 Voice Radio Message 210010 October 1944 to CTF 79.
  - \*\*\*\* CTG 79.1 Visual Dispatch 210218 October 1944 to CTG 79.3, info CTF 79.
  - \*\*\*\*\* CTG 77.4 Dispatch 210122 October 1944 to CTF 77.
  - \*\*\*\*\* CTF 79 Dispatch 210538 October 1944 to CTG's 79.1 and 79.2, COMDESDIV 96, info CTG's 79.3, 79.4, 77.6, etc.
  - \*\*\*\*\* CTF 79 Visual Dispatch 210539 October 1944 to CTU 79.11.2.



At 1448 he received a dispatch from CTF 77 retiring the damaged HONOLULU and AUSTRALIA, when ready for sea that evening, to Manus for repairs, and directing him (CTF 79) to designate one destroyer from DESRON FIFTY-SIX and CTF 78 to detail an Australian destroyer as escort.\* Immediately after this, he learned that CTU 77.2.2 had designated the RICHARD P. LEARY.\*\*

At 1500 the destroyers (MELVIN, MCGOWAN, REMEY, MONSSEN, and McDERMUT) in Screening Stations Nos. 27, 28, 29, 30 and 31, respectively, in lower Surigao Strait, commenced withdrawing to Screening Stations Nos. 3, 4, 5, 6, and 7\*\*\* (Plate VIII).

At 1611 he received a dispatch from CTU 77.2.2 (a) stating that three battleships and fifteen destroyers had but forty to sixty per cent fuel on board, and (b) recommending a fueling schedule for the following day which embraced fueling many of the ships in Area ACCIPITER.\*\*\*\* He commenced studying this plan.

At 1613 he replied (by TBS voice radio) to CTU 77.2.2's 210010. In his reply he accepted, in general, CTU 77.2.2's interpretation of the basic order,\*\*\*\*\* and (a) advised him, in part, that (1) the RICHARD P. LEARY, ALBERT W. GRANT, THORN, CLAXTON, ROBINSON, and CHARLES J. BADGER would report to him for screen that night, and (2) ISHERWOOD, CHAUNCEY, and HARADEN would report to CTG 79.1 and TWIGGS, KIDD, and HALLIGAN to CTG 79.2, (b) directed him to assign one battleship and one light or heavy cruiser to TG 79.1 and also to TG 79.2, (c) advised him that the remainder of the fire support ships would operate under him, and (d) cancelled the harassing mission for that night.\*\*\*\*\*

At 1621, having studied CTG 77.4's recommendations that TG 77.4 be permitted to make sweeps over the western Visayas and northern Mindanao,\*\*\*\*\* he advised CTF 77 that he concurred and recommended that, in view of the scarcity of profitable targets, his close support could be reduced from sixteen VF to six VF.\*\*\*\*\*

At 1642, based on reports of unloading progress, he designated thirteen transports (LAMAR, J.F. BELL, GOLDEN CITY, KNOX, CALVERT, CUSTER, ALPINE, HEYWOOD, FELAND, BOLIVAR, DOYEN, MONROVIA, WAR HAWK), two LSD's (LINDENWALD, ASHLAND), and, if ready for sea, two additional transports

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- \* CTF 77 Dispatch 210230 October 1944 to CTF's 78, 79, info COMDESRON 56; also Action Report COMCRUDIV 9, Seizure and Occupation of Leyte Island, October 18th-21st, 1944, Serial 0091, October 28th, 1944.
  - \*\* War Diary RICHARD P. LEARY, October 21st, 1944.
  - \*\*\* War Diary CTG 79.11 (COMDESRON 54), October 1944.
  - \*\*\*\* CTU 77.2.2 Visual Dispatch 210540 October 1944 to CTF 79.
  - \*\*\*\*\* CTF 79 Operation Plan No. A304-44, no serial, October 2nd, 1944, Annex D, Paragraph 13.
  - \*\*\*\*\* CTF 79 Voice Radio Message 210713 October 1944 to CTU 77.2.2.
  - \*\*\*\*\* CTG 77.4 Dispatch 210122 October 1944 to CTF 77.
  - \*\*\*\*\* CTF 79 Visual Dispatch 210721 October 1944 to CTF 77.

(FREDERICK FUNSTON, SHERIDAN),\* to form TU 79.14.1 under command of Captain Flanagan\*\* in the BOLIVAR, and to retire from the objective area at 1800 in company with the ten escorts previously designated by his dispatch 210538.

At 1649 he received a visual dispatch from CTU 79.11.2 reporting that his screen around the transports and LST's was composed of the following destroyer types stationed clockwise: BELKNAP, RATHBURNE, BRYANT, WELLES, LEUTZE, HALFORD, BENNION, SPROSTON, PICKING, GOLDSBOROUGH, HEYWOOD L. EDWARDS, OVERTON, McDONOUGH, ERBEN, STEMBLE and NEWCOMB.\*\*\*

At 1725 he received a recommendation from CTG 79.2 that a constant daylight patrol by support aircraft be maintained over Catmon Hill to neutralize harassing fire from enemy mortar batteries in this area against ORANGE and BLUE Beaches, which was causing some casualties and interrupting unloading operations.\*\*\*\*

At 1728, feeling the urgency for fueling the ships of TU 77.2.2 and realizing that TU 77.7.1 could be expected to be in Area ACCIPITER on D+2 day since that was provided for in the basic plan, he notified CTU 77.2.2\*\*\*\*\* that that commander's fueling schedule was approved providing not less than two cruisers and two destroyers, the latter with the maximum amount of ammunition, were left in the objective area for TG's 79.1 and 79.2.

At 1808 he received CTF 77's dispatch placing in effect immediately Harbor Defense Plan Number ONE, the full contents of which have been cited under the "Operations of CTF 77, October 21st".\*\*\*\*\* This plan directed him to (a) keep his transports and landing ships at anchor during night in the Southern Transport Area, (b) form a close screen at anchor or underway around the Southern Transport Area with screening vessels remaining (i.e., those destroyers not withdrawing at night with TU 77.2.2 or assigned to patrol stations at the eastern entrance to Leyte Gulf or southern Surigao Strait), prepared to make smoke and defend the area against air attack, and (c) continue to provide antisubmarine, antimotor torpedo boat and antiaircraft protection in own area of responsibility (Plate VIII).

Since he had previously issued instructions for his transports and landing craft to remain at anchor during the night and had provided a close screen with smoke and antiaircraft protection, this plan in no way changed his basic plans. In addition to the requirements of this plan, he

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\* CTF 79 Dispatch 210742 October 1944 to CTG's 79.3, 79.4, info COM-DESRON 96, etc.  
 \*\* Captain Henry C. Flanagan, U.S. Navy,  
 \*\*\* CTU 79.11.2 Visual Dispatch 210715 October 1944 to CTF 79.  
 \*\*\*\* CTG 79.2 Dispatch 210726 October 1944 to CTF 79.  
 \*\*\*\*\* CTF 79 Dispatch 210828 October 1944 to CTU 77.2.2, info CTG's 79.1 and 79.2.  
 \*\*\*\*\* CTF 77 Dispatch 210641 October 1944 to CTF's 78, 79, CTG's 77.2 and 77.3, info all TFC's and TGC's 7THFLT.



had stationed two destroyers (McNAIR, MERTZ) in the eastern entrance to Leyte Gulf to the seaward of the enemy minefield between Homonhon Island and Desolation Point, and five destroyers (MELVIN, McGOWAN, REMEY, MONSSEN, McDERMUT) in Surigao Strait on an east-west line between the northern tip of Dinagat Island and Leyte. The plan, however, did mean that he could no longer depend on the gunfire support ships of TU 77.2.2 to provide night harassing and call fire since these ships would henceforth have to withdraw from their respective fire support areas to operate at night in the southern area of Leyte Gulf. On the other hand, the plan directed that CTG 77.3 provide during darkness additional close protective cover approximately two to five miles east and southeast of the transport areas.

During this day he was concerned over the best defense against the Japanese low-flying planes similar to those which had hit the AUSTRALIA and HONOLULU. He had received a recommendation earlier in the day from CTG 79.1 that a division of fighters be stationed off shore near own transport area in order to utilize advantages of visual and other fighter directions.\* He studied this recommendation and at 1858 rejected it saying that he (a) thought it was too close for effective interception, (b) thought it preferable to have a TCAP stationed at low and varying altitudes across the most probable routes of approach of the Japanese planes, and (c) was so stationing the TCAP.\*\*

At 1927 he directed the RATHBURNE, CLEMSON, and GEORGE E. BADGER to proceed toward Point TED pending receipt of rendezvous from CCM-CRUDIV NINE.\*\*\* Since the TALBOT, MANLEY, GOLDSBOROUGH, KANE and SANDS had been directed to depart with CTU 79.14.1, he now had only four (BROOKS, BELKNAP, OVERTON, HUMPHREYS) of the twelve APD's which had originally arrived with CTG 77.2. Two of these APD's (BELKNAP and OVERTON) were operating with CTU 79.11.2 and the other two were anchored off Dulag.

At 1946 he should have learned, as an information addressee that TU 77.7.1 would arrive off Leyte anchorage on D+3 day and thereafter would be available for fueling his units until 1700 each day.\*\*\*\* However, although this dispatch was within the MOUNT OLYMPUS, it seems clear from the dispatch he sent at 2300 that, for some unexplained reason, he had not received it.

At 2052 he learned, from C.G. SIXTH Army, that COMSOWESPAC was to visit the area of the TWENTY-FOURTH Corps on the following day.\*\*\*\*\*

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- \* CTG 79.1 Visual Dispatch 210438 October 1944 to CTF 79, info CTG 79.2.
  - \*\* CTF 79 Visual Dispatch 210958 October 1944 to CTG 79.1.
  - \*\*\* CTF 79 Dispatch 211027 October 1944 to RATHBURNE, CLEMSON and GEORGE E. BADGER.
  - \*\*\*\* CTF 77 Dispatch 210702 October 1944 to CTU 77.7.1, info CTF's 78, 79.
  - \*\*\*\*\* C.G. 6TH Army Dispatch 211006 October 1944 to CTF 79, who was to pass it to C.G. 24TH Corps.

At 2055 he directed CTU 77.2.2 to leave four destroyers in FS area and then to comply with CTF 77's Harbor Defense Plan Number ONE.\*

By 2100, since he was nearby, he knew that TU 79.14.1, consisting of fourteen transports, two LSD's and ten escorts, had been formed as he had directed and was departing Leyte Gulf for Hollandia.\*\* The composition of this task unit was exactly that ordered by CTF 79 at 1642 plus the transport COMET, less the two transports FREDERICK FUNSTON and SHERIDAN which were not ready for sea.\*\*\*

With the departure of the above convoy CTF 79 had remaining at the southern beaches, exclusive of the three AGC's, the following units of assault shipping yet to be withdrawn: thirteen transports (CAVALIER, GEORGE CLYMER, STARLIGHT, PRESIDENT HAYES, RIXEY (APH),\*\*\*\* CLAY, ARTHUR MIDDLETON, BAXTER, BIDDLE, GEORGE F. ELLIOTT, CAMBRIA, FREDERICK FUNSTON, SHERIDAN), eight cargo vessels (THUBAN, ALSHAIN, MERCURY, CAPRICORNUS, ALCYONE, ALMAACK, CHARA, AURIGA), two LSV's (MONITOR, CATSKILL), three LSD's (CASA GRANDE, BELLE GROVE, RUSHMORE), and all fifty-five LST's which had arrived originally a sizable number of targets for enemy surface or air attack. Nevertheless, considerable progress had been made in unloading. All the assault troops, except the SIXTH Army Floating Reserve (381st Regimental Combat Team) had been landed and the assault tonnage of supplies and equipment unloaded had more than quadrupled that discharged the previous day (26,749 s/t vs 6,314 s/t).

At 2300 he decided that it was unwise to move the ships of TU 77.2.2 out of the gulf for, at this time, referring to CTF 77's 210641 (Harbor Defense Plan Number ONE), he (a) recommended to CTF 77 that the oilers be ordered into the objective area off the beaches, and (b) cancelled his authorization to CTU 77.2.2 to fuel in Area ACCIPITER on the following day.\*\*\*\*\* While he did not give any reason for this decision, except the reference to the Harbor Defense Plan, it seems clear that, since CTU 77.2.2's fueling plan would require most of the heavy ships to be out of the gulf on the night of October 22nd and would practically cancel that portion of the Harbor Defense Plan which related to TU 77.2.2, the Harbor Defense Plan was his motivation.

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- \* Action Report CTG 77.2 (COMCRUDIV 4), Bombardment and Capture of Leyte Island, Philippine Islands, October 16th - 24th, 1944, Serial 00147, November 5th, 1944.
  - \*\* CTU 79.14.1 (COMTRANSDIV 28) Dispatch 211410 October 1944 to all TFC's 7THFLT, CTG's 79.1, 79.2, etc.; also War Diary SANDS, October 21st, 1944.
  - \*\*\* CTU 79.14.1 (COMTRANSDIV 28) Dispatch 211410 October 1944 to all TFC's 7THFLT, CTG's 79.1, 79.2, etc.; also War Diary FREDERICK FUNSTON, October 21st, 1944.
  - \*\*\*\* RIXEY was APH-3 and as such was employed as a transport en route to Leyte and as a hospital ship on retirement.
  - \*\*\*\*\* CTF 79 Dispatch 211400 October 1944 to CTF 77.



At 2347 he received CTF 77's dispatch which (a) advised all commands that TU 77.7.1 would anchor in Leyte Gulf about five miles off the shore line about 0900 D+3 day, and (b) gave instructions concerning the replenishment.\* From this dispatch he could see that the arrival of replenishment ammunition would be one day later than he had recommended,\*\* and that he would now have to use what little remained rather sparingly.

Since, under the basic instructions, the local landing force (army division) commanders, having assumed command ashore, were expected to report to the attack force commander for duty, it seems correct to say that this had been done. Therefore, by the end of the day he (CTF 79) undoubtedly knew that the C.G.'s of the SEVENTH and NINETY-SIXTH Infantry Divisions had assumed command of their respective divisions ashore.

This action signified that these division commanders had considered that their troops, supplies and equipment had been established firmly enough ashore for them to assume full responsibility for further operations ashore.

Also, he likely learned that Dulag airstrip had been captured by the 184th Infantry.\*\*\*

(a) Operations of CTG 79.1 (Attack Group ABLE), October 21st.\*\*\*\*

CTG 79.1, in APPALACHIAN, remained off YELLOW and VIOLET Beaches while the unloading of his assault shipping continued on a twenty-four hour basis with all possible speed, although the necessity to replenish the smoke screen over the transport area the first twenty minutes of each hour until the CAP had arrived on station (at 0622) naturally hampered the unloading. During these twenty-minute smoking periods the visibility was practically reduced to zero and made navigation between the transport area and the beaches difficult.

At 0447 he received word from the shore party that they could handle cargo faster than it was being delivered to the beach. As a result four additional LST's were beached at VIOLET Beach.

At 0800 he landed the SECOND Battalion of the SEVENTEENTH Infantry Regiment (TWENTY-FOURTH Corps Reserve RCT). The other two battalions had been landed the day before.

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\* CTF 77 Dispatch 210657 October 1944 to all TFC's 7THFLT.

\*\* CTF 79 Dispatch 210248 October 1944 to CTF 77.

\*\*\* 6TH U.S. Army, Report of Leyte Operation, October 17th - December 25th, 1944, Page 39.

\*\*\*\* All information here, except as otherwise indicated, obtained from Action Report CTG 79.1, Participation in Amphibious Operations for the Capture of Leyte, Serial 00454, October 26th, 1944.

At 0845 he likely observed two enemy planes fly low at high speed over the transport area and drop two bombs near the CUSTER with negligible results and then escape over the mountains behind Dulag.\*

At 0858 he learned that the WALKER had shot down one single engine Japanese plane.

Sometime after 0900 he learned that the 184th Infantry had captured Dulag Airfield.\*\*

At 1000 he learned that three minutes earlier a torpedo plane from the MANILA BAY had been shot down by army artillery fire from the beach, and antiaircraft fire from the TALBOT and LST 733 (TG 79.1). This incident occurred not only because of poor recognition and eager gunners shortly after an air raid, but also because the torpedo plane, and artillery spotter plane, was sent down low to observe a new liaison plane landing strip along the beach held by the Allied forces, without first clearing through CSA, who would have notified navy and army units in the area. Fortunately, the pilot, aircrewmen and observer were rescued by the TALBOT.

At 1107, in accordance with the desires of the C.G. SEVENTH Division, he directed that all troops still in the STARLIGHT were to be disembarked to VIOLET Beach ONE immediately and those in the FELAND commencing at 1500.

At 1116 he notified CTF 79 that, based on the consumption the past night, he barely had enough smoke munitions and fog oil to last one more night.\*\*\* In other words, he voiced the opinion that these critical materials should be used more sparingly lest the supply become exhausted.

At 1118, owing to the above shortage of smoke munitions, and fog oil, he directed CTG 79.3 (Commander Transport Group ABLE) to transfer all such items from unloaded ships ready for sailing to other ships remaining in the area.\*\*\*\*

ALTHOUGH THE SHORTAGE OF SMOKE MUNITIONS AND FOG OIL WAS A RESULT OF INADEQUATE EVALUATION OF LOGISTICS CONSIDERATIONS IN THE ORIGINAL PLANNING STAGE BASED ON AN ASSUMED TOTAL REQUIREMENT WHICH PROVED TO BE GREATLY IN ERROR, THE CONCEPT OF TRANSFERRING ALL OF THE ABOVE EQUIPMENT FROM DEPARTING SHIPS TO THOSE SHIPS REMAINING WAS AN EXAMPLE OF EXCELLENT "ON THE SPOT" LOGISTICS IMPROVISATION. THIS EMPHASIZES THE IMPORTANCE OF (A) KEEPING THE COMMANDER INFORMED AS TO THE ACTUAL USAGE RATE OF THOSE ITEMS VITAL TO THE SUCCESSFUL CONDUCT OF HIS OPERATIONS, AND (B) ADVISING HIM WHEN THE CONSUMPTION OF ANY ITEMS SO EXCEEDS THE ESTIMATED USAGE RATE AS TO ENDANGER THE ACCOMPLISHMENT OF HIS OBJECTIVE.

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\* Action Report CTU 79.3.2, Assault on Leyte, Serial 086, October 26th, 1944; also War Diary CUSTER, October 21st, 1944.

\*\* Operation Report, 7TH Infantry Division, KING II, Page 5.

\*\*\* CTG 79.1 Dispatch 210216 October 1944 to CTF 79.

\*\*\*\* CTG 79.1 Dispatch 210218 October 1944 to CTG 79.3, info CTF 79.



IN CONNECTION WITH THE ABOVE, IT SEEMS IMPORTANT TO POINT OUT THAT THE NEED FOR MAINTAINING VITAL EQUIPMENT IN THE FORWARD AREAS OF THE WESTERN PACIFIC IN WORLD WAR II OFTEN BECAME SERIOUS IN THE MATTER OF SPARE PARTS. IN SUCH CASE, IT WAS THE USUAL PRACTICE TO REMOVE SERVICEABLE PARTS FROM ONE ITEM OF EQUIPMENT IN A DEPARTING SHIP IN ORDER TO INSTALL THEM ON ANOTHER ITEM OF EQUIPMENT ON A SHIP REMAINING IN THE OBJECTIVE AREA. THIS PRACTICE WAS KNOWN AS "TO CANNIBALIZE".\*

During the forenoon he fueled certain DM/DMS and YMS type minesweepers of TG 77.5.

Just prior to 1300 he knew that the C.G. SEVENTH Infantry Division had departed the APPALACHIAN, for at 1300 that commander arrived at VIOLET ONE Beach, and it seems probable that at this time he assumed command ashore,\*\* which information would have been made known immediately to CTG 79.1.

At 1500 he received instructions from CTF 79 that the transports, as on the previous night, would not retire at dark but would remain off the southern beaches to continue unloading operations overnight,\*\*\* and at 1530 he directed his units to again execute night inshore screening plan calling for an inner screen of LCI gunboats stationed on a line extending 120°(T) from the mouth of Dao River to prevent surprise night attack by enemy motor torpedo boats.

At 1800, in compliance with CTF 79 dispatches 210537 and 210742, he detached nine transports (LAMAR, J. FRANKLIN BELL, GOLDEN CITY, KNOX, CALVERT, CUSTER, HEYWOOD, ALPINE, FELAND) and two LSD's (ASHLAND and LINDENWALD) which had completed discharging their cargoes, to report to CTU 79.14.1 in BOLIVAR for retirement to Hollandia. Upon their departure the assault shipping remaining in TG 79.1 consisted of five transports, including RIXEY (APH), four cargo vessels, thirty-one LST's, and one LSV (MONITOR). This LSV debarked\*\*\*\* on this day eighty-nine officers and men of the Headquarters Corps Artillery and ELEVENTH Gun Battalion USMC.\*\*\*\*\*

At 2314 he made a summary report of the day's operations to CTF 79 stating that (a) C.G. SEVENTH Infantry Division and his headquarters, plus the remaining battalion of the Reserve RCT (RCT SIXTEEN) for the TWENTY-FOURTH Corps, had been placed ashore, (b) unloading from the LST's

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\* Dictionary of United States Military Terms for Joint Usage, May 1955, Page 20.

\*\* Operation Report, 7TH Infantry Division, KING II, Page 5; also 6TH U.S. Army, Report of Leyte Operation, October 17th - December 25th, 1944, Page 39.

\*\*\* CTF 79 Visual Dispatch 210543 October 1944 to CTG's 79.1 and 79.2.

\*\*\*\* War Diary MONITOR, October 21st, 1944.

\*\*\*\*\* These Marines were part of the Marine Artillery substituted by the Pacific Ocean area for the designated Army Artillery units which were still engaged with the enemy in the Marianas.

and AKA's was progressing satisfactorily, and (c) nine transports and two LSD's had unloaded and departed from the objective area.\*

At the end of the day he could review his operations with some satisfaction as (a) the inherent difficulties in getting his unloading schedule started had been overcome and the supplies and equipment were now being moved ashore smoothly and expeditiously, (b) nine transports and two LSD's had completed discharging their cargoes and departed. (The CAVALIER, which had completed unloading at 1300, did not depart at this time as she was the flagship of CTG 79.3 (Commander Transport Group ABLE), (c) the four transports (STARLIGHT, GEORGE CLYMER, PRESIDENT HAYES, RIXEY (APH)), and the four cargo vessels (THUBAN, CHARA, ALSHAIN, MERCURY) remaining were, as of 2000, approximately eighteen per cent unloaded, and (d) the thirty-one LST's remaining were, as of 2400, about fifty per cent unloaded (in this figure are included seven LST's--34, 169, 207, 213, 461, 617, 1006--which had been completely unloaded, and eleven which had as yet apparently not commenced unloading). Enemy reaction had been nil. The results had indeed justified remaining in the anchorage overnight.

(b) Operations of CTG 79.2 (Attack Group BAKER), October 21st.\*\*

CTG 79.2, in ROCKY MOUNT, remained at anchor off ORANGE and BLUE Beaches and continued to prosecute the unloading of his transports and LST's with utmost vigor so as to insure their earliest withdrawal from the objective area.

At 0447 he likely received word from the group beachmaster (CTU 79.4.5),\*\*\* who was in overall control of the TG 79.2 beaches, that (a) on the BLUE Beaches conditions were good, unloading was proceeding with many of the boats coming in, and cargo was being moved inland rapidly by the shore parties--this must have been heartening for, heretofore, the BLUE Beach shore party had been unable to handle the beach situation. (This was the only report received during the entire unloading operations which indicated that the BLUE Beach shore party was able to handle the beach situation), (b) on the ORANGE Beaches some cargo was on the beach but, although the shore party was moving it inland rapidly, it was not catching up with the unloading, and (c) all beach parties were unloading the boats as rapidly as the ships sent them in.\*\*\*\*

At 0600 he obtained permission from CTF 79 to retain for morning call fires the five fire support ships presently assigned him. These were the PORTLAND, COLUMBIA, BRAINE, GANSEVOORT and CLAXTON.

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\* CTG 79.1 Dispatch 211414 October 1944 to CTF 79.

\*\* All information here, except as otherwise indicated, obtained from Action Report CTG 79.2, Leyte Operation, Serial 0032, November 4th, 1944.

\*\*\* Lieutenant Commander H. E. Barron, D-V(S), USNR.

\*\*\*\* Action Report CTG 79.4, Leyte Operation, Serial 0126, October 29th, 1944.



At 0621 he noted that an enemy land attack plane had been shot down by three LSM's and one LST.

In view of the favorable reports concerning unloading received (as noted above) it must have been with some surprise that at 0659 he observed boats circling off the beach. He investigated the matter and learned that the circling resulted from congestion on the beaches caused by the inability of the shore parties to move the cargo rapidly enough inland.\* (This likely was due to the fact that, with the arrival of dawn, unloading had immediately speeded up.)\* He then stated that, in his opinion, (1) the unloading was dilatory and that this was surprising since, at 0615, he had sent sixty men to the LST beach to assist the army shore party there (these had been ordered by CTG 79.4) and (2) he was going to make a personal inspection of the beaches at 0800.\*

ACCORDINGLY HE LEFT HIS FLAGSHIP AT THAT TIME FOR ORANGE BEACH, WHERE HE WAS MET AT 0810 BY THE SHORE PARTY COMMANDER\*\*\* AND CTU 79.4.5. HE NOTED THAT (A) THE SHORE PARTIES HAD INSUFFICIENT CARGO HANDLERS TO HANDLE THE LARGE VOLUME OF CARGO REACHING THE BEACHES; OUT OF THE MEN ASSIGNED, ONLY A SMALL PERCENTAGE WERE ACTUALLY AVAILABLE, THE REST BEING REQUIRED FOR PERIMETER DEFENSE, MILITARY POLICE, SUPERVISORS AND OTHER MISCELLANEOUS DETAILS, (B) THERE WAS A LACK OF UNLOADING AIDS ON THE BEACHES AND INSUFFICIENT TRANSPORTATION TO KEEP THE BEACHES CLEAR; FOR INSTANCE, ABOUT 100 AMPHIBIOUS TRACTORS THAT HAD LANDED WITH THE INITIAL ASSAULT ECHELONS WERE PARKED SEVERAL HUNDRED YARDS INLAND FROM ORANGE BEACH AND HAD NOT BEEN TURNED OVER TO THE SHORE PARTY COMMANDER AS PLANNED\*\*---THESE VEHICLES COULD HAVE BEEN USED TO GOOD ADVANTAGE IN CLEARING THE CONGESTED BEACH AREA, (C) THERE WAS INSUFFICIENT OFFICER SUPERVISION OF THE WORKING PARTIES AND VEHICLE DRIVERS; THE DUKW'S WOULD HAUL A LOAD OF SUPPLIES FROM THE BEACH TO THE DUMP AREA AND FAIL TO RETURN.\*\*\*\* HE THEN ADVISED THE SHORE PARTY COMMANDER THAT HE WOULD SUPPLEMENT HIS ORGANIZATION WITH NAVAL PERSONNEL TO EXPEDITE THE UNLOADING.

THE PURPOSE OF THE ABOVE DISCUSSION IN REGARD TO THE SHORE PARTY IS TO EMPHASIZE THE NECESSITY IN AMPHIBIOUS OPERATIONS FOR NAVAL COMMANDERS AND OTHERS CONCERNED TO UNDERSTAND THE DUTIES OF SAID SHORE PARTY, THE EXTRANEOUS ACTIVITIES REQUIRED OF IT, THE MAINTENANCE, REPAIR, AND THE LOCATION AND USE OF ITS EQUIPMENT; ALL OF WHICH ARE OF PRIMARY INTEREST TO THE NAVAL COMMANDER IN THAT THESE ARE VITAL FACTORS IN DETERMINING THE SPEED OF UNLOADING.

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- \* Action Report CTG 79.4, Leyte Operation, Serial 0126, October 29th, 1944.
- \*\* Report of CTU 79.4.5 (Transport Group Beachmaster) to CTG 79.4, Leyte Operation, October 20th - 22nd, 1944, Enclosure (B) to Action Report CTG 79.4, Leyte Operation, Serial 0126, October 29th, 1944.
- \*\*\* Colonel C. J. Douglas, USA
- \*\*\*\* Action Report CTU 79.6.1, Assault and Occupation of Leyte, Serial 0210-44, November 7th, 1944.

At 0804, as previously authorized, the ROCKY MOUNT opened fire on Catmon Hill and Liberanan Head. CTF 79 later commented on this firing, and on another firing on this same day (also by the ROCKY MOUNT) to the effect that "THE WISDOM OF THE EXPOSURE OF A COMMAND SHIP, WITH LITTLE PROTECTION OR DAMAGE CONTROL, WITHIN CLOSE RANGE OF ENEMY GUNFIRE, IS SOMEWHAT DOUBTFUL".\*

By 0850, probably as a result of CTG 79.2's efforts to expedite unloading, a total of ten LST's, two LSM's and three LCT's were beached, and soon, the unloading of supplies and equipment was moving at a much faster tempo.\*\*

At 1120 CTG 79.2 sighted TG 70.1, consisting of about forty-seven motor torpedo boats, entering Leyte Gulf and approaching San Pedro Bay. This group was arriving on schedule.

At 1131 he returned aboard his flagship from his inspection of the unloading conditions at the beaches. By this time additional naval personnel had been sent ashore to aid the shore party and numerous Filipino natives had been recruited through the mayor of San Jose;\*\*\* additional pontoon barges had also been procured, and the stores were now being moved ashore at a fast rate although a shortage of vehicles to clear the beach areas still existed. It appeared that the goal of unloading all the transports by nightfall would be reached.

It seems likely that sometime in the early afternoon he learned that the LSD's CASA GRANDE, BELLE GROVE and RUSHMORE had completed unloading at noon.

It also seems likely that while ashore he learned that C.G. NINETY-SIXTH Infantry Division had assumed command the previous evening and, desiring confirmation thereof as well as appropriate notification to the commanders concerned, he at 1345 requested C.G. NINETY-SIXTH Infantry Division to report when he had assumed command ashore. This clearly indicates that a command or communications failure had occurred for, as noted under "Operations of CTG 79.2, October 20th", the C.G. NINETY-SIXTH Infantry Division had assumed command ashore at 1750 the previous day.

It is curious that it was not until 0254 on the following day (October 22nd) that an announcement was made of the assumption of command ashore by C.G. NINETY-SIXTH Infantry Division. CTG 79.2 has recorded in his chronological narrative that at that time C.G. TWENTY-FOURTH Corps,

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\* CTF 79 1st Endorsement Serial 00338, November 20th, 1944 to Action Report CTG 79.2, Leyte Operation, Serial 0032, November 4th, 1944.

\*\* Action Report CTG 79.4, Leyte Operation, Serial 0126, October 28th, 1944.

\*\*\* Report of CTU 79.4.5 (Transport Group Beachmaster) to CTG 79.4, Leyte Operation, October 20th - 22nd, 1944, Enclosure (B) to Action Report CTG 79.4, Leyte Operation, Serial 0126, October 29th, 1944.



in a dispatch to C.G. SIXTH Army, announced that both division commanders had assumed command ashore. Whether these two division commanders reported to CTF 79 as required by the instructions governing the changes in command is not clear, but it may be assumed that they did, in fact, comply with their instructions.

General unloading continued at an accelerated rate until 1422 when accurate enemy mortar fire from Catmon Hill commenced falling on the beaches and caused light damage and casualties to seven LST's whereupon those landing ships and craft at the beaches were ordered to retract and withdraw from the area until the enemy fire had been subdued. The enemy fire continued until 1505, at which time counterfire from the ROCKY MOUNT registered on the enemy mortar batteries at the foot of Catmon Hill and put them out of commission.\* Therefore, at 1600, unloading over the beaches resumed. This delay in unloading was sufficient to prevent the retirement of all transports of TG 79.2 at dark as had been planned.

At 1626 CTG 79.2 advised CTF 79 that, in view of the fact the enemy harassing fire from this area was causing casualties and interrupting unloading, he considered a constant patrol of support aircraft over Catmon Hill necessary in order to neutralize enemy mortar fire from this vicinity against ORANGE and BLUE Beaches.\*\*

At about 1800 he received a report from CTU 79.6.1 stating that, as of 1630, his twenty-four LST's were approximately forty-three per cent unloaded.\*\*\* This included three (117, 118, 486) completely unloaded and five (20, 669, 698, 999, 1013) which had not yet commenced to unload. Actually this report was slightly in error in that (a) LST 270 had completed unloading prior to 1336 and was now being employed as a lighter for the CAMBRIA and the ALCYONE,\*\*\*\* and (b) LST 1024 also had not as yet commenced unloading.

At 1800 he released four transports (BOLIVAR, DOYEN, MONROVIA, WAR HAWK) which had completed unloading to join TU 79.14.1 for retirement to Hollandia in accordance with CTF 79 dispatches 210538 and 210742, and ten minutes later he added one more transport (COMET).\*\*\*\*\* At 1930 these transports joined nine transports and two LSD's from TG 79.1 to form TU 79.14.1 and stood out of Leyte Gulf.

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\* Action Report CTU 79.6.1 (COMLSTFLOT 3), Assault and Occupation of Leyte, Serial 0210-44, November 7th, 1944.

\*\* CTG 79.2 Dispatch 210726 October 1944 to CTF 79.

\*\*\* CTU 79.6.1 Mailgram 210800 October 1944 to CTG's 79.2, 79.4; also Action Report CTU 79.6.1, Assault and Occupation of Leyte, Philippine Islands, Serial 0210-44, November 7th, 1944, Part II, Enclosure (B).

\*\*\*\* War Diary LST 270, October 21st, 1944.

\*\*\*\*\* Action Report CTG 79.4, Leyte Operation, Serial 0126, October 28th, 1944.

At 1959 the WAR HAWK, while standing out in the low visibility caused by smoke cover over the Southern Transport Area, collided with the TENNESSEE, causing minor damage to both ships and causing a slight delay in the WAR HAWK departure.

By 2100 TRANSDIV TEN (CLAY, ARTHUR MIDDLETON, BAXTER, GEORGE F. ELLIOTT, WILLIAM P. BIDDLE, CAPRICORNUS, CATSKILL) was ten per cent unloaded and the remaining ships of TRANSDIV's EIGHTEEN (CAMBRIA, FREDERICK FUNSTON, ALCYONE) and TWENTY-EIGHT (SHERIDAN, ALMAACK, AURIGA) were about eighty per cent unloaded.\* Also the SIXTH Army Floating Reserve (381st Regimental Combat Team) was still embarked in TRANSDIV TEN awaiting to be landed when called forward by C.G. SIXTH Army.

For fire support and screening duties he had remaining with him fourteen destroyers.

Nothing further of importance happened during this day.

(c) Operations of CTU 77.2.2 (Commander Fire Support Unit SOUTH), October 21st.

CTU 77.2.2, with the PENNSYLVANIA, CALIFORNIA, LOUISVILLE, MINNEAPOLIS, PORTLAND, DENVER, COLUMBIA, ROBINSON, CLAXTON and ALBERT W. GRANT from his command, and the BLACK, ABBOT, WALKER, BRAINE, GANSEVOORT and HALE from TG 79.11, was standing by for fire support missions. The remainder of his ships were: (a) screening--NEWCOMB, LEUTZE, BENNION, HEYWOOD L. EDWARDS, HALFORD, BRYANT, THORN, and WELLES;\*\* or (b) on other missions--(1) the TENNESSEE was lying to in the Southern Transport Area acting as anti-aircraft screen,\*\*\* and (2) the RICHARD P. LEARY was assisting the HONOLULU by transporting casualties to the RIXEY (APH-3).\*\*

At 0625 the CALIFORNIA and SAN CARLOS each claimed shooting down a Japanese Type ONE land attack plane during an air raid. However, it seems likely that this was one and the same plane.\*\*\*\*

At 0910 CTU 77.2.2 decided to clarify his understanding of CTF 79's operation plan as to who was assigned the responsibility for assigning the fire support and harassing fire ships since (a) the PENNSYLVANIA and MINNEAPOLIS had been assigned to fire support and harassing missions throughout the night on direct orders from attack group commanders without any reference to him whatsoever, and (b) because of the tactical situation, he must know their locations. He therefore queried CTF 79 in

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\* Action Report CTG 79.4, Leyte Operation, Serial 0126, October 28th, 1944.

\*\* Deck Logs of Destroyers concerned, October 21st, 1944.

\*\*\* War Diary TENNESSEE, October 21st, 1944.

\*\*\*\* Action Report CTG 77.2 (COMCRUDIV 4). Bombardment and Capture of Leyte Island, Philippine Islands, October 16th - 24th, 1944, Serial 00147, November 5th, 1944.



regard to the matter saying, in part, that it was his understanding that, on D-day and D+1 day, he was to assign the harassing ships as requested by the attack group commanders.\*

At 1452 he designated the RICHARD P. LEARY to accompany COMCRUDIV NINE in the HONOLULU to Manus in accordance with CTF 77's orders.\*\*

Meanwhile, he had been studying the fuel reports of his ships and quickly learned that the fuel was low, so low in fact that the three battleships and fifteen destroyers had but forty to sixty per cent fuel remaining. Since this required an early refueling, at 1440 he notified CTF 79 of his fueling situation and recommended a plan for fueling from TU 77.7.1 in Area ACCIPITER on the following day. He knew that TU 77.7.1 should be in that area on that day if the basic plan was followed.\*\*\*

At 1641 he received, from CTF 79, a TBS voice radio reply to his 0910 query above and (a) was informed that (1) the PENNSYLVANIA and MINNEAPOLIS had been assigned night missions on the NGF (naval gunfire control) net, (2) the RICHARD P. LEARY, ALBERT W. GRANT, THORN, CLAXTON, ROBINSON and CHARLES J. BADGER would report to him for screen that night, and (3) the ISHERWOOD, CHAUNCEY and HARADEN were assigned to Attack Group ABLE (CTG 79.1) and KIDD, TWIGGS and HALLIGAN were assigned to Attack Group BAKER (CTG 79.2), and (b) was directed (1) to assign one battleship (BB) and one heavy cruiser (CA) or light cruiser (CL) to each group, (2) to cancel the harassing mission for that night, and (c) was advised that (1) the assignments above would substitute for those in paragraph thirteen, Annex DOG, of CTF 79's Attack Plan No. A304-44, and (2) the balance of the Fire Support (FS) ships were to operate under him.\*\*\*\*

In accordance with these orders he seems to have assigned the CALIFORNIA and DENVER to CTG 79.1, and the TENNESSEE and MINNEAPOLIS to CTG 79.2, although the evidence thereon is not conclusive.

At 1745 he learned that CTF 79 had directed COMDESDIV NINETY-SIX, in the BLACK, with the BRAINE, WALKER, ABBOT, GANSEVOORT, MANLEY, TALBOT, SANDS, GOLDSBOROUGH and KANE, to report to CTU 79.14.1 (COMTRANSDIV TWENTY-EIGHT) for duty as screens for the retiring transports, and that the task unit so formed was to retire at 1800 that day.\*\*\*\*\*

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\* CTU 77.2.2 Visual Dispatch 210010, October 1944 to CTF 79, info CTG 79.1.

\*\* War Diary COMDESRON 56, October 21st, 1944; War Diary RICHARD P. LEARY, October 21st, 1944; Action Report CTG 77.2 (COMCRUDIV 4), Bombardment and Capture of Leyte, Philippine Islands, October 16th - 24th, 1944, Serial 00147, November 5th, 1944.

\*\*\* CTU 77.2.2 Visual Dispatch 210540 October 1944 to CTF 79.

\*\*\*\* CTF 79 TBS Voice Radio Message 210713 October 1944 to CTG 77.2.

\*\*\*\*\* CTF 79 Dispatch 210538 October 1944 to CTG's 79.1, 79.2 and COMDESDIV 96.

At 1808 he received Harbor Defense Plan Number ONE and made plans accordingly,\* but appears to have waited for CTF 79 to readjust his plans and make arrangements for relieving his ships from duties assigned (screening and FS duties).

At 1848 he received a dispatch from CTF 79 approving the fueling plan recommended in his 210540, providing not less than two cruisers and two destroyers were available in the objective area for each of the two groups (TG 79.1 and TG 79.2).\*\*

At 1938 he learned that the RICHARD P. LEARY, which was escorting TG 70.6 (HONOLULU, AUSTRALIA, WARRAMUNGA and RICHARD P. LEARY), would, upon being relieved by the GEORGE E. BADGER, RATHBURNE and CLEMSON, return to his command.\*\*\*

At 2012 he learned that the TENNESSEE and the WAR HAWK (AP 168) had been in a collision, but that the damage to both had been slight with no personnel casualties on either ship.\*\*\*\*

At 2055, as CTG 77.2, he received orders from CTF 79 to leave four destroyers in the fire support area and to carry out covering mission ordered by CTF 77.\*\*\*\*\* At this point he once again operated as CTG 77.2 and his further actions are discussed under "Operations of CTG 77.2, October 21st."

(3) Operations of CTG 77.2 (Bombardment and Fire Support Group), October 21st.

CTG 77.2 throughout this day was (as CTU 77.2.2) engaged in conducting operations in support of the operations of TG's 79.1 and 79.2, and had little responsibility as CTG 77.2. However, commencing at 1808, he began receiving orders as CTG 77.2. At this time he received CTF 77's dispatch 210641, which directed, in part, that (a) he withdraw TG 77.2 from the transport and FS areas and proceed to the southern area of Leyte Gulf, (b) during darkness he (1) be underway and (2) defend the gulf against the entry of hostile surface forces from either the eastern or southern entrance to Surigao Strait, (c) be prepared to sortie from the gulf to attack any enemy forces which were definitely located, and (d) return his units to their respective FS areas during daylight and render close FS on call as directed by CTF's 78 and 79.\*\*\*\*\* He now commenced estimating the situation to determine how best to accomplish the above directive.

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\* CTF 77 Dispatch 210641 October 1944 to CTF's 78, 79, CTG's 77.2, 77.3.  
 \*\* CTF 79 Dispatch 210828 October 1944 to CTU 77.2.2, info CTG's 79.1 and 79.2.  
 \*\*\* CTF 79 Dispatch 210900 October 1944 to COMCRUDIV 9, info COMDESRON 56.  
 \*\*\*\* Action Report CTG 77.2 (COMCRUDIV 4), Bombardment and Capture of Leyte Island, Philippine Islands, October 16th - 24th, 1944, Serial 00147, November 5th, 1944.  
 \*\*\*\*\* CTF 77 Dispatch 210641 October 1944 to CTF's 78, 79, CTG's 77.2, 77.3.



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At 1703 he directed COMBATDIV TWO, presumably by voice radio, to (a) have his three battleships, when not on firing missions, lie to on an east - west line in general vicinity Latitude 10°-46'N (off Abuyog) and within area DRUM, and (b) be prepared on signal in case of enemy Tokyo Express raids by fast surface forces to form one eight on the TENNESSEE distance 1000 yards on an easterly course and to patrol at five knots to Longitude 125°-15'E, at which point he was to reverse by turn signal.\*

THIS MESSAGE IS QUOTED IN FULL HERE BECAUSE IT SHOWS THAT (A) THE GENERAL CHARACTERISTICS OF THE BATTLE PLAN LATER EMPLOYED AT THE BATTLE OF SURIGAO STRAIT—I.E., HAVING SHIPS AT FIVE KNOTS ON AN EAST - WEST COURSE WITHIN LIMITING LONGITUDES—HAD ALREADY BEEN DETERMINED BY CTG 77.2, AND (B) CTG 77.2 WAS EXPECTING A POSSIBLE RAID BY FAST SURFACE FORCES RATHER THAN THE FLEET ACTION WHICH LATER DEVELOPED.

At 2055 he received orders from CTF 79 to (a) leave four destroyers in the FS area, and (b) carry out the covering mission assigned by CTF 77.\*\* He now completed his estimate and decided that he would take (a) BATDIV TWO (TENNESSEE, PENNSYLVANIA and CALIFORNIA) and would leave BATDIV's THREE (MISSISSIPPI) and FOUR (WEST VIRGINIA and MARYLAND) with their screen (AULICK, CONY, SIGOURNEY) in the FS area with orders to join him if so directed, (b) CRUDIV FOUR (LOUISVILLE, MINNEAPOLIS, PORTLAND) and CRUDIV TWELVE (DENVER, COLUMBIA)—the damaged HONOLULU had departed for Manus—and (c) the remaining destroyers of DESRON FIFTY-SIX (NEWCOMB, LEUTZE, BENNION, HEYWOOD L. EDWARDS, HALFORD, ROBINSON, ALBERT W. GRANT, BRYANT, CLAXTON, THORN and WELLES).\*\* The ROSS had been disabled by mines and the RICHARD P. LEARY had departed for Manus.

It will be noted that in this decision he included within TG 77.2 all of the ships assigned thereto with the exception of TU 77.2.1 (three battleships and three destroyers) which was operating with CTF 78. While this was not in full accord with his basic orders, his decision to leave TU 77.2.1 to operate independently seems sound for (a) his orders from CTF 79 (to form a covering group) were issued so late that it would have taken hours for TU 77.2.1 to rejoin him, and (b) TG 77.2, without TU 77.2.1, was stronger than any likely enemy.

At 2208 he received a dispatch from CTF 79 (a) requesting ships (presumably battleships) be assigned to call fire duty on the following day from vicinity Points PETER, NAN and GEORGE, and (b) assigning an ammunition allowance for each battleship.\*\*\*

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\* Action Report CALIFORNIA, Participation in Operations off Island of Leyte, October 19th - 24th, 1944, Serial 0025, November 8th, 1944.

\*\* Action Report CTG 77.2 (COMCRUDIV 4), Bombardment and Capture of Leyte Island, Philippine Islands, October 16th - 24th, 1944, Serial 00147, November 5th, 1944.

\*\*\* CTF 79 Voice Radio Message 212145/I October 1944 to CTG 77.2, info CTG's 79.1, 79.2, CALIFORNIA, TENNESSEE, PENNSYLVANIA.

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At about 2303 he formed his cruisers into cruising disposition and commenced patrolling on an east-west line off Tay Tay Point at speed of five knots.\*

At 2316 he issued orders to COMBATDIV's THREE and FOUR to standby to join his group if directed indicating that the rendezvous would be designated when further orders were issued.\*\*

(4) Operations of CTG 77.4 (Escort Carrier Group), October 21st.

CTG 77.4, with a total of 287 VF and 170 VT, continued to provide air cover and support over the objective area in accordance with his basic air plan.\*\*\* Air cover consisted of a daylight CAP of twenty-eight VF over the target area from 0615 until 1730; a dusk CAP of twelve VF from 1700 until 1820; and an ASP of two VT each across the southern part of Surigao Strait and the eastern entrances to Leyte Gulf (Plate VIII) from 0615 until 1730. Air support consisted of forty VF and fourteen VT on station over the target area from 0615 until 1730. In addition, an afternoon strike group consisting of twenty-six VF and eighteen VT was launched at 1330 by CTU 77.4.1 against Cebu.\*\*\*\*

The first target CAP of the day made a routine fighter sweep of Leyte airfields en route to their stations, and twelve VF of the first direct support group made antishipping and antimotor torpedo boat sweeps over Carigara Bay, San Pedro Bay, Camotes Sea, and Surigao Strait, with negative results.

Commencing at 0530 and ending at 1915 when the dusk CAP over the objective area was recovered, the three carrier task units of TG 77.4 flew a total of about 360 direct support group sorties, 132 target CAP sorties, and twenty target ASP sorties, plus forty-four attack sorties against Cebu.\*\*\*\*\*

The armament for the direct support and strike missions consisted generally of bombs, rockets and napalm, in addition to the normal loading of machine gun ammunition.

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- \* War Diary COMDESRON 56, October 21st, 1944.
  - \*\* CTG 77.2 Voice Radio Message 212316/I October 1944 to COMBATDIV's 3 and 4.
  - \*\*\* CTG 77.4 Operation Plan No. 2-44, Serial 00075, October 5th, 1944, Annex D.
  - \*\*\*\* Action Report CTU 77.4.1, Leyte Operation, October 12th - 29th, 1944, Serial 00104, November 8th, 1944.
  - \*\*\*\*\* CTG 77.4 Operation Plan No. 2-44, Serial 00075, October 5th, 1944; CTU 77.4.2 Operation Order No. 6-44, Serial 00018, October 9th, 1944; Action Report CTU 77.4.1, Leyte Operation, October 12th - 29th, 1944, Serial 00104, November 8th, 1944; Action Reports and War Diaries of CVE's in TG 77.4; also Aircraft Action Reports, October 21st, 1944, VC-3, VC-5, VC-21, VC-78, VC-81, CVEG-60, VT-26, VC-68, VF-26.



The weather in the sea operating area was cloudy, with northerly winds thirteen to eighteen knots, slight sea, intermittent showers in the afternoon, visibility about twelve miles except in showers, flying conditions average. Over the objective area the weather was good, with broken clouds at six thousand feet and visibility about fifteen miles in the morning, ceiling and visibility reducing to 3000 feet and about five miles in the later afternoon.\* Dawn was at 0517, sunrise at 0629, sunset at 1819 and evening twilight ended at 1929.

Direct air support missions over the northern and southern beach areas, in close cooperation with the gunfire support ships of CTG 77.2, knocked out a wide assortment of enemy positions and facilities ahead of the Allied troops and in the rear areas of the enemy. Particular emphasis was given to the neutralization of enemy mortar batteries on Catmon Hill and Libaranan Head as well as the interdiction of highway traffic to prevent enemy movement. In addition, eight single engine planes were reported as probably destroyed on Leyte airfields.\*\*

At 1022 CTG 77.4, who had been noting the harassing raids by small groups of aircraft, recommended to CTF 77 that, when the ground requirements permitted, he be authorized to make morning and afternoon sweeps in force over Cebu, Negros, Panay and northern Mindanao. He stated that (a) he felt that constant bombing of those areas would reduce the frequency of the harassing raids by small groups then being experienced, and (b) a prisoner on board the flagship said that the three planes which had attacked TG 77.4 on the preceding day, and had been shot down, were from Cebu.\*\*\*

This was an excellent recommendation for it was from the Cebu area in particular that the first Kamikaze attacks were being launched.

At approximately 1203 he received a request from CTF 77 to sweep northern Mindanao and western Visayan airfields with the primary objective being destruction of enemy aircraft. This was to be accomplished on a non-interference basis with scheduled air support operations.\*\*\*\*

He noted the similarity between this request and his own dispatch mentioned above and realized that these two dispatches had crossed, and that he and CTF 77 had arrived at approximately the same solution for the control of these harassing raids.

At about 1210 he received an order from CTF 77 to provide a target CAP of at least twelve fighters to be over the objective area at daybreak.\*\*\*\*\*

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- \* Action Report MANILA BAY, Operations in Support of the Occupation of Leyte, October 12th - 30th, 1944, Serial 0103, November 2nd, 1944; also Aircraft Action Reports VC-21, October 21st, 1944.
  - \*\* CTG 77.4 Dispatch 220123 October 1944 to CTF 77, info CTF's 78, 79, and all TGC's of TF 77.
  - \*\*\* CTG 77.4 Dispatch 210122 October 1944 to CTF 77.
  - \*\*\*\* CTF 77 Dispatch 201949 October 1944 to CTG 77.4, info COM3RDFLT, CTF's 78 and 79.
  - \*\*\*\*\* CTF 77 Dispatch 210055 October 1944 to CTG 77.4, info CTF's 78, 79 and CTG 77.2.

The strikes against Cebu which were made about 1530 reportedly destroyed between five and seven (the Japanese said there were six) carrier-type fighters at Lahug Field on Cebu as they were warming up their engines preparatory to taking off and destroyed or damaged seventeen additional planes.\* This differs in substance with CTG 77.4's report of the results of the day's operations in that the latter reported the planes warming up were located on Opon Field on nearby Mactan Island.\*\* Since (a) a Japanese postwar account even though not official,\*\*\* and (b) five separate aircraft action reports assert Cebu to be the location of these aircraft, CTG 77.4's report is believed to be in error. The claims by VF 26 (SANTEE) of seventeen additional aircraft destroyed or damaged\*\*\*\* which claims were accepted in general by CTG 77.4\*\* are largely discounted because of the likelihood that many or all of these aircraft were dummies or duds.

This day the target CAP was more effective in thwarting enemy air raids against the objective area, and shot down five enemy planes (two type three army fighters, one carrier-type fighter, one carrier-type attack plane, and one unidentified single seater).\*\* Unfortunately, it did not prevent an enemy carrier-type bomber from crashing into the bridge of the AUSTRALIA and inflicting severe enough damage to cause her retirement from the objective area.

Enemy air attacks that penetrated the objective area consisted of the following:

(1) At about 0515 LST 615 claimed to have shot down over the Southern Beach area an enemy two-engine plane, believed to have been an army-type heavy bomber;\*\*\*\*\*

(2) At 0558 the BREEZE, which was anchored off Dulag just north of the Southern Transport Area, shot down an enemy torpedo bomber;\*\*\*\*\*

(3) At about 0606 an enemy carrier-type bomber, under fire from many ships, crashed into the bridge and superstructure of the AUSTRALIA, causing serious damage and a number of personnel casualties;\*\*\*\*\*

(4) At 0624 the CALIFORNIA and SAN CARLOS collaborated in shooting down an enemy type-one land attack plane;\*\*\*\*\*

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\* Aircraft Action Reports VF 26, VF 35, VT 26, VT 37 and VC 60, October 21st, 1944.

\*\* CTG 77.4 Dispatch 220123 October 1944 to CTF 77, info CTF's 78 and 79 and all TGC's of TF 77.

\*\*\* Captain Rikihei Inoguchi, ex-IJN and Commander Kadashi Nakajima ex-IJN, "The Kamikaze Attack Corps", Naval Institute Proceedings No. 79, No. 9 (September 1953) Page 940.

\*\*\*\* Aircraft Action Report No. 16, VF 26, October 21st, 1944.

\*\*\*\*\* Action Report CTU 79.6.1, Assault and Occupation of Leyte, Serial 0210-44, November 7th, 1944.

\*\*\*\*\* Action Report BREEZE, Serial 041, December 5th, 1944.

\*\*\*\*\* War Diary MISSISSIPPI, October 21st, 1944; also AUSTRALIA Dispatch 202149 October 1944 to CTF 78, info CTG 77.3.

\*\*\*\*\* War Diary CALIFORNIA, October 21st, 1944; also SAN CARLOS Dispatch 202124 October 1944 to CTG 77.2.



(5) At about 0631, HUMPHREYS (APD-12), LST 917 and LSM's 24, 29, 136 off the southern beaches, cooperated in shooting down a two-engine land bomber, all being credited with an "assist";\*

(6) At 0845 two type-three army fighters flew fast and low over the Southern Transport Area, dropped two bombs without inflicting any damage, and then escaped to the west.\*\*

Available Japanese records in regard to their air operations, damage and losses, on this day stated that (a) seventeen army planes attacked Allied ships in Leyte Gulf, of which six planes failed to return,\*\*\* and (b) between 0735 and 1530 eighty Allied carrier fighters (F6F's), thirty carrier bombers (SBD's), and six army medium bombers (B25's) strafed and bombed Cebu and Mactan, hitting the airfields with several bombs and setting afire six carrier-type fighters.\*\*\*\*

As pointed out under "Operations of Commander FIFTH Base Air Force, October 21st", these six carrier-type planes were Kamikaze planes which were about to take off on a crash (suicide) attack against Allied carriers when they were struck and destroyed by Allied fighters.\*\*\*\* Since these fighters check closely in number with the seven carrier-type fighters claimed destroyed by TG 77.4, it seems likely that TG 77.4 can be so credited.

At 1514 he received a dispatch which had been originated by CINCPAC to COMSOWESPAC. In this dispatch CINCPAC (a) stated that it was necessary to augment the destroyers of TF 38, and (b) requested that DESRON FORTY-SEVEN be released about October 25th with orders to report (at Ulithi) to COMTHIRDFLT.\*\*\*\*\*

Needless to say, this dispatch undoubtedly alarmed him because DESRON FORTY-SEVEN destroyers were the only destroyers in the screens of his carrier task units and their detachment would reduce his screens to destroyer escorts only. Since his operation areas were in easy range of Japanese airfields, the necessity to maintain the strongest antiaircraft defense possible--to say nothing of antisubmarine defense--was of primary

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- \* Action Report CTU 79.6.1 (COMLSTFLOT 3), Assault and Occupation of Leyte, Serial 0210-44, November 7th, 1944; War Diary HUMPHREYS, October 21st, 1944.
  - \*\* War Diaries CHARLES J. BADGER, CALIFORNIA, LOUISVILLE, October 21st, 1944.
  - \*\*\* Daily Record of the War Situation, GHQ, FEC, Special Historical Collection, Supporting Documents to General of the Army Douglas MacArthur's Historical Report on Allied Operations Southwest Pacific Area (Item 4, Footlocker 10 of 10, SWPA Series, Volume II).
  - \*\*\*\* War Diary 61ST Air Flotilla, October 1944, WDC Document 161643, NA 12260.
  - \*\*\*\*\* COM7THFLT Dispatch 210341 October 1944 to CTF 77, info CTF's 78, 79, CTG 77.4 (Re-encypherment of CINCPAC Dispatch 162159 October 1944 to COMSOWESPAC, info COM3RDFLT and COM7THFLT).

importance. However, he seems to have expected CTF 77 to take some positive action in this matter for he made no comments thereon to that commander on this day.

From dawn until sunset TG 77.4 flew a CAP of eight VF and an ASP of four VT over TU 77.4.1, and a CAP of four VF and an ASP of four VT each over TU's 77.4.2 and 77.4.3. There were no enemy attacks although an enemy snoopers showing running lights flew around TU 77.4.1 from 1830 until 2045 dropping "window",\* but CTG 77.4 wisely did not open fire and thereby reveal his position.\*\*

Total aircraft losses for the day consisted of one VT from the MANILA BAY on an artillery spotting mission, shot down at about 1000 by friendly units (both army and navy) in the vicinity of the southern beaches (a) due to poor recognition, and (b) to unannounced offensive maneuvers by the pilot. Fortunately, all occupants were rescued.\*\*\* Thus, at the end of the day, CTG 77.4 had remaining 287 VF and 169 VT.

After landing the dusk CAP, the three task units of TG 77.4 withdrew to their night retirement areas (Diagram C).

(5) Operations of CTG 77.5 (Minesweeping and Hydrographic Group), October 21st.

On this day intensive exploratory sweeps were conducted in Areas FLOAT, CUTTER, PARAVANE, PLUMMET and OTTER\*\*\*\* (Plate IV) by the YMS's of Sweep Units FOUR through SEVEN. No mines were found in these areas.\*\*\*\*\*

Sweep Unit ONE was not employed in minesweeping on this day, but instead generally remained at anchor in the Southern Transport Area. As required, several of the ships got underway, proceeded alongside designated cargo ships of TF 79 for fueling, and then returned to their assigned anchorage areas. Hence this unit swept no mines on this day and in fact swept no more mines after D-day.\*\*\*\*\*

In addition the AM's continued operations in Area SWEEP to ensure that the area was cleared of mines.\*\*\*\*\*

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\* "Window" is the name for strips of frequency cut metal foil, wire or bars, usually dropped from planes or expelled from shells or rockets as a radar countermeasure. Dictionary of United States Military Terms for Joint Usage, OPNAVINST 3030.1A, May 1955.

\*\* Action Report CTG 77.4, Leyte Operation, October 12th - 29th, 1944, Serial 00104, November 8th, 1944.

\*\*\* Action Report CTG 79.1, Participation in Amphibious Operations for the Capture of Leyte Gulf, Serial 00454, October 26th, 1944.

\*\*\*\* Action Report CTG 77.5 (COMMINRON 2), Minesweeping Operations in Surigao Strait and Leyte Gulf, Serial 0111, October 29th, 1944.

\*\*\*\*\* War Diaries Ships concerned, October 21st, 1944.



Sweep Units TWO and THREE (MINDIV's FOURTEEN and THIRTEEN respectively\*) and MINDIV THIRTY-FOUR were engaged in these clearance sweeps of Area SWEEP.\*\*

A total of forty moored chemical-horn variety mines were reported swept all of which were in Area SWEEP (Main ship channel),\*\*\* giving a cumulative total for the operations of 267 mines (227 for the 17th - 20th inclusive plus the above forty). Later CTG 77.5 indicated that an additional twelve mines of similar type, previously unreported, had been swept on this day.\*\*\*\* This increased the reported total to date to 279 mines. It appears that sixty-three mines were actually swept this date, giving an actual cumulative total of 285 mines.

Since these minesweeping operations, vitally important though they were, had by the end of this day removed the bulk of the Japanese mine menace, they will not be further treated in this analysis except for the following summary:

(a) Minesweeping operations by AM's and YMS's were continued through October 23rd. The former continued to sweep Area SWEEP; the latter the areas above enumerated. All mines swept on these later days were of the moored chemical-horn variety.

(b) The numbers swept on the succeeding days of the operation with the cumulative total were as follows:

	<u>Day's Sweep</u>		<u>Cumulative Total</u>	
	<u>Reported by</u> <u>CTG 77.5</u>	<u>Actual from</u> <u>Ship Reports</u>	<u>Reported by</u> <u>CTG 77.5</u>	<u>Actual from</u> <u>Ship Reports</u>
October 22nd	<u>20</u>	<u>16</u>	<u>290</u>	<u>301</u>
October 23rd	<u>(16)*****</u>	<u>1</u>	<u>306*</u>	<u>302</u>

(c) The figure of 306 mines was the number given by CTG 77.5 in his action report as the total number of mines swept.

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\* Action Report CTG 77.5 (COMMINRON 2), Minesweeping Operations in Surigao Strait and Leyte Gulf, Serial 0111, October 29th, 1944.  
 \*\* War Diaries Ships concerned, October 21st, 1944.  
 \*\*\* CTG 77.5 Dispatch 211559 October 1944 to CTF 77.  
 \*\*\*\* CTG 77.5 Dispatch 220830 October 1944 to CTF 77.  
 \*\*\*\*\* An estimated figure based on the difference between CTG 77.5's totals for October 22nd and 23rd.

## (6) Operations of CTG 70.1 (Motor Torpedo Boats), October 21st.

At the beginning of the day CTG 70.1, in OYSTER BAY, with WACHAPREAGUE, WILLOUGHBY, HALF MOON, MTBRONS SEVEN, TWELVE, TWENTY-ONE, THIRTY-THREE, and five PT's of MTBRON THIRTY-SIX, plus one navy aircraft rescue boat and an army QS boat, was bearing 110°(T), distant seventy miles from the entrance to Leyte Gulf, proceeding along route SHEARWATER at nine knots.\*

At 0800 he entered Leyte Gulf.\*\*

Sometime between 0800 and 1145 he detached the HALF MOON to report for duty to CTG 73.7 (Commander Advanced Group--Fleet Air Wing TEN) in SAN CARLOS.\*\*\*

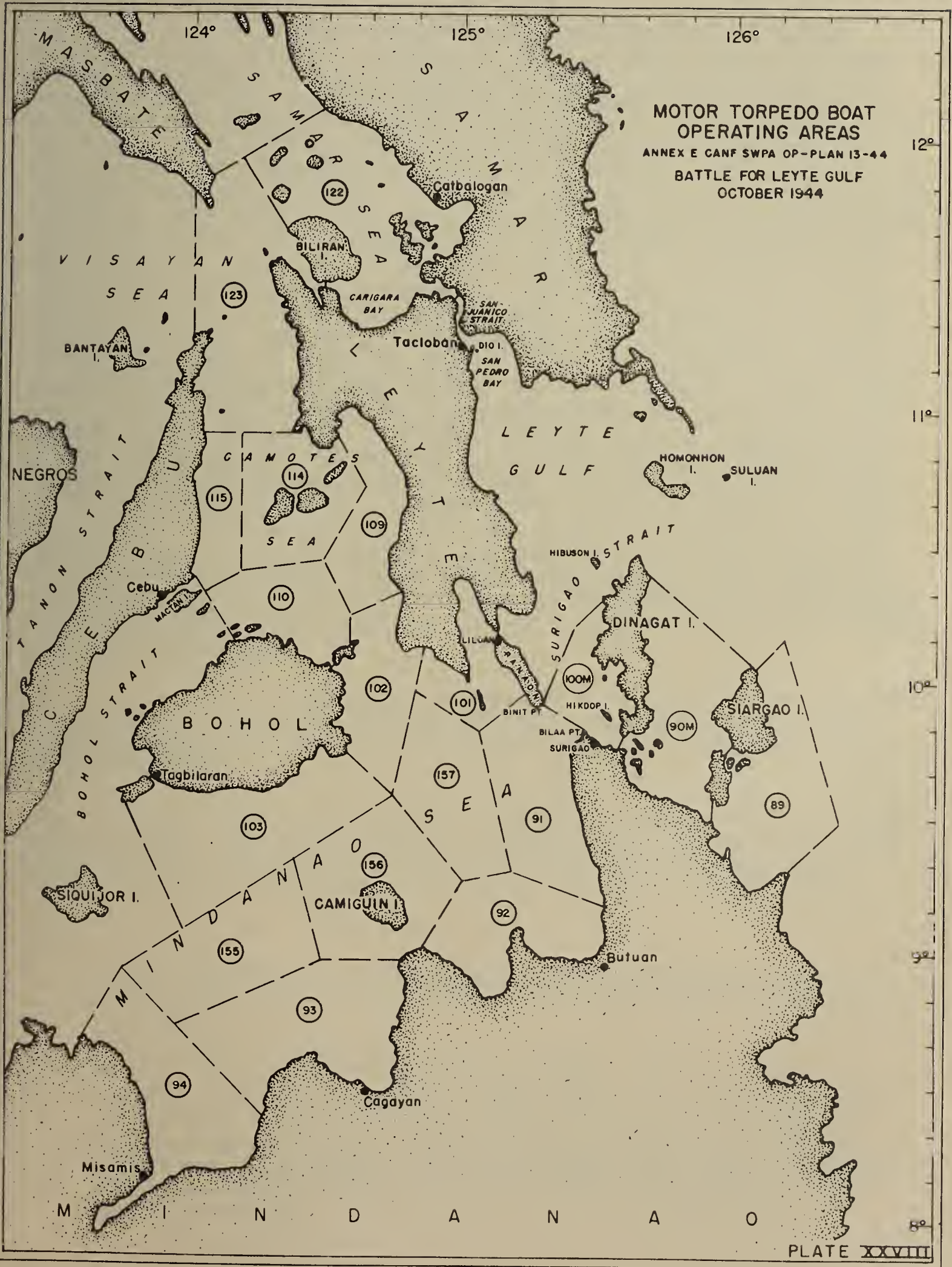
At 1200, in accordance with instructions from CTF 78, he anchored his task group in the PT boat dispersal area off Dio Island (to the eastward of Tacloban), San Pedro Bay.\*\*\*\*

On arrival he reported to CTF 77 for duty. At 1339 that commander advised CAAF SOWESPAC and C.G. FIFTH Air Force that (a) Allied PT boats would commence operations that evening in the southern entrances to San Juanico Strait and Surigao Strait, and the northeastern portion of Mindanao Sea, (b) CTG 70.1 would advise them direct of PT boat operations contemplated in CAAF SOWESPAC's operating area west of the eastern Philippines.\*\*\*\*\*

During the late afternoon CTG 70.1 directed ten MTB's to deploy from their tenders for initial operations in San Pedro Bay in accordance with CTF 77 basic instructions which prescribed that PT operations would commence the night of D+1 day in PT operating areas 91, 100M and 101 (Plate XXVIII).\*\*\*\*\* He had already advised all interested commands that for the night of October 21st - 22nd he would station two pairs of MTB's in lower Surigao Strait (Area 100M); one pair in the Mindanao Sea off the northern tip of Mindanao (Area 91); one pair off the west coast of Panaon (Area 101); and one pair off the southern entrance to San Juanico Strait, and gave the radio call of the senior boat of each pair.\*\*\*\*\*

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- \* War Diaries OYSTER BAY, WACHAPREAGUE and WILLOUGHBY, October 20th and 21st, 1944.
  - \*\* War Diary OYSTER BAY, October 21st, 1944.
  - \*\*\* War Diary HALF MOON, October 21st, 1944.
  - \*\*\*\* War Diaries CTG 70.1 and MTBRON 33, October 21st, 1944; also CTF 77 Visual Dispatch 210250 October 1944 to CTG 70.1.
  - \*\*\*\*\* CTF 77 Dispatch 210439 October 1944 to CAAF SOWESPAC and C.G. 5TH Air Force.
  - \*\*\*\*\* CANF SOWESPAC Operation Plan No. 13-44, Serial 00022A, September 26th, 1944, Appendix 5 to Annex E.
  - \*\*\*\*\* CTG 70.1 Dispatch 171257 October 1944 to CTF's 77, 78, 79, and all interested in MTB Operations.









THE ORIGINAL OBJECTIVE ASSIGNED THESE MTB'S IS NOWHERE STATED IN THE BASIC ORDERS. HOWEVER, IT SEEMS (AS SHOWN LATER IN THE GENERAL PLAN PARAGRAPH) TO HAVE BEEN MORE OF A DESTRUCTION OBJECTIVE THAN A PROTECTION OBJECTIVE, ALTHOUGH THERE ARE INDICATIONS THAT THESE MTB'S WERE ALSO ORIGINALLY ASSIGNED A PROTECTION OBJECTIVE; I.E., THE DISCOVERY OF ENEMY MTB'S AND SUBMARINES ATTEMPTING TO ENTER THE GULF. (SINCE THE MTB'S HAD NO SOUND GEAR, SUBMARINES COULD ONLY BE DISCOVERED ON THE SURFACE.) HOWEVER, SINCE THERE HAD BEEN A NUMBER OF DISPATCHES (NOTABLY BY COMTHIRDFLT) CONCERNING TOKYO EXPRESS OPERATIONS, IT SEEMS LIKELY THAT AN ADDITIONAL PROTECTION OBJECTIVE; I.E., THE PREVENTION OF AN UNDETECTED APPROACH OF JAPANESE FORCES INTO LEYTE GULF, WAS ASSIGNED THESE MTB'S ON THIS DATE, WHICH OBJECTIVE WAS GIVEN PRIMARY IMPORTANCE. THIS VIEW WAS SUPPORTED (A) TO A DEGREE BY CTG 79.11, WHO, IN HIS ACTION REPORT, STATED THAT HIS UNITS WERE BEING REMOVED FROM LOWER SURIGAO STRAIT BECAUSE THE "PT BOATS HAD ARRIVED TO TAKE OVER PATROL OF THE LOWER STRAIT,"\* (B) BY CTF 77'S ACTION AT 1541 IN MAKING EFFECTIVE HARBOR DEFENSE PLAN NO. ONE, WHICH DIRECTED, IN PART, THAT TG 77.2 WAS TO WITHDRAW FROM THE TRANSPORT AND FIRE SUPPORT AREAS AND WAS TO PROCEED TO THE SOUTHERN AREA OF LEYTE GULF WHERE IT WAS TO DEFEND THE GULF DURING DARKNESS AGAINST THE ENTRY OF HOSTILE SURFACE FORCES FROM EITHER THE EASTERN OR SOUTHERN ENTRANCE TO SURIGAO STRAIT,\*\* AND (C) (IN 1955) BY CTG 70.1, WHO STATED IN REPLY TO A QUERY THEREON,\*\*\* "YOUR DIAGNOSIS IS CORRECT-- THE OBJECTIVE OF THE BOATS THE FIRST NIGHT OR TWO WAS TO PREVENT THE UNDETECTED APPROACH OF JAPANESE FORCES (INCLUDING MOTOR BARGES AND SMALL CRAFT) INTO LEYTE GULF VIA SURIGAO STRAIT OR SAN JUANICO STRAIT. THIS OBJECTIVE WAS ASSIGNED EITHER BY SEPARATE DISPATCH FROM COMSEVENTHFLT OR BY CONFERENCE AT HOLLANDIA PRIOR TO THE OPERATION. IT WAS PASSED ON TO THE PT'S BY CONFERENCE AND BRIEFING".\*\*\*\*

This objective was in support of the further effect desired; i.e., the support objective assigned by CTG 70.1 in paragraph "two" (the general plan paragraph for the entire PT boat command) of his basic orders wherein he stated:

"This task group will support the ground forces in the occupation of Leyte, Philippine Islands by carrying out offensive patrols along the enemy-held coast, seeking out and destroying enemy shipping, barge traffic and shore installations. Boats will operate during the initial

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\* Action Report CTG 79.11 (COMDESRON 54), Attack on Leyte Island, Central Philippines, October 20th - 26th, 1944, Serial 059, November 12th, 1944.

\*\* CTF 77 Dispatch 210641 October 1944 to CTF's 78 and 79, CTG's 77.2 and 77.3, info all TFC's and TGC's of 7THFLT.

\*\*\* Commodore R. W. Bates, USN(Ret), Head, World War II Battle Evaluation Group, Naval War College, letter of December 15th, 1955 to Captain S.S. Bowling, USN, who, at the Battle for Leyte Gulf, was CTG 70.1.

\*\*\*\* Captain S.S. Bowling, USN, letter of December 27th, 1955, to Commodore R.W. Bates, USN(Ret), Head, World War II Battle Evaluation Group, Naval War College.



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operations entirely from tenders and floating equipment. When the PT advance base is sufficiently established, boats will operate from the base also."\*

The disposition of the MTB's (two) off San Juanico Strait appears to have been sound, but CTF 77's disposition of the MTB's (eight) off the southern approaches to Surigao Strait appears unsound if the "prevention of an undetected approach" objective, either of large or small craft, was to be accomplished. This seems so for, if it was desirable to limit the number of boats on patrol the first night or two\* (apparently to ten boats), it was important so to station the remaining eight boats that the objective could be accomplished without fail.

This was particularly so since the five screening destroyers which had been occupying Screening Stations Nos. 27, 28, 29, 30, and 31 (Plate VIII) in lower Surigao Strait had been ordered by CTF 79 at 1500 to return to their original Screening Stations Nos. 3, 4, 5, 6, 7\*\* in upper Surigao Strait, thereby leaving the lower strait wide open. As the distance between the latter screening stations and the entrance to Surigao Strait is about thirty-five miles, the necessity for closing the lower entrance to Surigao Strait becomes apparent. A contact on approaching enemy ships here by motor torpedo boats would provide about two hours advance notice to CTF 77 in the gulf.

BASED ON THIS THOUGHT, DOES IT NOT SEEM THAT IT WOULD HAVE BEEN MORE CORRECT HAD CTF 77 STATIONED (A) SIX OF THE EIGHT MTB'S IN SURIGAO STRAIT BETWEEN BINIT POINT (PANAON ISLAND) AND BILAA POINT (MINDANAO ISLAND), AND (B) TWO, RATHER THAN FOUR, MTB'S BETWEEN BILAA POINT AND HIKDOP ISLAND, AND TO HAVE AVOIDED THE EMPLOYMENT OF THE OPERATING AREAS IN THIS PARTICULAR CASE?

The reasons for limiting the number of MTB's on patrol the first night or so were: (a) the boats, which were not built or manned for sustained cruising, had just completed a two-day trip from Kossol Roads, Palau, under their own power which required rest for the crews and voyage repairs; (b) it was necessary to conserve (1) fuel (the only sure source of gas the first few days was the limited supply in the tenders), (2) the boats, until the drydocks had not only been positioned but had been put into operation (this was so because, otherwise, extensive shaft or hull repairs could not be accomplished)\*\*\* and the drydocks were not due to arrive until D+5.\*

Actually, of the ten MTB's ordered to patrol this night, only four took station as directed; i.e., the pair (PT's 524 and 525) covering

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\* CTG 70.1 Operations Plan No; 2-44, October 5th, 1944.

\*\* Action Report CTG 79.11 (COMDESRON 54), Attack on Leyte Island, Central Philippines, October 20th - 26th, 1944, Serial 059, November 12th, 1944.

\*\*\* Captain S.S. Bowling, USN, letter of December 27th, 1955, to Commodore R.W. Bates, USN(Ret), Head, World War II Battle Evaluation Group, Naval War College.



San Juanico Strait and the pair (PT's 129 and 492) in Area 100M.\* This supports the statement of CTG 70.1 above that motor torpedo boats, after a long cruise, are likely to require voyage repairs before commencing operations.

It seems probable that the two MTB's in Area 100M moved south to cover the southern entrance to Surigao Strait for COMMTBRON SEVEN stated in his War Diary that "PT's 129 and 492 patrolled the southern entrance to Surigao Strait". By this, it is assumed that he meant that his boats, in order to accomplish the "prevention of an undetected approach" objective, had automatically taken station on a line somewhere between Binit Point and Bilaa Point.

IF THIS ASSUMPTION IS CORRECT, THE ACTION OF THE COMMANDER OF THESE MTB'S WAS ALSO CORRECT FOR, BY CHANGING HIS OWN ORDERS, HE WAS NOT ONLY IN CONSONANCE WITH HIS COMMANDER'S PLAN BUT WAS CLEARLY BETTER ABLE TO ACCOMPLISH HIS COMMANDER'S OBJECTIVE.

SUCH MODIFICATION BY A COMMANDER OF HIS BASIC ORDERS IS SOUND PROCEDURE WHEN THAT COMMANDER DOES NOT HAVE TIME TO COMMUNICATE WITH THE PROPER AUTHORITY. CERTAINLY, THE OYSTER BAY WAS WELL BEYOND THE RANGE OF VOICE RADIO AND TIME WAS NOT AVAILABLE TO AWAIT THE TRANSMITTAL OF RADIO DISPATCHES. THE ABILITY OF A COMMANDER TO RECOGNIZE THAT THE SITUATION NOW PRESENTS A NEW PROBLEM AND THE WILLINGNESS OF THAT COMMANDER TO TAKE ACTION THEREON TO PRESERVE THE INTEGRITY OF THE BASIC PLAN IS A PRIME QUALIFICATION FOR COMMAND.

At 2028 he advised CTF 77 and all interested in MTB operations of his PT intentions for the night of October 22nd - 23rd.\*\* Since, in this message, he indicated that he had only ordered six MTB's to patrol whereas for the first night's operation he had anticipated his availability and had ordered ten MTB's on patrol stations, it is evident that his required voyage repairs were more extensive than he had expected and he had reduced his patrols accordingly. His present intentions were for his MTB's to patrol in pairs in areas 100M and 101 and across the San Pedro Bay entrance to San Juanico Straits the night of October 22nd - 23rd.

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\* War Diaries of MTB Squadrons 7, 12, 21, 33 and 36, October 31st, 1944.

\*\* CTG 70.1 Dispatch 211128 October 1944 to TF's 77, 78, 79, CTG 70.1 Base Ship, info all interested in MTB operations.

## (b) Operations of CTF 71 (Submarines, West Australia), October 21st.

CTF 71, from his headquarters at Perth, watched the developing situation. He knew, of course, that, in view of the Allied landing operations on Leyte of the previous day, enemy counteroperations could be expected but, from the somewhat casual manner with which he handled his submarines (as pointed out under "Operations of CTF 71, October 20th"), it is doubtful if he expected counteraction in strength. However, since (a) certain of his submarines had been specifically directed to report contacts on enemy combatant ships as soon as possible, (b) he clearly felt from this that all of his submarines would do likewise, and (c) if there was to be any counteraction his submarines would soon be reporting it, he awaited such reports.

He knew, of course, that, since October 17th, when the advance forces of TF 77 had commenced their operations in Leyte Gulf, and until today, his submarines had contacted merchant convoys only; i.e., the BLUEGILL on October 19th when she had reported sinking three cargo ships, and the HAMMERHEAD on October 20th when she also reported sinking three cargo ships. He realized that there had been some question about the BREAM's contact at 0300 October 18th when she had reported three or four large ships, but, since this contact (which, incidentally, had been by radar) had not been detected again, he likely felt that it was of no importance.

He also knew that (a) there was some question about the composition of the Japanese force reported by aircraft in Pare Pare Bay, Celebes, and (b) there had been some contacts on combatant forces in the western Pacific on the previous day (Plate III) by other Allied units but these contacts were few in number and of no particular importance.

At 0151 he (a) directed the BLUEGILL to proceed to Mios Woendi via Mindoro Strait, Sibutu Passage, and the Joint Zones; there to replenish and await orders, and (b) advised the ANGLER that the BLUEGILL had reported that the convoy had been (at 1715) in the vicinity of Cape Calavite and would probably round Lubang Island to the northward before heading south.\*

He commenced hearing from his command sometime in the early morning. At this time he received a dispatch (a) from the HAMMERHEAD reporting sinking three cargo ships from a southbound convoy west of Miri for a total of 22,500 tons at 0300 on the previous morning,\*\* and (b) from the wolf pack commander, who was also the Commanding Officer DARTER, reporting the results of his patrol and stating, in part, that at "1140 October 19th in Latitude 09°-09'N, Longitude 117°-03'E, both boats (DACE and DARTER) missed in simultaneous attack on one of two southbound FUBUKI's who interrupted a powwow. Same destroyers at same point northbound 0500 today (October 20th). If no BLUEGILL convoy by night twenty-first, plan depart area. DARTER can remain".\*\*\*

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\* CTF 71 Dispatch 201651 October 1944 to TG 71.1.

\*\* War Diary CTF 71 October 21st, 1944.

\*\*\* DARTER Dispatch 201530 October 1944 to CTF 71.



From this latter dispatch, it is clear that CTF 71, if he had not suspected it before, now knew that not only was Balabac Strait unguarded but, also, both submarines were some ninety miles and more to the northward of their assigned stations.

He took no action in this matter. Perhaps he felt that (a) in view of his dispatch (as CTG 71.1) to the DARTER and DACE on the nineteenth, reporting the RATON's estimate of the location of the movements of the BLUE-GILL's convoy at 0400 October 19th as "northern end of Palawan Passage, course 190°(T), speed six knots",\* this action by the submarine wolf pack commander was to have been expected, or (b) having received no contacts of importance on the previous day, this temporary deviation from his orders was within the competence of the wolf pack commander, or (c) since the landing had occurred successfully, guarding the approaches to Balabac Strait and southern Palawan Passage was no longer of primary importance, or (d) since the two submarines were to complete their patrols at sunset on this day and to then depart the area, it was unnecessary to take further action even though he may have disapproved of the conduct of the wolf pack commander.

In connection with item (a) above, it is not clear whether CTF 71 sent such dispatches about merchant shipping merely as information so as to alert his submarines along the prospective line of advance of the enemy unit or convoy, or whether he meant by this action to assign to these submarines a new objective; i.e., "the destruction of this unit or convoy", which objective had a priority over their basic objectives. This confusion arises because, although these dispatches seem purely informative and without the force of an order, they were nevertheless interpreted repeatedly by the submarine commanders as possessing an overriding priority. The actions of the DACE and DARTER are a case in point. Whether or not such overriding priority existed within TF 71 is not clear for there is nothing in the information available to this analysis which authorizes a TF 71 submarine commander to depart his station in response to a contact report specifically addressed to him by his commander. However, since there was such authority within TF 17, contained in the following quote: "Whenever a position given in such a dispatch is outside of an assigned area or off the route prescribed, it may be interpreted by the submarine addressed as authority to proceed to the position indicated. The submarine should return to her prescribed area or route as soon as contact and attack has been made, or after the expiration of a reasonable time if contact is not made";\*\* it is possible that similar authority existed within TF 71.

The fact that the commanding officers of submarines, and the wolf pack commanders, who made such deviations, were almost never--if ever--criticized by their immediate superiors in their endorsements to the patrol reports seems to indicate that such deviations met with the approval of these superiors. It seems likely that the superiors interpreted CANF SOWESPAC

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\* CTG 71.1 Dispatch 190148 October 1944 to TG 71.1 (DACE and DARTER).

\*\* CTF 17 Operation Plan No. 1-43, Serial 0807, June 24th, 1943, Annex A, Paragraph 6340(f).



Operation Plan Number 12-44, wherein that commander stated, "while continuing present missions to the fullest extent practicable",\* to mean that sinking of enemy shipping was to enjoy a continued high priority. In general, as pointed out in Volume I, the present mission of all submarines was, as given in their operation orders, "to destroy enemy shipping and to deny the use of vital traffic lanes by the employment of unrestricted submarine warfare".\*\*

CTF 71'S TACIT APPROVAL OF THE ACTIONS OF HIS SUBMARINE COMMANDERS IN SEEKING TO DESTROY SHIPPING DESPITE ORDERS TO REMAIN ON A DEFINITE STATION WITH A DEFINITE OBJECTIVE SUPPORTS AGAIN WHAT WAS SAID IN VOLUME I ON THIS SUBJECT. THERE, IT WAS STATED THAT THE SUBMARINES "WERE TOO FEW IN NUMBER AND TOO LOOSELY DISPERSED TO ACCOMPLISH ADEQUATELY THEIR ASSIGNED OBJECTIVES WITH RELATION TO OPERATION KING II WHILE AT THE SAME TIME CONTINUING PRESENT OPERATIONS, I.E., ANTISHIPPING PATROLS. THERE WAS A RELUCTANCE IN SOWESPAC, AND, AS WILL BE SHOWN LATER IN POA ALSO, TO LIMIT SUBMARINE ANTISHIPPING OPERATIONS IN ORDER TO SUPPORT KING II MORE EFFECTIVELY. THIS SEEMS TO HAVE BEEN DUE PRIMARILY TO THE BELIEF THAT MAJOR ELEMENTS OF THE JAPANESE FLEET WOULD NOT BE INVOLVED IN OPPOSITION TO THE ALLIED LANDINGS AT LEYTE. IT MAY ALSO HAVE BEEN DUE, IN PART, TO THE FACT THAT THE MARK OF SUCCESS OF A SUBMARINE COMMANDING OFFICER WAS OFTEN 'TONNAGE OF SHIPPING SUNK' AND HE WAS DECORATED ACCORDINGLY. NATURALLY, MANY SUBMARINE COMMANDING OFFICERS DID NOT VIEW WITH FAVOR THOSE ASSIGNMENTS WHICH TENDED TO REMOVE THEM FROM THE ANTISHIPPING FIELD. IN THIS THEY WERE OFTEN SUPPORTED BY THE DIVISION, SQUADRON AND FORCE COMMANDERS, WHO BELIEVED THAT THE CORRECT EMPLOYMENT OF SUBMARINES WAS AGAINST SHIPPING, AND NOT IN DIRECT SUPPORT OF FLEET OPERATIONS".\*\*\*

At this time CTF 71 was likely seriously concerned about the continuing departure of his submarines from their patrol areas, for from his deployment plot, he could see that many of the positions, which he had advised CTF 77 would be occupied by his submarines from October 15th to 25th, (Plate X) were now vacant with only one or two replacements possible.

He knew, of course, that on this day, unless he took some immediate action, the submarines BLUEGILL, HAMMERHEAD, DACE, DARTER, ROCK, BERGALL, and BONEFISH would depart the area because of completion of their patrols. He also knew that the HAMMERHEAD's relief—the GURNARD—was already in the HAMMERHEAD's area, but he had no reliefs immediately available for the other six submarines, although (a) the BLACKFIN, from TF 17, was en route and was expected to report to him for duty on the following day\*\*\*\* but would still be well to the north and therefore would not be available for several days, (b) the HAKE, GROWLER, HARDHEAD, GUNNEL, and MUSKALLUNGE were en route from Fremantle but could not arrive on station before October 25th, and (c) the

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\* CANF SOWESPAC Operation Plan No. 12-44, Serial 00019A, September 25th, 1944, Paragraph (3)(h).

\*\* CTG 71.1 Operation Orders to the submarines concerned.

\*\*\* Volume I, Battle for Leyte Gulf (NavPers 91973), Naval War College, Chapter II, Section (e)(2)(b).

\*\*\*\* CTF 17 Dispatch 190215 October 1944 to CTF 71.



COBIA from TF 17 would soon be reporting but since this submarine would not report until she had completed her patrol with TF 17 (at which time she would be well to the north in Luzon Strait) it was likely that she would only have enough fuel oil to take her to Fremantle.

He now commenced re-estimating the situation to ascertain what could be done to alleviate in part this unhappy shortage of submarines.

As a result of his re-estimation of the situation, he found it necessary to issue three dispatches during the afternoon:

(a) The first dispatch was to the TELEMACHUS, which was retiring from the area. In this dispatch he asked the TELEMACHUS to report whether or not she was clear of area E1 as the TANTALUS was heading for that area en route her patrol station;\*

(b) In the second dispatch he directed (1) the HAMMERHEAD to depart her area at dark on this day and to retire to Fremantle—he did this because the GURNARD, which was now in her patrol area west of Borneo, was in position to relieve the HAMMERHEAD in that area, and (2) the DACE to depart her area at sunset on the following day (October 22nd) and to retire to Fremantle\*\*—he did this because she was low on fuel;

(c) The third dispatch was to the ROCK, BERGALL and DARTER. In this dispatch he (1) informed these three submarines that he planned to keep them on station for a few more days, and (2) advised them, that if they were forced to depart prior to receipt of (new) orders, they were to notify him.\*\*\*

The nature of this dispatch indicates that (a) CTF 71 was not at all sure of the ability of the ROCK and BERGALL to remain on station; but since he had heard nothing from them, he clearly felt that their cruises had been uneventful; and therefore, they had sufficient fuel oil and torpedoes to remain for a few days longer; and (b) although he knew to a degree about the DARTER's ability to remain in the area (the Commanding Officer DARTER had indicated an ability to do so if necessary), he was not sure for how long.

It seems likely that in selecting these three submarines CTF 71 was primarily motivated by the fact that it was important at this time to discover any movement of enemy forces to the north. He knew that there were indications from the fact that oilers had been ordered to the Pescadores that the FIRST Striking Force might be en route north.\*\*\*\* Since these three submarines would be across such a movement, it was important to keep them on station as long as possible.

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\* CTF 71 Dispatch 210321 October 1944 to TELEMACHUS.

\*\* CTF 71 Dispatch 210528 October 1944 to TG's 71.1, 71.7, Z4L (DACE and HAMMERHEAD).

\*\*\* CTF 71 Dispatch 210536 October 1944 to CTG 71.1 (ROCK, BERGALL and DARTER).

\*\*\*\* GHQ, SOWESPAC Dispatch 171536 October 1944 to COMSOWESPAC.

This was a sound concept, but the disposition weakness lay in the fact that neither the ROCK, DARTER nor BERGALL were on station. As pointed out (a) under "ROCK and BERGALL, October 20th", these two submarines were en route to the sea areas south of Saigon and, consequently, were far removed from their assigned stations, and (b) under "DARTER, October 20th", the DARTER, which had been guarding Balabac Strait, was also far removed from that station. However, in the case of the latter submarine, he appears to have left it to the competence of the commanding officer (who, it will be recalled, was also the wolf pack commander) to choose a position which would likely intercept Japanese forces headed either for Balabac Strait or for Palawan Passage.

IF THIS WAS HIS REASON, IT WAS SOUND, FOR SUBORDINATE COMMANDERS ARE CHOSEN BECAUSE OF THEIR MILITARY CHARACTER. IT WOULD NOT ONLY BE UNWISE, BUT WOULD BE INCONSISTENT WITH THE ATTAINMENT OF MUTUAL UNDERSTANDING, IF THE SUPERIOR CONSTANTLY ISSUED ORDERS AND ALLOWED NO DISCRETION ON THE PART OF THE SUBORDINATE. IT SHOULD BE STRESSED HERE THAT THE FINAL AIM OF MUTUAL UNDERSTANDING IS TO ARRIVE AT THE HAPPY SITUATION WHEN A SUBORDINATE, IN THE ABSENCE OF INSTRUCTIONS, ACTS INSTINCTIVELY AS HIS IMMEDIATE SUPERIOR WOULD HAVE HIM ACT, AND ALSO COOPERATES INTELLIGENTLY WITH COORDINATE COMMANDERS ON HIS SAME ECHELON.

At 1514 he informed his command, and particularly his boats off Luzon, that (a) a contact had been made by aircraft at 0240 on a seven-ship convoy in Latitude 17°-42'N, Longitude 119°-03'E, and (b) no course and speed had been given.\* Since he believed that the submarines off Luzon consisted of the COD, BREAM, GUITARRO and ANGLER, it was for these four boats that he intended this dispatch.

At 1518, without waiting for the COBIA to report for duty from CTF 17, he sent her a dispatch wherein he directed that at 1800, when in approximate Latitude 18°-30'N, Longitude 118°-00'E, she was to proceed on a southerly course west of that longitude and thence to Fremantle via Mindoro Strait, Sibutu Pass, Makassar and Lombok Straits.\*\*

At approximately 1527 he likely received a dispatch from C.G. FIFTH Air Force to the effect that the photos taken at 1300, October 20th of Pare Pare Bay showed that (a) there was no important shipping there, (b) the total shipping consisted of 4800 tons, including one stack-aft freighter and several small freighters (from 200 to 500 tons), and (c) there were no warships.\*\*\* This dispatch was of importance because the previous report had stated that there were many large vessels there.\*\*\*\* He now knew that, excepting for some small craft, the harbor was empty.

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\* CTF 71 Dispatch 210614 October 1944 to TG 71.1 (Luzon Boats).  
 \*\* CTF 71 Dispatch 210618 October 1944 to CTG 71.1, Z4L (COBIA).  
 \*\*\* C.G. 5TH Air Force Dispatch 211333/I October 1944 to CAAF SOWESPAC.  
 \*\*\*\* CTF 71 Dispatch 191524 October 1944 to TG 71.7, Z4L/1 (TANTIVY).



At 1746 he issued instructions to HOE, BAYA and SEA ROVER concerning their entrance into port on the following day.\*

Whether or not he (a) chose to interpret the several small freighters referred to above as two large freighters, or (b) received the dispatch incorrectly, or (c) received another dispatch, not available to this analysis, is not known, but it is known that at 1859 he advised the TANTIVY that a plane had reported there were two large ships in Latitude 04°-02'S, Longitude 119°-37'E (Pare Pare Bay), at about 1200 that day.\*\*

At 1810 he intercepted a dispatch from COMSEVENTHFLT to CAAF SOWESPAC stating, among other things, that Coron Bay was a "highly likely concentration or fueling area for important elements of the Japanese fleet that may attempt to strike against our Leyte forces", and requesting that the area be kept under the closest air observation.\*\*\* He probably wondered why it was that he had not been included as an action addressee for, as pointed out above, he believed that the COBIA would presently be heading southward through Mindoro Strait and the BLUEGILL (also southbound), from his plot, was already in the vicinity of that strait. He took no action, presumably feeling that since the LAPON (which had departed the Coron area on October 20th, having been there since October 16th on lifeguard duty) had noted nothing, it was preferable to leave its reconnaissance to the aircraft.

At 1843, having heard from the HOE (which was returning to Fremantle) that at 1444 she had sighted, in Latitude 29°-15'S, Longitude 112°-34'E, a submarine which had submerged, he advised the HOE, BAYA, SEA ROVER, GROWLER and HAKE to this effect, and informed them that the first three submarines were southbound and the last two northbound, and that all five were probably in the same general vicinity.\*\*\*\* He sent this dispatch to warn all five submarines that the submarine sighted here was likely friendly, and to proceed with caution.

Since it was known that (a) the HOE, BAYA and SEA ROVER were fast approaching Fremantle—in fact, the HOE had given an ETA at Fremantle of 0600\*\*\*\*\* and the BAYA and SEA ROVER of 0700 October 22nd,\*\*\*\*\* and (b) the HAKE and GROWLER had left Fremantle on the previous day (October 20th), which fact had been given to the command by CTG 71.1 at 2213 on the previous evening,\*\*\*\*\* it is not clear how this confusion occurred. Perhaps the HOE had failed to receive the information.

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\* CTG 71.1 Dispatch 210846 October 1944 to TG's 71.1 and 71.7 (HOE, BAYA, SEA ROVER).

\*\* CTF 71 Dispatch 210959 October 1944 to TG 71.7, Z4L/1 (TANTIVY).

\*\*\* COM7THFLT Dispatch 210526 October 1944 to CAAF SOWESPAC, C.G. 5TH Air Force, info COMSOWESPAC, COM3RDFLT.

\*\*\*\* CTF 71 Dispatch 210943 October 1944 to TG's 71.1, 71.7, Z4L/2 (HOE, BAYA, SEA ROVER, GROWLER, HAKE).

\*\*\*\*\* War Diary CTF 71, October 19th, 1944.

\*\*\*\*\* War Diary CTF 71, October 18th, 1944.

\*\*\*\*\* CTG 71.1 Dispatch 201313 October 1944 to TG's 71.1, 71.7, Z4L/2.



That CTF 71 realized the danger of the situation is clear for, but fourteen minutes later (at 1857), he advised all submarines that the GUNNEL and HARDHEAD had departed Fremantle that day and that the former was proceeding to areas A7 - A8 via Darwin, Makassar Strait and Mindoro Strait, and the latter was proceeding via Exmouth Gulf, Lombok Strait, Sibutu Pass and Mindoro Strait to area A4 where she was to form a wolf pack with the GROWLER and HAKE.\*

At approximately 2010 he received a dispatch\*\* from C.G. THIRTEENTH Air Force reporting that at 1115 that day a plane had sighted one battleship, three light cruisers, three destroyers and six unidentified ships in Latitude 03°-30'N, Longitude 118°-40'E, on course 170°(T), speed fifteen knots. He took no action on this dispatch, likely because the PADDLE, which was patrolling across the northern entrance to Makassar Strait, and the submarines LAPON and RATON (which were southbound) and the CERO (from CTF 72 and which was northbound) should be in the vicinity. If the contact was correct, he likely felt that one of the above submarines would make a contact.

At 2228 he received a dispatch from COMNAVGRPCINA (a) reporting many aircraft contacts on merchant shipping during the past three days and as recently as 1300 on this day along the Tourane (Annam) and Hong Kong routes mostly moving northeast, and (b) suggesting that some of this traffic was probably from southern Hainan.\*\*\* Since he had no submarines in this area--the upper limit of his area was Latitude 18°-30'N--and had no submarines available to dispatch to the area between Tourane and southern Hainan, it seems probable that he hoped that the BERGALL might encounter some of this shipping but, since he did not advise her of the above contact report, it also seems probable that he preferred to have her remain on station (which she might not do if she knew of excellent prospects to the north).

(1) BREAM and GUITARRO.

(a) During this day the BREAM, generally on the surface, continued on toward her patrol station in A3 - A7. She submerged on occasions, presumably because of enemy aircraft, but once because of a contact on a periscope. Except for the above and for the fact that she contacted (a) at 0340 the LAPON, and (b) at 1601 what she thought was the BLUEGILL (periscope sighting only), but which was clearly a false contact since no Allied or Japanese submarines were in this vicinity at this time, her day's run was uneventful. She steamed on this day 256 miles, and at midnight was just entering Mindoro Strait.\*\*\*\*

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- \* CTG 71.1 Dispatch 210957 October 1944 to TG's 71.1 and 71.7, Z4L/2.
  - \*\* C.G. 13TH Air Force Dispatch 211922/I October 1944 to AOIC (all interested in current operations).
  - \*\*\* CINCPAC Dispatch 211206 October 1944 to COMSUBPAC, COMSUSOWESPAC, info COMINCH, COM3RDFLT, and all TFC's and TGC's 3RDFLT (Re-encypherment of COMNAVGRPCINA Dispatch 210600 October 1944 to CINCPAC, COMSUBPAC, COMSUSOWESPAC).
  - \*\*\*\* War Patrol Report BREAM, Report of 3RD War Patrol, Serial 021-44, November 22nd, 1944; also Deck Log BREAM, October 21st, 1944.



(b) During the day the GUITARRO continued northward through the Sulu Sea toward her patrol station. At 0728, owing to the approach of enemy aircraft, she submerged and remained submerged until 1940 when she surfaced and headed for East Cuyo Pass. Otherwise, her day's run was uneventful.\* She steamed on this day about 180 miles and at 2400 was just west of the southwest tip of Panay Island.

It seems probable that sometime after surfacing both of these submarines (which were eventually to arrive on station off Luzon) received CTF 71's dispatch reporting that at 0240 that day a seven-ship convoy had been sighted by a plane in Latitude 17°-42'N, Longitude 119°-03'E, with no course and speed given.\*\* Since this contact was well to the north, it is clear that it was of little interest on this day.

(2) ROCK and BERGALL.

It will be recalled from the previous day that these two submarines, which were supposedly patrolling the Cape Varella - North Danger Shoal line, had, instead, departed just prior to midnight (2400, October 20th) for a sea area south of Saigon, which area was not in their original assigned patrol area.\*\*\*

(a) The BERGALL, as shown on Diagram C, headed on a steady course throughout the day. She patrolled on the surface and, except for indications of a plane in the area, the day's run was uneventful.\*\*\*\*

During the afternoon, the Commanding Officer BERGALL should have received a dispatch from CTF 71 to the ROCK, BERGALL and DARTER to the effect that (a) he planned to keep them in their areas a few more days, and (b) if it was necessary for any of them to depart prior to receipt of orders, they were to let him (CTF 71) know.\*\*\*\*\*

However, if he received it (which seems highly possible since he was operating on the surface) he appears to have given little or no consideration to it. In commenting on this later (1957) he stated: "As I remember it, our primary mission was to sink shipping with lifeguard duties very much incidental. Just prior to the time of our movement to the

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\* War Patrol Report GUITARRO, Report of 3RD War Patrol, Serial 044, November 16th, 1944; also Deck Log GUITARRO, October 21st, 1944.  
 \*\* CTF 71 Dispatch 210614 October 1944 to TG 71.1 (Luzon Boats).  
 \*\*\* CTF 17 Operation Order 302-44, Serial 00813, September 7th, 1944.  
 \*\*\*\* War Patrol Report BERGALL, Report of 1ST War Patrol, Serial 0102, November 8th, 1944.  
 \*\*\*\*\* CTF 71 Dispatch 210536 October 1944 to CTG 71.1 (ROCK, BERGALL, DARTER).

area south of Saigon, we had spent two or three weeks close to the coast off Cape Varella and Camranh Bay. The area south of Saigon was also within our assigned patrol area, I believe. We were trying to intercept shipping on the Singapore to Saigon route."\*

That his dispatch orders, based on the action of the Commanding Officer ROCK, required and expected him to remain on his previous station on the Cape Varella - North Danger Shoal line is shown by the fact that CTF 71's war diary shows both ROCK and BERGALL on station on this line.\*\* Why, in the light of this dispatch, and in the light of his basic orders, he continued on toward the area south of Saigon is not fully explained.

However, his Executive Officer and Navigator stated (1957) that he believed that it was an intelligence report on Japanese shipping in the Saigon area rather than orders which led them to depart from their assigned patrol line.\*\*\* This belief, however, is not supported by the contacts received by the principal Allied commanders on October 20th (Plate III) and October 21st (Plate XXVI) although this fact is not conclusive. Similarly, the aircraft searches conducted by the FOURTEENTH Air Force in the South China Sea reported nothing in the Saigon area since these searches were conducted farther to the north.

It seems likely therefore that since (a) this patrol was the BERGALL's first war patrol with the resulting pressure to establish a good record with a new and untried ship, (b) she had encountered no enemy forces of any consequence, and (c) she believed that she had sunk but two small enemy cargo ships (she is credited with sinking but one small cargo ship—possibly an oiler—the SHINSHU MARU, up to this time).\*\*\*\*

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\* Captain John M. Hyde, USN, letter, April 29th, 1957, to Commodore R.W. Bates, USN(Ret), Head, World War II Battle Evaluation Group, Naval War College.

\*\* War Diary CTF 71, October 1944; Daily Disposition of Submarines Based Western Australia, Serial 00341, November 25th, 1944.

\*\*\* Captain (then Commander) Thomas K. Kimmel, USN, Statement to Commodore R.W. Bates, USN(Ret), Head, World War II Battle Evaluation Group, Naval War College, June 10th, 1957.

\*\*\*\* Japanese Naval and Merchant Losses During World War II by U.S. Submarines, prepared by the Joint Army-Navy Assessment Committee, February 1947.



he had decided that it was necessary to seek targets in what he hoped would be a more fruitful area and therefore, without more ado and without advising CTF 71 of his new plans, he continued on.

ALTHOUGH CTF 71 CONSIDERED THAT THE PATROL OF THE BERGALL WAS A "FINE FIRST WAR PATROL" AND MADE NO ADVERSE COMMENT CONCERNING HER FAILURE TO REMAIN ON STATION ON HER ASSIGNED PATROL LINE, IT IS NOT CONSIDERED THAT HE WAS CORRECT IN OVERLOOKING THIS DEVIATION FROM ORDERS,\* FOR BY SO DOING HE WAS GIVING HIS TACIT APPROVAL (A) TO THE COMMANDING OFFICER'S REJECTION (1) OF HIS ASSIGNED OBJECTIVE; I.E., "THE GUARDING OF THE CAPE VARELLA - NORTH DANGER SHOAL LINE", WITH ITS EVIDENT RELATION TO THE PROTECTION OF THE ALLIED FORCES IN THE LEYTE AREA, AND (2) OF HIS COLLATERAL OBJECTIVE; I.E., "LIFEGUARD DUTIES", AND (B) TO THAT OFFICER'S CONCEPT THAT THE POSSIBILITY OF SINKING ENEMY SHIPPING—LIKELY MERCHANT—WAS AN OBJECTIVE OF OVERRIDING PRIORITY. SUCH, OF COURSE, WAS NOT THE CASE FOR THE OBJECTIVE CHOSEN BY THE COMMANDING OFFICER BERGALL WOULD NOT, EXCEPT IN A MOST FORTUITOUS SITUATION, CONTRIBUTE AS GREATLY TO THE ACCOMPLISHMENT OF CTF 71'S GENERAL OBJECTIVE AS WOULD THE ACCOMPLISHMENT OF THE ASSIGNED OBJECTIVE. CTF 71'S GENERAL OBJECTIVE WAS THE PROTECTION OF THE THIRDFLT AND TF 77 DURING KING II LARGELY THROUGH THE PROVIDING OF EARLY ADVICE BY HIS SUBMARINES ON THE MOVEMENTS OF ENEMY COMBATANT UNITS.\*\* HIS ASSIGNED OBJECTIVE (TO THE BERGALL) CLEARLY CONTRIBUTED TO THE ACCOMPLISHMENT OF THIS OBJECTIVE, BUT CAN IT BE SAID THAT THE SINKING OF SOME MERCHANT SHIPPING IN THE AREA SOUTH OF SAIGON WOULD HAVE CONTRIBUTED LIKEWISE?

At 2400 the BERGALL was bearing 128°(T), distant 105 miles from Poulo Obi Island Light. Since this position was (a) some 400 miles from her assigned patrol line, (b) in waters of less than twenty-five fathoms, and (c) to the westward of a position directly south of Saigon, it seems clear that the term "south of Saigon" meant in the general waters south of Cochin China.

(b) The ROCK continued on toward her newly selected patrol station in the area south of Saigon. She patrolled on the surface during darkness and submerged during daylight.\*\*\* Since she was submerged during daylight, she did not receive CTF 71's dispatch 210536 (referred to above under the BERGALL) until sometime after she had surfaced (at 1928--the evening broadcasts were at 2100). Why she travelled submerged during daylight is not clear since the BERGALL, in waters much nearer enemy land-based aircraft, remained on the surface.

It seems probable that at about 2100 or later the Commanding Officer ROCK received CTF 71's dispatch 210536 (referred to above

\* CTF 71 2ND ENDORSEMENT, Serial 01446, November 25th, 1944, to War Patrol Report BERGALL, Report of 1ST War Patrol, Serial 0102, November 8th, 1944.

\*\* CANF SOWESPAC Operation Plan No. 12-44, Serial 00019A, September 25th, 1944, Paragraph 3(h).

\*\*\* War Patrol Report ROCK, Report of 4TH War Patrol, Serial 016, November 11th, 1944; also Deck Log ROCK, October 21st, 1944.



under the BERGALL) for at 2319 he reversed course and headed for the Cape Varella - North Danger Shoal patrol line. At the same time he notified CTF 71 that he was returning to station, had all torpedoes and 71,000 gallons of fuel oil remaining, and requested "a week's extension on station".\* What he meant here by "returning to station", while somewhat obscure, seems to refer to the fact that his original patrol was to expire at sunset that day and, although he had been ordered to remain on station until further orders,\*\* he wished to reassure CTF 71 as to his plans. That CTF 71 accepted it in this fashion seems clear for his war diary makes no mention thereon.

No contacts nor lifeguard calls were made on this day.

At 2400 the ROCK, on course 060°(T), speed fourteen knots, was bearing 214°(T), distant 145 miles from the western limit of her patrol line (Latitude 12°-10'N, Longitude 112°-00'E).\*\*\*

(3) BLUEGILL and ANGLER.

These two submarines continued to patrol their assigned stations as on the previous day. Neither of them made any contacts other than small sea trucks, patrol vessels, and aircraft. They patrolled on the surface during darkness and submerged during daylight.\*\*\*\*

(a) The BLUEGILL at about 0331 received a dispatch from CTF 71 directing her to proceed via Mindoro Strait, Sibutu Pass and the Joint Submarine Zones, to Mios Woendi where she was to replenish and await orders.\*\*\*\*\* Since it was customary for submarines to depart their stations at sunset, and since his own basic orders so directed,\*\*\*\*\* the commanding officer decided to remain in the area until that hour and therefore at 0615 he submerged and continued his patrol. At 1943 he surfaced and commenced departing the area. At 2400 he was in Mindoro Strait on a southerly course.

(b) The Commanding Officer, ANGLER, also having received the above dispatch to the BLUEGILL, noted that CTF 71 had directed his attention to the fact that the BLUEGILL had reported the BLUEGILL convoy in the vicinity of Cape Calavite at 1715 on the previous day and had estimated that it would probably round Lubang Island to northward before heading south. He realized that the BLUEGILL would presently (at sunset) be departing for Mios Woendi, but would remain on station during daylight. He therefore decided to conduct his normal patrol and at 0546 submerged on station. During the day he

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\* Ibid.; also War Diary CTF 71, October 22nd, 1944.  
 \*\* CTF 71 Dispatch 160456 October 1944 to CTG 71.1 (ROCK, BERGALL).  
 \*\*\* Deck Log ROCK, October 21st, 1944.  
 \*\*\*\* War Patrol Report BLUEGILL, Report of 3RD War Patrol, Serial 039, November 25th, 1944; also War Patrol Report ANGLER, Report of 5TH War Patrol, Serial 09(10), November 9th, 1944.  
 \*\*\*\*\* CTF 71 Dispatch 201651 October 1944 to TG 71.1 (BLUEGILL).  
 \*\*\*\*\* CTG 71.1 Operations Order No. 135-44, September 17th, 1944 to BLUEGILL.



estimated the situation and decided that, with the BLUEGILL gone and the convoy having had time since to have passed the patrol line, he could best cover the SW approaches to Manila by conducting a surface patrol off the northern end of Palawan Passage.\* Therefore at 1948 he surfaced and headed for his new station.

Sometime after surfacing he should have received a dispatch from CTF 71 to the Luzon boats (of which the ANGLER was one) reporting an aircraft report of a seven-ship convoy at 0240 in Latitude 17°-42'N, Longitude 119°-03'E, with no course and speed given.\*\* As will be shown in the discussion which follows, he seems to have given little consideration to this information.

WHILE HIS ACTION IN RE-ESTIMATING THE SITUATION IN ORDER TO DETERMINE WHETHER OR NOT HE COULD BETTER ACCOMPLISH HIS OBJECTIVE BY CHOOSING ANOTHER STATION IN THE SAME AREA WAS CORRECT, HIS SELECTION OF A NEW STATION OFF THE NORTHERN END OF PALAWAN PASSAGE SEEMS INCORRECT. WHY IS THIS SO? TO DISCOVER THE REASON, IT IS NECESSARY FIRST TO ANALYZE HIS OBJECTIVE. IT WILL BE RECALLED THAT, WITH THE BLUEGILL, HE HAD BEEN DIRECTED TO COVER THE SW APPROACHES TO MANILA BAY AND HAD BEEN ADVISED TO STATION ONE SUBMARINE NORTH OF AND THE OTHER SOUTH OF LUBANG ISLAND,\*\*\* AND THAT HE HAD ASSIGNED HIS SUBMARINES SO THAT ON THIS DAY THE ANGLER WAS OPERATING FROM LUBANG ISLAND NORTHWEST TO THE BOUNDARY OF AREA A4 AND THE BLUEGILL WAS BETWEEN LUBANG ISLAND AND CAPE CALAVITE.\*\*\*\* BUT WHAT WAS HE TO COVER AGAINST? THIS WAS ALSO SPECIFIED IN THE SAME DISPATCH WHEREIN HE WAS TOLD THAT "EARLY ADVICE MOVEMENT COMBATANT UNITS IMPORTANT". THEREFORE, IT SEEMS CLEAR THAT THE OBJECTIVE WAS A "PROTECTION" OBJECTIVE. HE WAS PRIMARILY TO KEEP HIS COMMANDERS INFORMED OF ENEMY MOVEMENTS SO THAT, DURING THE PERIOD HE WAS COMPLYING WITH HIS DIRECTIVE, THEY COULD HAVE EARLY WARNING. BUT NOW THAT THE BLUEGILL HAD DEPARTED, WHERE COULD THIS EARLY WARNING BE BEST OBTAINED? WOULD IT BE (A) WHERE HE WAS, OR (B) TO THE NORTH OR TO THE SOUTH OF LUBANG ISLAND AS ORIGINALLY SUGGESTED BY CTF 71? HE CHOSE NONE OF THESE BUT, INSTEAD, AND AS POINTED OUT EARLIER, DECIDED TO MOVE FARTHER SOUTH IN THE DIRECTION OF THE NORTHERN END OF PALAWAN PASSAGE, FOR THE REASON THAT "THIS SEEMS TO BE A BETTER WAY TO COVER THE SOUTHWEST APPROACHES TO MANILA, RATHER THAN TO TRY TO COVER EITHER ONE OF THE TWO PASSAGES SUBMERGED".\*\*\*\*\* BUT, WAS THIS CORRECT? IT WOULD APPEAR NOT, FOR THE NORTHERN END OF PALAWAN PASSAGE WAS ABOUT 150 MILES SW OF LUBANG ISLAND AND ABOUT 210 MILES FROM MANILA AND THEREFORE THE SW APPROACHES WERE ONLY GUARDED IN SO FAR AS ENEMY UNITS FROM THE SOUTH AND SOUTHWEST WERE CONCERNED. WHERE, THEN, SHOULD HE

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\* War Patrol Report ANGLER, Report of 5TH War Patrol, Serial 09(10), November 9th, 1944.

\*\* CTF 71 Dispatch 210614 October 1944 to TG 71.1 (Luzon Boats).

\*\*\* CTF 71 Dispatch 110807 October 1944 to CTG 71.1, 24L, (BLUEGILL, ANGLER).

\*\*\*\* CTF 71 Dispatch 141207 October 1944 to TG 71.1, 24L (In this dispatch CTF 71 relayed the Commanding Officer BLUEGILL orders to the ANGLER).

\*\*\*\*\* War Patrol Report ANGLER, Report of 5TH War Patrol, Serial 09(10), November 9th, 1944.



HAVE GONE? SINCE CTF 71 HAD NOT GIVEN HIM ANY INSTRUCTIONS IN THIS MATTER, IT IS ASSUMED THAT THAT COMMANDER EITHER EXPECTED HIM TO REMAIN WHERE HE WAS, OR EXPECTED HIM TO RESTATION HIMSELF AS NECESSARY. DOES IT NOT SEEM CLEAR THAT, IF HE REMAINED WHERE HE WAS OR TOOK STATION TO THE SOUTH OF LUBANG ISLAND, HE COULD NOT COVER THE SW APPROACHES TO MANILA BAY EVEN THOUGH ON THE SURFACE AS ADEQUATELY AS IF HE MOVED TO A STATION DUE NORTH OF LUBANG ISLAND SINCE, IN THE LATTER POSITION, HE WOULD MORE NEARLY APPROACH THE FOCI OF THE SEVERAL SHIPPING ROUTES LEADING TO AND FROM MANILA? THEREFORE, IT SEEMS CORRECT THAT HE SHOULD HAVE TAKEN STATION NORTH OF LUBANG ISLAND.

(4) DACE and DARTER.

These two submarines continued to patrol Palawan Passage in search of the BLUEGILL convoy and other shipping and by so doing continued to leave Balabac Strait unguarded. Their patrol was to end at sunset on this day, at which time they were to return to Fremantle via Karimata Strait. They operated on the surface during darkness and submerged during daylight hours and made no contacts.\*

(a) The DARTER at 0030 sent a dispatch to CTF 71 wherein the wolf pack commander in the DARTER reported the results of the patrol. Among other data, he reported that (a) at 1140 on the 19th, in Latitude 09°-09'N, Longitude 117°-03'E, both submarines had made an abortive attack on two southbound destroyers (FUBUKI-class) which had attacked them, (b) these two destroyers were at 0500, October 20th at the same point (in Latitude 09°-09'N, Longitude 117°-03'E) but northbound, (c) if he did not locate the BLUEGILL convoy by nightfall of October 21st, he planned to depart the area, and (d) the DARTER could remain (in the area) since she had 60,000 gallons of fuel and sixteen torpedoes, but he implied that the DACE could not remain since, although she still had ten torpedoes, she had only 40,000 gallons of fuel.\*\*

AT 0100 THE COMMANDING OFFICER DARTER RECEIVED A NEWS BROADCAST OF THE INVASION OF THE PHILIPPINES. THIS WAS THE FIRST KNOWLEDGE HE HAD RELATIVE TO THE LEYTE OPERATION AND THEREFORE HE COULD NOW PLAINLY SEE WHY IT WAS THAT HE HAD BEEN GIVEN THE SPECIFIC INSTRUCTIONS, "UNTIL FURTHER ORDERS COORDINATE PATROL YOUR GROUP THAT SOUTHERN APPROACHES PALAWAN PASSAGE AND WESTERN APPROACHES TO BALABAC STRAIT ARE EFFECTIVELY COVERED".\*\*\*

HE IMMEDIATELY HEADED ON THE SURFACE AT FIFTEEN KNOTS FOR BALABAC STRAIT—TO QUOTE HIS WAY DIARY—"TO WATCH FOR HEAVY UNITS SINCE SINGAPORE - BALABAC - MINDANAO SEA IS SHORTEST ROUTE FOR ANY PART OF THE JAP FLEET WHICH MIGHT HEAD FOR LEYTE".\*\*\*\*

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\* War Patrol Report DARTER, Report of 4TH War Patrol, Serial 020, November 5th, 1944; also War Patrol Report DACE, Report of 5TH War Patrol, Serial 09, November 6th, 1944.

\*\* DARTER Dispatch 201530 October 1944 to CTF 71.

\*\*\* CTF 71 Dispatch 110504 October 1944 to CTG 71.1 (DARTER, DACE, HAMMER-HEAD).

\*\*\*\* War Patrol Report DARTER, Report of 4TH War Patrol, Serial 020, November 5th, 1944.



He advised the DACE at 0156 of his decision.\*

At 0915, having arrived in the western approaches to Balabac Strait, he submerged and commenced patrolling.\*\*

At 1924 he surfaced and continued his patrol. However, instead of remaining in the western approaches as directed, he headed for the southwest approaches\*\* as shown in Diagram C.

Sometime after dark he received two dispatches from CTF 71. One dispatch directed the DACE to depart her area at dark on the following day for Fremantle;\*\*\* the other (a) advised the DARTER that it was planned to keep her in the area a few more days, and (b) directed her to notify CTF 71 if she had to leave prior to the receipt of orders to do so.\*\*\*\*

At 2400 the DARTER was bearing 240°(T), distant sixty-five miles from the entrance to the strait, which position was adequate to cover the SW approaches, but which was somewhat removed from the western approaches.

(b) It seems likely that the DACE, although she makes no mention of it in her war patrol report, received, at 0100, the same news broadcast of the Philippine invasion that was received by the DARTER. Therefore, when at 0156 she received word from the DARTER\* (presumably by voice radio) that she was returning to Balabac Strait, the Commanding Officer DACE understood the reasons for the DARTER's action. Since his assigned station was in the southern approaches to Palawan Passage, and since he was already heading in that direction, he correctly continued toward that station.\*\*\*\*\* At 0626 he submerged and remained more or less in this position throughout the day.\* With the arrival of darkness he (at 1916) surfaced\*\*\*\*\* and headed down the strait, presumably to close the DARTER somewhat.

Sometime after surfacing, he received a dispatch from CTF 71 directing him to depart the area at dark the following day for Fremantle and to follow the routing in his operation order.\*\*\* At about the same time, he intercepted a dispatch from CTF 71 to the DARTER advising that ship that he planned to retain her in the area for a few more days.\*\*\*\* At 2400 she was bearing 265°(T), distant about twenty-five miles from Cape Buliluyan (southern tip of Palawan).

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- \* War Patrol Report DACE, Report of 5TH War Patrol, Serial 09, November 6th, 1944.
  - \*\* War Patrol Report DARTER, Report of 4TH War Patrol, Serial 020, November 5th, 1944.
  - \*\*\* CTF 71 Dispatch 210528 October 1944 to TG's 71.7, 71.1, 24L/2 (DACE, HAMMERHEAD).
  - \*\*\*\* CTF 71 Dispatch 210536 October 1944 to CTG 71.1 (ROCK, BERGALL, DARTER).
  - \*\*\*\*\* Deck Log DACE, October 21st, 1944.

## (5) HAMMERHEAD.

It will be recalled from the previous day that the Commanding Officer HAMMERHEAD had decided to avoid the area where he had torpedoed several Japanese cargo ships and had therefore headed for Luconia Shoals with the intention of rounding the shoal counterclockwise and then, on the following day, of heading back toward Brunei Bay. However, as shown by his track, the commanding officer after rounding the northern end of the shoal headed on course 204°(T) which indicates that he was likely not intending to close Brunei Bay this day, but instead was planning to let Brunei Bay "cool off".\*

IT WAS UNFORTUNATE FROM THE ALLIED VIEWPOINT THAT THE COMMANDING OFFICER HAD DECIDED TO MAKE THIS DETOUR AROUND LUCONIA SHOALS FOR, ENTIRELY UNKNOWN TO THE ALLIES, THE BRUNEI FUELING GROUP (MICHISHIO, NOWAKI, ETOROFU, YUHO MARU AND HAKKO MARU) FROM SINGAPORE HAD PASSED THROUGH THE SW APPROACHES TO BRUNEI BAY DURING THE NIGHT OF OCTOBER 20TH AND THE FORENOON OF OCTOBER 21ST AND HAD ARRIVED IN THAT BAY AT 1120 ON THE 21ST.\*\* ALSO ON THIS SAME DAY JAPANESE CRUDIV SIXTEEN, COMPOSED OF TWO CRUISERS--AOBA (CA), KINU (CL), AND A DESTROYER--URANAMI, HAD AT 1710 SORTIED FROM BRUNEI BAY EN ROUTE MANILA.\*\*\*

During darkness the HAMMERHEAD patrolled on the surface and during daylight she patrolled submerged.

At 2100 she received dispatch orders from CTF 71, which in addition to other items directed her to depart at dark on this day for Fremantle via the routing in her operation order she immediately commenced clearing the area.\*

## (6) TANTIVY.

This submarine, which was en route Bonthain Roads, (south coast CELEBES) at 0415 commenced her approach to that place. At 0450 she submerged. At 0600, having discovered nothing of importance there, she reversed course for Cape Bulu Bulu, which was to the westward of Bonthain Roads. There at 1500 she discovered twenty-one small sailing craft heavily laden presumably with nickel ore. At 1516 she surfaced and commenced closing the sailing craft; opening fire on these craft, she destroyed eight. Because of enemy aircraft she was forced to submerge at 1643. At 1839 she surfaced and sank one more sailing craft, and then the other craft having disappeared, she at 1915 headed for Kangean Island.

At 2400 her commanding officer received a dispatch from CTF 71 to the effect that a plane reported that at 1200 two large ships were in

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\* War Patrol Report HAMMERHEAD, Report of 2ND War Patrol, No Serial, November 2nd, 1944.

\*\* Detailed Action Report No. 13, DESRON 10, SHO Operation, October 17th - 31st, 1944, WDC Document 161005, NA 11744.

\*\*\* Detailed Action Report No. 6, AOBA, Antisubmarine Action West of Philippines, October 18th - 25th, 1944, WDC Document 161747.



Pare Pare Bay. He therefore altered course to cover the south coast of the Celebes, from the eastern edge of his area to westward (across Makassar Strait).\*

## (7) STOIC.

The STOIC continued to patrol the Java Sea in areas E5 and E8, which covered the coastal waters off the northern coast of Java. No information is available concerning her conduct of this patrol, but she appears to have made no contacts of importance on this day.\*\* Since the information on this submarine is meager and since she made no important contacts she will be dropped from further discussion.

## (8) GURNARD.

The GURNARD, in Patrol Area D4, continued on her course toward the focal point of the traffic routes off Point Datoe\*\*\* (western Borneo). Whether her commanding officer was heading for this focal point because his mines were to be laid in that general area or whether he had in mind the possibility of intercepting there the convoy which the HAMMERHEAD had attacked on the previous morning is not clear.

Certainly, his basic orders directed him, first to lay his mines and, then, to patrol. However, these orders, with the usual phraseology, also directed him to "exploit traffic lanes and focal points en route to and from the area".\*\*\*\* It seems likely therefore that, instead of mining directly, he had decided that the convoy above referred to might well arrive in his area at this time and therefore he should exploit this concept prior to commencing the mining operation.

Whatever may have been his mental process at this point, the facts are that at 1322 he sighted three columns of smoke in the vicinity of Point Datoe. He decided that this convoy was important enough for him to attack. Believing that it (a) might be the remnants of the HAMMERHEAD convoy, and (b) would head for Singapore from this point via Api Pass, which was the channel off Point Datoe, he decided, because the waters of the pass were mined, to swing around South Natoena Islands in a counterclockwise direction (as shown on the track chart), and intercept it south of those islands.

ALTHOUGH THE COMMANDING OFFICER GURNARD'S DECISION WAS BASED (A) ON ENEMY INTENTIONS—IT WAS GOING TO SINGAPORE—RATHER THAN ON ENEMY

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\* War Patrol Report TANTIVY, Report of 7TH War Patrol, Report of COMSUBS7THFLT, Serial 00565, December 14th, 1944; CTF 71 Dispatch 210959 October 1944 to TG 71.7, Z4L/1 (TANTIVY).

\*\* CTF 71 War Diary, October 21st, 1944.

\*\*\* War Patrol Report GURNARD, Report of 7TH War Patrol, Serial 030, November 17th, 1944.

\*\*\*\* CTG 71.1 Operation Order No. 145-44, No Serial, October 8th, 1944 to GURNARD.

CAPABILITIES—IT MIGHT BE GOING ELSEWHERE, AND (B) ON THE SUPPOSITION THAT THESE SMOKES REPRESENTED A CONVOY AND MOST LIKELY THE HAMMERHEAD CONVOY WHEN, IN FACT, IT MAY HAVE BEEN SOMETHING ELSE, AND ALTHOUGH THE EXECUTION OF THE DECISION WOULD DELAY BY A DAY OR SO THE MINING OF THE AREAS DESIGNATED, IT IS CONSIDERED THAT THE DECISION WAS CORRECT. THIS SEEMS SO FOR (A) DESPITE HIS SPECIFIC ORDERS, THE COMMANDING OFFICER GURNARD ALSO WAS GUIDED BY THE FOLLOWING BASIC INSTRUCTIONS: "IN CARRYING OUT YOUR ORDERS, WHICH LEAVE SO MUCH TO THE INITIATIVE OF THE COMMANDING OFFICER, KEEP IN MIND THAT THERE IS NO GREATER SECURITY AND NO QUICKER MEANS OF ULTIMATE VICTORY THAN THE SINKING OF ALL ENEMY SHIPS ENCOUNTERED. THE ATTITUDE OF THE COMMANDING OFFICER SETS THE STANDARD FOR THE SHIP,"\* AND (B) A CHART ANALYSIS SHOWS THAT, WITH ANY GOOD FORTUNE, HE WOULD LIKELY INTERCEPT THIS CONVOY.

At 1615, in accordance with his decision, the commanding officer surfaced and set course and speed to intercept this convoy by rounding the South Natoena Islands and arriving in a position somewhere to the westward of St. Petrus Light prior to dawn.

At 2400 the GURNARD was bearing 322°(T), about thirty miles from St. Petrus Light.

(9) BATFISH.

This submarine continued on toward her patrol station in Area A8. She appears to have operated submerged during daylight (she had submerged at 0717 when she sighted visually several small sailboats in the vicinity of the Tiger Islands) and on the surface during darkness. At 2000 she observed several explosions in the vicinity of Makassar City—which she estimated were the result of Allied air attacks.\*\* Although the information thereon is obscure, these explosions do not appear to have resulted from such an attack and were the result of some other cause.

Except for this, the day was uneventful.

At 2400 the BATFISH was bearing 228°(T), distant forty miles from Cape Bulu Bulu.

(10) STORM.

The STORM was patrolling the approach to Gulf of Boni (southern Celebes) and during this day patrolled the area fifteen miles due east of the southern tip of Saleier Island. She apparently conducted a routine patrol and made no contacts.\*\*\* Since the information on this submarine is meager and since she made no important contacts she will be dropped from further discussion.

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\* CTG 71.1 Operation Plan No. 1-44, Serial 00270, September 13th, 1944, Annex B, Paragraph 27.

\*\* War Patrol Report BATFISH, Report of 5TH War Patrol, Serial 057, December 1st, 1944.

\*\*\* War Patrol Report STORM, Report of 8TH War Patrol, Report of COMSUB-7THFLT, Serial 00355, December 11th, 1944.



(11) These submarines which were to the south of NEI Barrier and were heading north to patrol stations as indicated below will be dropped from discussion until they arrive within the limits of the diagram.

(a) TANTALUS en route her assigned patrol station in the vicinity of Anambas Island.\*

(b) MUSKALLUNGE en route to Area A6 via Darwin.\*\*

(c) GROWLER and HAKE en route Area A4 via Exmouth Gulf.\*\*\*

(d) HARDHEAD which had departed Fremantle at 1410 this day was en route Area A4 via Exmouth Gulf in company with the GUNNEL as far as the gulf.

(e) GUNNEL which had departed Fremantle at 1405 this day was en route Areas A7 and A8 (off western Luzon) via Darwin.

(12) BONEFISH.

The BONEFISH, having completed her lifeguard duties, was en route on the surface to the CONVOY COLLEGE Safety Lane. At 0335 which was just five hours earlier than directed in her orders, the commanding officer by dispatch (a) reported to CTF 17 for duty, giving his position as Latitude 18°-44'N, Longitude 119°-40'E, (b) stated that he had 43,000 gallons of fuel and four torpedoes, aft, (c) reported having on board the crew of one SB2C from the BUNKER HILL, and (d) requested permission to proceed via Saipan for fuel and medical advice.\*\*\*\*

Sometime during the day, since the BONEFISH was operating generally on the surface, the commanding officer received a dispatch from CTF 17 giving him routing instructions to Pearl Harbor and Midway and requesting information as to which base he desired.\*\*\*\*\* Since he had already requested permission to proceed to Saipan\*\*\*\* he took no action on this dispatch, but awaited a reply to his own request.

Also during the day the BONEFISH contacted numerous aircraft which, on occasions, forced her to submerge for a while. At 2032, having arrived in the safety lane, she changed course to the eastward and headed for Balintang Channel. Three minutes later she exchanged calls with the BLACKFIN.\*\*\*\*\*

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\* CTF 71 War Diary, October 1944.  
 \*\* War Patrol Report MUSKALLUNGE, Report of 5TH War Patrol, Serial 038, December 14th, 1944.  
 \*\*\* War Patrol Report HAKE, Report of 7TH War Patrol, Serial 0149, No Date, but likely December 1944.  
 \*\*\*\* BONEFISH Dispatch 201803 October 1944 to CTF 17.  
 \*\*\*\*\* CTF 17 Dispatch 210004 October 1944 to BONEFISH.  
 \*\*\*\*\* War Patrol Report BONEFISH, Report of 6TH War Patrol, No Serial, November 8th, 1944.

Between 2130 and 2150 she received routing instructions from CTF 17 which authorized her to proceed via Saipan.\*

At 2400 the BONEFISH was just entering Balintang Channel.

Since the BONEFISH was now attached to CTF 17, her patrols will, in the future, be discussed under that commander.

(13) COD.

At midnight the COD, which had been heading to her assigned area (A2), continued to the northwestward (327°T). The commanding officer planned to operate off shore between Capes Balinao and Bojeador this day.

He remained on the surface during the night and attempted to do so during the day, but, owing to enemy aircraft, he was on occasions forced to submerge. Finally, at 1747 he surfaced for the night and headed for in-shore patrol off Cape Balinao. About this time he likely received CTF 71's dispatch reporting a convoy of seven ships in Latitude 17°-42'N, Longitude 119°-03'E.\*\* This would have been of intense interest to him for this convoy might well pass through his area, although, from the fact that the contact had been made some fifteen hours earlier, the chances were that it was headed in another direction. It is significant that he makes no mention of this dispatch or this convoy in his patrol report.

Except for the contacts on aircraft, the patrol for this day was uneventful.\*\*\*

(14) LAPON.

The LAPON, having completed her lifeguard duties off Coron Bay, was proceeding southward in the Sulu Sea en route to Fremantle. She exchanged calls with the BREEM and RATON during the day and by midnight was nearing the approach to Sibutu Passage.\*\*\*\* She proceeded on the surface during daylight as well as during darkness and made no contacts of importance.

(15) RATON.

The RATON was southbound in the Sulu Sea proceeding to Mios Woendi. She submerged at 0624 in the vicinity north of Pearl Bank, presumably awaiting darkness to transit Sibutu Passage.\*\*\*\*\* At 1745 she surfaced

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\* War Patrol Report BONEFISH, Report of 6TH War Patrol, No Serial, November 8th, 1944.  
 \*\* CTF 71 Dispatch 210614 October 1944 to TG 71.1 (Luzon Boats).  
 \*\*\* War Patrol Report COD, Report of 5TH War Patrol, Serial 06, November 20th, 1944.  
 \*\*\*\* War Patrol Report LAPON, Report of 6TH War Patrol, Serial 44, October 31st, 1944.  
 \*\*\*\*\* Deck Log RATON, October 21st, 1944.



October 21st

and resumed southerly courses. During the day she exchanged calls with LAPON and CERO and by midnight was approaching Sibutu Passage.\*

(16) Lifeguard Submarines, PADDLE.

The PADDLE was the only remaining submarine of the original four—the others were COD, LAPON and BONEFISH—which was still assigned lifeguard duties. Her lifeguard station was, as before, off Balikpapan, but only on designated days. At other times she was under orders to patrol Makassar Strait. During this day she conducted a submerged patrol along a line paralleling the Borneo coast SW of Point Mangkalihat and at a distance of about three miles from the coast.\*\* At 1952 she surfaced and commenced conducting her patrol across Makassar Strait between Cape Mangkalihat and North Watcher Island, in accordance with CTF 71's orders for the previous day.

(17) Submarines retiring from the area, in addition to those discussed above, were BAYA, HOE, SEA ROVER, SPITEFUL, TELEMACHUS, STURDY, ZWAARDVISCH.\*\*\* These submarines, since they were beyond the NEI barrier, are, for the purposes of this analysis, considered as no longer participating in the KING II Operation.

(2) Operations of CAAF SOWESPAC, October 21st.

CAAF SOWESPAC remained with COMSOWESPAC aboard the NASHVILLE while the operation of his aircraft in support of KING II continued to be controlled from his headquarters at Hollandia.

At 0948 he went ashore at the northern beachhead in company with COMSOWESPAC.\*\*\*\*

During his visit ashore he inspected the Tacloban airdrome and was pleased to find that C.G. FIRST Cavalry Division already had bulldozers and graders at work filling up bomb craters and getting the ground leveled off.\*\*\*\*\* This work had been started by the 46th Engineer Construction Battalion immediately after its capture on the previous day.\*\*\*\*\* It was important that CAAF SOWESPAC inspect this airfield since it was the first one captured, and it was planned by D+5 to have one airfield with an airstrip 5000 feet by 100 feet with undispersed parking areas for two groups of fighters and one squadron of night fighters. Since, as a result of his

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- \* War Patrol Report RATON, Report of 6TH War Patrol, No Serial, December 1st, 1944.
  - \*\* War Patrol Report PADDLE, Report of 6TH War Patrol, Serial 018, November 1st, 1944.
  - \*\*\* CAVALLA arrived at Fremantle this day.
  - \*\*\*\* War Diary NASHVILLE, October 21st, 1944.
  - \*\*\*\*\* George C. Kenney, General Kenney Reports, (New York, 1949), Page 450.
  - \*\*\*\*\* 6TH U.S. Army, Report of the Leyte Operation, October 17th - December 25th, 1944, Pages 113 and 233.

inspection, CAAF SOWESPAC estimated that Tacloban Airfield was large enough for one group of seventy-five fighters and perhaps a few more single engine aircraft,\* it seems clear that it was finally decided at this point that Tacloban Airfield was the first one to be made ready.

CAAF SOWESPAC WAS ANXIOUS TO GET THE FORTY-NINTH FIGHTER GROUP DEPLOYED FORWARD FROM MOROTAI ON SCHEDULE BY D+5, BECAUSE HE WAS SOMEWHAT SKEPTICAL OF THE ABILITY OF THE CARRIERS TO CONTINUE SUSTAINED AIR SUPPORT AFTER THAT TIME.\*\* THIS VIEW WAS ALSO SHARED BY COMSOWESPAC, ALTHOUGH TO A LESSER EXTENT. THIS SEEMS SO BECAUSE, IN THIS OPERATION, HE HAD BEEN WILLING FOR THE FIRST TIME TO LAUNCH AN ASSAULT BEYOND THE COVER OF HIS OWN LAND-BASED AIR.\*\*\* THIS MATTER IS COMMENTED ON MORE FULLY UNDER "OPERATIONS OF COMSOWESPAC, OCTOBER 21ST".

At 1303 CAAF SOWESPAC returned aboard the NASHVILLE with the other members of the observing party.\*\*\*\*

On this date his headquarters at Hollandia issued an intelligence summary wherein, under the heading "Situation Review", referring to the THIRDFLT devastating air attacks on the Nansei Shoto, Formosa and Luzon areas it stated "It must be recorded again that in spite of extreme provocation the Japanese fleet did not appear during these memorable eight days. With helpless though not indifferent eyes it saw the enactment of another phase in the smashing of the Japanese merchant marine". In this summary, under the heading "Late Information", his headquarters stated that the above situation review had been completed some days before publication and that since that time "excellent progress has been made by the Allied forces on Leyte. Air opposition has been slight".\*\*\*\*\*

FROM THE ABOVE IT SEEMS CORRECT TO SAY THAT HEADQUARTERS AAF SOWESPAC DID NOT ANTICIPATE JAPANESE NAVAL REACTION AT THIS TIME IN OTHER THAN LIMITED STRENGTH.

Except for the above nothing else of importance happened this day.

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\* George C. Kenney, General Kenney Reports, (New York, 1949), Page 450.  
 \*\* Kenney Op Cit, Pages 447, 449, 450, 454.  
 \*\*\* COMSOWESPAC Dispatch 221148 October 1944 to COM3RDFLT, info COMINCH, CINCPAC, CTF 77 and CTG 38.1.  
 \*\*\*\* War Diary NASHVILLE, October 21st, 1944.  
 \*\*\*\*\* Intelligence Summary No. 246, Headquarters AAF SOWESPAC, October 23rd, 1944.



## (a) Operations of C.G. FIFTH Air Force, October 21st.

C.G. FIFTH Air Force, having assigned the following tasks to be accomplished on this day by his command in the Philippines, awaited the results:\*

## (1) C.G. FIFTH Bomber Command:

(a) To strike Cagayan Town using eleven squadrons of B-24's.

(b) To conduct sea searches in Philippines area night October 20th/21st using two B-24's.

## (2) Commanding Officer 310th Bombardment Wing:

(a) To conduct armed reconnaissance of the Mindanao Sea using one squadron of P-38's.

(b) To strike airdromes in southern Negros and Bohol Islands using two squadrons of B-25's.

## (3) Commanding Officer 91st Photo Reconnaissance Wing:

(a) To Photo-reconnoiter Jolo and Tawi Tawi.

## (4) CTG 73.4 (Commander Fleet Air Wing SEVENTEEN):

(a) To carry out Search Plan FOX using ten PB4Y's.

At about 1117 he received at his headquarters in Biak (OWI) a dispatch from the Commanding Officer 310th Bombardment Wing at Morotai, promulgating the air operations contemplated for October 22nd from that base stating, among other things, that (a) Search Plan FOX would be executed by navy PB4Y's and PV's, (b) sixteen P-38's would make a fighter sweep from Jolo Island north to Zamboanga and (c) twelve B-25's would make an antishipping sweep from Tawi Tawi Island north through the Sulu Archipelago.\*\*

This dispatch is of interest because, from a study of C.G. FIFTH Air Force's fragmentary order for the 22nd, it indicates that said fragmentary order was an organized assembly of orders issued earlier by his various commanders rather than a directive planned by FIFTH Air Force headquarters.

\* HQ 5TH Air Force, Fragmentary Field Order No. 295, October 21st, 1944.

\*\* Commanding Officer 310th Bombardment Wing Dispatch 211047/I October 1944 to all interested commands.

During the day he learned that his prescribed tasks had been accomplished as follows:

(1) Forty-two B-24's had attacked Cagayan Town, adjacent to the Del Monte airfield complex in northern Mindanao, destroying many buildings and starting numerous fires. There was no enemy interception or antiaircraft fire.

(2) Six B-25's had bombed Misamis in southern Mindanao, wrecking barracks-type buildings and destroying one float plane.

(3) Fourteen P-38's had strafed twenty-three out of thirty trucks near Kibawe in central Mindanao after making an antishipping sweep over Mindanao Sea with negative results.

(4) Ten P-47's had made a fighter sweep from Bacolod airfield to Fabrica airfield, both on Negros, but found no worthwhile targets.

(5) Six B-25's (THIRTEENTH Air Force) had attacked coast-wise shipping between Cebu and Mactan Island and claimed sinking three small cargo vessels; also attacked small island south of Mactan setting two oil tanks afire.

(6) Two XB-24's had made night searches over the Mindanao Sea with negative results.\*

It will be noted that airdromes in southern Negros and Bohol Island were not bombed. While the reason for this is not explained, it seems likely that C.G. FIFTH Air Force, realizing that owing to the lateness of CTF 77's reply to COMTHIRDFLT's 200314\*\* it was probable that COMTHIRDFLT and CTG 77.4 would attack the western Visayas that day, thought it unwise to risk his bombers there but instead made (a) a precautionary fighter sweep over Negros and (b) two air strikes by B-25's (one on Misamis, the other in the Cebu area). If this was his reasoning it was correct for as discussed under "Operations of CTG 38.2 and 38.3, October 21st" COMTHIRDFLT struck the western Visayas heavily during the forenoon.

The Japanese action reports say little about these strikes. However, one report\*\*\* which included the strikes by naval aircraft as well listed the damage accomplished at Cagayan, Cebu and Mactan Island. This information is included under "Operations of CTG 77.4, October 21st".

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\* 5TH Air Force Weekly Intelligence Review No. 47, Period October 15th - 21st, 1944, Prepared by the Office of the Assistant Chief of Staff, A-2 also COM7THFLT Dispatch 220305, October 1944 to usual addressees.

\*\* COM3RDFLT Dispatch 200314 October 1944 to CTF 77, COMSOWESPAC, all TFC's 3RD and 7TH Fleets.

\*\*\* War Diary 61st Air Flotilla, October 21st, 1944, WDC Document 161643, NA 12260.



In addition to the above C.G. FIFTH Air Force carried out Search Plan FOX and also launched attacks against the central Visayas using PV-1 type aircraft from navy squadrons under his operational control at Morotai, which are discussed under the "Operations of CTF 73, October 21st".

At 1732 he notified all commands concerned that one group of B-24's would again hit Cagayan between 1115 and 1130 October 22nd.\*

At 1758 he received a dispatch from CTF 77 stating (a) the scope of the motor torpedo boat operations and (b) that CTG 70.1 would advise him directly of the operations scheduled west of the line prescribed in COMSOWESPAC's 170939.\*\* The import of this dispatch is discussed fully under "Operations of CTF 77, October 21st".

At 1810 he received a dispatch from COMSEVENTHFLT to the effect that Coron Bay was a likely concentration and fueling point for important elements of the Japanese fleet and requesting that he (a) keep the bay under the closest practicable air observation by daily search, (b) report and attack enemy units sighted and (c) if no units sighted, attack enemy facilities in order to discourage the use of the bay.\*\*\*

(b) Operations of CTF 73 (Naval Air Force), October 21st.

CTF 73 continued toward Morotai in his flagship CURRITUCK while his Morotai-based squadrons continued to function under the operational control of the Commanding Officer 310th Bombardment Wing, who, under C.G. FIFTH Air Force, was responsible for all air operations from Morotai.

These operations were similar to those described under "Operations of CTF 73 for October 20th."\*\*\*\*

His FOX Plan searches were all negative as well as were the augmenting night PBY searches in sectors ONE, TWO and THREE.\*\*\*\*\*

His PV's from VPB-146 on attack mission (a) strafed seven loaded personnel barges off Jolo Island, sinking two and damaging the others, and (b) strafed and bombed two small cargo vessels at Tawi Tawi, setting one afire and leaving the other dead in the water.\*\*\*\*\*

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- \* C.G. 5TH Air Force Dispatch 211732/I October 1944 to COMSOWESPAC, CAAF SOWESPAC, CTF's 77, 78 and 79, COM3RDFLT, etc.
  - \*\* CTF 77 Dispatch 210439 October 1944 to CAAF SOWESPAC and C.G. 5TH Air Force.
  - \*\*\* COM7THFLT Dispatch 210526 October 1944 to CAAF SOWESPAC and C.G. 5TH Air Force, info COMSOWESPAC and COM3RDFLT.
  - \*\*\*\* COMAIR7THFLT Operation Plan No. 8-44, October 1944, Serial 000166, October 15th, 1944.
  - \*\*\*\*\* War Diaries VPB 101, 115, 146 and 29, October 21st, 1944; also C.G. 5TH Air Force Dispatch 220713/I October 1944 to all interested in current SOWESPAC operations.
  - \*\*\*\*\* War Diary VPB 146, October 21st, 1944; also Aircraft Action Reports Nos. 10 and 12, VPB 146, October 21st, 1944.

These claims, however, are not supported by the postwar analyses.\*

At 1636 he broke radio silence—his operation order prescribed radio silence except in emergency or imminent contact with enemy forces or when necessary to break silence for traffic essential to the accomplishment of the task assigned\*\*—and directed CTG 73.4 in effect that in conducting Search Plan FOX all important sightings of hostile men of war and of large shipping or air concentrations were to be passed immediately by him to (a) (1) CINCPAC, (2) COMTHIRDFLT and (3) all TFC's THIRD Fleet via THIRD Fleet TFC's circuit (4295)kcs, (b) (1) COMSOWESPAC, (2) CANF SOWESPAC, (3) CAAF SOWESPAC and (4) C.G. THIRTEENTH Air Force.\*\*\*

It seems likely that the above dispatch was occasioned by (a) his receipt of COMSEVENTHFLT dispatch 210526 to C.G. FIFTH Air Force wherein that commander requested that the closest practicable air observation be made in order to detect any important elements of the Japanese fleet that might use this anchorage as an assembly or fueling area,\*\*\*\* (b) his realization that his search planes would probably be instructed to pay particular attention to this area and (c) his desire to insure that any contact reports made by these search planes would be sent to the appropriate commanders with utmost dispatch. In spite of the foregoing factors which may have prompted CTF 73 to initiate this message, it seems strange that he designated the THIRD Fleet TFC circuit for the relay of aircraft contact reports since the Air Operational Intelligence Circuit\*\*\*\*\* had been established for that very purpose. His own instructions for search planes\*\*\*\*\* were quite explicit and apparently adequate; but obviously, Commander Aircraft SEVENTH Fleet felt the need to emphasize the urgency of forwarding plane contact reports.

At 2129 he advised his command that effective 2400 that date and continuing until further notice he, himself, and COMAIRSEVENTHFLT would maintain radio silence and directed that (a) radio traffic be routed via Bells (Australian) and Manus FOX and (b) the TANGIER assume control of TF 73 circuit and to guard SEVENTH Fleet TFC's circuit;\*\*\*\*\*

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- \* The Imperial Japanese Navy in World War II, prepared by Military History Section, Special Staff, GHQ, FEC, February 1952.
  - \*\* COMAIR7THFLT Operation Plan No. 8-44, October 1944, Serial 000166, October 15th, 1944.
  - \*\*\* CTF 73 Dispatch 210736 October 1944 to CTG 73.4, info C.O. 310TH Bombardment Wing, CTG's 73.2 and 73.7.
  - \*\*\*\* COM7THFLT Dispatch 210526 October 1944 to C.G. 5TH Air Force and CAAF SOWESPAC, info COMSOWESPAC and COM3RDFLT.
  - \*\*\*\*\* CANF SOWESPAC Communication Plan No. 3-44, Article 2200, Item 57, Page 22; also Annex F to COMSOWESPAC TF's Operation Plan No. 14-44, Article 2214(f), Page 4 and Article 2218(i), Page 5.
  - \*\*\*\*\* COMAIR7THFLT letter Serial 000167, October 15th, 1944. Subject: Special Instructions for Search Planes - Aircraft 7TH Fleet.
  - \*\*\*\*\* CTF 73 Dispatch 211229 October 1944 to TF 73, COM7THFLT, TFC's 7THFLT, TG 70.1, CAAF SOWESPAC, COMSOWESPAC, etc.



This latter instruction was important because the TANGIER was at Morotai Island and upon arrival of CTF 73, would be able to provide that commander with any radio traffic not previously forwarded. This traffic would likely be mainly administrative.

At 2400 the CURRITUCK was bearing 108°(T), distant 400 miles from Morotai.

(B) CINCPAC - CINCPOA, October 21st.

At 0340 CINCPOA directed that effective 1500Z (2400 I) October 23rd the Forward Area and TF 57 would revert to the direct control of CINCPOA except for units of Fleet Air Wing ONE and SERVRON TEN based in the Marianas and Western Carolines which would continue to operate as task groups of the THIRD Fleet.\*

(1) Western Pacific Task Forces.

(a) Operations of COMTHIRDFLT.

COMTHIRDFLT, in NEW JERSEY (TG 38.2), proceeded in company with TG's 38.2 and 38.3 to the vicinity of San Bernardino Strait in Latitude 13°-30'N, Longitude 125°-30'E, from which position, beginning at about dawn, these two groups launched (a) a search between 310°(T) and 020°(T) to a distance of 300 miles and (b) a fighter sweep and two deckload strikes (ABLE and BAKER) to destroy enemy aircraft in the Bicol - Visayas areas. Meanwhile, he knew that if all went according to plan\*\* TG's 38.1 and 38.4 would on this day fuel and receive replacement aircraft in Area MICK\*\*\* and that TG 30.3, now considered well out of range of enemy aircraft, would continue toward Ulithi.

During the night he pondered over the action to take with reference to the BUNKER HILL. He finally decided that it would be wise to return that ship to Manus. He therefore, in preparation for this event, at 0845 (a) advised CTG 38.2 by visual dispatch that it was his present intention to send the BUNKER HILL to Manus about October 23rd and (b) directed that commander to nominate as escorts the two destroyers most requiring overhaul.\*\*\*\*

At 0854 he received information from CINCPAC to the effect that he (CINCPAC) believed that Commander Main Force had probably sortied from the Inland Sea the evening or night of the previous day.

At 0917 he received a dispatch from CTF 77 which (a) requested him to sweep all airfields as practicable north of Latitude 12°-00'N with the

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\* CINCPOA Dispatch 201840 October 1944 to COM3RDFLT, COMFWDAREA, COMWESCAROLINES, COMSERVPAC, COMAIRPAC, COMGENPOA, COMGENAAFPOA.

\*\* COMFIRSTCARTASKFORPAC Operation Order 11-44, Serial 0020, October 1st, 1944, Annex C, Employment Schedule.

\*\*\* War Diaries COM3RDFLT and SITKOH BAY, October 21st, 1944.

\*\*\*\* COM3RDFLT Visual Dispatch 202345 October 1944 to CTG 38.2, info CTF 38.

primary objective the destruction of enemy aircraft and (b) advised that (1) the army was covering all airfields south of this line, and (2) no coordination with other activities was required.\*

He realized from this that there was a possibility of interference between the planes of TG 38.2, which were even then striking the western Visayas, and planes of CAAF SOWESPAC, which likewise might be striking the same areas. However, he knew that CTG 38.2 had cautioned his pilots that army aircraft would be in the area;\*\* and since he had received no interference reports, it seems likely that he felt that this was an indication that fortunately no interference had occurred.

At 1005 he advised COMAIRPAC in part that (a) practically one hundred per cent of the pilots of Fighter Squadron EIGHT (VF-8) were suffering from combat fatigue, (b) he was therefore sending the BUNKER HILL to Manus for (1) availability and (2) removal not only of Fighter Squadron EIGHT but of Air Group (CVG) EIGHT in its entirety and (c) he planned to request COMAIRSEVENTHFLT to provide pilots for the VF planes which would be retained on board.\*\*\*

THIS RECOMMENDATION TO REMOVE THE ENTIRE AIR GROUP WAS, OF COURSE, CORRECT FOR THE DETERIORATION OF THE FIGHTER SQUADRON COULD BE EXPECTED TO AFFECT THE MORALE OF THE ENTIRE AIR GROUP AS WELL.

At 1028, referring to the above dispatch, he advised COMAIRSEVENTHFLT Logistics among other matters that he would require thirty-six VF pilots for BUNKER HILL in Manus by not later than October 30th.\*\*\*\*

At 1032 he (a) requested COMAIRPAC and CTF 57 to augment the carrier aircraft replacement pool at Guam with planes and pilots as early as practicable and (b) stated that future operations indicated desirability of loading replacement CVE's at Guam in lieu of Manus in order to reduce the steaming distances and thereby speed replacements.\*\*\*\*\*

THE ABOVE THREE DISPATCHES CONCERNING REPLACEMENT PILOTS IN PARTICULAR SHOW THE SERIOUS EFFECT THE DETERIORATION OF VF-8 WAS HAVING ON THE THOUGHT PROCESSES OF COMTHIRDFLT. HE NOW CLEARLY FELT THAT (A) IT WOULD BE WISE TO REMOVE THE BUNKER HILL WITH ITS DEBILITATED AIR GROUP FROM THE COMBAT AREA ENTIRELY AND (B) OTHER AIR GROUPS IN OTHER CARRIERS MIGHT LIKEWISE BE RAPIDLY DETERIORATING; AND THEREFORE, EVERY EFFORT SHOULD BE MADE TO INSURE THAT REPLACEMENT PILOTS IN QUANTITY WERE RELATIVELY NEARBY SO THAT CHANGES AS NECESSARY COULD BE MADE WITH THE MINIMUM DELAY.

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- \* CTF 77 Dispatch 201942 October 1944 to COM3RDFLT, info CINCPAC, all TFC's 3RD and 7TH Fleets, 310th Bombardment Wing, etc.
  - \*\* CTG 38.2 TBS Voice Radio Message 202148/I October 1944 to TU 38.2.1.
  - \*\*\* COM3RDFLT Dispatch 210105 October 1944 to COMAIRPAC, info COMAIR7THFLT Logistics, CTF 38, CTG's 38.1 and 38.2, CINCPAC.
  - \*\*\*\* COM3RDFLT Dispatch 210128 October 1944 to COMAIR7THFLT Logistics, info COMAIRPAC, CTF 38, CTG 38.2.
  - \*\*\*\*\* COM3RDFLT Dispatch 210132 October 1944 to COMAIRPAC, CTF 57, info CTF 38, CTG 38.1, CTF 96, CTG 19.9, CINCPAC.



HE HAD EVERY REASON TO BE CONCERNED FOR HIS CARRIERS WERE PRESENTLY SCHEDULED FOR AIR STRIKES AGAINST THE EMPIRE. THIS WOULD REQUIRE "STRATEGICAL BOMBING ON A LARGER SCALE"\* WHERE HIS PILOTS, IN ADDITION TO MEETING ENEMY FIGHTER PILOTS, WOULD ENCOUNTER HEAVY ANTI-AIRCRAFT FIRE WHICH THEY DID NOT LIKE. THIS HAD AN ADVERSE EFFECT ON THEIR MORALE AND THEREFORE, TENDED TO INCREASE THE COMBAT FATIGUE FACTOR. IN THIS CONNECTION (A) THE COMMANDING OFFICER HORNET STATED "CARRIER AIR GROUPS CANNOT MAINTAIN THEIR EFFICIENCY FOR OVER THREE MONTHS AT THE PRESENT PACE. THIS WILL BECOME MORE APPARENT WHEN TASK FORCE THIRTY-EIGHT RUNS OUT OF TACTICAL TARGETS AND TURNS TO STRATEGICAL BOMBING ON A LARGER SCALE. PILOTS DO NOT LIKE AA FIRE, WHICH IS ALWAYS ACCURATE AND INTENSE TO A DEGREE DEPENDING UPON THE IMPORTANCE OF THE TARGET. AFTER PERIODS OF BOMBING SHORE OBJECTIVES WELL DEFENDED BY AA, THERE IS A PRONOUNCED SLACKING OFF IN DRIVE AND A TENDENCY TO TAKE IT EASY. THE CURVE OF PERCENTAGE OF DUDS ON TAKE OFF INCREASES, WHICH IS ONE OF THE FIRST SIGNS OF COMBAT FATIGUE. IT IS RECOMMENDED THAT CONSIDERATION BE GIVEN TO THE PROBLEM OF ACCELERATING READINESS OF REPLACEMENT GROUPS",\* AND (B) CTF 38 STATED, IN PART, THAT "CURRENTLY OUR CARRIER AIR GROUPS ARE BEING DEBILITATED BY EXTENDED PERIODS OF COMBAT DUTY UNDER SHIP-BASED CONDITIONS. SERIOUS CONSIDERATION MUST BE GIVEN IMMEDIATELY TO RELIEVING CARRIER AIR GROUPS EVERY FOUR MONTHS".\*\*

COMTHIRDFLT, in his forwarding endorsement to item (b) above stated, "Steps are now being taken to establish reasonable facilities for training and rehabilitation of carrier air groups in the forward area and replacement groups forward are being made available in case of necessity. Arrangements are also being made to reduce combat employment periods for carrier air groups to not more than six months".\*\*\*

THE ABOVE ACTION BY COMTHIRDFLT AND THE RECOMMENDATIONS OF CTF 38 SHOW CLEARLY THAT THE HIGH COMMAND UP TO THIS POINT WAS NOT SUFFICIENTLY AWARE OF THE ADVERSE EFFECT THAT THE LONG SUSTAINED COMBAT OPERATIONS WERE HAVING ON THE PILOTS AND AIR CREWS OF THE CARRIERS. HAD THEY BEEN SUFFICIENTLY AWARE OF THIS ILL EFFECT, IS IT NOT REASONABLE TO ASSUME THAT REMEDIAL ACTION WOULD HAVE BEEN TAKEN PRIOR TO KING II? AS IT WAS, THE REMEDIAL ACTION RECOMMENDED ABOVE WOULD BE HELPFUL IN LATER OPERATIONS BUT WOULD NOT BE HELPFUL, EXCEPT IN A MINOR WAY, IN KING II.

This lack of awareness was due, in part, to the fact that (a) the tempo of operations at this stage of the Pacific war had increased considerably with the forced advancement of planned schedules and (b) Allied carrier aircraft in the POA until this time had had little experience and no sustained experience in attacking strongly defended and extensive inland targets and therefore, adequate experience was not available upon which to base logistics and personnel factors (such as replacement, rotation, etc.).

\* Action Report HORNET, Ryukyu Island, Formosa, and Philippines Operations, October 2nd - 27th, 1944, Serial 0031, October 28th, 1944.

\*\* Action Report CTF 38, Summary of TF 38 Operations, August 29th - October 30th, 1944, Serial 00505, November 3rd, 1944, Part III.

\*\*\* COM3RDFLT's 1ST Endorsement on Action Report CTF 38, Summary of TF 38 Operations, August 29th - October 30th, 1944, Serial 00505, November 3rd, 1944, Part III, Serial 0067, January 16th, 1945.



At 1103 he advised CTG 30.8 (Oiler Group) that he planned to fuel one carrier group each day from October 22nd until further notice in Area MICK, or in that vicinity as later directed.\*

During the forenoon, as well as on preceding days, he had become increasingly concerned with the non-delivery, inordinate delay and volume of repeated transmissions affecting the delivery of vital dispatch traffic, which caused commanders to employ increased precedence as a means of expediting delivery. The net result was a gross overloading of the Primary and Secondary FOX broadcasts at Honolulu and Manus jointly servicing Central Pacific, THIRDFLT and SOWESPAC units. Therefore, in order to rectify this untenable situation, he at 1245 made certain recommendations thereon in a long dispatch to CINCPAC of which the most important recommendation was that a Primary FOX be assigned exclusively for THIRDFLT traffic and that an alternate broadcast be established for servicing units not in THIRDFLT. He suggested that if his recommendations were accepted they be made effective as of November 1st.\*\*

In suggesting that the proposed modifications in the system of broadcast coverage to the forces afloat become effective about ten days hence, COMTHIRDFLT was (a) aware that time would be required to (1) study the proposal, (2) effect inter-theater coordination, (3) promulgate necessary instructions to operating forces and shore-radio stations should the recommendations be adopted and (4) allow commands affected to notify shore-radio stations concerned of the broadcasts they would copy and (b) desirous of having any such changes initiated during a period of decreased activity in current operations when the volume of communication traffic would be at a minimum. Thus, the date of November 1st seems to indicate a feeling on the part of COMTHIRDFLT that enemy fleet reaction to the Leyte landings, whatever its nature, would likely be completed during the intervening period. This date would also give a suitable shakedown period for the new system of broadcasts prior to Operation HOTFOOT, scheduled at this time for November 11th.

Also during the forenoon he studied the existing situation. He knew since he was in the NEW JERSEY with TG 38.2 (TG 38.3 was operating nearby) that (a) the air strikes of TG's 38.2 and 38.3 on that day against the Bicol - Visayan area had discovered few worthwhile targets and therefore the danger from enemy forces (and notably enemy air forces) was not at the moment serious, and (b) there had been no reports of significant sightings of enemy forces so far on this day by either SEVENTHFLT forces or by Western Pacific Task Forces nor had there been any on the preceding day.

Since the operations within the central Philippines appeared to be progressing favorably and since he was expecting enemy opposition to be more in the nature of raids including Tokyo Express runs, he appears to have felt that CTG 77.2 and CTG 77.4 would be able to supply any necessary support and close cover to TF 77 against such operations. He, therefore, now made

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\* COM3RDFLT Dispatch 210203 October 1944 to CTG 30.8, info CTF 38.

\*\* COM3RDFLT Dispatch 210345 October 1944 to CINCPAC, info COM7THFLT.



an estimate of the situation to determine in what manner he might better accomplish his objective as assigned him in CINCPOA Operation Plan No. 8-44. It will be recalled that in this plan he had been given instructions as follows: "In case opportunity for destruction of a major portion of the enemy fleet offer or can be created, such destruction becomes the primary task".\* He wished to discover whether such a situation offered, or whether he could create a situation which would entice the Japanese fleet units to battle. He seems to have reasoned as follows: (a) there appeared to be little indication of prospective attacks by the Japanese in strength in the waters east of the Philippines; (b) he had intelligence information that Japanese oilers were moving in the direction of Coron Bay; and (c) he had also had several reports of sightings of Japanese surface forces in the South China Sea, although these sightings were now several days old and were widely separated.

From the above he decided that the movements of these Japanese forces showed that possibly the Japanese were planning to bring heavy units into the South China Sea to the westward of the Philippines and that this would create the situation referred to in his basic orders. He therefore at 1354 queried COMSOWESPAC as follows: "Since the South China Sea may suddenly become a critical area, information is requested as to what is the earliest estimate for a safe route to that sea via Surigao and Mindoro Straits for (a) well escorted oilers and (b) major combatant ships."\*\*

That he had for some time been considering the possibility of such an excursion westward of the Philippines is disclosed by the fact that during a conference in early October he had indicated to COMSOWESPAC the immediate importance of opening Surigao Straits for shipping. As a consequence COMSOWESPAC had directed the C.G. SIXTH Army and Commander Allied Naval Forces to clear the northern tip of the Surigao Peninsula of Mindanao and Dinagat Island as additional tasks related to those already set forth in COMSOWESPAC Operation Instruction 70, which required the seizure of objectives to clear Panaon Strait and Surigao Strait.\*\*\*

WHILE THE CONCEPT THAT THE SOUTH CHINA SEA MIGHT SUDDENLY BECOME A CRITICAL AREA WAS SOUND AND WHILE IT WAS CORRECT THEREFORE FOR COMTHIRDFLT TO OBTAIN VITAL INFORMATION CONCERNING ROUTES INTO THAT AREA SINCE THE DEMANDS OF THE SITUATION, OR CINCPOA HIMSELF, MIGHT REQUIRE HIM TO GO INTO THAT AREA, THERE IS CONSIDERABLE DOUBT AS TO THE WISENESS OF THIS DISPATCH AT THIS TIME, FOR IT GAVE INDICATIONS OF A DESIRE TO DEPART FROM HIS PRESENT POSITION IN STRATEGIC SUPPORT AND TO OPERATE ELSEWHERE, WHICH HE MIGHT WELL HAVE REALIZED WOULD BE OF CONSIDERABLE CONCERN TO COMSOWESPAC AND CTF 77.

At 1203 he received as an information addressee CTF 77's request to CTG 77.4 to conduct afternoon sweeps of the airfields in the western

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\* CINCPOA Operation Plan No. 8-44, Serial 000851, September 27th, 1944.

\*\* COM3RDFLT Dispatch 210454 October 1944 to COMSOWESPAC, info CINCPAC, CTG 38.1, COMINCH, CTF's 77, 38.

\*\*\* COMSOWESPAC Dispatch 041340 October 1944 to C.G. 6TH Army, CANF SOWESPAC, info CAAF SOWESPAC, CINCPOA, COM3RDFLT.



Visayas and northern Mindanao, the primary objective being destruction of enemy aircraft;\* and a few minutes later at 1237 he intercepted CTG 77.4's dispatch to CTF 77 recommending the organization of morning and afternoon sweeps in force over Cebu, Panay, Negros and northern Mindanao by TG 77.4 forces in order to prevent the frequency of harassing raids.\*\*

From these dispatches he could see that sufficient aircraft were available within TG 77.4 to accomplish any necessary strikes in the western Visayas.

At 1248 he advised his command that (a) a new Point DIESEL in Latitude 16°-35'N, Longitude 130°-20'E was the NE corner of a fueling area 100 miles east - west and fifty miles north - south, and (b) Area CONDOR, established by CANF SOWESPAC, which would be used when required by THIRDFLT, had its NE corner at Latitude 13°-55'N, Longitude 130°-15'E and was 150 miles east - west and seventy-five miles north - south.\*\*\*

At 1315 he received from CTF 77 an amplifying report of the Leyte landings giving the situation as of 1400.\*\*\*\* This report showed continued favorable advance of the troops ashore and progress in unloading at the beachhead. In particular, it made no further mention of any Japanese air opposition to the Allied landings. Therefore, the satisfaction that COM-THIRDFLT had derived from the first progress report on the landings (received at 2355 the previous day) still obtained. Thus far, his task of providing cover and support to KING II had been accomplished successfully.

At 1408 he received CTG 38.2's dispatch nominating the BENHAM and STEPHAN POTTER to escort the BUNKER HILL to Manus.\*\*\*\*\*

He now continued his study of the present situation. What factors, in addition to those previously mentioned, were of particular interest to him are not known. However, it seems likely that (a) one factor of considerable concern was the necessity for being prepared for Operation HOTFOOT--air strikes against the Japanese mainland by TF 38 and for which he had issued a warning order on October 13th (on which day he was striking Formosa)--which operation was scheduled for about November 11th,\*\*\*\*\* and which based on the assumption that the (Leyte) situation would permit the withdrawal of TF 38

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- \* CTF 77 Dispatch 201949 October 1944 to CTG 77.4, info COM3RDFLT, CTF's 78 and 79.
  - \*\* CTG 77.4 Dispatch 210122 October 1944 to CTF 77.
  - \*\*\* COM3RDFLT Dispatch 210348 October 1944 to 3RDFLT, info CINCPAC, COMINCH, all concerned SOWESPAC operations.
  - \*\*\*\* CTF 77 Dispatch 201303 October 1944 to COMSOWESPAC, info COMINCH, CINCPAC, COM3RDFLT, etc.
  - \*\*\*\*\* CTG 38.2 Visual Dispatch 210501 October 1944 to COM3RDFLT, info CTF 38.
  - \*\*\*\*\* COM3RDFLT Dispatch 130338 October 1944 to CTF's 57, 59, CTG's 38.1, 30.8, info COMINCH, CINCPAC, CTF 38.



from the vicinity of the central Philippines,\* (b) a second factor, also of considerable concern, was the deterioration of the air group in the BUNKER HILL; he necessarily was forced to give consideration to the possibility that other air groups might also be deteriorating from combat fatigue and therefore that rest and replacements were necessary; and (c) a third factor was the fact that in the original employment schedule,\*\* which he had modified later\*\*\* and finally cancelled,\*\*\*\* TG's 38.2 and 38.3 were scheduled to depart for Ulithi about 1800 on D+3 to return to the THIRDFLT operating area about D+10 day, during which time TG's 38.1 and 38.4 were to operate, in general, in support of KING II.\*\* Because of this and because operations were apparently proceeding according to plan, he likely felt that it might be possible to return to the original schedule.

As a result of these considerations, he appears to have felt that he would be better able to accomplish his objectives—present as well as scheduled—if he could be released from his present restrictions. Therefore, at 1545 he (a) informed COMSOWESPAC that his present operations in strategic position to meet the threat of enemy fleet forces were somewhat restricted by the necessity for covering the transports and other vulnerable overseas movements, (b) requested early advice regarding the withdrawal of such units to safe positions and (c) stated that such information would permit him to execute an orderly rearming program for his groups and would at the same time give him more freedom for further offensive action.\*\*\*\*\*

AS MENTIONED EARLIER, THE ADVISABILITY OF SENDING DISPATCHES OF THIS NATURE AT THIS TIME WAS OPEN TO SERIOUS QUESTION FOR (A) THE ALLIES HAD ONLY MADE THEIR ASSAULT LANDING ON THE PREVIOUS DAY AND WERE NOT AS YET FIRMLY ESTABLISHED ASHORE, (B) ALLIED AIR SUPPORT WAS STILL LIMITED LARGELY TO CARRIER AIRCRAFT, FOR AS YET NO ALLIED LAND-BASED AIRCRAFT WERE OPERATING FROM PHILIPPINE BASES AND WERE NOT EXPECTED TO BE SO ESTABLISHED BEFORE D+5 AT THE EARLIEST, AND (C) THE STRENGTH AND CHARACTER OF THE EXPECTED ENEMY COUNTERACTION (AIR AND SURFACE RAIDS AND TOKYO EXPRESS OPERATIONS) HAD YET TO BE DETERMINED ALTHOUGH THERE WERE GROWING INDICATIONS THAT THIS DETERMINATION WOULD SOON BE FORTHCOMING.

At 1550 he intercepted a dispatch which seems to have irritated him. This was the dispatch from CTF 77 to CTF 38 requesting a dusk CAP of eight VF from TF 38 to be over the objective area from 1730 until 1900 on

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- \* CINCPOA Dispatch 071125 October 1944 to COM3RDFLT, info COMSOWESPAC, COMINCH, COMSUBPAC, COMSERVPAC, COMAIRPAC, CTF 38 and CTF 57.  
 \*\* COM1STCARTASKFORPAC (CTF 38) Operation Order No. 11-44, Serial 00020, October 1st, 1944, Annex C, Employment Schedule.  
 \*\*\* COM3RDFLT Dispatch 180449 October 1944 to CTG 38.1, info CTG 38.2, etc.  
 \*\*\*\* COM3RDFLT Dispatch 191329 October 1944 to CTF 38 and all TGC's of TF 38, info COMINCH, COMSOWESPAC, CINCPAC, etc.  
 \*\*\*\*\* COM3RDFLT Dispatch 210645 October 1944 to COMSOWESPAC, info CINCPAC, CTF 77, COMINCH, CTF 38, CTG 38.1.

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D+1, D+2 and thereafter as practicable.\* His irritation was due to the fact that when CTF 77 on the preceding day had made a similar request to CTG 38.1 for D-day and days subsequent thereto,\*\* as well as a request for strikes against the Visayas after D-day,\*\*\* he (COMTHIRDFLT) had personally replied for CTG 38.1 stating that he approved the Visayan strikes on the 21st.\*\*\*\* In this dispatch he had made no mention of the dusk CAP beyond citing the dispatch reference (191930)\*\* since he was probably aware that CTG 38.1 would reply in the affirmative to CTF 77's request, which was done.\*\*\*\*\* He quite likely hoped that by thus citing the dusk CAP request in conjunction with the strike request, CTF 77 would realize that he (COMTHIRDFLT) was assuming personal control over the movements and commitments of his fast carrier task groups and would therefore submit future requests of this nature directly to him for action.

He could now see that this hope had fallen on barren ground for CTF 77 instead of making a request to him had made the request to CTF 38. He reacted immediately and at 1615 (a) directed CTF 38 by TBS voice radio not to attempt to comply with CTF 77's 210425 stating that he would answer\*\*\*\*\* and (b) told CTF 77 that it was impracticable to comply and referred him to his 210645 to COMSOWESPAC (referred to above).\*\*\*\*\*

It would be instructive to discover why it was that COMTHIRDFLT omitted CINCPOA as an information addressee from this dispatch whereas in the previous dispatch relating to the same general subject matter he had included CINCPOA.

At 1757 he notified COMSOWESPAC and CTF 77 by dispatch of the results of the dawn fighter sweeps and first strikes against the Bicol - Visayas area. He stated therein that (a) there were few targets remaining in the Coron Bay and southern Luzon areas and the only shipping at Coron Bay consisted of one previously damaged cargo vessel, one small coastal cargo ship and a one-hundred foot escort, all of which were sunk; three patrol boats were sunk at Batangas Bay in southwestern Luzon, (b) one patrol boat was sunk at Cebu, (c) two medium cargo ships and two luggers were damaged at Masbate and a number of ammunition barges were destroyed, (d) thirteen airborne enemy planes were shot down, including three by search planes and CAP, (e) thirty-seven planes were destroyed on the ground, including some that had

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\* COM7THFLT Dispatch 210425 October 1944 to CTF 38, info COM3RDFLT, CTF's 78, 79, CTG's 77.4, 38.3, 38.4.

\*\* CTF 77 Dispatch 191930 October 1944 to CTG 38.1, info COM3RDFLT, CTG 77.4, etc.

\*\*\* CTF 77 Dispatch 191921 October 1944 to COM3RDFLT, info CTG 38.1, 38.2, 38.3, 38.4, 77.4, CTF's 38, 78, 79.

\*\*\*\* COM3RDFLT Dispatch 200314 October 1944 to CTF 77, info CINCPOA, COMSOWESPAC, all TFC's 3RD and 7TH Fleets.

\*\*\*\*\* CTG 38.1 Dispatch 200215 October 1944 to CTF 77, info CTG 38.4.

\*\*\*\*\* COM3RDFLT TBS Voice Radio Message 211615/I October 1944 to CTF 38.

\*\*\*\*\* COM3RDFLT Dispatch 210715 October 1944 to CTF 77, info COMSOWESPAC, CTF 38.



been previously damaged, (f) barracks buildings and a possible hangar had been damaged at Bulan in southeastern Luzon, (g) a total of forty-four enemy planes remained at Marvela (garbled—probably Manapla in northern Negros), San Jose, Bulan, Legaspi and Saravia, some of which were probably damaged and (h) own losses consisted of three planes, one pilot and one crewman.\*

Information concerning Japanese reaction to the above attacks is rather meager for the few records which are available are contradictory: (a) the navy in the southern Philippines stated that between 0735 and 1530 eighty carrier fighters (F6F's), thirty carrier bombers (SBD's) and six army medium bombers (B-25's) strafed and bombed Cebu and Mactan, hitting the airfields with several bombs and setting afire six carrier-type fighters;\*\* (b) the army in Tokyo stated that the Philippines were attacked by a total of 912 planes (eighty-one land-based) and six Japanese planes failed to return;\*\*\* (c) a postwar monograph stated that about 100 Allied carrier planes attacked Legaspi and Bulan areas;\*\*\*\* and (d) the navy in Tokyo stated that about 150 enemy aircraft attacked the central Philippines.\*\*\*\*\* Actually, the total Allied attacks were: TF 38--356; TG 77.4--44; FIFTH Air Force--64; a total of 464 strikes.

At 1810 he received, as an information addressee, a dispatch from COMSEVENTHFLT, which dispatch stated that since Coron Bay anchorage appeared most likely to be used as a concentration or fueling area for important elements of the Japanese fleet which might attempt to attack the Allied forces at Leyte, it was requested that C.G. FIFTH Air Force (a) maintain that bay under the closest practicable air observation and (b) report and attack any enemy ships sighted.\*\*\*\*\* Before the receipt of this dispatch, since he apparently had the same intelligence regarding Coron Bay that COMSEVENTHFLT had, he had already launched and recovered a morning strike group against this area and knew there was no worthwhile shipping there except a previously damaged cargo ship, a small coastal cargo vessel

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- \* COM3RDFLT Dispatch 210857 October 1944 to COMSOWESPAC, CINCPAC, info COMINCH, COM7THFLT, and all TFC's 3RDFLT.
  - \*\* War Diary 61ST Air Flotilla, October 1944, WDC Document 161643, NA 12260.
  - \*\*\* Daily Record of the War Situation, GHQ, FEC, Special Historical Collection, Supporting Documents to General of the Army Douglas MacArthur's Historical Report on Allied Operations Southwest Pacific Area (Item 4, Footlocker 10 of 10, SWPA Series, Volume II).
  - \*\*\*\* Philippine Area Naval Operations, Part II, October - December 1944, Second Demobilization Bureau, Japanese Government, October 1947, Department of the Army Historical Division, File No. 8-5, JS-104.
  - \*\*\*\*\* Material for Situation Estimates, 1ST Section, Naval General Staff, October 1944, WDC Document 216764 (Microfilm).
  - \*\*\*\*\* COM7THFLT Dispatch 210526 October 1944 to C.G. 5TH Air Force and CAAF SOWESPAC, info COMSOWESPAC and COM3RDFLT.

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and a small escort, all of which were destroyed. Militarily speaking, he knew that as of this time the bay was deserted.

At 1816, in the NEW JERSEY with CTG 38.2, he headed via a circuitous route for Point READY while CTG 38.3 headed for Point MICK.

At 1835 he learned that C.G. FIFTH Air Force, between 1115 and 1130 on October 22nd (the following day), planned to hit Cagayan (northern Mindanao) with one group of B-24's.\*

At 2014 he learned that a B-24 had reported sighting at 1115, in Latitude  $03^{\circ}-30'N$ , Longitude  $118^{\circ}-40'E$ , an enemy convoy consisting of one battleship, three light cruisers, three destroyers and six unidentified ships on course  $170^{\circ}(T)$ , speed fifteen knots.\*\* He could not have been too much concerned with this contact since these ships were (a) proceeding away from the objective area, (b) with relation to his own command, far away and (c) within striking radius of Allied shore-based aircraft from Morotai (Plate XXVII).

At 2036 he received a contact report relayed by CINCPAC reporting the 1530 sighting (by China-based aircraft) of an enemy task force consisting of one carrier, three heavy cruisers and four destroyers in Formosa Strait in Latitude  $23^{\circ}-10'N$ , Longitude  $117^{\circ}-50'E$ , on course  $045^{\circ}(T)$ , speed fifteen knots.\*\*\* As explained under the "Operations of C.G. FOURTEENTH Air Force, October 21st", these ships were either (a) a convoy of merchant ships escorted by the carrier SHINYO (CVE) heading for Japan or (b) the SECOND Striking Force.

What reaction he had to the above contact report is not known; but since (a) he knew through a submarine contact report off northern Formosa at 1400 October 19th that an enemy task force consisting of four cruisers and five destroyers (SECOND Striking Force) had been sighted heading west toward Formosa Strait\*\*\*\* and (b) he had received no further information concerning this unit either from his air searches or from Allied submarines, it is possible that he may have thought that these two naval forces might be planning to rendezvous and then perhaps, with the carriers from the Empire, engage in some sort of raids against Leyte or THIRDFLT forces.

At 2150 he received a contact report from the BARBEL regarding an enemy submarine of the I-15 class sighted at 1807 in Latitude  $22^{\circ}-46'N$ , Longitude  $132^{\circ}-21'E$ , on course  $210^{\circ}(T)$ , speed ten knots. Since the BARBEL had no

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\* C.G. 5TH Air Force Dispatch 211732/I October 1944 to COM3RDFLT, COMSOWESPAC, CTF's 38, 77, 78, 79, etc.

\*\* C.G. 13TH Air Force Dispatch 211922/I October 1944 to all interested commands.

\*\*\* CINCPAC Dispatch 211037 October 1944 to COM3RDFLT, CTF 77, all TFC's and TGC's 3RDFLT (Re-encypherment of COMNAVGRPCHINA Dispatch 210930 October 1944 to CINCPAC).

\*\*\*\* TRIGGER Dispatch 190715 October 1944 to COMSUBPAC, info COM3RDFLT.



torpedoes and was unable to close the range for gun battle prior to dark, the submarine escaped.\* This submarine appears to have been one of the five submarines (I-38, 41, 46, 53, RO-43) which had departed the Empire on October 19th. Although the Japanese submarine reports available to this study do not indicate that the Japanese submarines had sighted the BARBEL, there seems little doubt of their identity for both the I-38 and I-41 were of the I-15 class and the plot shows that both of these submarines were in the vicinity of the BARBEL's contact at this time.\*\*

At 2228 he received a dispatch from CINCPAC to the effect (a) that (FOURTEENTH Air Force) search planes had reported many contacts on enemy merchant shipping during the past three days and as recently as 1300 on the Tourane (Annam) - Hong Kong routes, mostly moving northeast, and (b) some of this traffic was from southern Hainan.\*\*\*

THIS WAS AN INTELLIGENT DISPATCH AND SHOWS CONSIDERABLE UNDERSTANDING OF THE NECESSITY FOR COORDINATION BETWEEN THE CHINA-BASED U.S. COMMANDS AND THOSE OF COMSOWESPAC AND CINCPAC. BY THIS DISPATCH COMNAVGRPCHINA ADVISED THE ALLIED SUBMARINE COMMANDERS AS TO THE GENERAL ROUTES OF JAPANESE MERCHANT TRAFFIC AND GAVE THEM INFORMATION UPON WHICH THEY COULD RE-ESTIMATE THE SITUATION AND PERHAPS REDEPLOY CERTAIN SUBMARINES IF THE STRATEGICAL SITUATION WITH RELATION TO THE KING II OPERATION PERMITTED.

CINCPAC's re-encypherment of this dispatch as information to COMTHIRDFLT and to the TFC's and TGC's of THIRDFLT was done as a matter of policy. He had previously directed COMNAVGRPCHINA to retransmit all contacts to him (CINCPOA) for rebroadcast to the following addressees: COMSOWESPAC, COMINCH, CTF 77, COMTHIRDFLT, all TFC's and TGC's THIRDFLT.\*\*\*\*

At 2332 he received CTF 77's summary report of operations for this day. Among the items of interest to him were: (a) operations were continuing according to schedule; (b) AK and LST unloading was progressing satisfactorily; (c) bulldozers were working on the Tacloban airstrip; and (d) early morning raids were by a small number of planes mostly singles.\*\*\*\*\* The effect of the combination of all of these no doubt strengthened his desire to continue his planned gradual withdrawal from the immediate vicinity of the objective area in order to be in position for strategic support of KING II and at the same time prepare for his next scheduled operation.

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\* BARBEL Dispatch 210907 October 1944 to COMSUBPAC, info COM3RDFLT.

\*\* Merit Rating Reports for Naval Ship Units (Submarine Operations), October 1944, WDC Document 161011.

\*\*\* CINCPAC Dispatch 211206 October 1944 to COMSUBPAC, COMSOWESPAC, info COMINCH, COM3RDFLT, and all TFC's and TGC's 3RDFLT (Re-encypherment of COMNAVGRPCHINA Dispatch 210600 October 1944 to CINCPAC, COMSUBPAC, COMSOWESPAC.).

\*\*\*\* CINCPOA Dispatch 152255 October 1944 to COMNAVGRPCHINA, info COMSOWESPAC, CTF 77, COM3RDFLT, all TFC's and TGC's 3RDFLT.

\*\*\*\*\* CTF 77 Dispatch 210946 October 1944 to COMSOWESPAC, info COMINCH, CINCPOA, COM3RDFLT, all TFC's and TGC's 3RDFLT and 7THFLT, COM7THFLT (Administrative).

At about this time he received a dispatch from COMNAVGRPCCHINA reporting that as a result of photographic reconnaissance there were at 1015, October 20th, thirty-one ships in Hong Kong harbor totalling 127,000 tons, eleven naval craft and 22,150 tons of shipping in drydock.\* Since most of this was clearly merchant shipping and since the naval craft were likely small craft (otherwise the photo interpretation would have indicated something larger), it seems probable that he considered these units to be proper submarine targets and of little concern to the THIRDFLT.

At 2400 COMTHIRDFLT, in TG 38.2, continued to head for Point READY via a circuitous route since Point READY was but fifty miles away.

(1) TF 38 (Fast Carrier Force)

(a) Operations of CTG 38.1 and CTG 38.4, October 21st.

CTG's 38.1 (OTC) and 38.4 continued to proceed in company on course 035°(T) at twenty knots to rendezvous at 0700 with TG 30.8 in the vicinity of Point MICK (Latitude 15°-00'N, Longitude 130°-00'E).\*\*

At 0625 rendezvous was effected with the fueling group consisting of nine oilers (NEOSHO, SCHUYLKILL, ESCAMBIA, MONONGAHELA, TOMAHAWK, KENNEBAGO, CHIKASKIA, PATUXENT, PECOS), two escort carriers (NEHENTA BAY and SARGENT BAY) and one replacement carrier (SITKOH BAY) plus a number of screening destroyers and destroyer escorts.\*\*

At 0700 the McCALL, which, since suffering an engineering casualty on October 16th, had been operating temporarily with the oiler group rejoined TG 38.4 in accordance with CTG 38.4 dispatch 200553.\*\*\* At about the same time the FARENHOLT was detached from the oiler group and joined TG 38.1 in accordance with COMTHIRDFLT dispatch 060132.\*\*\*\*

Fueling was commenced at 0708 on base course 070°(T), speed twelve knots, but the speed was presently reduced to ten knots to improve the fueling.

Although the seas were smooth and favorable for fueling, flying conditions in the area were generally undesirable, with variable winds and low ceilings and periods of intense precipitation during the early morning.\*\*\*\*\*

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\* COMNAVGRPCCHINA Dispatch 211012 October 1944 to COM3RDFLT, info CINCPAC COMSOWESPAC, COMSUBPAC.

\*\* War Diaries CTG's 38.1 and 38.4, October 21st, 1944.

\*\*\* War Diary McCALL, October 21st, 1944.

\*\*\*\* War Diary FARENHOLT, October 21st, 1944.

\*\*\*\*\* War Diary COWPENS, October 21st, 1944; also Deck Logs FRANKLIN and BILOXI, October 21st, 1944.



At 0722 COMCRUDIV SIX, in WICHITA, reported for duty with CTG 38.4.\* He was accompanied by the NICHOLSON which had been sent from TG 38.4 to escort him.\*\* Three minutes later the COWPENS, escorted by GRAYSON, reported for duty with CTG 38.1.\*\*\* It will be recalled that WICHITA had been released from temporary duty with TG 30.3 in accordance with COMTHIRDFLT dispatch 190150\*\* and the COWPENS and GRAYSON had been detached from TG 30.3 in accordance with COMTHIRDFLT dispatch 200027.\*\*\*\*

At 1400 both task groups had completed fueling, having received a total of 166,000 barrels of fuel oil and 431,000 gallons of aviation gasoline.\*\*\*\*\*

During this period TG's 38.1 and 38.4 (a) received from the SITKOH BAY four VT (WASP two; MONTEREY and HORNET one each) and eight VT (FRANKLIN two; ENTERPRISE six) replacement aircraft, respectively, and a total of six pilots and ten aircrewmen (HORNET three pilots, six aircrewmen; WASP one pilot, one aircrewman--what ship or ships received the remaining two pilots and three aircrewmen is not known as the records are incomplete), and (b) delivered to the SITKOH BAY four flyable duds (one VF from COWPENS, one VF from ENTERPRISE, one VB from HORNET and one VT from MONTEREY).\*\*\*\*\*

After completion of fueling, the two task groups formed cruising disposition and headed west to rendezvous with TG 38.2 at 0600 the next day in the vicinity of Point READY (Latitude 15°-00'N, Longitude 127°-00'E) where in accordance with COMTHIRDFLT's 201222,\*\*\*\*\* the three groups were to operate in strategic support of KING II.

From sunrise until sunset CTG 38.1 maintained a CAP of eight VF and a SNASP of four VF and four VT; CTG 38.4 flew a CAP of eight VF and an ASP of four VT during the same period. There were no enemy contacts.

At 2400 these task groups were in a mean position Latitude 15°-03'N, Longitude 128°-30'E, on bearing 086°(T), distant ninety miles from Point READY. At this time TG 38.1 had a total of 145 VF, 44 VB and 54 VT and TG 38.4 a total of 109 VF, 44 VB and 54 VT.

At this time TG 38.1 consisted of WASP, HORNET, MONTEREY, COWPENS, CHESTER, PENSACOLA, SALT LAKE CITY, SAN DIEGO, OAKLAND, MARSHALL, DUNLAP, FANNING, CASE, CASSIN, DOWNES, CUMMINGS, McCALLA, GRAYSON, WOODWORTH,

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- \* War Diary COMCRUDIV 6, October 21st, 1944.
  - \*\* COM3RDFLT Dispatch 190150 October 1944 to CTG 38.4 and COMCRUDIV 6, info COMINCH, CINCPAC, etc.
  - \*\*\* War Diary COWPENS, October 21st, 1944; also Deck Logs FRANKLIN and BILOXI, October 21st, 1944.
  - \*\*\*\* COM3RDFLT Dispatch 200027 October 1944 to CTG 30.3, info COMINCH, CINCPAC, etc.
  - \*\*\*\*\* War Diary CTG 30.8, October 21st, 1944.
  - \*\*\*\*\* War Diary SITKOH BAY, October 21st, 1944.
  - \*\*\*\*\* Deck Logs FRANKLIN and BILOXI, October 21st, 1944; also War Diaries OAKLAND, CHESTER and PENSACOLA, October 21st, 1944.

IZARD, CONNER, FARENHOLT, BROWN; and TG 38.4 consisted of FRANKLIN, SAN JACINTO, ENTERPRISE, BELLEAU WOOD, WICHITA, BILOXI, NEW ORLEANS, MAURY, GRIDLEY, HELM, McCALL, MUGFORD, RALPH TALBOT, PATTERSON, BAGLEY, WILKES, NICHOLSON, SWANSON.

(b) Operations of CTG 38.2 and CTG 38.3, October 21st.

CTG's 38.2 and 38.3 arrived in their dawn launching positions about sixty miles northeast of San Bernardino Strait in the vicinity of Latitude 13°-30'N, Longitude 125°-30'E and commenced launching aircraft in accordance with CTF 38 visual dispatch 200735 which directed that CTG 38.2 strike Cebu, Masbate, Negros and Panay; CTG 38.3 strike southern Luzon, Mindoro and Coron Bay:\*

<u>Time</u>	<u>Strike Designation</u>	<u>Composition</u>	<u>Sorties</u>
0600	VF Sweep	43 VF, 5 VF(P)	48
0600	ABLE	61 VF, 58 VB, 28 VT	147
0800	BAKER	56 VF, 53 VB, 52 VT	<u>161</u>
Total Sorties			356

The armament for the above strikes consisted generally of bombs, incendiary clusters and rockets in addition to the standard loading of machine gun ammunition.

The weather in the operating area was generally favorable, with partly cloudy skies, moderate seas, occasional rain squalls, fair visibility and good flying conditions: over the target areas the weather was excellent with clear skies and visibility about twenty miles. The sun rose at 0640.\*\*

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\* Action Report BUNKER HILL, October 7th - 26th, 1944, Serial 0293, October 27th, 1944; Action Report CABOT, Okinawa Jima, Formosa, Visayas, etc., October 6th - 14th and October 20th - 31st, 1944, Serial 069, October 31st, 1944; Action Report HANCOCK, October 6th - 31st, 1944, Serial 0100, November 3rd, 1944; Action Report INTREPID, Operations against Nansei Shoto, Formosa, Luzon, Visayas, etc., Strategic Support of Landing Operations on Leyte, Serial 0166, no date but probably early November 1944; Action Report LANGLEY, Operations in Support of Seizure and Occupation of Leyte-Samar Area, October 6th - 30th, 1944, Serial 0227, November 7th, 1944; Deck Logs ESSEX, INTREPID, INDEPENDENCE, October 21st, 1944; Aircraft Action Report Air Group 15, Report of Air Operations during period October 21st - 27th, 1944, CAG 15, Serial 026, November 11th, 1944; Aircraft Action Reports Air Groups 7, 8, 15, 18, 19 and 27, October 21st, 1944; War Diary 38.3, October 21st, 1944.

\*\* War Diary LANGLEY, October 21st, 1944; also Action Report LANGLEY and HANCOCK, October 6th - 31st, 1944, Operations in Support of Seizure and Occupation of Leyte-Samar Area, Serial 0227, November 7th, 1944.



The above strikes claimed a total of fourteen enemy aircraft shot down in the air and fifty-nine destroyed on the ground. No enemy operational airfields were found on Mindoro nor in the Bicol area. Forty enemy planes were strafed on the new Lipa airfields sixty miles south of Manila of which thirteen (included in the above total) were reportedly destroyed. The remainder of destruction to aircraft on the ground occurred in the central Visayas; viz., ten on Lahug and Opon airfields (Cebu), twenty-seven on San Jose airfield (Panay) and nine on Tanza airfield (Negros). Interpretation of photographs taken of Fabrica airfield on Negros showed thirty carefully camouflaged planes, apparently operational, although this airfield was not attacked.\*

In regard to enemy shipping at Coron Bay a previously damaged medium cargo ship, a small coastal cargo vessel and a one-hundred foot escort were claimed to have been destroyed; three small cargo ships were reportedly sunk respectively off Romblon Island (north of Panay); Igon and Gigantes Island (northeast of Panay); three patrol boats were claimed sunk at Batangas Bay (southern Luzon) and one off Cebu; an ammunition barge was exploded at Masbate.\*

As previously stated under the "Operations of COMTHIRDFLT, October 21st" in connection with his summary dispatch report of the fighter sweeps and first strikes, available Japanese accounts relative to the above attacks merely state that (a) various numbers of Allied army and carrier-based planes attacked areas in southeastern Luzon and the central Visayas, (b) six carrier-type fighters were set afire on the ground at Cebu and Mactan and (c) six airborne planes failed to return. In the case of Cebu, except as mentioned below, there is no way to adjudicate the claims of damage or destruction since planes from TG 77.4 and army planes from Morotai also attacked this island during the day; and no specific times are mentioned in the Japanese records. (The six planes destroyed on the ground at Cebu and Mactan have been credited to TG 77.4 by this analysis).

The claims of shipping damaged or destroyed appear to have been excessive since postwar records show that on October 21st only three small ships were sunk or damaged. These were (a) the small cargo ships DOGO MARU of 2294 tons which was sunk; this occurred in Latitude 12°-35'N, Longitude 122°-16'E\*\* (off Romblon Island) and was done by carrier-based aircraft, presumably from TG 38.3 since these were supposedly the only planes attacking in this area, (b) the small cargo ship of 2158 tons RYOCHI MARU which was sunk in Latitude 11°-14'N, Longitude 123°-44'E\*\*\* (just west of Bantayan

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\* Operational Summaries of Carrier Strikes, COM3RDFLT Serial 00109, November 22nd, 1944; Action Report CTG 38.2, October 6th - November 3rd, 1944, Serial 0040, November 8th, 1944; War Diary CTG 38.3, October 21st, 1944.

\*\* Imperial Japanese Navy in World War II, Military History Section, Special Staff, GHQ, FEC, February 1952.

\*\*\* Japanese Naval and Merchant Losses During WW II, Joint Army-Navy Assessment Committee, February 1947; Imperial Japanese Navy World War II, Military History Section, Special Staff, GHQ, FEC, February 1952.



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Island) and (c) the auxiliary minesweeper No. EIGHT which was sunk in the Visayan Sea to the northeastward of Panay and near Gigantes Island. The sinking in (b) was affected by carrier-based aircraft\* (likely from TG 38.2), and that in item (c) by carrier-based aircraft (likely from TG 77.4).

A Japanese ship of unknown type and tonnage (HOKICHI MARU) was also sunk on this day in Sogod Bay, Cebu, from unknown causes.\*\*

In addition to the above strikes, CTG 38.2 conducted--in accordance with orders from COMTHIRDFLT\*\*\*--(a) a morning and an afternoon search which searched the sector between 310°(T) and 020°(T)\*\*\*\* to 300 miles or to land, in order to contact enemy ships passing close along the coast; both searches consisted of seven VF and seven VT from the CABOT (the morning search was launched at 0600 and recovered at 1257; the afternoon search was launched at 1244 and recovered at 1814--the results of both searches were negative except for two enemy land-attack planes shot down during the morning,\*\*\*\*\* and (b) a combined photographic and antisnooper flight consisting of six VF and two VT from the PRINCETON; this flight was launched at 1200 and recovered at 1500. After photographing the coast line at the extreme SE end of the Luzon Peninsula in order to discover enemy shipping that might be hiding under camouflage close to shore, it patrolled the sea area between Luzon and TG's 38.2 and 38.3 with negative results.\*\*\*\*\*

From dawn until sunset CTG 38.2 maintained a CAP of sixteen VF and an ASP of four VB; CTG 38.3, a CAP of eight VF and an ASP of four VB/VT. In addition, CTG 38.2 maintained a night CAP of two VF(N) from 0000 until 0606, and three VF(N) from 1840 until 2000;\*\*\*\*\* CTG 38,3, a CAP of two VF(N) from 0330 until dawn.\*\*\*\*\*

Enemy air activity in the vicinity of the two task groups was limited to (a) a low flying twin-engine plane that was sighted at 0945 by

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- \* Japanese Naval and Merchant Losses During WW II, Joint Army-Navy Assessment Committee, February 1947; Imperial Japanese Navy World War II, Military History Section, Special Staff, GHQ, FEC, February 1952.
  - \*\* Imperial Japanese Navy in World War II, Military History Section, Special Staff, GHQ, FEC, February 1952.
  - \*\*\* COM3RDFLT Dispatch 191329 October 1944 to CTF 38 and all TGC's TF 38, info COMINCH, COMSOWESPAC, CINCPAC, CTG 30.3, etc.; also CTF 38 Visual Dispatch 200735 October 1944 to CTG's 38.2, 38.3, info COM3RDFLT.
  - \*\*\*\* CTG 38.2 TBS Voice Radio Message 211240/I October 1944 to CTF 38.
  - \*\*\*\*\* War Diary CABOT, October 21st; also Aircraft Action Report Air Group 29, October 21st, 1944, Serial 0024, November 7th, 1944, forwarded by Commanding Officer CABOT, 1ST Endorsement of November 9th, 1944; also CTG 38.2 Voice Radio Message 211240/I October 1944 to CTF 38 and CTG 38.2 Visual Dispatch 210452 October 1944 to COM3RDFLT.
  - \*\*\*\*\* Aircraft Action Report Air Group 27, October 17th - 21st, 1944, forwarded by PRINCETON, Serial 07, November 10th, 1944.
  - \*\*\*\*\* War Diary INDEPENDENCE, October 21st, 1944.
  - \*\*\*\*\* War Diary LANGLEY, October 21st, 1944.



the lookouts on the LEXINGTON eight miles, bearing 300°(T) from TG 38.3; this plane escaped\* and reported to Commander FIFTH Base Air Force that at 0935 it had contacted one battleship and twenty-four other ships in position bearing 350°(T), distant 160 miles from Suluan Island\*\* (This position was about fifteen miles to the westward of TG 38.3's position), (b) a two-engine land bomber shot down by the CAP from TG 38.2 at 1121 bearing 035°(T), distant about thirty-five miles.\*\*\* No information on item (b) is available from Japanese records.

Total aircraft losses for the day for both task groups from all causes were four VF, one VB and two VT, including two VF lost as a result of combat damage and two VF and one VT that were jettisoned. Personnel losses consisted of one aircrewman lost operationally.\*\*\*\*

At 0845 CTG 38.2 received a dispatch from COMTHIRDFLT asking him to nominate two destroyers as escorts for the BUNKER HILL then scheduled to be sent to Manus,\*\*\*\*\* and at 1401 he nominated the BENHAM and STEPHEN POTTER.\*\*\*\*\*

Upon completion of the day's flight operations at 1822, CTG 38.2 headed on a circuitous route toward Point READY (Latitude 15°-00'N, Longitude 127°-00'E) where he was to join CTG's 38.1 and 38.4 at 0600 the following day and was then to operate in strategic support of KING II in the vicinity of this point. Meanwhile, CTG 38.3 headed toward Area MICK to rendezvous with the oiler group (TG 30.8) at 0700 the next morning.\*\*\*\*\*

At 2400 CTG 38.2 was in Latitude 14°-18'N, Longitude 127°-20'E, or about 146°(T), distant fifty miles from Point READY, and CTG 38.3 was in Latitude 14°-40'N, Longitude 128°-00'E, or about 260°(T), distant 120 miles from Point MICK. At this time TG 38.2 had a total of 179 VF, 70 VB and 71 VT and TG 38.3 had a total of 138 VF, 55 VB and 54 VT.

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- \* War Diary LEXINGTON, October 21st, 1944.
  - \*\* Vice Admiral Matome Ugaki, IJN (COMBATDIV 1), Personal Diary SENSOROKU, Nippon Shuppan Kyodo Kabushiki Kaisha (Tokyo, March 15th, 1953), Volume II; Appended Chart II, Enemy Fleet Disposition on October 21st, 1944, Detailed Action Report Main Force, SHO No. 1 Operation, October 20th - 29th, 1944, WDC Document 161005, NA 11744.
  - \*\*\* War Diary BUNKER HILL, October 21st, 1944; also Deck Log ESSEX, October 21st, 1944.
  - \*\*\*\* War Diaries INTREPID, CABOT, INDEPENDENCE and HANCOCK, October 21st, 1944; Aircraft Action Report Air Group 19, October 21st, 1944; Action Report BUNKER HILL, October 7th - 26th, 1944, Serial 0293, October 27th, 1944.
  - \*\*\*\*\* COM3RDFLT Dispatch 202345 October 1944 to CTG 38.2, info CTF 38.
  - \*\*\*\*\* CTG 38.2 Visual Dispatch 210501 October 1944 to COM3RDFLT, info CTF 38.
  - \*\*\*\*\* War Diary LANGLEY, October 21st, 1944.

(2) Operations of CTG 30.5 (Air Search, Reconnaissance, and Photographic Group), October 21st.

CTG 30.5 continued air searches from Kossol Passage, Saipan and Tinian (Plate XVI) as shown on Diagram C.\*

Except for his searches, the day was uneventful.

Sometime during the late evening he received dispatches as follows: (a) from CTU 30.5.1 to the effect that the seaplanes searching the 600-mile sector 300°-360°(T) from Kossol Passage had completed their searches to the full distance with a coverage of 100 per cent except for sectors 300°-310°(T) and 320°-330°(T) where the coverage because of bad weather was about ninety per cent;\*\* (b) from CTU 30.5.3 to the effect that the PB4Y's searching the 1000-mile NW sector (272°-353°(T)) from Tinian had completed their searches to the full distance with a coverage of but ninety per cent.\*\*\*

All searches under (a) and (b), except for minor contacts, were reported negative.

While the facts concerning these searches from Tinian are not as complete as they might be (item (b)), nevertheless, the information available—e.g., Squadron Master Flight Logs (recording total time for each flight), Aircraft Action Reports and pilot's statements—is sufficient to challenge the accuracy of CTU 30.5.3's dispatch report. The Master Flight Logs for the three squadrons flying the nine sectors to the northwest of Tinian this day reveal the average flight time to be 12.46 hours. It is estimated that two-tenths of an hour was dissipated during each mission in other than flying the actual track (total time was reckoned from the time the plane took off until it returned to the chocks). Therefore the average time for each flight is more accurately 12.26 hours.

A review of aircraft action reports relating to this period reveals that the missions were flown at varying altitudes at an indicated airspeed of 140 knots. Correcting this speed for average altitude and the air temperature normal for the area, a true air speed of 150 knots is derived. Discounting the effect of wind which theoretically at least would have an adverse effect on the average ground speed, it is computed that at a ground speed of 150 knots, 13.5 hours would elapse in properly covering the assigned sector. The flight would consist of a 950 miles outbound leg (assuming radar coverage for the last fifty miles of the sector), a 100 miles cross leg and a 950 miles inbound leg or a total flight of 2000 miles.

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\* War Diaries VPB's 102, 116, 117 and 216, October 21st, 1944; also War Diary CTF 57 (COMFWDAREACENTPAC), October 21st, 1944.

\*\* CTU 30.5.1 Dispatch 211212 October 1944 to COM3RDFLT, info CTG 30.5, CTF 57, etc.

\*\*\* CTU 30.5.3 Dispatch 210903 October 1944 to COM3RDFLT, info all TFC's 3RDFLT, CTG 30.5 and CTF's 57, 59.



To properly cover the sector in 12.26 hours, a ground speed of 163 knots would have to be averaged, this being quite unlikely. Therefore, it seems unlikely that these planes covered the sector adequately.

ALTHOUGH THIS REPORT DID NOT HAVE AN ADVERSE EFFECT ON ALLIED OPERATIONS BECAUSE NO JAPANESE FORCES OF CONSEQUENCE WERE IN THE NW SECTOR, THE FACT THAT IT WAS MADE IS OF IMPORTANCE SINCE LOSSES OF SHIPS, PLANES, AND PERSONNEL, AS WELL AS MANY LOST OPPORTUNITIES FOR DECISIVE DEFEATS OF THE ENEMY, HAVE BEEN NEEDLESSLY SUSTAINED THROUGH (AMONG OTHER ITEMS) FAILURE TO OBTAIN COMPLETE AND ACCURATE INFORMATION AND FAILURE TO STATE CLEARLY THE INFORMATION AT HAND.\*

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\* Basic Fleet Operational Communication Doctrine (NWP 16), Department of the Navy, Office of the Chief of Naval Operations, September 1953, Chapter 5, Page 5-3.

## (2) Operations of CTF 17 (Submarine Force Pacific), October 21st.

CTF 17 knew that this was the day his submarines in CONVOY COLLEGE and MARU MORGUE were due to rotate patrol areas in a clockwise direction;\* and if they had not already done so, they would soon be in their new areas. Knowing from CINCPAC's headquarters that the landings at Leyte were proceeding according to schedule and that nothing more had been heard of the several contacts previously reported east and north of Formosa, China and Celebes Seas, he was awaiting further developments and reports from his submarines.

Having received a request from the SNOOK on the previous evening to extend her patrol and knowing that the COBIA, which was patrolling the Area DESTROY with her, was to report to CTF 71 at 1800 and that (1) the schedule being followed by the SNOOK and COBIA had been assigned to the HADDOCK wolf pack soon to depart Saipan, (2) the SNOOK would be more effective in a wolf pack, he at 0452 issued orders extending her patrol and further directed her to continue to operate in Area DESTROY until sunset October 24th then to move into Area DETECT where she was to join the SHARK's wolf pack until sunset on October 31st.\*\*

IN CONNECTION WITH ITEM (2) ABOVE, IT HAD LONG BEEN RECOGNIZED THAT AGAINST AN ENEMY USING WELL-ESCORTED CONVOYS AND TASK FORCES, THE COORDINATED ATTACK GROUP (WOLF PACK) WAS MORE EFFECTIVE THAN THE SINGLE SUBMARINE. THIS WAS SO BECAUSE THE SINGLE SUBMARINE IS SERIOUSLY HAMPERED BY (A) MULTIPLE ESCORTS, (B) THE NUMBER OF TORPEDOES AVAILABLE AND BY (C) LIMITED SEARCH CAPABILITIES, WHEREAS, WITH THE COORDINATED ATTACK GROUPS, THESE DISADVANTAGES ARE OVERCOME BY MUTUAL TACTICAL ASSISTANCE. CERTAINLY, A SUBMARINE GROUP WITH A WIDE SEARCH FRONT IS MORE LIKELY TO CONTACT AND ATTACK ANY CONVOY TRAFFIC IN AN AREA THAN IS THE INDEPENDENT SUBMARINE.\*\*\*

At 0604 he notified the submarines in CONVOY COLLEGE, which, being to the westward of Longitude 123°-00'E, were in a Submarine Patrol Zone (Plate XVIII), that the date of the NAUTILUS (of TF 72 which was on special mission on the east coast of southern Luzon) passing westbound had been changed to October 24th and that the BONEFISH would be passing eastbound on this and the following days.\*\*\*\*

This was a wise dispatch for the NAUTILUS was operating under CTF 72 and her operations were generally unknown to the submarines of TF 17, and the BONEFISH which had been operating under CTF 71 had only recently (at 0335 this very day) reported to CTF 17. Therefore, without information concerning the friendly nature of these two submarines there was the possibility of

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\* Submarine Operational History, World War II, Commander Submarine Force, U.S. Pacific Fleet, Volume I, Pages 74, 87.

\*\* CTF 17 Dispatch 201952 October 1944 to all submarines, info SHARK and submarines in CONVOY COLLEGE.

\*\*\* Submarine Warfare Instructions (USF 9), Navy Department, Office of the Chief of Naval Operations, 1946, Chapter 14, Paragraph 1402.

\*\*\*\* CTF 17 Dispatch 202104 October 1944 to CONVOY COLLEGE.



friendly units attacking one another since in a Submarine Patrol Zone submarines, unless given contrary instructions, were authorized to consider as enemy and attack any target encountered.\*

Actually, this possibility within TF 17 was more theoretical than real for instructions concerning routing to and from areas existed within that command to the effect, in part, that "since it was frequently necessary to route friendly submarines through areas already occupied by friendly submarines", it was "obligatory" that TF 17 submarines "be certain of its enemy character before attacking any submarine".\*\*

Today's submarine doctrine provides that submarines in a Submarine Patrol Zone "shall consider as enemy and may attack any target encountered subject to certain limitations such as specific orders to the contrary, provisions of international law,\*\*\* etc."

At 0621 he passed to COMTHIRDFLT the information received from the PARCHE and SAILFISH revealing the names of the aviators rescued and that those personnel would arrive at Saipan on October 24th.\*\*\*\*

Whether he had a routine message made up in advance to route the BONEFISH and it was transmitted routinely or whether for some reason by this time he had failed to receive the request sent at 0325 by the BONEFISH to proceed to Saipan, is not known but at 0904 he sent a dispatch to welcome the BONEFISH and included routing instructions for her to proceed to Pearl Harbor or Midway and requested her to notify him which base was ultimately chosen.\*\*\*\*\*

At 1158 he published by dispatch a position report as of 0400 the following morning of (a) the submarines en route to and departing from their stations and (b) the seven submarines in the vicinity of Luzon Strait.\*\*\*\*\* He omitted any reference to other TF 17 submarines operating in the western Pacific, presumably because they were on station and because the principal activity was expected in the Luzon Strait area.

His employment of the term "in the vicinity of Luzon Strait" was an unusually loose definition of the noun "vicinity" for (a) six of these seven submarines were following the rotation scheduled of CONVOY COLLEGE and were actually from 100 to 160 miles to the westward of a line between Garan Bi and

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\* Submarine Operational History, World War II, Commander Submarine Force, U.S. Pacific Fleet, undated, Volume I, Page 79.

\*\* CTF 17 Operation Plan No. 1-43, Serial 0807, June 24th, 1943, Annex B, Paragraph 20.

\*\*\* Allied Naval Maneuvering Instructions (ATP 1), Department of the Navy, Office of the Chief of Naval Operations, 1951 (USN Addendum to ATP 1, Change 2, February 1954), Chapter 20.1, Article 2024.1.

\*\*\*\* CTF 17 Dispatch 202121 October 1944 to COM3RDFLT, info TF 38, etc.

\*\*\*\*\* CTF 17 Dispatch 210004 October 1944 to BONEFISH.

\*\*\*\*\* CTF 17 Dispatch 210258 October 1944 to all interested in COMSUBPAC daily submarine positions.



northern Luzon, and (b) the seventh, presumably the SNOOK, was about 275 miles to the westward of that line.

Meanwhile, he had been estimating the situation. While the nature of his mental processes at this point is not known, it seems likely that it was along these lines: he knew that (a) the landings on the previous day had proceeded satisfactorily and that the Japanese reaction thereto had been light and ineffective, and (b) the operations on this day were also proceeding satisfactorily with Japanese reaction still light and ineffective. He noted that all of his submarines, except those in the approaches to Tokyo Bay, had now been released from any specific reconnaissance assignments and were operating in their normal areas with the destruction of enemy shipping as a principal objective. He decided that he should release the two submarines off Tokyo Bay as well and therefore at 1831 he issued instructions to this effect, in part, as follows: "Your patrol sectors hereby changed. Until further orders GREENLING work all approaches to Tokyo Bay to the westward of a line drawn from O SHIMA to Lots Wife (SOFU GAN). TAMBOR work approaches lying to the eastward of this line".\*

These instructions have been difficult to appraise adequately as the employment of the verb "work" is somewhat confusing. However, based on the opinion of a number of submarine officers consulted thereon, this verb, while admittedly loose, in effect meant that the submarine commanders were now to operate at discretion, largely against shipping in the broad approach areas assigned.

WITH THE ISSUANCE OF THIS DISPATCH CTF 17 HAD COMPLETED THE RETURN OF ALL SUBMARINES TO THEIR ROUTINE DUTIES. SINCE HIS ACTION IN SO DOING WAS KNOWN TO CINCPAC AND MAY HAVE BEEN APPROVED BY THAT COMMANDER, IT SEEMS CLEAR THAT IT WAS IN ACCORDANCE WITH FLEET POLICY. BUT WAS THIS FLEET POLICY CORRECT? THIS SEEMS DOUBTFUL BECAUSE, FROM THE PRESENT DEPLOYMENT OF THE SUBMARINES, THERE IS EVERY INDICATION THAT CINCPAC WAS NOT EXPECTING JAPANESE NAVAL REACTION IN STRENGTH AGAINST THE ALLIED NAVAL FORCES CONDUCTING THE LEYTE OPERATION, WHEREAS, UNKNOWN TO HIM, THE JAPANESE NAVAL FORCES WERE ALREADY UNDERWAY TO ATTACK THE ALLIED LANDING FORCES WITH THE POSSIBILITY OF A MAJOR ENGAGEMENT IN MIND.

Sometime during this day CTF 17 learned that the TWENTIETH Air Force based in China was planning to attack Sasebo with B-29's on October 25th; it seems likely that this dispatch contained a request for lifeguard submarines. Because of this request, he advised the PERCH, CROAKER (and possibly the ESCOLAR which, unknown to all concerned, had been lost on the night of October 17th) of the above B-29 strike and directed the PERCH to take lifeguard station on that day in Latitude 32°-30'N, Longitude 126°-00'E and the CROAKER in Latitude 32°-00'N, Longitude 129°-00'E.\*\*

\* CTF 17 Dispatch 210931 October 1944 to TAMBOR and GREENLING, info CINCPAC.

\*\* War Patrol Report PERCH, Report of 3RD War Patrol, No Serial, November 8th, 1944; also War Patrol Report CROAKER, Report of 2ND War Patrol, Serial 027, November 10th, 1944; Deck Log CROAKER, October 25th, 1944.



It will be noted from these assignments that the CROAKER, which was en route to the west coast of Korea and was far to the westward of the PERCH, was given a lifeguard assignment about 150 miles to the eastward of the PERCH, thereby necessitating that she travel much farther than would have been necessary had she been given the PERCH's lifeguard station and the PERCH hers. SINCE THIS IS SO OBVIOUS, DOES IT NOT INDICATE CLEARLY THAT CTF 17 DID NOT KNOW THAT THE CROAKER HAD DEPARTED FOR THE WEST COAST OF KOREA BUT, INSTEAD, THOUGHT THAT BOTH THE CROAKER AND THE PERCH WERE OPERATING TOGETHER SOMEWHERE IN OPERATING AREAS NINE OR TWELVE?

Also sometime during the day he received the BONEFISH's dispatch requesting, among other items, (a) that she be permitted to proceed to Saipan for fuel and medical advice and (b) requesting routing instructions.\* He realized that this dispatch had crossed his own; but because the BONEFISH needed fuel and medical advice, he decided not to await further dispatches thereon from the BONEFISH but, instead, to authorize her to proceed to Saipan as requested. This authorization was received by the BONEFISH sometime between 2130 and 2150.\*\*

By 1748 he received as an information addressee, a submarine notice from CTG 17.7 (COMSUBRON TEN and Commander Submarine Advance Base) in the SPERRY at Guam announcing that the ATULE, JALLAO and PINTADO were departing Saipan at 0900 October 22nd with routing instructions to reach Latitude 18°-30'N, Longitude 140°-00'E, by dark on October 23rd.\*\*\*

At about 1900, having received information of an aircraft contact made at 1530 on one carrier, three heavy cruisers and four destroyers west of the Pescadores in Formosa Strait heading northeast at fifteen knots along the China Coast,\*\*\*\* he at 1934 relayed this contact information to his submarines.\*\*\*\*\* Actually, this contact, unknown to him, was a merchant convoy including the escort carrier SHINYO.

At this time CTF 17, realizing that the BARBEL should have completed her rendezvous with the SALMON and was now en route Saipan in accordance with his instructions of the previous day, thought it advisable to inform CTG 17.7 (COMSUBRON TEN and Commander Submarine Advance Base), who was based at Guam, as well as the BARBEL, of the planned movements for the BARBEL. He therefore at 1959 advised the above by dispatch that, among other items, (a) the BARBEL was to proceed to Saipan for fuel and full load of torpedoes was then to proceed to Fremantle for refit patrolling approximately ten days in the SOWESPAC area en route, and (b) prior to departure, the FULTON (at Saipan) was to accomplish any vital repairs.\*\*\*\*\*

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- \* BONEFISH Dispatch 201803 October 1944 to CTF 17.
  - \*\* War Patrol Report BONEFISH, Report of 6TH War Patrol, No Serial, November 8th, 1944.
  - \*\*\* CTG 17.7 Dispatch 210629 October 1944, info COM3RDFLT, etc.
  - \*\*\*\* COMNAVGRPCHINA Dispatch 210930 October 1944 to CINCPAC, info CTF 17.
  - \*\*\*\*\* CTF 17 Dispatch 211034 October 1944 to all submarines.
  - \*\*\*\*\* CTF 17 Dispatch 211059 October 1944 to CTG 17.7, BARBEL.



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Shortly before 2150 (when it was received by COMTHIRDFLT) he received a contact report from the BARBEL on an I-15 class submarine in Latitude 22°-48'N, Longitude 132°-21'E, on course 210°(T) wherein the BARBEL, having no torpedoes and being unable to close for a gun battle prior to dark, avoided action and continued on toward Saipan.\* This was not news to him for at 0903 on the preceding day COMTHIRDFLT had advised CINCPAC, among others, that there were indications that possibly at least three submarines were approaching the present track of TG 30.3 from the north.\*\* This contact indicated that other enemy submarines were also en route either toward TG 30.3 or the Leyte area.

By 2315 he likely received a dispatch from CTG 17.7 informing certain port directors of the BARBEL's contact report on a Japanese submarine.\*\*\* This was, of course, because the above directors were charged with the routing of shipping.

About this time he received a dispatch from CTG 17.7 which alerted all submarines approaching Latitude 18°-30'N, Longitude 140°-00'E (northwest entrance to Saipan Safety Lane at southeast corner of Area PARLOR) to the fact that the BARBEL would overtake the PARCHE and SAILFISH and that all three submarines, which were incoming to Saipan, would pass two Allied coordinated attack groups (wolf packs) outgoing from Saipan and also published BARBEL's contact on a Japanese submarine.\*\*\*\*

During the day he learned that the coordinated attack group (HADDOCK, TUNA and HALIBUT) had departed Saipan for patrol in the Luzon Strait area.\*\*\*\*\*

(a) CONVOY COLLEGE (Plate XIX).

The submarines SAWFISH, ICEFISH, DRUM, SHARK, BLACKFISH, SEA-DRAGON, COBIA and SNOOK patrolled CONVOY COLLEGE. With the commencement of the day they began rotating their patrol areas in a clockwise direction into their new stations mentioned below under the different sub-heads. Sometime during the day, they likely received information from CTF 17 that the NAUTILUS would pass westbound through the area on October 24th and the BONEFISH would be eastbound through the area on this and the following days.\*\*\*\*\* They patrolled as follows:

(1) SAWFISH, ICEFISH, DRUM.

This coordinated attack group (wolf pack) was now in Area DELETE. Its submarines patrolled on the surface during darkness and submerged

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\* BARBEL Dispatch 210907 October 1944 to CTF 17, COM3RDFLT.  
\*\* COM3RDFLT Dispatch 200003 October 1944 to CTG 30.7 (Hunter Killer Group), info COMINCH, CINCPAC, etc.  
\*\*\* CTG 17.7 Dispatch 211310 October 1944 to PDO's (Port Director Officers) Saipan, Guam and Tinian, info FULTON, CTF 57.  
\*\*\*\* CTG 17.7 Dispatch 211347 October 1944 to CTF 17.  
\*\*\*\*\* War Diary CTF 17, October 1944, Serial 00916, November 5th, 1944.  
\*\*\*\*\* CTF 17 Dispatch 202104 October 1944 to submarines in CONVOY COLLEGE.



during daylight and made no contacts of importance. Upon surfacing for the night the SAWFISH experienced moderate to heavy sea conditions as did the ICEFISH which recorded heavy seas from the north and poor visibility due to high winds and haze.\*

(2) SHARK, BLACKFISH, SEADRAGON.

This coordinated attack group (wolf pack) was now in Area DETECT. Its submarines patrolled on the surface during darkness and submerged during daylight and patrolled uneventfully except as discussed below under the SEADRAGON.\*\*

At 2300, when the SNOOK received it, the Commanding Officer SHARK, who was the wolf pack commander, likely received the dispatch directing the SNOOK to join and patrol with his wolf pack after sunset on October 24th.\*\*\*

At 2315 the SEADRAGON in Latitude 21°-47'N, Longitude 118°-14'E made radar contact bearing 025°(T), distant 30,000 yards on five ships on course 190°(T), speed from fifteen to twenty-two knots and zigzagging. Her commanding officer promptly commenced closing in order to obtain a correct firing position.\*\*\*\*

At 2330 he noted that four smaller pips had appeared on the radar screen giving a force of five large and four small ships and by 2335 he had decided that the enemy course instead of being 190°(T) was 210°(T).\*\*\*\*

At 2345 he notified the two other submarines of the wolf pack (SHARK and BLACKFISH) of this contact giving, among other items, the course as 210°(T), the speed as sixteen knots.\*\*\*\*\* These submarines then set course and speed to intercept.

Although by midnight he had not closed sufficiently to permit identification, his estimate of the composition of this force and its speed likely led him to believe that it was an enemy combatant force. In this, he would have been correct for this contact was on the Japanese SECOND Striking Force which was composed at this time of the NACHI, ASHIGARA, ABUKUMA, SHIRANUHI, KASUMI, AKEBONO, USHIO. From this it can be seen that his radar

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\* War Patrol Report ICEFISH, Report of 1ST War Patrol, Serial 011, November 13th, 1944; War Patrol Report SAWFISH, Report of 8TH War Patrol, Serial 88-44, November 8th, 1944; War Patrol Report DRUM, Report of 11TH War Patrol, Serial 056, undated but about November 9th, 1944.

\*\* War Patrol Report BLACKFISH, Report of 9TH War Patrol, Serial 001, November 24th, 1944.

\*\*\* CTF 17 Dispatch 201952 October 1944 to all Submarines, info SHARK and CONVOY COLLEGE.

\*\*\*\* War Patrol Report SEADRAGON, Report of 11TH War Patrol, Serial 194, November 8th, 1944.

\*\*\*\*\* Report of Coordinated Patrol of TG 17.11 (SHARK, BLACKFISH, SEADRAGON), Serial 002, undated but probably November 28th, 1944.

evaluation was correct as regards the four destroyers but for some unexplained reason was incorrect as regards the large ships. The course of 210°(T) and the speed of sixteen knots were approximately correct.

As a matter of interest, it seems well to mention here that in his patrol report for the day the Commanding Officer BLACKFISH reported that seventy out of eighty-two men on board the BLACKFISH had either vomited or felt ill upon surfacing and that this had been occurring for the last eight - ten days. While the cause of this illness was not known, the submarine division commander believed that it may have been from lead (sic) poisoning induced by the contamination of air due to the evaporation of carbon tetrachloride from two one-gallon cans which had loose lids.\*

The danger incident to the use of carbon tetrachloride has long been recognized by the Bureau of Ships which from time to time has issued warning instructions thereon. Present instructions are in part as follows: "Carbon tetrachloride must never be stored on submarines because of the danger of leakage from its container when the submarine is submerged and it is impossible to exhaust to the outside atmosphere."\*\*

In 1953 in a letter to Commander Submarine Force Atlantic the Chief of the Bureau of Ships amplified this point as follows: "Because of the danger of leakings from the container when the submarine is submerged neither tetrachloride nor dry cleaning solvent should ever be stored on board a submarine."\*\*\*

(3) SNOOK, COBIA.

These submarines formed a reduced wolf pack; and although they were both expected to patrol Area DESTROY, they continued to patrol independently. The COBIA had already entered Area DESTROY en route to the vicinity of Pratas Reef where she hoped to contact a convoy reported en route to that area, while the SNOOK continued to head toward Area DESTROY at about ten knots presumably awaiting a reply from CTF 17 to her request for an extension of patrol.

At 0400 the SNOOK entered Area DESTROY and submerged at dawn. She surfaced for the night at 1530 and made no contacts.\*\*\*\* At 2300 she received orders from CTF 17, in part, extending her patrol and also directing

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\* COMSUBDIV 62's 1ST Endorsement, Serial 056, November 26th, 1944 to War Patrol Report BLACKFISH, Report of 9TH War Patrol, Serial 001, November 24th, 1944.

\*\* Bureau of Ships Manual (Ch. No. 2), Chapter 60, Paragraph 413, Cleaning by Means of Solvents, October 1st, 1949.

\*\*\* Chief, Bureau of Ships letter, Serial 560-65003, Dated October 9th, 1953 to Commander Submarine Force, U.S. Atlantic Fleet, on "Solvent Cleaning of Electrical Equipment", Paragraph 6.

\*\*\*\* War Patrol Report SNOOK, Report of 7TH War Patrol, Serial 053, November 18th, 1944.



her to patrol her present area on present schedule until sunset October 24th and then to join and operate with the SHARK wolf pack until sunset October 31st.\* At 2330 she intercepted a contact report from the SHARK to the north, but the distance was excessive.\*\*

Meanwhile, the COBIA which had arrived in the area north of Pratas Reef at 0400 patrolled that area until 0725 when in accordance with the previous days dispatch instructions from CTF 17\*\*\* she discontinued her patrol and set course for Latitude 18°-30'N, Longitude 118°-00'E, where at 1800 on this day she was to report to CTF 71 for operational control. At 1822 she arrived at the above position, which was on the lower edge of Area DESTROY; and therefore, the dividing line between POA and SOWESPAC for submarine operations\*\*\*\* and then continued on toward Fremantle in accordance with routing orders.\*\*\*

She remained on the surface during daylight as well as during darkness and made no contacts.\*\*\*\*\* Discussion of this submarine on subsequent days will be found under "Operations of CTF 71 (Submarines West Australia)".

(4) BLACKFIN.

With the commencement of the day the BLACKFIN was transiting Balintang Channel heading westward in the safety lane through CONVOY COLLEGE en route to Latitude 18°-30'N, Longitude 118°-00'E, to report to CTF 71 for operational control at 0600 October 22nd. She proceeded on the surface during darkness and submerged during daylight and made no contacts.\*\*\*\*\* At 2400 she was bearing 304°(T), distant 140 miles from Cape Bojeador.

(5) HADDOCK, HALIBUT, TUNA.

This coordinated attack group (wolf pack) departed Saipan at about 1430 with the Commanding Officer HADDOCK as wolf pack commander. It had instructions to (a) patrol the Luzon Strait area (CONVOY COLLEGE) from about October 24th until November 23rd unless material casualty or expenditure of fuel, torpedoes or vital supplies made an earlier departure necessary\*\*\*\*\* and (b) attack and destroy enemy forces encountered and report

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- \* CTF 17 Dispatch 201952 October 1944 to all Submarines, info SHARK and CONVOY COLLEGE.
- \*\* War Patrol Report SNOOK, Report of 7TH War Patrol, Serial 053, November 18th, 1944.
- \*\*\* CTF 17 Dispatch 200941 October 1944 to COBIA, info SNOOK, BARBEL.
- \*\*\*\* Submarine Operational History, World War II, Commander Submarine Force, U.S. Pacific Fleet, Volume I, Page 73.
- \*\*\*\*\* War Patrol Report COBIA, Report of 2ND War Patrol, Serial 035, November 5th, 1944.
- \*\*\*\*\* War Patrol Report BLACKFIN, Report of 1ST War Patrol, Serial 021, December 4th, 1944.
- \*\*\*\*\* CTF 17 Operation Order No. 343-44, October 7th, 1944, to TG 17.12 (HADDOCK, HALIBUT, TUNA).

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information concerning the movement of important enemy men-of-war and convoys.\* It had further instructions to patrol the above area following the schedule now being followed by the SNOOK and COBIA, which submarines were scheduled to depart the area at sunset on this day.\*

The wolf pack commander dismissed the escort at 1930, formed a scouting line normal to the base course at ten-mile intervals and proceeded toward the patrol stations.\*\*

It seems highly likely that he learned at 2300, when the SNOOK learned it, that the patrol of the SNOOK had been extended until sunset October 24th and that CTF 17 expected him (the wolf pack commander) with his three submarines, to commence patrolling the SNOOK's area about October 25th.\*\*\*

At 2400 the wolf pack was in a mean position, Latitude 15°-30'N, Longitude 143°-50'E and was about 1600 miles from Area DESTROY. It was clear to the wolf pack commander that he would be unable, even under the most favorable circumstances, to arrive on station as above scheduled.

(b) Northwest Coast of Formosa.

The TANG, which had retired to the northward of Formosa for a rest and for repairs to radar, continued submerged patrol of this area during daylight and then proceeded toward Turnabout Island, which is about ten miles off Haitan Island. At 2000 she tracked a PC-DE type patrol boat proceeding down the coast in dark stormy weather. The Commanding Officer TANG endeavored to attack but was unable to obtain a suitable firing position. The attack was broken off as if by mutual consent. Then the Commanding Officer TANG decided to retire to the Formosa area where he seems to have expected better operating conditions.\*\*\*\* It seems probable that at 2300 (when the PERCH received it) he received CTF 17's contact report on a carrier force in Formosa Strait heading northeast.\*\*\*\*\*

Since this force was heading up the strait and might well be headed for Kiirun harbor (northern Formosa), the Commanding Officer TANG likely felt that his position in Formosa Strait was favorable for interception.

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- \* CTF 17 Operation Order No. 343-44, October 7th, 1944, to TG 17.12 (HADDOCK, HALIBUT, TUNA).
  - \*\* War Patrol Report HALIBUT, Report of 10TH War Patrol, Serial 024, December 1st, 1944.
  - \*\*\* CTF 17 Dispatch 201952 October 1944 to all Submarines info SHARK and CONVOY COLLEGE.
  - \*\*\*\* War Patrol Report TANG, Report of 5TH War Patrol, No Serial, September 10th, 1945.
  - \*\*\*\*\* CTF 17 Dispatch 211034 October 1944 to all submarines.



## (c) Northeast Coast of Formosa.

This coordinated attack group, consisting at this time of only the SILVERSIDES and TRIGGER since the SALMON was en route to rendezvous with the BARBEL, continued to patrol the eastern approach to Kiirun harbor awaiting possible sortie of a Japanese task force which had been sighted on the 19th and was presumed to have entered this port to fuel.\*

The reduced wolf pack remained on station on this day and conducted (a) a submerged patrol during daylight, experiencing difficulty in maintaining depth control due to rough seas and (b) a surface patrol during darkness. No contacts were made.\*\*

Meanwhile, the SALMON proceeded eastward on the surface to her planned rendezvous with the BARBEL in Latitude 24°-00'N, Longitude 130°-00'E. At 0730 she effected the rendezvous as planned, transferred the ailing officer via rubber boat for transportation to Saipan and medical treatment and then at 0756 set course due west, speed ten knots and commenced returning to her assigned station off northeast Formosa.\*\*\* She remained on the surface during daylight as well as darkness and made no contacts.\*\*\*\*

## (d) MARU MORGUE.

The group of submarines patrolling the Nansei Shoto area, owing to the departure of the BARBEL on the previous day for Saipan, had been reduced from six submarines to five; these were the SEA DOG, SKATE, SAURY, BURRFISH and STERLET.

Commencing with the beginning of this day, they had started rotating their patrol areas in a clockwise direction in accordance with the rotating schedule for this area.\*\*\*\*\* When on their new stations, they patrolled as follows: SEA DOG in Area ABANDON; SKATE in Area ABDUCT; SAURY in Area ABOLISH; BURRFISH in Area ABRIDGE; and STERLET in Area ABUSE. This left Area ABLAZE unpatrolled. They operated on the surface during darkness and submerged during daylight and made no contacts of importance.\*\*\*\*\*

One of these submarines (the SKATE), which was patrolling off northeastern Okinawa and was to be relieved at sunset by the BILLFISH,

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- \* Report of Coordinated Patrol of TG 17.19 (SILVERSIDES, SALMON, TRIGGER), Serial 046, November 23rd, 1944.
  - \*\* War Patrol Report SILVERSIDES, Report of 11TH War Patrol, Serial 045, November 23rd, 1944; War Patrol Report TRIGGER, Report of 10TH War Patrol, Serial 033, November 3rd, 1944; Deck Logs SILVERSIDES and TRIGGER, October 21st, 1944.
  - \*\*\* War Patrol Report SALMON, Report of 11TH War Patrol, Serial 0-16, November 10th, 1944.
  - \*\*\*\* Deck Log SALMON, October 21st, 1944.
  - \*\*\*\*\* Submarine Operational History, World War II, Commander Submarine Force, U.S. Pacific Fleet, Volume I, Page 87.
  - \*\*\*\*\* War Patrol Reports and Deck Logs of Submarines Concerned.



terminated her patrol at sunset and departed her patrol area at 2310 for Pearl Harbor,\* apparently without attempting to contact her relief. This was the usual practice in TF 17 at this time. The question of submarines departing their areas in this manner has been discussed in Volume II.

The BILLFISH, which it will be recalled was proceeding to Area ABDUCT to relieve the SKATE, remained on the surface until 1420 when she was forced to submerge by patrolling aircraft but surfaced again at 1745. At 2000 she entered Area ABDUCT from the eastward and continued to close Okinawa.\*\* She appears to have made no attempt to contact the SKATE. By midnight she was about forty-eight miles from the SKATE.

Meanwhile, the BARBEL proceeded southward en route to her planned rendezvous with the SALMON, which rendezvous was effected at 0730. At 0740 having received via rubber boat the patient from the SALMON, she set course on the surface for Saipan. Her voyage was uneventful until 1712 when in Latitude 22°-46'N, Longitude 132°-21'E, she sighted smoke through the high periscope and at 1730 identified this contact as a Japanese submarine of the I-15 class. As she had no torpedoes and as the increasing darkness diminished the possibility of an effective surface battle, the commanding officer decided that the best thing to do was to "beat a strategic retreat and fast", which he proceeded to do.\*\*\* At 1807 he reported this contact to CTF 17 and gave the enemy course as 210°(T), speed ten knots.\*\*\*\* For some unexplained reason he omitted the time of contact, making it necessary for those receiving this report to use the time of origin of the dispatch. While this was not too important in this case of a slow-moving target, it would necessarily have a greater effect on higher speed targets.

In this same dispatch the commanding officer advised that he had no torpedoes and gave his ETA Saipan Safety Lane as 0200 October 22nd.\*\*\*\*

Which Japanese submarine this was is not known. However, since the I's-38, 41, 46, 53 and RO-43 were in this vicinity en route to the Leyte area,\*\*\*\*\* it seems clear that the contact was on one of these submarines.

Sometime before midnight he received amplifying orders from CTF 17 to proceed to Saipan, fuel and load torpedoes and then proceed to Fremantle for refit, patrolling in SOWESPAC area approximately ten days en route.\*\*\*\*\* Since the BARBEL no longer participated in the KING II operations, she will be dropped from further discussion but will be continued on the diagrams for reference.

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- \* War Patrol Report SKATE, Report of 6TH War Patrol, Serial 052, November 2nd, 1944; also Deck Log SKATE, October 21st, 1944.
  - \*\* War Patrol Report BILLFISH, Report of 6TH War Patrol, Serial 088, November 27th, 1944.
  - \*\*\* War Patrol Report BARBEL, Report of 2ND War Patrol, Serial 040, October 24th, 1944.
  - \*\*\*\* BARBEL Dispatch 210907 October 1944 to CTF 17 and COM3RDFLT.
  - \*\*\*\*\* Supra., Chapter II - Japanese Operations, (A)(2) Operations of Commander Advance Expeditionary Force, October 20th.
  - \*\*\*\*\* CTF 17 Dispatch 211059 October 1944 to BARBEL, CTF 17.7.



## (e) Nagasaki - Sasebo.

The CROAKER, south of Cheju Do (Quelpart Island), continued on a northwesterly course en route to the west coast of Korea. She patrolled uneventfully during the day, during which time she entered water of less than fifty fathoms. She patrolled on the surface during darkness and submerged during daylight.\* At 2100 her commanding officer received a dispatch from CTF 17 assigning her a lifeguard assignment in the Nagasaki - Sasebo area for October 25th. Since the station assigned was about thirty-five miles due east of Danjo Gunto or in Latitude 32°-00'N, Longitude 129°-00'E, he estimated that he could still proceed to the west coast of Korea, patrol for one day and return to the lifeguard station on time.

The CROAKER made no contacts.\* At 2400 she was bearing 345°(T), distant about twenty-five miles from Hong Do, Korea.

The PERCH remained in the vicinity of Danjo Gunto and patrolled on the surface during darkness and submerged during daylight.\*\* Her patrol was uneventful.\*\*\* At 2330 her commanding officer received a dispatch from CTF 17 reporting a contact on a carrier force in Latitude 23°-10'N, Longitude 117°-30'E (Formosa Strait), on course 045°(T), speed fifteen knots.\*\*\*\* He estimated the situation and decided that should this contact be proceeding toward Shimonoseki Suido, he could by moving a short distance into Latitude 31°-44'N, Longitude 127°-21'E (which was but forty miles, bearing 228°(T), from his midnight position) be in position to intercept on October 23rd. He therefore headed toward that position.\*\*\* At 2345 he also received orders (note that the CROAKER received this at 2100) from CTF 17 assigning him to lifeguard station on October 25th, which was in Latitude 32°-30'N, Longitude 126°-00'E, or a position bearing 284°(T), distant 124 miles from Danjo Gunto. This did not affect his decision to endeavor to intercept the carrier convoy for this lifeguard station was but eighty miles, bearing 303°(T), from his intercepting position and therefore he could readily reach that station on schedule even though he intercepted the task force. At 2400 the PERCH, still on the Nagasaki - Shanghai convoy route, was bearing about 300°(T) distant about thirty miles from Danjo Gunto.

## (f) HIT PARADE.

## (1) The Approaches to Bungo Suido.

The BESUGO and the RONQUIL continued patrolling the western approaches to Bungo Suido along the 100-fathom curve. The BESUGO was patrolling north of Latitude 32°-00'N, while the RONQUIL was patrolling south of

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\* War Patrol Report CROAKER, Report of 2ND War Patrol, Serial 027, November 10th, 1944; also Deck Log CROAKER, October 21st, 1944.

\*\* Deck Log PERCH, October 21st, 1944.

\*\*\* War Patrol Report PERCH, Report of 3RD War Patrol, No Serial, November 8th, 1944.

\*\*\*\* CTF 17 Dispatch 211034 October 1944 to all submarines.

that latitude. The eastern approaches to Bungo Suido remained unguarded and the comments pertaining to this condition on October 20th still applied on this day.

These submarines patrolled submerged during daylight and on the surface during darkness; and although they sighted several aircraft, they made no important contacts.\* The RONQUIL encountered fairly heavy seas and had difficulty in maintaining depth control for periscope observations.\*\*

During the day and unknown to them, Japanese submarine RO-46 departed the Inland Sea for the operating area east of the Philippines.\*\*\*

(2) The Approaches to Kii Suido.

The GABILAN, which had been patrolling on the surface in an area about twenty-five miles south of Muroto Saki, at 0443 submerged and commenced patrolling to the northeast. She patrolled on the surface during darkness and submerged during daylight and made no important contacts.\*\*\*\*

(3) The Approaches to Tokyo Bay.

The TAMBOR and GREENLING continued patrolling the approaches to Tokyo Bay, albeit well removed from the entrance to the bay. They operated on the surface during darkness and submerged during daylight.\*\*\*\*\*

The TAMBOR, which at 0000 was fifty-five miles south of O Shima, during the day worked her way slowly northward toward that island. At 1355 she sighted an enemy submarine in Latitude 34°-00'N, Longitude 139°-52'E, on course north, speed twelve knots. During the approach when attempting to check bearing before firing torpedoes, she lost the target and could not relocate it. This may have been due, in part, to the heavy weather with twelve to fifteen foot waves which made periscope attack difficult.\*\*\*\*\* The identification of this contact is not known for there were no Japanese submarines known to be in the vicinity although the Japanese records thereon are not complete. The TAMBOR appears to have made no contact report to CTF 17, perhaps as the enemy submarine appeared to be returning to port.

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\* War Patrol Report BESUGO, Report of 1ST War Patrol, Serial 027, November 4th, 1944.  
 \*\* War Patrol Report RONQUIL, Report of 2ND War Patrol, Serial 038, November 28th, 1944.  
 \*\*\* Merit Rating Reports for Naval Ship Units (Submarine Operations, October 1944), WDC Document 161011.  
 \*\*\*\* War Patrol Report GABILAN, Report of 3RD War Patrol, Serial 031, December 13th, 1944.  
 \*\*\*\*\* Deck Logs TAMBOR and GREENLING, October 21st, 1944.  
 \*\*\*\*\* War Patrol Report TAMBOR, Report of 12TH War Patrol, Serial 08019, November 30th, 1944.



The GREENLING, which was about forty miles to the southwestward of O Shima, continued her patrol uneventfully except for sighting several aircraft.\* At 1801 she set course for Enshu Nada, a body of water to the westward of her present position and therefore even farther from O Shima.\*

Soon after this—sometime after 1900—both the TAMBOR and the GREENLING received a change in patrol orders from CTF 17. In these orders CTF 17 directed the (a) GREENLING until further orders to work all approaches to Tokyo Bay to the westward of a line drawn from O Shima to Lot's Wife and (b) TAMBOR to work all the approaches lying to eastward of this line.\*\*

The receipt of this order does not seem to have changed the operations of these submarines noticeably for the GREENLING continued to the westward toward Enshu Nada, and the TAMBOR continued to move in toward O Shima about twenty miles.

At 2400 the GREENLING was bearing 240°(T), distant seventy-five miles from O Shima, and the TAMBOR was bearing 174°(T), distant thirty-five miles from O Shima.

(C) China - Burma - India Theater, October 21st.

(1) Operations of C.G. FOURTEENTH Air Force, October 21st.\*\*\*

At 0000 October 21st the two search planes which had departed on their searches at 2000 the previous evening were slightly beyond the middle of the outbound legs of their respective search patterns (Diagram C).

During the early morning they made the following contacts:

- (a) At 0100, possible destroyer, Latitude 15°-50'N, Longitude 119°-34'E.
- (b) At 0153, two small ships, Latitude 15°-32'N, Longitude 116°-10'E.
- (c) At 0153, one small ship, Latitude 15°-32'N, Longitude 116°-18'E.
- (d) At 0203, two small ships, Latitude 15°-47'N, Longitude 116°-08'E.
- (e) At 0209, one small ship, Latitude 15°-47'N, Longitude 115°-31'E.

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\* War Patrol Report GREENLING, Report of 11TH War Patrol, No Serial, November 23rd, 1944.

\*\* CTF 17 Dispatch 210931 October 1944 to GREENLING and TAMBOR.

\*\*\* All information here, except as otherwise indicated, obtained from "AAF Operations from China Bases in Support of the Leyte Campaign", letter from Historical Division, Air University Library, USAF Air University, Maxwell AFB, Alabama, to President, Naval War College, November 8th, 1950.

(f) At 0240, a naval task force consisting of seven ships; one CV, one BB, two CL and three DD, unknown direction, Latitude 17°-40'N, Longitude 116°-10'E.

(g) At 0254, three small ships, Latitude 17°-16'N, Longitude 114°-36'E.

At about 0800 the two planes (LAB-24's) which were to make the daylight searches departed Lieuchow. During the day the search plane on the west course made two contacts as follows:

(a) At 1005, twelve to fifteen ships (four or five large), Latitude 20°-44'N, Longitude 111°-54'E—no visual contact because of thunderstorms in the area.

(b) At 1041, two transports (7000 - 8000 gross tons) heading northwest, Latitude 19°-32'N, Longitude 111°-55'E.

The plane on the east course made no contacts.

It is of interest to note here that four of the contacts made on this day were in submarine operating area A7 where, commencing October 15th, CTF 71 had planned to station two submarines.\* It will be recalled that he had ordered the RAY to this area but the RAY had suffered an operational casualty and had been ordered to proceed to Mios Woendi.\*\* Although two other submarines (BREAM\*\*\* and GUITARRO\*\*\*\*) were en route to patrol areas A3 - A7, for one reason or another they had not as yet arrived. It seems probable that, had these latter two submarines been in their operating areas (A3 - A7), they would have contacted much of this shipping (Plate XII).

COMNAVGRPCHINA, upon receiving information of the above contacts from C.G. FOURTEENTH Air Force, apparently evaluated them all as merchant shipping, since he made no specific report of them to CINCPAC but only advised that commander that search planes had reported many contacts on merchant shipping in the South China Sea during the last three days and as recently as 1300 October 21st on the Tourane - Hong Kong route mostly moving northeast, with some of the traffic probably from southern Hainan.\*\*\*\*\* This report suggests that most of this merchant shipping was en route the Empire.

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\* CTF 71 Letter Serial 00328, November 17th, 1944 to CTF 77; CTF 71 Dispatch 101426 October 1944 to COM7THFLT and COMSOWESPAC.  
 \*\* CTF 71 Dispatch 140133 October 1944 to CTG 71.1 (Z4L).  
 \*\*\* War Patrol Report BREAM, Report of 3RD War Patrol, Serial 021-44, November 22nd, 1944.  
 \*\*\*\* War Patrol Report GUITARRO, Report of 3RD War Patrol, Serial 044, November 16th, 1944; also Deck Log GUITARRO, October 21st, 1944.  
 \*\*\*\*\* CINCPAC Dispatch 211206 October 1944 to COM3RDFLT, COMSUBPAC, all TFC's 3RDFLT.



In addition to the routine searches, C.G. FOURTEENTH Air Force (or C.G. TWENTIETH Bomber Command) apparently flew a special search over Formosa Strait for at 1830 COMNAVGRPCHINA advised CINCPOA that aircraft had sighted at 1530 a naval task force in Formosa Strait consisting of one carrier, three heavy cruisers and four destroyers heading on course 045°(T), at fifteen knots, Latitude 23°-10'N, Longitude 117°-50'E.\*

This report was considerably in error for at this time there were no first line carriers (or battleships) in this area or, in fact, any cruisers in this part of the South China Sea.

What force the plane actually contacted is not known, but it might possibly have been the escort carrier SHINYO's convoy referred to under "Operations of C.G. FOURTEENTH Air Force, October 19th,"\*\* and consisting of merchant ships and probably one or two DE/DD type escorts. This convoy which had departed Sanwa, Hainan Island at 1620 October 18th for Japan\*\*\* and had last been reported heading generally north of Hainan Island at 1405 October 19th, might well have been in this position en route the Empire.

The night search (LAB-24's) departed its base at 2000 as scheduled and by 2400 the plane flying the east course was beyond the middle of the outbound leg of its sector (Diagram C). Because of radar malfunction the plane flying the west course had returned to base--time not known. The decision of the pilot of the latter plane to return to base was sound as, without radar, a night search is of little value. This is especially so if there is no moonlight--on this night the moon set before midnight (at about 2300(mean) in the area of search).

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\* COMNAVGRPCHINA Dispatch 210930 October 1944 to CINCPOA, info COMSOWESPAC, CTF 77, and COM3RDFLT.

\*\* Volume II, Battle for Leyte Gulf (NavPers 92194), Naval War College, 1955, Chapter V(C)(1).

\*\*\* War Diary 931ST Air Group, October 1944, WDC Document 160151, NA 12319.

CHAPTER IV - JAPANESE OPERATIONS, October 21st

## (A) Operations of CinC Combined Fleet.

CinC Combined Fleet remained at his headquarters at Hiyoshi. Because of this, and because he was therefore in close proximity to Imperial General Headquarters, it is reasonable to say that he knew not only of the movements and operations of his naval forces but also of the general situation ashore in the Leyte area.

He was watching that situation carefully since it was his responsibility, as CinC Combined Fleet, to do all that he could to insure the success of the penetration operation now underway.

He had two highly important problems on his mind. One, and probably the more important was the question as to whether or not he should assign the entire SECOND Striking Force to the penetration operation as had been recommended by Commander SW Area Force\* as well as by Commander SECOND Striking Force,\*\* or whether he should retain it, as presently assigned, in the counterlanding operations; the other problem of almost equal importance was the question as to whether or not Commander FIRST Striking Force would accept the suggestion of the Chief of Staff Combined Fleet that the FIRST Striking Force be divided into two groups—one to pass through San Bernardino Strait, the other to pass through Surigao Strait\*\*\*—and, if so, when, for time was passing.

As regards the former problem, it seems likely that owing to the fact, as reported by Commander SW Area Force,\*\*\*\* that the Southern Army's plan for moving troops to Leyte had not been fixed, he was somewhat sympathetic to the idea that the SECOND Striking Force be assigned to the penetration operation. However, he was unable as yet to make a decision in the

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- \* CofS SW Area Force Dispatch 202137 October 1944 to Chief 1ST Section, Imperial GHQ (Navy Section), Commanders 1ST and 2ND Striking Forces, Main Force, CRUDIV 16, Detailed Action Report CRUDIV 16, SHO Operation, October 17th - 27th, 1944, WDC Document 161005, NA 11744.
- \*\* CofS 2ND Striking Force Dispatch 201806, October 1944 to Commander SW Area Force, info CinC Combined Fleet, COMCRUDIV 16, Imperial GHQ (Navy Section), etc., Detailed Action Report CRUDIV 16, SHO Operation, October 17th - 27th, 1944, WDC Document 161005, NA 11744.
- \*\*\* CofS Combined Fleet Dispatch 201006 October 1944, addressees unknown, Information compiled by Captain Toshikazu Ohmae, ex-IJN, Japanese Research Division, HQ, USAFFE, Military History Section, relating to the Penetration Operations of the 1ST Striking Force, Battle for Leyte Gulf, contained in HQ, USAFFE, Military History Section, letter March 30th, 1954, to President, Naval War College.
- \*\*\*\* CofS SW Area Force Dispatch 192230 October 1944 to CinC Combined Fleet, info Commanders 1ST and 2ND Striking Forces, CRUDIV 16, Imperial GHQ (Navy Section), Commander Main Force, Detailed Action Report CRUDIV 16, SHO Operation, October 17th - 27th, 1944, WDC Document 161005, NA 11744.



matter because of the army request that the SECOND Striking Force be employed in the transportation of the SIXTY-EIGHTH Brigade presently in Formosa.\* He clearly realized that he could do nothing until Imperial General Headquarters (Navy Section), after discussion with Imperial General Headquarters (Army Section), had made a decision in this matter.

As regards the latter problem he may have felt that Commander FIRST Striking Force's delay in arriving at a decision was based in part on that commander's lack of information as regards the possible assignment of the SECOND Striking Force.

Therefore, it is clear that he was confronted with a difficult situation, for the two problems appeared to be interdependent. What action he took in the matter is not known, but it seems likely that he took none, for not only is the record silent in this regard but also the dispatches on this day indicate no decision in Tokyo on this matter.

Sometime after midnight he received bad news. Although he likely expected that the movement of the FIRST Striking Force from Lingga - Singapore would be discovered by the Allied forces, he had as yet had no indication that this had occurred. However, he now had reason to believe that the FIRST Striking Force had been discovered because the commander of the Communications Force reported as follows:

"Between 1145 and 1625 Morotai-based patrol plane(s) transmitted nine urgent radio messages which were reports of sighting our forces. Longitude position reported was not clear, but Latitude was five degrees. It is highly probable that force sighted was the FIRST Striking Force. Further, these messages are being relayed via radio stations at Honolulu and the Admiralties to all forces engaged in the current operations and to the Commander-in-Chief for the New Guinea Area."\*\*\*

In reality, he had no cause for alarm since the Allied radio traffic intercepted appears to have concerned a series of contact reports on October 20th (always sent with urgent precedence in Allied practice)\*\*\* emanating from Morotai-based patrol planes which at 1145 reported sighting an enemy destroyer and cargo ship in Latitude 08°-07'N, Longitude 117°-10'E and during early afternoon reported sighting one large and one small cargo vessel in

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\* CofS SW Area Force Dispatch 202137 October 1944 to Chief 1ST Section Imperial GHQ (Navy Section), info Commanders 1ST and 2ND Striking Forces, Main Force, CRUDIV 16, Detailed Action Report CRUDIV 16, SHO Operation, October 17th - 27th, 1944, WDC Document 161005, NA 11744.

\*\* Commander Communication Force Dispatch 202329 October 1944 to Major Fleet Commands, War Diary DESRON 10, October 1944, WDC Document 161638, NA 11739.

\*\*\* U.S. Fleet Basic Rapid Communication Plan for War (USF 70A), Office of COMINCH, March 1943, Paragraph 2100; also CANF SOWESPAC Communication Plan No. 3-44, Paragraph 1170.



Latitude 11°-32'N, Longitude 123°-15'E.\* Unfortunately for the Japanese, these contact reports were interpreted incorrectly--notably the Latitude of 05°-00'N--and induced CinC Combined Fleet to the conclusion that the FIRST Striking Force had been sighted. Allied records show no other contact reports at this time.

IT SEEMS WELL TO EMPHASIZE HERE THAT THE FACT THAT THE JAPANESE COMMUNICATIONS INTELLIGENCE WRONGLY EVALUATED THE AIRCRAFT CONTACT REPORTS SHOULD NOT BE ALLOWED TO OBSCURE THE MORE IMPORTANT CONSIDERATION THAT THE MAINTENANCE AND OPERATION OF AN EFFICIENT COMMUNICATIONS INTELLIGENCE ORGANIZATION IS OF VITAL IMPORTANCE.

During the late mid-watch he received several pertinent dispatches. One, from Commander SECOND Striking Force,\*\* cancelled the sortie orders of that force. This was likely very gratifying since the employment of this force was still in question, and it was therefore logical to retain it at Mako, which was in the Formosa area; another, from Commander FIFTH Base Air Force, formally organized the Kamikaze Special Attack Units.\*\*\* This matter has been discussed previously in this volume under "Operations of Commander FIFTH Base Air Force, October 20th;\*\*\*\* a third, from Commander SIXTH Base Air Force, advised that air force that (a) on the following day they were (1) to execute night attacks from Formosa airfields, (2) to move to the Philippines, and (b) the general offensive was tentatively scheduled for October 23rd.\*\*\*\*\*

THE FORMATION OF THESE KAMIKAZE UNITS WAS OF CONSIDERABLE IMPORTANCE TO CINC COMBINED FLEET, FOR SINCE COMMANDER FIFTH BASE AIR FORCE HAD BEEN WITH HIM AT SHINCHIKU AND TAKAO, HAD THEN LEFT FOR AND ARRIVED AT MANILA ON OCTOBER 17TH AND HAD ASSUMED COMMAND OF THE FIFTH BASE AIR FORCE THERE ON OCTOBER 20TH, IT CAN BE SAFELY SAID THAT HE WELL KNEW OF THE POSSIBILITY AND EVEN THE PROBABILITY THAT COMMANDER FIFTH BASE AIR FORCE, BECAUSE OF THE DETERIORATION OF THE FIFTH BASE AIR FORCE, MIGHT FIND IT NECESSARY TO ESTABLISH SUCH UNITS. HOWEVER, IT IS LIKELY THAT IT WAS NOT UNTIL THE RECEIPT OF THIS DISPATCH THAT HE KNEW OF THEIR FORMATION AND WAS AWARE OF THE SAD DETERIORATION OF THAT AIR FORCE.

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- \* COM7THFLT Dispatch 210721 October 1944 to all commands receiving COM-7THFLT Intelligence Summaries.
  - \*\* Commander 2ND Striking Force Dispatch 202340 October 1944 to CinC Combined Fleet, info Commanders 1ST Striking Force, Main Force, 5TH and 6TH Base Air Forces, Imperial GHQ (Navy Section), Detailed Action Report CRUDIV 16, SHO Operation, October 17th - 27th, 1944, WDC Document 161005, NA 11744.
  - \*\*\* Commander 5TH Base Air Force Dispatch 202347 October 1944 to Mabalacat Air Base (5TH Base Air Force DesOpOrd No. 52), War Diary 61ST Air Flotilla, October 1944, WDC Document 161643, NA 12260.
  - \*\*\*\* Although this dispatch appears to have been sent to Mabalacat Air Base only, its importance was such that it likely was sent as well to CinC Combined Fleet as an information addressee.
  - \*\*\*\*\* Commander 6TH Base Air Force Dispatch 210013 October 1944 to 6TH Base Air Force, Detailed Action Report 102ND and 103RD Attack Units, Air Action in Philippines, October 22nd - November 15th, 1944, WDC Document 161293, NA 12505-A.



October 21st

Since under his DesOpOrd issued at 0813 on the previous day, the general air offensive by the SIXTH Base Air Force was scheduled to occur on Y-day (D-1) rather than on D-2 day, it is interesting to note that he appears to have allowed this change to be made by Commander SIXTH Base Air Force without any reference to Tokyo.

Why this was so is not explained, although two possible reasons for Commander SIXTH Base Air Force's action are mentioned under "Operations of Commander SIXTH Base Air Force, October 21st". It seems likely that CinC Combined Fleet (a) feeling that his commanders in the objective area were (1) thoroughly familiar with the orders and (2) thoroughly competent and (b) realizing that the weather forecasts for the Philippines area for October 23rd - 24th were now unfavorable (weather conditions on the 23rd were actually so bad that the attack units were forced back to base)\* had decided that this advancement of the date for the general air offensive was based on a sound estimate of the local situation and therefore should be permitted to stand.

During the early forenoon he likely received a dispatch from Commander 901ST Air Group reporting that the two night search planes operating from Garan Bi had completed their searches with negative results.\*\*

Possibly at 0940 (it was received by COMDESRON TEN at this time) as an information addressee, he received a dispatch from Commander SECOND Striking Force to Commander FIRST Striking Force (a) advising that commander that in the event the SECOND Striking Force was ordered to make a penetration attack, it was to be accomplished as follows: At 1500 October 23rd the SECOND Striking Force was to be twenty miles south of Cape Calavite (Mindoro) Light; from there it was to proceed south through the northern part of the Sulu Sea at an actual speed of sixteen knots; at about 1500 October 24th it was to pass through the western entrance of the Mindanao Sea, and (b) requesting information concerning the scheduled movement of the FIRST Striking Force.\*\*\*

What he thought of this dispatch is not known; but if he had not heretofore been able to discern fully what Commander SECOND Striking Force was proposing, he now knew that that commander hoped to operate as an independent unit under Commander SW Area Force and to operate apart from the FIRST Striking Force by penetrating through Surigao Strait rather than through the eastern entrance to Leyte Gulf as had long been planned for the FIRST Striking Force.

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\* Memorandum Notes of Captain Bunzo Shibata, IJN, Senior Staff Officer 6TH Base Air Force, October 10th - 23rd, 1944, Department of the Army Historical Division, Microfilm HS-22, Item B.

\*\* Commander 901ST Air Group Dispatch 210750 October 1944 to CinC Combined Fleet, Commander 6TH Base Air Force, Detailed Action Report 901ST Air Group, Night Searches, October 10th - 28th, 1944, WDC Document 160551, NA 12402.

\*\*\* CofS 2ND Striking Force Dispatch 201932 October 1944 to Commander 1ST Striking Force, War Diary DESRON 10, October 1944, WDC Document 161638, NA 11739.



During the early forenoon he learned that Allied aircraft had commenced hitting the Philippines again. From naval reports he learned that the central Philippines had been hit by about 150 aircraft; whereas, if he maintained close contact with the army, he also learned that the army reported that about 912 aircraft had hit the Philippines. This divergence in count is discussed under "Operations of Commander SW Area Force, October 21st".

At 1031 feeling possibly from queries that there was some question as to X and Y-days, he decided to reaffirm X-day as October 25th and Y-day as October 24th and therefore released a message\* to this effect to all commands. This was a wise decision for his command was widely separated; some parts of it were even now under heavy Allied air attack; and since the coordination required of the principal commands as shown in his 200813 was necessarily precise, it was vital to the success of the plan that all commands know the above dates.

Possibly before 1135 (when it was received by DESRON ONE) he received information to the effect that on October 22nd Formosa and Japan proper were going to be bombed by U.S. air forces based in China.\*\* It seems probable that he received this dispatch prior to 1135 because it seems likely that this information originated with intelligence units in Tokyo. This seems so for is it not logical to say that had the information originated at Takao Naval Base the addressees would have included all commands rather than Commander SECOND Striking Force alone?

At 1145 he again warned Commander FIRST Striking Force, then fueling at Brunei, of the necessity for maintaining a strict alert for enemy reconnaissance planes.\*\*\*

It will be recalled, in this regard, that on the previous day (a) he had cautioned that commander (who was fueling his force at Brunei Bay) on the necessity for maintaining a strict alert against enemy reconnaissance planes, and (b) Japanese radio intelligence had warned that commander that it was highly probable that the FIRST Striking Force had been sighted.\*\*\*\* It seems likely therefore that his reason for this additional warning was his realization that since he was operating under considerably weaker forces than the

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- \* CinC Combined Fleet Dispatch 211031 October 1944 to All Fleet and Squadron Commanders, Combined Fleet, etc., Detailed Action Report MOGAMI, Battle off the Philippines, October 18th - 25th, 1944, WDC Document 160463, NA 12653.
  - \*\* Takao Naval Guard District Dispatch to 2ND Striking Force received by DESRON 1 at 211135 October 1944, War Diary DESRON 1, October 1944, WDC Document 161638, NA 11739.
  - \*\*\* CinC Combined Fleet Dispatch 211145 October 1944 to Commander 1ST Striking Force, info Commanders 6TH Base Air Force, SW Area Force, War Diary DESRON 10, October 1944, WDC Document 161638, NA 11739.
  - \*\*\*\* Commander Communications Force Dispatch 202329 October 1944 to CinC Combined Fleet, Commander 1ST Striking Force, info SW Area Force, Main Force, War Diary DESRON 10, October 1944, WDC Document 161638, NA 11739.



Allies, it was essential that his forces be not weakened further by carelessness in security measures. From this it seems clear that he (a) was not aware of the security measures within the FIRST Striking Force at Brunei Bay and (b) was somewhat apprehensive of the state of alertness in the FIRST Striking Force.

His concern was likely (a) lessened somewhat when at about 1159 he received Commander Western Force's dispatch 211129 directing six aircraft to move up to Labuan Island, Brunei Bay from the southwest for the purpose of providing antisubmarine patrol for the FIRST Striking Force,\* and (b) increased slightly when at about 1301 he received a dispatch from the Chief of Staff SW Area Force warning interested commands that enemy B-24's were operating as far as Puerto Princesa, Palawan Island and San Jose (Mindoro Island).\*\*

Commencing sometime after midnight and continuing until about 1430, CinC Combined Fleet received numerous contact reports from aircraft, coastwatchers and radio direction finder fixes. The contact reports were from both army and navy sources, but mostly from the latter.

(a) These sight contacts included (Plate XXIX):

(1) East of Catanduanes Island and San Bernardino Strait (a) at 0920 (Contact H) one task group—composition not reported, (b) at 0935 (Contact I) on one battleship (BB) and twenty-four other ships, with no carriers reported, and (c) at 1040 (Contact J) amplified at 1330 to large task force with four carriers (CV), five battleships (BB) and twenty-two other ships;

(2) Well to the eastward of Luzon, at 0920 (Contact G) on surface ships, composition unreported;

(3) East of Samar at 1330 (Contact K) on four escort carriers (CVE), two battleships (BB), two heavy or light cruisers (CA/CL) and six destroyers (DD);

(4) East of Dinagat and Mindanao Island (a) at 0818 (Contact C) on six attack transports (APA) and six destroyers (DD), with no carriers reported, (b) at 0830 (Contact D) on a surface force of sixteen attack transports (APA) escorted by two escort carriers (CVE), (c) at 0840 (Contact E) on eighteen attack transports (APA), with no carriers reported and (d) at 0900 (Contact F) on a task group with two carriers (CV), four escort carriers (CVE), and twenty other ships.

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\* Commander Western Force Dispatch 211129 October 1944 to Commanders 936TH Air Group, 1ST Striking Force, Western Force, etc., (Western Force DesOpOrd No. 172), Detailed Action Report BATDIV 1, SHO No. 1 Operation, October 18th - 28th, 1944, WDC Document 161005, NA 11744.

\*\* CofS SW Area Force Dispatch 211231 October 1944 to Commander Main Force, Commander 6TH Base Air Force, War Diary ZUIHO, October 1st - 25th, 1944, WDC Document 161636, NA 11973.

(b) These radio direction finder fixes, which were all to the eastward of southern Luzon, included:

- (1) At 2325, the previous evening (Contact A) a powerful task force of twenty ships;
- (2) At 0012 (Contact B) one task group, composition not reported;
- (3) At 1400 (Contact L) one task group, composition not reported.

Based on the sight contacts, CinC Combined Fleet could estimate that his forces were opposed by six carriers (CV) and ten escort carriers (CVE) with a possibility of anywhere from one to four carriers (CV) in the task group sighted at 0920 (Contact I). This would mean that if the composition of the Allied units sighted was correct he was opposed, in so far as forces sighted were concerned, by a total of from seven to eleven carriers (CV) and by ten escort carriers (CVE).

Based on the radio direction finder fixes, he could estimate that his forces were opposed, in addition, by (a) contact (1) four carriers (CV), (b) contact (2) possibly one to three carriers (CV), and (c) contact (3) also possibly one to three carriers (CV) or a total of six to ten carriers (CV).

If he considered the above as separate contacts he could estimate that the Allies had from thirteen to twenty-one carriers (CV) and ten escort carriers (CVE).

From this he could estimate that he was still opposed by Allied carrier forces at least equal to the sixteen carriers (CV) and five escort carriers (CVE) which had been sighted on October 19th and therefore that the Allied naval forces continued to be in great strength.

Sometime during the afternoon he received intelligence, presumably largely from Allied broadcasts:

- (a) An announcement of the capture of Tacloban Airfield,
- (b) A statement of General MacArthur that the Japanese apparently had expected that U.S. forces would land on Mindanao,
- (c) An announcement by the British Admiralty that more than half of the British fleet was currently moving to the Far East,
- (d) An announcement that Belgrade had been captured.\*

Most of the above intelligence (items a, b and d) was likely known to the Japanese but it is doubtful if they were familiar with the movements of the

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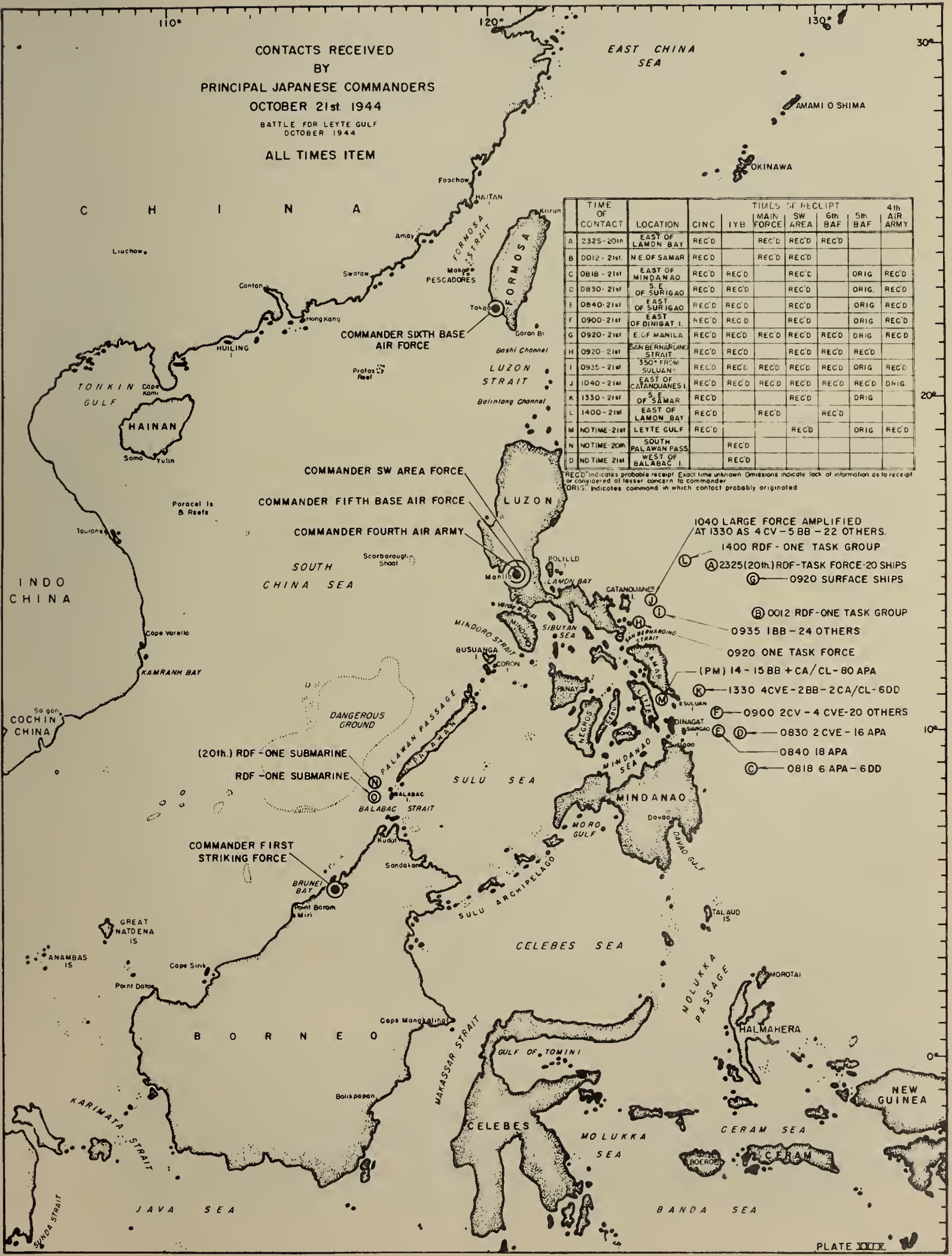
\* Material for Situation Estimates, 1ST Section, Naval General Staff, October 1944, WDC Document 216764 (Microfilm).



CONTACTS RECEIVED  
BY  
PRINCIPAL JAPANESE COMMANDERS  
OCTOBER 21st. 1944  
BATTLE FOR LEYTE GULF  
OCTOBER 1944  
ALL TIMES ITEM

TIME OF CONTACT	LOCATION	TIMES OF RECEIPT						
		CINC	IYB	MAIN FORCE	SW AREA	6th BAF	5th BAF	4th AIR ARMY
A 2325-201h	EAST OF LAMON BAY	REC'D		REC'D	REC'D			
B 0012-21st	N.E. OF SAMAR	REC'D		REC'D	REC'D			
C 0818-21st	EAST OF MINDANAO	REC'D	REC'D		REC'D		ORIG	REC'D
D 0830-21st	S.E. OF SURIGAO	REC'D	REC'D		REC'D		ORIG	REC'D
E 0840-21st	EAST OF SURIGAO	REC'D	REC'D		REC'D		ORIG	REC'D
F 0900-21st	EAST OF DINIGAT I.	REC'D	REC'D		REC'D		ORIG	REC'D
G 0920-21st	E. OF MANILA	REC'D	REC'D	REC'D	REC'D	REC'D	REC'D	REC'D
H 0920-21st	SAN BERNARDINO STRAIT	REC'D	REC'D		REC'D	REC'D	REC'D	
I 0935-21st	350° FROM SULUAN I.	REC'D	REC'D	REC'D	REC'D	REC'D	ORIG	REC'D
J 1040-21st	EAST OF CATANDUANES I.	REC'D	REC'D	REC'D	REC'D	REC'D	REC'D	DRIG
K 1330-21st	S.E. OF SAMAR	REC'D			REC'D		DRIG	
L 1400-21st	EAST OF LAMON BAY	REC'D		REC'D		REC'D		
M NOTIME-21st	LEYTE GULF	REC'D			REC'D		ORIG	REC'D
N NOTIME-20th	SOUTH PALAWAN PASS		REC'D					
O NOTIME-21st	WEST OF BALABAC I.		REC'D					

REC'D indicates probable receipt. Exact time unknown. Omissions indicate lack of information as to receipt or considered of lesser concern to commander. ORIG indicates command in which contact probably originated.







British fleet to Asiatic waters. Why it became necessary to broadcast this information is not known for the war in the European theater was not over yet (it would not be over for seven months—the Germans did not surrender until May 7th, 1945) and the Japanese fleet, in so far as the Allies knew, had not yet been committed in final battle.

It is possible that the above announcement coupled with item (d), the fall of Belgrade, were additional indications to the Japanese High Command of the increasingly unhappy situation of their German Ally in Europe.

Also sometime during the afternoon he likely received a dispatch from the THIRTY-THIRD Special Base Force\* relaying an army report that it appeared that landings were being made on Rapu Rapu Island near Legaspi in southern Luzon. He does not appear to have taken any action although such a landing would have considerably broadened the area of operations. However, this report was erroneous and was cancelled later in the evening.\*\*

Possibly at 1504 (it was received by KINU at that time) he received Commander SW Area Force's directive to the SECOND Striking Force to proceed to Manila to arrive by early morning of the 23rd.\*\*\* In view of the directive issued by Commander SW Area Force the previous day, stating that the movements of the SECOND Striking Force would be as directed by Commander SECOND Striking Force,\*\*\*\* he likely wondered what new developments had arisen requiring the presence of the SECOND Striking Force in Manila on the 23rd, for as yet there had been no decision concerning the movements of army troops from Formosa to the Philippines.\*\*\*\*\* However, the situation, if confusing, was likely clarified sometime later (possibly at 1637 when it was received by COMCRUDIV SIX-TEEN) upon the receipt of the Chief of Staff SW Area Force's 211322 dispatch to Commander SECOND Striking Force.\*\*\*\*\* This dispatch stated that

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- \* Commander 33RD Special Base Force Dispatch 211250 October 1944, addressees unknown, Detailed Action Report Main Force, SHO No. 1 Operation, October 20th - 29th, 1944, WDC Document 161005, NA 11744.
- \*\* Commander 33RD Special Base Force Dispatch 211900 October 1944, addressees unknown, Detailed Action Report Main Force, SHO No. 1 Operation, October 20th - 29th, 1944, WDC Document 161005, NA 11744.
- \*\*\* SW Area Force Dispatch 211252 October 1944 to Commander 2ND Striking Force, COMCRUDIV 16, info 2ND Air Fleet, Commander SW Area Force, War Diary DESRON 1, October 1944, WDC Document 161638, NA 11739.
- \*\*\*\* Commander SW Area Force Dispatch 201428 October 1944 to 2ND Striking Force, CRUDIV 16, info all Fleet and Squadron Commanders, SW Area Force, Combined Fleet, War Diary DESRON 1, October 1944, WDC Document 161638, NA 11739.
- \*\*\*\*\* CofS SW Area Force Dispatch 201958 October 1944 to Commander 2ND Striking Force, info CinC Combined Fleet, COMCRUDIV 16, etc., Detailed Action Report CRUDIV 16, SHO Operation, October 17th - 27th, 1944, WDC Document 161005, NA 11744.
- \*\*\*\*\* CofS SW Area Force Dispatch 211322 October 1944 to Commander 2ND Striking Force, COMCRUDIV 16, info CinC Combined Fleet, 1ST Striking Force, Main Force, Imperial GHQ (Navy Section), Detailed Action Report CRUDIV 16, SHO Operation, October 17th - 27th, 1944, WDC Document 161005, NA 11744.



Headquarters SW Area Force (a) was conferring with army headquarters but doubted that the army would be prepared to effect a counterlanding at Leyte during the night of the 25th and (b) was of the opinion that at least CRUDIV TWENTY-ONE and DESRON ONE should participate in the penetration operation through Surigao Strait in coordination with the FIRST Striking Force operation.

CinC Combined Fleet undoubtedly noticed that the above suggested employment of the SECOND Striking Force made no reference to the transportation of the SIXTY-EIGHTH Brigade from Formosa. This was an indication that CinC Southern Army, despite his request of the previous evening on the above matter addressed to Imperial General Headquarters (Army Section), was now satisfied that the army was not ready at the present moment to move the SIXTY-EIGHTH Brigade to Leyte and had so informed Headquarters SW Area Force even if he had not as yet notified Tokyo.

This would account for Commander SW Area Force's action in moving the SECOND Striking Force to the Manila area. Here it would be (a) in no danger from the China-based planes which intelligence reported were expected to attack Formosa (Mako) on the following day and (b) in better position for its operations in the Philippines; i.e., penetration or counterlanding.

Sometime during the day he received information that fourteen to fifteen battleships and cruisers and eighty transports were in Leyte Gulf\* (Contact M).

This was important news because it indicated that the Allied landing operations were still far from complete. However, he realized that the Allies still had four days in which to land their reserve troops and stores and to retire their transports and cargo ships.

At 1807 (COMBATDIV ONE received it at this time) he received SECOND Striking Force's sortie order to depart Mako at 1600 October 21st and arrive Manila Bay at 0700 October 23rd.\*\*

At 1945 (when it was received by Commander FIRST Striking Force) CinC Combined Fleet received Commander SW Area Force's order\*\*\* (quoted in full under "Operations of Commander SW Area Force, October 21st") in which that

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\* Appended Chart II, Enemy Fleet Dispositions on October 21st, 1944, Detailed Action Report Main Force, SHO No. 1 Operation, October 20th - 29th, 1944, WDC Document 161005, NA 11744.

\*\* Commander 2ND Striking Force Dispatch 211455 October 1944 to Commander SW Area Force, CinC Combined Fleet, Commander 1ST Striking Force, Detailed Action Report BATDIV 1, SHO No. 1 Operation, October 18th - 28th, 1944, WDC Document 161005, NA 11744.

\*\*\* Commander SW Area Force Dispatch 211345 October 1944 to Commanders 5TH and 6TH Base Air Forces, 1ST and 2ND Striking Forces, 954TH and 955TH Air Groups, Detailed Action Report 1ST Striking Force, SHO Operations, October 16th - 28th, 1944, WDC Document 161641, NA 11839.



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commander, under Combined Fleet's DesOpOrd No. 363, assumed command of all naval air forces assembled in the Philippines area and also prescribed the tasks of the shore-based air forces during the forthcoming operations. He noted that the operations of the FIFTH and SIXTH Base Air Forces were, at least for the present, to be "cooperative" under the direction of Commander SW Area Force rather than be unified. Since this was in accordance with Combined Fleet operational policy,\* it is assumed that he found the arrangement satisfactory.

At about 2100 he received two dispatches; one was Commander SW Area Force dispatch 211910 in which he was notified of an Army - Navy agreement wherein the navy agreed to transport two infantry battalions from Cagayan to Leyte under command of COMCRUDIV SIXTEEN;\*\* the other was Chief of Staff SW Area Force dispatch 211914 which, referring to the former dispatch, gave the opinions of that command regarding the employment of CRUDIV TWENTY-ONE and DESRON ONE.\*\*\* This latter dispatch, which is quoted in full under "Operations of Commander SW Area Force, October 21st", was particularly interesting in that, among other items, it not only continued to recommend that CRUDIV TWENTY-ONE and DESRON ONE participate in the decisive battle operations scheduled for October 25th by penetrating through Surigao Strait but recommended, for the first time, that these units do so under the command of Commander FIRST Striking Force. This differed from the previous dispatches thereon which implied that CRUDIV TWENTY-ONE and DESRON ONE were to continue to operate under Commander SW Area Force and to participate in the penetration operation "in support of"\*\*\*\* or "in coordination with"\*\*\*\*\* the FIRST Striking Force.

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- \* 6TH Base Air Force OpOrd No. 6, September 6th, 1944, File of Orders kept by Captain Bunzo Shibata, Senior Staff Officer, 6TH Base Air Force, Basic SHO Operation Orders of 6TH Base Air Force, Army Historical Division Microfilm HS-18, Item D.
- \*\* COM SW Area Force Dispatch 211910 October 1944, substance of which is referred to in COM SW Area Force Dispatch 221320 October 1944 to COMCRUDIV 16, Transports 9, 10, 6, 102, info CinC Combined Fleet, 2ND and 1ST Striking Forces, Main Force, 6TH Base Air Force, Detailed Action Report CRUDIV 16, SHO Operation, October 17th - 27th, 1944, WDC Document 161005, NA 11744.
- \*\*\* CofS SW Area Force Dispatch 211914 October 1944 to CinC Combined Fleet, COMCRUDIV 16, Commander 2ND Striking Force, Imperial GHQ (Navy Section), info Commanders Main Force, 1ST Striking Force, 5TH and 6TH Base Air Forces, War Diary DESRON 10, October 1944, WDC Document 161638, NA 11739.
- \*\*\*\* CofS SW Area Force Dispatch 192230 October 1944 to CinC Combined Fleet, Detailed Action Report CRUDIV 16, SHO Operation, October 17th - 27th, 1944, WDC Document 161005, NA 11744.
- \*\*\*\*\* CofS SW Area Force Dispatch 211322 October 1944 to 2ND Striking Force, COMCRUDIV 16, info CinC Combined Fleet, Commander 1ST Striking Force, Imperial GHQ (Navy Section), Detailed Action Report CRUDIV 16, SHO Operation, October 17th - 27th, 1944, WDC Document 161005, NA 11744.



The question of the employment of CRUDIV TWENTY-ONE and DESRON ONE was under discussion at Imperial General Headquarters (Navy Section) where it had been referred on the previous evening by the Chief of Staff SW Area Force.\* However, the 211910 dispatch indicated that the army and navy commanders in the Philippines had reached agreement as to the transportation time schedule of the army units. Further, the 211914 dispatch appears to have been designed to reduce the army's opposition to the inclusion of CRUDIV TWENTY-ONE and DESRON ONE in the penetration operation.\*\* Therefore, these dispatches should have materially assisted Imperial General Headquarters to arrive at a solution.

At 2106 having received additional intelligence thereon, he notified naval units in the Formosa, Nansei Shoto Area that air attacks from China were possible and warned those units to maintain strict alert.\*\*\*

It is of interest that sometime on this day, but apparently late in the day because it was not received by most commands until the following day, CinC Combined Fleet received an Imperial Rescript (a) forwarded by the Chief of the Naval General Staff wherein the Emperor commended CinC Southern Army, CinC Combined Fleet and C.G. Formosa Army for their battle successes and (b) at the same time broadcast to the world.\*\*\*\* This rescript follows:

"Our Army and Navy forces working in close cooperation have intercepted the enemy fleet and in fierce battle have inflicted heavy losses on him. I hereby express my deep gratitude.

"This situation is daily becoming more critical. The Army and Navy forces will strengthen even further their cooperation and will endeavor to fulfill my faith in them."\*\*\*\*\*

THIS WAS AN EXTRAORDINARY MESSAGE IN THAT (A) IT IMPLIES THAT THERE HAD BEEN A FLEET ACTION IN WHICH THE JAPANESE FORCES HAD BEEN UNUSUALLY SUCCESSFUL.

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- \* CofS SW Area Force Dispatch 202137 October 1944 to Imperial GHQ (Navy Section), info CinC Combined Fleet, etc., Detailed Action Report CRUDIV 16, SHO Operation, October 17th - 27th, 1944, WDC Document 161005, NA 11744.
  - \*\* CofS SW Area Force Dispatch 211914 October 1944 to CinC Combined Fleet, COMCRUDIV 16, Commander 2ND Striking Force, Imperial GHQ (Navy Section), info Commanders Main Force, 1ST Striking Force, 5TH and 6TH Base Air Forces, War Diary DESRON 10, October 1944, WDC Document 161638, NA 11739.
  - \*\*\* CinC Combined Fleet Dispatch 212106 October 1944 to 2ND and 3RD Air Fleets, Detailed Action Report Nampo Shoto Air Group, WDC Document 160267, NA 12540.
  - \*\*\*\* This rescript was broadcast by Radio Tokyo, monitored and translated by FCC and published in The New York Times, October 22nd, 1944, Page 26.
  - \*\*\*\*\* Vice Admiral Matome Ugaki, IJN (COMBATDIV 1), Personal Diary SENSOROKU, Nippon Shuppan Kyodo Kabushiki Kaisha (Tokyo, March 15th, 1953), Volume II.



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CINC COMBINED FLEET  
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ACTUALLY, OF COURSE, THE ONLY HEAVY LOSSES ON THE ENEMY THAT THE JAPANESE HAD CLAIMED HERETOFORE HAD BEEN REPORTEDLY EFFECTED BY ARMY AND NAVY AIRPOWER (THE PRINCIPAL DAMAGE EFFECTED HAD CONSISTED OF THE TORPEDOING OF THE CRUISERS HOUSTON AND CANBERRA), AND (B) IT COMPLETELY OMITTS ANY REFERENCE TO THE FACT THAT THE ALLIES ON THE PREVIOUS DAY HAD LANDED LARGE FORCES ON EASTERN LEYTE WHICH IPSO FACTO WOULD CONTRADICT THE SUCCESSES CLAIMED ABOVE AND HAD SO ANNOUNCED TO THE WORLD.

SINCE, FROM PARAGRAPH TWO OF THE RESCRIPT, IT IS CLEAR THAT THE EMPEROR REALIZED THAT FUTURE OPERATIONS WOULD BE EXTREMELY CRITICAL, IT SEEMS POSSIBLE THAT HE WAS A LITTLE BETTER INFORMED AS TO THE PHILIPPINES SITUATION THAN THIS RESCRIPT DENOTES. HOWEVER, THE WHOLE MESSAGE INDICATES THAT EITHER HE (A) WAS NOT BEING KEPT FULLY INFORMED BY THE HIGH COMMAND OF THE SERIOUSNESS OF THE DEVELOPING SITUATION AND OF THE FACT THAT THE ALLIES HAD LANDED IN STRENGTH, OR (B) HAD ISSUED THIS RESCRIPT AS A FORM OF PROPAGANDA.

IF ITEM (A) IS ACCEPTED AS CORRECT, IT WOULD BE INTERESTING TO KNOW THE REASON THEREFOR. COULD IT HAVE BEEN THAT THE HIGH COMMAND, RELYING ON THE PENETRATION OPERATION, AND HOPING THAT IT WOULD BE SUCCESSFUL, HAD DECIDED TO WITHHOLD FROM THE EMPEROR INFORMATION OF THE ALLIED SUCCESSES UNTIL SUCH TIME AS THE PENETRATION OPERATION HAD BEEN ATTEMPTED? THEN, SHOULD THE PENETRATION OPERATION BE SUCCESSFUL, THEY COULD STILL CLAIM VICTORY DESPITE THE ALLIED LANDINGS.

IF ITEM (B) IS ACCEPTED, THE REASON FOR ITS ISSUANCE IS OBVIOUS; IT WAS A COUNTER TO ALLIED CLAIMS OF GREAT VICTORIES.\*

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\* The New York Times, October 18th, 19th, 20th, 21st, 1944.

## (1) Operations of Commander FIRST Striking Force, October 21st.

With the commencement of this day the FIRST Striking Force, which had arrived at Brunei Bay the previous forenoon and had commenced fueling immediately in accordance with the fueling plans, was still fueling from the battleships and cruisers those units which had not as yet completed fueling. Actually, by this time most of the destroyers and cruisers had apparently completed fueling leaving only the TONE to be fueled from the MUSASHI, the MICHISHIO from the KONGO, the NOWAKI from the HARUNA, the MUSASHI and MOGAMI from the HAKKO MARU, the YAMATO and MAYA from the YUHO MARU. It will be recalled that no orders had as yet been given for fueling the other battleships (NAGATO, FUSO, YAMASHIRO, KONGO and HARUNA).

Shortly after midnight Commander FIRST Striking Force learned that Commander SECOND Striking Force's sortie from Mako, ordered for that morning, had been cancelled.\*

At 0140 (when the AOBA received it), as an information addressee, he learned that CRUDIV SIXTEEN, in consultation with the army, was to carry out the first movement of troop reinforcements.\*\* He was likely pleased that he had already fueled that CRUDIV.

Sometime before 0305 he received a report from the Commander Communication Force stating that (a) between 1145 and 1625 Morotai-based patrol planes had transmitted nine urgent radio messages which were reports of sighting Japanese forces, and (b) it was highly probable that the Japanese force sighted was the FIRST Striking Force.\*\*\* Although he did not know it, this was an erroneous conclusion of the Communication Force. It did, however, cause much concern within the FIRST Striking Force since the success of the penetration operation depended in part on remaining unobserved by the enemy as long as possible.

At this time he was necessarily concerned about three important items. These were: (a) the question as to whether or not to make a double penetration as had been suggested by the Chief of Staff Combined Fleet; (b) the safety of the Brunei Fueling Group which was due to arrive that day and which, if on schedule, was even now passing through the area where Allied submarines had torpedoed several ships of a southbound convoy; and (c) the fact that his command had likely been observed by Allied patrol planes operating out of Morotai.\*\*\*

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\* Commander 2ND Striking Force Dispatch 202340 October 1944 to CinC Combined Fleet, Commander Takao Guard District, info other Combined Fleet commands, Detailed Action Report CRUDIV 16, SHO Operation, October 17th - 27th, 1944, WDC Document 161005, NA 11744.

\*\* Commander 2ND Striking Force Dispatch 201756 October 1944 to CinC Combined Fleet, COMCRUDIV 16 (2ND Striking Force DesOpOrd No. 8), War Diary DESRON 1, October 1944, WDC Document 161638, NA 11739.

\*\*\* Commander Communication Force Dispatch 202329 October 1944 to CinC Combined Fleet, Commander 1ST Striking Force, info Main Force, SW Area Force, War Diary DESRON 10, October 1944, WDC Document 161638, NA 11739.



As regards item (a) he knew that his staff was at this very moment giving this matter very serious consideration; as regards item (b) he had done all that he could to insure the safe arrival of the oilers and he could now only trust that his measures would prove effective. However, item (c) was of pressing concern for, if correct, it could have a very vital and adverse effect on the likelihood of the success of the penetration operation. He felt that as a consequence, it was possible that Allied air attacks might be made on his command commencing at dawn. Therefore, at 0305 he advised the FIRST Striking Force as follows:

"There is a strong possibility that enemy patrol planes have spotted this force. Especially strict alert will be enforced applying No. Two anti-aircraft alert dispositions from dawn today."\*

As the night passed, having received no messages from the Brunei Fueling Group--it was proceeding in radio silence--he realized that this group had most likely succeeded in passing through the principal danger area unharmed.

Beginning at dawn (a) all units set Condition No. 2 AA or higher, (b) air patrols were established over the anchorage employing both cruiser and battleship aircraft, and (c) all ships were prepared for sixteen knots on thirty minutes notice.

At 0843 he notified all ships present that at 1020 the ATAGO would send one seaplane to Labuan Base (on Labuan Island in Brunei Bay) to pick up an army liaison staff officer and then return with him to the ATAGO.\*\* This officer appears to have been ordered to report to Commander FIRST Striking Force to explain the situation in the Tacloban area and presumably thereby to assist that commander in the final formulation of his operation plan.

At 0940 (since COMDESRON TEN received it at that time) he received a dispatch from the Chief of Staff SECOND Striking Force giving the movements of that force in the event it carried out a penetration attack and requesting information concerning the scheduled track of the FIRST Striking Force.\*\*\*

At 1020 he directed all unit commanders, destroyer commanders and staff officers to assemble at 1700 on board the ATAGO.\*\*\*\* This is the first

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- \* Commander 1ST Striking Force Visual Dispatch 210305 October 1944 to 1ST Striking Force, Detailed Action Report BATDIV 1, SHO No. 1 Operation, October 18th - 28th, 1944, WDC Document 161005, NA 11744.
  - \*\* Commander 1ST Striking Force Visual Dispatch 210843 October 1944 to all divisions 1ST Striking Force, Detailed Action Report BATDIV 1, SHO No. 1 Operation, October 18th - 28th, 1944, WDC Document 161005, NA 11744.
  - \*\*\* CofS 2ND Striking Force Dispatch 201932 October 1944 to Commander 1ST Striking Force, War Diary DESRON 10, October 1944, WDC Document 161638, NA 11739.
  - \*\*\*\* Commander 1ST Striking Force Visual Dispatch 211020 October 1944 to 1ST Striking Force, Detailed Action Report BATDIV 1, SHO No. 1 Operation, October 18th - 28th, 1944, WDC Document 161005, NA 11744.

indication that he either had arrived at or was fast approaching a decision as to (a) whether or not to divide his command, and (b) his final plan for the penetration operation.

At 1120 he noted that the Brunei Fueling Group had entered port and that at 1220 the YUHO MARU had gone alongside the YAMATO and the HAKKO MARU alongside the MUSASHI. He also noted that the MICHISHIO had promptly commenced fueling from the KONGO, the NOWAKI from the HARUNA.\*

This early arrival\*\* was a source of considerable satisfaction since his earlier estimate had been that this group would arrive at 1700\*\*\* and here it had arrived at 1120. This indicated a speed of advance of nine and seven-tenths (9.7) knots rather than the nine knots estimated for the 1700 arrival and was in accordance with the basic movement plan which had forecast arrival at 1100.\*\*\*\*

He also noted that the ASAGUMO and YAMAGUMO, which had departed at 1150 on the previous day to reinforce the escorts of the Brunei Fueling Group, had not returned with that group. If he queried the Commander Brunei Fueling Group (COMDESDIV FOUR in MICHISHIO) on this matter, he soon learned that neither of these destroyers had been observed by the ships of that group. This would have been an additional cause for concern for it indicated that (a) something strange might have happened to these two destroyers since the weather was excellent, the positions of the enemy sinking likely reasonably accurate; and therefore, if the fueling group maintained its estimated course of 070°(T) as was expected, the chance of failing to contact it poor; and (b) the planes from the YAHAGI and NOSHIRO had (1) failed to make contact since they had been directed to notify the ASAGUMO and YAMAGUMO of the actual position of the fueling group once that group had been located\*\*\*\*\* or (2) once having located the fueling group had been unable to locate the two destroyers or (3) been unable to locate the fueling group. He awaited further information thereon from the destroyers or from the aircraft.

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- \* Detailed Action Report No. 13, DESRON 10, SHO Operation, October 17th - 31st, 1944, WDC Document 161005, NA 11744.
  - \*\* Vice Admiral Matome Ugaki, IJN (COMBATDIV 1), Personal Diary SENSOROKU, Nippon Shuppan Kyodo Kabushiki Kaisha (Tokyo, March 15th, 1953), Volume II.
  - \*\*\* Commander 1ST Striking Force Visual Dispatch 201025 October 1944 to 1ST Striking Force (1ST Striking Force SigOrd No. 183), Detailed Action Report BATDIV 1, SHO No. 1 Operation, October 18th - 28th, 1944, WDC Document 161005, NA 11744.
  - \*\*\*\* COMDESDIV 4 Dispatch 172245 October 1944 to Commander 1ST Striking Force, War Diary DESRON 10, October 1944, WDC Document 161638, NA 11739.
  - \*\*\*\*\* Commander 1ST Striking Force Visual Dispatch 201300 October 1944, to YAHAGI, NOSHIRO, info all ships, Detailed Action Report BATDIV 1, SHO No. 1 Operation, October 18th - 28th, 1944, WDC Document 161005, NA 11744.



During the forenoon he received an Allied broadcast of the previous day which COMBATDIV ONE recorded as the "United States SIXTH Army Central Pacific Force and Australian forces under direct command of MacArthur (aboard a warship) have landed at two places on Leyte Island, Panaon Island, the northern tip of Dinagat Island and the southern part of Homonhon Island."\*\* It is clear that this recording is a paraphrase of the original broadcast which, while not available to this study, very likely stated "Southwest Pacific" and "Allied" rather than "Central Pacific" and "Australian" and was confused by the staff of COMBATDIV ONE. Whether or not it was also confused by Commander FIRST Striking Force is not known.

Since Commander Main Force had reported, on the previous day, having received at 2138 a dispatch from Imperial General Headquarters (Navy Section) to the effect that the Allies had landed "at two points on Leyte Island and had occupied Panaon Island, the northern tip of Dinagat Island and Homonhon Island",\*\* it would appear as if Imperial General Headquarters had obtained this intelligence from Allied broadcasts.

Although this broadcast was not entirely accurate in that the landing at Suluan Island was not mentioned, it seems probable that it was of considerable importance to Commander FIRST Striking Force, for it indicated the locations of the Allied landings and gave an indication of the strength of the Allied forces. The two landings on Leyte Island would be especially interesting in that they clearly were the principal landings and therefore indicated the general location of the major Allied amphibious forces which were his primary target. He had reason to believe that one of these two landings was in the Tacloban area for he had received information thereon previously, but he had received little or no information of the other landing, excepting the report of a landing between Dulag and San Jose. However, on this very day he had also received word from a night reconnaissance plane of the brilliant lights in Tacloban and south of Dulag,\* which implied their capture by the Allies and from this he likely assumed that Dulag was the location of the second landing. He was also interested in the other landings reported for, if he had the same information as COMBATDIV ONE, he had had until now no information on the landings on Homonhon, Dinagat and Panaon Islands.

THIS POINTS OUT THE FACT THAT NEWS BROADCASTS WHICH SEEM RELATIVELY UNIMPORTANT CAN BE AND OFTEN ARE OF VALUE TO AN ENEMY.

INSTRUCTIONS AT THE TIME ON THE RELEASE OF SUCH INFORMATION GAVE AS A GENERAL GUIDE THE FOLLOWING: "IF THE MATERIAL CONTAINED IN THE MATERIAL, WRITTEN OR PHOTOGRAPHIC, MIGHT BE OF VALUE TO OUR ENEMIES IT SHOULD NOT BE RELEASED"; IF IT IS OF NO VALUE TO THE ENEMY IT MAY BE RELEASED.\*\*\*

\* Vice Admiral Matome Ugaki, IJN (COMBATDIV 1), Personal Diary SENSOROKU; Nippon Shuppan Kyodo Kabushiki Kaisha (Tokyo, March 15th, 1953), Volume II.

\*\* Detailed Action Report Main Force, SHO No. 1 Operation, October 20th - 29th, 1944, WDC Document 161005, NA 11744.

\*\*\* Public Relations Manual, USN, March 1st, 1943, Article 1.406a (Directive for War Correspondents), Section XIV, General Guide.



CURRENT INSTRUCTIONS (1957) ON THE RELEASE OF SUCH INFORMATION PROVIDE, IN ESSENCE, THAT (A) THE MAXIMUM OF INFORMATION SHOULD BE RELEASED TO THE PUBLIC WITH A MINIMUM OF TIME CONSUMED IN REVIEW, AND (B) THE ENEMY SHOULD BE DENIED INFORMATION WHICH WOULD ENABLE HIM TO PROSECUTE THE WAR MORE EFFECTIVELY. WITH THESE PRINCIPLES IN MIND, THE INSTRUCTIONS ALSO PROVIDE THAT ALL NEWS MATERIAL WILL BE RELEASED UNLESS IT:

(1) WILL SUPPLY MILITARY INFORMATION OF VALUE TO THE ENEMY; OR

(2) WILL HAVE AN ADVERSE EFFECT UPON THE COMBAT EFFICIENCY OF OUR FORCES OR THOSE OF OUR ALLIES; OR

(3) IS FALSE OR INACCURATE IN RESPECTS WHICH ARE DETRIMENTAL TO OUR FORCES OR THOSE OF OUR ALLIES AND OF SERVICE TO THE ENEMY.\*

IT WILL BE NOTED THAT THESE CURRENT INSTRUCTIONS DO NOT COVER THE SITUATION, WHICH OFTEN ARISES AND WHICH AROSE HERE (1944), WHEREIN INFORMATION CLEARLY OF VALUE TO THE ENEMY IS RELEASED BECAUSE IT IS EXPECTED THAT THE GAIN THEREBY TO MORALE, ETC., OF OWN PEOPLE AND MILITARY FORCES WILL BE GREATER THAN THAT GAINED BY THE ENEMY; IN OTHER WORDS, THE RELEASE OF THE INFORMATION IS EXPECTED TO HAVE A SALUTARY EFFECT ON THE DIRECTION OF THE WAR. WHETHER OR NOT THE RELEASE OF THE INFORMATION IN THIS CASE WAS A CASE IN POINT IS NOT KNOWN. HOWEVER, IT SEEMS MOST LIKELY THAT IT WAS BECAUSE OF THE TREMENDOUS PROPAGANDA EFFECT ITS RELEASE COULD BE EXPECTED TO HAVE, NOT ONLY ON THE PEOPLES OF THE WORLD, BUT ON THE PEOPLES OF SOUTHEAST ASIA, INCLUDING THE PHILIPPINES AND THE NETHERLANDS EAST INDIES, IN PARTICULAR. ON THE OTHER HAND, AND THIS IS CONSIDERED POSSIBLE, IT MAY HAVE BEEN RELEASED BECAUSE THE ALLIES, BEING IN GREAT STRENGTH, CONTINUED TO BELIEVE THAT MAJOR ELEMENTS OF THE JAPANESE FLEET WOULD NOT BE INVOLVED IN OPPOSITION TO THE ALLIED LANDINGS AT LEYTE AND THEREFORE THE RELEASE, EVEN OF THIS MILITARY INFORMATION, WAS NOT EXPECTED TO PROVE HARMFUL. AT THIS TIME THE ALLIES WERE NOT AWARE EITHER (A) OF THE PRESENCE OF THE JAPANESE FIRST STRIKING FORCE AT BRUNEI, OR (B) OF THE FACT THAT THE MAIN FORCE HAD SORTIED, ALTHOUGH THERE APPEAR TO HAVE BEEN INDICATIONS WITHIN ALLIED INTELLIGENCE THAT THIS HAD, IN FACT, OCCURRED. IT IS OF INTEREST THAT ON THIS DAY ALLIED GENERAL HEAD-QUARTERS SOWESPAC AREA, IN A DISCUSSION OF "ENEMY TRENDS", STATED, IN SUMMARY:

"(A) ENEMY AIR--FORWARD AREA (NORTHERN LUZON, FORMOSA, NANSEI SHOTO). DEFEATED IN THE AIR, HARASSMENT AND LIMITED DEFENSE ONLY REMAINS.

"(B) ENEMY NAVAL UNITS--NO APPARENT INTENT TO INTERFERE WITH OUR LEYTE LANDINGS."\*\*

\* Joint Regulations, Public Relations - Establishment and Conduct of Field Press Censorship in Combat Areas, OPNAV Instruction 5530.3, Army Regulations No. 360-65, Air Force Regulation No. 190-11, August 15th, 1952, Paragraph 17c.

\*\* Intelligence Summary No. 20, Periodic Summary of Enemy Trends, GHQ, SOWESPAC Area, Military Intelligence Section, General Staff, October 21st, 1944.



During the forenoon Commander FIRST Striking Force received aircraft contact reports reporting enemy sightings as follows (Plate XXIX):

- (a) At 0813, six transports and six destroyers, bearing 110°(T), distant 170 miles from Surigao Strait (Contact C).
- (b) At 0830, two carriers and thirty-five transports, bearing 090°(T), distant 140 miles from Surigao Strait (Contacts D and E).
- (c) At 0840, two carriers, four converted carriers (CVE) and twenty other ships, bearing 070°(T), distant 105 miles from Surigao Strait (Contact F).
- (d) At 0920, surface ships, bearing 091°(T), distant 420 miles from Manila (Contact G).
- (e) At 0920, a task force in San Bernardino Strait (Contact H).
- (f) At 0935, one battleship and twenty-four other ships, bearing 350°(T), distant 160 miles from Suluan Island\* (Contact I).

It will be observed that several of these contacts differ from those recorded by Commander Main Force. For example, Contact C is reported as 0813 instead of 0818 (a very minor difference), Contact D is reported as two carriers and thirty-five transports instead of two carriers and eighteen transports, and Contact E, sixteen transports is entirely missing. Whether Contacts D and E were somehow merged by Commander FIRST Striking Force is not known. Contact F is reported as 0840 rather than 0900. However, it should be clear that the general picture is the same in either case.

These contact reports were important to Commander FIRST Striking Force because they showed the manner in which the Allied units contacted were disposed. Of course, in view of the numerous contacts reported on the 19th; i.e., sixteen carriers (CV) and five escort carriers (CVE), he undoubtedly realized that many of the Allied carriers had not as yet been contacted on this day. However, his present information, while clearly inadequate, was of value in the final formulation of his plan in that it was the forces outside of Leyte Gulf, such as these, which would oppose his movement to that gulf. Therefore, it was essential that he have some knowledge of their disposition and composition.

The above is based on the assumption that he either did not receive the radio direction finder fixes shown under "Operations of CinC Combined Fleet, October 21st" or considered them as unreliable.

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\* Vice Admiral Matome Ugaki, IJN (COMBATDIV 1), Personal Diary SENSOROKU, Nippon Shuppan Kyodo Kabushiki Kaisha (Tokyo, March 15th, 1953), Volume II.

At 1158 (it was received by the MOGAMI at this time) he received a dispatch from CinC Combined Fleet setting X-day, the day of arrival at Leyte by the FIRST Striking Force, as October 25th.\* As this date had already been established by CinC Combined Fleet on the previous day,\*\* he knew that this later dispatch was merely a confirmation.

Also about this time, or possibly earlier, he received a dispatch\*\*\* from the FIRST Combined Communication Unit. This dispatch warned that Eastern Radio No. One (Tokyo Radio) might transmit false messages in order to increase the effectiveness of the radio deception measures of the Main Force and requested that caution be exercised.

At 1208 he directed the MAYA to send one seaplane to Balabac Strait to make arrangements with the ships there (presumably refers to small craft from neighboring Palawan Island) concerning the placing of the course markers (buoys).\*\*\*\* It seems logical to believe that he desired to lay these buoys (a) as an alternative route to the central route to San Bernardino Strait, previously mentioned in his 172103,\*\*\*\*\* or (b) because he now had decided to divide his command into two groups and to send one group via Balabac Strait and Surigao Strait to Leyte Gulf, and one group via the central route and San Bernardino Strait to Leyte Gulf as originally suggested by the Chief of Staff Combined Fleet in his 201006.\*\*\*\*\*

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- \* CinC Combined Fleet Dispatch 211031 October 1944 to all Fleet and Squadron Commanders Combined Fleet, Detailed Action Report BATDIV 1, SHO No. 1 Operation, October 18th - 28th, 1944, WDC Document 161005, NA 11744.
  - \*\* CinC Combined Fleet Dispatch 200813 October 1944 to Combined Fleet Commanders, Commander China Area Fleet, C.G. Southern Army, War Diary BATDIV 1, October 1944, WDC Document 161638, NA 11739.
  - \*\*\* 1ST Combined Communication Unit Dispatch 211002 October 1944 to Communications Officer Main Force, info all Fleet and Squadron Commanders Combined Fleet, Detailed Action Report ZUIHO, SHO No. 1 Operation, October 20th - 25th, 1944, WDC Document 161008.
  - \*\*\*\* Commander 1ST Striking Force Visual Dispatch 211208 October 1944 to MAYA (1ST Striking Force SigOrd 145), Detailed Action Report BATDIV 1, SHO No. 1 Operation, October 18th - 28th, 1944, WDC Document 161005, NA 11744.
  - \*\*\*\*\* Commander 1ST Striking Force Dispatch 172103 October 1944, Detailed Action Report BATDIV 1, SHO No. 1 Operation, October 18th - 28th, 1944, WDC Document 161005, NA 11744.
  - \*\*\*\*\* CofS Combined Fleet Dispatch 201006 October 1944 Addressees Unknown, Information compiled by Captain Toshikazu Ohmae, ex-IJN, Japanese Research Division, HQ, USAFFE, Military History Section, relating to Penetration Operations of 1ST Striking Force, Battle for Leyte Gulf, contained in HQ USAFFE, Military History Section letter March 30th, 1954, to President, Naval War College; also Vice Admiral Matome Ugaki, IJN (COMBATDIV 1) Personal Diary SENSOROKU, Nippon Shuppan Kyodo Kabushiki Kaisha (Tokyo, March 15th, 1953) Volume II.



At 1220 he received a dispatch from COMBATDIV ONE in the YAMATO to BATDIV ONE directing that (a) one of the NAGATO's planes was to be carried aboard and operated from the YAMATO and one was to be carried aboard and operated from the MUSASHI and (b) seven maintenance personnel (petty officers and men) from the NAGATO were to be stationed aboard the MUSASHI.\*

About this time COMBATDIV ONE received word of numerous attacks by Allied carrier aircraft south of the central Philippines.\*\* It is believed that this was recorded in error since other reports referred to (a) air attacks in the central Philippines,\*\*\* and (b) air attacks in the Philippines.\*\*\*\* It is assumed that the correct message was received by Commander FIRST Striking Force.

During the early afternoon he received a 1330 contact report, amplifying an earlier report, of an Allied task force including four carriers, bearing 100°(T), distant 40 miles from the northern tip of Catanduanes Island (Point YOG) (Contact J).\*\*\*\*\* He had now received contact reports on a minimum of three Allied surface groups with a reported total of eight carriers (CV) and four converted carriers (CVE), and of one task group (0920), the composition of which remained unknown.

At 1350 he received, as an information addressee, an important dispatch from the Commander Western Force\*\*\*\*\* (Commander FIRST Southern Expeditionary Fleet) to Commander 936th Air Group, apparently at Singapore, directing that commander to dispatch six reconnaissance seaplanes to Labuan (Brunei Bay) and to move them to the Philippines area as required by the FIRST Striking Force sortie. This dispatch implied that these planes would furnish ASP protection to the FIRST Striking Force as it moved northward, thereby augmenting ship-based aircraft in protecting against submarines—the immediate danger in this movement.

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- \* COMBATDIV 1 Visual Dispatch 211220 October 1944 to BATDIV 1, info ATAGO (BATDIV 1 SigOrd 15), Detailed Action Report BATDIV 1, SHO No. 1 Operation, October 18th - 28th, 1944, WDC Document 161005, NA 11744.
  - \*\* Vice Admiral Matome Ugaki, IJN (COMBATDIV 1), Personal Diary SENSOROKU, Nippon Shuppan Kyodo Kabushiki Kaisha (Tokyo, March 15th, 1953), Volume II.
  - \*\*\* Material for Situation Estimates, 1ST Section, Naval General Staff, October 1944, WDC Document 216764, 4TH Air Army (Microfilm).
  - \*\*\*\* Daily Record of the War Situation, GHQ, FEC, Special Historical Collection, Supporting Documents to General of the Army Douglas MacArthur's Historical Report on Allied Operations in the Southwest Pacific Area (Item 4, Footlocker 10 of 10, SWPA Series, Volume II).
  - \*\*\*\*\* Commander Western Force Dispatch 211129 October 1944 to Commander 936th Air Group, info Western Force, 1ST Striking Force, etc., (Western Force DesOpOrd No. 172), War Diary DESRON 10, October 1944, WDC Document 161638, NA 11739.



At 1530 (it was received by Commander Main Force at this time) he received a dispatch to the effect that according to Army intelligence the Allies had apparently landed on Rapu Rapu Island.\* Since this island was just twenty-five miles north of San Bernardino Light, this information was of considerable interest and even concern to him because it indicated that enemy surface forces could be expected in this vicinity. Even though the island was small and mountainous and of no apparent military significance, he nevertheless felt forced to take note of this report because he realized that, if true, it would necessitate changes in his operational plans.\*\* However, despite this, he appears to have waited for further information before he accepted the report as correct.

At 1600 or earlier (COMDESRON TEN received it at this time)\*\*\* he received another dispatch warning from CinC Combined Fleet of enemy air reconnaissance of Brunei Bay wherein CinC Combined Fleet, probably repeating the previously issued warning of radio intelligence, advised that, judging from enemy aircraft reports, the FIRST Striking Force had been sighted and recommended that the force commander enforce strict alert.\*\*\*\* It will be recalled that he already had taken action on this probable sighting as early as 0305.\*\*\*\*\*

At 1630 he observed that the destroyers ASAGUMO and YAMAGUMO had returned to Brunei Bay after having failed to rendezvous with the Brunei Fueling Group\*\*\* as mentioned earlier. There is no explanation available to this study which indicates why this was so. Therefore, the answer here given is more of a speculation than a fact. However, it seems likely that when the Commander Brunei Fueling Group learned of the torpedoing of the UGO MARU by an Allied submarine and realized that the sinking had occurred in an area through which his planned course to Brunei Bay passed, he then and there (a) decided that prudence required that he not pass through that area and (b) changed course to move into the shallow waters along the western shore of Borneo where submarine operations would be difficult. He did not notify anyone of this change of course because (a) he was in radio silence, which he thought should not be broken, and (b) HE HAD NO REASON TO BELIEVE THAT HE WAS TO BE PROVIDED WITH ADDITIONAL ESCORTS. IF THE ABOVE IS THE CORRECT ANALYSIS OF COMMANDER BRUNEI FUELING GROUP'S ACTIONS, HIS DECISION TO CHANGE

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- \* Commander 33RD Special Base Force Dispatch 211250 October 1944, addressees unknown, but likely all commands, Detailed Action Report Main Force, SHO No. 1 Operation, October 20th - 29th, 1944, WDC Document 161005, NA 11744.
- \*\* Vice Admiral Matome Ugaki, IJN (COMBATDIV 1), Personal Diary SENSOROKU, Nippon Shuppan Kyodo Kabushiki Kaisha (Tokyo, March 15th, 1953), Volume II.
- \*\*\* War Diary DESRON 10, October 1944, WDC Document 161638, NA 11739.
- \*\*\*\* CinC Combined Fleet Dispatch 211145 October 1944 to 1ST Striking Force, info SW Area Force and 5TH Base Air Force, War Diary DESRON 10, October 1944, WDC Document 161638, NA 11739.
- \*\*\*\*\* Commander 1ST Striking Force Visual Dispatch 210305 October 1944 to 1ST Striking Force, Detailed Action Report BATDIV 1, SHO No. 1 Operation, October 18th - 28th, 1944, WDC Document 161005, NA 11744.



COURSE, EVEN THOUGH IT MIGHT DELAY HIS ARRIVAL, IS CONSIDERED SOUND. THIS IS SO BECAUSE THE IMPORTANCE OF HIS SAFE ARRIVAL AT BRUNEI BAY TRANSCENDED ANY ILL EFFECTS THE DELAY IN HIS ARRIVAL MIGHT HAVE, EVEN ON THE PENETRATION OPERATION TIME TABLE.

The YAMAGUMO now commenced fueling from the YAMASHIRO, the ASAGUMO from the FUSO.\*

At 1637 he received the Chief of Staff SW Area Force's dispatch to Commander SECOND Striking Force wherein the chief of staff, after outlining some of the movements of army troops and munitions to Leyte, stated, "Our opinion is that at least CRUDIV TWENTY-ONE and DESRON ONE should carry out a penetration attack through Surigao Strait in coordination with the FIRST Striking Force penetration."\*\*\*

What effect this suggestion had on his planning is not known but from the fact, as is shown later, that he had by this time decided to send certain of his own units through that strait irrespective of whether or not the SECOND Striking Force also passed through that strait at or about the same time, and from the further fact that he appears to have sent no queries to CinC Combined Fleet relating thereto, it seems clear that he had decided to proceed on the sound premise that, since the SECOND Striking Force had not been assigned to his command, he could not include it in his order.

At 1700, when all unit commanders, destroyer commanders and staff officers had assembled on board the flagship ATAGO, he issued (to them) his written order for the penetration operation, had his staff brief them thereon, and finally addressed them himself.\*\*\*

His written order follows:\*\*\*\*

"In accordance with Combined Fleet DesOpOrd 363, the FIRST Striking Force, in cooperation with the base air forces and the Main Force, will penetrate to the Tacloban area at dawn on X-day (October 25th). It will first attack and destroy enemy surface forces in the area and will then annihilate

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\* Detailed Action Report No. 13, DESRON 10, SHO Operations, October 17th-31st, 1944, WDC Document 161005, NA 11744.

\*\* CofS SW Area Force Dispatch 211322 October 1944 to Commander 2ND Striking Force, COMCRUDIV 16, info CinC Combined Fleet, Commanders 1ST Striking Force, Main Force, Imperial GHQ (Navy Section), Detailed Action Report 1ST Striking Force, SHO Operations, October 16th - 28th, 1944, WDC Document 161641, NA 11839.

\*\*\* Detailed Action Report No. 13, DESRON 10, SHO Operations, October 17th-31st, 1944, WDC Document 161005, NA 11744; also Vice Admiral Matome Ugaki, IJN (COMBATDIV 1), Personal Diary SENSOROKU, Nippon Shuppan Kyodo Kabushiki Kaisha (Tokyo, March 15th, 1953), Volume II.

\*\*\*\* Commander 1ST Striking Force Operation Order No. 4, October 1944, Detailed Action Report 1ST Striking Force, SHO Operations, October 16th - 28th, 1944, WDC Document 161641, NA 11839.

the enemy landing forces. Operations will be carried out in accordance with the FIRST Striking Force SHO operations outline except as provided below:

1. Allocation of forces is modified as follows:

Section	Strength	Principal Mission
FIRST Section (FIRST Night Combat Unit)	BATDIV 1 CRUDIV 4 CRUDIV 5 (less MOGAMI) DESRON 2 (less SHIGURE, KIYOSHIMO)	1. To destroy enemy surface forces; 2. To destroy enemy transport group and landing forces.
SECOND Section (SECOND Night Combat Unit)	BATDIV 3 CRUDIV 7 DESRON 10 (less DESDIV's 61, 41, 4, plus NOWAKI) KIYOSHIMO	
THIRD Section (THIRD Night Combat Unit)	BATDIV 2 MOGAMI DESDIV 4 (less NOWAKI) SHIGURE	1. To destroy enemy transport group and landing forces; 2. To make a diversionary attack on enemy surface forces.
FIRST Supply Force	YUHO MARU, HAKKO MARU, OMUROSAN MARU, ITSUKU- SHIMA MARU, MANEI MARU, NIPPO MARU, CHIBURI, YURISHIMA, Coast Defense #19, 27, Minesweeper #34 (Note: the above MARU's were all AO's)	Supply (location--Singapore - Brunei)
SECOND Supply Force	NICHIEI MARU, RYOEI MARU, KURAHASHI, Coast Defense #32 (Note: the above MARU's were AO's)	Supply (location-- NICHIEI MARU: Sana - Urugan RYOEI MARU : Singapore - Bako)

2. Operation Plan.

The main strength of the FIRST Striking Force to sortie from Brunei 0800 October 22nd and at sundown October 24th pass through San Bernardino Strait. To destroy surface units in a night action off the east coast of Samar, and subsequently penetrate into the Tacloban area at dawn of the 25th and destroy the enemy convoys and landing forces there. The THIRD Section, to sortie from Brunei, in accordance with orders of the Commander, thereafter proceeding independently, and at dawn on the 25th in concert with the main strength penetrate into the Tacloban area via Surigao Strait destroying the enemy convoys and landing forces there."



It is assumed that at this same briefing Commander FIRST Striking Force issued to his assembled commanders a draft of his proposed movement schedule, or at the very least discussed its prospective contents with them. Since this movement schedule was not finally issued until 2053, at which time it was issued by dispatch, and since the conference appears to have continued until 2000\* (a period of three hours) it seems likely that the movement plan was not finally firmed until it had been thoroughly threshed out in this conference. Therefore, the contents of this dispatch are necessarily included here in order that an adequate discussion of the entire plan can be made. This dispatch was:

"1. The Main Body of the FIRST Striking Force (CRUDIV's FOUR, FIVE, SEVEN; BATDIV's ONE, THREE; and DESRON's TWO, TEN) will sortie from Brunei at 0800 on October 22nd. It will take the route north of Palawan moving at an actual speed (SOA) of sixteen knots. On the 24th (X-1 day) after passing south of Mindoro at dawn, it will thereafter proceed at an actual speed of twenty to twenty-four knots, in order to arrive at the eastern entrance of San Bernardino Strait at sunset of the same day. At 0400 on X-day it will arrive in the vicinity of Suluan Island and will then penetrate into the anchorage.

"2. The THIRD Section (BATDIV TWO, MOGAMI, four DD) will sortie from Brunei during the afternoon of October 22nd, will proceed via the Sulu Sea and will arrive at the western entrance of the Mindanao Sea at sunset on X-1 day. In coordination with the Main Body of the FIRST Striking Force it will pass through Surigao Strait and penetrate into the anchorage at dawn on X-day."\*\*

It is also assumed that he discussed his interpretation of paragraph two of the above dispatch, giving particular attention to the viewpoints of Commander THIRD Section and his staff on this matter. Therefore, it seems appropriate to insert here the contents of:

(a) Commander THIRD Section's written order thereon issued on the following day (October 22nd); this written order was:

"In accordance with FIRST Striking Force Top Secret Operations Order No. Four, the THIRD Section will operate separately from the Main Body of the force and will cooperate with the Main Body's operations by penetrating into Tacloban Anchorage at dawn on X-day (October 25th) and destroying the enemy forces present.

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\* Vice Admiral Matome Ugaki, IJN (COMBATDIV 1), Personal Diary SENSOROKU, Nippon Shuppan Kyodo Kabushiki Kaisha (Tokyo, March 15th, 1953), Volume II.

\*\* Commander 1ST Striking Force Dispatch 212053 October 1944 to CinC Combined Fleet, Commander Main Force, Commander 2ND Striking Force, War Diary DESRON 1, October 1944, WDC Document 161638, NA 11739.

"1. Outline of Operations: The THIRD Section will sortie from Brunei at 1500 on X-3 day and will proceed under strict antiaircraft and antisubmarine alert via the route shown on the separate chart. In general, it will penetrate from Surigao Strait into Tacloban Anchorage two hours before sunrise on X-day and, in coordination with the Main Body, will attack and destroy the enemy transport group and landing forces before and after sunrise";\* and

(b) Commander THIRD Section's 221155 also issued on the following day; this dispatch was:

"Outline of movements of THIRD Section (BATDIV TWO, MOGAMI, DESDIV FOUR and SHIGURE):

"X-3 day: Sortie from Brunei.

"X-2 day: Pass through Balabac Strait at 1100 and proceed on course 050°(T).

"X-1 day: At 0630, in position 10°-30'N, 121°-35'E, change course to 140°(T), and thereafter proceed along northern edge of Mindanao Sea.

"X-day: 0100, reach point south of Point Binit and penetrate into Leyte Gulf on course 350°."\*\* (Plate XXX).

It will be noted that the wording of these dispatches is confusing. This is because the various terms such as "Tacloban area", "Tacloban Anchorage", "anchorage", are employed somewhat loosely. In this analysis they are considered to mean one and the same thing; i.e., an anchorage area within about ten miles from Tacloban city and will be called hereinafter Tacloban Anchorage.

IT WILL ALSO BE NOTED THAT THE TERM "DAWN" IS EMPLOYED WITHOUT A CLEAR EXPLANATION OF ITS MEANING. HOWEVER, THERE ARE TWO DIRECT SOURCES WHICH INDICATE WHAT IT MEANT TO COMMANDER THIRD SECTION. THIS IS TO BE FOUND IN HIS WRITTEN ORDER OF OCTOBER 22ND, QUOTED IN FULL ABOVE, WHERE, IN THE FIRST PARAGRAPH, HE STATES, "THE THIRD SECTION . . . WILL COOPERATE . . . BY PENETRATING INTO TACLOBAN AREA AT DAWN ON X-DAY", AND IN THE SECOND PARAGRAPH ("OUTLINE OF OPERATIONS"), HE STATES, "WILL PENETRATE FROM SURIGAO STRAIT INTO TACLOBAN ANCHORAGE TWO HOURS BEFORE SUNRISE ON X-DAY." THUS,

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\* Commander 3RD Section Written Operations Order No. 1, Detailed Action Report SHIGURE, Battle of Leyte Gulf, October 23rd - 27th, 1944, WDC Document 161717 (Part 4), NA 11801.

\*\* Commander 3RD Section Dispatch 221155 October 1944 to CinC Combined Fleet, CRUDIV 16, Commanders 6TH Base Air Force, Main Force, SW Area Force, etc., Detailed Action Report No. 13, DESRON 10, October 17th - 31st, 1944, WDC Document 161005, NA 11744.



ROUTES TO TACLOBAN ANCHORAGE  
 SELECTED BY  
 COMMANDERS FIRST STRIKING FORCE 20°  
 AND THIRD SECTION  
 SHOWING  
 ALLIED SEARCH CAPABILITIES

COMMANDER FIRST STRIKING FORCE  
 DISPATCH 212053 OCTOBER 1944  
 COMMANDER THIRD SECTION DISPATCH 221155 OCTOBER 1944  
 BATTLE FOR LEYTE GULF  
 OCTOBER 1944

	FROM	VIA (1)	VIA (2)	MILES
FIRST STRIKING FORCE	BRUNEI	MINDORO STRAIT	SAN BERNARDINO STRAIT	1160
THIRD SECTION	BRUNEI	BALABAC STRAIT	SURIGAO STRAIT	925







DAWN IS CLEARLY TWO HOURS BEFORE SUNRISE.\* THIS VIEW IS FIRMLY SUPPORTED BY THE COMMANDING OFFICER SHIGURE, WHO STATES IN HIS ACTION REPORT, "THE THIRD SECTION WAS TO ADVANCE THROUGH THE SULU SEA AND SURIGAO STRAIT BREAKING INTO TACLOBAN ANCHORAGE AT DAWN (TWO HOURS BEFORE SUNRISE) ON THE 25TH".\*\*

What, in essence, then was Commander FIRST Striking Force's plan? It was as follows:

(a) to divide the FIRST Striking Force into:

(1) one large force (Main Body) consisting of CRUDIV's FOUR, FIVE and SEVEN; BATDIV's ONE and THREE; DESRON's TWO and TEN.

(2) one small force (THIRD Section) consisting of BATDIV TWO, MOGAMI, and four destroyers.

(b) to assign objectives as follows:

(1) to the Main Body (a) the destruction of enemy surface forces, and (b) the destruction of the enemy transport group and landing forces;

(2) to the THIRD Section (a) the destruction of the enemy transport group and landing forces, and (b) a diversionary attack on enemy surface forces;

(c) to approach the objective area with the separate groups by:

(1) sending the Main Body to Leyte Gulf via Palawan Passage and Mindoro Strait to arrive (a) south of Mindoro at dawn (0442) October 24th, (b) at the eastern entrance to San Bernardino Strait at sunset (1820) X-1 day, (c) off Suluan Island at 0400 X-day, and then to penetrate into Leyte Gulf commencing at 0400 and to head for the Tacloban Anchorage (arriving there at about 0600),

(2) sending the THIRD Section through Balabac Strait to arrive at the western entrance of the Mindanao Sea at sunset (1820) X-1 day and after passing south of Binit Point at 0100 X-day, to penetrate Tacloban Anchorage at dawn (0427) the same day.

Thus, it is clear that Commander FIRST Striking Force had not only decided to accept the recommendation of the Chief of Staff Combined Fleet to

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\* Commander 1ST Striking Force, in 1954 in a reply to a query by Captain Ohmae, stated, "By dawn meant usually an hour before sunrise in the Japanese Homeland waters where the twilight continues for forty-five minutes. In the Battle for Leyte Gulf, it was fixed at 0400." This statement is completely unsupported either by others or by the facts of the case.

\*\* Detailed Action Report SHIGURE, Battle of Leyte Gulf, October 23rd - 27th, 1944, WDC Document 161717 (Part 4), NA 11801.

divide his force into two groups but had so scheduled the movement of the two groups that the dawn penetration of the THIRD Section into the Allied anchorage off Tacloban was to occur about one and one-half hours before that of the Main Body.

This view was confirmed by Commander FIRST Striking Force in his interrogation by the Strategic Bombing Survey in 1945 when, in reply to a query as to whether or not these two groups were to attack simultaneously, he replied that (a) rather than attack simultaneously they were to attack separately with the THIRD Section arriving at Tacloban Anchorage two hours before the Main Body, and (b) the two hour interval was to avoid the congestion which results when large numbers of ships operate in confined waters. In this same interrogation he later stated that the THIRD Section was to arrive at about five—the Main Body about six—in the morning.\* It is not clear where he lost the second hour.

It seems pertinent now to discuss the objectives.

With regard to the first objective of the Main Body, "the destruction of enemy surface forces", this objective stemmed from the Japanese belief that the Main Body would be detected by the Allies as a result of which Allied forces would be drawn from Leyte Gulf and proceeding along the coast of Samar in order to close the Main Body, would be destroyed in battle off Samar. This idea was clearly expressed by (1) Commander FIRST Striking Force in his action report wherein he stated that the Main Body was "to destroy surface units in a night action off Samar",\*\* (2) the Commanding Officer SHIGURE in his action report wherein he stated that the Main Body "in the waters east of Samar was to engage and destroy any enemy naval surface forces present",\*\*\* (3) Commander Advance Expeditionary Force (Submarines), who expected the FIRST and SECOND Striking Forces to encounter the Allied surface forces at sea east of the Philippines early morning October 25th and therefore, as will be shown later, on October 24th massed his submarines off Samar and off the eastern entrance to Leyte Gulf,\*\*\*\* and (4) Commander FIRST Striking Force in his interrogation by the Strategic Bombing Survey in 1945, when in reply to a query as to whether "it was expected that Admiral Nishimura, by his early arrival at Leyte Gulf, would draw our (the Allied) forces to the south and facilitate the entrance of the San Bernardino Force", he stated, "No, it was thought that knowledge of the larger body (Main Body First Striking Force) coming from the north might draw American ships out from the gulf and thus leave Nishimura free to enter".\*

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\* USSBS Interrogation of Japanese Officials, Nav No 9, Interrogation of Vice Admiral Takeo Kurita, IJN, Volume I, Page 36.

\*\* Detailed Action Report 1ST Striking Force, SHO Operations, October 16th - 28th, 1944, WDC Document 161641, NA 11839.

\*\*\* Detailed Action Report SHIGURE, Battle of Leyte Gulf, October 23rd - 27th, 1944, WDC Document 161717 (Part 4), NA 11801.

\*\*\*\* Submarine Operations in the 3RD Phase Operations, Part IV, September 1944 - February 1945, Japanese Monograph No. 184, compiled by the 2ND Historical Records Section of the Repatriation Relief Bureau of the Welfare Ministry, June 1954.



The statement by the Commanding Officer SHIGURE, regarding the destruction objective assigned the Main Body, is of particular value here because (a) it completely confirms Commander FIRST Striking Force's action report statement thereon (quoted above), and (b) it undoubtedly reflects information which he (Commanding Officer SHIGURE) gained at Commander FIRST Striking Force's pre-sailing conference held at 1700 this day on board the ATAGO.

With regard to the second objective of the FIRST Striking Force, "the destruction of the enemy transport group and landing forces", this meant that after destroying the enemy forces off Samar the FIRST Striking Force at 0400 was then to penetrate into the gulf and, arriving in Tacloban Anchorage at about 0600, was there to assist the THIRD Section which would be undertaking the same task as a first objective.

With regard to the first objective of the THIRD Section, which was the same as the second objective of the Main Body, this requires no elaboration.

What the second objective of the THIRD Section was is not fully understood. It will be recalled that the second task assigned this section was "to make a diversionary attack on enemy surface forces" but when and where is nowhere stated. Captain Ohmae implies that the second task assigned to the THIRD Section was "to divert enemy surface forces"\* and this wording of the second task is included in the study "The Campaigns of the Pacific War" but this wording is definitely incorrect.\*\* It is considered likely that the objective contained in the correct translation was a "protection" objective wherein the THIRD Section was to contribute toward the success of the Main Body by attacking, if necessary, Allied forces in the Leyte Gulf area which were engaging the Main Body and thereby assist in protecting the Main Body by such a diversionary attack. This seems so for it was only in the Leyte Gulf area that it would be possible to "make a diversionary attack on enemy surface forces".

If this was the correct second objective, it was sound because it was likely that the Main Body would encounter stronger forces than anticipated. It would appear that, with the second objective of the THIRD Section, provision was being made, in part, for the contingency that the Allied surface forces might not be drawn out of Leyte Gulf and hence, Commander FIRST Striking Force may be said here to have done some unrealistic "capabilities planning".

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\* Information compiled by Captain Toshikazu Ohmae, ex-IJN, Japanese Research Division, HQ USAFFE, Military History Section, relating to Penetration Operations of 1ST Striking Force, Battle for Leyte Gulf, contained in HQ USAFFE, Military History Section letter March 30th, 1954, to President, Naval War College.

\*\* Letter from Mrs. Lily Tanaka, Translator, World War II Battle Evaluation Group, August 23rd, 1955, to Commodore R. W. Bates, USN(Ret), Head, World War II Battle Evaluation Group, Naval War College.



IT IS CONSIDERED THAT WHILE THE ASSIGNMENT OF OBJECTIVES AND PHYSICAL OBJECTIVES TO THE SEPARATE ELEMENTS OF HIS FORCE WAS CORRECT, THE TIME PHASING OF THE OPERATIONS IN THE OBJECTIVE AREA WAS INCORRECT SINCE IT APPARENTLY WAS BASED ON AN ESTIMATE OF ENEMY INTENTIONS RATHER THAN CAPABILITIES; I.E., THE EXPECTATION THAT THE ALLIED HEAVY FORCES WOULD BE DRAWN OUT OF THE GULF BY THE MAIN BODY. BUT SUPPOSING THAT THIS DID NOT OCCUR? IS IT ILLOGICAL TO SAY THAT IT WAS AN ENEMY CAPABILITY TO KEEP HEAVY FORCES IN THE GULF? IN THIS CASE, WOULD NOT THE THIRD SECTION, ARRIVING IN TAGLOBAN ANCHORAGE ONE HOUR AND ONE-HALF BEFORE THE MAIN BODY, BE FORCED INTO BATTLE AGAINST THE ALLIED HEAVY FORCES WITH A POSSIBILITY OF BEING DESTROYED? DID NOT THIS, IN FACT, OCCUR? ANOTHER CONSIDERATION BEARING ON THE TIME PHASING WHICH MAY BE NOTED HERE IS THE IMPRACTICABILITY OF COORDINATING THE OPERATION OF THESE TWO SEPARATE FORCES ONCE THEY HAD REACHED TAGLOBAN ANCHORAGE. NOWHERE DOES THE PLAN INDICATE HOW COOPERATION WAS TO BE EFFECTED.

In prescribing the above objectives and physical objectives and the timing of the operation of his separate forces, it is clear that Commander FIRST Striking Force failed to insure that the Main Body would first eliminate the Allied enemy surface forces in order that the THIRD Section might fall on the relatively unprotected Allied transport group and landing forces.

THEREFORE, SINCE THE PHASING OF THE OPERATIONS WAS UNSUITABLE AND INFEASIBLE, THE PLAN WAS UNSOUND.

However, since Commander FIRST Striking Force was responsible for the plan and since the importance of this plan in relation to the Battle for Leyte Gulf is considerable, it seems wise to analyze the various factors connected therewith to discover, if possible, his guiding motivations.

To accomplish this adequately it also seems wise (a) to commence with a discussion of Commander FIRST Striking Force's movement plan, (b) then to discuss the factors which motivated the divided approach, (c) to follow this with a discussion of the question as to whether or not the divided approach was sound, and finally (d) to indicate the correct procedure.

(a) A discussion of the Movement Plan.

In his action report Commander FIRST Striking Force stated that as regards to the Main Body he (a) visualized three routes (Plate XXXI), viz., Route One along the east coast of Palawan and thence to Mindoro Strait; Route Two through Dangerous Ground to Mindoro Strait; and Route Three along the west coast of Palawan (through Palawan Passage) to Mindoro Strait, and (b) had chosen Route Three despite the fact that the submarine threat was greatest along this route because (1) of the unsatisfactory fueling situation for surface forces in general at the time of activation of the SHO Operation (delay in deployment of oilers) (2) if the CinC Combined Fleet's general plans were to be adhered to, there was too little time and (3) this route made possible the best defense against enemy large type planes. (Route Three, which is based on his actual route was to pass about ninety miles to the north of Palawan and thence to a point south of Mindoro Island.)



MILEAGE TABLE

	1st. leg	2nd. leg	3rd. leg	TOTAL
Route One	630	230	230	1090
Route Two	800	230	230	1260
Route Three	700	230	230	1160

ROUTES CONSIDERED  
BY  
COMMANDER FIRST STRIKING FORCE  
SHOWING  
ALLIED SEARCH CAPABILITIES  
BATTLE FOR LEYTE GULF  
OCTOBER 1944



PLATE XXXI





A development of these routes based on the preceding data, gives:

(1) Route One (along the east coast of Palawan) as consisting of legs about as follows: (a) first leg, Brunei Bay through Balabac Strait to a point south of Mindoro Island (630 miles), (b) second leg, from a point south of Mindoro Island to San Bernardino Light (230 miles), (c) third leg, from San Bernardino Light to Tacloban Anchorage (230 miles).

(2) Route Two (through Dangerous Ground to Mindoro Strait) as consisting of legs about as follows: (a) first leg, Brunei Bay through Dangerous Ground\* and Mindoro Strait to a point south of Mindoro Island (800 miles), (b) and (c) same as in Route One above.

(3) Route Three (along west coast of Palawan Island through Palawan Passage to Mindoro Strait) as consisting of legs about as follows: (a) first leg, through Palawan Passage then along a track about ninety miles north of Palawan Island\*\* thence through Mindoro Strait to a point south of Mindoro Island (700 miles), (b) and (c) same as in Route One above.

Thus, the difference in these three routes is only the difference in their first legs. This means that Route Three (first leg - 700 miles) was about seventy miles longer than Route One and about 100 miles shorter than Route Two.

While he gives no reason for directing the FIRST Striking Force to reach a point south of Mindoro Island at dawn (0442), October 24th, there seems to have been one basic reason for this. This appears to have been the fact that since (a) it was necessary to pass through Mindoro Strait, more or less in column and (b) owing to possible contact reports on him from Allied sources, he might be attacked by Allied aircraft with the break of day, he desired to be in a combat disposition (probably antiaircraft) immediately after dawn.

While he likewise gives no reason for directing the arrival of the Main Body off the eastern entrance to San Bernardino Strait (San Bernardino Light) at sunset, it appears to have been based in a large part on the fact that this arrival time had, by the very nature of his problem, been forced upon him. This was because he felt that he had to be off Suluan Island at 0400 in order to be within what he considered acceptable coordinating distance of the THIRD Section, which section he had ordered to strike the Allied invasion forces at dawn (0427) October 25th in Tacloban Anchorage in

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\* The route through Dangerous Ground is the route shown on Plate XXXI which was that employed by CRUDIV 16 en route from Brunei Bay to Manila Bay, October 21st - 23rd, 1944. (Detailed Action Report CRUDIV 16, SHO Operation, October 17th - 27th, 1944, WDC Document 161005 NA 11744).

\*\* This track is based largely upon Commander 1ST Striking Force's actual track in entering Mindoro Strait, October 23rd, 1944.

accordance with CinC Combined Fleet Operation Order No. 363.\* Since (1) he likely required as much as one hour (he actually required but forty-one minutes) to assume his night disposition (the ships would be transiting the strait in a long column) and (2) based on an assumed SOA of twenty knots from San Bernardino Strait to Suluan Island, he would require about nine hours to cover the approximately 180 miles to Suluan Island, it is clear that he would have to arrive off San Bernardino Light at about sunset (sunset was at about 1820) or about ten hours before 0400 in order to arrive off Suluan Island on time.

It appears to have been based in a lesser part on the fact that (1) after passing through San Bernardino Strait, he expected to encounter strong enemy surface forces and submarines,\*\* and (2) owing to Japanese training, he considered night action for which he had trained intensively\*\*\* to be more acceptable than day action (in this latter case he would be forced to contend with Allied aircraft, both land and carrier-based) and therefore, desired to be in his night disposition before dark. Surprising as it may seem, he appears in his planning to have had less fear of Allied aircraft at this point (in the vicinity of San Bernardino Strait) than he did of Allied surface and submarine units despite the fact that evening twilight would last for about one half hour. This appears to have been due to the fact, as stated by Commander FIRST Striking Force's Operations Officer in October 1945, that "We did not plan to have any protection from fighters because we never thought we would need any. There were no plans,...."\*\*\*\* This view of the operations officer was supported later (1952) by the Chief of Staff FIRST Striking Force, who stated that "training gave us confidence that we would be able to withstand enemy air attack even without friendly combat air patrol".\*\* And yet in what better place could the Allied carriers desire to attack the Main Body than when it was transiting San Bernardino Strait in column?

It seems only fair to state here that some of this confidence must have stemmed, in part, from (a) the expectation that the air attacks by the FIFTH and SIXTH Base Air Forces against the Allied carriers which attacks had been ordered by CinC Combined Fleet would be reasonably successful, and (b) the thought that Commander Main Force might be successful in "luring"

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- \* CinC Combined Fleet Dispatch 200813 October 1944 to Combined Fleet, Commanders China Area Fleet, Escort Force, Naval Bases and Guard Districts, Imperial GHQ, CinC Southern Army (Combined Fleet DesOpOrd 363), War Diary BATDIV 1, October 1944, WDC Document 161638, NA 11739.
- \*\* Rear Admiral Tomiji Koyanagi, ex-IJN, "The Battle for Leyte Gulf - A Retrospection", MS Translation by Captain Toshikazu Ohmae, ex-IJN (1952). A modified version of this article was published in the U.S. Naval Institute Proceedings February 1953 (Vol. 79, No. 2).
- \*\*\* USSBS Interrogation of Japanese Officials, Nav. No. 9, Interrogation of Vice Admiral Takeo Kurita, IJN, Volume I, Page 34.
- \*\*\*\* USSBS Interrogation of Japanese Officials, Nav. No. 41, Interrogation of Commander Tonosuke Otani, IJN, Volume I, Page 172.



to the north and away from the San Bernardino area, in particular, certain of the Allied carrier groups. However, the above concepts, if they obtained, are only referred to indirectly in Japanese interrogations. In this connection, it is important here to point out that the emphasis in training at Lingga was on the necessity for repelling air attacks solely by ship board antiaircraft batteries and by maneuver.

He made no comments in his action report concerning the routes which the THIRD Section was to travel, presumably because he saw no necessity for giving Commander THIRD Section instructions other than the general ones which he had provided in his 212053 October 1944; i.e., via Sulu and Mindanao Seas, arriving at the southern entrance to Surigao Strait at sunset on X-1 day and penetrating into Tacloban Anchorage at dawn on X-day. This was standard Japanese practice.

Let us now examine each of the Main Body routes considered.

(1) Route One above (along the east coast of Palawan) he rejected because he felt that here he was in the greatest danger of detection from Allied large type aircraft.\* He expounds this point no further. What exact information he had at this time on Allied aircraft searches from Biak and Morotai is not known. However, since Allied Search Plan EASY (operating from Biak) had been in effect for many days, it seems likely that he knew from observer reports (a) the limits of this search plan (Plate XXXI) within the Sulu and Celebes Seas, (b) the fact that this search did not operate within the Visayan area except as above stated and (c) the approximate time (1300 - 1400) that the search planes reached their outer limit. Whether or not he knew that this search plan had been replaced or extended, as could be inferred from the areas covered by Search Plan FOX, which operated from Morotai (Plate XXXI) is not known. (Search Plan FOX was inaugurated on October 19th at which time Search Plan EASY was cancelled.) However, it seems likely that he knew about this because (a) he knew that planes operating from Morotai had reportedly contacted his command on October 20th, although whether he thought that this was the result of a reconnaissance mission or of an extended search is not known,\*\* and (b) on this very day (October 21st) the Chief of Staff SW Area Force had informed certain commands that enemy B-24's were operating as far as Puerto Princesa (Palawan Island) and San Jose (Mindoro Island).\*\*\* While he was not an action addressee of this dispatch, it is highly probable that he received it since the ZUIHO in the Main Force received it.

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\* Detailed Action Report 1ST Striking Force, SHO Operations, October 16th - 28th, 1944, WDC Document 161641, NA 11839.

\*\* CinC Combined Fleet Dispatch 211145 October 1944 to 1ST Striking Force, info SW Area Force and 5TH Base Air Force, War Diary DESRON 10, October 1944, WDC Document 161638, NA 11739.

\*\*\* CofS SW Area Force Dispatch 211231 October 1944 to Commander Main Force, 6TH Base Air Force, COMDESRON 11, War Diary ZUIHO, October 1st - 25th, 1944, WDC Document 161636, NA 11973.

These reports would indicate that Commander FIRST Striking Force was aware of the increased range of the Allied searches and reconnaissance missions at least in the directions of Mindoro Island, Palawan Island and Brunei Bay. Whether or not he was also aware of the fact that Allied air search and reconnaissance planes were flying as far as 1100 miles from Morotai Island is not known since there is no mention of it in his report. However, since he was likely familiar, as pointed out above, with the fact that the Allied planes from Biak had been searching to 1100 miles, it seems correct to credit him with an appreciation of this capability.

He had another concern. It was the fact, mentioned above, that his command reportedly had been discovered entering Brunei Bay on the previous day. Because of this he had reason to expect that the Allies would endeavor to discover his movements from Brunei Bay, and this Allied capability likewise must have had an effect on his decision to avoid Route One with his major force. Certainly, an enemy contact on a force as large as the FIRST Striking Force (or even its Main Body) proceeding along Route One would not only alert the enemy to impending developments\* but would likely bring on heavy air attacks by land-based aircraft from Morotai Island. This was quite possible since the bombing range of B-24's was about 825 miles\*\* and Palawan Island was about 750 miles from Morotai Island.

It is likely that it was knowledge of both the patrol and bombing ranges of the B-24's which caused Commander THIRD Section to direct his command upon sortie from Brunei Bay to proceed under strict antiaircraft (and antisubmarine) alert.\*\*\*

What thought he gave to the possibility of submarines in the Balabac Strait area at this time is not known; but since he knew that Japanese light forces from Palawan Island were operating in this area,\*\*\*\* and since there had been no reports of submarine sightings or of submarine torpedoings there, he likely felt that the strait was at least temporarily clear of Allied submarines.

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\* This refers to the thought that a contact on the force in Palawan Passage might lead to the conclusion that the force was proceeding northward or even to Coron Bay, whereas a contact in the Sulu Sea or in Cuyo Pass (most probably with the force on a northeasterly course) might well lead to the conclusion that the force would transit the Sibuyan Sea and even San Bernardino Strait.

\*\* Air Evaluation Board, SOWESPAC, Leyte Campaign.

\*\*\* Commander 3RD Section Written Operations Order No. 1, Detailed Action Report SHIGURE, Battle of Leyte Gulf, October 23rd - 27th, 1944, WDC Document 161717 (Part 4), NA 11801.

\*\*\*\* Commander 1ST Striking Force Visual Dispatch 211208 October 1944 to MAYA (1ST Striking Force SigOrd 145), Detailed Action Report BATDIV 1, SHO No. 1 Operation, October 18th - 28th, 1944, WDC Document 161005, NA 11744.



In this he would have been in error, for the DARTER, which had been ordered into this station and which had been absent therefrom since October 19th, had now returned and from 0915 was on station there.\*

His decision not to employ Route One is understandable from this analysis. While the advantage of a route seventy-miles shorter is an advantage not to be dismissed lightly particularly in view of the fuel limitations within his ships, nevertheless, in the mind of Commander FIRST Striking Force, the likelihood of contact by Allied planes from Morotai, for reasons stated, was greater than he felt was acceptable. Since his reasoning in this matter appears to have been correct, his decision to reject this route appears sound.

In this discussion it is to be noted here that nowhere in his action report does Commander FIRST Striking Force refer to the danger from searches by Allied carrier aircraft, although on this day he had received contact reports on Allied carrier groups off Leyte Gulf and in the San Bernardino Strait - Catanduanes Island area. However, his instructions to the Main Body that having passed a point south of Mindoro Island it was to operate at engine speeds between twenty and twenty-four knots indicate that he was familiar with the possibility (a) of discovery in this area by aircraft, submarine and coast watcher and (b) of an attack from the above carriers. In this connection it should be pointed out here that the Allied carriers on this day, and on the preceding days, had not launched any air searches whatsoever over these areas but instead had made air strikes only. It is not known whether this fact was known to Commander FIRST Striking Force, but the fact that he called for increased speed in this area, which speed was not necessary to reach San Bernardino Light at sunset (1820) indicates that he quite logically expected some sort of attack in this area. In his reply to a query by Captain Ohmae in 1954 he is reported to have stated that "under these conditions (Japanese outnumbered in carriers and battleships and with the supremacy of the air with the Allies) the only hope was to avoid the disclosure of our (the Main Body) location as late as possible, at least on the 24th".\*\*

(2) Route Two above (through Dangerous Ground to Mindoro Strait) he rejected because this route was longer and would require refueling, which could not be effected because (a) there was an unsatisfactory fueling situation owing to delay in deploying the oilers and (b) the time schedule did not permit the delay required by the increased mileage and the time required for refueling.

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\* War Patrol Report DARTER, Report of 4TH War Patrol, Serial 020, November 5th, 1944.

\*\* Information compiled by Captain Toshikazu Ohmae, ex-IJN, Japanese Research Division, HQ, USAFFE, Military History Section, relating to the Penetration Operation of 1ST Striking Force, Battle for Leyte Gulf, contained in HQ, USAFFE, Military History Section, letter March 30th, 1954, to President, Naval War College.



With reference to item (a) above it will be recalled that, except for the NIPPO MARU, no oilers had been transferred to the FIRST Striking Force until after its sortie from Lingga on October 18th. On October 21st six of the eight oilers so transferred (HAKKO MARU, YUHO MARU, MANEI MARU, ITSUKUSHIMA MARU, OMUROSAN MARU and NIPPO MARU) were either at Brunei or en route Brunei. Of the remaining two oilers one (RYOEI MARU) was at Mako (Pescadores Islands) where it was refueling the SECOND Striking Force and the other, the NICHIEI MARU, was en route from Sana (Hainan Island) to Ulugan Bay (Palawan Island). Since the NICHIEI MARU's original orders were to head for Coron Bay the fact that she headed instead for Ulugan Bay seems to indicate that she had been diverted there, possibly for the FIRST Striking Force. This oiler alone of all of the above oilers was capable of fueling at sea. Therefore, it is considered that Commander FIRST Striking Force's statement that there was an unsatisfactory fueling situation for the surface forces, in general, is correct.

With reference to item (b) above, it seems likely that this statement was based on the time factor required in refueling the destroyers either from the larger ships or from the single oiler which might be so employed. Commander FIRST Striking Force appears to have felt that had oilers (including the NICHIEI MARU) sufficient in number to reduce this time factor to a satisfactory limit been ordered into Dangerous Ground, Route Two in so far as the above factor was concerned might then have been suitable.

He had another concern. This concerned his earliest departure time from Brunei Bay.\* Since the time of penetration into Tacloban Anchorage had been fixed by CinC Combined Fleet at dawn (0427) October 25th he estimated that he had to depart Brunei by at least 0800 the following morning.\* Since the oilers had arrived at about noon this meant that the fueling had to be completed in twenty hours. With an estimated fueling time of twenty-three hours he realized that he could not employ Route Two since this route would require at least six hours more than that required for Route Three even without the possible fueling delay of three hours indicated above. (Actually the fueling was completed in seventeen hours.)

This six hours derived from the fact that since Route Two was at least 100 miles longer than Route Three (800 vs 700), it would require over six hours to cover it. Whether or not there was a route shorter than Route Two is not known since the information as to the routes through Dangerous Ground known to Commander FIRST Striking Force is not available to this study.

At this point it is important to note that the average speed necessary to reach a point south of Mindoro Island at dawn (0442)\*\* October 24th via Route Three was slightly less than sixteen knots (700 miles divided

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\* Detailed Action Report 1ST Striking Force, SHO Operations, October 16th - 28th, 1944, WDC Document 161641, NA 11839.

\*\* Since sunrise at Mindoro Island was at 0642 and since dawn was established as two hours earlier, dawn at Mindoro Island therefore was at 0442.



by 44.7 hours) and the average speed necessary to reach this same point via Route Two was about eighteen knots (800 miles divided by 44.7 hours). This latter speed was fast approaching the refueling stage for his destroyers as reported in his 172103 October to CinC Combined Fleet\*--which refueling would necessitate increased delays.

His decision therefore to reject this route appears sound.

(3) Route Three above (through Palawan Passage and Mindoro Strait to a point south of Mindoro Island) he accepted despite the fact that the submarine threat was greatest along this route.\*\* He had reason to expect submarines in this area for on October 19th (two days earlier) there had been an unsuccessful attack by an Allied submarine (actually there were two submarines) on two of his destroyers, AKISHIMO and HAYASHIMO, in the vicinity of Royal Captain Shoal.\*\*\* This attack had been made by the DARTER and the DACE, which had been operating in this area against merchant shipping. He also appears to have had reports of radio direction finder fixes on one or more submarines (1) on October 20th, in Latitude 08°-20'N, Longitude 116°-30'E (Contact N) and (2) on October 21st, west of Balabac Island\*\*\*\* (Contact O).

In selecting this route over Route One, he necessarily had to make a choice between two primary dangers--in the case of Route One, the danger from Allied air attack and in the case of Route Three, the danger from Allied submarine attack in Palawan Passage. Of course, in the latter case there was always the danger of discovery by Allied aircraft operating out of Morotai for such aircraft had already reportedly contacted his command entering Brunei Bay, but the chance of any serious attack on his command in the Palawan Passage area apparently seemed relatively remote because of its position beyond Palawan Island (discussed below). And in the former case (Route One), there was always the danger of submarine attack. However, the danger (a) of air attack in the case of Route Three and (b) of submarine attack in the case of Route One, he clearly considered to be of secondary importance.

His decision to proceed by Route Three is therefore considered to have been correct for the following reasons:

(A) THERE IS NO DOUBT THAT THERE WAS MUCH LESS LIKELIHOOD OF HIS BEING DISCOVERED BY AIR SEARCH OR BY AIR RECONNAISSANCE AND EVEN LESS LIKELIHOOD OF HIS BEING ATTACKED BY AIR ON THIS ROUTE THAN THERE WAS ON ROUTE ONE. THIS IS BECAUSE OF NUMEROUS FACTORS, THE MOST IMPORTANT OF WHICH ARE

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- \* Commander 1ST Striking Force Dispatch 172103 October 1944 to CinC Combined Fleet, Detailed Action Report 1ST Striking Force, SHO Operations, October 16th - 28th, 1944, WDC Document 161641, NA 11839.
  - \*\* Detailed Action Report 1ST Striking Force, SHO Operations, October 16th - 28th, 1944, WDC Document 161641, NA 11839.
  - \*\*\* War Diary AKISHIMO, October 1944, WDC Document 161638, NA 11973.
  - \*\*\*\* Charts Appended Detailed Action Report TAKAO, Anti-submarine Action, October 23rd - 25th, 1944, WDC Document 160141, NA 11839.



(1) THE SEARCH DENSITY OF AN AIR SEARCH BECOMES LESS AS IT REACHES ITS FULL RADIUS, (2) FLYING OVER HIGH LAND FORCES SEARCH PLANES TO HIGHER ALTITUDES\*—GENERALLY OVER THE CLOUDS WHICH USUALLY FORM OVER ISLANDS, (3) THE PRESENCE OF ENEMY AIRFIELDS ALSO FORCES SEARCH PLANES TO HIGHER ALTITUDES (THERE WAS ONE IMPORTANT AIRFIELD AT PUERTO PRINCESA), AND (4) PALAWAN PASSAGE WAS, IN GENERAL, AT THE EXTREME EFFECTIVE BOMBING RANGE OF THE B-24'S;

(B) THE SUBMARINE THREAT COULD BE SERIOUSLY REDUCED BY THE EMPLOYMENT OF PROPER PROTECTIVE MEASURES WITHIN HIS OWN COMMAND AND BY PROPER ANTISUBMARINE MEASURES BY JAPANESE NAVAL AND AIR FORCES OPERATING FROM PALAWAN ISLAND;

(C) SHOULD HE BE SIGHTED BY ALLIED AIRCRAFT OR SUBMARINES THE FACT THAT HE WAS PROCEEDING ON A NORTHERLY COURSE TO THE WESTWARD OF PALAWAN ISLAND WOULD NOT NECESSARILY REVEAL THE BROAD STRATEGIC PLAN, WHEREAS, AS POINTED OUT EARLIER, A CONTACT ON A LARGE FORCE IN THE SULU SEA MIGHT BE VERY REVEALING.

(b) The factors which motivated the divided approach.

In discussing these factors it seems highly probable that his motivation was included in the following: (1) the expectation of creating a diversion; (2) the concept of a double envelopment; (3) the effect of the speed differential within the battleships which embraced (a) the idea of delay in arriving at the Tacloban Anchorage and (b) the loss of freedom of action for the faster battleships should BATDIV TWO operate with the FIRST Striking Force; (4) something else, such as a combination.

With reference to item (1) (the expectation of creating a diversion) does it not seem correct to say that the supporting data employed in the discussion of the first objective for the Main Body is equally applicable here, i.e., Commander FIRST Striking Force's concept that the discovery by the Allies of his Main Body might draw Allied ships out of the gulf and his resulting concept (supported by the Commanding Officer SHIGURE) of a night battle off Samar (presumably with the forces diverted out of the gulf)?

With reference to item (2) (the concept of a double envelopment) this concept is supported by two factors, (a) the fact that the Chief of Staff Combined Fleet's dispatch did not recommend any specific composition of either the San Bernardino Strait or the Surigao Strait groups. Instead, if anything, it appears to have the connotation of nearly equal forces. It seems possible also that COMBATDIV ONE's inclusion among the information addressees, which caused him to state that he considered it particularly meaningful that he had been so included,\*\* was related to this concept,

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\* Palawan Island is generally mountainous with its highest point in the south at 6740 feet, in the center near Puerto Princesa at 4220 feet, in the north central portion at 5225 feet and in the north at 2160 feet.

\*\* Vice Admiral Matome Ugaki, IJN (COMBATDIV 1), Personal Diary SENSOROKU, Nippon Shuppan Kyodo Kabushiki Kaisha (Tokyo, March 15th, 1953) Vol. II.



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(b) the statements previously referred to under "Operations of Commander FIRST Striking Force, October 20th" by Commander FIRST Striking Force in 1954, and by his Chief of Staff in 1951, to the effect that since a divided approach was recommended and since this coincided with their studies, they had settled on such an approach. An additional factor supporting the double envelopment concept is the fact that such an idea was inherent in the Japanese philosophy of naval strategy. In a study aimed at development of striking force tactics, one of the methods of fighting decisive battles discussed is the envelopment on both flanks and the classic illustration cited is the method adopted by Hannibal at Cannae about 200 B.C. One of the general plans for accomplishing envelopment movements is described as converging on the field of battle forces which were stationed strategically on exterior lines.\* While the research leading to the publication of this pamphlet was intended primarily toward evolving tactics of carrier forces, it seems reasonable to conclude that such general concepts as that of double envelopment were widely known and studied for their applicability to particular situations as in this instance.

In this connection it seems likely that the Main Force entered into the double envelopment concept to a considerable degree even though it is rarely mentioned therewith. This seems so for two principal reasons. In the first place, it will be recalled that the Main Force had as its primary objective a diversion objective; i.e., the drawing off of the Allied carriers and if a favorable opportunity arose their destruction. While Commander FIRST Striking Force placed great reliance on the success of this maneuver to facilitate his own operation--indeed it offered the principal hope for his successful penetration and withdrawal, it seems likely that he nevertheless realized that all carriers might not be drawn off thereby and made preparations for AA defense accordingly.

In the second place it will also be recalled that Commander FIRST Striking Force knew that after the diversionary operations Commander Main Force might decide to close the combat area off Samar and endeavor to destroy the enemy remnants employing especially the ISE and HYUGA.\*\* In this case his actions relative to the Allied forces presumably in Leyte Gulf would tend to form a triple rather than a double envelopment although here the arrival of the third element might well be delayed.

With reference to item (3) (speed differential of the battle-ships) this view is supported by Commander FIRST Striking Force's reply to

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\* CINCPAC - CINCPA Weekly Intelligence, Volume I, No. 10, September 15th, 1944, Addendum, KNOW YOUR ENEMY--Japanese Striking Force Tactics, Pages 4, 5.

\*\* CofS Combined Fleet Dispatch 201412 October 1944 to CofS Main Force, Detailed Action Report Main Force, SHO No. 1 Operation, October 20th - 29th, 1944, WDC Document 161005, NA 11744.



a query by Captain Toshikazu Ohmae, ex-IJN, in 1954.\* At this time Comander FIRST Striking Force stated that the reason for dividing his forces was the difference in speed within his battleships.\*\* He further stated that he felt that (a) since the old battleships FUSO and YAMASHIRO were slow speed ships, to attempt to maneuver with them might impair the mobility (freedom of action (?)) of the FIRST Striking Force, and (b) it was doubtful if the FIRST Striking Force, slowed by the two older battleships, could effect a penetration into Leyte Gulf by dawn on the 25th unless it proceeded by the shorter Surigao Strait route.\*\*\* By "impair the mobility of the FIRST Striking Force", Commander FIRST Striking Force meant that with the speed limitation of twenty knots rather than of twenty-three or four knots, he would (1) have less chance than ever of passing through San Bernardino Strait undetected, which he considered vital to the success of the operation and (2) after passing through San Bernardino Strait, be seriously handicapped in night surface action with a powerful enemy force.\*\*\*

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\* In conducting the analysis of this action, in 1954 the Naval War College formulated a series of questions, dealing with the operations of the 1ST Striking Force, which were forwarded to Japan and the replies thereto were obtained by Captain Toshikazu Ohmae, ex-IJN, who at the time of the Battle for Leyte Gulf was Operations Officer on the staff of Commander Main Force (Contained in HQ, USAFFE, Military History Section, letter March 30th, 1954, to President, Naval War College). In preparing the replies to the questions, Captain Ohmae queried, among others, Vice Admiral Kurita, ex-IJN and his CofS, Rear Admiral Koyanagi, ex-IJN. The material so obtained was reviewed by the Military History Section and edited in consultation with Captain Ohmae. As is pointed out later, there is considerable question as to the accuracy of Captain Ohmae's 1954 conclusions.

\*\* In this material, Captain Ohmae stated that the Japanese for planning purposes considered the maximum speeds of the 1ST Striking Force battleships to be (a) YAMATO and MUSASHI, twenty-seven (27) knots, (b) KONGO and HARUNA, twenty-seven and one-half (27.5) knots, (c) NAGATO, twenty-five (25) knots and (d) FUSO and YAMASHIRO, twenty-two and one-half (22.5) knots. He further stated that, although the expected speed differential between the NAGATO and the FUSO and YAMASHIRO was about 2.5 knots, this speed differential was more likely 3 - 4 knots. He then went on to rationalize Japanese actions on this basis. The error of this becomes apparent when, as is shown later, he later (1955) reported that the maximum speeds of the FUSO and YAMASHIRO were 24 knots rather than 22.5 knots (Letter from Captain Toshikazu Ohmae, ex-IJN, to Mr. Roger Pineau, Naval History Division, quoted in letter from Mr. Roger Pineau to Commodore R.W. Bates, USN(Ret), Head, World War II Battle Evaluation Group, Naval War College, January 5th, 1956).

\*\*\* Information compiled by Captain Toshikazu Ohmae, ex-IJN, Japanese Research Division, HQ, USAFFE, Military History Section, relating to Penetration Operations of 1ST Striking Force, Battle for Leyte Gulf, contained in HQ, USAFFE, Military History Section, letter March 30th, 1954, to President, Naval War College.



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NOTE: This view, as pointed out earlier, is not supported by facts, later discovered (1955). These facts are that the two battleships, FUSO and YAMASHIRO, rather than being slow speed battleships were, instead, capable of a maximum speed of twenty-four knots,\* which was but one knot less than the NAGATO's (twenty-five). Therefore, the FUSO and YAMASHIRO were likely able to run at sustained speeds in excess of twenty knots and more likely in the vicinity of twenty-three knots.

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It is of importance to note here that item (b) above, the inability to effect penetration by dawn on the 25th, was not mentioned by Captain Ohmae in his 1953 letter as one of the reasons given by Commander FIRST Striking Force for dividing his force. He gave solely two reasons; (a) the speed of BATDIV TWO was about twenty knots which made it unsuitable for high speed movement, and (b) although the training level of BATDIV TWO was low and its headquarters weak, COMBATDIV TWO was next senior officer to Commander FIRST Striking Force, which meant that if the FIRST Striking Force operated as a single force, COMBATDIV TWO would automatically assume command of the entire force in the event Commander FIRST Striking Force should become unable to act.

NOTE: The inaccuracy of this latter statement will be discussed later.

With reference to item (4) above (something else or a combination), this view is supported by Captain Ohmae's comments in 1954 to the effect that:

(a) Concentration on the physical objective was the primary consideration and concentration en route to the objective areas was not of primary importance;

(b) Since the FIRST Striking Force was inferior in naval strength and was not likely to have adequate air cover, diversionary tactics might provide some advantage;

(c) If detected, the THIRD Section might have some diversionary effect;

(d) (1) The FUSO and YAMASHIRO could not steam in the fleet formation at more than twenty knots for protracted periods even though they were capable of top speeds of twenty-two and one-half knots. Their speed

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\* Letter from Captain Toshikazu Ohmae, ex-IJN, to Mr. Roger Pineau, Naval History Division, quoted in letter from Mr. Roger Pineau to Commodore R.W. Bates, USN(Ret), Head, World War II Battle Evaluation Group, Naval War College, January 5th, 1956.

limitations were due primarily to the difficulty in firing their boilers which, using a combination of coal and oil, required almost constant stoking when running at extreme speeds. The fact that their crews were not well trained may have been a contributing factor to the difficulty in achieving proper stoking. The NAGATO could achieve and maintain speeds (twenty-four knots) for longer periods due to having more experienced personnel;\*

(2) When steaming at high speed, the FUSO and YAMASHIRO usually made heavy smoke with the ensuing possibility of detection.\*

NOTE: The statements here given in (d) (1) and (2), notably that (a) the FUSO and YAMASHIRO could not steam in fleet formation for protracted periods due primarily to the fact that they used a combination of coal and oil and (b) these battleships, when steaming at high speed, usually made heavy smoke, have been shown recently to be incorrect. Captain Ohmae, who compiled the original information quoted largely herein and dated 1954, later in reply to a query from the Naval War College modified his statements in late 1955 saying, "FUSO and YAMASHIRO were converted to oil burner ships in May 1934 and March 1936 respectively with each 6 oil burning boilers of KAMPON type instead of 24 mixed burning boilers. Their speeds after the reconstruction were expected to be 25 knots, however, their actual speeds were about 24 knots. I must apologize for my false information solely depended upon the opinion of an engineer officer in the Demobilization Bureau".\*\*

The above statement of Captain Ohmae concerning the conversion of the boilers from coal and oil to oil alone was confirmed on January 10th, 1956 by Commander U.S. Naval Forces Far East.\*\*\*

(e) Since Commander FIRST Striking Force was accurately informed as to the composition and strength of the U.S. naval forces and was well aware that they outnumbered the Japanese in battleship and carrier strength as well as in the air, his only hope was to avoid disclosure of his presence as long as possible, at least until the 24th. Captain Ohmae believes that Commander FIRST Striking Force felt that (1) if the Japanese fleet could pass through San Bernardino Strait undetected there would be a chance of success, and (2) to achieve the objective, speed and mobility were of the utmost necessity and therefore the difference (in speed) of three to four knots might have a highly important bearing on the outcome of the engagement. According

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\* Information compiled by Captain Toshikazu Ohmae, ex-IJN, Japanese Research Division, HQ, USAFFE, Military History Section, relating to Penetration Operations of 1ST Striking Force, Battle for Leyte Gulf, contained in HQ, USAFFE, Military History Section, letter March 30th, 1954, to President, Naval War College.

\*\* Letter from Captain Toshikazu Ohmae, ex-IJN, to Mr. Roger Pineau, Naval History Division, quoted in letter from Mr. Roger Pineau to Commodore R.W. Bates, USN(Ret), Head, World War II Battle Evaluation Group, Naval War College, January 5th, 1956.

\*\*\* Letter from COMNAVFE (VADM W.M. Callaghan, USN) to Commodore R.W. Bates, USN(Ret), Head, World War II Battle Evaluation Group, Naval War College, January 10th, 1956.



to Captain Ohmae, this view was also expressed by Commander FIRST Striking Force.\*

(f) The Japanese believed in the principle of self sacrifice for a great cause even when the possibility of success was somewhat remote, which principle they considered belonged with the established principles of war. Captain Ohmae employed this concept to point out that if the THIRD Section could be used as a diversion they were willing to sacrifice it (in a manner similar to a Banzai charge or a Kamikaze attack) in order to draw the American strength away from Leyte and thereby give the main strength of the FIRST Striking Force a chance for victory.\*

(g) COMBATDIV ONE, who was junior to COMBATDIV TWO, was considered the best qualified officer within the command to succeed Commander FIRST Striking Force should the fortunes of battle require. He likewise appears to have had a competent staff whereas that of COMBATDIV TWO was rather weak due to a lack of training.\* It will be recalled that COMBATDIV TWO had arrived but sixteen days earlier from the Empire and had had little opportunity for training with the FIRST Striking Force. However, this should not have been serious since COMBATDIV TWO and his staff were thoroughly familiar with current Japanese orders and doctrines and in the sixteen days should have become thoroughly familiar with any special orders or directives of the FIRST Striking Force if such existed.

NOTE: The statement here given in (g) that COMBATDIV ONE was junior to COMBATDIV TWO, has been shown recently to be incorrect. Captain Ohmae, who compiled the original information quoted herein and dated 1954, later in reply to a query from the Naval War College modified his statement in 1956 saying that, "The signal numbers shown in the Naval War College letter are the correct index as to the order of seniority. Therefore, VADM Ugaki would have succeeded to command of the FIRST Striking Force in the event of the incapacity of VADM Kurita. At the time I wrote Mr. Kawakami, the signal numbers were not available to me and I was forced to go entirely by class years, which is normally an accurate index as to seniority."\*\*

At first view the above data seems very confusing, but this is not entirely so, for it must be remembered that (a) "the finest memory is less enduring than the poorest ink",\*\*\* and (b) the Japanese information prepared by Captain Ohmae was not based in the main part on records but was, instead, based on interrogations of the principal officers involved, which

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\* Information compiled by Captain Toshikazu Ohmae, ex-IJN, Japanese Research Division, HQ, USAFFE, Military History Section, relating to Penetration Operations of 1ST Striking Force, Battle for Leyte Gulf, contained in HQ, USAFFE, Military History Section, letter March 30th, 1954, to President, Naval War College.

\*\* HQ, USAFFE/8A (Rear), Military History Office, letter December 21st, 1956, to President, Naval War College.

\*\*\* A fact known to many students of history but put in this form by Commodore R.W. Bates, USN(Ret), Head, World War II Battle Evaluation Group, Naval War College.



interrogations as pointed out earlier were in 1953 and 1954. The replies of these principal officers and notably those of the Commander FIRST Striking Force appear to have been recollections. A close examination of the statements made by the Commander FIRST Striking Force in 1945 with those made by himself in 1953\* and 1954\*\* and by Captain Ohmae also in 1953,\* 1954\*\* and 1955\*\*\* will indicate very obvious divergencies.

The most important of these divergencies are:

(a) Commander FIRST Striking Force's 1954 statement (attributed to him by Captain Ohmae) to the effect that the Chief of Staff Combined Fleet had suggested that the THIRD Section, FIRST Striking Force, operate separately and the believed actual wording of the CofS Combined Fleet dispatch to the effect that "it would be preferable to proceed to and break into the enemy anchorage in two groups; one from the north approaching through San Bernardino Strait and the other from the south approaching through Surigao Strait, rather than to approach with the whole fleet as a unit".

(b) Commander FIRST Striking Force's 1945 statement to the effect that it was thought that the larger body (i.e. Main Body, FIRST Striking Force) coming from the north would draw the Allied forces from the gulf and thus make possible the entry there of the THIRD Section and the statement (1) by himself in 1954 to the effect that if the FIRST Striking Force could pass through San Bernardino Strait undetected there was a chance of success and (2) that by Captain Ohmae, also in 1954, to the effect that the Japanese were willing to sacrifice the THIRD Section in order to draw the Allied forces from the gulf and thus make possible the entry of the larger body coming from the north.

(c) The statements by Commander FIRST Striking Force in 1945 which implied that diversion was the principal reason for dividing the forces and the 1953\* and 1954 statements by the same commander (attributed to him by Captain Ohmae) that the speed differential between the battleships was the reason.

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\* Letter from Captain Toshikazu Ohmae, ex-IJN, (formerly Senior Staff Officer Mobile Force) Japanese Research Division, GHQ, FEC, Military History Section, to Mr. Clarke Kawakami, World War II Battle Evaluation Group, Naval War College, undated but received Washington, D.C. April 13th, 1953.

\*\* Information compiled by Captain Toshikazu Ohmae, ex-IJN, Japanese Research Division, HQ, USAFFE, Military History Section, relating to Penetration Operations of 1ST Striking Force, Battle for Leyte Gulf, contained in HQ, USAFFE, Military History Section, letter March 30th, 1954, to President, Naval War College.

\*\*\* Letter from Captain Toshikazu Ohmae, ex-IJN, to Mr. Roger Pineau, Naval History Division, quoted in letter from Mr. Roger Pineau to Commodore R.W. Bates, USN(Ret), Head, World War II Battle Evaluation Group, Naval War College, January 5th, 1956.



(d) The 1954 statement by Commander FIRST Striking Force (attributed to him by Captain Ohmae) that it was doubtful if the FIRST Striking Force slowed by the two older battleships could effect a penetration into Leyte Gulf by dawn of the 25th unless it proceeded by the shorter Surigao Strait route and the actual fact that by Route Three at an actual speed of advance of approximately seventeen knots he could have arrived at Tacloban anchorage at dawn (0427) October 25th in about 68.5 hours.

However, since zigzagging, while transversing some waters, would be necessary during daylight this meant that the engine speeds would have to be greater than this with the increased probability of requiring refueling as the average engine speeds approached twenty knots. He had previously commented on this fact to CinC Combined Fleet by dispatch on October 17th.\* But this was so only if he followed Route Three. It was not so if he followed a track somewhat different from the above. There are two obvious shorter tracks--(a) one passing through the same general waters as above but passing south of Hunter Rock in Mindoro Strait would reduce this leg from 700 miles to about 660 miles--a reduction of about forty miles--and the average speed of advance required would then be slightly more than sixteen knots (1120 divided by 68.5 hours) and (b) one passing through Linapacan Channel, thence to a point south of Mindoro Light with the remainder of the track the same as before. This would have reduced the first leg from 700 miles to about 630 miles--a reduction of about seventy miles--and the average speed of advance required would then have been slightly less than sixteen knots (1090 divided by 68.5 hours).

In discussing the above it should be pointed out, however, that whereas the track after passing a point south of Mindoro is the same as that in Route Three, the times of arrival at the point south of Mindoro and at San Bernardino Light, based on approximately sixteen knots, are necessarily different. If, however, he desired to fix his arrival time at San Bernardino Light as sunset, he could still reach the objective area at dawn by running the third leg at twenty knots. His speed required over the first two legs would then be about fourteen point seven knots, which would permit a later departure time from Brunei or more maneuvering en route.

Therefore, it seems clear that the FIRST Striking Force (including BATDIV TWO) could, by following a route somewhat different and somewhat shorter than Route Three, have made the penetration on time. Commander FIRST Striking Force had already attested to this fact at 2103 October 17th\* when he stated that should he depart on the morning of October 22nd and take the shortest central route he could arrive at the eastern entrance to San Bernardino Strait on the night of October 24th.

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\* Commander 1ST Striking Force Dispatch 172103 October 1944 to CinC Combined Fleet, info Commanders Main Force, SW Area Force, etc., Detailed Action Report 1ST Striking Force, SHO Operations, October 16th - 28th, 1944, WDC Document 161641, NA 11839.



From all of these divergencies does it not seem logical to say that the statements of Commander FIRST Striking Force in later years, i.e., 1953 and 1954, are incorrect and are either postwar rationalizations or are the result of lapse of memory, and those of Captain Ohmae are purely rationalizations since he was not with Commander FIRST Striking Force at the Battle for Leyte Gulf but was instead with Commander Main Force at that battle; and therefore, his concepts are likely those developed in a large part from his conversations in later years with the commanders concerned?

Why then did Commander FIRST Striking Force divide his force? What one or more of the above possible reasons was the cause? The analysis of this matter, based on the preceding study, follows:

It seems clear that item (2) (concept of double envelopment) and that portion of item (3) relating to the statement that BATDIV TWO was too slow to arrive at Tacloban Anchorage on time, can be eliminated outright. This seems so (a) as regards item (2) because double envelopment was not mentioned either by Commander FIRST Striking Force or by the other commanders in their action reports or in postwar comments, although it was referred to (employing the term pincers movement)\* by Captain Ohmae in his 1953 statement,\*\* and (b) as regards the above referred to portion of item (3) because it is clear that despite his statement in 1954 to the contrary he could have reached the Tacloban Anchorage at dawn without dividing his force and without unduly endangering his command either from Allied attack or from a shortage of fuel.

It also seems clear that that portion of item (3) relating to freedom of action can be largely eliminated for the following reasons:

(a) Until Captain Ohmae had forwarded his comments referring to speed differential, repeatedly referred to in this portion of the analysis, no information was available which mentioned this. Instead, the concept of advancing the FIRST Striking Force as a single unit still persisted.

(b) While it is true that there is some advantage to be gained by being able to regulate the time of approach to the estimated outer range of Allied carrier searches so that the force might be outside that estimated range at the estimated time at which Allied search planes would be there, this condition does not appear to have obtained in this case for (1) a carrier search arc of 300 miles from the vicinity of the Catanduanes Islands would

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\* The term "pincers movement" in this case was not original with Captain Ohmae. Unfortunately, Mr. C.H. Kawakami, translator for the World War II Battle Evaluation Group, Naval War College, employed this term in a letter to Captain Ohmae, and it was in reply to this letter that Captain Ohmae employed the term.

\*\* Letter from Captain Toshikazu Ohmae, ex-IJN, (formerly Senior Staff Officer Mobile Force) to Mr. Clarke Kawakami, World War II Battle Evaluation Group, Naval War College, undated but received Washington, D.C. April 13th, 1953.



clearly embrace the entire Mindoro Island area, (2) the distance from a point south of Mindoro Island to San Bernardino Light was but 230 miles and the hours between dawn and sunset, which were to be employed in traversing this track, were about fourteen (0442 to 1830). This would have required a speed of advance of 16.4 knots. And yet Captain Ohmae credits Commander FIRST Striking Force with requiring twenty-four knots to avoid detection until as late as possible?

(c) Also, while it is true that some advantage can often be gained in night action by having more rather than less speed within the command, there is considerable doubt whether in a case of this type where Commander FIRST Striking Force was seeking rather than evading night action that the gain in speed outweighed the advantages inherent in an increased number of combatant ships. The detachment of the THIRD Section reduced the strength of the Main Body by two battleships or thirty per cent, by one heavy cruiser or ten per cent, and by four destroyers or twenty-six per cent. In addition, since he expected that he would be under heavy Allied air attack with the likelihood of damage to one or more of his battleships, the gain in speed would be more ephemeral than real, because depending on the nature of the damage, it might be necessary in order to maintain the gunpower, to slow down the speed of the disposition accordingly.

As regards item (1) (the expectation of creating a diversion) this item has support from all sources, with no negative implications and is clearly implied in Commander FIRST Striking Force's basic directive for the penetration operation (Operation Order No. Four). In this connection, the Commanding Officer TONE stated in part in his action report, "Against an enemy with superior air search power, the separation of one's forces in order to divert the enemy..."\* THEREFORE, IT IS BELIEVED THAT "DIVERSION" MUST BE CONSIDERED AS ONE OF THE FUNDAMENTAL REASONS FOR THE "DIVISION OF THE FIRST STRIKING FORCE".

As regards item (4) (something else, such as a combination), this item must also be considered as embracing within itself certain factors which may have influenced Commander FIRST Striking Force to make his decision. One factor which may have had an effect and which has not been mentioned previously is the probability that Commander FIRST Striking Force desired to accede, if possible, to Chief of Staff Combined Fleet's suggestion that he divide his command.

THEREFORE, IT SEEMS MOST PROBABLE THAT COMMANDER FIRST STRIKING FORCE'S REASON FOR DIVIDING HIS FORCE WAS "DIVERSION", WITH THE OTHER FACTORS ENUMERATED IN THE PARAGRAPH ABOVE CONTRIBUTING TO A LESSER DEGREE.

(c) The soundness or lack of soundness of this decision:

Whatever may have been the reason for this decision, the question now arises as to whether or not it was sound. In order to determine this, it is necessary to re-present the situation at the time as it seems to have appeared to Commander FIRST Striking Force. First, it will be recalled that Commander FIRST Striking Force knew, from information obtained from

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\* Detailed Action Report TONE, SHO Operation (Battle off the Philippines), October 24th - 26th, 1944, WDC Document 161747.



captured pilots as well as from contact reports (although, for some reason, he has failed to mention the latter), that the Japanese were outnumbered, especially in carriers and battleships and had lost command of the air (he stated that the Allies had air supremacy)—presumably, he meant in the Philippines. Secondly, it will be recalled that his most recent intelligence concerning forces in Leyte Gulf indicated that as many as fourteen or fifteen battleships and cruisers with numerous small craft including transports had been reported there in the forenoon of the preceding day.\*

In addition, on this day Commander FIRST Striking Force had received reports of (a) four large carriers and four small carriers off Leyte Gulf and (b) (1) four carriers, (2) a task force (Number of carriers not reported) and (3) two groups of "surface ships" in the San Bernardino - Catanduanes Island area. He necessarily considered that there was at least one carrier in the task force. Thus, although he had not encountered the twenty-one carriers of October 19th, it is likely that for purposes of his estimate he considered the above thirteen carriers (9 CV and 4 CVE) as the minimum he might encounter.

Since he states that he knew that he was outnumbered in battleships and cruisers, it seems likely that he considered that the estimate of battleships and cruisers in the gulf was low and had decided that it was possible that he might encounter there all of the eight old battleships which were reportedly with the THIRD Fleet. At least, it was wise to consider this as an Allied capability since aircraft contacts were not necessarily always accurate. This view is supported by Commander FIRST Striking Force's statement in 1945 when, in reply to a query by the Strategic Bombing Survey as to what information he had of the Allied forces inside Leyte Gulf upon his departure from Brunei Bay, he stated, "I thought that you had about 200 transports, about seven battleships and appropriate accompanying cruisers and destroyers."\*\* Of course, with the Allies in command of the air, he must have realized that he would likely suffer damages from air attack en route to Leyte Gulf and therefore, the relative strength of his command with relation to those of the Allies in Leyte Gulf would be diminished.

He had analyzed the situation likely along the lines indicated in the pages immediately preceding this discussion and had decided, as has been discussed earlier, to divide his force. In support of this decision, Captain Ohmae in 1954 quoted from Julian Corbett's "Some Principles of Maritime Strategy", part of which quotation was:\*\*\*

"In naval warfare at least this distinction between concentration and mass is essential to clear appreciation. It leads us to conclusions that are of the first importance. For instance, when once the mass is formed, concealment and flexibility are at an end. The further, therefore, from the

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\* Vice Admiral Matome Ugaki, IJN (COMBATDIV 1), Personal Diary SENSOROKU, Nippon Shuppan Kyodo Kabushiki Kaisha (Tokyo, March 15th, 1953), Volume II.

\*\* USSBS Interrogation of Japanese Officials, Nav. No. 9, Interrogation of Vice Admiral Takeo Kurita, IJN, Volume I, Page 36.

\*\*\* Julian S. Corbett, "Some Principles of Maritime Strategy" (London, 1911) Pages 131, 134.



formation of the ultimate mass we can stop the process of concentration the better designed it will be. The less we are committed to any particular mass, and the less we indicate what and where our mass is to be, the more formidable our concentration.

"To concentration, therefore, the idea of division is as essential as the idea of connection. It is this view of the process which, at least for naval warfare, a weighty critical authority has most strongly emphasized.

"The idea of massing, as a virtue in itself, is bred in peace and not in war. It indicates the debilitating idea that in war we must seek rather to avoid than to inflict defeat. True, advocates of the mass entrench themselves in the plausible conception that their aim is to inflict crushing defeats. But this too is an idea of peace. War has proved to the hilt that victories have not only to be won, but worked for. They must be worked for by bold strategical combinations, which as a rule entail at least apparent dispersal. They can only be achieved by taking risks, and the greatest and most effective of these is division."

He also quoted from Captain Alfred Mahan's "War of 1812" as follows:\*

"It is not the keeping of the several vessels side by side that constitutes the virtue of this disposition; it is the placing them under a single head, thereby insuring cooperation, however widely dispersed by their common chief under the emergency of successive moments. Like a fan that opens and shuts, vessels thus organically bound together possess the power of wide sweep, which insures exertion over a great field of ocean and at the same time that of mutual support, because dependent upon and controlled from a common center. Such is concentration, reasonably understood; not huddled together like a drove of cattle but distributed with a regard to a common purpose and linked together by the effectual energy of a single will."

But were these quotations applicable to the Japanese situation in this case? The answer appears to have been in the negative for the situation here was considerably different from that envisaged by either Corbett or Mahan. In addition, several new factors had come into play, notably the airplane, the submarine, radar and radio, which made it even more difficult for diversionary operations of the type herewith attempted to be successful.

At the time of the Battle for Leyte Gulf, Allied carrier-based aircraft had a search and attack radius of about 325 miles;\*\* land-based aircraft (PB4Y-1 and B-24's) had a normal search radius of about 1000 miles and a bombing radius of about 825 miles;\*\* airsearch radar had a maximum range of

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\* Captain Alfred T. Mahan, USN, "Sea Power in its Relations to the War of 1812" (Boston, 1919) Volume I, Page 316.

\*\* Comparative Performances and Characteristics, Representative Enemy and Allied Aircraft, TAIC Manual No. 2, October 1944.



detection of aircraft about 100 miles;\* surface search radar (average height 100 feet) had an effective average range of detection of a surface ship (average height 100 feet) of about twenty-five miles;\*\* radio was highly effective at long ranges; voice radio was quite effective at ranges up to about fifty miles, and submarines were highly efficient. It seems highly probable that most of the above information was known to the Japanese either through tests of captured material or through statements of prisoners of war.

When Captain Mahan wrote (1905) the book from which the "fan" quote was taken by the Japanese, the airplane, submarine and radio were in their early stages of development; radar was unknown. When Julian Corbett wrote the book (1911) from which the Japanese chose the above "quotes", the submarine was fairly well advanced; the airplane and radio, which were still in the process of development, had very limited capabilities; radar was as yet unknown. These factors therefore were given little consideration in the above books.

At this point it is of importance to restate the fact that Commander FIRST Striking Force's plan called for (a) the main strength of the FIRST Striking Force to pass to the westward of Palawan, thence south of Mindoro, and thence through San Bernardino Strait, arriving in the vicinity of Suluan Island at 0400 on X-day, and (b) the THIRD Section to pass through Balabac Strait, the Sulu and Mindanao Seas, and Surigao Strait, penetrating to the Allied anchorage at dawn (0427) on X-day. A study of the chart shows that by this division the Japanese, because of the intervening islands throughout the Visayas, would necessarily find it difficult if not impossible for the separate units to maintain the mutual support required. However, these geographic deterrents to the Japanese surface forces were not deterrents to Allied air power. Therefore, it can be argued that whereas the above concepts from Julian Corbett and Captain Mahan were scarcely applicable to the Japanese surface units they were directly applicable to Allied air power, which was able to range over the whole area of the Visayas and yet was readily able to provide mutual support wherever desired.

Since the Japanese were heavily outnumbered in the air and unable to provide adequate air cover for the two well separated divisions of the FIRST Striking Force, does it not seem clear then that once the Japanese FIRST Striking Force came within range of Allied air power, its units should have been concentrated in order to insure that they (a) could mutually support one another, (b) could direct against Allied air concentrations the maximum antiaircraft fire within the FIRST Striking Force, and (c) presented the maximum number of targets to the Allied pilots? In other words, it was not concentration in the objective area alone which was vital in this case; it was concentration en route to the objective area as well, for without such

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\* Current Tactical Orders and Doctrine, U.S. Fleet, USF-10A, 1944, Part VI, Supporting Doctrines and Instructions, Paragraph 6021.

\*\* Radar Operator's Manual (RAD 3), United States Fleet, Headquarters of the Commander in Chief, August 5th, 1944 (Reprint March 1945), Page 4-SG-12.



concentration the feasibility of the operation became even more doubtful than ever. Is this not so despite the advantages of diversion?

BECAUSE OF THESE FACTS ABOVE, IT IS CONSIDERED THAT COMMANDER FIRST STRIKING FORCE'S DECISION TO DIVIDE HIS FORCE, DESPITE THE SUGGESTION OF THE CHIEF OF STAFF COMBINED FLEET TO DO SO, WAS UNSOUND.

The decision to divide the FIRST Striking Force was also unsound for another reason. This was because it required such coordination between the Main Body and the THIRD Section that the Main Body was expected to arrive at Suluan Island at 0400, at which time the THIRD Section would be fast approaching the Tacloban Anchorage. It is not clear how Commander FIRST Striking Force expected to obtain this timing in view of the much stronger Allied air power and the expected surface action off Samar.

That certain of the Japanese senior officers were cognizant of these facts is to be noted from the following quotes:

(1) "It is essential to speedily establish a completely new policy for improving the faculty of strategic movement (screening and patrols). Today, in view of the active role played by submarines and aircraft not only is it fallacious to make a sharp distinction between the so-called strategic and tactical movements as in the past, but it is possible to go so far as to conclude that the entire movement of a fleet from the time it sorties to the time it reaches the battle area is one continuous combat operation. Furthermore, past experience shows that most damage has been sustained during so-called strategic movement. This tendency will become even more pronounced and underlines our present deficiencies in patrols and screening."\*

(2) "Against an enemy with superior air search power, the separation of one's forces in order to divert the enemy not only carries with it little possibility of success, but in the event the strength of the main force is reduced by losses, one is invariably greatly handicapped in decisive battle. It is concluded that in directing future operations, it is imperative to employ this recent battle lesson."\*\*

(d) The correct procedure.

ALTHOUGH THE CORRECT PROCEDURE HAS BEEN INDICATED UNDER THE PRECEDING HEADING, IT SEEMS WELL BECAUSE OF ITS IMPORTANCE TO RESTATE IT HERE FOR GENERAL USE. IT IS THIS. IN SITUATIONS OF THIS KIND WHERE CONCENTRATION ENROUTE TO THE OBJECTIVE AREA MAY BE QUITE AS IMPORTANT AS CONCENTRATION WITHIN THE OBJECTIVE AREA, THE UNITS OF THE WEAKER FORCE SHOULD BE CONCENTRATED BEFORE THEY COME WITHIN RANGE OF ENEMY AIR POWER IN ORDER TO INSURE THAT THEY CAN (A) MUTUALLY SUPPORT ONE ANOTHER, (B) DIRECT AGAINST ENEMY AIR CONCENTRATIONS THE MAXIMUM ANTI-AIRCRAFT FIRE WITHIN THE COMMAND, (C) PRESENT THE MAXIMUM NUMBER OF TARGETS TO THE ENEMY PILOTS. OTHERWISE, OWING TO THE ABILITY OF SUPERIOR AIR POWER TO CONCENTRATE READILY, THOSE SURFACE UNITS

\* Detailed Action Report No. 15, MYOKO, Battle off the Philippines (Anti-aircraft Action in Mindoro Sea), October 24th, 1944, WDC Document 161647.

\*\* Detailed Action Report TONE, SHO Operation (Battle off the Philippines), October 24th - 26th, 1944, WDC Document 161747.



NOT ABLE TO SO CONCENTRATE WILL BE MORE SUBJECT TO DESTRUCTION THAN WILL THOSE SURFACE UNITS ALREADY CONCENTRATED. THIS IS BELIEVED TO BE TRUE NOTWITHSTANDING THE DEVELOPMENT OF NUCLEAR WEAPONS. WHILE NUCLEAR WEAPONS MAY DICTATE THE METHODS OF OPERATION OF SURFACE FORCES AND THE GENERAL TACTICAL DOCTRINES AND TECHNIQUES CONNECTED THEREWITH IT SHOULD BE EMPHASIZED THAT WE ARE HERE CONCERNED WITH THE FORMULATION OF SOUND GENERAL CONCEPTS RATHER THAN WITH SPECIFIC DETAILS, SUCH AS THE DISTANCE BETWEEN SHIPS WHETHER IN YARDS OR IN MILES.

Because of the later actions by this command, it is important to note at this point that Commander FIRST Striking Force now had his command so constituted that (a) his San Bernardino Strait group--his Main Body--had a minimum sustained speed of twenty-four knots; had as its second in command COMBATDIV ONE, who was recognized as the officer best qualified to succeed to command of the FIRST Striking Force should its present commander become disabled and was composed of units and commanders who had been operating together for some time, and (b) his Surigao Strait group included his two slowest battleships and was commanded by COMBATDIV TWO, who was an officer experienced in night fighting but whose staff was considered a little inexperienced for handling the problems which might arise with the San Bernardino Strait group.

At 1710 he observed CRUDIV SIXTEEN depart Brunei for Manila\* in accordance with instructions from Commander SW Area Force.\*\*

At 1807 Commander FIRST Striking Force received a dispatch from Commander SECOND Striking Force advising that the SECOND Striking Force, less units with FIRST Striking Force, would sortie Mako 1600 October 21st arriving off Manila Bay at about 0700 October 23rd.\*\*\* He thereby knew from its projected movements that the SECOND Striking Force would still be available for a counterlanding operation or for employment in the penetration operation, as finally determined by CinC Combined Fleet.

At 1945 he received a dispatch from Commander SW Area Force in which that commander (a) assumed command of all naval air forces assembled in the Philippines, (b) advised that in close cooperation with the surface forces and the army his command would destroy first the enemy task force east of the Philippines and then the enemy invasion force and (c) after this general statement listed the missions he had assigned the FIFTH and SIXTH Base Air Forces and the 954th and 955th Air Groups.\*\*\*\*

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- \* Commander SW Area Force Dispatch 211252 October 1944 to Commanders 1ST and 2ND Striking Forces, COMCRUDIV 16, info CinC Combined Fleet, War Diary DESRON 1, October 1944, WDC Document 161638, NA 11739.
  - \*\* Detailed Action Report No. 6, AOBA, Antisubmarine Action West of Philippines, October 18th - 24th, 1944, WDC Document 161747.
  - \*\*\* Commander 2ND Striking Force Dispatch 211455 October 1944 to Commanders SW Area Force, 1ST Striking Force, etc., Detailed Action Report BATDIV 1, SHO No. 1 Operation, October 18th - 28th, 1944, WDC Document 161005, NA 11744.
  - \*\*\*\* Commander SW Area Force Dispatch 211345 October 1944 to Commanders 5TH and 6TH Base Air Forces, 954TH and 955TH Air Groups, info Commanders 1ST and 2ND Striking Forces, Main Force, Detailed Action Report 1ST Striking Force, SHO Operations, October 16th - 28th, 1944, WDC Document 161641, NA 11839.



At 1946 Commander FIRST Striking Force directed his command (a) to assume Antiaircraft Alert No. Three and (b) at 0630 the following morning to assume Antiaircraft Alert No. Two.\*

At 2053 he, being finally satisfied as to its contents, released his 212053. Although this dispatch was designated as Labuan 212053, its actual originator was Commander FIRST Striking Force, and this fact was contained within the body of the dispatch. This was done so that enemy radio intelligence units might be confused thereby and was in accordance with his visual dispatch 201410 of the previous day which directed that, except for urgent and unavoidable communications by aircraft and contact reports by picket boats, radio silence was to be enforced.

THIS ACTION OF COMMANDER FIRST STRIKING FORCE WAS SOUND. ALTHOUGH HE HAD REASON TO BELIEVE THAT THE PRESENCE OF HIS FORCE HAD BEEN DISCOVERED BY ALLIED PLANES, HE ALSO KNEW THAT HE (A) HAD NOT CONTACTED ANY ALLIED PLANES WITH HIS OWN AIR PATROL OR WITH HIS OWN RADAR AND (B) HAD RECEIVED NO FURTHER REPORTS OF CONTACTS ON HIS COMMAND FROM OTHER SOURCES. THEREFORE, WITH THE POSSIBILITY IN HIS MIND THAT HIS PRESENCE IN BRUNEI BAY MIGHT NOT BE KNOWN TO THE ENEMY, HE TOOK PRECAUTIONS ACCORDINGLY.

Strategems of this nature have often been successful in war. Students of naval warfare will recall that a situation somewhat similar to this occurred on May 30th, 1916 during the operations preliminary to the Battle of Jutland. Here, the Germans, suspecting that their radio dispatches were giving valuable information to the enemy, particularly through radio direction finder fixes, directed that the guardship anchored in Jade Roads should (a) take over the radio guard for the fleet flagship, (b) use the radio call then in use by CinC High Seas Fleet in the FRIEDRICH DER GROSSE. The latter battleship was to observe radio silence until contacts with the enemy were reported. Meanwhile, all dispatches addressed to CinC High Seas Fleet were to be receipted for by the guardship and broadcast to the flagship. This strategem proved to be highly effective for up to this time the British naval commanders had received remarkably accurate information of the movement of the High Seas Fleet. Now, when the British took bearings on the guardship (which they thought was the flagship), they found her still in Jade Roads and inferred therefore that High Seas Fleet was still in port, when, in fact it had already sortied and was at sea.\*\*

There seems reason to believe that Commander FIRST Striking Force's action in employing the Labuan call sign was very wise for it is

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\* Commander 1ST Striking Force Visual Dispatch 211946 October 1944 to 1ST Striking Force (1ST Striking Force SigOrd No. 187), Detailed Action Report BATDIV 1, SHO No. 1 Operation, October 18th - 28th, 1944, WDC Document 161005, NA 11744.

\*\* Sir Julian Corbett "History of the Great War Naval Operations", London, August 1923, Volume III, Pages 324 - 329; also Commander Holloway H. Frost, USN, "The Battle of Jutland," Annapolis, Maryland, Pages 123 and 143.



a fact that the Allies did not at this time know of the presence of the FIRST Striking Force in Brunei Bay. Had the call sign of Commander FIRST Striking Force been employed, it seems likely that this fact would have been known to Allied radio intelligence and the presence of the Japanese naval force in Brunei Bay would have been at the very least, suspected.

At 2102 (it was received by COMCRUDIV SIXTEEN at this time) he received a dispatch from the Chief of Staff SW Area Force giving the considered opinion of that headquarters concerning the prospective operations of the SECOND Striking Force.\* This dispatch was of considerable interest to him as it indicated a persistence in the belief, expressed earlier that day,\*\* that CRUDIV TWENTY-ONE and DESRON ONE should participate in the decisive battle operations of the FIRST Striking Force, but here it took on increased significance because this dispatch now made the definite recommendation that the above units be transferred to his command for this purpose.\* If this recommendation became effective it clearly would require additional orders on his part. However, it seems probable that this dispatch did not unduly alarm him for it seems reasonable to assume that his planners in view of the possibility and even probability that the above units might be transferred to him, had already made additional plans to cover this contingency.

At 2115 the unit commanders of the FIRST Section assembled on the YAMATO in accordance with instructions from COMBATDIV ONE\*\*\* and completed arrangements for their part in the penetration operation. At this time they were briefed on the military situation in the Tacloban area by an officer from the FOURTEENTH Area Army who stressed the fact that the SIXTEENTH Army Division had been concentrated for defense and would be able to defend the area providing the enemy rear line (line of communications) could be cut. This point is of considerable importance here as it shows the reliance on sea power\*\*\*\* by the army units charged with the defense of Leyte.

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\* CofS SW Area Force Dispatch 211914 October 1944 to CinC Combined Fleet Commander 2ND Striking Force, COMCRUDIV 16, Chief 1ST Section Imperial General Headquarters (Navy Section), info to Commander 1ST Striking Force, Commanders 5TH and 6TH Base Air Forces, Detailed Action Report CRUDIV 16, SHO Operations, October 17th - 27th, 1944, WDC Document 161005, NA 11744.

\*\* CofS SW Area Force Dispatch 211322 October 1944 to Commanders 2ND Striking Force, CRUDIV 16, info to CinC Combined Fleet, Commander 1ST Striking Force, Commanders 5TH and 6TH Base Air Forces, etc., Detailed Action Report CRUDIV 16, SHO Operation, October 17th - 27th, 1944, WDC Document 161005, NA 11744.

\*\*\* COMBATDIV 1 Visual Dispatch 212016 October 1944 to 1ST Section, Detailed Action Report BATDIV 1, SHO No. 1 Operation, October 18th - 28th, 1944, WDC Document 161005, NA 11744.

\*\*\*\* Vice Admiral Matome Ugaki, IJN (COMBATDIV 1), Personal Diary SENSOROKU, Nippon Shuppan Kyodo Kabushiki Kaisha (Tokyo, March 15th, 1953), Volume II.



At 2122 COMCRUDIV FIVE advised his command that the aircraft from CRUDIV FIVE designated as shore-based reconnaissance units were assigned as follows:

(a) Second (Shore Based) Reconnaissance Unit: MYOKO, HAGURO -- one plane each; MOGAMI -- two planes.

(b) Third (Shore Based) Reconnaissance Unit: MYOKO, HAGURO -- one plane each.

(c) MOGAMI aircraft above will be launched as desired by the Commanding Officer MOGAMI and will transfer directly to San Jose (Mindoro Island.)\*

This order was based on FIRST Striking Force Written DesOpOrd No. 2 (not available to this analysis) which, although dated three days earlier, had only been received that day.\*\*

It seems clear from the dispatches that this DesOpOrd, among other items, established shore-based reconnaissance units at San Jose which units were to provide antisubmarine patrols for the FIRST Striking Force.

At 2400 the force was still refueling.\*\*\*

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- \* COMCRUDIV 5 Dispatch 212122 October 1944 to CRUDIV 5, Detailed Action Report No. 15, MYOKO, Battle off the Philippines (Anti-aircraft Action in Mindoro Sea), October 24th, 1944, WDC Document 161647.
- \*\* Commander 1ST Striking Force Written Order, October 18th, 1944, to 1ST Striking Force, War Diary CRUDIV 5, October 1944, WDC Document 161638, NA 11739.
- \*\*\* Detailed Action Report 1ST Striking Force, SHO Operations, October 16th - 28th, 1944, WDC Document 161641, NA 11839.

## (2) Operations of Commander Main Force, October 21st.

At 0000 Commander Main Force, who in No. One Alert Cruising Disposition was on course 140°(T) at twenty knots changed course to 180°(T).\* This was in accordance with his instructions to his command issued at 2145 the previous day.\*\*

At 0014 he reduced speed to eighteen knots.\*

At 0100 he received word that the oilers JINEI MARU and TAKANE MARU\*\*\* had been transferred to his command in accordance with Combined Fleet DesOpOrd No. 480.\*\*\*\* He also received Combined Fleet DesOpOrds Nos. 479 and 481 regarding the general movements of the supply ships.\*\*\*\*\*

By about 0400 (CRUDIV SIXTEEN received it at 0356) he likely learned that the sortie of the SECOND Striking Force for that morning had been cancelled.\*\*\*\*\*

Also at this time he received a dispatch from Commander Communication Force which stated, in effect, that it appeared most likely that the FIRST Striking Force had been discovered by Morotai-based enemy patrol

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- \* Track Chart, Detailed Action Report ZUIKAKU, SHO No. 1 Operation, October 20th - 25th, 1944, WDC Document 161008.
  - \*\* Commander Main Force Visual Dispatch 202145 October 1944 to Main Force, Detailed Action Report ZUIHO, SHO No. 1 Operation, October 20th - 25th, 1944, WDC Document 161008.
  - \*\*\* The JINEI MARU and TAKANE MARU (XAO's) were of 10,500 and 10,021 gross tons respectively with a cargo capacity of 100,000 barrels (42 gallon) for the former and 93,000 barrels for the latter. (Japanese Naval and Merchant Losses during World War II, Pages 73 and 74; also Japanese Merchant Ships Recognition Manual, (ONI 208J, Revised) Navy Department, Office of the Chief of Naval Operations, Page 272.)
  - \*\*\*\* CinC Combined Fleet Dispatch 201712 October 1944 to Commander Main Force (Combined Fleet DesOpOrd No. 480), Detailed Action Report Main Force, SHO No. 1 Operation, October 20th - 29th, 1944, WDC Document 161005, NA 11744.
  - \*\*\*\*\* CinC Combined Fleet Dispatches 201715 and 201745 October 1944 to Commander Main Force (Combined Fleet DesOpOrds Nos. 479 and 481), Detailed Action Report Main Force, SHO No. 1 Operation, October 20th - 29th, 1944, WDC Document 161005, NA 11744.
  - \*\*\*\*\* Commander 2ND Striking Force Dispatch 202340 October 1944 to CinC Combined Fleet, Commander Takao Guard District, info 1ST Striking Force, Main Force, 5TH and 6TH Base Air Forces, CRUDIV 16, Imperial GHQ (Navy Section), Detailed Action Report CRUDIV 16, SHO Operation, October 17th - 27th, 1944, WDC Document 161005, NA 11744.



planes.\* This dispatch was of considerable importance to him as it indicated clearly that the enemy was making strong efforts to avoid surprise. He realized that his operations might be affected thereby since it was likely that Allied air searches might be seeking to discover his command as well. Since it was his responsibility to draw as much Allied air power as possible away from the Leyte area in order that the strength of the Allied carrier-based air attacks against the FIRST Striking Force might be reduced, it became necessary to take every possible measure to avoid discovery at this early date, lest his "lure" effect be weakened thereby. In this connection, he stated that he hoped to be undetected until October 22nd or 23rd, at which time he planned to open up on radio for the purpose of luring.\*\*

At 0500 he commenced zigzagging, employing Type A zigzag plan which required a change of course at five minute intervals.\*\*\*

At 0600 he launched an antisubmarine patrol consisting of two carrier attack planes which covered\*\*\*\* an area sixty degrees on each side of the fleet axis to a radius of six kilometers.\*\*\*\*\* This patrol he maintained throughout the day. At this same time he placed four fighters and an attack unit of eight fighter-bombers, eight fighters and two attack planes on a No. Two Alert.\*\*\*\*\*

At 0618 he reduced speed to sixteen knots. He appears to have done this because, by this time, his antisubmarine patrol was on station and he properly felt that the submarine danger was thereby markedly reduced.

At 0620 he directed his command to prepare to make twenty knots on fifteen minutes notice.\*\*\*\*\*

About this time his command probably assumed the day's cruising disposition--No. Four Antiaircraft Alert Disposition (Plate XXXII). Although available records do not show specifically that this change in dispositions was made, subsequently the daily routine of the force did provide for the assumption of this disposition at about this time in the morning.

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- \* Commander Communication Force Dispatch 202329 October 1944 to CinC Combined Fleet, Commander 1ST Striking Force, info Main Force, SW Area Force, War Diary DESRON 10, October 1944, WDC Document 161638, NA 11739.
  - \*\* USSBS Interrogation of Japanese Officials, Nav No. 55, Interrogation of Vice Admiral Jisaburo Ozawa, IJN, Volume I, Page 221.
  - \*\*\* Detailed Action Report No. 2, OYODO, SHO No. 1 Operation, October 20th - 28th, 1944, WDC Document 161007.
  - \*\*\*\* Appendix One to Detailed Action Report Main Force, SHO No. 1 Operation, October 20th - 29th, 1944, WDC Document 161005, NA 11744.
  - \*\*\*\*\* Detailed Action Report No. 1 653rd Air Group, SHO Operation, October 20th - 25th, 1944, WDC Document 161004, NA 12605.
  - \*\*\*\*\* Detailed Action Report ZUIHO, SHO No. 1 Operation, October 20th - 25th, 1944, WDC Document 161008.

This defensive disposition is interesting in that it gives an insight into Japanese carrier force tactics at this stage of the war. It will be noted that it consists basically of two two-carrier task groups, each in a roughly circular disposition. It had been among those included in Commander Mobile Force's "Outline of Operations of the Task Force in SHO Operations" dated August 10th, 1944. In an addendum to this operation order, the Chief of Staff Mobile Force had seen fit to comment as follows: "Evasive action against bomb or torpedo attack when in circular formation will be carried out as follows: The carrier will take individual evasive action, and the other ships will follow it. In the forthcoming operations there will be a circular formation for every two carriers. In this case the carrier with the senior officer aboard will take individual evasive action, and the other ships will follow it. Repeated practice is regarded necessary for executing this action. Therefore, so long as training is insufficient, an emergency simultaneous change of course will be relied on."\*

This comment is important because it indicates that Commander Mobile Force (a) felt that two-carrier task groups were as large as he could handle as a unit under air attack, (b) anticipated some trouble in maneuvering even the two-carrier group(s), and (c) in spite of the anticipated difficulty in maneuvering, deemed this better tactics than separating into one group per carrier which was the method dealt with at greatest length in his standing orders.\*\*

In contrast, U. S. naval practice at this same time generally involved operating four-carrier groups relying upon, for defense against aircraft attack:

"(a) Most effective fighter direction and coverage.

"(b) Maximum antiaircraft fire from all weapons.

"(c) Mutual support between heavy ships and of heavy ships by the screen.

"(d) Effective avoiding maneuvers under broad control by the officer in tactical command, with ships at foci of attacks supplementing signaled maneuvers as required."\*\*\*

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\* Statement of CofS on Task Force Operations in the SHO Operations, Task Force Top Secret Serial 1003, August 10th, 1944, ATIS Document No. 39, Part I, April 22nd, 1945 (NACHI Document).

\*\* Mobile Force Standing Order No. 17, August 23rd, 1944, Section VII, Standard Procedure for Evading Torpedo and Bombing Attacks, ATIS Document No. 39, Part III, May 10th, 1945 (NACHI Document).

\*\*\* Current Tactical Orders and Doctrine, U.S. Fleet (USF 10A), U.S. Fleet Headquarters of the Commander in Chief, Navy Department, 1944, Paragraph 4510.



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The relegation of maneuver to the last priority in U.S. tactics appears to have been because of the tremendous advances in the development of radar and anti-aircraft weapons.

\* \* \*

The battle lesson resulting from the above discussion is, in general, the same as that developed under the discussion of Main Force No. 1 Alert Cruising Disposition under "Operations of Commander Main Force, October 20th."

At 0700, in Latitude 29°-50'N, Longitude 134°-26'E, he launched a nine-plane search consisting of six carrier-type attack planes from the ZUIKAKU and three from the ZUIHO. These planes were directed to search an arc 104°(T) to 230°(T), to a radius varying from 280 miles to 370 miles with 178°(T) as the base search line.\*

Also at 0700 he received Commander Advance Expeditionary Force DesOpOrd No. One directing the deployment and disposition of the submarines of the "A" and "B" Groups.\*\* This was of little concern to him at this moment since these deployments were to be south of Latitude 14°N and his present plans called for him to proceed to the eastward of Luzon Straits\*\*\* (mean Latitude about 20°-00'N).

At 0705, somewhat ahead of time, he changed course to 205°(T).

At 0851 a member of his staff (likely the staff engineer) informed the Main Force that during the night SUGI's boiler room oil filters had clogged, stopping her main engines and all other machinery and cautioning all ships to carry out the cleaning of oil filters, at the same time exercising care to prevent salt water from entering the oil tanks.\*\*\*\* THIS INCIDENT IS INSERTED HERE BECAUSE IT SEEMS TO BE A REVEALING SIDELIGHT ON THE STATE OF TRAINING OF ENGINEERING FORCE PERSONNEL AFTER THREE YEARS OF WAR.

At about 0900 he received a contact report from his search planes on two surfaced submarines, one in Latitude 25°-00'N, Longitude 133°-20'E,

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- \* Detailed Action Report 653rd Air Group, October 20th - 25th, 1944, WDC Document 161004, NA 12605; also Detailed Action Report ZUIKAKU, SHO No. 1 Operation, October 20th - 25th, 1944, WDC Document 161008.
- \*\* Commander Advance Expeditionary Force Dispatch 202053 October 1944 to Advance Expeditionary Force, all fleet and squadron commanders Combined Fleet, Detailed Action Report BATDIV 1, SHO No. 1 Operation, October 18th - 28th, 1944, WDC Document 161005, NA 11744.
- \*\*\* CofS Main Force Dispatch 200930 October 1944 to all commands, Detailed Action Report No. 2, OYODO, SHO No. 1 Operation, October 20th - 28th, 1944, WDC Document 161007.
- \*\*\*\* ZUIKAKU (Commander Main Force) Visual Dispatch 210851 October 1944 to Main Force, Detailed Action Report ZUIHO, SHO No. 1 Operation, October 20th - 25th, 1944, WDC Document 161008.

and one in Latitude 24°-40'N, Longitude 133°-20'E. He noted that one submarine had been identified as friendly while the other had been unidentified.\* However, since (a) he knew that six submarines (I-38, 41, 44, 46, 53, RO-43) had departed Bungo Suido on October 18th and 19th,\*\* and were likely on a southerly course, and (b) the unidentified submarine was along his general track, which was also southerly, he appears to have decided that it likewise was friendly, for he took no action.\*

At 0930 he issued instructions concerning radar guard.\*\*\*

Also at 0930 he received a report from the Commanding Officer CHITOSE that a floating mine had been sighted\*\*\*\* and a recommendation that the Main Force maintain an alert against floating mines.\*\*\*\*\*

At 1030 he issued instructions for the radio deception to be employed later wherein he pointed out that (a) several lengthy dispatches would be sent employing different call signals and as far as possible, different transmitters for each dispatch, (b) ten or more dispatches would be sent relative to aircraft movements and security, employing different codes, etc., in order to create the impression the carriers were operating and (c) indirect communication would be carried out between OYODO and one carrier of CARDIV FOUR.\*\*\*\*\*

During the forenoon he (a) received a dispatch\*\*\*\*\* announcing the possible transmission of false messages from Eastern Radio Number One (Tokyo Radio) in an effort to increase the effectiveness of his radio deception measures (since the procedures had already been set up, this message was a precautionary message to other commands to be on the alert for false

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- \* Detailed Action Report Main Force, SHO No. 1 Operation, October 20th - 29th, 1944, WDC Document 161005, NA 11744.
  - \*\* Japanese Monograph No. 184, Submarine Operations in the Third Phase Operations, September 1944 - February 1945, GHQ, FEC, Military History Section, Japanese Research Division, August 23rd, 1954.
  - \*\*\* Commander Main Force Visual Dispatch 210930 October 1944 to Main Force (Main Force SigOrd No. 5), Detailed Action Report ZUIKAKU, SHO No. 1 Operation, October 20th - 25th, 1944, WDC Document 161008.
  - \*\*\*\* Detailed Action Report CHITOSE, SHO No. 1 Operation, October 20th - 25th, 1944, WDC Document 161008.
  - \*\*\*\*\* CHITOSE Visual Dispatch 210935 October 1944 to Main Force, Detailed Action Report ZUIHO, SHO No. 1 Operation, October 20th - 25th, 1944, WDC Document 161008.
  - \*\*\*\*\* Commander Main Force Visual Dispatch 211030 October 1944 to Main Force, Detailed Action Report ZUIHO, SHO No. 1 Operation, October 20th - 25th, 1944, WDC Document 161008.
  - \*\*\*\*\* Commander 1ST Combined Communication Unit Dispatch 211002 October 1944 to Communications Officer Main Force, info Combined Fleet Commanders, Detailed Action Report ZUIHO, SHO No. 1 Operation, October 20th - 25th, 1944, WDC Document 161008.

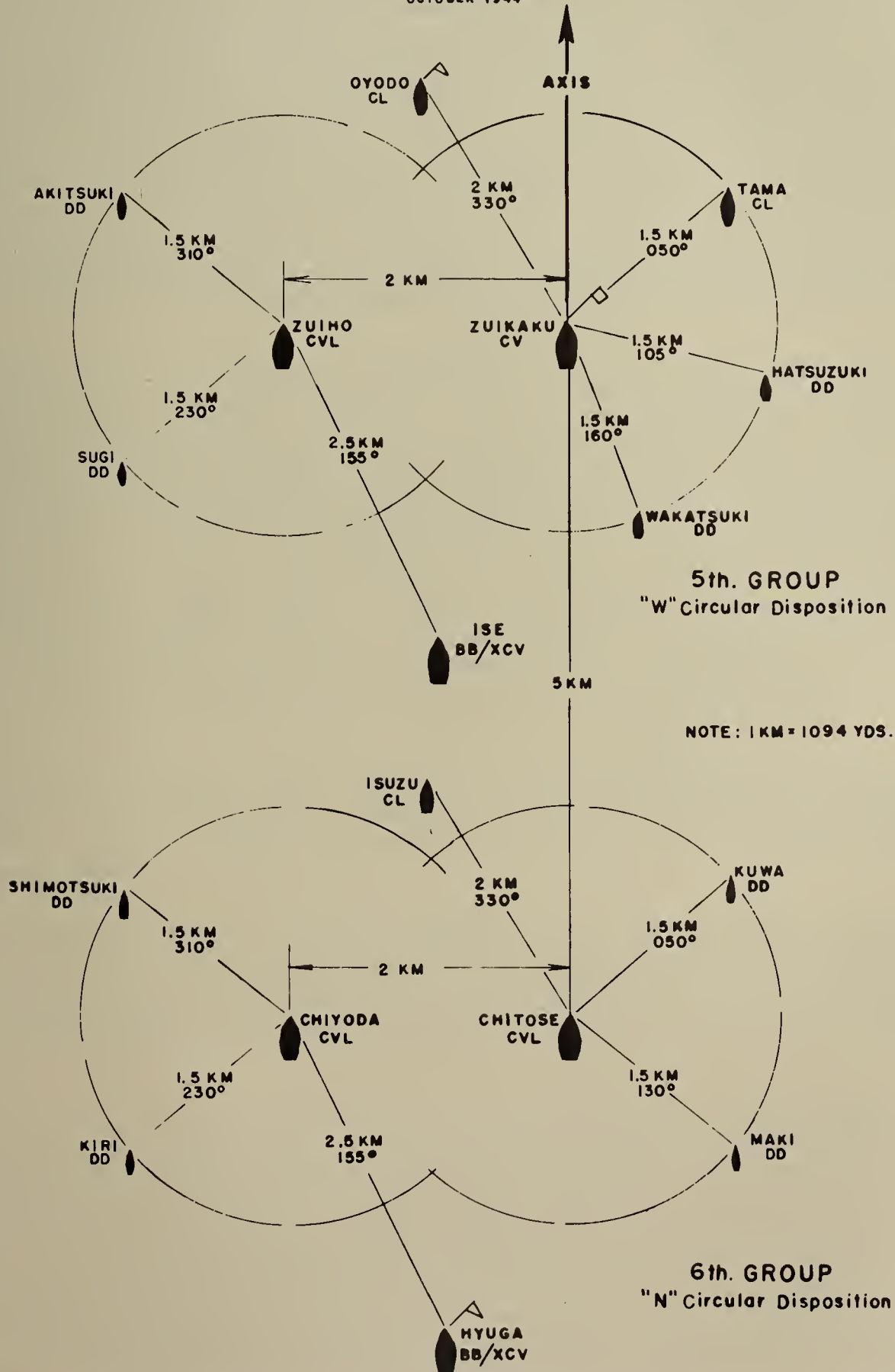


### MAIN FORCE NO.4 ALERT CRUISING DISPOSITION

(EMPLOYED FOR AA ALERT & APPROACH)

DETAILED ACTION REPORT ISE, SHO NO.1 OPERATION, OCTOBER 28TH, 1944

BATTLE FOR LEYTE GULF  
OCTOBER 1944







dispatches) and (b) received a confirmation\* from CinC Combined Fleet confirming X-day as October 25th and Y-day as October 24th.

THE ABOVE DISPATCHES (INCLUDING THAT ISSUED BY COMMANDER MOBILE FORCE ON THE PREVIOUS DAY WHEREIN HE STATED THAT IT MIGHT BE NECESSARY, IN ORDER TO DIVERT AND LURE THE ENEMY, FOR THE OYODO AND ONE CARDIV FOUR SHIP TO CARRY OUT RADIO DECEPTION)\*\* SHOW RATHER WELL HOW, THROUGH SUCH CONTROLLED RADIO DECEPTION, COMMANDER MAIN FORCE HOPED TO ACCOMPLISH HIS DIVERSION OBJECTIVE WITH THE MAIN FORCE ONLY. THE BASIS OF THE PLAN APPEARS TO HAVE BEEN THE EXPECTATION THAT, BY THE TRANSMISSION OF DUMMY DISPATCHES RELATING TO AIRCRAFT MOVEMENTS AND SECURITY, HE WOULD BE ABLE (A) TO CREATE THE IMPRESSION IN THE ALLIED COMMANDS CONCERNED THAT ENEMY CARRIERS OR OTHER STRONG FORCES WERE OPERATING IN THE AREA TO THE NORTH OR NORTHEASTWARD OF THE PHILIPPINES AND (B) THEREBY TO DECOY SUCH ALLIED FORCES INTO THAT AREA AND AWAY FROM THE PHILIPPINES, THUS REDUCING THE OPPOSITION THAT THE FIRST STRIKING FORCE WOULD LIKELY ENCOUNTER IN ITS MOVEMENT TO THE OBJECTIVE AREA.

Also during the forenoon he received certain contact reports on enemy ships as shown on Plate XXIX. Of these contacts those of most importance to him were the more northerly contacts, i.e., (a) the 202325 radio direction finder fix on a powerful task force of twenty ships east of Lamon Bay (Contact A), (b) the 0012 radio direction finder fix 220 miles east of San Bernardino Strait (Contact B), (c) the 0920 contact on surface ships bearing 091°(T), distant 420 miles from Manila (Contact G), (d) the 0935 contact on one battleship and twenty-four other ships bearing 350°(T), distant 160 miles from Suluan Island, which placed it about eighty miles to the northeastward of San Bernardino Strait (Contact I) and (e) at 1040 a large force bearing 070°(T), distant fifty-four miles from Catanduanes Island (Contact J). His interest in these contacts lay in the fact that it was most likely these units which he would be called upon to divert to the north and east.

At 1202, in approximate position 29°-05'N, 133°-59'E, his flagship, the ZUIKAKU, detected torpedo noises on bearing 220°. All ships immediately took evasive action and some in accordance with his orders, dropped depth charges with unknown results.\*\*\*

Since there were no Allied submarines in this area and since any Japanese submarines would likely have identified this force as Japanese because of the peculiar construction of the ISE and HYUGA, it is assumed that the torpedo noises heard were not torpedo noises at all but, if anything, were noises made by a black fish or a whale.

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\* CinC Combined Fleet Dispatch 211031 October 1944 to Combined Fleet Commanders, Detailed Action Report ZUIHO, SHO No. 1 Operation, October 20th - 25th, 1944, WDC Document 161008.

\*\* CofS Mobile Force Dispatch 201630 October 1944 to CinC Combined Fleet, Detailed Action Report KUWA, Battle off the Philippines, October 20th - 26th, 1944, WDC Document 161717, NA 11801.

\*\*\* Detailed Action Report ZUIKAKU, SHO No. 1 Operation, October 20th - 25th, 1944, WDC Document 161008; also Detailed Action Report ZUIHO, SHO No. 1 Operation, October 20th - 25th, 1944, WDC Document 161008.



Probably about 1300 he received a precautionary dispatch\* from the Chief of Staff SW Area Force warning addressees that the enemy B-24 reconnaissance attack range had been extended to Puerto Princesa and San Jose (Mindoro) and to be alert. Since the Main Force was far to the north of this search area he was not concerned, but it likely confirmed his previous estimate that the Allied searches were becoming broader and therefore increasingly dangerous.

He continued on the base course of 205°(T) during the afternoon. At 1412, a submarine having been reported in the vicinity of Latitude 28°-55'N, Longitude 133°-45'E (about thirty miles west of the force), he directed the CHITOSE to launch two carrier attack planes to patrol the area until sunset\*\*

During the early afternoon he received a 1330 contact report which amplified the 1040 report (Contact J) and declared that it consisted, among other units, of four carriers, five battleships and twenty-two others.\*\*\*

At 1423 he informed his command that no further searches would be conducted that day.\*\*\*\* Undoubtedly, this decision was arrived at after having received Commander Western Attack Force TWO's dispatch of 1100, wherein that commander directed (a) the Okinawa-based aircraft to fly an antisubmarine patrol for the Main Force between Latitudes 27°N and 22°N searching one day's run ahead of the force along its track and (b) a two-plane local A/S patrol be flown during daylight.\*\*\*\*\*

At 1425 he advised the command that he feared that one of his scouting planes had had a forced landing, bearing 180°(T) and directed the SHIMOTSUKI to proceed at once to render assistance.\*\*\*\*\*

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- \* CofS SW Area Force Dispatch 211231 October 1944 to Main Force, 6TH Base Air Force, DESRON 11, Main Force, War Diary ZUIHO, October 1st - 25th, 1944, WDC Document 161636, NA 11973.
  - \*\* Commander Main Force Visual Dispatch 211412 October 1944 to Main Force, Detailed Action Report ZUIKAKU, SHO No. 1 Operation, October 20th - 25th, 1944, WDC Document 161008.
  - \*\*\* Daily Record of the War Situation, 4TH Air Army, GHQ, FEC, Special Historical Collection, Supporting Documents to General of the Army Douglas MacArthur's Historical Report on Allied Operations in the Southwest Pacific Area (Item 4, Footlocker 10 of 10, SWPA Series, Volume II).
  - \*\*\*\* Commander Main Force Visual Dispatch 211423 October 1944 to Main Force, Detailed Action Report ZUIHO, SHO No. 1 Operation, October 20th - 25th, 1944, WDC Document 161008.
  - \*\*\*\*\* Commander Western Attack Force TWO Telephone Dispatch 211100 October 1944 to Okinawa Air Group and 4TH Escort Force, (Western Attack Force TWO SigDesOrd No. 1), Detailed Action Report No. 2, 5TH Attack Unit (752nd Air Group), October 22nd - 29th, 1944, WDC Document 161004, NA 12605.
  - \*\*\*\*\* Commander Main Force Visual Dispatch 211425 October 1944 to Main Force, Detailed Action Report ZUIKAKU, SHO No. 1 Operation, October 20th - 25th, 1944, WDC Document 161008.



About this time he received, as an information addressee, a dispatch from Commander SW Area Force directing the SECOND Striking Force to advance to Manila by early morning October 23rd at the latest.\*

This was of importance to him for not only had he been informed on October 19th that the SECOND Striking Force might be returned to the Main Force, but he had on October 20th issued instructions to his command and presumably also to Commander SECOND Striking Force, wherein he had prescribed the plan to be followed after the return of that force to his command. In this plan the SECOND Striking Force was to act as a lure to divert the Allied carriers to the northwest and the Main Force was then to strike the carriers from the flank.\*\*

This was a great change from his present plan which, it will be recalled, provided for the Main Force to act as a lure to divert the enemy to the north and if a favorable opportunity arose to attack and destroy him.

While it is not believed that at this relatively late hour (he had already sortied) he had placed much reliance on the chance that the SECOND Striking Force might be returned to him, nevertheless he could not completely ignore the possibility. However, he now knew that unless these orders were changed the SECOND Striking Force would not be returned to him for this force could not be east of Luzon Strait and in Manila Bay on the same day (X-2); and therefore, the difficult task of diverting the Allied carrier forces to the north would fall on the Main Force alone.

By this time he had received a 1400 radio direction finder fix on a task force 200 miles east of Lamon Bay (Contact L).

He could now estimate the contacts in which he had primary interest to be: Three task forces fixed by radio, two groups of surface ships (sighted visually) to the northeastward of San Bernardino Strait, plus one four-carrier task group off Catanduanes Island.

While his estimate of the composition of the task groups fixed by radio direction finder is not known, it seems probable, in view of the fact that two of these task groups were considered large or powerful, that he estimated them to consist of three-four carriers and estimated the other to consist of perhaps one to two carriers or a total among these three groups of from seven to ten carriers. This total when included with the four carriers which had been sighted off San Bernardino Strait, would have given him an estimated total of from eleven to fourteen carriers north of Leyte.

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\* Commander SW Area Force Dispatch 211251 October 1944 to Commanders 2ND Striking Force, CRUDIV 16, info 6TH Base Air Force (SW Area Force DesOpOrd No. 678), Detailed Action Report KINU, SHO No. 1 Operation, October 18th - 26th, 1944, WDC Document 161007.

\*\* Commander Mobile Force Dispatch 200021 October 1944 to Mobile Force (Mobile Force DesOpOrd No. 62), Detailed Action Report Main Force, SHO No. 1 Operation, October 20th - 29th, 1944, WDC Document 161005, NA 11744.

At 1500 the CHITOSE launched the two carrier planes ordered for the antisubmarine patrol. However, since one plane crashed on take off the patrol was conducted by the remaining plane only.\*

Sometime in the afternoon, as an information addressee, he most likely received a dispatch from Chief of Staff SW Area Force to Commander SECOND Striking Force wherein the chief of staff listed various movements of army forces.\*\* He was most interested in that part of this dispatch where it stated that in the opinion of Commander SW Area Force CRUDIV TWENTY-ONE and DESRON ONE should carry out a penetration attack through Surigao Strait in coordination with the attack by the FIRST Striking Force, since it tended to confirm his feeling that the SECOND Striking Force would not be returned to him.

A short time later he received a dispatch in which Commander SW Area Force assumed command of all naval air forces assembled in the area and assigned tasks to SW Area Force units.\*\*\*

At 1530 he learned from a THIRTY-THIRD Special Base Force dispatch\*\*\*\* that according to army intelligence reports the enemy had apparently landed on Rapu Rapu Island\*\*\*\*\* (Rapu Rapu lies north of San Bernardino Strait, about twenty-five miles east of Legaspi).

This report was of considerable interest to him because it indicated landing operations in the vicinity of San Bernardino Strait. However, since he already knew of Allied carriers and surface forces in this area and since his own problem was not at the moment adversely affected thereby, he decided to do nothing. It seems likely that he wondered why the Allies were seizing this small mountainous island which appeared to be of no military consequence.

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- \* Detailed Action Report CHITOSE, SHO No. 1 Operation, October 20th - 25th, 1944, WDC Document 161008.
  - \*\* CofS SW Area Force Dispatch 211322 October 1944 to 2ND Striking Force, COMCRUDIV 16, info CinC Combined Fleet, 1ST Striking Force, Main Force, Imperial GHQ (Navy Section), Detailed Action Report CRUDIV 16, SHO Operation, October 17th - 27th, 1944, WDC Document 161005, NA 11744.
  - \*\*\* Commander SW Area Force Dispatch 211345 October 1944 to Commanders 5TH and 6TH Base Air Forces, 954th and 955th Air Groups, info Commanders 1ST and 2ND Striking Forces, Main Force, Detailed Action Report 1ST Striking Force, SHO Operations, October 16th - 28th, 1944, WDC Document 161641, NA 11839.
  - \*\*\*\* The 33RD Special Base Force, a part of the Philippines Force, was located in the Cebu Area (HQ, USAFFE, Military History Section, letter October 27th, 1954, to President, Naval War College — Enclosure 1).
  - \*\*\*\*\* 33RD Special Base Force Dispatch 211250 October 1944, addressees unknown, Detailed Action Report Main Force, SHO No. 1 Operation, October 20th - 29th, 1944, WDC Document 161005, NA 11744.



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During the day Commander Main Force studied the tentative plan proposed by the Chief of Staff Combined Fleet\* which had been received at 1730 the previous evening. He likely examined the implications of this proposal, comparing it with the combat methods prescribed in the Mobile Force basic plan for the SHO Operation. (It will be recalled that this latter plan, as has been mentioned in Volume II,\*\* included five combat tactical methods,\*\*\* anyone of which might be employed.)

He could readily see that the second of these five methods; i.e., Method OTSU, which provided that "The Main Force will divide into two units for the operation. A detachment will be assigned to carry out a diversionary movement in order to facilitate the overall operation.", more nearly matched the above tentative plan proposed by the Chief of Staff Combined Fleet. However, he could also see that the OTSU plan differed from the tentative plan primarily in that whereas (a) in the OTSU plan the division of the Main Force was intended to effect a diversion, (b) in the tentative plan the division was not to occur until after the diversionary operations had been completed and was then to destroy enemy remnants.

Since he (a) had been advised to keep the tentative plan in mind and (b) realized that COMCARDIV FOUR should prepare the necessary plans, he wisely decided to inform his command thereon.

Accordingly, at 1605 his Chief of Staff (a) informed the force that depending on the results of air operations scheduled for the 24th, CARDIV FOUR (HYUGA, ISE) and the four large destroyers comprising DESDIV's FORTY-ONE and SIXTY-ONE might be ordered to the area east of Samar to destroy remnants of the enemy in coordination with the attack on that area by the FIRST Striking Force and (b) directed COMCARDIV FOUR to prepare the necessary plans in case such an operation was ordered.\*\*\*\* This was the same operation referred to the previous day by the Chief of Staff Combined Fleet,\*\*\*\*\* who visualized an opportunity to utilize the fourteen-inch guns of the HYUGA and ISE.\*\*\*\*\*

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- \* CofS Combined Fleet Dispatch 201412 October 1944 to CofS Main Force, Detailed Action Report Main Force, SHO No. 1 Operation, October 20th - 29th, 1944, WDC Document 161005, NA 11744.
- \*\* Volume II, Battle for Leyte Gulf (NavPers 92194), Naval War College, 1955, Chapter VI, (A), Operations of CinC Combined Fleet.
- \*\*\* Mobile Force Operation Order No. 76, August 10th, 1944, Section IV, Combat Methods, Page 12, ATIS Document No. 39, Part I, April 22nd, 1945 (NACHI Document).
- \*\*\*\* CofS Main Force Visual Dispatch 211605 October 1944 to Main Force, Detailed Action Report ZUIKAKU, SHO No. 1 Operation, October 20th - 25th, 1944, WDC Document 161008.
- \*\*\*\*\* CofS Combined Fleet Dispatch 201412 October 1944 to CofS Main Force, Detailed Action Report ZUIKAKU, SHO No. 1 Operation, October 20th - 25th, 1944, WDC Document 161008.
- \*\*\*\*\* Japanese Naval Vessels at the End of the War, April 25th, 1945, Administrative Division, Second Demobilization Bureau (Compiled by Shizuo Fukui, Constructor Lieutenant Commander, ex-IJN).

IT IS OF INTEREST THAT THIS CONCEPT OF TEMPORARILY DETACHING FROM THE CARRIER FORCE CERTAIN OF THE HEAVY SURFACE SHIPS SUPPORTED BY LIGHTER CRAFT TO CARRY OUT SURFACE SHIP OPERATIONS WAS STRIKINGLY SIMILAR TO THAT EMPLOYED BY COMTHIRDFLT IN THE ESTABLISHMENT OF TF 34 AND TG 34.5, DISCUSSED LATER IN THIS ANALYSIS.

At 1700 the CHITOSE carrier attack plane on antisubmarine patrol returned having made no contacts.\*

At 1710, after notifying the Main Force that an enemy ultra short wave radio transmission had been intercepted, he directed all ships to enforce radio discipline.\*\*

At 1730 his staff issued preparatory fueling orders for fueling the next day, which called for the TAMA to be fueled from the ZUIKAKU, ISUZU from the CHITOSE, SUGI from the ZUIHO, KIRI from the OYODO, KUWA and MAKI from the CHIYODA. However, a short time later (1810) these plans were cancelled for reasons unknown to this study.

At 1800 he issued his air operations plan for the 22nd. It provided for (a) a search departing at 0530 by six planes from the ZUIKAKU and three from the CHITOSE (with base line 200°(T)), (b) an antisubmarine patrol of two planes from the CHIYODA from 0530 - 1200 and two from the CHITOSE from 1200 - 1400 to augment that provided by shore-based aircraft, (c) the attack group planes to be on No. Two Alert from 0530 until 1000 and (d) a four-plane CAP to be on alert from 0530 until sunset (0530 - 1200, ZUIKAKU and 1200 - sunset, ZUIHO).\*\*\*

At 1807 (it was received by BATDIV ONE at this time) he received, as an information addressee, a dispatch from Commander SECOND Striking Force wherein that commander advised the various commands that the SECOND Striking Force planned to depart Mako on that day and to arrive at the entrance to Manila Bay at about 0700 October 23rd.\*\*\*\* If he had had any lingering hopes that this unit would return to his command, this dispatch clearly dispelled them. He was on his own!

Indicative of the state of training of the air group, the following losses were sustained as a result of the day's air operations: (a) of the

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- \* Detailed Action Report CHITOSE, SHO No. 1 Operation, October 20th - 25th, 1944, WDC Document 161008.
  - \*\* Commander Main Force Visual Dispatch 211710 October 1944 to Main Force, Detailed Action Report ISUZU, Battle off the Philippines, October 20th - 29th, 1944, WDC Document 161007.
  - \*\*\* Commander Main Force Visual Dispatch 211800 October 1944 to Main Force (Main Force SigOrd No. 8), Detailed Action Report ZUIKAKU, SHO No. 1 Operation, October 20th - 25th, 1944, WDC Document 161008.
  - \*\*\*\* Commander 2ND Striking Force Dispatch 211455 October 1944 to Commander SW Area Force, War Diary BATDIV 1, October 1944, WDC Document 161638, NA 11739.



nine planes which had conducted his morning search, one had made a forced landing on Okinawa and one, unable to locate its carrier, had made a forced landing in the water;\* (b) of the two planes which had been launched from the CHITOSE about 1500, one had crashed on take off due to engine trouble;\*\* and (c) one plane crash-landed on the ZUIKAKU.\*\*\* This was a loss of three aircraft for the day from twenty-one sorties, a casualty rate of fourteen per cent. It reduced the number of aircraft within the Main Force from 116 to 113 which was not an auspicious beginning for a command where every aircraft carried was at a premium and bears out the statement of the Senior Staff Officer Main Force that many of his pilots were incompletely trained.\*\*\*\* With respect to the plane which crash-landed on ZUIKAKU, the absence of any statement concerning its loss leads one to believe that it was salvaged and could be made serviceable. It is interesting to note that Commander Main Force omitted any mention of the loss of the CHITOSE attack plane.\*\*\*\*\*

At 1830 he directed his command that commencing at 0600 on the following morning No. One Radar Alert and No. Three Sonar Alert were to be in effect.\*\*\*\*\*

Sometime during the day he received information that fourteen to fifteen battleships and cruisers and eighty transports were in Leyte Gulf.\*\*\*\*\*

At 1915 he received word from the ISUZU that since 1750 she had had a continuous submarine contact on bearing 005°(T), signal strength five#\*\*\*\*\* What this was is not known as there were no Allied submarines in the vicinity. However, since the contact, if true, was to the north and since he was heading south at sixteen knots, he took no action even though the signal was strong. It is assumed that he decided that he did not wish to

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- \* Detailed Action Report, SHO No. 1 Operation, 653rd Air Group, October 20th - 25th, 1944, WDC Document 161004, NA 12605.
  - \*\* War Diary CHITOSE, October 1st - 31st, 1944, WDC Document 161636.
  - \*\*\* War Diary ISUZU, October 1st - 31st, 1944, WDC Document 161638, NA 11973.
  - \*\*\*\* Letter from Captain Toshikazu Ohmae, ex-IJN (former Senior Staff Officer Main Force) to Mr. Clarke H. Kawakami, World War II Battle Evaluation Group, Naval War College about May 23rd, 1952.
  - \*\*\*\*\* Detailed Action Report Main Force, SHO No. 1 Operation, October 20th - 29th, 1944, WDC Document 161005, NA 11744.
  - \*\*\*\*\* Commander Main Force Visual Dispatch 211830 October 1944 to Main Force (Main Force SigOrd No. 9), Detailed Action Report ZUIKAKU, SHO No. 1 Operation, October 20th - 25th, 1944, WDC Document 161008.
  - \*\*\*\*\* Appended Chart II, Enemy Fleet Dispositions on October 21st, 1944, Detailed Action Report Main Force, SHO No. 1 Operation, October 20th - 29th, 1944, WDC Document 161005, NA 11744.
  - \*\*\*\*\* Commanding Officer ISUZU Visual Dispatch 211915 October 1944 to Main Force, Detailed Action Report KUWA, Battle off the Philippines, October 20th - 26th, 1944, WDC Document 161717, NA 11801.



dispatch destroyers from his disposition to investigate this for the sound reasons that (a) the fuel expenditures in rejoining and (b) the possibility of being forced to break radio silence to guide the destroyers back to the disposition were both unacceptable.

It seems that possibly at 2102 (it was received by COMCRUDIV SIXTEEN at this time) he received, as an information addressee, a dispatch from the Chief of Staff SW Area Force to CinC Combined Fleet wherein that commander stated, among other things, that it was the opinion of SW Area Force headquarters that CRUDIV TWENTY-ONE and DESRON ONE, under command of Commander FIRST Striking Force, should participate in the decisive battle operations of the FIRST Striking Force and execute a penetration through Surigao Strait.\*

At 2130 he received Commander SW Area Force's 211345 wherein that commander outlined the operational policy of the SW Area Force after the SIXTH Base Air Force had moved to the Philippines.\*\* This dispatch concerned him greatly as it indicated, in general, the broad employment of the FIFTH and SIXTH Base Air Forces and, in particular, stressed the air strikes against Allied carriers and invasion forces which had always been the basic factor in the SHO One plan\*\*\* and which had been emphasized on the previous day by CinC Combined Fleet.\*\*\*\*

At 2300 he received a dispatch from Commander Supply Force which informed him that his oilers would be departing on schedule, of their prospective movements, and of the expected composition of the supply groups on sortie.\*\*\*\*\* This information was of considerable importance because it affected his freedom of action.

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\* CofS SW Area Force Dispatch 211914 October 1944 to CinC Combined Fleet, Commanders 2ND Striking Force, CRUDIV 16, etc., info Commanders 1ST Striking Force, 5TH and 6TH Base Air Forces, Main Force, Detailed Action Report CRUDIV 16, SHO Operation, October 17th - 27th, 1944, WDC Document 161005, NA 11744.

\*\* Commander SW Area Force Dispatch 211345 October 1944 to Commanders 5TH and 6TH Base Air Forces, 954th and 955th Air Groups, 1ST and 2ND Striking Forces, Main Force (SW Area Force DesOpOrd No. 679), Detailed Action Report Main Force, SHO No. 1 Operation, October 20th - 29th, 1944, WDC Document 161005, NA 11744.

\*\*\* Mobile Force Operation Order No. 76, August 10th, 1944, ATIS Document No. 39, Part I, April 22nd, 1945. (NACHI Document)

\*\*\*\* CinC Combined Fleet Dispatch 200813 October 1944 to Combined Fleet, CinC Southern Army, Imperial GHQ (Navy Section), China Area Fleet, etc., (Combined Fleet DesOpOrd No. 363), War Diary BATDIV 1, October 1944, WDC Document 161638, NA 11739.

\*\*\*\*\* Commander Main Force Supply Force Dispatch 211505 October 1944 to Commander Main Force, CinC Combined Fleet, etc., Detailed Action Report Main Force, Supply Force, October 21st - November 1st, 1944, WDC Document 161008.



At 2400 the force, still on course 205°(T), approximate speed sixteen knots, was in the vicinity of Latitude 26°-40'N, Longitude 133°-00'E, or about 275 miles east of Okinawa.\*

(a) Operations of Commander Main Force Supply Force, October 21st.\*\*

At 1505 Commander Supply Force having completed his estimate of the situation issued instructions to his command wherein he directed in part that (a) the FIRST Supply Group (TAKANE MARU and ESCORTS Nos. 22, 29 and 33) was to move from Tokuyama\*\*\* to arrive Koniya\*\*\*\* October 23rd, (b) the SECOND Supply Group (JINEI MARU, AKIKAZE and ESCORTS Nos. 31, 43 and 132) was to depart Kure on October 23rd to arrive at Amami O Shima October 25th and (c) advised both supply groups to take adequate antisubmarine precautions.\*\*\*\*\*

(1) Operations of Commander FIRST Supply Group.

At 2100 Commander FIRST Supply Group in Escort No. 33 with the FIRST Supply Group (TAKANE MARU, Escorts 22, 29 and 33) departed Tokuyama, where the TAKANE MARU had taken on a bulk cargo of fuel oil, and proceeding at thirteen knots through the Inland Sea, headed for Bungo Suido which he expected to transit during the night. He was en route to Koniya, where he was scheduled to arrive at 1500 October 23rd and where he was to fuel the Main Force.

(2) Operations of Commander SECOND Supply Group.

During this day Commander SECOND Supply Group, in the AKIKAZE with the SECOND Supply Group (JINEI MARU, AKIKAZE, Escorts Nos. 31, 43 and 132), remained at Kure where he was completing preparations for sortie. It seems probable that prior to arriving at Kure he had first fueled at Tokuyama since he had been originally ordered there.

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- \* Appended Track Chart, Detailed Action Report ZUIHO, SHO No. 1 Operation, October 20th - 25th, 1944, WDC Document 161008.
- \*\* Detailed Action Report Main Force Supply Force, October 21st - November 1st, 1944, WDC Document 161008.
- \*\*\* Tokuyama in SW Honshu in the Inland Sea, was the site of a naval fuel depot.
- \*\*\*\* Koniya is the principal village in SW Amami O Shima. It is on the northern shore of O Shima Channel and about three miles from its eastern entrance.
- \*\*\*\*\* Commander Main Force Supply Force Dispatch 211505 October 1944 to Commander Main Force, CinC Combined Fleet, etc., Detailed Action Report Main Force Supply Force, October 21st - November 1st, WDC Document 161008.

## (3) Operations of Commander Advance Expeditionary Force, October 21st.

One submarine, the RO-46, departed the Inland Sea during the day for the Philippine area.\* With the sailing of this submarine, a total of eleven submarines (I-26, 38, 41, 45, 46, 53, 54, 56, RO-41, 43, 46) were now en route to or in the Philippine area with orders to deploy to the eastward of the Philippines in a manner shown in Plate XXVI. One or more were sighted by aircraft of the Main Force during the day while proceeding on the surface,\*\* and one was sighted at 1712 by the Allied submarine BARBEL in approximate position Latitude 23°-00'N, Longitude 132°-00'E.\*\*\* Other than the above, the submarines do not appear to have made any contacts or attacks during the day.

## (4) Operations of Commander SIXTH Base Air Force, October 21st.

At midnight Commander SIXTH Base Air Force was in his Takao headquarters awaiting contacts from the night search being made by his radar-equipped planes of the 901st Air Group operating from Toko. He was alert to the possibility that a part of the Allied "task force" might return to Formosa and launch a surprise attack against his forces concentrated there.

His searches from Toko show clearly that he (a) feared such carrier strikes and (b) realized that they were an Allied capability of considerable danger to himself and probably wondered why it was that so far he had been permitted to operate in the Formosa area with perfect freedom of action for the past week and had been allowed to reorganize and reinforce his command with no interference whatsoever.

At 0013 he advised his command by dispatch that the (a) SIXTH Base Air Force would execute night attacks from Formosa airfields on October 22nd, (b) flying units would move up to the Philippines on the same day, and (c) general offensive was tentatively scheduled for October 23rd.\*\*\*\*

At 0046 his chief of staff informed Commander Western Attack Force ONE in Kyushu by dispatch\*\*\*\*\* that it had been (a) decided to carry out

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- \* Merit Rating Reports for Naval Ship Units (Submarine Operations, October 1944), WDC Document 161011.
  - \*\* Appendix, Summary of Main Force Air Operations in the SHO No. 1 Operation, Detailed Action Report Main Force, SHO No. 1 Operation, October 20th - 29th, 1944, WDC Document 161005, NA 11744.
  - \*\*\* CINCPAC - CINCPA Weekly Intelligence Bulletin, Volume 1, No. 16, October 27th, 1944.
  - \*\*\*\* Commander 6TH Base Air Force Dispatch 210013 October 1944 to 6TH Base Air Force, Detailed Action Report No. 2, 102nd and 103rd Attack Units (701st Air Group), October 22nd - November 15th, 1944, WDC Document 161293, NA 12505A.
  - \*\*\*\*\* CofS 6TH Base Air Force Dispatch 210046 October 1944 to Western Attack Force 1, info 6TH Base Air Force, War Diary, 103rd Attack Unit (701st Air Group), Kokubu Detachment, October 13th - 31st, 1944, WDC Document 160258, NA 12592.



on October 23rd the SHO One general offensive by the SIXTH Base Air Force ordered by Combined Fleet DesOpOrd 363 and (b) tentatively decided that the SECOND Attack Group, Table 2, was to conduct a dusk and night attack on October 22nd.

Since, by this scheduling of the general offensive for October 23rd, he was anticipating by one day the date specified in CinC Combined Fleet's order,\* and since his reasons for so doing are nowhere stated, it seems pertinent to speculate upon them. Several reasons present themselves.

The primary reason appears to have been a forecast of bad weather for October 23rd - 24th which, if eventuated, would likely anchor his planes in Formosa. (It will be shown later that the weather was so bad on the 23rd that the attack units which had succeeded in sortieing were forced back to base.)\*\* Based on this danger he acted to advance his projected movement into the Philippines by the one day referred to above and to likewise advance the date of the general air offensive.

THAT METEOROLOGICAL MATTERS HAD BEEN GIVEN CONSIDERATION BY THE JAPANESE HIGH COMMAND CAN BE SEEN FROM THE INSTRUCTIONS ISSUED TO THE MOBILE FORCE WHICH STATED, "AS THESE OPERATIONS WILL BE CARRIED OUT IN THE TYPHOON SEASON IN AN AREA WHERE METEOROLOGICAL CONDITIONS ARE WELL KNOWN TO US, WE MUST EXPLOIT THIS KNOWLEDGE TO THE FULL AND MAKE THE BEST USE OF AIR STRENGTH AND OF THE DISADVANTAGES UNDER WHICH THE ENEMY IS LABORING."\*\*\*

In this case with bad weather apparently being forecast, the success of the basic plan was thereby jeopardized because if the scheduled movement of the SIXTH Base Air Force to the Philippines were followed, the planes might be forced to remain in Formosa and thereby would be unable to accomplish the protection objective assigned the SIXTH Base Air Force. Should this occur the whole penetration plan might be delayed with the consequent ill effects this might have to the Japanese operations because of oil shortages, etc. Commander SIXTH Base Air Force mindful of the serious effects such delay might have, therefore correctly decided to advance the date one day. In doing so he realized that if for reasons not known to him this action was not satisfactory to CinC Combined Fleet that commander had ample time to issue instructions thereon since at least two days would elapse before the general air offensive referred to was to be executed.

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\* CinC Combined Fleet Dispatch 200813 October 1944 to Major Fleet Commanders (Combined Fleet DesOpOrd No. 363), War Diary BATDIV 1, October 1944, WDC Document 161638, NA 11739.

\*\* Memorandum Notes of Captain Bunzo Shibata, IJN, Senior Staff Officer, 6TH Base Air Force, October 10th - 23rd, 1944, Department of the Army Historical Division, Microfilm HS-22, Item B.

\*\*\* Commander Mobile Force Ultrasecret Serial 1003, August 10th, 1944; "Statement of CofS on Task Force Operations in the SHO Operation", paragraph F.5.j., Mobile Force Operations Order No. 76, August 10th, 1944, ATIS Document No. 39, (Part I), April 22nd, 1945 (NACHI Document).



Another reason may have been his knowledge that the FIFTH Base Air Force was very weak and would not be able to accomplish much unless the Kamikaze attacks were very successful. However, since the Kamikaze was as yet an untried weapon, it could not be depended upon in planning. Therefore, he may have felt that he might require as much as two days with the SIXTH Base Air Force in the Philippines to achieve what might be termed reasonable success against the Allied carriers.

His reference to the night attack by the SECOND Attack Group appears to refer to the attack which Commander Western Attack Force TWO had scheduled on the previous day for the evening of October 22nd. While the basic objective for this attack is not mentioned, it seems highly probable that it was also a protection objective. This thought is based on the fact that since many units of the SIXTH Base Air Force were moving to the Philippines on that very day and would be based on Luzon, the presence of the Allied task groups believed to be operating off Lamon Bay automatically became a threat of considerable magnitude to those units once they had arrived in the Luzon area.

Therefore, he considered it necessary to strike immediately with the hope of gaining surprise and of so disabling the carriers as to gain, at least temporarily, a respite from carrier air attack. What hopes he had of success in this venture are not known, but it seems unlikely that he was optimistic in any degree because (a) (1) as pointed out in Volume I of this study, his SIXTH Base Air Force had suffered cruelly in the operations from October 10th - 0719 October 17th, having lost about 584 planes; and since that time had been engaged in regrouping, training and preparing for the Philippines operation, (2) its combat efficiency was low not only because of the losses suffered with the adverse effect thereof on morale but because the reinforcements being received were not very highly trained, and (b) as pointed out in Volumes I and II, he was most likely thoroughly cognizant of the fact that the damage done to the Allied carriers had, in general, been heavily exaggerated.

THIS ACTION OF COMMANDER SIXTH BASE AIR FORCE WAS SOUND AND CAN BE CLASSIFIED AS THE SOLUTION OF A PROBLEM INVOLVING MODIFICATION OF THE BASIC PLAN. WHEN SUCH PROBLEMS ARISE THE COMMANDER IS AUTHORIZED AND EXPECTED TO TAKE APPROPRIATE ACTION IN DUE TIME TO CONTROL THE UNFOLDING SITUATION.\*

It seems probable that during the early morning hours he received two dispatches of considerable importance. These were (a) Commander FIFTH Base Air Force DesOpOrd No. 52, which established the Kamikaze Special Attack Units,\*\* and (b) Commander SECOND Striking Force's dispatch, which cancelled

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\* Sound Military Decision, U.S. Naval War College, 1942, Pages 201 - 202.

\*\* Commander 5TH Base Air Force Dispatch 202347 October 1944 to Commander Mabalacat Air Base (5TH Base Air Force DesOpOrd No. 52), War Diary 61st Air Flotilla, October 1944, WDC Document 161643, NA 12260.



the sortie orders for that force.\*

His interest in the former order (item (a) above) was great because he had probably discussed the matter with the incoming Commander FIFTH Base Air Force\*\* when that officer, in company with CinC Combined Fleet, had visited him at Takao from October 16th to October 17th and was familiar with its import to the SIXTH Base Air Force. It seems probable that at Takao the incoming Commander FIFTH Base Air Force had stressed to him the thought, related later by the retiring Commander FIFTH Base Air Force,\*\*\* that the Kamikaze units should be established because "aware that victory could not be attained with conventional methods (of warfare) it was finally concluded that in order to save the country there was no other method than the crash dive tactic".\*\*\*\* Therefore, it was clear to Commander SIXTH Base Air Force that if these Kamikaze Special Attack Units were successful, his SIXTH Base Air Force would be expected to provide similar units.

His interest in the latter order (item (b) above) stemmed from the fact that his units were providing air cover for the SECOND Striking Force while it remained at Mako.\*\*\*\*\*

It also seems probable that since (a) Toko was in the Takao area and therefore, was in easy telephone distance of the headquarters of Commander SIXTH Base Air Force, (b) the two radar-equipped flying boats completed their search to the scheduled 450 miles at 0210 and 0215 with negative results,\*\*\*\*\* and (c) the Commander of the 901st Air Group was monitoring the frequency of these radar-equipped flying boats, Commander SIXTH Base Air Force knew, through telephone reports at an early hour, of the negative nature of the above searches. This was important information because it indicated that carrier attacks on Formosa on this day were unlikely.

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\* Commander 2ND Striking Force Dispatch 202340 October 1944 to CinC Combined Fleet, Commander Takao Guard District, info Commanders 1ST Striking Force, Mobile Force, 5TH and 6TH Base Air Forces, CRUDIV 16, Chief 1ST Section, Imperial GHQ (Navy Section), Detailed Action Report CRUDIV 16, SHO Operation, October 17th - 27th, 1944, WDC Document 161005, NA 11744.

\*\* Vice Admiral Takijiro Onishi, IJN.

\*\*\* Vice Admiral Kimpei Teraoka, IJN.

\*\*\*\* Diary of Vice Admiral Kimpei Teraoka, IJN, August 1st - November 1st, 1944, 5TH Base Air Force in SHO Operation, GHQ, FEC, Special Historical Collection, Supporting Documents to General of the Army Douglas MacArthur's Historical Report on Allied Operations in the Southwest Pacific Area (Item 30, Footlocker 7 of 10, SWPA Series, Volume II).

\*\*\*\*\* Commander 6TH Base Air Force Dispatch 192331 October 1944 to Commander 14th Combined Air Group (6TH Base Air Force DesOpOrd No. 82), War Diary DESRON 1, October 1944, WDC Document 161638, NA 11739.

\*\*\*\*\* Commander 901st Air Group Dispatch 210750 October 1944 to CinC Combined Fleet, Commander 6TH Base Air Force, Detailed Action Report 901st Air Group, Night Searches, October 10th - 28th, 1944, WDC Document 160551, NA 12402.



He was undoubtedly relieved by these reports for it was on the following day that he planned to move to the Philippines those units of the SIXTH Base Air Force assigned to the Philippines for the defense of Leyte. It was clear that air strikes on this day by the Allied carriers similar in intensity to those made in the Battle off Formosa (October 12th, 13th and 14th) would be highly destructive and would likely upset his plans.

At 0700 he received Commander Advance Expeditionary Force's dispatch 202053\* which assigned deployment stations off the Philippines to the submarines of the "A" and "B" Groups. This was important information for some of the SIXTH Base Air Force pilots were flying over the very waters through which these friendly submarines were now passing en route to the above stations.

During the forenoon he received the numerous contacts made by the FIFTH Base Air Force during that time and listed under "Operations of Commander FIFTH Base Air Force, October 21st". He was particularly interested in the five contacts nearest Formosa since it was these contacts which might give him trouble (a) on the following morning should the carriers decide to attack Formosa and (b) on the following day should the SECOND Striking Force move to Luzon. These contacts were (a) at 2325 October 20th, a task force of twenty ships 220 miles east of Lamon Bay (Plate XXIX) (Contact A), (b) at 0920 an Allied task force in San Bernardino Strait (Contact H), (c) at 0920 surface ships, bearing 091°(T), distant 420 miles from Manila (Contact G), (d) at 0935 one battleship and twenty-four other ships, bearing 350°(T), distant 160 miles from Suluan Island (Contact I) and (e) at 1040 a large force, bearing 070°(T), distant fifty-four miles from Catanduanes Island (Contact J). Of course, if there were no carriers in items (c), (d) and (e), these would give him no particular concern. But he had to be alert for the presence of carriers.

During this time his senior staff officer at Manila had held consultations with the FOURTH Air Army relative to the deployment bases for the SIXTH Base Air Force\*\* which bases were largely FOURTH Air Army bases obtained earlier from the Army,\*\*\* and had decided that for the present the headquarters of Commander SIXTH Base Air Force would be at Manila with a branch at Clark Field.\*\*

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\* Commander Advance Expeditionary Force Dispatch 202053 October 1944 to Advance Expeditionary Force, All Force and Squadron Commanders, Detailed Action Report BATDIV 1, SHO No. 1 Operation, October 18th - 28th, 1944, WDC Document 161005, NA 11744.

\*\* Memorandum Notes of Captain Bunzo Shibata, IJN, Senior Staff Officer, 6TH Base Air Force, October 10th - 23rd, 1944, Department of the Army, Historical Division, Microfilm HS-22, Item B.

\*\*\* Philippine Air Operations, Phase II, 1944 - 1945, 1ST Demobilization Bureau Monograph, Japanese Government, October 1946, Volume 46, Part I, (Col. Misao Matsumae, ex-IJA), Chapter II, Paragraph (C) (1) (a).



It seems likely that also during the forenoon he issued his OpOrd No. 110 which was his basic directive for the (a) movement of his units to the Philippines including their search and attack operations en route (Appendix 1 to SIXTH Base Air Force OpOrd No. 110), (b) employment of his units in the Philippines after arrival there and until October 26th (Appendix 1 to SIXTH Base Air Force OpOrd No. 110) and (c) designation of the basic deployment bases there (Appendix 2 to SIXTH Base Air Force OpOrd No. 110).

The body of this directive is quoted as follows:

"1. X-day has been set for October 25th and Y-day for October 24th.

"2. This force will move up its entire strength\* (less the SECOND Attack Group) to the Philippines on October 22nd in accordance with the Allocation of Forces given in Appendix 1 and will carry out a night attack the same day against the enemy carrier group east of Lamon Bay. It will be ready to launch a general offensive on October 23rd after which the remaining enemy will be pursued and destroyed.

From October 22nd all units will operate in accordance with the Allocation of Forces given in Appendix 1.

"3. Basic deployment bases in the Philippines are tentatively fixed as in Appendix 2.

"4. On October 22nd I will command the Headquarters Transport Plane Unit and part of the Fighter Striking Unit (341st Air Group and 303rd Fighter Unit) and will take off from Daikozan at 1330. After reaching Nichols No. 1 at 1700, I will set up my headquarters at Manila."\*\*

It is noted that the Attack Organization outlined in this order expands somewhat the organization outlined in his 200002 message which totaled 330 planes. This order includes in addition (1) the 303rd Fighter Unit totaling about twenty carrier VF assigned to his Headquarters Transport Plane Unit, (2) the 301st Reconnaissance Unit, twelve reconnaissance seaplanes, assigned to the SECOND Special Attack Unit and directed to remain on attack alert at Toko on October 22nd and to move up under special orders October 23rd and (3) the SECOND Attack Group which consisted of six patrol seaplanes and thirty land-attack planes which were to conduct attack from bases in the Takao area as ordered. This order then embraces 350 aircraft for immediate deployment, forty-eight to be held at Formosan bases, or a total of 398 (Table 2).

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\* CofS 6TH Base Air Force Dispatch 200002 October 1944, addressees unknown, War Diary 103rd Attack Unit (701st Air Group), Kokobu Detachment, October 13th - 31st, 1944, WDC Document 160258, NA 12592. (Infra., Table 2, 6TH Base Air Force Tactical Organization.)

\*\* 6TH Base Air Force Operation Order No. 110, October 21st, 1944, File of 6TH Base Air Force Operation Orders and Supplemental Material obtained from Captain Bunzo Shibata, IJN, Senior Staff Officer, 6TH Base Air Force, GHQ, FEC, Military History Section, Microfilm (unnumbered).



Likely before 1135 (it was received by COMDESRON ONE at this time) he received a dispatch from Takao to the effect that, "According to intelligence reports, the U.S. Air Forces based in China are preparing to make bombing attacks on Formosa and Japan proper on October 22nd in cooperation with U.S. task force operations in the Philippine area. Preparations appear to be underway at the various enemy bases. Special precautions are necessary."\*

This dispatch was necessarily of great concern to him since (a) an important portion of his command was in the SW Formosa area, (b) he had seen the effects of the B-29 strikes but a few days earlier (October 14th, 16th and 17th) and (c) had reason to believe that their bombing power was tremendous.\*\* Another strike in the same area could, if successful, seriously handicap if not upset his prospective operations. What action, if any, he took at this time is not known, but it seems likely that he made plans to retire his aircraft other than fighters in the SW Formosa area to safer Formosan fields.

Possibly at 1158 (it was received by the MOGAMI at that time) he received CinC Combined Fleet dispatch 211031 which again announced that October 25th would be X-day.\*\*\* From this confirmation he could infer that no further change in X-day was anticipated.

Sometime in the early afternoon he received a precautionary dispatch from the Chief of Staff SW Area Force which warned addressees that the enemy B-24's reconnaissance attack range had been extended to Puerto Princesa and San Jose and to be alert.\*\*\*\* It seems clear that inasmuch as he planned to base his units in the Clark Field - Manila area, he was not unduly aroused over this increase in radius of the Allied land-based aircraft searches since the above fields were well beyond this radius.

Also in the early afternoon he received a report which amplified the 1040 contact report referred to previously. This report stated that the 1040 contact consisted of, among other units, four carriers\*\*\*\*\* (Contact J). In

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\* Takao Naval Guard District Dispatch to 2ND Striking Force received at 211135 October 1944, War Diary DESRON 1, October 1944, WDC Document 161638, NA 11739.

\*\* Memorandum Notes of Captain Bunzo Shibata, IJN, Senior Staff Officer, 6TH Base Air Force, October 10th - 23rd, 1944, Department of the Army, Historical Division, Microfilm HS-22, Item B.

\*\*\* CinC Combined Fleet Dispatch 211031 October 1944 to All Fleet and Squadron Commanders, Detailed Action Report MOGAMI, Battle off the Philippines, October 18th - 25th, 1944, WDC Document 160463, NA 12653.

\*\*\*\* CofS SW Area Force Dispatch 211231 October 1944 to Commander 6TH Base Air Force, DESRON 11, Main Force, War Diary ZUIHO, October 1st - 25th, 1944, WDC Document 161636, NA 11973.

\*\*\*\*\* Daily Record of the War Situation, 4TH Air Army, GHQ, FEC, Special Historical Collection, Supporting Documents to General of the Army Douglas MacArthur's Historical Report on Allied Operations in the Southwest Pacific Area (Item 4, Footlocker 10 of 10, SWPA Series, Volume II).



CONFIDENTIAL

SIXTH BASE AIR FORCE  
TACTICAL ORGANIZATION, 21 OCTOBER 1944\*

FORCE	AIR GROUP or UNIT	NO. and TYPE A/C	DEPLOYMENT BASE
1. Recco Unit	141st Air Group	6 Carrier type Recco	Nichols NO. 1 or Mabalacat West
2. Patrol Unit	783rd Air Group	6 2-Engine Bombers	Clark Central
3. Night Search Unit	901st Air Group	6 Patrol Seaplanes	
4. Anti-Submarine Patrol Unit	901st Air Group 953rd Air Group	12 Land-Attack Planes 10 Recco Seaplanes	
5. Night Fighter Unit	141st Air Group	6 Night VF	Nichols NO. 1 or Mabalacat West
6. First Attack Group			
a. Forward Search Unit	653rd Air Group		
b. Fighter Striking Unit	634th Air Group 221st Air Group 341st Air Group 252nd Air Group	5 Carrier type attack 30 Carrier type VF 30 Interceptor VF 32 Carrier type VF	Mabalacat West Clark Central or Angeles
Guide Unit	653rd Air Group	2 Carrier type attack	
c. High Cover Unit	303rd Fighter Unit	20 Carrier type VF	Clark Central or Angeles
d. First Attack Unit (Fighter-Bomber Unit)			
(1) 1st Escort Unit	221st Air Group	32 Carrier type VF	Marcot
(2) 1st Bombing Unit	221st Air Group	8 Carrier type VF	Marcot
e. Second Attack Unit (Carrier-Bomber Unit)	3rd Attack Unit 5th Attack Unit 634th Air Group 653rd Air Group		Mabalacat East or Bamban
f. Third Attack Unit (Carrier-Bomber Unit)			
(1) 3rd Escort Unit	304th Fighter Unit 634th Air Group 653rd Air Group	60 Carrier type VF	Mabalacat East or Bamban
(2) 3rd Bombing Unit	701st Air Group 634th Air Group	34 Carrier type bombers	Mabalacat East or Bamban
7. First Special Attack Unit (Dusk Bombing Unit)	634th Air Group 653rd Air Group 256th Attack Unit 252nd Attack Unit	14 Carrier type attack	Bamban or Angeles West
8. Second Special Attack Unit (Dusk Bombing Unit)	634th Air Group	19 Recco Seaplanes	Cavite or Legaspi & Tabaco
9. Lead Unit	141st Air Group	6 Land Recco	Nichols NO. 1 or Mabalacat
Total aircraft for immediate deployment to Philippines:		350	

PORTION OF ATTACK ORGANIZATION HELD IN FORMOSAN BASES

10. Portion of Second Special Attack Unit (Dusk Bombing Unit)	301st Recco Unit	12 Recco Seaplanes	Cavite or Legaspi & Tabaco
(Note: To be held on attack alert at TOKO on October 22nd and to move up under special orders October 23rd.)			
11. Second Attack Group			
a. Night Search Contact Unit	901st Air Group	6 Patrol Seaplanes	Toko
b. Night Attack Unit	702nd Attack Unit	30 Land-Attack Planes	Takao

Total 48  
Grand Total 398

\*This organization is a collation of three documents. (1) CofS 6TH Base Air Force Dispatch 200002, October 1944, addressees unknown, War Diary 103RD Attack Unit (701ST Air Group), Kokubu Detachment, October 13th - 31st, 1944, WDC Document 160258, NA 12592; (2) 6TH Base Air Force Operation Order No. 110, October 21st, 1944 and (3) 6TH Base Air Force Attack Organization for SHO 1 (undated), File of 6TH Base Air Force Operation Orders and Supplemental Material obtained from Captain Bunzo Shibata, IJN, Senior Staff Officer, 6TH Base Air Force, GHQ, FEC Military History Section, Microfilm (Unnumbered).

TABLE (2)

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addition, he received a radio direction finder fix evaluated as a task force at 1400, 170 miles east of Lamón Bay (Contact L). He now knew that there were four carrier task groups in the vicinity of San Bernardino Strait and east of Lamón Bay, all within easy reach of the Clark Field complex as well as of the Manila area, plus two groups of surface ships. It is of interest that there were, in fact, two carrier task groups (TG 38.2 and TG 38.3) operating in the San Bernardino Strait - Catanduanes area at this time and two carrier task groups operating 350 miles east of Lamón Bay.

About this time he was aware of another intelligence warning issued by the Takao Guard District to the effect that China-based bombers had been sighted heading east and that attacks on Formosa were probable—commencing on that day.\* These bombers appear to have been one B-24 from the FOURTEENTH Air Force, on armed reconnaissance patrol, which unsuccessfully bombed a convoy twenty miles SW of Takao.\*\* Since he had already been alerted to this possibility, it seems likely that he took no further action.

At 1458 he issued a dispatch outline of operations for the following day,\*\*\* October 22nd, implementing the basic plan which he had issued earlier in the day.\*\*\*\* He directed the following operations: (a) a search by three two-engine land bombers departing Garan Bi in the early morning to search  $117\frac{1}{2}^{\circ}$ ,  $125^{\circ}$  and  $132\frac{1}{2}^{\circ}$  to a distance of 650 miles thence to Clark Field; (b) a search by four carrier-type reconnaissance planes to depart Garan Bi at 0900 to search  $147\frac{1}{2}^{\circ}$ ,  $175^{\circ}$ ,  $155^{\circ}$ ,  $158^{\circ}$  landing at Nichols Field; (c) additional carrier-type reconnaissance planes to be prepared to take off on twenty-five minutes notice for contact scouting; (d) dusk and night attacks on enemy carriers east of Lamón Bay by the SECOND Attack Group (702nd Attack Unit, Flying Boat Unit of 901st Air Group, Two-Engine Land Bomber Unit of 763rd Air Group) operating from Takao area, Formosa; (e) dusk attacks on the same carriers by the FIRST and SECOND Special Attack Units operating from Clark Field and Cavite, respectively; (f) interception operations at the discretion of each base commander; and (g) the transfer of other SIXTH Base Air Force units to the Philippines in accordance with the basic plan.

IT WILL BE OBSERVED THAT NOTHING IN THIS ORDER REFERS TO THE COORDINATION OF THE ATTACKS FROM FORMOSA WITH THE ATTACKS FROM THE PHILIPPINES; HOWEVER, IT IS ASSUMED THAT SUCH DETAILS HAD BEEN COVERED IN THE OPERATIONAL

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- \* Takao Naval Guard District Visual Dispatch 211340 October 1944 to All Forces, War Diary DESRON 1, October 1944, WDC Document 161638, NA 11739.
  - \*\* Chief Historical Division of the Air University, Maxwell Field, Alabama, letter November 8th, 1950 to President, Naval War College.
  - \*\*\* Commander 6TH Base Air Force Dispatch 211458 October 1944 to 6TH Base Air Force, Main Force (6TH Base Air Force DesOpOrd No. 85), War Diary ZUIHO, October 1st - 25th, 1944, WDC Document 161636, NA 11973.
  - \*\*\*\* 6TH Base Air Force Operation Order No. 110, October 21st, 1944, File of 6TH Base Air Force Operation Orders and Supplemental Material obtained from Captain Bunzo Shibata, IJN, Senior Staff Officer, 6TH Base Air Force, GHQ, FEC Military History Section, Microfilm (Unnumbered).



CONFERENCES HELD PREVIOUSLY ON FORMOSA WITH GROUP AND UNIT COMMANDERS. IT IS NOTED, HOWEVER, THAT SUCH COORDINATION HAD OFTEN BEEN LACKING IN THE BATTLE OFF FORMOSA, AS DISCUSSED IN VOLUME I OF THIS STUDY, AND RESULTED IN MUCH LESS SUCCESS THAN WOULD HAVE BEEN EXPECTED FROM A WELL COORDINATED EFFORT OF THE SAME BASIC STRENGTH.

At about 1504 (it was received by the KINU at this time) he received the order from Commander SW Area Force to Commander SECOND Striking Force ordering that force to Manila by early morning of October 23rd at the latest.\*

During the afternoon he learned that the enemy had landed at Rapu Rapu Island which is but twenty-five miles east of Legaspi.\*\* This was of concern because (a) it indicated that strong enemy units would be operating in this area at the time when he moved his command to the Philippines, and (b) certain of his aircraft (SECOND Special Attack Unit) were scheduled, depending on the situation, to deploy in this area.\*\*\* This meant that the Legaspi airfield would be untenable. He seems, however, to have issued no instructions thereon but to have awaited further information.

Also during the afternoon the senior officer, whom he had sent ahead to Manila, held consultations there with Commander Philippine Attack Force TWO and with the C. G. Formosa Army, who was likewise in Manila.\*\* While the nature of these discussions is not known, it seems probable that they concerned the prospective movement of the SIXTY-EIGHTH Brigade from Formosa to the Philippines.\*\*\*\*

At 1637 (it was received by CRUDIV SIXTEEN at this time) he received, as an information addressee, a dispatch from Chief of Staff SW Area Force wherein the Chief of Staff discussed the problems of moving reinforcements to Leyte and then stated that it was the headquarters opinion that CRUDIV TWENTY-ONE and DESRON ONE should be included in the penetration

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\* Commander SW Area Force Dispatch 211251 October 1944 to COMCRUDIV 16, Commander 2ND Striking Force, info CinC Combined Fleet 6TH Base Air Force, SW Area Force, War Diary DESRON 1, October 1944, WDC Document 161638, NA 11739.

\*\* Memorandum notes of Captain Bunzo Shibata, IJN, Senior Staff Officer 6TH Base Air Force, October 10th - 23rd, 1944, Department of the Army, Historical Division, Microfilm HS-22, Item B.

\*\*\* Appendix 2, 6TH Base Air Force Operation Order No. 110, October 21st, 1944, File of 6TH Base Air Force Operation Orders and Supplemental Material obtained from Captain Bunzo Shibata, IJN, Senior Staff Officer, 6TH Base Air Force, GHQ, FEC, Military History Section, Microfilm (Unnumbered).

\*\*\*\* CofS SW Area Force Dispatch 202137 October 1944 to Imperial General Headquarters (Navy Section), etc., Detailed Action Report CRUDIV 16, SHO Operation, October 17th - 27th, 1944, WDC Document 161005, NA 11744.



operations.\* All of this was of concern to him because these operations could scarcely be effective without the assistance of the SIXTH Base Air Force.

At 1945 he received by dispatch Commander SW Area Force DesOpOrd No. 679 wherein that commander (a) after stating the general plan, "Based on Combined Fleet DesOpOrd No. 363,\*\* this command will assume command of all naval air forces assembled in the Philippines area. Cooperating closely with surface and army forces, it will destroy first the enemy task force east of the Philippines and then the enemy invasion forces", (b) assigned tasks to the naval air forces under his command once the SIXTH Base Air Force had moved to the Philippines.\*\*\*

Commander SIXTH Base Air Force noted that (a) the tasks assigned his command were limited to (1) antisubmarine and antiaircraft patrols, (2) attacks on enemy invasion forces, (3) reconnaissance patrols, scouting and tracking, and (b) among the tasks assigned the FIFTH Base Air Force were surprise attacks on enemy carriers. This was probably a surprise to him for he had been directed by CinC Combined Fleet on the previous day, in Combined Fleet DesOpOrd 363, to launch an all-out offensive against the enemy carrier forces on October 24th (he had tentatively decided to accomplish this on October 23rd)\*\*\*\* and here, by this order, this task appeared to have been eliminated. Since, as will be shown later, he did attack the carriers as he had been ordered to do by CinC Combined Fleet, it would appear probable that somehow the objective (destruction of the enemy carrier forces) assigned the SIXTH Base Air Force by CinC Combined Fleet on the previous day had either been inadvertently omitted from this order, which fact was well understood by Commander SIXTH Base Air Force, or was to be accomplished in addition to the tasks assigned above. This matter is discussed more fully under "Operations of Commander SW Area Force, October 21st".

Despite the fact that Commander SIXTH Base Air Force had been assigned the task of providing antisubmarine and antiaircraft patrols for the surface forces—notably the FIRST Striking Force—(this was also a protection objective) which would be executing the penetration operation, he decided not

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- \* CofS SW Area Force Dispatch 211322 October 1944 to Commander 2ND Striking Force, etc., Detailed Action Report CRUDIV 16, SHO Operation, October 17th - 27th, 1944, WDC Document 161005, NA 11744.
  - \*\* CinC Combined Fleet Dispatch 200813 October 1944 to Major Fleet Commanders (Combined Fleet DesOpOrd No. 363), War Diary BATDIV 1, October 1944, WDC Document 161638, NA 11739.
  - \*\*\* Commander SW Area Force Dispatch 211345 October 1944 to Commanders 5TH and 6TH Base Air Forces 954th and 955th Air Groups, 1ST and 2ND Striking Forces, Mobile Force (SW Area Force DesOpOrd No. 679), Detailed Action Report 1ST Striking Force, SHO Operations, October 16th - 28th, 1944, WDC Document 161641, NA 11839.
  - \*\*\*\* CofS 6TH Base Air Force Dispatch 210046 October 1944 to 6TH Base Air Force, War Diary, 103rd Attack Unit (701st Air Group), Kokubu Detachment, October 13th - 31st, 1944, WDC Document 160358, NA 12592.



to provide these patrols in the literal sense, except in a very limited way, but instead, chose to accomplish them indirectly by powerful direct attacks upon the Allied carrier forces. In his own words he stated, in part, "In using this unwieldy land-based air force to support a constantly moving fleet, about the best that could be done would be to send fighters to protect the surface units and scouting planes to search for submarines. But to do that would mean a serious weakening of the attacking power of the air force". He therefore, desiring to retain his attacking air power, decided, in general, not to provide such protection.\*

THIS ACTION BY COMMANDER SIXTH BASE AIR FORCE SEEMS OF DOUBTFUL CORRECTNESS. THIS SEEMS SO BECAUSE HE KNEW AT THIS TIME (A) OF THE LARGE NUMBER OF ALLIED CARRIERS IN THE AREA WITH THEIR OVERWHELMING NUMBER OF PLANES, (B) THAT THE CLAIMS OF DAMAGE ON ALLIED CARRIERS OVER THE PRECEDING DAYS HAD BEEN HEAVILY EXAGGERATED, (C) THAT HE DID NOT HAVE ADEQUATE KNOWLEDGE OF THE LOCATION OF THE ALLIED CARRIERS TO GUARANTEE EVEN A REASONABLE DEGREE OF SUCCESS, AND (D) AND THIS IS VERY IMPORTANT, THAT EVEN THOUGH HIS PILOTS HAD CLAIMED HIGH SUCCESSES AGAINST THESE VERY CARRIERS, THE ALLIED AIR STRIKES HAD CONTINUED UNABATED AND THEREFORE, HE MUST HAVE BEEN AWARE OF THE FACT THAT HIS EXPECTANCY OF SUCCESS AGAINST THEM WAS LOW INDEED.

SINCE, IN AN ACTION INVOLVING AIRCRAFT CARRIERS, IT IS ADVISABLE TO KEEP ALL CARRIERS UNDER ATTACK IN A MANNER SIMILAR TO THE ADVISABILITY LONG RECOGNIZED IN GUNNERY OF KEEPING ALL SHIPS OF THE ENEMY BATTLELINE UNDER FIRE, DOES IT NOT SEEM CORRECT TO STATE HERE THAT IF COMMANDER SIXTH BASE AIR FORCE HOPED TO ACCOMPLISH HIS PROTECTION OBJECTIVE ADEQUATELY BY AIR STRIKES AGAINST THE ALLIED CARRIERS HE WAS NECESSARILY FORCED TO DISABLE THE FLIGHT DECKS OF AS MANY OF THE ALLIED CARRIERS AS POSSIBLE? AND, SINCE HE HAD BEEN UNABLE TO ACCOMPLISH THIS BEFORE IN ANY MARKED DEGREE AND WAS NOT SURE AS TO THE LOCATION OF ALL OF THE CARRIER GROUPS, WAS IT LOGICAL FOR HIM TO EXPECT TO ACCOMPLISH IT NOW WITH HIS WEAKENED AIR FORCE AND LACK OF INFORMATION? DID HE NOT REALIZE THAT (A) THE SUCCESS OF THE PENETRATION OPERATION REVOLVED LARGELY UPON THE SUCCESS OF THE FIRST STRIKING FORCE, (B) THIS WOULD LIKELY BE PERCEIVED BY THE ALLIES, (C) DESPITE HIS AIR STRIKES IN OPPOSITION THERETO, HE COULD EXPECT THAT ALLIED AIR STRIKES IN PARTICULAR WOULD BE MADE AGAINST THAT FORCE NOT ONLY FROM THE CARRIERS BUT POSSIBLY FROM MOROTAI AS WELL, AND (D) BECAUSE OF THESE THREE FACTORS, IT WAS ESSENTIAL TO PROVIDE AIR COVER IN NUMBERS AND QUALITY SUFFICIENT, WHEN COORDINATED WITH THE DEFENSE MEASURES INHERENT IN THE FIRST STRIKING FORCE (ANTIAIRCRAFT FIRE AND MANEUVER), TO GIVE THAT FORCE ADEQUATE PROTECTION?

DID HE NOT ALSO REALIZE THAT BY LAUNCHING ATTACKS AGAINST THE CARRIERS, EVEN AGAINST THOSE CARRIERS WHOSE LOCATION WAS KNOWN, HE WOULD BE FORCED TO DISPERSE WIDELY HIS LIMITED AIRCRAFT, WHEREAS IF HE PROVIDED AIR COVER IN STRENGTH OVER THE FIRST STRIKING FORCE HE WOULD BE PROVIDING PROTECTION NOT ONLY AGAINST THE CARRIERS WHOSE LOCATION WAS KNOWN BUT ALSO AGAINST (1) THE CARRIERS WHOSE LOCATION WAS UNKNOWN AS WELL AS (2) AGAINST HEAVY BOMBERS FROM MOROTAI?

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\* USSBS Interrogation of Japanese Officials, Nav No. 115, Interrogation of Vice Admiral Shigeru Fukudome, IJN, Volume II, Page 504.



BASED ON THE ABOVE IT WOULD SEEM AS IF COMMANDER SIXTH BASE AIR FORCE (AS WELL AS CINC COMBINED FLEET) WOULD HAVE HAD A BETTER CHANCE OF ACCOMPLISHING HIS PROTECTION OBJECTIVE (THE INSURANCE OF THE SAFE ARRIVAL OF THE FIRST STRIKING FORCE AT THE OBJECTIVE AREA--LEYTE GULF) HAD HE DECIDED TO PROVIDE AS A MATTER OF (A) PRIMARY URGENCY, AS POWERFUL A CAP AS POSSIBLE OVER THAT FORCE IN ORDER TO GAIN AND MAINTAIN LOCAL AIR SUPERIORITY, (B) SECONDARY URGENCY, THE PLANNED AIR STRIKES AGAINST THE ALLIED CARRIERS.

In the early evening he issued verbal instructions for a night radar search from Garan Bi.\* Two flying boats were to depart at 2100, search lines 110°(T) and 130°(T) to 450 miles, fly a ninety-mile crossleg to the left and return to Garan Bi.

Also commencing about this time and continuing on during the night, the senior officer whom he had sent ahead to Manila began discussions--apparently with Commander FIFTH Base Air Force's staff--over "Commander FIFTH Base Air Force's views in favor of repeated fighter bomber attacks and change in X-day".\*\* The nature of this discussion is commented on under "Operations of Commander FIFTH Base Air Force, October 21st".

At 2130 he received another attack warning relative to the possibility of Allied land-based air attacks from the China mainland being made on October 22nd (the following day).\*\*\* While there is no mention in the documents available to this study of his action in this matter, it seems doubtful that he took any specific action additional to that already taken.

Sometime that night he received (a) a dispatch from the Chief of Staff SW Area Force giving the opinions of that command concerning the use of the SECOND Striking Force in the penetration operation\*\*\*\*--he watched these developments with interest but without vital concern as the operations protecting the FIRST Striking Force would also protect the SECOND Striking Force and (b) a dispatch informing all commands that the report of a

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- \* Detailed Action Report 901ST Air Group, Night Searches, October 10th - 28th, 1944, WDC Document 160551, NA 12402.
  - \*\* Memorandum Notes of Captain Bunzo Shibata, IJN, Senior Staff Officer, 6TH Base Air Force, October 10th - 23rd, 1944, Department of the Army, Historical Division Microfilm HS-22, Item B.
  - \*\*\* CinC COMBINED Fleet Dispatch 212100 October 1944 to 6TH Base Air Force, etc., Detailed Action Report No. 2, Northern Attack Force (2ND Base Air Force), October 10th - November 14th, 1944, WDC Document 161645, NA 12262.
  - \*\*\*\* CofS SW Area Force Dispatch 211914 October 1944 to CinC Combined Fleet, Commanders 2ND Striking Force, CRUDIV 16, Imperial GHQ (Navy Section), info Main Force, 1ST Striking Force, 5TH and 6TH Base Air Forces, War Diary DESRON 1, October 1944, WDC Document 161638, NA 11739.

landing on Rapu Rapu Island had been false.\*

Prior to midnight he knew that the night Garan Bi search had departed Toko at 2145 and had taken departure from Garan Bi at 2202 and 2225 respectively.\*\*

(5) Operations of Commander SW Area Force, October 21st.

Commander SW Area Force remained at his headquarters in Manila. Here, he and his staff, in conference with the new Commander FIFTH Base Air Force and with the representatives of the SIXTH Base Air Force, continued the discussions which had been commenced on the previous evening and out of which had evolved the order establishing the Kamikaze Special Attack Corps. Except for this, there is no information available as to the nature of these discussions but, as pointed out in "Operations of FIFTH Base Air Force, October 20th", they seemed to cover, in part, the coordination of the efforts of the FIFTH and SIXTH Base Air Forces and the readiness of the airfields to accommodate the SIXTH Base Air Force planes. The conference adjourned at 0130.

It seems likely that in addition to the matters discussed in this conference, Commander SW Area Force was (a) watching the situation in the Leyte area very closely because the developments in this area, including the number and character of the Allied shipping which remained in the Leyte Gulf area, might well have a determining effect upon the execution of the "penetration" operation which on the previous day had been ordered for dawn, October 25th,\*\*\* and (b) awaiting the decision of Imperial General Headquarters (Navy Section) as to whether or not the SECOND Striking Force was to be employed in the penetration operation as he had suggested or whether it was to be employed in counterlanding operations as requested by the CinC Southern Army.\*\*\*\* He also had an interest in the results of the night searches by the radar-equipped flying boats operating from Garan Bi since, if these planes contacted Allied carrier task groups, it indicated possibly a reduction of the Allied air attacks in the Philippines.

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- \* 33RD Special Base Force Dispatch 211900 October 1944, addressees unknown, Detailed Action Report Main Force, SHO No. 1 Operation, October 20th - 29th, 1944, WDC Document 161005, NA 11744.
  - \*\* Detailed Action Report 901st Air Group, Night Searches, October 10th - 28th, 1944, WDC Document 160551, NA 12402.
  - \*\*\* CinC Combined Fleet Dispatch 200813 October 1944 to Combined Fleet, CinC Southern Army, Imperial GHQ, China Area Fleet, etc., (Combined Fleet DesOpOrd 363), War Diary BATDIV 1, October 1944, WDC Document 161638, NA 11739.
  - \*\*\*\* CofS SW Area Force Dispatch 202137 October 1944 to Imperial General Headquarters (Navy Section), info Combined Fleet, etc., Detailed Action Report CRUDIV 16, SHO Operation, October 17th - 27th, 1944, WDC Document 161005, NA 11744.



At 0356 (it was received by COMCRUDIV SIXTEEN at this time) he received, as an information addressee, word that the SECOND Striking Force sortie from Mako scheduled for 0700 had been cancelled.\*

At about 0820 he received a dispatch from Commander 901st Air Group reporting that the night searches from Garan Bi were negative.\*\* This information was important as it indicated that the Allied carrier task groups were likely remaining off the Philippines.

Possibly at 0940 (it was received by COMDESRON TEN at this time) he received, as an information addressee, a dispatch sent by the Chief of Staff SECOND Striking Force on the previous day outlining Commander SECOND Striking Force's plan for part of his force (CRUDIV TWENTY-ONE and DESRON ONE) in a penetration attack which called, among other items (a) for the SECOND Striking Force to be at 1500 October 23rd twenty miles south of Cape Calavite Light (Mindoro Island), thence through the Sulu and Mindanao Seas through Surigao Strait to Tacloban Anchorage, (b) requesting information as to the scheduled course of the FIRST Striking Force.\*\*\*

This dispatch was of considerable interest because he could see clearly that Commander SECOND Striking Force did not visualize his command as attached to the FIRST Striking Force or the Main Force. Instead, he visualized a double penetration with the SECOND Striking Force advancing through Surigao Strait in support of the FIRST Striking Force.

During the early forenoon he learned that Allied planes had hit the Philippines.

If he maintained a close liaison with the headquarters of the FOURTH Air Army, he must have been somewhat confused by the difference in numbers reported by his own forces and those reported by the army. The navy reported that about 150 aircraft had hit the central Philippines and reported no other attacks;\*\*\*\* the FOURTH Air Army reported that about 912 aircraft,

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\* Commander 2ND Striking Force Dispatch 202340 October 1944 to CinC Combined Fleet, Commander Takao Guard District, Detailed Action Report, CRUDIV 16, SHO Operation, October 17th - 27th, 1944, WDC Document 161005, NA 11744.

\*\* Commander 901st Air Group Dispatch 210750 October 1944 to CinC Combined Fleet Commander 6TH Base Air Force, Detailed Action Report 901st Air Group, Night Searches, October 10th - 28th, 1944, WDC Document 160551, NA 12402.

\*\*\* CofS 2ND Striking Force Dispatch 201932 October 1944 to Commander 1ST Striking Force, info Combined Fleet, SW Area Force, Imperial GHQ (Navy Section), War Diary DESRON 10, October 1944, WDC Document 161638, NA 11739.

\*\*\*\* Material for Situation Estimates, 1ST Section Naval General Staff, October 1944, WDC Document 216764 (Microfilm).

of which eighty-one were land-based, had hit the Philippines.\* This was a very great difference and was of considerable importance for it could have had a bearing on the number of Allied carriers within air attack range of the central Philippines. The figure 150 was well below, and the figure 912 was well above, the number of air strikes on October 13th and 14th against Formosa, which Japanese naval estimates had placed at 600 planes.\*\* Certainly Commander SW Area Force could estimate that (a) if the former figure (150) were correct, there were likely many less planes available today for air strikes than had been available on October 13th and 14th; and (b) if the latter figure (912) were correct, there were likely fifty per cent more planes available today for operations against not only the Philippines but against the forces engaged in the penetration operation as well. As a consequence, it is not unlikely that he endeavored to obtain more information concerning the location and composition of the Allied carrier task groups. Actually the Allies made a total of 464 strikes (TF 38 - 356, TG 77.4 - 44, FIFTH Air Force - 64) against the Philippines. Most of these strikes were in the Visayas.

At 1158 (when it was received by MOGAMI) he received CinC Combined Fleet's dispatch of 1031 confirming X-day, the date of arrival at Leyte Gulf by the FIRST Striking Force, as October 25th.\*\*\*

During the late forenoon he received the numerous contacts made by FIFTH Base Air Force during that time and listed under "Operations of Commander FIFTH Base Air Force, October 21st". These contacts gave a general picture of the nature of the Allied operations against the Philippines. He could see from these reports and possibly from the numerous radio direction finder fixes reported for this day that the enemy forces continued to be in great strength. However, he realized also that with the limited forces available, both naval and air, he could accomplish little until the SIXTH Base Air Force had moved to the Philippines.

Also during the late forenoon he undoubtedly received (a) the warning to exercise caution on messages transmitted by Eastern Radio Number One (Tokyo Radio) some of which, for radio deception purposes, might be false\*\*\*\*

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- \* Daily Record of the War Situation, 4TH Air Army, GHQ, FEC Special Historical Collection, Supporting Documents to General of the Army Douglas MacArthur's Historical Report on Allied Operations in the Southwest Pacific Area (Item 4, Footlocker 10 of 10, SWPA Series, Volume II).
  - \*\* Material for Situation Estimates, 1ST Section Naval General Staff, October 1944, WDC Document 216764 (Microfilm).
  - \*\*\* CinC Combined Fleet Dispatch 211031 October 1944 to all commanders Combined Fleet, Detailed Action Report BATDIV 1, SHO No. 1 Operation, October 18th - 28th, 1944, WDC Document 161005, NA 11744.
  - \*\*\*\* Commander 1ST Combined Communication Unit Dispatch 211002 October 1944 to Communications Officer Main Force, all fleet and squadron commanders Combined Fleet, Detailed Action Report ZUIHO, SHO No. 1 Operation, October 20th - 25th, 1944, WDC Document 161008.



and (b) a battle report from Commander FIFTH Base Air Force reporting the surprise torpedo attack by one carrier attack plane on enemy ships in Leyte Gulf the afternoon of October 20th. The damage claimed was the sinking of one large transport.\* Actually, the ship hit was the HONOLULU which had been seriously damaged by one torpedo hit.\*\*

At 1231, having received information from Palawan and Mindoro Islands that the Allied planes were operating in these areas, his Chief of Staff advised Commander SIXTH Base Air Force that the B-24 reconnaissance-attack range had been extended to Puerto Princesa (Palawan) and San Jose (southwest coast Mindoro) and to be alert.\*\*\*

At 1251 he directed Commander SECOND Striking Force to proceed to Manila to arrive by early morning of October 23rd at the latest.\*\*\*\*

While the reasons for this sudden order which was at variance with his order of the previous day—he had directed that the SECOND Striking Force operate in the future as directed by Commander SECOND Striking Force\*\*\*\*\*—are not available to this analysis, it seems likely that they were as follows:

(a) It will be recalled that (1) for some time he had been consulting with the army in Manila relative to the transportation of troops to Leyte from Formosa as well as from the Visayas for counterlanding operations,\*\*\*\*\* (2) the army desired to employ the entire SECOND Striking Force in such transportation operations,\*\*\*\*\* (3) since he was opposed to the

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- \* Commander 5TH Base Air Force Dispatch 211000 October 1944 to 5TH Base Air Force, Battle Report Addressees, Detailed Action Report No. 3, 253rd Attack Unit (331st Air Group), October 20th - November 13th, 1944, WDC Document 160354, NA 12378.
  - \*\* War Diary HONOLULU, October 20th, 1944.
  - \*\*\* CofS SW Area Force Dispatch 211231 October 1944 to Commanders Main Force, 6TH Base Air Force, etc., Detailed Action Report ZUIHO, SHO No. 1 Operation, October 20th - 25th, 1944, WDC Document 161008.
  - \*\*\*\* Commander SW Area Force Dispatch 211251 October 1944 to Commanders 2ND Striking Force, CRUDIV 16, info CinC Combined Fleet, Commanders 1ST Striking Force, SW Area Force, 6TH Base Air Force (SW Area Force DesOpOrd No. 678), War Diary DESRON 1, October 1944, WDC Document 161638, NA 11739.
  - \*\*\*\*\* Commander SW Area Force Dispatch 201428 October 1944 to 2ND Striking Force, COMCRUDIV 16, CinC Combined Fleet, all fleet and squadron commanders SW Area Force (SW Area Force DesOpOrd No. 672), War Diary DESRON 1, October 1944, WDC Document 161638, NA 11739.
  - \*\*\*\*\* CofS SW Area Force Dispatch 202137 October 1944 to Chief 1ST Section, Imperial GHQ (Navy Section), info CinC Combined Fleet, 2ND Striking Force, Main Force, SW Area Force, COMCRUDIV 16, Detailed Action Report CRUDIV 16, SHO Operation, October 17th - 27th, 1944, WDC Document 161005, NA 11744.



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employment of his units for the transportation of the Formosa troops at this time, he had recommended to Imperial General Headquarters (Navy Section) that CRUDIV TWENTY-ONE and DESRON ONE be released from such assignment and instead, be ordered to share in the penetration operation, leaving CRUDIV SIXTEEN to assist the army in the Visayas,\* (4) he had received Commander SECOND Striking Force's dispatch which stated, among other items, that the SECOND Striking Force, if included in the penetration operation, planned to be twenty miles south of Cape Calavite Light at 1500 October 23rd,\*\* and (5) Commander SECOND Striking Force had cancelled his sortie plans and had no plans to proceed to Manila.\*\*\*

(b) While the possible employment of the SECOND Striking Force was still under discussion, he learned that (1) the army had decided that it was not yet ready to move the SIXTY-EIGHTH Brigade to Leyte Island from Formosa, (2) the troops (two battalions) from the central Philippines would not be ready until the night of October 27th, and (3) the army, separately from the above reinforcements, was planning to move one to two regiments by naval ships from Manila to Leyte\*\*\*\* where they would make a counterlanding, or would be immediately moved to the Carigara area (Leyte, north coast). He believed that it was not feasible to accomplish this counterlanding on the night of October 25th. The above information (paragraph (b)) was not yet available to Commander SECOND Striking Force.

(c) He also learned that Commander Takao Guard District expected the Formosa area to be attacked that day by China-based U.S. air forces.\*\*\*\*\*

As a result of the above and because of the shortage of time, he decided that it would be wise (a) to move the SECOND Striking Force from Mako,

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\* CofS SW Area Force Dispatch 202137 October 1944 to Chief 1ST Section, Imperial GHQ (Navy Section), info CinC Combined Fleet, 2ND Striking Force, Main Force, SW Area Force, COMCRUDIV 16, Detailed Action Report CRUDIV 16, SHO Operation, October 17th - 27th, 1944, WDC Document 161005, NA 11744.

\*\* CofS 2ND Striking Force Dispatch 201932 October 1944 to Commander 1ST Striking Force, info Combined Fleet, SW Area Force, Imperial GHQ (Navy Section), War Diary DESRON 10, October 1944, WDC Document 161638, NA 11739.

\*\*\* Commander 2ND Striking Force Dispatch 202340 October 1944 to CinC Combined Fleet, Commander Takao Guard District, info Commanders 1ST Striking Force, Main Force, 5TH and 6TH Base Air Forces, CRUDIV 16, Chief 1ST Section Imperial GHQ (Navy Section), Detailed Action Report CRUDIV 16, SHO Operation, October 17th - 27th, 1944, WDC Document 161005, NA 11744.

\*\*\*\* CofS SW Area Force Dispatch 211322 October 1944 to Commanders 2ND Striking Force, CRUDIV 16, Detailed Action Report CRUDIV 16, SHO Operation, October 17th - 27th, 1944, WDC Document 161005, NA 11744.

\*\*\*\*\* Takao Naval Guard District Dispatch (date-time group unknown but received at 1340 by DESRON 1) to all forces, War Diary DESRON 1, October 1944, WDC Document 161638, NA 11739.



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where it could be readily bombed by China-based planes, and (b) as a first move, to have it arrive off Manila early morning October 23rd because he hoped that, by that time, the decision of Imperial General Headquarters relative to the future employment of the SECOND Striking Force would have been made. If the decision were in favor of (a) the penetration operation, Commander SECOND Striking Force would then be in excellent position to carry out his planned operation, and (b) the counterlanding operation from Manila, Commander SECOND Striking Force would be likewise in excellent position, based on time and distance, to carry out that phase. His decision, therefore, to order Commander SECOND Striking Force to Manila was sound.

About this time he decided that it would also be wise to advise the interested commanders as to the developing situation with relation to the army, which information is mentioned under (b) (1), (2) and (3) above; and therefore, at 1322 his Chief of Staff sent them a dispatch which embraced this information and ended with the oft-repeated recommendation "Therefore, our opinion is that at least CRUDIV TWENTY-ONE and DESRON ONE should carry out a penetration attack through Surigao Strait in coordination with the penetration of the FIRST Striking Force".\*

At 1345, in view of the prospective arrival of the SIXTH Base Air Force in the Philippines, Commander SW Area Force issued his command instructions thereon through his SW Area Force DesOpOrd No. 679 as follows:

"1. Based on Combined Fleet DesOpOrd No. 363, this command will assume command of all naval air forces assembled in the Philippines area. Cooperating closely with the surface forces and army forces, it will destroy first the enemy task force east of the Philippines and then the enemy invasion forces.

"2. After SIXTH Base Air Force has moved up to the Philippines, the air forces present in that area will effect close cooperation and liaison and operate as follows:

"(In the order of unit, commander and principal mission).

(a) FIFTH Base Air Force (including units under its command); Commander FIRST Air Fleet; surprise attacks on enemy carriers and patrol of the area east of the Philippines.

(b) SIXTH Base Air Force (including units under its command); Commander SECOND Air Fleet; antisubmarine and antiaircraft patrols, then, attacks on enemy invasion forces and patrols, reconnaissance and tracking.

(c) 954th Air Group (including units under its command); Commander

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\* CofS SW Area Force Dispatch 211322 October 1944 to Commanders 2ND Striking Force, CRUDIV 16, info CinC Combined Fleet, Commander 1ST Striking Force, etc., Detailed Action Report CRUDIV 16, SHO Operation, October 17th - 27th, 1944, WDC Document 161005, NA 11744.

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954th Air Group; fleet antisubmarine patrol and protection of surface traffic.

(d) 955th Air Group (including units under its command); Commander 955th Air Group; same as 954th Air Group."\*

As noted under "Operations of Commander SIXTH Base Air Force, October 21st", the tasks assigned to Commander SIXTH Base Air Force failed to include strikes against the enemy carrier force. Since Combined Fleet DesOpOrd No. 363, upon which this order was based, did contain that specific task, i.e., launch an all-out offensive against enemy carrier forces on October 24th, it appears that its omission here was either inadvertent or it was understood to have been accomplished in addition to the assigned tasks of this order. In this connection the Naval War College wrote to the Chief, Military History Section, Headquarters U. S. Army Forces, Far East Command, requesting comment on this aspect of the order,\*\* to which he replied that the translation of paragraph 2.(b) was seriously in error, and that the phrase "anti-submarine and anti-aircraft patrols" should read "attacks on enemy task forces".\*\*\* Upon receipt of this information the order in question was again submitted to the World War II Battle Evaluation Group translator\*\*\*\* who again reviewed the document but persisted in her original translation which appears above. Her version was also supported by Mr. Roger Pineau, Naval History Division, Washington, D.C.\*\*\*\*\* Since the above reply of the Army contained numerous errors of fact, it was decided that the version of the World War II Battle Evaluation Group translator was more likely correct and therefore that translation has been accepted.

At 1600 or earlier (COMDESRON TEN received it at this time) he received, as an information addressee, another dispatch warning from CinC Combined Fleet advising Commander FIRST Striking Force that his command had apparently been sighted by enemy reconnaissance planes and to tighten his alert.\*\*\*\*\*

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- \* Commander SW Area Force Dispatch 211345 October 1944 to Commanders 5TH and 6TH Base Air Forces, 954th and 955th Air Groups, 1ST and 2ND Striking Force, Main Force (SW Area Force DesOpOrd No. 679), Detailed Action Report 1ST Striking Force, SHO Operations, October 16th - 28th, 1944, WDC Document 161641, NA 11839.
  - \*\* President, Naval War College letter serial 2050-55 dated 22 September 1955 to Chief, Military History Section, HQ, USAFFE.
  - \*\*\* HQ USAFFE/8A (Rear) letter MH 314.8 dated 2 November 1955 to President, Naval War College.
  - \*\*\*\* Mrs. Lily Y. Tanaka, Japanese Translator, World War II Battle Evaluation Group.
  - \*\*\*\*\* Letters to Commodore R.W. Bates, USN(Ret), Head, World War II Battle Evaluation Group, Naval War College from Mr. Roger Pineau, Office of the Chief of Naval Operations, Naval History Division, Washington, D.C. dated 13 December 1955 and 21 December 1955.
  - \*\*\*\*\* CinC Combined Fleet Dispatch 211145 October 1944 to 1ST Striking Force, info SW Area Force, 5TH Base Air Force, War Diary DESRON 10, October 1944, WDC Document 161638, NA 11739.



By 1807 (COMBATDIV ONE received it at this time) he received Commander SECOND Striking Force's sortie order issued in compliance with his directive to be off Manila in the morning of October 23rd.\*

At 1822 he cancelled the "U" Operation Alert\*\* for the Car Nicobar Islands, which he had issued at 2246 October 19th.\*\*\* The "U" Operation appeared to have prescribed the tasks to be undertaken by the sub-area forces, both surface forces and land-based air forces.

During the afternoon he had continued his discussions with the army relative to the possibility of carrying out a counterlanding with troops from the Manila area on the night of October 25th. This, as he had forecast in his 211322,\*\*\*\* had been found infeasible and therefore, discussions had been shifted to the possibility of moving troops from the Cagayan area of Mindanao Island. Since this seems feasible, he now concluded an agreement with the army (apparently with C.G. FOURTEENTH Area Army)\*\*\*\*\* relative thereto and at 1910 advised all interested commands by dispatch (this dispatch is not available in its entirety but the substance of it is available in his 221320) that he had concluded an Army-Navy Agreement with the army whereby the navy agreed to transport two infantry battalions from Cagayan, Mindanao Island, to Leyte under command of COMCRUDIV SIXTEEN as Commander Guard Force.\*\*\*\*\* This dispatch is interesting in that this is the first time that Cagayan has been mentioned as an embarkation point of troops for the Leyte operation.

After sending this dispatch and (a) seemingly concerned over the situation developing because of the indecision of CinC Combined Fleet and

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- \* Commander 2ND Striking Force Dispatch 211455 October 1944 to Commander SW Area Force, CinC Combined Fleet, Commander 1ST Striking Force, etc., War Diary BATDIV 1, October 1944, WDC Document 161638, NA 11739.
  - \*\* Commander SW Area Force Dispatch 211822 October 1944 to all fleet and squadron commanders SW Area Force (SW Area Force DesOpOrd No. 681) War Diary DESRON 1, October 1944, WDC Document 161638, NA 11739.
  - \*\*\* Commander SW Area Force Dispatch 192246 October 1944 to SW Area Force (SW Area Force DesOpOrd No. 669), War Diary 23rd Air Flotilla, October 1944, WDC Document 160264, NA 12546.
  - \*\*\*\* CofS SW Area Force Dispatch 211322 October 1944 to Commanders 2ND Striking Force, CRUDIV 16, info CinC Combined Fleet, Imperial General Headquarters (Navy Section), etc., Detailed Action Report CRUDIV 16, SHO Operation, October 17th - 27th, 1944, WDC Document 161005, NA 11744.
  - \*\*\*\*\* Philippine Operations, The 14TH Area Army Command in Leyte, 1ST Demobilization Ministry, October 1946, Volume II, Phase 3.
  - \*\*\*\*\* Commander SW Area Force Dispatch 221320 October 1944 to COMCRUDIV 16, Transports 9, 6, 10, 101, 102, info CinC Combined Fleet, 1ST and 2ND Striking Forces, Main Force, 6TH Base Air Force (SW Area Force DesOpOrd No. 684) Detailed Action Report CRUDIV 16, SHO Operation, October 17th-27th, 1944, WDC Document 161005, NA 11744.

Imperial General Headquarters relative to the employment of the SECOND Striking Force, (b) feeling that an immediate decision was highly important and that perhaps he had not clarified his own ideas sufficiently, he directed his chief of staff to advise the high commands accordingly. Therefore, at 1914 the chief of staff sent a dispatch as follows:

"Referring to SW Area Force Dispatch 211910. Opinions of this headquarters concerning conduct of operations in this area are as follows:

(1) CRUDIV TWENTY-ONE and DESRON ONE under Commander FIRST Striking Force command should participate in decisive battle operations of the FIRST Striking Force and execute a penetration through Surigao Strait.

(2) Depending on the situation after conclusion of the decisive battle, CRUDIV TWENTY-ONE, DESRON ONE, CRUDIV SIXTEEN and other units may be employed to effect the second reinforcement transport operation.

(3) Depending on the situation of CRUDIV SIXTEEN following its departure from Brunei, there is no objection to cancelling its orders to come to Manila and sending it directly to Cagayan."\*

This dispatch is of particular interest because here the Chief of Staff SW Area Force, after repeating his recommendation that CRUDIV TWENTY-ONE and DESRON ONE be included in the penetration operation, had recommended for the first time that CRUDIV TWENTY-ONE and DESRON ONE be assigned to Commander FIRST Striking Force for this operation. Why he made this latter recommendation is not explained, but it seems likely that he did it because, having heard nothing from Commander FIRST Striking Force concerning his final plans for the penetration operation and (a) feeling that (1) that commander was having difficulty deciding whether or not to divide his command into two groups, as recommended by CinC Combined Fleet in his 201006 (one group to pass through San Bernardino Strait and one through Surigao Strait),\*\* and (2) a decision to place CRUDIV TWENTY-ONE and DESRON ONE under Commander FIRST Striking Force might facilitate the latter commander's decision whether or not so to divide his command, (b) realizing that it was perhaps too late for CRUDIV TWENTY-ONE and DESRON ONE to operate in support of the Main Force, as previously

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\* CofS SW Area Force Dispatch 211914 October 1944 to CinC Combined Fleet, Commander 2ND Striking Force, COMCRUDIV 16, Imperial General Headquarters (Navy Section), info Commanders Main Force, 1ST Striking Force, 5TH and 6TH Base Air Forces, Detailed Action Report CRUDIV 16, JHO Operation, October 17th - 27th, 1944, WDC Document 161005, NA 11744.

\*\* CinC Combined Fleet Dispatch 201006 October 1944, addressees unknown. Information compiled by Captain Toshikazu Ohmae, ex-IJN, Japanese Research Division, HQ, USAFFE, Military History Section, relating to Penetration Operation of the 1ST Striking Force, Battle for Leyte Gulf, contained in HQ, USAFFE, Military History Section, letter March 30th, 1954, to President, Naval War College.



suggested,\* because the latter force was well at sea in radio silence, and (c) not desiring under the limited information available concerning the "penetration operation" plans of Commander FIRST Striking Force to have the responsibility of handling the SECOND Striking Force, he had concluded that perhaps a flat recommendation as above might be helpful.

His inclusion of paragraphs two and three of the basic dispatch wherein he pointed out (a) the forces which would later be available for troop transportation, and (b) that CRUDIV SIXTEEN could be diverted to Cagayan, if desired, appears to have been designed to reduce the army's opposition to the inclusion of CRUDIV TWENTY-ONE and DESRON ONE in the penetration operation.

IF THE ABOVE WERE HIS REASONS FOR SENDING THIS DISPATCH, THEY SEEM SOUND FOR TIME WAS NOW LIMITED AND IF THE DECISION AS TO THE FUTURE MOVEMENTS OF CRUDIV TWENTY-ONE AND DESRON ONE WERE LONG DELAYED ITS EMPLOYMENT IN THE PENETRATION OPERATION, IF ORDERED, WOULD MOST LIKELY BE UNDER CIRCUMSTANCES CONSIDERABLY LESS FAVORABLE TO THE SUCCESS OF THE OPERATION.

During the afternoon he received a report of enemy landings on Rapu Rapu Island near Legaspi,\*\* and at about 1930 learned that this report was false.\*\*\*

Sometime on this day he issued a warning that Japanese surface ships were operating in Philippine Island waters and directed that (a) attention should be paid to recognition signals, and (b) caution should be exercised to prevent communications exposing the operations of these ships.

Several hours after this (at 2211) through his chief of staff and apparently in implementation of the basic Army - Navy Agreement referred to above, he informed COMCRUDIV SIXTEEN that (a) transports No. Six (about sixteen knots),\*\*\*\* Nos. Nine and Ten (about eighteen knots),\*\*\*\* Nos. 101 and 102 (about eleven knots)\*\*\*\* were to concentrate at Cagayan on the evening of the 24th, (b) upon arrival, they were to come under COMCRUDIV SIXTEEN command, (c) transport No. 131 was to proceed directly from Manila to Leyte with a cargo of army ordnance and ammunition, and (d) COMCRUDIV SIXTEEN was authorized to complete arrangements to Cagayan with

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- \* CofS SW Area Force Dispatch 192230 October 1944 to CinC Combined Fleet, info Commanders 1ST Striking Force, 2ND Striking Force, Main Force, CRUDIV 16, etc., Detailed Action Report CRUDIV 16, SHO Operation, October 17th - 27th, 1944, WDC Document 161005, NA 11744.
- \*\* Commander 33rd Special Base Air Force Dispatch 211250 October 1944, addressee unknown, but likely all commands, Detailed Action Report Main Force, SHO No. 1 Operation, October 20th - 29th, 1944, WDC Document 161005, NA 11744.
- \*\*\* Ibid., Commander 33rd Special Base Air Force Dispatch 211900 October 1944.
- \*\*\*\* The speeds in parentheses were included in the basic dispatch.

C.G. THIRTY-FIFTH Army (presently at Cebu) for the Cagayan - Leyte transport operation.\*

Commander FOURTEENTH Area Army's coordinate action with relation to the above was promulgated to C.G. THIRTY-FIFTH Army, apparently in the evening of October 21st, as follows:

"a. The enemy is landing in the Leyte area.

The navy and air forces will concentrate their entire strength and destroy the enemy on X-day.

b. In coordination with the (above) operation by the navy and air forces to destroy the enemy, the Area Army will destroy the enemy landing in the Leyte area.

c. 1. C.G. THIRTY-FIFTH Army will concentrate his strength as much as possible and will destroy the enemy.

2. In order to cooperate with the above, the navy will dispatch CRUDIV SIXTEEN and transports (assigned) to Cagayan, Mindanao, to arrive there on the evening of October 24th.

d. Around October 23rd (1) the TWENTIETH Independent Anti-tank Unit will depart Manila for Leyte, (2) the infantry battalion of the FIFTY-SEVENTH Independent Brigade (presently) at Cebu (this battalion, while heading for the Netherlands East Indies, had been shipwrecked and landed on Cebu) will be placed under the command of C.G. FOURTEEN Area Army.\*\*

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\* CofS SW Area Force Dispatch 212211 October 1944 to COMCRUDIV 16, info CinC Combined Fleet, Commanders 2ND Striking Force, 33RD Special Base Force, Transports 6, 9, 10, 101, 102 and 131, Detailed Action Report CRUDIV 16, SHO Operation, October 17th - 27th, 1944, WDC Document 161005, NA 11744.

\*\* Translation of Chapter II B.2., Philippine Operation, The 14TH Area Army Command in Leyte, 1ST Demobilization Ministry, October 1946, Volume II, Phase 3, contained in letter from Mrs. Lily Y. Tanaka, Japanese Translator, Naval History Division, Office of the Chief of Naval Operations to Commodore R.W. Bates, USN(Ret), Head, World War II Battle Evaluation Group, Naval War College, dated October 26th, 1956.



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## (a) Operations of Commander SECOND Striking Force, October 21st.

At 0000 October 21st Commander SECOND Striking Force, with CRUDIV TWENTY-ONE and DESRON ONE, was at anchor in Mako, completing fueling the NACHI and ASHIGARA from the RYOEI MARU, preparatory to advancing to the Philippines,\* while CRUDIV SIXTEEN was at Brunei fueling and awaiting orders.\*\*

At 0630 the NACHI and ASHIGARA cast off from the oiler and returned to their original anchorages.\*\*\*

At 0750, in accordance with CinC Combined Fleet's order of October 20th to furnish escorts for the convoy of SIXTH Base Air Force ground personnel and material to the Philippines,\*\*\*\* and in accordance with his decision thereon of the previous day, he ordered DESDIV TWENTY-ONE (WAKABA, HATSUSHIMO, HATSUHARU) to proceed to the commercial port of Takao to arrive by evening of this day.\*\*\*\*\*

At 0906, by SigOrd No. 136, he directed his command at Mako to enforce No. Two antiaircraft alert from 1030 to 1530.\*\*\*\*\*

At 1135 he received a dispatch from Commander Takao Naval District advising that there was a likelihood that Allied aircraft operating from China would attack Formosa and the Japanese main islands on the following day.\*\*\*\*\* This was of considerable importance for Mako was even nearer to the Chinese mainland than was Takao and the possibility of his being bombed was great. However, he did not have to worry for the immediate present, as the attack was reportedly not to occur on that day. Assuming the above information to be correct, he now decided that his action in remaining at Mako to await there a decision concerning his future operations was sound. He therefore took no action.

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- \* War Diary DESRON 1, October 1944, WDC Document 161638, NA 11739.
  - \*\* Detailed Action Report CRUDIV 16, SHO Operation, October 17th - 27th, 1944, WDC Document 161005, NA 11739.
  - \*\*\* Commander 2ND Striking Force Visual Dispatch 202330 October 1944 to 2ND Striking Force (at Mako), War Diary DESRON 1, October 1944, WDC Document 161638, NA 11739.
  - \*\*\*\* CinC Combined Fleet Dispatch 200834 October 1944 to Commander 2ND Striking Force, COMDESRON 1, info Commanders SW Area Force, Takao Guard District (Combined Fleet DesOpOrd No. 460), War Diary DESRON 1, October 1944, WDC Document 161638, NA 11739.
  - \*\*\*\*\* Commander 2ND Striking Force Visual Dispatch 210750 October 1944 to 2ND Striking Force, War Diary DESRON 1, October 1944, WDC Document 161638, NA 11739.
  - \*\*\*\*\* Commander 2ND Striking Force Visual Dispatch 210906 October 1944 to 2ND Striking Force (2ND Striking Force SigOrd No. 136), War Diary DESRON 1, October 1944, WDC Document 161638, NA 11739.
  - \*\*\*\*\* Takao Naval Guard District Dispatch (time group unknown) October 21st, 1944 to 2ND Striking Force, War Diary DESRON 1, October 1944, WDC Document 161638, NA 11739.



At 1200 DESDIV TWENTY-ONE departed for Takao as ordered.\*

At 1300 he received the dispatch sent to all commands by CinC Combined Fleet confirming X-day as October 25th and Y-day (X-1) as October 24th.\*\*

At 1340 he received a second dispatch from Commander Takao Guard District which stated, in effect, that (a) it was highly probable China-based U.S. air forces would begin attacking the Formosa area from today in support of the landing forces in the Philippines, (b) about fifty enemy planes passed over (the place name given here is unidentifiable but is presumably Chinese) at 1100 heading east and southeast, and (c) an alert is necessary.\*\*\*

Sometime after this he received a dispatch from Commander SW Area Force directing the SECOND Striking Force to proceed to Manila, to arrive not later than early morning October 23rd.\*\*\*\* Since there was no reason given in this dispatch for these orders, it seems likely that he realized that he was being transferred to Manila not only to have his command in a better relative position should he be ordered to partake in either the penetration operation or the counterlanding operation but also, in view of the Allied air strikes expected for today, to remove the command from the Mako area.

As a consequence of this order he issued at 1430 by visual dispatch his SigOrd No. 137 wherein he advised his command that, "This force will sortie tonight and proceed south. CRUDIV TWENTY-ONE time of departure will be 1700".\*\*\*\*\* He sent this dispatch to Commander Mako Base Force as well so that that commander might make the necessary arrangements for the departure of the above two units which arrangements likely concerned the opening of the antisubmarine net--if one was there--and the employment of base small craft in antisubmarine measures.

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- \* War Diary DESRON 1, October 1944, WDC Document 161638, NA 11739.
  - \*\* CinC Combined Fleet Dispatch 211031 October 1944 to all commanders Combined Fleet, Detailed Action Report BATDIV 1, SHO No. 1 Operation, October 18th - 28th, 1944, WDC Document 161005, NA 11744.
  - \*\*\* Commander Takao Guard District Visual Dispatch (date-time group unknown but received at 1340 by DESRON 1) October 1944 to all forces, War Diary DESRON 1, October 1944, WDC Document 161638, NA 11739.
  - \*\*\*\* Commander SW Area Force Dispatch 211251 October 1944 to Commander 2ND Striking Force, COMCRUDIV 16 (SW Area Force DesOpOrd No. 678), Detailed Action Report CRUDIV 16, SHO Operation, October 17th - 27th, 1944, WDC Document 161005, NA 11744.
  - \*\*\*\*\* Commander 2ND Striking Force Visual Dispatch 211430 October 1944 to 2ND Striking Force and Mako Base Force (2ND Striking Force SigOrd No. 137), War Diary DESDIV 7 (USHIO) October 1944, WDC Document 161717, NA 11801.

At 1455 he advised the interested commands that the SECOND Striking Force (less CRUDIV SIXTEEN and DESDIV TWENTY-ONE) would depart Mako at 1600 that day and was scheduled to arrive at the entrance to Manila Bay at about 0700 October 23rd.\*

It will be observed that he did not issue direct orders to COM-CRUDIV SIXTEEN but instead listed him as an action addressee in the above dispatch. From this it is clear that he expected that that commander would automatically comply with Commander SW Area Force's dispatch 211251. In this he was correct for as shown under "Operations of COMCRUDIV SIXTEEN October 21st" CRUDIV SIXTEEN sortied from Brunei Bay for Manila at 1710.\*\*

During the forenoon and early afternoon he awaited the decision as to whether or not his entire command was to be employed in the counter-landings or whether such operations would be limited to CRUDIV SIXTEEN while he with CRUDIV TWENTY-ONE and DESRON ONE would then be employed in the penetration operation. Certainly, from his actions of the previous day, it seems clear that while he desired the latter he was somewhat fearful of the former (counterlandings).

At 1600, in the NACHI with CRUDIV TWENTY-ONE and DESRON ONE (less DESDIV TWENTY-ONE), he sortied Mako and proceeded toward Manila.\*\*\*

At 1637 (when it was received by COMCRUDIV SIXTEEN) he received a dispatch from the Chief of Staff SW Area Force which, after discussing the Army's difficulties with regard to reinforcements to the Leyte area, recommended that at least CRUDIV TWENTY-ONE and DESRON ONE be directed to carry out a penetration attack through Surigao Strait in coordination with the penetration of the FIRST Striking Force.\*\*\*\* Based on the thoughts expressed above, this dispatch was doubtless most pleasing to him. Whether this was so simply because he desired to be in the penetration operation with no depth of strategic concept, or whether it was so because he realized that a naval victory was essential at this point and that, since the Japanese forces were inferior, it was essential for success that all units available be included in the Japanese order of battle, is not known. From the fact that he at no time made any suggestion to this effect, it seems likely that the former is correct.

It is assumed that during the day he received most of the dispatches received by the other commands including the various contact reports

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- \* Commander 2ND Striking Force Dispatch 211455 October 1944 to Commander SW Area Force info CinC Combined Fleet, Commander 1ST Striking Force, COMCRUDIV 16, etc., War Diary BATDIV 1, October 1944, WDC Document 161638, NA 11739.
  - \*\* Detailed Action Report No. 6, AOBA, Antisubmarine Action West of Philippines, October 18th - 24th, 1944, WDC Document 161747.
  - \*\*\* War Diary DESRON 1, October 1944, WDC Document 161638, NA 11739.
  - \*\*\*\* CofS SW Area Force Dispatch 211322 October 1944 to Commander 2ND Striking Force and COMCRUDIV 16, etc., Detailed Action Report CRUDIV 16, SHO Operation, October 17th - 27th, 1944, WDC Document 161005, NA 11744.



and was therefore alert to the developing situation in the Philippines and to the operations under consideration for countering every action.

Sometime in the early evening and probably about 1945 (when it was received by Commander FIRST Striking Force) he received Commander SW Area Force DesOpOrd No. 679 wherein that commander (a) announced that he was assuming command of all naval air forces assembled in the Philippines area, and (b) assigned tasks to the naval air forces under his command once the SIXTH Base Air Force had moved to the Philippines.\*

At 2315, entirely unknown to his command, they were contacted by radar by the submarine SEADRAGON which at 2317 notified the other two submarines (SHARK, BLACKFISH)\*\* giving a fairly accurate report of the position of the force, its course (210°(T)), speed (sixteen) and composition (four ships).\*\*\* As a result of this contact report, the SHARK and BLACKFISH, operating on the surface, set course and speed to intercept.

At 2400 Commander SECOND Striking Force, with the SECOND Striking Force less CRUDIV SIXTEEN (which is discussed in the following pages) and DESDIV TWENTY-ONE, was bearing approximately 240°(T), distant about 140 miles from Garan Bi.

At this time COMDESDIV TWENTY-ONE, with DESDIV TWENTY-ONE, was at Takao where he had arrived a few hours earlier—exact time not known.

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- \* Commander SW Area Force Dispatch 211345 October 1944 to Commanders 5TH and 6TH Base Air Forces, 954th and 955th Air Groups, 1ST and 2ND Striking Forces, Mobile Force (SW Area Force DesOpOrd No. 679), Detailed Action Report 1ST Striking Force, SHO Operations, October 16th - 28th, 1944, WDC Document 161641, NA 11839.
- \*\* War Patrol Report SEADRAGON, Report of 11TH War Patrol, Serial 194, November 8th, 1944.
- \*\*\* War Patrol Report BLACKFISH, Report of 9TH War Patrol, Serial 001, November (n), 1944.

## (1) Operations of COMCRUDIV SIXTEEN, October 21st.

At 0000 COMCRUDIV SIXTEEN, with CRUDIV SIXTEEN (AOBA, KINU, URANAMI), was at anchor at Brunei Bay. He had completed fueling the previous evening and was now awaiting orders. He well knew from the numerous dispatches relating thereto that his command would be engaged in the transport of troops from the Visayan Islands to Leyte.

In confirmation of the above he now (at 0140—the time that it was received by the AOBA)\* received dispatch orders to carry out the first movement of troop reinforcements in direct consultation with the FOURTEENTH Area Army.\*\*

At 1504 he received a dispatch from Commander SW Area Force directing the SECOND Striking Force to advance to Manila by the morning of October 23rd at the latest.\*\*\*

In accordance with this dispatch he directed his command by visual signal (a) at 1600 to prepare to sortie immediately, and (b) at 1635 (by blinker) that the command would depart Brunei Bay at 1645.\*\*\*\* The time allowance here of ten minutes was inadequate for it was not until 1710 that the AOBA sortied.\*

It is assumed that during the day he received most of the dispatches received by the other commands, including the various contact reports and was therefore alert to the developing situation in the Philippines and to the operations under consideration for countering enemy action.

He knew, of course, that all indications now were that he would handle the counterlandings with CRUDIV SIXTEEN alone and that Commander SECOND Striking Force, with CRUDIV TWENTY-ONE and DESRON ONE would be included in the penetration operation.

At about 2102, while underway for Manila, he received two important dispatches: one, from Commander SW Area Force, reported an Army-Navy Agreement wherein the navy agreed to transport two infantry battalions

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- \* Detailed Action Report No. 6, AOBA, Antisubmarine Action West of Philippines, October 18th - 24th, 1944, WDC Document 161747.
  - \*\* Commander 2ND Striking Force Dispatch 201756 October 1944 to COMCRUDIV 16 (2ND Striking Force DesOpOrd No. 8), War Diary, DESRON 1, October 1944, WDC Document 161638, NA 11739.
  - \*\*\* Commander SW Area Force Dispatch 211251 October 1944 to Commander 2ND Striking Force, COMCRUDIV 16, info to Commander 1ST Striking Force, etc. (SW Area Force DesOpOrd No. 678), Detailed Action Report KINU, SHO No. 1 Operation, October 18th - 26th, 1944, WDC Document 161007.
  - \*\*\*\* COMCRUDIV 16 (Visual) Dispatches 211600 and 211635 October 1944 to CRUDIV 16, Detailed Action Report KINU, SHO No. 1 Operation, October 18th - 26th, 1944, WDC Document 161007.



from Cagayan to Leyte under command of COMCRUDIV SIXTEEN;\* the other, from the Chief of Staff SW Area Force, stated among other items, that SW Area Force Headquarters believed that if, upon departure from Brunei Bay for Manila, the military situation required the presence of CRUDIV SIXTEEN at Cagayan (Mindanao Island) rather than at Manila, there was no objection to such a change.\*\*

While this latter dispatch was not an order but was only the opinion of the headquarters of Commander SW Area Force, it appears to have been sent for guidance and also appears to have had the force of an order. Some neither Commander SECOND Striking Force nor COMCRUDIV SIXTEEN acted on it on this day, it is clear that the Japanese command thought that the situation was not favorable for a change.

At 2400 COMCRUDIV SIXTEEN was in approximate position Latitude 06°-45'N, Longitude 114°-50'E, bearing 345°(T), distant ninety miles from Labuan Island, Brunei Bay.

(b) Operations of Commander FIFTH Base Air Force, October 21st.

About 0043 Commander FIFTH Base Air Force, while still in conference at the headquarters of Commander SW Area Force,\*\*\* received a SIXTH Base Air Force dispatch announcing that that command would tentatively carry out the general offensive on October 23rd and further that it was planned to conduct a dusk and night attack on October 22nd and that flying units would move up to the Philippines on October 22nd.\*\*\*\* He noted that this dispatch advanced the date of the offensive by one day which meant that he would likely have more strength to contribute to the operation because of less attrition from enemy air attacks.

The conference broke up about 0130.\*\*\*

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- \* Commander SW Area Force Dispatch 211910 October 1944 (Addressees unknown), substance of which is referred to in Commander SW Area Force Dispatch 221320 October 1944 to COMCRUDIV 16, Transports 9, 10, 6, 102, info CinC Combined Fleet, 1ST and 2ND Striking Forces, Main Force, 6TH Base Air Force, Detailed Action Report CRUDIV 16, SHO Operation, October 17th - 27th, 1944, WDC Document 161005, NA 11744.
  - \*\* CofS SW Area Force Dispatch 211914 October 1944 to CinC Combined Fleet, Commander 2ND Striking Force, CRUDIV 16, Imperial GHQ (Navy Section), info Commanders Main Force, 6TH Base Air Force, Detailed Action Report CRUDIV 16, SHO Operation, October 17th - 27th, 1944, WDC Document 161005, NA 11744.
  - \*\*\* Memorandum Notes of Captain Bunzo Shibata, IJN, Senior Staff Officer, 6TH Base Air Force, October 10th - 23rd, 1944, Department of the Army Historical Division Microfilm HS-22, Item B.
  - \*\*\*\* Commander 6TH Base Air Force Dispatch 210013 October 1944 to 6TH Base Air Force, War Diary, 103rd Attack Unit, (701st Air Group), Kokubu Detachment, October 13th - 31st, 1944, WDC Document 160258, NA 12592.

At 0505 he received, as an information addressee, a dispatch from the Chief of Staff SIXTH Base Air Force informing Commander Western Attack Force ONE that it had been (a) decided to carry out the SHO One general offensive by the SIXTH Base Air Force ordered by Combined Fleet DesOpOrd 363 on October 23rd, and (b) tentatively decided to conduct a dusk and night attack on October 22nd, employing the SECOND Attack Group (Table 2).\*

This dispatch was of considerable importance in that the general offensive which had heretofore been scheduled as tentative now was confirmed.

No specific information is available on the extent of search and reconnaissance operations conducted by the FIFTH Base Air Force on this date. From the number and locations of contacts, however, it appears that the area covered was more extensive than on the previous day.

Possibly at 0700 (it was received by the Main Force at this time) he received Commander Advance Expeditionary Force DesOpOrd No. 1 directing the deployment and disposition of the "A" and "B" groups of submarines.\*\* This was important information for Commander FIFTH Base Air Force now knew that friendly submarines would soon be operating in certain definite areas, some within sixty miles of the eastern coast of the Philippines, and he could caution his command accordingly.

Commencing with early morning he began to receive contact reports from his planes with an 0818 contact on six transports and six destroyers, bearing 110°(T), distant 170 miles from Surigao.\*\*\* This appears to have been TG 78.9 consisting of six transport type ships and four destroyers which had departed the Leyte Gulf entrance at 2000 October 20th, (Contact C) (Plate XXIX).

Shortly thereafter he received an 0830 report on sixteen transports and two escort carriers, bearing 090°(T), distant 140 miles from Surigao,\*\*\* (Contact D). This was a contact on TG 78.6 consisting of two

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\* CofS 6TH Base Air Force Dispatch 210046 October 1944 to Western Attack Force 1, info 5TH and 6TH Base Air Forces, War Diary 701st Air Group, October 1st - 31st, 1944, WDC Document 160258.

\*\* Commander Advance Expeditionary Force Dispatch 202053 October 1944 to Advance Force, all commanders Combined Fleet (Advance Expeditionary Force DesOpOrd No. 1), Detailed Action Report BATDIV 1, SHO No. 1 Operation, October 18th - 28th, 1944, WDC Document 161005, NA 11744.

\*\*\* Collation of two documents which differ somewhat as to times, location and composition but which give the same general picture: Vice Admiral Matome Ugaki, IJN (COMBATDIV 1), Personal Diary SENSOROKU, Nippon Shuppan Kyodo Kabushiki Kaisha (Tokyo, March 15th, 1953), Volume II; Appended Chart II, Enemy Fleet Dispositions on October 21st, 1944, Detailed Action Report Main Force, SHO No. 1 Operation, October 20th - 29th, 1944, WDC Document 161005, NA 11744. (Note: Reference point appears to have been the town of Surigao near the northern tip of Mindanao).



CVE's, six DD's, fourteen APA's/AKA's, thirty-three LST's, twelve LSI's and two PF's. The group was en route Leyte via route SHEARWATER and was about 120 miles from the Leyte Gulf entrance and therefore about fifteen miles to the westward of the reported position. One of the escort carriers, KADASHAN BAY, made radar contact on an unidentified plane at 0835.\*

He then received two 0840 contacts. One (Contact F) was reported as two carriers, four escort carriers and twenty other ships, bearing 070°(T), distant 105 miles from Surigao.\*\* This contact appears to have been either TU 77.4.1, with four escort carriers, or TU 77.4.2, with six escort carriers, despite the fact that TU 77.4.1 (which was the nearer) was over fifty miles to the northwestward of the reported position. The second contact\*\*\* (Contact E) reported as eighteen transports, was in approximately the correct position for TG 78.3, consisting of eighteen transports and five destroyers, which had departed the entrance to Leyte Gulf at 0230 that morning.

Shortly thereafter, he apparently received a correction to the 0840 contact on the carriers which gave an 0900 position closer to Leyte Gulf\*\*\* (about 060°(T), distant sixty miles from Siarago Island). This position, while still incorrect, was about fifteen miles closer to the actual position of TU 77.4.1.

At about this time he received a contact report of surface ships which at 0920 were bearing 091°(T), distant 420 miles from Manila,\*\*\*\* (Contact G). Although the position reported was about sixty miles to the southwestward of their actual position, this appears to have been a contact report on TG's 38.1 and 38.4 which were then fueling. The lack of further details is attributed in part to the poor flying weather at the time in the vicinity of the fueling area. He also received another 0920 contact (Contact H) listed only as a task force estimated to be in the San Bernardino Strait.\*\*\*\* Whence came this contact report is not known as the Allies had no forces in this area.

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\* War Diary KADASHAN BAY, October 21st, 1944.

\*\* Collation of two documents which differ somewhat as to times, locations and composition but which give the same general picture: Vice Admiral Matome Ugaki, IJN (COMBATDIV 1), Personal Diary SENSOROKU, Nippon Shuppan Kyodo Kabushiki Kaisha (Tokyo, March 15th, 1953), Volume II; Appended Chart II, Enemy Fleet Dispositions on October 21st, 1944, Detailed Action Report Main Force, SHO No. 1 Operation, October 20th - 29th, 1944, WDC Document 161005, NA 11744. (Note: Reference point appears to have been the town of Surigao near the northern tip of Mindanao.

\*\*\* Appended Chart II, Enemy Fleet Dispositions on October 21st, 1944, Detailed Action Report Main Force, SHO No. 1 Operation, October 20th - 29th, 1944, WDC Document 161005, NA 11744.

\*\*\*\* Vice Admiral Matome Ugaki, IJN (COMBATDIV 1), Personal Diary SENSOROKU Nippon Shuppan Kyodo Kabushiki Kaisha (Tokyo, March 15th, 1953), Volume II; and Appended Chart II, Enemy Fleet Dispositions on October 21st, 1944, Detailed Action Report Main Force, SHO No. 1 Operation, October 20th - 29th, 1944, WDC Document 161005, NA 11744.



Shortly thereafter he received a 0935 contact report on one battleship and twenty-four other ships, bearing 350°, distant 160 miles from Suluan Island\* (Contact I). Although this position was approximately correct for TG 38.2, the sighting appears to have been made on TG 38.3, which was about fifteen miles to the westward, because the lookouts in the LEXINGTON sighted a low flying twin-engine plane at 0945 about eight miles from that task group. The plane managed to escape.\*\*

At 1000 he sent a dispatch announcing that two carrier-type attack planes had carried out a surprise attack on enemy ships in Leyte Gulf the previous day (October 20th) and had sunk one large transport.\*\*\* Actually, no transports had been sunk or even hit at this time. However, the HONOLULU had been seriously damaged by an aerial torpedo on that day\*\*\*\* and it seems probable therefore that it was this hit which was incorrectly reported by the airplane. In this connection it is of interest that at approximately 0600 on this day (October 21st) a Japanese carrier-type plane had struck the AUSTRALIA on the foremast\*\*\*\*\* killing, as mentioned under "Operations of CinC Combined Fleet, October 20th", her Captain and wounding the Commodore. The Japanese do not appear to have known of the success of this attack. Therefore, when they received intelligence information, presumably in the forenoon (October 21st) that a cruiser, the AUSTRALIA, had been hit,\*\*\*\*\* they evaluated the hit as being the transport hit of the previous day.

Soon thereafter he was aware of the issuance of FOURTH Air Army Order No. 518 for the SHO Operation.\*\*\*\*\* He studied this order and noted that with the possible exception of the intended move of the headquarters of C. G. FOURTH Air Army to Bacolod, there was nothing in the order which was at variance with the basic plans. He could perhaps foresee future difficulty

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- \* Vice Admiral Matome Ugaki, IJN (COMBATDIV 1), Personal Diary SENSOROKU, Nippon Shuppan Kyodo Kabushiki Kaisha (Tokyo, March 15th, 1953), Volume II; and Appended Chart II, Enemy Fleet Dispositions on October 21st, 1944, Detailed Action Report Main Force, SHO No. 1 Operation, October 20th - 29th, 1944, WDC Document 161005, NA 11744.
- \*\* War Diary LEXINGTON, October 21st, 1944.
- \*\*\* 5TH Base Air Force Dispatch 211000 October 1944 to Battle Report Addressees, Detailed Action Report No. 3, 253rd Attack Unit (331st Air Group), October 20th - November 13th, 1944, WDC Document 160354, NA 12378.
- \*\*\*\* CTF 77 Dispatch 200755 October 1944 to COMSOWESPAC, info COMINCH, CINCPAC, COM3RDFLT, etc.
- \*\*\*\*\* Action Report CTG 77.3, Leyte Operation, Serial A16-3 (0359), November 3rd, 1944.
- \*\*\*\*\* Material for Situation Estimates, 1ST Section Naval General Staff October 1944, WDC Document 216764 (Microfilm).
- \*\*\*\*\* 4TH Air Army Operation Order A-518, 1000 October 21st, 1944, Documents from file of Lieutenant Colonel Katsuo Sato, IJA, Staff Officer 4TH Air Army, Department of the Army Historical Division, Microfilm HS-7.



in coordinating the efforts of the army and navy air forces during the coming operations resulting from the physical separation of the two headquarters, but since this was more a problem for Commander SW Area Force than of his command he likely gave it no serious attention.

Shortly thereafter he received a report that the lookout station on Catanduanes Island at 1040 had sighted a large force bearing 070°(T), distant fifty-four miles,\* (Contact J). This was apparently a sighting of TG 38.3 because it was the group nearest the reported position and also because the LEXINGTON in that group had sighted Catanduanes Island at 0855, distant thirty-five miles.\*\*

As a result of this contact and possibly the ones made at 0920 and 0935, Commander FIFTH Base Air Force appears to have directed further reconnaissance in the vicinity of San Bernardino Strait. He had reason to believe that a task force was present in that area.\*\*\*

He also was likely aware--perhaps he had so ordered--that Kamikaze attacks were to be initiated that afternoon with an attack on the two carriers and four escort carriers which had been contacted at 0840 and 0900.\*\*\*\*

At about 1159 he received a dispatch from Commander Western Force which ordered six reconnaissance seaplanes to provide A/S protection for the FIRST Striking Force, operating first from Labuan and then from the Philippines.\*\*\*\*\*

At about 1215 he received a dispatch to Commander FIRST Striking Force wherein CinC Combined Fleet cautioned that Allied reconnaissance planes had apparently reported sighting that force.\*\*\*\*\* Shortly thereafter

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\* Memorandum of Vice Admiral Gunichi Mikawa, IJN, CinC Southwest Area Force, GHQ, FEC Special Historical Collection, Supporting Documents to General of the Army Douglas MacArthur's Historical Report on Allied Operations in the Southwest Pacific Area (Item 31, Footlocker 7 of 10, SWPA Series, Volume II).

\*\* War Diary LEXINGTON, October 21st, 1944.

\*\*\* Vice Admiral Matome Ugaki, IJN, (COMBATDIV 1), Personal Diary, SENSOROKU, Nippon Shuppan Kyodo Kabushiki Kaisha, (Tokyo, March 15th, 1953), Volume II.

\*\*\*\* Summary Table of Special Attack (Kamikaze) Air Operations in the Philippines, October 21st - 27th, 1944, Philippine Area Naval Operations, Part II, October - December 1944, 2ND Demobilization Bureau Japanese Government, October 1947, Department of the Army Historical Division File No. 8-5, JS-104.

\*\*\*\*\* Commander Western Force Dispatch 211129 October 1944 to interested commands, War Diary DESRON 10, October 1944, WDC Document 161638, NA 11739.

\*\*\*\*\* CinC Combined Fleet Dispatch 211145 October 1944 to Commander 1ST Striking Force, info Commander SW Area Force and Commander 5TH Base Air Force, War Diary DESRON 10, October 1944, WDC Document 161638, NA 11739.

the credibility of this sighting was strengthened by a dispatch from the Chief of Staff SW Area Force reporting that B-24 reconnaissance and attack range had been extended to Palawan and Mindoro,\* which were almost as far from Morotai as was Brunei. He watched these developments with interest because of the increasing possibility that he would be called upon to furnish protection for the FIRST Striking Force against both air and submarine attacks.

Possibly at 1300 (it was received by COMDESRON ONE at this time) he received a CinC Combined Fleet dispatch which again announced that X-day was set for October 25th and Y-day for October 24th.\*\* Since this dispatch was a confirmation of previous information he likely decided that no further changes in X-day were anticipated by CinC Combined Fleet.

At 1302 he sent a dispatch to his own command and probably other commands as well announcing that Vice Admiral Onishi had assumed command of the FIFTH Base Air Force on October 20th and that the transfer of duties had been completed.\*\*\*

During the afternoon he received (a) a dispatch stating that an army report indicated that landings were taking place on Rapu Rapu Island near Legaspi.\*\*\*\* Since this report had not been preceded by reports of the usual pre-landing activity in that vicinity, it seems likely that he reached no conclusion but awaited further developments, (b) a dispatch that Commander SW Area Force was ordering the SECOND Striking Force to advance to Manila by the morning of October 23rd,\*\*\*\*\* (c) a 1330 contact (Contact K) on four CVE's, two battleships, two cruisers, and six destroyers, a total of seventeen ships (sic).\*\*\*\*\* (This appears to have been either TU 77.4.1 or TU 77.4.2), (d) a dispatch, apparently from the FOURTH Air Army, giving the results of further reconnaissance in the vicinity of San Bernardino Strait.

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- \* CofS SW Area Force Dispatch 211231 October 1944 to Commanders Main Force, 6TH Base Air Force, etc., War Diary ZUIHO, October 1st - 25th, 1944, WDC Document 161636, NA 11973.
  - \*\* CinC Combined Fleet Dispatch 211031 October 1944 to all Fleet and Squadron Commanders, Combined Fleet Detailed Action Report BATDIV 1, SHO No. 1 Operation, October 18th - 28th, 1944, WDC Document 161005, NA 11744.
  - \*\*\* 5TH Base Air Force Dispatch 211302 October 1944 to 5TH Base Air Force, War Diary 61st Air Flotilla, October 1944, WDC Document 161643, NA 12260.
  - \*\*\*\* 33RD Special Base Force Dispatch 211250 October 1944, addressees unknown, Detailed Action Report Main Force, SHO No. 1 Operation, October 20th - 29th, 1944, WDC Document 161005, NA 11744.
  - \*\*\*\*\* Commander SW Area Force Dispatch 211251 October 1944 to Fleet Commands, War Diary, DESRON 1, October 1944, WDC Document 161638, NA 11739.
  - \*\*\*\*\* Appended Chart II, Enemy Fleet Dispositions on October 21st, 1944, Detailed Action Report Main Force, SHO No. 1 Operation, October 20th - 29th, 1944, WDC Document 161005, NA 11744.



Four carriers, five battleships and twenty-two other ships were reported at 1330 to have been bearing 100°(T), distant forty miles from the northern tip of Catanduanes Island\* (Contact J). This was on TG 38.3 and was a reasonably correct position report. Actually, the group was about ten miles farther to the eastward. It was comprised at this time of four carriers, two battleships, one cruiser and thirteen destroyers—a total of twenty ships.

Upon receipt of the latter concept and in accordance with instructions,\*\* an attack was ordered made on this task group by carrier-type attack planes of the 253rd Attack Unit at Nichols.\*\*\*

At about 1415 (because he was in the Manila area) he had received an important dispatch from Commander SW Area Force wherein that commander outlined his policy once the SIXTH Base Air Force came under his command.\*\*\*\*

At 1500 he knew that a search attack group of six carrier planes had taken off from Nichols Field to attack the carrier group sighted off Catanduanes Island at 1330.\*\*\*

At about 1528 he received a dispatch outline of SIXTH Base Air Force operations for the next day, October 22nd.\*\*\*\*\* These operations included, among other things, the general plan of movement of the SIXTH Base Air Force to the Philippines and the planned arrival of the commander of that force in Manila about 1700 October 22nd. Since he had been a party to the discussions of matters pertaining to the basing of SIXTH Base Air Force units, he was likely familiar with the general plan of movement and with the fact that a tentative decision had been made to locate headquarters in Manila.\*\*\*\*\*

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- \* Daily Record of the War Situation, 4TH Air Army, GHQ, FEC, Special Historical Collection, Supporting Documents to General of the Army Douglas MacArthur's Historical Report on Allied Operations in the Southwest Pacific Area (Item 4, Footlocker 10 of 10, SWPA Series, Volume II).
- \*\* Commander Philippine Attack Force 1 SigOpOrd No. 22, October 19th, 1944, Detailed Action Report No. 3, 253rd Attack Unit (331st Air Group), October 20th - November 13th, 1944, WDC Document 160354, NA 12378.
- \*\*\* Detailed Action Report No. 3, 253rd Attack Unit (331st Air Group), October 20th - November 13th, 1944, WDC Document 160354, NA 12378.
- \*\*\*\* Commander SW Area Force Dispatch 211345 October 1944 to major fleet commanders (SW Area Force DesOpOrd No. 679), Detailed Action Report BATDIV 1, SHO No. 1 Operation, October 18th - 28th, 1944, WDC Document 161005, NA 11744.
- \*\*\*\*\* Commander 6TH Base Air Force Dispatch 211458 October 1944 to 6TH Base Air Force, Main Force (6TH Base Air Force DesOpOrd No. 85), War Diary ZUIHO, October 1st - 25th, 1944, WDC Document 161636, NA 11973.
- \*\*\*\*\* Memorandum notes of Captain Bunzo Shibata, IJN, Senior Staff Officer, 6TH Base Air Force, October 10th - 23rd, 1944, Department of the Army, Historical Division Microfilm HS-22, Item B.

October 21st

At 1625 the first Kamikaze attack unit, consisting of two fighter bombers escorted by one fighter, took off from Cebu Island with orders to crash attack an enemy group of six carriers, bearing 090°(T), distant 145 miles from Cebu (Contact F). Since the contact was nearly seven and one-half hours old at the time of take off, Commander FIFTH Base Air Force likely realized that the chance of success was poor.\*

THIS KAMIKAZE UNIT MARKED THE INAUGURATION OF REGULARLY PLANNED KAMIKAZE ATTACKS AND, AS SUCH, IS HISTORICALLY IMPORTANT, FORESHADOWING THE VIOLENT ATTACKS BY UNITS IN LATER OPERATIONS SUCH AS LINGAYEN GULF AND OKINAWA. THIS UNIT SUCCEEDED IN TAKING OFF AT 1625 ONLY AFTER CONSIDERABLE DIFFICULTY. These difficulties are described in a post-war article on the Kamikaze Attack Corps\*\* of which one of the co-authors was the operations officer of the 201st Air Group.\*\*\* This account related that on this day six carrier-type fighters at Cebu Base had been moved from concealed revetments to the airstrip and were warming up preparatory to the initiation of Kamikaze attacks when Allied "Grummans" attacked, burning all six aircraft. (According to Allied records, this attack occurred about 1530). Following the Allied attack, two more Kamikaze aircraft were readied and took off with one escort but did not make contact; two of the three returned to base, one was lost. While this account is interesting, it cannot be considered without other evidence to be sufficiently accurate to use in this analysis. This is so for the official report fails to indicate the results of this flight other than to say "unknown". The destruction of the six carrier-type fighters is confirmed (a) by Japanese records which state that six carrier-type fighters were set afire by the strikes against Cebu and Mactan,\*\*\*\* and (b) by Allied reports which claimed the destruction on the ground at Cebu, of seven carrier-type fighters which were warming up preparatory to take off.\*\*\*\*\*

At 1644, as had been directed by Commander SW Area Force on the day before,\*\*\*\*\* he ordered Commander 761st Unit to transfer five

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- \* Summary Table of Special Attack (Kamikaze) Air Operations in the Philippines, October 21st - 27th, 1944, Philippine Area Naval Operations, Part II, October - December 1944, 2ND Demobilization Bureau Japanese Government, October 1947, Department of the Army, Historical Division File No. 8-5, JS-104.
  - \*\* Captain Rikihei Inoguchi, ex-IJN and Commander Tadashi Nakajima, ex-IJN, "The Kamikaze Attack Corps", Naval Institute Proceedings, Vol. No. 79, No. 9 (September 1953), pages 933-945.
  - \*\*\* Commander Tadashi Nakajima, ex-IJN.
  - \*\*\*\* War Diary 61ST Air Flotilla, October 1944, WDC Document 161643, NA 12260.
  - \*\*\*\*\* Aircraft Action Reports VF 26, VF 35, VT 26, VT 27 and VC 60, October 21st, 1944.
  - \*\*\*\*\* Commander SW Area Force Dispatch 201017 October 1944 to Commanders Western Air Attack Force, 5TH Base Air Force, CinC Combined Fleet, Imperial GHQ (Navy Section), (SW Area Force DesOpOrd No. 671), Detailed Action Report No. 3, 253RD Attack Unit (331ST Air Group), October 20th - November 13th, 1944, WDC Document 160354, NA 12378.



carrier-type attack planes to the 331st Air Group.\* This might appear to have been rather belated compliance with Commander SW Area Force's directive; however, it appears more likely that this dispatch was merely a written confirmation of action previously taken.

Sometime during the day he received a report that fourteen to fifteen battleships and cruisers and eighty transports were in Leyte Gulf\*\* (Contact M).

It appears likely that he received or was the originator of a summary evaluation of important contacts on enemy forces near the Philippines. This summary, as recorded in Imperial General Headquarters, placed the over-all enemy strength discovered at "four carriers, eight escort carriers, about sixty transports, three task groups".\*\*\* It is not clear from the notation whether the three task groups mentioned are exclusive of the other forces enumerated or, as appears more likely, that the notation indicates the grouping of the forces enumerated. Regardless of the meaning placed on this notation, from the incomplete contact reports and the numerous radio direction finder fixes,\*\* it was most likely apparent to Commander FIFTH Base Air Force that many of the Allied forces presently off the Philippines had not as yet been sighted.

At about sunset, since he had originated the Kamikaze attacks, he awaited with interest the results accomplished by the first attack unit which had taken off at 1625.\*\*\*\* He appears to have awaited in vain for the results of the attack, if made, are unknown\*\*\*\* probably because the fighter escort lost contact with the attack planes. The Allied forces report no attacks at this time, although a Japanese snooper showing navigation lights flew around TU 77.4.1 from 1830 to 2045.\*\*\*\*\*

Sometime around 1930 he learned that the report of an Allied landing near Legaspi had been false.\*\*\*\*\*

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- \* Commander 5TH Base Air Force Dispatch 211644 October 1944 to Clark Air Base, 331ST Air Group, Commanders SW Area Force, Western Air Attack Force (5TH Base Air Force DesOpOrd No. 53), Detailed Action Report No. 3, 253RD Attack Unit (331ST Air Group), October 20th - November 13th, 1944, WDC Document 160354, NA 12378.
  - \*\* Appended Chart II, Enemy Fleet Dispositions on October 21st, 1944, Detailed Action Report Main Force, SHO No. 1 Operation, October 20th - 29th, 1944, WDC Document 161005, NA 11744.
  - \*\*\* Material for Situation Estimates, 1ST Section, Naval General Staff, October 1944, WDC Document 216764 (Microfilm).
  - \*\*\*\* Summary Table of Special Attack (Kamikaze) Air Operations in the Philippines, October 21st - 27th, 1944, Philippine Area Naval Operations, Part II, October - December 1944, 2ND Demobilization Bureau, Japanese Government, October 1945, Department of the Army, Historical Division File No. 8-5, JS-104.
  - \*\*\*\*\* Action Report CTG 77.4, Leyte Gulf, October 12th - 29th, 1944, Serial 00104, November 8th, 1944.
  - \*\*\*\*\* 33RD Special Base Force Dispatch 211900 October 1944, addressees unknown, Detailed Action Report Main Force, SHO No. 1 Operation, October 20th - 29th, 1944, WDC Document 161005, NA 11744.



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At about 2050 he learned that the search-attack group of six carrier-type attack planes, which had taken off from Nichols Field at 1500 against the carrier task group sighted at 1330 off Catanduanes Island, had failed to contact the enemy and had landed at Bulan at 2020. Two planes were heavily damaged in operational accidents.\*

About this time he also learned that during the day the FOURTH Air Army had launched about seventeen planes for attack on Allied ships in Leyte Gulf.\*\*

It seems that also about this time he became very concerned over the limited air offensive which could be launched by the Japanese air forces in the Philippines in support of the penetration operation—it was because of this he had formed the Kamikaze Special Attack Units—and feared that unless these units were given some days in which to attack the enemy carriers, the Japanese air forces could not provide adequate air protection for the FIRST Striking Force.\*\*\* This matter was even now under discussion by his staff, which discussion was attended by a representative of the SIXTH Base Air Force.\*\*\*\* He determined at this late hour to recommend that the penetration operation "be postponed until after the enemy had been submitted to strikes by our Special Attack Corps" and therefore, for this purpose, went over to Commander SW Area Force's headquarters. However, upon arriving there, he learned that Commander FIRST Striking Force had already issued the sortie orders for the FIRST Striking Force and so he decided to forego the request\*\*\*\*\*

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- \* Detailed Action Report No. 3, 253RD Attack Unit (331ST Air Group), October 20th - November 13th, 1944, WDC Document 160354, NA 12378.
- \*\* Daily Record of the War Situation, 4TH Air Army, GHQ, FEC, Special Historical Collection, Supporting Documents to General of the Army, Douglas MacArthur's Historical Report on Allied Operations in the Southwest Pacific Area (Item 4, Footlocker 10 of 10, SWPA Series, Volume I).
- \*\*\* Captain Rikihei Inoguchi, ex-IJN, and Commander Tadashi Nakajima, ex-IJN, "The Kamikaze Attack Corps", Naval Institute Proceedings, Vol. No. 79, No. 9 (September 1953), Pages 933 - 945.
- \*\*\*\* Memorandum Notes of Captain Bunzo Shibata, IJN, Senior Staff Officer, 6TH Base Air Force, October 10th - 23rd, 1944, Department of the Army, Historical Division Microfilm HS-22, Item B.
- \*\*\*\*\* Vice Admiral Ryunosuke Kusaka, CofS Combined Fleet, has a variant to this. He says that (a) Commander 5TH Base Air Force sent a dispatch, not available to this analysis, to CinC Combined Fleet in which he asked, "Would it be possible to postpone the penetration scheduled for October 25th for two or three days?", and (b) CinC Combined Fleet denied this request (by dispatch?) because the 1ST Striking Force would be wandering "aimlessly around" for two or three days which would make the penetration impossible because of a shortage of fuel. (Vice Admiral Ryunosuke Kusaka, "COMBINED FLEET", (Japan, April 5th, 1952), Pages 225 - 246.) Since this version is not supported either by (a) dispatches, (b) other information available which appears more correct, or (c) by what appear to be the facts of the case, it is considered as the less likely of the two versions.



Sometime that night he received a dispatch from the Chief of Staff SW Area Force giving the opinions of that command concerning the use of the SECOND Striking Force in the penetration operation.\*

There is no information available from Japanese sources which indicates the total number of aircraft on this day (a) lost by the FIFTH Base Air Force, or (b) received as reinforcements, although it seems probable that none were so received. Therefore, recourse must necessarily be made to the evaluation system developed in Volume I\*\* wherein it was determined that (1) the Allied claims had to be multiplied by sixty-four per cent to obtain actual losses by the Japanese and (2) the actual ground losses so obtained had to be multiplied by sixty per cent to obtain the number of operational aircraft destroyed on the ground. The result of this evaluation gives a loss of nine planes which, when subtracted from the thirty-three operational aircraft on hand at the beginning of the day gives twenty-four operational planes on hand at the end of the day.\*\*\*

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- \* CofS SW Area Force Dispatch 211914 October 1944 to CinC Combined Fleet, COMCRUDIV 16, 2ND Striking Force, Imperial GHQ (Navy Section), etc., War Diary DESRON 1, October 1944, WDC Document 161638, NA 11739.
- \*\* Volume I, Battle for Leyte Gulf (NavPers 91973), Naval War College, 1953, Chapter III, (e)(3), Discussion of Losses of Japanese Aircraft.
- \*\*\* This figure was obtained as follows:
- A. (a) COM3RDFLT claimed destroying (1) in the air, thirteen planes and (2) on the ground, thirty-seven planes. These, based on Allied reports, have been evaluated as (1) in the air, eleven army and two navy, (2) on the ground, thirty-seven army. (b) CTG 77.4 claimed destroying (1) in the air, five planes and (2) on the ground thirty-one planes. These, based on Allied reports, have been evaluated as (1) in the air, three army and two navy, and (2) on the ground, twenty-four army and seven navy. (c) Commander FIFTH Air Force claimed destroying (1) in the air, none (2) on the water, one. (d) Allied units in Leyte Gulf claimed destroying (1) in the air, three army planes, one navy plane, (2) on the ground, none. (e) (1) Therefore, the 5TH Base Air Force planes claimed destroyed by Allied forces were (a) in the air, five (b) on the ground, eight; (2) and the 4TH Air Army planes claimed destroyed by Allied forces were (a) in the air, seventeen (b) on the ground, sixty-one.
- B. With relation to the 5TH Base Air Force planes, the Japanese as pointed out earlier, admit having lost six on the ground. It is assumed that this figure is correct and therefore, the calculated multiplier of sixty-four per cent is not applicable. However, it is applicable to the planes lost in the air. This gives three (5x.64) planes. Likewise, the multiplier of sixty per cent to determine the operational planes lost on the ground is inapplicable, because the six planes were operational. Therefore, the total operational planes lost by the 5TH Base Air Force were three in the air and six on the ground, a total of nine planes. This figure subtracted from the thirty-three operational aircraft on hand at the commencement of the day leaves a remainder of twenty-four planes.



## (B) Operations of C.G. FOURTH Air Army, October 21st.

Shortly after midnight the C.G. FOURTH Air Army, who was at his headquarters in Manila, learned presumably from his naval liaison officer of Commander FIFTH Base Air Force's order to form Kamikaze attack units.\* There is no indication that he at this time seriously considered adopting such tactics within his own command.

Shortly thereafter, through the navy, he learned that Commander SIXTH Base Air Force had decided to commence the general air offensive on October 23rd and that there was also a plan to conduct a dusk and night attack on the evening of October 22nd.\*\* This plan was important to him because his own plan called for the concentration of his forces in the Visayas prior to launching the general offensive. With the SIXTH Base Air Force attacking the Allied carrier force in strength, there would be less likelihood of enemy interference with the concentration of his own forces.

On the other hand, there was the disadvantage that such early arrival would necessarily force increased pressure on his command to insure that the airfields were prepared for the arrival of the SIXTH Base Air Force since the larger part of these airfields belonged to the FOURTH Air Army.

He was, of course, aware of the conference at the headquarters of Commander SW Area Force which continued until 0130.\*\*\*

As with Commander FIFTH Base Air Force, there is no information available as to the extent of the search and reconnaissance operations conducted by C.G. FOURTH Air Army on this date. However, it is clear that these operations were extensive for he received the following contacts on forces near Leyte Gulf shown on Plate XXIX:\*\*\*\* (a) an 0818 contact on six transports and six destroyers (Contact C); (b) an 0830 contact on sixteen transports

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- \* Commander 5TH Base Air Force Dispatch 202347 October 1944 to Commander 201ST Air Group (5TH Base Air Force DesOpOrd No. 52), War Diary 61ST Air Flotilla, October 1944, WDC Document 161643, NA 12260.
- \*\* Commander 6TH Base Air Force Dispatch 210013 October 1944 to 6TH Base Air Force, Detailed Action Report No. 2, 102ND and 103RD Attack Units (701ST Air Group), October 22nd - November 15th, 1944, WDC Document 161293, NA 12505A; also CofS 6TH Base Air Force Dispatch 210046 October 1944, to Commander Western Attack Force 1, info Commanders 5TH and 6TH Base Air Forces, War Diary 103RD Attack Unit (701ST Air Group) Kokubu Detachment, October 13th - 31st, 1944, WDC Document 160258, NA 12592.
- \*\*\* Memorandum Notes of Captain Bunzo Shibata, IJN, Senior Staff Officer, 6TH Base Air Force, October 10th - 23rd, 1944, Department of the Army, Historical Division Microfilm HS-22, Item B.
- \*\*\*\* Vice Admiral Matome Ugaki, IJN (COMBATDIV 1), Personal Diary SENSOROKU, Nippon Shuppan Kyodo Kabushiki Kaisha (Tokyo, March 15th, 1953), Volume II; also Appended Chart II, Enemy Fleet Dispositions on October 21st, 1944, Detailed Action Report Main Force, SHO No. 1 Operation, October 20th - 29th, 1944, WDC Document 161005, NA 11744.



and two escort carriers (Contact D); (c) an 0840 contact amplified at 0900 on two carriers, four escort carriers and twenty other ships (Contact F); and (d) another 0840 contact report on eighteen transports (Contact E). He also received a 0920 contact report on surface ships 420 miles east of Manila (Contact G) and an 0935 contact on one battleship and twenty-four other ships off San Bernardino Strait (Contact I).

Sometime during the morning he received a visit from a senior staff officer representing Commander SIXTH Base Air Force\* to discuss the utilization by that force of army bases in the Philippines.\*\* From that officer, he likely received an up-to-date concept of the operation from the point of view of Commander SIXTH Base Air Force.

At 1000 he placed the THIRTIETH Fighter Group under Commander SECOND Air Division.\*\*\* All fighter planes in the SECOND Air Division were now commanded by the commander of the THIRTIETH Fighter Group in accordance with the order of C.G. SECOND Air Division issued the previous day.\*\*\*\* This included most of the army fighters in the northern and central Philippines.

He had been following the developing situation and at 1000 issued his Operation Order A-518\*\*\*\*\* for the coming offensive. Because it was apparently the order under which the FOURTH Air Army conducted the battle, it is quoted essentially in full:

"(1) The enemy is continuing to land on the coast of Leyte Gulf. The main strength of our naval forces has begun moving with a view to destroying the enemy in the waters east of the Philippines.

"(2) The Air Army will employ its full strength to smash enemy shipping engaged in landing operations in the Leyte Gulf Area.

"(3) Commander SECOND Air Division will continue to press attacks while awaiting the arrival of the THIRTIETH Fighter Group in the central

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\* Captain Bunzo Shibata, IJN.

\*\* Memorandum Notes of Captain Bunzo Shibata, IJN, Senior Staff Officer, 6TH Base Air Force, October 10th - 23rd, 1944, Department of the Army, Historical Division Microfilm HS-22, Item B.

\*\*\* Daily Record of the War Situation, 4TH Air Army, GHQ, FEC, Special Historical Collection, Supporting Documents to General of the Army Douglas MacArthur's Historical Report on Allied Operations in the Southwest Pacific Area (Item 4, Footlocker 10 of 10, SWPA Series, Volume II).

\*\*\*\* 2ND Air Division Plan of Operations for the Philippine Decisive Battle, October 20th, 1944, Document from file of Lieutenant Colonel Katsuo Sato, IJA, Staff Officer, 4TH Air Army, Department of the Army, Historical Division Microfilm HS-7.

\*\*\*\*\* 4TH Air Army Operation Order A-518, 1000 October 21st, 1944, Document from file of Lieutenant Colonel Katsuo Sato, IJA, Staff Officer 4TH Air Army, Department of the Army Historical Division Microfilm HS-7.



Philippines. Upon its arrival by the evening of October 23rd it will come under his command and therefore full strength attacks will be launched and continued.

"(4) All units will take special precautions to conceal and protect aircraft on the ground.

"(5) The command post of C.G. FOURTH Air Army will move to Bacolod on the evening of October 23rd."

THE ABOVE PLAN SEEMS, IN GENERAL, CORRECT AND IN ACCORDANCE WITH THE AGREED PLANS; I.E., THE BASE AIR FORCES WERE TO ATTACK THE CARRIERS, PRIMARILY WHILE THE FOURTH AIR ARMY ATTACKED THE INVASION FORCES. HOWEVER, THE MOVEMENT OF THE COMMAND POST OF THE FOURTH AIR ARMY TO BACOLOD WAS QUESTIONABLE BECAUSE OF THE NECESSITY FOR OBTAINING COORDINATION NOT ONLY BETWEEN THE AIR FORCES CONCERNED, BUT ALSO BETWEEN CINC SOUTHERN ARMY, C.G. FOURTEENTH AREA ARMY, THE COMMANDERS FIFTH AND SIXTH BASE AIR FORCES, AND COMMANDER SW AREA FORCE, ALL OF WHOM HAD OR WOULD SOON HAVE HEADQUARTERS IN MANILA. SINCE C.G. FOURTH AIR ARMY WAS FULLY ALERT TO THIS PROBLEM, HIS DECISION TO MOVE TO BACOLOD MUST NECESSARILY HAVE BEEN A DIFFICULT COMPROMISE. HE REALIZED THAT THERE WERE, OF COURSE, MANY ADVANTAGES IN HAVING THE COMMAND POST AT BACOLOD. AMONG THESE WERE (A) HIS FEELING THAT SINCE THE SECOND AIR DIVISION, WHICH CONTAINED THE LARGER NUMBER OF AIRPLANES IN THE FOURTH AIR ARMY IN THE PHILIPPINES, WAS TO MOVE TO THE VISAYAS WHERE IT WAS TO LAUNCH ATTACKS AGAINST THE ALLIED INVASION FORCES IN LEYTE GULF, HE MIGHT BETTER CONTROL ITS OPERATIONS FROM THERE, AND (B) HIS BELIEF THAT HIS PRESENCE IN THE BACOLOD AREA COULD NOT BUT HAVE AN INSPIRING EFFECT ON THE COMBATANT UNITS. ON THE OTHER HAND, HE COULD PLAINLY SEE THAT THE SUCCESS OR FAILURE OF HIS PLAN WOULD NECESSARILY BE DETERMINED, OTHER THINGS BEING EQUAL, BY THE EFFECTIVENESS OF THE COMMUNICATION SYSTEM AND BY THE COMPETENCE OF HIS LIAISON OFFICERS AT THE VARIOUS HEADQUARTERS. (AS A MATTER OF INTEREST, FINDING IT VERY AWKWARD AND INCONVENIENT TO ESTABLISH SUCH COMMUNICATIONS, THE C.G. FOURTH AIR ARMY RETURNED HIS HEADQUARTERS TO MANILA ON NOVEMBER 7TH.)\*

Through navy sources he learned shortly after 1100 that (a) CinC Combined Fleet had again announced that X-day had been set for October 25th,\*\* and (b) at 1040 the Catanduanes Island lookout station had sighted a large force bearing 070°(T), distant fifty-four miles (Contact J),\*\*\* and (c) of

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\* Philippine Air Operations, Phase II, 1944 - 1945, 1ST Demobilization Bureau Monograph, Japanese Government, October 1946, Vol. 46, Part I (Colonel Misao Matsumae, ex-IJA).

\*\* CinC Combined Fleet Dispatch 211031 October 1944 to all Fleet and Squadron Commanders, Combined Fleet, Detailed Action Report BATDIV 1, SHO No. 1 Operation, October 18th - 28th, 1944, WDC Document 161005, NA 11744.

\*\*\* Memorandum of Vice Admiral Gunichi Mikawa, IJN, CinC Southwest Area Fleet, GHQ, FEC; Special Historical Collection, Supporting Documents to General of the Army Douglas MacArthur's Historical Report on the Allied Operations in the Southwest Pacific Area (Item 31, Footlocker 7 of 10, SWPA Series, Volume II).



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the planned operations of the SIXTH Base Air Force for the following day.\*

Following the issuance of Operation Order A-518, his chief of staff designated a staff officer to visit the two major commands concerned,\*\* i.e. the SECOND Air Division and THIRTIETH Fighter Group, with amplifying instructions and also with suggestions relating to the order. As this officer, for the reason stated below, was unable to depart, the Chief of Staff outlined these matters by dispatch to the Chief of Staff SECOND Air Division and to the senior staff officer, THIRTIETH Fighter Group.\*\*\* The time of this dispatch is not available, but it was most likely sent in the early afternoon.

In this dispatch the Chief of Staff explained that he was sending therein the information which he had planned to have delivered in person by Staff Officer Sato,\*\* but since because of the aircraft breakdown that officer had been unable to depart, he had assembled in this dispatch (a) the essentials of the Air Army's plans, (b) those items requiring liaison.

He then listed the above essentials and items under four headings (1) Attack Dispositions (2) Arrival of Reinforcement Units (3) Naval Operations and (4) Deployment on October 23rd.

He expressed the above in essence as follows:

(1) Attack dispositions: After expressing confidence that all necessary plans were being formulated, he added "in view of the critical nature of the decisive battle it is desired that the following points be specially borne in mind": (a) the determination to carry out attacks frequently and repeatedly and at any cost must be thoroughly instilled in all branches; (b) bases should be defended by protective patrols; (c) depending on naval operations and weather, attack operations were tentatively scheduled to commence October 24th; (d) starter and fueling equipment was to be properly distributed to key points to facilitate frequent take-off's by Type 4 fighters (newest Japanese interceptors); (e) attack targets were restricted to enemy ships other than warships and (f) unit commanders were to confer together in order to insure complete coordination.

(2) Reinforcement Units: (a) the 200th Air Regiment with about thirty planes was to leave Akeno (Japan) on October 22nd; (b) the TWENTY-SECOND Air Regiment with about thirty-nine planes was expected to reach Clark Air Base on October 23rd and under favorable conditions, might be available in the Visayas by the afternoon of October 24th; (c) the FIRST and ELEVENTH Air Regiments were scheduled to reach Clark Air Base by the evening of October 22nd.

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\* Commander 6TH Base Air Force Dispatch 211458 October 1944 to 6TH Base Air Force and Main Force (6TH Base Air Force DesOpOrd No. 84), War Diary ZUIHO, October 1st - 25th, 1944, WDC Document 161636, NA 11973.

\*\* Lieutenant Colonel Katsuo Sato, IJA.

\*\*\* CofS 4TH Air Army Dispatch No. 6406 October 21st, 1944 to CofS 2ND Air Division and Senior Staff Officer 30TH Fighter Group, Documents from file of Lieutenant Colonel Katsuo Sato, IJA, Staff Officer 4TH Air Army, Department of the Army Historical Division Microfilm HS-7.



(3) Naval Operations: (a) the SIXTH Base Air Force consisting of about 190 fighters, seventy bombers, 140 "T" Force planes and fifty others (a total of about 450 planes) was to carry out operations against the enemy task force on October 23rd and 24th and would be based in the Clark Air Base complex; (b) the operations of the naval surface forces were to be correlated with air operations.

(4) Deployment on October 23rd: Taking into consideration the naval operations mentioned above, the FOURTH Air Army headquarters was of the opinion that deployment on the evening of October 23rd should be as follows: (a) the attack force should move up to the Bacolod area on the evening of October 23rd except that the SEVENTH Air Brigade should move up to Lipa and the light bombers should move up to San Jose; (b) after executing attacks the heavy and light bombers should retire to Clark Air Base complex, to Sandakan (north Borneo) and to other bases.

It might seem as if these amplifying instructions were somewhat restricted and represented in many cases what should have been doctrine. Why then did he send them: There appear to have been a number of sound reasons, among which these two seem the most likely: (a) while he did not desire to restrict unnecessarily the action of his subordinate commanders by providing a plan in detail, he nevertheless felt that it was desirable to insure that certain important factors were not overlooked; and (b) inasmuch as he planned to move to Bacolod on the following day and would, in effect, be in personal command of the operation, he wished to insure that the plans prepared by his subordinates would conform in detail to his concept of the operation.

Apparently prior to 1250, when the THIRTY-THIRD Special Base Force issued a report, he was aware (from army sources) of a report that landings were taking place on Rapu Rapu Island near Legaspi.\* He realized that if this report were true it would likely necessitate a change in his plan; that is, a division of his forces in order to attack both Allied landing forces. However, he appears to have taken no immediate action thereon but to have awaited further developments.

At 1400 he received, apparently from FOURTH Air Army sources, an amplification of (Contact J) made at 1040 listing four carriers, five battleships and twenty-two other ships forty miles, bearing 100°(T), from the northern tip (Point YOG) of Catanduanes Island.\*\* A short time thereafter he received Commander SW Area Force's dispatch which outlined the operations to be

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\* 33RD Special Base Force Dispatch 211250 October 1944, addressees unknown, Detailed Action Report Main Force, SHO No. 1 Operation, October 20th - 29th, 1944, WDC Document 161005, NA 11744.

\*\* Daily Record of the War Situation, 4TH Air Army, GHQ, FEC, Special Historical Collection, Supporting Documents to General of the Army Douglas MacArthur's Historical Report of Allied Operations in the Southwest Pacific Area (Item 4, Footlocker 10 of 10, SWPA Series, Volume II).



conducted by the FIFTH and SIXTH Base Air Forces once the latter had deployed to the Philippines.\* He noted therein that Commander SW Area Force had assigned as a primary objective for the FIFTH and SIXTH Base Air Forces "the destruction of the Allied task forces". It does not seem likely that he was surprised by this assignment, for the above objective was, in general, in accordance with the provisions of the Army - Navy Central Agreement\*\* and since both he and the Commander SW Area Force were in Manila, was likely in accordance with agreements reached during the preceding days and hours. In this connection, it will be recalled that he had, but a few hours earlier, assigned to the SECOND Air Division "as its primary objective" "the destruction of the Allied invasion forces"\*\*\* and had much earlier (October 15th) assigned (although tentatively) to the SECOND Air Division and the THIRTIETH Fighter Group "the destruction of the enemy landing convoy".\*\*\*\*

During the day he learned (a) that fourteen to fifteen battleships and cruisers and eighty transports were in Leyte Gulf (Contact M),\*\*\*\*\* (b) that the report of an Allied landing near Legaspi had been false,\*\*\*\*\* (c) that the FOURTH Air Army had succeeded in launching seventeen planes for attacks on ships in Leyte Gulf of which six planes had failed to return,\*\*\*\*\* and (d) that the attack forces of the FIFTH Base Air Force had failed to make contact with the enemy.

The results claimed for the attacks by the FOURTH Air Army are illegible in the Japanese manuscript except near misses on two carriers and one

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- \* Commander SW Area Force Dispatch 211345 October 1944 to Major Fleet Commanders (SW Area Force DesOpOrd No. 679), Detailed Action Report BATDIV 1, SHO No. 1 Operation, October 18th - 28th, 1944, WDC Document 161005, NA 11744.
- \*\* Army-Navy Central Agreement concerning SHO Air Operations concluded July 24th, 1944, Supplement to Imperial GHQ (Navy Section) Directive 435, July 26th, 1944, WDC Document 216769 (Microfilm).
- \*\*\* 4TH Air Army Operations Order A-518, 1000 October 21st, Documents from file of Lieutenant Colonel Katsuo Sato, IJA, Staff Officer, 4TH Air Army, Department of the Army, Historical Division Microfilm HS-7.
- \*\*\*\* Draft Plan of 4TH Air Army Operations after mid-October, Document from file of Lieutenant Colonel Katsuo Sato, IJA, Staff Officer, 4TH Air Army, Department of the Army, Historical Division Microfilm HS-7.
- \*\*\*\*\* Appended Chart II, Enemy Fleet Dispositions on October 21st, 1944, Detailed Action Report Main Force, SHO No. 1 Operation, October 20th - 29th, 1944, WDC Document 161005, NA 11744.
- \*\*\*\*\* 33RD Special Base Force Dispatch 211900 October 1944, addressees unknown, Detailed Action Report Main Force, SHO No. 1 Operation, October 20th - 29th, 1944, WDC Document 161005, NA 11744.
- \*\*\*\*\* Daily Record of the War Situation, 4TH Air Army, GHQ, FEC, Special Historical Collection, Supporting Documents to General of the Army Douglas MacArthur's Historical Report of Allied Operations in the Southwest Pacific Area (Item 4, Footlocker 10 of 10, SWPA Series, Volume II).

transport set afire.\* Since these two entries are the last of a list of claims, it is very likely that the FOURTH Air Army also claimed sinking and damaging other ships. The Allies listed the following attacks by army-type planes: 0557 one torpedo plane shot down by BREEZE;\*\* 0621 one land-attack plane shot down by three LSM's and one LST;\*\*\* 0626 one land-attack plane shot down by CALIFORNIA and SAN CARLOS;\*\*\*\* 0845 two army Type 3 fighters dropped two bombs near the CUSTER with negligible damage;\*\*\*\*\* and at 0846 one plane dropped two bombs 900 yards off the starboard bow of the CHARLES J. BADGER.\*\*\*\*\*

The FOURTH Air Army commenced this days operations with seventy-five operational aircraft and reportedly finished the day with thirty-seven.\* This figure approximates the forty-one planes obtained by this study's evaluation system developed in Volume I\*\*\*\*\* for determining Japanese aircraft losses.\*\*\*\*\*

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- \* Daily Record of the War Situation, 4TH Air Army, GHQ, FEC, Special Historical Collection, Supporting Documents to General of the Army Douglas MacArthur's Historical Report of Allied Operations in the Southwest Pacific Area (Item 4, Footlocker 10 of 10, SWPA Series, Volume II).
- \*\* War Diary BREEZE, October 21st, 1944.
- \*\*\* Action Report CTG 79.2, Leyte Operation, Serial 0032, November 4th, 1944.
- \*\*\*\* War Diary CALIFORNIA, October 21st, 1944; also SAN CARLOS Dispatch 202124 October 1944 to CTG 77.2.
- \*\*\*\*\* War Diary CUSTER, October 21st, 1944.
- \*\*\*\*\* War Diary CHARLES J. BADGER, October 21st, 1944.
- \*\*\*\*\* Volume I, Battle for Leyte Gulf (NavPers 91973), Naval War College, 1953, Chapter III, (e)(3).
- \*\*\*\*\* It will be recalled from the evaluation note at the end of "Operations of Commander 5TH Base Air Force, October 21st", that the 4TH Air Army planes claimed destroyed by Allied forces were (1) in the air, 17; (2) on the ground, 61. By (a) multiplying the totals by 64%, the actual Japanese army losses were 11 aircraft (17 X .64) in the air and 39 aircraft (61 X .64) on the ground, (b) then by multiplying the latter by 60%, the resultant figure shows that there were 23 operational aircraft (39 X .60) lost on the ground, (c) therefore, the total operational planes lost by the Japanese 4TH Air Army were 11 in the air and 23 on the ground or 34 planes, (d) this figure, subtracted from the 75 planes on hand at the commencement of the day, leaves a remainder of 41 planes.



CHAPTER V -- ALLIED OPERATIONS, October 22nd

## (A) Operations of COMSOWESPAC, October 22nd.

COMSOWESPAC, in the NASHVILLE with the flagship group, continued on his night retirement in the eastern portion of Leyte Gulf. The flagship group commenced its return to the operating area off the beaches at 0644 (just after sunrise).

During the early morning he received several contact reports as follows: (a) at 0315 on two light cruisers of the YUBARI class in Verde Island Passage at 1300 on the preceding day at a SOA of twenty-five knots;\* and (b) at 0518 on three large ships estimated as cruisers at 0200 in Latitude 07° - 31'N, Longitude 115° - 22'E, course 020°(T), speed twenty-one.\*\*

Since these contacts were of no particular importance and were well within the competence of his naval air force commanders, he likely gave them little attention except to note that ships of this type were quite capable of making night raids.

At 0740 he finally transmitted to a shore radio station for relaying to COMTHIRDFLT the dispatch discussed under "Operations of COMSOWESPAC, October 21st" which he had drafted at 2100 the previous evening but which, owing to radio silence, he had not been able to transmit until now. THIS DISPATCH, WHICH WAS IN REPLY TO COMTHIRDFLT'S 210645, WAS TO THE EFFECT THAT HE CONSIDERED THAT COMTHIRDFLT'S MISSION TO COVER THE OPERATION WAS ESSENTIAL AND PARAMOUNT. WHY IT WAS NECESSARY TO PRESERVE RADIO SILENCE IN THE NASHVILLE WHILE ON NIGHT RETIREMENT WITHIN THE GULF IS NOT UNDERSTOOD SINCE (A) THERE WERE NUMEROUS ALLIED SHIPS OPERATING THEIR RADIOS CLOSE BY, AND (B) CTF 77, WHO, IN THE WASATCH, WAS OPERATING IN THE SAME FLAGSHIP UNIT (CTG 77.1) WITH THE NASHVILLE, HAD SENT NIGHT DISPATCHES HERETOFORE. IN VIEW OF THIS, DOES THIS DELAY, REPORTEDLY DUE TO THE IMPOSITION OF RADIO SILENCE, SEEM JUSTIFIED?

At 0846 the NASHVILLE anchored in San Pedro Bay in the vicinity of RED Beach.\*\*\* However, since COMSOWESPAC desired to visit the southern beaches, the NASHVILLE, with the ABNER READ and BUSH, at 0921 shifted anchorage to that area to facilitate that operation\*\*\*\* and at 1020 reanchored.\*\*\*

At 1015 the President of the Philippines\*\*\*\*\* sent a dispatch to the President of the United States from the NASHVILLE thanking the President and the American people for their assistance.\*\*\*\*\*

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\* COM7THFLT Dispatch 211205 October 1944 to CTF's 77, 78, 79, 71, 72, 73, CTG's 77.2, 77.4, COM3RDFLT, CTG's 38.1, 38.2, 38.3, 38.4, CAAF SOWESPAC.

\*\* DARTER Dispatch 211755 October 1944 to Radio Perth.

\*\*\* War Diary NASHVILLE, October 22nd, 1944.

\*\*\*\* War Diary BUSH, October 22nd, 1944.

\*\*\*\*\* Mr. Sergei Osmena.

\*\*\*\*\* NASHVILLE Dispatch 220115 October 1944 to Radio Washington.

At 1038 COMSOWESPAC, with members of his staff, went ashore to inspect conditions on the beach and to see how the ground offensive was progressing.\* During his visit ashore with CAAF SOWESPAC he inspected Dulag Airfield\*\* which had been captured on the previous day by the SEVENTH Infantry Division.\*\*\*

At 1200 he intercepted a dispatch from CTG 77.4 to CTF 77 reporting the successes of that group in supporting the ground troops and in striking airfields in Cebu and Mactan Island,\*\*\*\* and at 1206 he received a follow-up report from the DARTER to the effect, in part, that she at 0800 had lost contact on the three ships and that the tops of one, dimly seen, was probably that of a battleship.\*\*\*\*\*

At 1355 he returned on board with his observing party. Then the NASHVILLE at 1421 shifted anchorage from the southern beach area back to her original area. At 1517 she anchored in San Pedro Bay in the vicinity of RED Beach.

At 1634, in the NASHVILLE, he got underway with the ABNER READ and BUSH and rendezvoused with TU 77.1.1 to form TG 77.1 (flagship group), which group then retired in the eastern portion of Leyte Gulf.

During the late afternoon and evening he received, as an information addressee, certain important dispatches as follows:

(1) At 1736 a dispatch from COMTHIRDFLT directing TG 38.1 plus the HANCOCK and TG 38.4 plus the WASHINGTON, ALABAMA and DESDIV 100 to (a) depart Point CONDOR at 0600 the following morning for Ulithi to arrive at 0600 October 25th, (b) rearm, fuel and provision, and (c) be ready for sea dawn October 29th. \*\*\*\*\*

This dispatch likely interested him greatly because it appeared to be the first action as regards the carrier task groups of TF 38 taken by COMTHIRDFLT since that commander's probable receipt of his 212240. The action represented by this dispatch showed clearly that at least two of the four carrier task groups were to be retired to Ulithi to be gone from the combatant area at least until October 29th. This, providing the COMTHIRDFLT did not issue any orders to the contrary, would leave two carrier task groups (somewhat reduced in strength) to provide the strategic support necessary for

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\* War Diary NASHVILLE, October 22nd, 1944.

\*\* George C. Kenney, General Kenney Reports, New York, 1949, Pages 451 - 452.

\*\*\* Operations Report, 7TH Infantry Division, KING II, Page 5.

\*\*\*\* CTG 77.4 Dispatch 220123 October 1944 to CTF 77, info CTF's 78, 79, all TGC's of TF 77.

\*\*\*\*\* DARTER Dispatch 212359 October 1944 to CTF 71.

\*\*\*\*\* COM3RDFLT Dispatch 220219 October 1944 to CTG's 38.1, 38.4, info COMINCH, CINCPAC, all TFC's and TGC's 3RDFLT, all concerned with SOWESPAC operations, etc.



the protection of his forces in Leyte Gulf. While his reaction is not known, it seems probable that he decided "to let the matter ride" on the assumption that, if COMTHIRDFLT's action were not satisfactory to CINCPAC, that commander would rectify it. If this was his attitude, it was sound and was in accordance with his own statement to COMTHIRDFLT wherein he had stated, "The method by which you fulfill that responsibility rests, of course, entirely in your own judgement".\*

(2) At 1800 a dispatch from COMNAVGRPCINA to the effect that the FOURTEENTH Air Force daylight search had been turned back by weather and that it appeared likely that the night search would be cancelled.\*\*

(3) At 2100 a dispatch from COMTHIRDFLT, quoted in full under "Operations of COMTHIRDFLT, October 22nd", wherein COMTHIRDFLT gave the assignments of TG's 38.2 and 38.3 for the following day, and directed that, upon completion of these assignments, they were to operate in Area CONDOR until further notice.\*\*\*

This dispatch was likely reassuring to him for this confirmed his concept that COMTHIRDFLT planned to retain two carrier task groups in strategic support of the SOWESPAC forces.

(4) At 2200 a dispatch from COMTHIRDFLT forecasting within the next few days a considerable increase in enemy submarine activity in the Philippine Sea in the vicinity of Palau and the Marianas.\*\*\*\*

(5) At 2205 a dispatch from CTF 77 to the effect that, owing to the uncertainty of movements of the enemy fleet, he desired to retain CRUDIV FOUR until the local defense forces were firmly established on Leyte.\*\*\*\*\*

Sometime in the late evening (possibly at 2259 when it was received by COMTHIRDFLT) he received a dispatch, presumably from C.G. SIXTH Army to GHQ SOWESPAC, giving a summary of the activities of the ground forces on Leyte Island as of 1600 the previous evening, wherein the principal facts were that (a) in the north the entire Cataisan Peninsula including Tacloban had fallen to the Allies, and (b) in the south both divisional commanders had assumed command ashore, heavy fire was being received from Catmon Hill and (PIPER) CUBS were operating from Dulag Airfield.\*\*\*\*\*

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- \* COMSOWESPAC Dispatch 212240 October 1944 to COM3RDFLT, info COMINCH, CINCPAC, CofS U.S. Army, CTF's 38, 77, CTG 38.1.
  - \*\* COMNAVGRPCINA Dispatch 220741 October 1944 to COMSOWESPAC, info CINCPAC, COM3RDFLT.
  - \*\*\* COM3RDFLT Dispatch 220214 October 1944 to CTG's 38.2, 38.3, info COMINCH, CINCPAC, all TFC's and TGC's 3RDFLT, all concerned SOWESPAC operations, etc.
  - \*\*\*\* COM3RDFLT Dispatch 220805 October 1944 to 3RDFLT, info CINCPAC, COMSOWESPAC, CTF 77.
  - \*\*\*\*\* CTF 77 Dispatch 220837 October 1944 to CINCPAC, info COMCRUDIV 4, COM7THFLT, CTF's 78, 79, COMSOWESPAC, COM3RDFLT.
  - \*\*\*\*\* Unknown Source Dispatch 220220 October 1944 to GHQ SOWESPAC.

October 22nd

During the day, in addition to the dispatches commented on herein, it seems quite likely that he received most, if not all, of the various dispatches which flowed between the various commands within the Leyte area but, since most of these had to do with operations which were reported as progressing satisfactorily, it is assumed that he read them primarily for information purposes in order to keep himself abreast of the strategical and tactical situation. This view is supported, in part, by the Report of the G-3 SIXTH Army wherein it was stated that the operations subsection of the SIXTH Army, while in the WASATCH, passed from D-day to D+4 day information on the tactical situation to COMSOWESPAC.\*

(1) Operations of COMSEVENTHFLT, October 22nd.

COMSEVENTHFLT, who was also CTF 77, was, as pointed out under "Operations of CTF 77, October 21st", operating in the WASATCH in his night retirement area.

During the day he took no unusual action as COMSEVENTHFLT or in his capacity as CANF SOWESPAC in so far as the Leyte operation was concerned. However, his headquarters at Hollandia continued to exercise administrative control.

It is assumed that this headquarters received most, if not all, of the dispatches relating to the operation and acted as necessary on those items which fell to that headquarters. About the only dispatches sent out by headquarters at Hollandia were (a) at 1205, the intelligence summary listing the results of contacts and strikes on that day as well as on the previous day; the sum total of these results was some damage and sinkings of minor merchant shipping and some effective bombing of certain key sectors, notably Cagayan Town and Misamis, Mindanao, and (b) at 1855 informing CTF's 71 and 73 that a search plane reported sighting at 0500 nine large merchant ships plus five destroyers in Latitude 11° - 47'N, Longitude 116° - 20'E on course 240°(T), speed twelve knots.\*\*

During the day his headquarters received dispatches of importance, as information addressee, as follows:

(1) At 0518 a dispatch from CTF 71 reporting that a submarine had contacted three large unidentified ships estimated cruisers at 0200 in Latitude 07° - 31'N, Longitude 115° - 22'E, on course 025, speed twenty-one knots.\*\*\*

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\* 6TH U.S. Army, Report of the Leyte Operation, October 17th - December 25th, 1944, Part VIII, Report of the G-3, Page 107.

\*\* COM7THFLT Dispatch 220305 October 1944 to usuals; also COM7THFLT Dispatch 220955 October 1944 to CTF's 71 and 73.

\*\*\* CTF 71 Dispatch 211941 October 1944 to CINCPAC, CTF 17, COM3RDFLT, COM7THFLT, C.G. 5TH Air Force, all TFC's 3RD and 7TH Fleets.



October 22nd

CONFIDENTIAL

(2) At 0740 a dispatch from CTF 78 to the ARIADNE directing that ship to fuel in Area ACCIPITER since there was no fuel in Kossol Roads.\*

(3) At 1206 a dispatch from CTF 71 reporting that the submarine referred to in (1) above had at 0800 lost contact on the three unidentified ships in Latitude 09° - 23'N, Longitude 115° - 20'E, at which time the tops of one had been dimly seen and which was probably a battleship.\*\*

(4) At 1233 a special report from CINCPAC stating, in part, that there was evidence of a good contact at 0637 by a Japanese plane in either Latitude 10° - 32'N or 25° - 32'N, Longitude 133° - 28'E, which report had been broadcast several times, as a result of which Sasebo had ordered a precautionary alert for the Nansei Shoto. Whether or not his headquarters gave any attention to this dispatch is not known but it seems probable that, since there were no SOWESPAC units in the position referred to, they may have felt that the northern latitude was correct, which would place it within the POA.

(5) At 2055 a dispatch from COMTHIRDFLT to the effect that (a) he planned to send to Ulithi two carrier groups, October 25th - 29th, and two, October 29th - November 3rd, and (b) only the BUNKER HILL and two destroyers would be sent to Manus in the immediate future.\*\*\*

(6) At 2058 a dispatch from COMTHIRDFLT, quoted in full under "Operations of COMTHIRDFLT, October 22nd", ordering the BUNKER HILL with the STEPHEN POTTER and BENHAM to Manus and giving instructions concerning the handling of its aircraft.\*\*\*\*

(7) At 2112 a dispatch from the ARIADNE saying that she planned to continue on to Kossol Roads.\*\*\*\*\*

(8) Sometime around 2205 a dispatch from CTF 77 to CINCPAC stating that he desired to retain CRUDIV FOUR less INDIANAPOLIS plus MINNEAPOLIS until local defense forces were firmly established on Leyte.\*\*\*\*\*

(9) At 2245 a dispatch from COMCORTDIV THIRTY-SEVEN advising CTF 77 that he planned to send the AOG KISHWAUKEE to join TU 77.7.1 in Leyte Gulf and would hold the balance of the Kossol Roads unit of 77.7.1 to await further orders.\*\*\*\*\*

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- \* CTF 78 Dispatch 211539 October 1944 to ARIADNE, info CTF 77, COM7THFLT.
  - \*\* CTF 71 Dispatch 220207 October 1944 to CINCPAC, COMSUBPAC, all TFC's 3RD and 7TH Fleets, COM3RDFLT, C.G.'s 5TH and 13TH Air Forces.
  - \*\*\* COM3RDFLT Dispatch 220517 October 1944 to CINCPAC, info COM7THFLT, COMAIR7THFLT, CTF 38, CTF 57, etc.
  - \*\*\*\* COM3RDFLT Dispatch 220304 October 1944 to BUNKER HILL, info all interested.
  - \*\*\*\*\* ARIADNE Dispatch 220954 October 1944 to CTF 78, info CTF 77.
  - \*\*\*\*\* CTF 77 Dispatch 220837 October 1944 to CINCPAC, info CTG 77.2, COM7THFLT, CTF's 78, 79, COMSOWESPAC, COM3RDFLT.
  - \*\*\*\*\* COMCORTDIV 37 Dispatch 212315 October 1944 to CTF 77, CTU 77.7.1, COMSERV7THFLT, info COM7THFLT, CTG 77.7.

Since these dispatches dealt largely with matters being handled generally by other commands, he appears to have taken no direct action but, instead, employed them solely as factors in his running estimate.

(a) Operations of CTF 77 (Central Philippines Attack Force).

At the beginning of the day CTF 77, embarked in WASATCH, was returning toward the Southern Transport Area where he planned to observe operations during the forenoon. The previous evening he had withdrawn from the vicinity of the beaches as usual and had retired for the night to the southeastern portion of Leyte Gulf with his flagship group (TG 77.1) consisting of WASATCH, NASHVILLE (COMSOWESPAC embarked), BUSH, ABNER READ, AMMEN, and MULLANY.\*

So far, during the night he had received no new information which materially changed the situation as regards the operations at the landing beaches over that which he had reported to COMSOWESPAC at 1846 the evening before.\*\*

As on the previous night, he was particularly interested in the operations ashore and at the beachheads, which operations continued to proceed favorably. He had encountered unloading delays in the southern beach areas it was true, but these were not too serious as both C.G. SEVENTH Division and C.G. NINETY-SIXTH Division had assumed command ashore there. Since all of the army division commanders had assumed command ashore and since his TENTH Corps commander had assumed command off the northern beaches, he was now anxious to expedite the unloading of the remaining shipping as this would expedite (1) its departure and thereby reduce its period of vulnerability to enemy attack, and (2) the assumptions of command ashore by C.G. TWENTY-FOURTH Corps and by C.G. SIXTH Army.

During the midwatch he received dispatches and TBS voice radio messages as follows:

(a) At 0056, one from CTF 79 (actually this dispatch, while received within the WASATCH at this time, was not delivered to him for many hours with the result that, as will be shown later, he found it necessary to admonish CTF 79); this dispatch cancelled that commander's approval of CTU 77.2.2's request to fuel in Area ACCIPITER and recommended instead that the oilers be brought into the gulf and anchored roughly between the transport areas in which position they were to fuel the combatant ships;\*\*\*

(b) At 0059, one from CTG 77.5 reporting having swept:

(1) Area SWEEP to a depth of eighty feet;

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\* War Diaries WASATCH and NASHVILLE, October 21st and 22nd, 1944.

\*\* CTF 77 Dispatch 210946 October 1944 to COMSOWESPAC, info COMINCH, CINCPAC, COM3RDFLT, etc.

\*\*\* CTF 79 Dispatch 211400 October 1944 to CTF 77, info CTG 77.2.



(2) No mines in those portions to the north and south of the Main Ship Channel, which areas were considered safe;

(3) Forty mines in the Main Channel and would repeat the sweep on the following day;\*

(c) At 0107, one from CTG 79.1. This was a summary of the previous day's operations which reported principally that C.G. SEVENTH Infantry Division and his headquarters had been placed ashore, and that the unloading was proceeding satisfactorily;\*\* and.

(d) Two contact reports from his Hollandia headquarters, one at 0315 of a 1300 October 21st contact believed reliable on two light cruisers of the YUBARI-class between Maricaban and Cape Santiago en route from Manila Bay to Verde Island Passage at an SOA of twenty-five knots\*\*\* (Plate XXXIII, Contact 4). (The evaluation of this contact is discussed under "Operations of COMSEVENTHFLT, October 21st"), and the other at 0355 (which was included in the daily intelligence summary) which stated that (1) at 1115 October 21st a THIRTEENTH Air Force Liberator had contacted one battleship, three light cruisers, three destroyers, and six unidentified ships in the western Celebes Sea (Contact 3), and (2) there was doubt as to the type and size of the shipping reported.\*\*\*\*

This latter report was essentially a repeat of a contact report which he had received originally at 2010 on the previous day.\*\*\*\*\* It seems likely that he entertained the same doubt as to the type and size of this shipping as did his Hollandia headquarters\*\*\*\* since there had been no (a) amplifying report nor confirmation by CTG 73.4 whose aircraft on Search Plan FOX from Morotai were covering this vicinity and had on the previous day been directed by CTF 73 to pass immediately to the principal commanders concerned all important sightings of hostile men-of-war and large shipping or air concentrations\*\*\*\*\* or (b) intelligence from any other sources which indicated the movement of any such force to this area.

(It is interesting to note that this report must have been discounted or seriously doubted by other commands as well. In the Intelligence Summary prepared by his Headquarters on the 22nd, there is no

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\* CTG 77.5 TBS Voice Radio Message 211559 October 1944 to CTF 79.  
 \*\* CTG 79.1 Dispatch 211414 October 1944 to CTF 79.  
 \*\*\* COM7THFLT Dispatch 211205 October 1944 to CTF's 77, 78, 79, 71, 72, CTG's 77.2, 77.4, COM3RDFLT, CTF 38, etc.  
 \*\*\*\* COM7THFLT Dispatch 210721 October 1944 to all concerned COM7THFLT Intelligence Summary.  
 \*\*\*\*\* C.G. 13TH Air Force Dispatch 211922 October 1944 to all interested commands.  
 \*\*\*\*\* CTF 73 Dispatch 210736 October 1944 to CTG 73.4, CANF SOWESPAC, C.G. 5TH Air Force, COMSOWESPAC, etc.

mention of it,\* and in reporting the air searches for October 21st the Intelligence Officer at GHQ SOWESPAC stated, "nil significant reports".\*\* Finally, C.G. FIFTH Air Force, in the early afternoon of the 22nd, reported that subsequent searches for this contact had failed to locate it and explained that the original sighting had been made from a distance of fifteen miles,\*\*\* implying thereby that the original report was dubious. Until this clarification was finally received, however, this force must have been a matter of concern to CTF 77).

At 0518 he received a third contact report. This was from CTF 71 and reported that a submarine (DARTER) had sighted at 0200 that morning three large unidentified ships, which she estimated to be cruisers, in Latitude 07° - 31'N, Longitude 115° - 22'E, on course 025°(T), speed twenty-one\*\*\*\* (Contact 6).

At 0636 he intercepted a dispatch from COMINCH to CINCPAC requesting early advice as to what COMTHIRDFLT had in mind when he requested information about a safe route through Surigao and Mindoro Straits.\*\*\*\*\*

This was doubtless of considerable interest to him because he had likewise received on the previous day the dispatch above referred to by COMINCH. He had, also on the previous day, received, as an information addressee, another dispatch from COMTHIRDFLT to COMSOWESPAC which indicated a desire to be relieved of the responsibility for covering the transports so that some of the groups might rearm while the remaining groups were free for more offensive action.\*\*\*\*\* Since these two dispatches were somewhat at variance with the existing situation, it seems likely that he was as confused as was COMINCH and welcomed the latter's query, as well as awaited COMTHIRDFLT's reply thereto.

At 0828 he received a dispatch from CTG 77.4 (quoted in full under "Operations of CTG 77.4, October 22nd") wherein that commander protested the prospective detachment of his DESRON FORTY-SEVEN to COMTHIRDFLT.\*\*\*\*\*

Whether or not, prior to the receipt of this dispatch, he had planned to take some action at this time in this case is not known but it seems clear, from a dispatch which he sent later in the day, that he now

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- \* COM7THFLT Dispatch 220305 October 1944 to all concerned with 7THFLT Intelligence Summaries.
  - \*\* COM7THFLT for GHQ SOWESPAC Dispatch 221105 October 1944 G-2 to CofS.
  - \*\*\* C.G. 5TH Air Force Dispatch 221433/I October 1944 to all concerned with current operations SOWESPAC.
  - \*\*\*\* CTF 71 Dispatch 211941 October 1944 to all CTF's 3RD and 7TH Fleets, C.G. 13TH and 16TH Air Forces.
  - \*\*\*\*\* COMINCH Dispatch 211535 October 1944 to CINCPAC, info COM3RDFLT.
  - \*\*\*\*\* COM3RDFLT Dispatch 210645 October 1944 to COMSOWESPAC, info COMINCH, CINCPAC, CTF 77, CTF 38, CTG 38.1.
  - \*\*\*\*\* CTG 77.4 Dispatch 212224 October 1944 to CTF 77.





CONTACTS RECEIVED  
BY  
PRINCIPAL ALLIED COMMANDERS  
OCTOBER 22nd 1944  
BATTLE FOR LEYTE GULF  
OCTOBER 1944  
ALL TIMES ITEM

	TIME OF CONTACT	LOCATION	TIMES OF RECEIPT		
			CSWPAC	CTF 77	C3rd FLT
1	AM - 21st	N PALAWAN PASS		•	0226
2	0637-21st	E OF OKINAWA OR E OF LEYTE GULF		1233	1233
3	1115 - 21st	W CELEBES SEA		0355	
4	1300-21st	VEROE I PASS	0315	0315	0317
5	2335 - 21st	S.W. OF FORMOSA		0832	0832
6	0200-22nd	S.OF DANGEROUS GROUND	0518	0518	0527
7	0630-22nd	N.W. OF LUZON		**	**
8	0730-22nd	N OF AMAMI O SHIMA		2030	2037
9	0800-22nd	DANGEROUS GROUND	1206	1206	0934
10	0930-22nd	N.W. OF LUZON		**	**
11	1400-22nd	N DANGEROUS GROUND		1703	1530
12	1745-22nd	N.W. OF LUZON		**	**

Omitted times of receipt are unknown  
 • Received on previous day  
 \* Received on following day  
 © Received only by CTF 17 this day

⊙ COMTHIRDFLT





felt, in view of CTG 77.4's evident concern, that he should initiate immediately some action in this matter. He realized, of course, that, in view of the limited support he was obtaining from COMTHIRDFLT, it was highly important that TG 77.4 be maintained fully effective. He also realized, from CTG 77.4's dispatch, that this would likely be difficult of accomplishment should that task group be denied adequate antiaircraft and antisubmarine defense. He therefore commenced estimating the situation to determine what his decision should be in this matter. He likely considered two courses of action; i.e., whether to (a) recommend to CINCPAC that the detachment of DESRON FORTY-SEVEN be delayed, or (b) authorize the detachment on schedule but, in so doing, to provide adequate replacements from his own command. Since, in analysing these courses of action, he required information concerning the availability of destroyers, he could not arrive at a decision immediately and therefore was forced to delay his decision until the necessary information became available.

At 0832 he received a report from the SEA DRAGON of a contact at 2335 on the previous day on one carrier and four unidentified warships in Latitude 21° - 47'N, Longitude 118° - 36'E, on course 210°(T), speed nineteen\* (Contact 5).

Just prior to 0844, having heard nothing from CTF 79 and apparently feeling that that commander even at this late hour had not (a) received his 210702 which ordered the fueling group into Leyte Gulf on the following day,\*\* or (b) perceived the adverse effect that the departure of part of TU 77.2.2 from Leyte Gulf would have on his Harbor Defense Plan Number ONE which he had ordered in his 210641,\*\*\* he decided that he would have to take immediate action to prevent those TU 77.2.2 units scheduled to fuel in Area ACCIPITER the following morning, commencing after 0800, from departing Leyte Gulf in accordance with CTU 77.2.2's approved plan. He therefore at 0844 (a) cancelled CTF 79's approval of CTU 77.2.2's plan, (b) called CTF 79's attention to his 210702 and 210641, and (c) admonished that commander for approving a plan which contemplated withdrawal of BATDIV FOUR from the northern area and the departure of part of TU 77.2.2 from Leyte Gulf on the sound basis that this was a function of CTF 77, the overall commander, and was not a function of any lesser commander.\*\*\*\*

At 1025 he directed CTG 77.2 to designate a battleship or cruiser to provide two aircraft for air - sea rescue service to be available on fifteen minutes notice commencing at 0630 daily. The designated ship was to make radio contact with Commander Support Aircraft, Central Philippines (CSACP) each morning upon assuming the duty.\*\*\*\*\*

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- \* SEA DRAGON Dispatch 212140 October 1944 to CTF 17.
  - \*\* CTF 77 Dispatch 210702 October 1944 to CTU 77.7.1, info CTF's 78, 79.
  - \*\*\* CTF 77 Dispatch 210641 October 1944 to CTF's 78, 79, CTG's 77.2, 77.3.
  - \*\*\*\* CTF 77 Dispatch 212344 October 1944 to CTF 79, CTG 77.2.
  - \*\*\*\*\* CTF 77 Dispatch 220125 October 1944 to CTG 77.2, info CTF's 78, 79 and CTG 77.4.

This order implemented the air - sea rescue procedure contained in his basic plan which stated, in part, that "CSACP will receive and coordinate all reports of downed aviators, suggest appropriate rescue measures, and provide necessary aircraft, ships or boats for rescue missions from those available as ordered by CTF 77".\* Why he had not done this before D+2 is not known; however, it is likely that he now realized that no specific assignment of air - sea rescue aircraft had been made and, with the Visayan strikes by CTG 77.4 to be carried out both morning and afternoon commencing the following day, this facility should be made available to CSACP so that there would be a minimum delay in the rescue of aviators downed away from the immediate vicinity of surface rescue vessels. While the above details might well have been included in his basic plan, it seems probable that he had previously considered this and had discarded the idea in favor of issuing a later directive which would be based on the current developments and requirements of the operation.

At 1145 he received (by hand) from CTF 79 the 1000 situation report\*\* which at 0840 he had requested from each of his attack force commanders.\*\*\* While this report, quoted in full under "Operations of CTF 79, October 22nd", was not very complete and generally covered the previous day's operations, rather than this days as well, it was nevertheless optimistic in tone and indicated a confidence that the situation ashore and the unloading were both proceeding satisfactorily. For these reasons he appears to have accepted the dispatch even though he likely disapproved of its brevity.

At 1206, as the WASATCH was getting underway to proceed to the Northern Transport Area,\*\*\*\* he received a dispatch from CTF 71 reporting that the submarine which had reported three unidentified ships at 0200 had lost contact at 0800 in Latitude 09° - 23'N, Longitude 115° - 20'E (Plate XXXIII, Contact 9), at which time the tops of one had been dimly seen and might have been a battleship.\*\*\*\*\*

He now likely studied the contact reports with more attention and concern than heretofore. By this time, he had received reports of one carrier, one battleship (and possibly two), six or seven cruisers, and numerous destroyers, any or all of which might be in a position to reach Leyte Gulf the next day.

At 1233 he received a special report from CINCPAC. This was of particular interest to him in that, among other things, it (a) reported the movement of some small craft (largely MTB's) on October 20th to Batangas, and (b) said that, except for the above, there was no additional information regarding the movements of Japanese combatant forces.

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\* CANF SOWESPAC Operation Plan No. 13-44, Serial 00022A, September 26th, 1944, Appendix 4 to Annex G.  
 \*\* CTF 79 Dispatch 220216 October 1944 to CTF 77.  
 \*\*\* CTF 77 Dispatch 212340 October 1944 to CTF's 78 and 79.  
 \*\*\*\* War Diary WASATCH, October 22nd, 1944.  
 \*\*\*\*\* CTF 71 Dispatch 220207 October 1944 to CINCPAC, COMSUBPAC, all TFC's 3RD and 7TH Fleets, etc.



At 1257, having completed his estimate of the situation with relation to the prospective detachment of DESRON FORTY-SEVEN and having decided to accept the course of action previously referred to (i.e., to authorize the detachment but to provide adequate replacements from his own command), he directed CTF's 78 and 79 each to (a) provide such replacements by providing one destroyer division to report to CTG 77.4 on covering station by October 25th or earliest practicable date thereafter, and (b) inform interested parties as to the division designated. In addition, he directed CTG 77.4, upon the reporting of these destroyers, to send DESRON FORTY-SEVEN to Ulithi where it was to report to COMTHIRDFLT for duty.\*

It is not clear, from this dispatch, whether CTF 77 directed COMDESRON FORTY-SEVEN, upon arrival Ulithi, to report to COMTHIRDFLT because (a) such instructions were in CINCPAC's basic dispatch, or (b) he expected that commander to be in Ulithi. If the former was correct, there is no particular significance to this dispatch; if the latter was correct, the dispatch was of considerable significance in that it shows that CTF 77 (1) was of the opinion that by October 25th TF 38 would have succeeded in returning to the basic plan wherein TG's 38.2 and 38.3 were scheduled to be in Ulithi on this date for refueling and rearming,\*\* and (2) realized that the TF 38 covering forces would by that time be reduced to about fifty per cent. SINCE HE DID NOT TAKE ANY ACTION TO RETAIN DESRON FORTY-SEVEN OR TO SUGGEST TO COMTHIRDFLT THAT HE (COMTHIRDFLT) DELAY HIS MOVEMENT TO ULITHI, THIS SEEMS TO INDICATE HIS BELIEF THAT THE GENERAL SITUATION BY THAT DATE WOULD BE IN HAND.

At 1302 he directed CTG 77.2 to furnish, upon departure of the attack force commanders, the antisubmarine patrols required by paragraph 3(x)(10) of his basic plan. This paragraph referred to the antisubmarine patrols which each attack force commander had been directed to provide (and which had been provided) to cover the entrances to Leyte Gulf within that task force commander's area of responsibility.\*\*\*

At 1312 his flagship (WASATCH) anchored in the Northern Transport Area.\*\*\*\*

At 1328 he received, as an information addressee, a query from CTF 78 to CTG 78.5 (Harbor Entrance Control Group) as to the progress of the clearance sweep north of Homonhon Island which CTF 78 had requested forenoon on the 20th.\*\*\*\*\* This is discussed further under "Operations of CTF 78, October 22nd".

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- \* CTF 77 Dispatch 220357 October 1944 to CTF's 78 and 79, CTG 77.4, etc.
  - \*\* CTF 38 (COMFIRSTCARTASKFORPAC) Operation Order No. 11-44, Serial 00020, October 1st, 1944.
  - \*\*\* CANF SOWESPAC Operation Plan No. 13-44, Serial 00022A, September 26th, 1944, Paragraph 3(x)(10).
  - \*\*\*\* War Diary WASATCH, October 22nd, 1944.
  - \*\*\*\*\* CTF 78 Dispatch 220215 October 1944 to CTG 78.5, info CTF 77 and COMDESRON 25.



At 1406, undoubtedly motivated by the progress made by the units of the TENTH Corps along San Juanico Strait and by the fact that the southern entrance to that strait was being patrolled by LCI's\* as well as by MTB's, he wisely directed CTG 70.1 to cancel that portion of Operation Plan No. 13-44 which required a patrol at the southern entrance to San Juanico Strait.\*\*

Meanwhile, he had been studying CTG 77.4's recommendation that, in order to reduce the harassing raids by enemy aircraft, he (CTG 77.4) be authorized to make morning and afternoon sweeps over Cebu, Negros, and northern Mindanao. Although he clearly considered this to be an excellent suggestion and one which he desired to authorize, he had naturally been concerned over the fact that army aircraft were scheduled to strike in these general areas and it was therefore necessary, if these TG 77.4 strikes were to be made, to learn from C.G. FIFTH Air Force at what time the FIFTH Air Force planned to make its strikes so that interference might be avoided in the target area. He therefore appears to have communicated with that commander and to have received a suitable reply for at 1503 he (1) directed CTG 77.4 to reduce the TCAP to sixteen VF (from the scheduled twenty-eight)\*\*\* and the direct support groups for each attack force to six VF/six VT (this gave a total of twelve VF/twelve VT for both attack forces rather than the scheduled forty VF/twenty-four VT),\*\*\* (2) recommended that (a) an early morning fighter sweep of enemy airfields in northern Mindanao and the western Visayas be made to be completed not later than 1000 and that late afternoon combined attacks be made with VT's used primarily against shipping, and (b) varying tactics daily be employed to catch the enemy off-guard, and (3) advised that, unless informed to the contrary, the FIFTH Air Force would be striking northern Mindanao and the western Visayas between 1000 and 1400.\*\*\*\*

It seems clear that sometime in the early afternoon he received a dispatch from C.G. SIXTH Army requesting that (a) the Army Reserve (381st Infantry) be unloaded in the area of the NINETY-SIXTH Infantry Division where it was to remain in Army Reserve, and (b) the C.G. TWENTY-FOURTH Corps be informed, for, at 1519, he advised CTF 79 to this effect.\*\*\*\*\*

At 1610, just prior to getting underway for night retirement, he requested from CTF's 78 and 79 the names of ships in screen and station assignment for each.\*\*\*\*\* He desired this information in order that he might be properly oriented should there be any contact reports during the night from these screening vessels.

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- \* CTF 78 Operation Plan No. 101-44, Serial 0008, October 3rd, 1944, Appendix E.
  - \*\* CTF 77 Dispatch 220506 October 1944 to CTG 70.1.
  - \*\*\* CTG 77.4 Operation Plan No. 2-44, Serial 00075, October 5th, 1944, Appendix 3 to Annex D.
  - \*\*\*\* CTF 77 Dispatch 220603 October 1944 to CTG 77.4, info C.G. 5TH Air Force, CAAF SOWESPAC, CTF's 78, 79, COM3RDFLT, CTF 38.
  - \*\*\*\*\* CTF 77 Dispatch 220619 October 1944 to CTF 79.
  - \*\*\*\*\* CTF 77 Dispatch 220710 October 1944 to CTF's 78 and 79.



At about the same time he received from CTG 77.2 a visual dispatch listing the order in which he desired his ships to be fueled and to receive ammunition on the following day.\*

At 1630 he received, as an information addressee, the sailing orders issued by CTF 79 to CTU 79.14.2, which directed certain ships and escorts to depart the Leyte transport area at 1800 for Hollandia.\*\* The details of the departure of this unit are discussed under "Operations of CTF 79, October 22nd".

At 1640 he commenced his night retirement as the WASATCH got underway in company with the NASHVILLE and escorts forming TG 77.1 (Flagship Group) for night withdrawal in Leyte Gulf.\*\*\*

At 1649 he received, as an information addressee, a TBS voice radio dispatch from CTU 79.11.2 to CTF 79 giving the assignments of the destroyers in that commanders area of responsibility.\*\*\*\*

Although there is no record of a similar reply from CTF 78 concerning the screen in his area, he likely soon learned, or already knew, that the ANDERSON and JOHN RODGERS were patrolling to seaward of the northern entrance to Leyte Gulf.\*\*\*\*\*

At 1703 he no doubt intercepted on the AOIC a report of an aircraft contact made at 0500 on nine large merchant ships plus five destroyers, giving the position of the contact as Latitude 11° - 47'N, Longitude 116° - 20'E, course 240°(T), speed twelve knots\*\*\*\*\* (Contact 11).

It seems likely that this contact was made at 1400 rather than at 0500 since there are no orders or reports which show that any Allied aircraft were in this position (900 miles from Morotai) at 0500 October 22nd. Although Sectors ONE, TWO and THREE of Search Plan FOX had (effective October 19th)\*\*\*\*\* been extended to maximum radius (generally 1000 miles during daylight and 900 miles at night), it must be emphasized that none of these searches were near the contact position at 0500, although the day searches were near this position at 1400.

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- \* CTG 77.2 Visual Dispatch 220515 October 1944 to CTF 77, info CTF 79.
  - \*\* CTF 79 Dispatch 220554 October 1944 to all concerned.
  - \*\*\* War Diary WASATCH, October 22nd, 1944.
  - \*\*\*\* CTU 79.11.2 TBS Voice Radio Message 220749 October 1944 to CTF 79, info CTF 77.
  - \*\*\*\*\* Action Report CTU 78.1.6, Leyte Operation, Serial 0114, November 4th, 1944.
  - \*\*\*\*\* Plane HL 65 (Sector 2), Search Plan FOX, Dispatch 220610 October 1944 to 5TH BOMCOM.
  - \*\*\*\*\* CTF 73 Dispatch 180900 October 1944 to CTG's 73.2, 73.4, info CAAF SOWESPAC and 5TH Air Force, CTF's 71, 72 and 77.

THIS CONTACT WAS RE-BROADCAST LATER A MINIMUM OF THREE TIMES. OF THESE FOUR BROADCASTS, ONLY TWO INDICATED THE ZONE DESIGNATION OF THE TIME OF CONTACT AND, EVEN IN THESE CASES, AS POINTED OUT ABOVE, THE DESIGNATION MAY WELL HAVE BEEN INCORRECT. WHILE THE COMMANDERS WHO RE-BROADCAST THIS REPORT SO FREQUENTLY LIKELY HAD GOOD REASONS FOR SO DOING, IT SEEMS WISE TO EMPHASIZE HERE THE FACT THAT THE UNNECESSARY REPETITION OF DISPATCHES OF THIS NATURE--MERCHANT SHIPPING OR MINOR CONTACTS--TENDS TO CONGEST THE RADIO CIRCUITS AND TO DELAY THE TRANSMISSION OF MORE IMPORTANT DISPATCHES. THEREFORE, THE QUESTION OF WHETHER OR NOT TO RE-BROADCAST A MINOR CONTACT REPORT SHOULD IN EACH CASE BE THE SUBJECT OF SERIOUS CONSIDERATION BY THE RESPONSIBLE COMMANDERS.

CTF 77 was, of course, interested in the location of this contact. Therefore, he knew that (a) the only units which might be able to attack it were the DACE and DARTER, and (b) the DARTER at 0800 had been about 150 miles south of the contact, which was heading generally toward the DARTER's last reported position. He did not inform these submarines of this contact on the sound ground that this was a function of CTF 71, who could be expected to take action against the convoy if the situation permitted.

At 1711 he dispatched his daily summary of operations to COMSOWESPAC. This report, which was general in nature, commented on the (a) successful operations of the CVE carrier planes which were reported as successfully (1) sweeping Cebu and Panay, (2) supporting the advancing troops, (b) failure of the Japanese harassing attacks on ships in the unloading areas as well as against the CVE's, (c) scattering of pamphlets, (d) success of the unloading operations stating the "majority of the transports and LST's have departed--twenty-four cargo ships (AK's) and transports (AP's) remain", (e) the collision between the TENNESSEE and WAR HAWK with resulting minor damage to both ships, and (f) finally, on the fact that Major General Sibert\* (C.G. TENTH Corps) had assumed command ashore.\*\*

This dispatch is particularly interesting because of three statements therein. The first is the statement that the majority of the transports and LST's had departed the area; the second is the statement that twenty-four AK's and AP's remained; and the third is the statement concerning General Sibert. The first statement, while correct concerning the transports, was incorrect as regards the LST's for at this time twenty LST's remained off the northern beaches and fifty-nine off the southern beaches or a total of seventy-nine LST's, including the LST's of TG 78.6. Since 112 LST's had so far arrived at Leyte, it is clear that approximately seventy per cent still remained. The second statement was incorrect for ten AK's and AP's had been ordered to depart the area at 1700 and were at this time doing so. Therefore, the correct figure should have been fourteen rather than twenty-four AK's and AP's. The third statement, while correct, was incomplete for it gives the

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\* Major General Franklin C. Sibert, USA.

\*\* CTF 77 Dispatch 220811 October 1944 to COMSOWESPAC, info COMINCH, CINCPAC, COM3RDFLT, etc.



impression that General Sibert had assumed command ashore that day when, as a matter of fact, he had assumed command ashore at 1600 on the previous day.

At 1714 (a) he informed CTF 79 that the "Ceremony for installation Philippine government will take place at Tacloban at noon tomorrow Monday. General MacArthur would like you to attend if practicable. PT boat will leave WASATCH for Tacloban at 1045",\* and (b) at 1716, having received a request from CTG 78.2 (who, after the departure of the attack force and attack group commanders, was to remain in the Leyte area as the SOPA (admin) afloat)\*\* for six LCI's and four LCI's (Mortar) boats from CTF 79, he advised CTF 79 of this request.\*\*\*

At 1736 he received, as an information addressee, a dispatch from COMTHIRDFLT wherein that commander ordered TG 38.1 plus the HANCOCK and TG 38.4 plus COMBATPAC in the WASHINGTON with the ALABAMA and DESDIV TEN to retire to Ulithi for rearming, fuel and provisions and to be in Ulithi from October 25th to dawn October 29th.\*\*\*\*

While this dispatch was clearly of considerable interest to him, it may not have been a surprise for, as pointed out earlier (under the discussion at 1257), it is possible that he expected two carrier task groups to be in Ulithi at this time. Whatever may have been the case, he now knew that these groups would be TG's 38.1 and 38.4 rather than TG's 38.2 and 38.3. This was gratifying for it showed that COMTHIRDFLT, in view of the unsettled situation and the previous comments of CINCPAC,\*\*\*\*\* was himself remaining off Luzon in strategic support.

Meanwhile, he continued studying the situation. He appears to have reasoned as follows:

(a) His own combatant forces would continue to be reduced in strength as the empty transports, cargo ships and LST's departed the area. This was because such shipping required escorts;

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\* CTF 77 Dispatch 220814 October 1944 to CTF 79.  
 \*\* Action Report CTG 78.2, Leyte Operation, Serial 0085, November 29th, 1944, Enclosure A, Page 8.  
 \*\*\* CTF 77 Dispatch 220816 October 1944 to CTF 79.  
 \*\*\*\* COM3RDFLT Dispatch 220219 October 1944 to CTG's 38.1, 38.4, info COMINCH, CINCPAC, all concerned with SOWESPAC operations, etc.  
 \*\*\*\*\* CINCPAC Dispatch 211852 October 1944 to COM3RDFLT, info COMINCH, COMSOWESPAC.

(b) While contacts on Japanese forces had not been numerous and had been miles apart, the few which had been made appeared to have a raiding capability;

(c) Since he was losing DESRON FORTY-SEVEN and was being forced to relieve this DESRON with one destroyer division from TF 78 and one from TF 79, this tended to weaken his local defense forces even more;

(d) He should therefore have as strong a surface force as possible inside the gulf in defense of the shipping off the beaches.

He now looked over his movement orders and quickly discerned that CRUDIV FOUR, less INDIANAPOLIS plus MINNEAPOLIS, was scheduled to be detached to the THIRDFLT on October 25th.\* He decided that he would make an effort to retain this unit and therefore at 1737 he originated a dispatch to this effect.\*\*

THE PRECEDING DISPATCHES PRESENT AN UNUSUAL VIEW OF THE MENTAL ATTITUDES OF THE TWO PRINCIPAL COMMANDERS AT THIS TIME. ON THE ONE HAND, THE COMMANDER (CTF 77) CHARGED WITH THE DEFENSE OF LEYTE GULF WAS CONCERNED WITH THE POSSIBILITY OF ATTACKS BY ENEMY RAIDING FORCES AND WAS ENDEAVORING TO MAINTAIN WITHIN LEYTE GULF SURFACE FORCES OF SUFFICIENT STRENGTH TO BE ABLE TO COPE ADEQUATELY WITH SUCH RAIDING FORCES, WHILE THE COMMANDER (COMTHIRDFLT) CHARGED WITH PROVIDING STRATEGIC COVER FOR THE OPERATION WAS NOT TOO CONCERNED WITH THE POSSIBILITY OF RAIDS BY SURFACE FORCES BUT, INSTEAD, WAS GIVING THOUGHT TO (A) THE POSSIBILITY OF CREATING A SITUATION FAVORABLE TO THE DESTRUCTION OF A MAJOR PORTION OF THE ENEMY FLEET, AND (B) OPERATION HOTFOOT, IN VIEW OF WHICH HE HAD ALREADY ORDERED TWO TASK GROUPS TO ULITHI.

At 1800 he received the disappointing information that the FOURTEENTH Air Force daylight search of the South China Sea had been turned back due to weather and that the night search would likely not be made for the same reason.\*\*\* Although, as pointed out in Volume I, this search may not have given the most effective coverage that might have been obtained, it nevertheless was the only attempt using aircraft made to detect movement of enemy surface units in the South China Sea, and the failure to conduct this search could be and clearly was a matter of concern to the commanders responsible for the Leyte operation.

At 1833 he learned from CTG 77.2 that the damage to the WEST VIRGINIA, caused by her touching the ground the previous morning, seemed to be confined to the tips of her propeller blades and that the vibration

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\* CINCPAC Dispatch 101935 October 1944 to COM7THFLT, COM3RDFLT, info COMINCH, COMSOWESPAC, COMCRUPAC, COMCRUDIV's 4, 6, 9 and 12.

\*\* CTF 77 Dispatch 220837 October 1944 to CINCPAC, COMCRUDIV 4, COM7THFLT, CTF's 78, 79, COMSOWESPAC, COM3RDFLT.

\*\*\* COMNAVGRPCHINA Dispatch 220741 October 1944 to COMSOWESPAC, info CINCPAC and COM3RDFLT.



limited her speed to sixteen knots for cruising and eighteen knots in an emergency.\*

At 2138 he received a dispatch from CTF 78 (quoted in full under "Operations of CTF 78, October 22nd") which summarized (a) the situation ashore and reported that although he was in communication with the shore fire control parties he had received no requests for FS that day, and (b) the shipping situation wherein he stated that he expected twenty LST's plus all transport type ships (except FREMONT and JUPITER) to depart that night at 1700.\*\*

Since this report indicated most satisfactory progress ashore and at the same time indicated that the unloading operations were proceeding well it seems likely that CTF 77 received this report with satisfaction.

At 2200, as an information addressee, he received a dispatch from COMTHIRDFLT to the THIRDFLT reporting that he expected a considerable increase in enemy submarine activity in the Philippine Sea in the vicinity of Palau and the Marianas and cautioning alertness.\*\*\*

This was important because his convoys were passing in the vicinity of the Palaus and had heretofore been lightly escorted. In fact, those which had departed that evening from TF 78 were escorted by not more than three destroyers. It seems likely, therefore, that the thought of the submarine problem which might arise presently caused him to feel that the decision to dump cargoes temporarily on the Tacloban airstrip was correct.

At 2205 he received a dispatch from CTG 73.7 (quoted in full under "Operations of CTF 73, October 22nd") who with seaplane tenders SAN CARLOS and HALF MOON was based at Hinunangan Bay, stating in part that he expected to commence day and night SEACAT operations about October 25th with the planes arriving about October 23rd and giving his operating instructions within Leyte Gulf.\*\*\*\*

It seems probable that at about 2300 he received, as an information addressee, a dispatch from CTF 73 to Commander Fleet Air Wing SEVENTEEN directing him in part to order five planes from PATBOMRON THIRTY-THREE and five from PATBOMRON THIRTY-FOUR, with fifteen crews, to proceed to Leyte Gulf at first light October 23rd.\*\*\*\*\*

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- \* CTG 77.2 Dispatch 220844 October 1944 to CTF 77, COMINCH, CINCPAC, info COMBATPAC and COMSERVFORPAC.
  - \*\* CTF 78 Dispatch 220956 October 1944 to CTF 77.
  - \*\*\* COM3RDFLT Dispatch 220805 October 1944 to 3RDFLT, info CINCPAC, COMSOWESPAC, CTF 77.
  - \*\*\*\* CTG 73.7 Dispatch 220921 October 1944 to CTF 77.
  - \*\*\*\*\* CTF 73 Dispatch 221245 October 1944 to COMFAIRWING 17(Admin), info COMPATBOMRON's 33, 34, C.G. 5TH Air Force, CAAF SOWESPAC, CTF's 77, 78, CTG 73.7, SAN CARLOS, etc.

Since, with the commencement of the flights by these SEACATS which were to fly sectors S, T, U, V, W of Search Plan FOX (Revised) (Plate XXXIV), the search plan would now be complete, it seems probable that CTF 77 viewed their prospective arrival with considerable satisfaction.

As pointed out under "Operations of CTF 73, October 22nd", it is not clear whether CTF 77 directed CTF 73 to send these planes to Leyte or whether CTF 73, having heard nothing from CTF 77, decided to send them on his own initiative. According to CTF 73's basic plan, these planes were expected to be called forward by CTF 77 in time to commence operations on D+2.\* Now, for reasons not explained, this would be delayed until D+5.

At 2255, as an information addressee, he received COMTHIRD-FLT's dispatch to CINCPAC informing that commander that his present intention was to send two carrier groups to Ulithi October 25th - 29th and two October 29th - November 3rd.\*\*

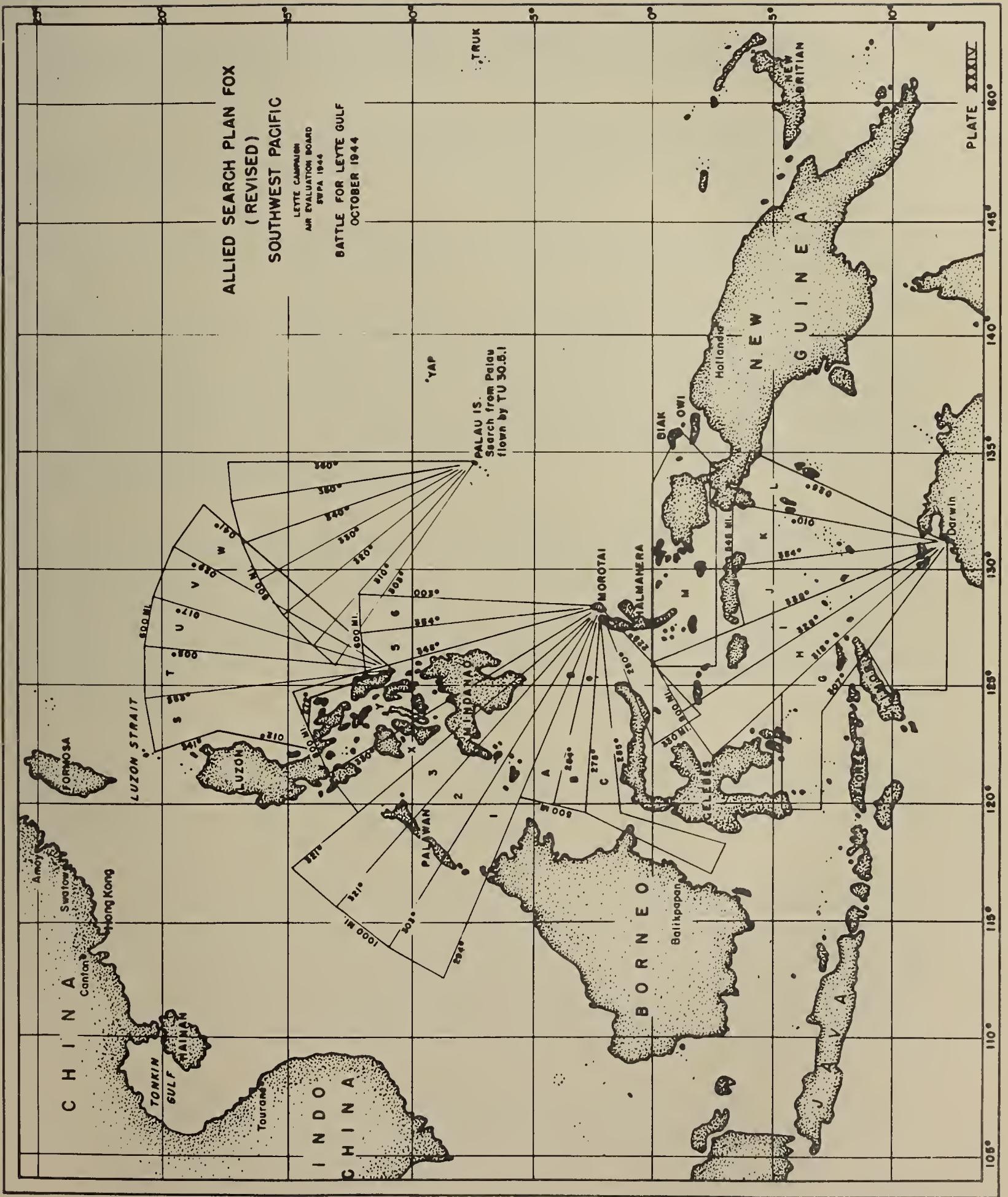
(1) Operations of CTF 78 (Northern Attack Force), October 22nd.

CTF 78, in BLUE RIDGE, remained at anchor in San Pedro Bay off RED Beach with no responsibility for the shore operations since 1600 October 21st when C.G. TENTH Corps had assumed command ashore.\*\*\* He was, however, responsible for the expeditious unloading of all personnel, equipment, and supplies allocated to the TENTH Corps area and for the movement of his ships away from the objective area as quickly and as orderly as possible after unloading. His screening responsibilities as assigned by CTF 77 in his Harbor Defense Plan ONE still obtained and he carried them out in the same manner as he had on October 21st.

At 0039 he directed the ARIADNE, with two APD's, to return to Area ACCIPITER to fuel\*\*\*\* since he had learned late the previous evening that there would be no fuel available from tankers at Kossol.\*\*\*\*\* Acting on information concerning the intentions of the ARIADNE,\*\*\*\*\* he had previously ordered these ships, which were en route Hollandia in TG 78.9, to stop and fuel at Kossol.\*\*\*\*\* He had made no other arrangements for them to fuel.

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- \* COMAIR7THFLT Operation Plan No. 8-44, Serial 000166, October 15th, 1944.
  - \*\* COM3RDFLT Dispatch 220517 October 1944 to CINCPAC, info, among others, COM7THFLT, CTF 38.
  - \*\*\* CTF 78 Dispatch 211113 October 1944 to CTF 77.
  - \*\*\*\* CTF 78 Dispatch 211539 October 1944 to HMS ARIADNE, info CTF 77 and COM7THFLT.
  - \*\*\*\*\* COM7THFLT Dispatch 210635 October 1944 to CTF 78, info CTF's 77, 79, ARIADNE, COM3RDFLT, ISCOM Palau and CTU 77.7.1.
  - \*\*\*\*\* ARIADNE Dispatch 200947 October 1944 to CTF 78.
  - \*\*\*\*\* CTF 78 Dispatch 201216 October 1944 to ARIADNE, info CTF's 77, 79.









At 0315 he received from COMSEVENTHFLT a report evaluated as reliable of two enemy light cruisers en route from Manila to Verde Island Passage.\*

At 0756 he noted that the first transport in Reinforcement Group ONE had anchored in San Pedro Bay and had immediately commenced unloading.\*\*

At 0830 he noted the arrival of the twenty-eight LST's and the six liberty ships (XAK's) of the RED Beach Group.\*\*\*

About this time he found himself faced with a serious problem. Although he had succeeded in unloading all of his original (D-day landing) LST's, he now had fourteen new LST's to unload at RED Beach. These LST's had arrived with CTG 78.6. He knew that he would have to do something about this and therefore, sometime before 0815, he seems to have advised the senior LST commander with TG 78.6 of the unfavorable conditions at RED Beach as a result of which the RED Beach LST's anchored off the beach and made no attempt to unload.\*\*\*\*

Meanwhile, he deliberated over the problem as to where and when he could best discharge these RED Beach LST's. Analysis indicated that Cataisan Point north of the WHITE Beach area would be suitable and was long enough to handle many LST's at once. But analysis also indicated that if many LST's unloaded there the space required would gradually embrace Tacloban airstrip as the supplies to be landed would be greater than the limited beach areas could provide for. This would necessarily have a retarding effect on the construction of the airdrome which was supposed to be ready by D+5.

He decided to authorize the RED Beach LST's to beach at Cataisan Point. Whether or not he consulted with CTF 77 in this matter is not known but, in view of the importance of this decision and its strategic implications, it seems likely that he did.

This decision was difficult to make and, owing to the limited information available concerning (a) the condition of the Tacloban airfield at its time of capture, (b) the measures necessary to prepare it for use by army aircraft to be based there, and (c) the weight given by the various top commanders to the danger of successful raids by enemy aircraft and surface ships, it is equally difficult to evaluate. On the one hand, it was very important to establish land-based aircraft on Leyte as soon as

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\* COM7THFLT Dispatch 211205 October 1944 to CTF 78.  
\*\* Action Report CALLAWAY, Reinforcement Leyte Island Assault, Serial 0102, October 29th, 1944.  
\*\*\* Action Report CTG 78.2, Leyte Operation, Serial 0085, November 29th, 1944.  
\*\*\*\* Action Report LST 751, Report of Landing Operations in the Invasion of Leyte Island, Serial 07, October 27th, 1944.

possible. This was so because the ground forces would not then be dependent upon Allied carrier aircraft, which, although quite capable of providing the necessary cover and support for some time, had not at this time been fully accepted for this purpose by COMSOWESPAC or CAAF SOWESPAC. On the other hand, it was likewise very important, in view of the Allied expectation of raids by Japanese aircraft and naval surface forces, to remove the support shipping from the area as rapidly as possible.

CTF 78 KNEW THAT THE AIRFIELD REQUIREMENTS WERE FOR ONE 5000' X 100' RUNWAY WITH UNDISPERSED PARKING FOR TWO FIGHTER GROUPS AND ONE SQUADRON OF NIGHT FIGHTERS TO BE COMPLETED BY D+5\* AND THAT TACLOBAN AIRDROME HAD BEEN SELECTED AS THE AIRFIELD FOR THIS RUNWAY. HE ALSO KNEW, FROM THE FACT THAT HE WAS LANDING HIS SUPPLIES THERE, THAT THE PREPARATION OF THE AIRFIELD MIGHT BE DELAYED UNTIL MUCH LATER THAN D+5. THIS DELAY WOULD BE LARGELY BECAUSE THE HEAVY RAINS HAD TURNED ROADS IN THE VICINITY OF TACLOBAN AIRDROME INTO QUAGMIRES. IN THIS CONNECTION, THE AIR EVALUATION BOARD REPORTED THAT THE FIRST HURRICANE, WHICH PASSED OVER EASTERN LEYTE ON OCTOBER 17TH WITH HEAVY RAINS, HAD MADE MOTOR TRAFFIC DIFFICULT FOR DAYS WITH THE RESULT THAT, WHEN THE AMPHIBIOUS LANDING WAS MADE, THE SUPPOSEDLY ALL-WEATHER TACLOBAN AIRSTRIP WAS FOUND TO BE SOFT AND MUDDY.\*\* (ACTUALLY, AS WILL BE SHOWN LATER, COMMENCING WITH D+7 THIRTY-THREE P-38'S WERE OPERATED FROM THIS AIRSTRIP). SINCE THE DUMPING OF CARGO ON THIS STRIP DELAYED THE CONSTRUCTION OF THE FIELD ABOUT TWO DAYS,\*\*\* IT CAN BE SAID THAT, HAD THE SUPPLIES NOT BEEN DUMPED ON THE STRIP, THE ABOVE THIRTY-THREE P-38'S MIGHT HAVE BEEN OPERATED FROM THE STRIP ON D+5. WHILE THIS WOULD HAVE BEEN A HELP TO CTG 77.4, IT IS EVIDENT THAT THESE FEW PLANES WOULD NOT HAVE RELIEVED HIM OF HIS CONTINUED RESPONSIBILITY FOR SUPPORT AND COVER.

THEREFORE, IT SEEMS PROBABLE THAT CTF 78, FEELING THAT TG 77.4 WOULD HAVE TO REMAIN FOR SOME TIME AND FURTHER FEELING THAT THE DANGER TO HIS SHIPPING WAS GREAT, DECIDED TO UNLOAD THE SUPPORT SHIPS AND TO WITHDRAW THEM FROM THE AREA AS EARLY AS PRACTICABLE.

WHILE, AS POINTED OUT ABOVE, THIS DECISION IS DIFFICULT TO EVALUATE FOR THE REASONS STATED, THERE NEVERTHELESS IS CONSIDERABLE DOUBT AS TO ITS SOUNDNESS. THIS SEEMS SO FOR, DESPITE THE SITUATION DEVELOPING IN THE CORON BAY AREA, BOTH CTF'S 77 AND 78 MUST HAVE FELT THAT ALLIED FORCES EXISTED IN SUFFICIENT STRENGTH TO INSURE ADEQUATE PROTECTION TO ALL FORCES INSIDE LEYTE GULF. IN ADDITION THEY KNEW THAT (A)(1) COMTHIRDFLT WAS ANXIOUS TO BE RELIEVED OF HIS COVERING DUTIES, AND (2) THAT COMMANDER HAD THE HOTFOOT OPERATION BEFORE HIM, (B) COMSOWESPAC DESIRED THAT LAND-BASED AIR FORCES (COMPETENT TO HANDLE THE SITUATION) BE INSTALLED PRIOR TO RELEASING COMTHIRD-FLT FOR OTHER DUTY, WHICH REQUIRED THE EARLIEST POSSIBLE COMPLETION OF THE AIRFIELDS, AND (C) JAPANESE GROUND AND AIR COUNTERACTION HAD BEEN WEAK. THEREFORE, IN VIEW OF THE ABOVE AND ALSO SINCE THERE IS NO INDICATION THAT THE LANDING OF THE CARGO, WHICH WAS LARGELY FROM TG 78.6 (REINFORCEMENT GROUP ONE), WAS OF AN OVERRIDING PRIORITY, DOES IT NOT SEEM CORRECT TO SAY THAT IT

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\* COMSOWESPAC Operation Instruction No. 70, September 21st, 1944.

\*\* Air Evaluation Board, SOWESPAC, Leyte Campaign, Page 261.

\*\*\* Ibid., Page 201.



WOULD HAVE BEEN PREFERABLE TO DELAY THE UNLOADING OF GENERAL CARGO A DAY OR SO RATHER THAN TO HAVE DELAYED THE CONSTRUCTION OF THE AIRFIELD? THIS VIEW IS SUPPORTED BY (1) CAAF SOWESPAC'S STATEMENT IN 1949 THAT "TO MAKE SURE THAT NO MORE STUFF WOULD BE MOVED ON THE TACLOBAN STRIP I SAW GENERAL MACARTHUR (COMSOWESPAC) WHO PASSED THE WORD TO BOTH KRUEGER (C.G. SIXTH ARMY) AND KINKAID (CTF 77) THAT HE WANTED THE PLACE USED AS AN AIRDROME AND NOT AS AN UNLOADING POINT",\* AND (2) CTG 77.4'S STATEMENT IN HIS ACTION REPORT THAT "THE ABSOLUTELY PRIMARY AND FIRST OBJECTIVE OF FUTURE LANDING OPERATIONS, NOW THAT WE HAVE REACHED THE AREAS WITHIN RANGE OF THE ENTIRE SHORE BASED AIR FORCE OF THE EMPIRE, MUST BE USEABLE AIR FIELDS. ABSOLUTELY NOTHING MUST BE ALLOWED TO INTERFERE WITH THE WORK OF MAKING THEM USEABLE AT THE EARLIEST POSSIBLE MOMENT".\*\*

By 0900 the majority of the transports had completed disembarking their troops and were commencing to unload supplies and equipment.\*\*\*

It is assumed that at 0901 (the time it was received by CTF 79) he received a request from CTF 77 for a summary of the situation as of 1000 that day.\*\*\*\*

At 0955 he noted that LST's were now beaching at the northern end of Cataisan Peninsula.\*\*\*

As a result of his decision, discussed above, to unload the support ships and to withdraw them from the area as early as practicable, at 1002 he directed CTG 78.2 and the Beachmaster at WHITE Beach to beach the RED Beach LST's on Cataisan Point.\*\*\*

In accordance with these instructions, the Beachmaster at WHITE Beach now diverted all LST's to beach at that point.\*\*\*\*\*

At 1010 CTF 78 ordered the HOWORTH and STEVENS to fuel from the FREMONT.\*\*\* He made similar arrangements for fueling the other escorts arriving with this group.\*\*\*\*\*

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- \* George C. Kenney, "General Kenney Reports" (New York, 1949), Page 454.
  - \*\* Action Report CTG 77.4, Leyte Operations, October 12th - 29th, 1944, Serial 00120, November 15th, 1944.
  - \*\*\* Action Report CTG 78.2, Leyte Operation, Serial 0085, November 29th, 1944.
  - \*\*\*\* CTF 77 Dispatch 212340 October 1944 to CTF's 78, 79.
  - \*\*\*\*\* Action Report Force Beachmaster, WHITE Beach (Naval Beach Parties Nos. 3 and 8), October 13th to November 16th, 1944 inclusive, No Serial, November 20th, 1944.
  - \*\*\*\*\* War Diaries MORRIS, MUSTIN, CARSON CITY, BURLINGTON, October 22nd, 1944.

At 1043 he passed to all units of his force the congratulations and appreciations he had received from CTF 77 for his skillful execution of the Leyte operation and his wholehearted support. To this, he added that the receipt of such a message was a signal recognition of the superlative performance of duty, loyalty and cooperation of all personnel of his force.\*

At 1115 he queried CTG 78.5 as to the progress of clearance sweeps of channels north of Homonhon Island which he had requested the morning of October 20th.\*\* He stated that he desired to station a destroyer north of Handig Point (northern tip Homonhon Island) as soon as the area was safe.\*\*\*

At 1534 he received, from CTG 77.5, a reply to his query of progress sweeping north of Homonhon Island. In this reply CTG 77.5 advised that he had not received CTF 78's request of October 20th,\*\* but that he was today conducting sweeps as ordered by CTF 77 along the west tangent of Manicani - Homonhon Islands thence to the south coast of Homonhon and then due east to Longitude 126° - 00'E.\*\*\*\* With the sweeping along this line between the two aforementioned islands completed, he could then safely establish the patrol north of Handig Point.

At 1537 he received, as an information addressee, instructions from CTF 77 to CTG 77.2\*\*\*\*\* that upon departure attack force commanders from Leyte area, CTG 77.2 was to furnish the antisubmarine patrol of the entrance to Leyte Gulf required by his basic plan.\*\*\*\*\*

By now he had noted with satisfaction the progress of the unloading of the transports and at 1542 he (a) directed CTG 78.6, in CRESCENT CITY with six transports (WARREN, WINDSOR, CALLAWAY, LEON, SUMTER, STORM KING) which had arrived that morning plus three cargo ships (ARNEB, ELECTRA, HERCULES) of the D-day echelon screened by three destroyers (MORRIS, HOWORTH, MUSTIN), to depart the transport area at 1700 for Kossol Roads and Hollandia, and (b) designated the route to be followed.\*\*\*\*\*

At 1554 he received instructions from CTF 77 to direct one destroyer division to report to CTG 77.4 on covering station by October 25th or the earliest practicable date thereafter. He no doubt had anticipated receipt of such instructions after having previously learned

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- \* CTF 78 Dispatch 220143 October 1944 to TF 78.
  - \*\* CTF 78 Dispatch 192246 October 1944 to CTG 77.5, info CTF 77.
  - \*\*\* CTF 78 Dispatch 220215 October 1944 to CTG 78.5, info CTF 77 and COMDESRON 25 (CTU 78.1.6).
  - \*\*\*\* CTG 77.5 Dispatch 220501 October 1944 to CTF 78, info CTF 77, CTG 78.5 and COMDESRON 25.
  - \*\*\*\*\* CTF 77 Dispatch 220402 October 1944 to CTG 77.2, info all TFC's and TGC's 7THFLT.
  - \*\*\*\*\* CANF SOWESPAC Operation Plan No. 13-44, Serial 00022A, September 26th, 1944, Paragraph 3(x)(10).
  - \*\*\*\*\* CTF 78 Dispatch 220642 October 1944 to CTG 78.6, info all concerned.



that CTG 77.4 (a) was committed to release DESRON FORTY-SEVEN,\* and (b) required an on-station relief of these destroyers when they were released.\*\*

At 1610 he received from CTF 77 a request for names of ships in screen with their station assignments.\*\*\* Although there is no available record of his reply, he undoubtedly advised CTF 77 that the ANDERSON and JOHN RODGERS were patrolling to seaward of the northern entrance to Leyte Gulf\*\*\*\* (Plate VIII) as prescribed in his basic operation plan, while JENKINS was in Radar Picket Station ONE.\*\*\*\*\* As for his inner screen to the east and south of his transport area, the only other destroyer he had was the RUSSELL which was anchored in FS Area ABLE;\*\*\*\*\* he therefore had available for this screen various control vessels (PC's and SC's) and support vessels (LCI's). These he had planned to use for this screen to make smoke for the protection of his transports from enemy air attack and to guard the southern entrance to San Juanico.

At 1651 he had observed that the unloading of the WHITE Beach LST's was progressing satisfactorily while all but one of his D-day RED Beach LST's had completed unloading and would be ready to leave this day. He accordingly formed TG 78.10 and directed a Commander Baker\*\*\*\*\* in LST 459 with twenty LST's escorted by STEVENS and BURLINGTON to (a) depart RED Beach area at 1700, and (b) follow a route which was designated in the dispatch.\*\*\*\*\*

At 1713 he noted that CTG 78.6, in the CRESCENT CITY, with five other APA's (WARREN, WINDSOR, CALLAWAY, LEON, SUMTER), one AP (STORM KING), two AKA's (ARNEB, ELECTRA), one AK (HERCULES), and escorted by three destroyers (MORRIS, HOWORTH, MUSTIN), had departed the Northern Transport Area and (b) at 1800 he noted that CTG 78.10, which command had been assumed by Commander LST Flotilla EIGHT\*\*\*\*\* in LST 614 in lieu of CTU 78.14 in LST 459, had departed the same area with sixteen LST's (171, 181, 456, 458, 459, 460, 462, 463, 614, 696, 699, 700, 910, 911, 1014, 1027) escorted by one destroyer (STEVENS) and one frigate (BURLINGTON).\*\*\*\*\*

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- \* COM7THFLT Dispatch 210341 October 1944 to CTF 77, info CTF 78, CTF 79, and CTG 77.4.
  - \*\* CTG 77.4 Dispatch 212224 October 1944 to CTF 77.
  - \*\*\* CTF 77 Voice Radio Message 220710 October 1944 to CTF's 78 and 79.
  - \*\*\*\* Action Report CTU 78.1.6, Leyte Operation, Serial 0114, November 4th, 1944.
  - \*\*\*\*\* War Diary JENKINS, October 22nd, 1944.
  - \*\*\*\*\* War Diary RUSSELL, October 22nd, 1944.
  - \*\*\*\*\* Commander Danford M. Baker, USNR.
  - \*\*\*\*\* CTF 78 Dispatch 220751 October 1944 to CTG 78.10, info all concerned.
  - \*\*\*\*\* Captain Oral G. Swigart, USN.
  - \*\*\*\*\* Action Report CTG 78.10 (COMLSTFLOT 8), Serial 0003, November 8th, 1944.

October 22nd

At 1856 he forwarded by dispatch to CTF 77 his summary of the situation which was, in general, as follows:

"Includes last summarized report received 221127 (presumably Item time). In 1st Cavalry Division sector our troops hold Tacloban Town and all area to north. (At this point, the dispatch gave the front-line position by grid points). South of last point (in 24th Division sector) our situation is not so well defined. One battalion is reported located west of highway number one in target area 5754. All of Hill 522 (two miles north of Palo) is held and Palo Town is occupied. The left flank of the beachhead is strongly held along line of Palo River. We hold strong points on both sides of highway south of Pawing. The highway itself is not yet under our control but is expected to be so this afternoon. We are in communication with shore fire control parties and have firing ships in position ready to fire but have received no request for naval gunfire support today. Last night we delivered harassing fire throughout night on left flank of beachhead and illuminated areas west of beachhead. Illumination firing was reported "perfect". Shipping situation follows. ELECTRA and ARNEB unloaded. HERCULES estimates 1600 completion. TRANSDIV EIGHT estimates 1700 completion. At 1200 TRANSDIV TWENTY-SIX unloaded in percentages as follows. CALLAWAY 42, LEON 40, SUMTER 32, STORM KING 20, JUPITER 9. Expect twenty LST's and above ships except JUPITER leave tonight. All transport types present except JUPITER and FREMONT will sail at 1700".\*

The time of the above dispatch is interesting because it is about two hours after the departure of TG 78.10 from the area. Evidently the dispatch had been prepared for release much earlier in the day but had been delayed in transmission within the BLUE RIDGE. Whether this delay was due to carelessness or to congestion within the communications system is not known but the latter seems the more likely.

With the departure of these two groups, CTF 78 had the following ships of his force remaining in his area of responsibility: his control and support vessels (PC's, SC's and LCI's), five DD's (RUSSELL, JENKINS, ANDERSON, JOHN RODGERS, LANG), twenty LST's (170, 397, 465, 549, 613, 623, 666, 667, 668, 695, 697, 740, 741, 744, 751, 912, 986, 993, 1017, 1018) one AK (JUPITER), BLUE RIDGE (FFF), FREMONT (FFF), six XAK's, one ARL and one PF (CARSON CITY).

At 2112 he received a dispatch from the ARIADNE which advised him, in general, that her estimated remaining endurance would not justify her returning to ACCIPITER for fuel and that she would arrive at Kossol at 0900 October 23rd with KILTY; also that CROSBY had arrived Kossol this day with little fuel remaining.\*\*

At 2321 he approved of ARIADNE's intentions and issued sailing orders for her, with KILTY and CROSBY, from Kossol to Hollandia.\*\*\*

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\* CTF 78 Dispatch 220956 October 1944 to CTF 77.

\*\* ARIADNE Dispatch 220954 October 1944 to CTF 78, info CTF 77.

\*\*\* CTF 78 Dispatch 221421 October 1944 to ARIADNE.



At 2324 he issued additional instructions regarding the sailing and escorting of TG 78.6 from vicinity Kossol to Hollandia.\*

(a) Operations of CTG 78.1 (Palo Attack Group), October 22nd.

Although the operations of CTG 78.1 are discussed largely under the "Operations of CTF 78 (Northern Attack Force), October 22nd", there are certain matters which it is considered advisable to discuss separately.

It will be remembered (from "Operations of CTF 78 (Northern Attack Force), October 21st") that, by the end of that day, he (a) had succeeded in unloading all of his support shipping with the exception of one cargo ship (HERCULES) and eight LST's (171, 181, 456, 458, 459, 462, 463, 465) and (b) knew that on the following day he would receive from CTG 78.6 resupply shipping of three APA's and fourteen LST's.

At 0826 TRANSDIV EIGHT (CRESCENT CITY, WARREN, WINDSOR) destined for RED Beach, arrived off that beach and immediately commenced unloading troops and equipment.\*\*

At 0830 fourteen LST's (623, 666, 667, 668, 695, 697, 740, 741, 744, 751, 986, 1017, 1018(F), 1027) arrived from TG 78.6 off RED Beach. These, when added to the eight LST's (171, 181, 456, 458, 459, 462, 463, 465 of TG 78.1) which were still unloading, gave him a total of twenty-two LST's to unload this day.

Since he was also CTF 78 he knew (a) at 1542, that CTG 78.6 had been directed to depart the area at 1700 with certain designated ships of which the only ships from TG 78.1 were the HERCULES from the D-day echelon and the CRESCENT CITY, WARREN and WINDSOR\*\*\* and (b) at 1651, CTG 78.10, with twenty LST's, had been directed to depart RED Beach at 1700 for Hollandia. He also knew that included in this number would be about eight RED Beach LST's.

At 1800 CTG 78.10, in LST 614, departed the Northern Transport Area with, among other LST's, LST's 171, 181, 456, 458, 459, 462 and 463 which had unloaded at RED Beach\*\*\*\* and LST 1027 which, although

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\* CTF 78 Dispatch 221424 October 1944 to and info all concerned.

\*\* War Diary CRESCENT CITY, October 22nd, 1944.

\*\*\* CTF 78 Dispatch 220642 October 1944 to CTG 78.6, info CTF's 77, 79, all TFC's 7THFLT, CTG 78.5, etc.

\*\*\*\* Action Report CTG 78.10 (COMLSTFLOT 8), Serial 0003, November 8th, 1944.

destined for RED Beach, had unloaded on Cataisan Point.\*

Thus, with the departure of this convoy, CTG 78.1 had remaining to be unloaded fourteen LST's (465, 623, 666, 667, 668, 695, 697, 740, 741, 744, 751, 986, 1017, 1018).

In addition, he had the BLUE RIDGE (FFF), RUSSELL, JOHN RODGERS, LANG and a number of landing and control craft.

(b) Operations of CTG 78.2 (San Ricardo Attack Group),  
October 22nd.

CTG 78.2, in the FREMONT, remained at anchor off WHITE Beach while the unloading of his two remaining AKA's (ARNEB, ELECTRA) continued throughout the night.

At 0800 TRANSDIV TWENTY-SIX (CALLAWAY, LEON, SUMTER, STORM KING, JUPITER), destined for WHITE Beach, arrived and immediately commenced disembarking troops followed by the unloading of cargo.\*\*

At 0830 fourteen LST's (170, 397, 460, 549, 613, 614(F), 696, 699, 700, 910, 911, 912, 993, 1014) and six XAK's (THOMAS, FIELDS, SHORT, GIANELLA, KINNEY, JUDSON) arrived. The LST's were beached on the Cataisan Peninsula north of the original WHITE Beach and commenced unloading immediately.\*\*\*

At 1002 the fourteen LST's destined for RED Beach were directed to beach on the Cataisan Peninsula and follow the WHITE Beach LST's in.\*\*\*\* As pointed out under "Operations of CTG 78.6 (Reinforcement Group ONE), October 22nd", all did so excepting LST 986 which beached on RED Beach the following day.

At 1048 the HOWORTH and at 1208 the STEVENS were fueled from his flagship.\*\*\*\*\*

From this time until 1624 nothing of importance occurred excepting that the unloading continued most satisfactorily with no enemy air or surface action. At 1624 CTG 78.2 learned that TRANSDIV TWENTY-SIX, less the JUPITER, had been unloaded and at 1642 that at least ten LST's from WHITE Beach would be ready to sail that night.\*\*\*\*

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\* War Diary LST 1027, October 22nd, 1944.  
 \*\* Action Report COMTRANSDIV 26, Central Philippines Operation, Serial 0148, November 2nd, 1944.  
 \*\*\* Action Report Force Beachmaster WHITE Beach, Northern Attack Group, Leyte Operation, October 13th - November 16th, 1944, No Serial, November 20th, 1944.  
 \*\*\*\* Action Report CTG 78.2, Leyte Operation, Serial 0085, November 29th, 1944.  
 \*\*\*\*\* Action Report FREMONT, Leyte Operation, Serial 00555, November 20th, 1944.



Sometime after 1542 but prior to 1713 he received a dispatch (presumably by hand) from CTF 78 to CTG 78.6 directing that commander to depart the Leyte transport area at 1700 with certain designated ships, of which he noted that (a) the ARNEB and ELECTRA were from his D-day echelon, and (b) the CALLAWAY, LEON, SUMTER and STORM KING had arrived this day with CTG 78.6.\*

Sometime after 1651 but prior to 1800 he received a dispatch (presumably by hand) from CTF 78 directing CTU 78.1.4 (LST Unit) in LST 459 with nineteen additional LST's escorted by the STEVENS and BURLINGTON, to depart RED Beach at 1700 for Hollandia.\*\* This was of interest to him because he realized that, included in these nineteen, were a large number of WHITE Beach LST's.

At 1713 TG 78.6 sailed.\*\*\*

At 1800 CTG 78.10, who was now Commander LST Flotilla EIGHT instead of CTU 78.1.4, departed the Northern Transport Area with, among other LST's, the following from WHITE Beach: 460, 696, 699, 700, 910, 911, 1017.\*\*\*\*

Thus, with the departure of the above convoys, CTG 78.2, now had with him (a) the FREMONT (FFF), ANDERSON and JENKINS, and (b) six LST's (170, 397, 549, 613, 912 and 993), the JUPITER, one ARL (ACHILLES), one frigate (CARSON CITY) and six XAK's which had arrived with TG 78.6. In addition, he still had a number of landing and control craft.

At 1850 he assigned the RUSSELL the task of firing at 2000, 2400 this night and 0500 the following morning into San Juanico Strait to disrupt a movement of enemy troops in barges between Samar and Leyte Islands,\*\*\*\*\* which task the RUSSELL commenced executing at 2005.\*\*\*\*\*

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- \* CTF 78 Dispatch 220642 October 1944 to CTG 78.6, info CTF's 77, 79, all TFC's 7THFLT, CTG 78.5, etc.
  - \*\* CTF 78 Dispatch 220751 October 1944 to COMLSTGRP 20, STEVENS, info all TFC's 7THFLT, CTF's 76, 77, 79, all TGC's 7THFLT, CTG 78.5.
  - \*\*\* Action Report CTG 78.6 (Reinforcement Group 1), Leyte Island, Philippine Operation, October 16th - 27th, 1944, Serial 0154, October 31st, 1944.
  - \*\*\*\* Action Report CTG 78.10 (COMLSTFLOT 8), Serial 0003, November 8th, 1944.
  - \*\*\*\*\* Action Report CTG 78.2, Leyte Operation, Serial 0085, November 29th, 1944.
  - \*\*\*\*\* War Diary RUSSELL, October 22nd, 1944.

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(c) Operations of CTU 77.2.1 (Fire Support Unit NORTH) and CTG 77.3 (Close Covering Group), October 22nd.

(1) Operations of CTU 77.2.1.

At 0000 this unit, composed of the MISSISSIPPI, WEST VIRGINIA, MARYLAND, and screened by the AULICK, CONY and SIGOURNEY, was operating in the southern part of Leyte Gulf and to the northward of BATDIV TWO. The OTC was COMBATDIV THREE in the MISSISSIPPI. At 0105 it was necessary for the SIGOURNEY to maneuver independently in order to avoid BATDIV TWO and its destroyer screen.\* At 0304 TU 77.2.1 headed for San Pedro Bay where, between 0730 and 0755, the six ships of this group anchored and stood by for call fire missions but they received no calls.\*\*

They remained so anchored until 1700 when, pursuant to orders from CTG 77.2, they got underway and proceeded to their assigned night stations in the southern part of Leyte Gulf north of Tay Tay Point. Here they were joined by the CALIFORNIA and PENNSYLVANIA.\*\*\*

At 1844 an enemy plane was observed flying the length of the gulf in flames, eventually crashing on Leyte Island.\*\*\*\*

At 1944 the heavy ships of TU 77.2.1 executed speed zero and lay to in Area DRUM.\*\*\*\*\*

As of 2400 this patrol had been uneventful.

(2) Operations of CTG 77.3 (Close Covering Group), October 22nd.

CTG 77.3, in the PHOENIX as OTC and accompanied by the SHROPSHIRE and BOISE, screened by the HUTCHINS, DALY, BEALE, KILLEN, ARUNTA and BACHE, continued patrolling the area east and southeast of the transport area in accordance with Harbor Defense Plan ONE.\*\*\*\*\*

At 0400 this group commenced returning to San Pedro Bay, having had an uneventful patrol. At 0500, CTG 77.3 ordered the ships to proceed independently.\*\*\*\*\*

At 0653 the PHOENIX opened fire on enemy aircraft in the area.\*\*\*\*\*

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\* Deck Log SIGOURNEY, October 22nd, 1944.

\*\* Deck Logs MARYLAND, WEST VIRGINIA, MISSISSIPPI, AULICK, CONY, SIGOURNEY, October 22nd, 1944.

\*\*\* War Diaries COMBATDIV 3, WEST VIRGINIA, October 22nd, 1944.

\*\*\*\* War Diary MISSISSIPPI, October 22nd, 1944.

\*\*\*\*\* War Diary COMBATDIV 3, October 22nd, 1944.

\*\*\*\*\* War Diary PHOENIX, October 22nd, 1944; Deck Log PHOENIX, October 22nd, 1944.



By 0717 the PHOENIX, BOISE and presumably the SHROPSHIRE had anchored in San Pedro Bay followed by the destroyers which, except for the KILLEN, had all anchored by 0815.\* The KILLEN spent the day patrolling off Capines Point.\*\* Some of these ships shifted berths during the day but none of them were called upon to furnish fire support.

At 1649 CTG 77.3, with TG 77.3 (less the KILLEN which remained behind for FS duty), commenced getting underway for night retirement in accordance with Harbor Defense Plan ONE. By 1900 he had arrived in his patrol area and had commenced patrolling at low speed as on the previous night.\*\*\*

Meanwhile, the KILLEN in FS Area DOG delivered FS fire from 1958 until 2105 and expended ninety-one rounds of 5"/38 projectiles. She remained in FS Area DOG throughout the night awaiting night harassing assignment.\*\*

Except for the operations of the KILLEN, the operations of this group up to 2400 had been uneventful.

(d) Operations of CTG's 78.6, 78.7 and 78.8, October 22nd.

(1) Operations of CTG 78.6 (Reinforcement Group ONE).

At the beginning of the day CTG 78.6, with six APA's (CRESCENT CITY (FF), WARREN, WINDSOR, CALLAWAY (FF), LEON, SUMTER), one AP (STORM KING), six XAK's (THOMAS, FIELDS, SHORT, GIANELLA, KINNEY, JUDSON), four DD's (MORRIS (F), HOWORTH, MUSTIN (FD), STEVENS), two PF's (CARSON CITY, BURLINGTON), one ARL (ex-LST, ACHILLES), one AK (JUPITER), thirty-two LST's (24, 170, 397, 460, 471, 472(F), 549, 606, 613, 614(F), 623, 666, 667, 668, 695, 696, 697, 699, 700, 740, 741, 744, 751, 910, 911, 912, 986, 993, 1014, 1017, 1018(F), 1027), twelve LCI's (683, 684, 685, 693, 977, 978(F), 979, 980, 981, 982, 1064, 1065), had just entered Leyte Gulf.\*\*\*\*

At 0420, at Point "C" in the Tacloban - Dulag approach channel, he detached the BLUE - ORANGE Beach Unit consisting of the LST's 24, 471, 472 and 606,\*\*\*\*\* under command of the Commanding Officer LST 472.

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\* Deck Logs PHOENIX, BOISE, BEALE, HUTCHINS, BACHE, DALY, October 22nd, 1944.

\*\* War Diary KILLEN, October 22nd, 1944.

\*\*\* Deck Log BOISE, October 22nd, 1944.

\*\*\*\* Action Report CTG 78.6, Reinforcement Group 1, Leyte Island, Philippine Operations, October 16th - 27th, 1944, Serial 0145, October 31st, 1944.

\*\*\*\*\* Action Report LST 472, Echelon L-3, Leyte Operation, Serial 073, October 23rd, 1944.

At 0550 he ordered his section commanders to take charge and proceed as previously directed.\* As he approached the Northern Transport Area he encountered dense smoke that had been laid by the ships in San Pedro Bay as protection against early morning enemy air attacks.\*\* This smoke made piloting difficult; nevertheless he arrived on schedule.

At 0756\*\*\* his leading transport anchored in her assigned berth while the remaining transports anchored shortly thereafter. All commenced unloading as follows: CRESCENT CITY, WARREN, WINDSOR on RED Beach; CALLAWAY, LEON, SUMTER, STORM KING and JUPITER on WHITE Beach.\*

At this same time the (a) fourteen LST's scheduled for WHITE Beach (LST's 170, 397, 460, 549, 613, 614(F), 696, 699, 700, 910, 911, 912, 993, 1014) headed for that beach where, between 1100 and noon, they beached and commenced unloading, and (b) fourteen LST's scheduled for RED Beach (LST's 623, 666, 667, 668, 695, 697, 740, 741, 744, 751, 986, 1017, 1018(F), 1027)\* arrived in the Northern Transport Area and at 0815 were directed by Commander LST Flotilla EIGHT to anchor "until other arrangements could be made as this beach was under fire of the shore batteries which were located in the hills above the beach".\*\*\*\*

All of this seems surprising indeed for CTF 78 well knew from his unhappy experiences two days earlier that RED Beach, because of unfavorable beach approach conditions, as well as because of the above gunfire, was unsuitable for handling LST's and therefore most of the RED Beach LST's had been unloading on the Cataisan Peninsula. Why this information was not given to CTG 78.6 prior to his arrival is not known.

Meanwhile, CTG 78.10 appears to have ordered his LST's to proceed to the area off the northern end of the Cataisan Peninsula for they were observed in that area by CTG 78.2. At 1002 he received instructions (source unknown but likely CTG 78.2 whose LST's were beaching on that beach) to beach after the WHITE Beach LST's.\*\*\*\*\* At 1031 he directed all LST's to beach on Cataisan Point and unload all cargo. Actually, except for the LST 549 which beached at 1130 and for the LST 986 which beached on RED Beach on October 23rd, all of these RED Beach LST's beached during the afternoon on Cataisan Point as ordered.

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\* Action Report CTG 78.6, Reinforcement Group 1, Leyte Island, Philippine Operations, October 16th - 27th, 1944, Serial 0145, October 31st, 1944.

\*\* War Diary CRESCENT CITY, October 22nd, 1944.

\*\*\* Action Report CALLAWAY, Reinforcement Leyte Island Assault, Serial 0102, October 29th, 1944.

\*\*\*\* Action Report LST 751, Philippine Island Operations, Serial 07, October 29th, 1944.

\*\*\*\*\* Action Report CTG 78.2, Leyte Operation, Serial 0085, November 29th, 1944.



Meanwhile, his LCI's unloaded their troops at WHITE Beach with no difficulty.

At about 1612 he received from CTF 78 his anticipated sailing orders\* (quoted in full under "Operations of CTF 78, October 22nd").

Shortly after 1700 his heavy ships, except the JUPITER, had completed unloading.\*

At 1713, in accordance with the above orders, he departed the transport area in APA CRESCENT CITY with APA's WARREN, WINDSOR, CALLAWAY, LEON, SUMTER, AP STORM KING, AKA's ARNEB, ELECTRA, AK HERCULES escorted by DD's MORRIS, HOWORTH and MUSTIN.\*\*

At 2300 he departed Leyte Gulf.\*\*\* The unloading progress and departure of those LST's arriving with CTG 78.6 are discussed under the operations of CTF's 78 and 79. the XAK's (Liberty ships) were not scheduled to depart before D+9 day and the LCI's were not scheduled to retire until the completion of the operation.\*\*\*\*

(2) Operations of CTG's 78.7 (Reinforcement Group TWO) and 78.8 (Reinforcement Group THREE), October 22nd.

At the beginning of the day TG 78.7 was bearing 114°(T), distant about 440 miles from Leyte Gulf. During the day nothing of importance occurred and by midnight the task group was bearing 112°(T), distant 224 miles from the gulf.\*\*\*\*\* Meanwhile, CTG 78.8 was at Hollandia making preparations to depart for Leyte at 0700, October 23rd.\*\*\*\*\*

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\* CTF 78 Dispatch 220642 October 1944 to CTG 78.6.  
 \*\* Action Report CTG 78.6 (Reinforcement Group 1), Leyte Island, Philippine Operation, October 16th - 27th, 1944, Serial 0154, October 31st, 1944.  
 \*\*\* War Diary CRESCENT CITY, October 22nd, 1944.  
 \*\*\*\* CTF 78 Operation Plan No. 101-44, Serial 0008, October 3rd, 1944.  
 \*\*\*\*\* War Diary NICHOLAS, October 21st, 22nd and 23rd, 1944; also Action Report CTG 78.7 (COMDESRON 21), Central Philippine Operations, Serial 0176, November 10th, 1944.  
 \*\*\*\*\* Action Report CTG 78.8 (COMCORTDIV 29), Reinforcement Group 3, Central Philippine Operation, Serial 071, November 16th, 1944.

(2) Operations of CTF 79 (Southern Attack Force), October 22nd.

CTF 79 remained in the MOUNT OLYMPUS (anchored in the vicinity of the Southern Transport Area)\* where he was able to observe and coordinate the operations of his two attack group commanders who were now primarily concerned with the expeditious unloading and withdrawal of the transports and LST's.\*\*

Knowing as he did that the C.G.'s of the NINETY-SIXTH and SEVENTH Infantry Divisions had assumed command ashore on D and D+1 days respectively, he was now especially interested in expediting the unloading of his transports and his cargo ships in order to obtain a situation favorable to the assumption of command ashore by the C.G. TWENTY-FOURTH Corps. He knew that that commander, who (a) was directing operations from the flagship-- primarily because the communications facilities there afforded direct and rapid communication contact with the subordinate commanders,\*\* and (b) was naturally anxious to assume command ashore, was closely following the situation with item (b) in mind and had consequently made several visits to the beaches to study (1) the developing situation ashore, (2) the unloading of important cargo--and this included TWENTY-FOURTH Corps shipping, and (3) the headquarters facilities there.

At 0107 he received a summary report of operations for the previous day from CTG 79.1 informing him that, in general, (a) C.G. SEVENTH Division had moved ashore, and (b) the unloading from his LST's and AKA's was progressing satisfactorily.\*\*\* It seems likely that, along with this, he had some of the periodic unloading reports from CTG 79.4 and therefore was aware of the current status of the remaining ships of TG 79.4.

Since, on the previous day, mortar fire from Catmon Hill had seriously interfered with the unloading operations and had forced the retraction for some hours of the beached LST's, CTF 79 decided that with the break of day he would endeavor to destroy the enemy gun positions and thus, either reduce this interference to a negligible amount or completely remove it. Therefore, at 0615 he issued orders\*\*\*\* for a naval bombardment of Catmon Hill which was to be delivered at 0630 in conjunction with artillery fire in preparation for an advance\*\* by the FIRST Battalion of the 383rd Infantry which had been given the D-day task of securing the southern slopes (Liberanan Head) of Catmon Hill but had not succeeded in accomplishing this task either on D-day or D+1 day because of increasingly strong enemy resistance.\*\*\*\*\*

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\* War Diary MOUNT OLYMPUS, October 22nd, 1944.

\*\* Action Report CTF 79, Seizure of Leyte, Serial 00323, November 13th, 1944.

\*\*\* CTG 79.1 Dispatch 211414 October 1944 to CTF 79.

\*\*\*\* Action Report CTG 79.2, Leyte Operation, Serial 0032, November 4th, 1944, Section 5.

\*\*\*\*\* Action Report C.G. 96TH Infantry Division, Action Against the Enemy, KING II Operation, 1944, March 1945, Page 38.



However, he shortly realized that this bombardment would not take place on schedule because (a) he had encountered difficulty in clearing with the shore command, and (b) the ships designated to conduct this bombardment (MINNEAPOLIS, DENVER, COLUMBIA) had not as yet arrived on station.

Although he finally succeeded in clearing with the shore command, the ships for reasons discussed under "Operations of CTG 79.2, October 22nd" were not able to open fire before 0725. This firing finally ceased at 0800 and in conjunction with the army artillery fire and other factors appears to have contributed greatly to the support of the FIRST Battalion in its operations to seize Liberman Head. Certainly, from this time forward, the beaches were no longer being fired on from the Catmon Hill area, and the unloading continued without interference from that source. (Actually, the FIRST Battalion seized Liberman Head at 1630 this day).\*

At 0810 he assigned FS ships to TG 79.2 as follows: PORTLAND, COLUMBIA, KIDD, TWIGGS and HALLIGAN.\*\* He also assigned--perhaps at this time, perhaps a little later--FS ships to TG 79.1. Which ships he assigned are nowhere stated but analysis of available information indicates that they were likely the LOUISVILLE, MINNEAPOLIS, ISHERWOOD, HARADEN.

At 0845, finding it necessary to have ammunition in sufficient quantities to take a position south of Calbasag River (just north of Dulag), he advised CTG 79.2 to this effect and directed him to discharge (a) LST's 123 and 451 and 216 tons of artillery ammunition on the MERCURY to VIOLET Beach ONE or TWO, and (b) the other Corps ships at the beaches designated.\*\*\*

Also at 0845 he received a visual dispatch from COMDESRON FORTY-NINE to the effect that, unless otherwise directed, he planned to keep screening stations fourteen to eighteen inclusive filled, and to station the remainder of the screening ships available equally around the transport and LST areas. He also stated that DESRON FIFTY-FOUR was occupying stations one to seven inclusive.\*\*\*\*

It seems likely that he realized that COMDESRON FORTY-NINE's statement above, that DESRON FIFTY-FOUR was occupying stations one to seven inclusive (and was therefore about thirty miles away), was designed to be purely informative and to indicate that, with the absence of COMDESRON FIFTY-FOUR from the transport area, COMDESRON FORTY-NINE became the senior

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\* Action Report C.G. 96TH Infantry Division, Action Against the Enemy, KING II Operation, 1944, March 1945, Page 38.  
 \*\* Action Report CTG 79.2, Leyte Operation, Serial 0032, November 4th, 1944, Part V, Section 5.  
 \*\*\* CTF 79 Dispatch 212345 October 1944 to CTG 79.2, info CTG 79.4.  
 \*\*\*\* CTU 79.11.2 (COMDESRON 49) Visual Dispatch 212345 October 1944 to CTF 79, info CTG's 79.1, 79.2.

officer and OTC of the screen. This matter is discussed under "Operations of CTG 79.11, October 20th".

At 0850, after having received (at 0605, 0730 and 0815) requests for instructions from the Commanding Officer LST 472 (who, with LST's 24, 471, 472 and 606, had been ordered to report to him for duty with the objective of unloading on the ORANGE - BLUE Beaches) and having apparently no information on these four LST's, he directed the Commanding Officer LST 472 to query CTG 78.6 as to his needs.\*

This action by CTF 79 shows that he had made no preparations for the arrival of these LST's and likely had been caught unaware. This seems surprising for he had received CTF 78's operation plan, and the fact that four LST's were scheduled to arrive off ORANGE - BLUE Beaches at 0800 October 22nd was included in that plan.\*\*

At 0855 he received a visual dispatch from COMDESRON FORTY-NINE (CTU 79.11.2) stating that (a) the PICKING, SPROSTON, WICKES and MacDONOUGH were available for FS duties, and (b) the first three destroyers had 400 rounds of AA common above their regular allowance.\*\*\*

At 0901 he received a request from CTF 77 for a summary of the situation as of 1000 that day.\*\*\*\*

At 0951 he informed CTF 77 of the amount of ammunition his ships had expended by 2000 on the previous day and of the amount remaining on board at that time.\*\*\*\*\*

At 1003 he received a dispatch from CTF 77 which may have surprised him somewhat. In this dispatch, quoted in full under "Operations of CTF 77, October 22nd", CTF 77 criticized him for approving CTG 77.2's fueling recommendations and pointed out that only he (CTF 77) could approve such recommendations.\*\*\*\*\*

At 1101 he handled a portion of his local logistics problem by directing the transports and AGC's to provide the PC's and SC's with water and provisions.\*\*\*\*\*

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- \* Action Report LST 472, Report of Echelon L-3 to Leyte Island, Philippines, October 13th - 22nd, 1944.
  - \*\* CTF 78 Operation Plan No. 101-44, Serial 0008, October 3rd, 1944, Annex B, Movement Schedule, Page 18.
  - \*\*\* COMDESRON 49 Visual Dispatch 212315 October 1944 to CTF 79.
  - \*\*\*\* CTF 77 Dispatch 212340 October 1944 to CTF's 78, 79.
  - \*\*\*\*\* CTF 79 Dispatch 220051 October 1944 to CTF 77.
  - \*\*\*\*\* CTF 77 Dispatch 212344 October 1944 to CTF 79, CTG 77.2.
  - \*\*\*\*\* CTF 79 Dispatch 220201 October 1944 to CTU 79.11.2, info CTG's 79.1, 79.2.



At 1116, in accordance with CTF 77's request, he forwarded by hand to that commander (who, at the time, was in the Southern Transport Area) his 1000 summary of the situation, saying:

"Situation 1000, October 22nd, the Corps has established an initial beachhead to a depth of approximately two miles. Yesterday's gain was approximately the same as that for October 21st (sic). The elements of the SEVENTH Division holding the Daguitan River crossing at Dao were subjected to a very minor counterattack last night. Both divisions resumed the attack this morning after preparatory naval bombardment of Catmon Hill. Our casualties have not been heavy. Unloading proceeds satisfactorily although interruption in unloading of NINETY-SIXTH Division occurred yesterday afternoon as a result of Jap mortar and artillery fire from the north falling on the beaches. Three LST's unloading on ORANGE TWO were hit with minor damage to ships, but casualties were six killed, thirty-four wounded. First section of unloaded transports per my 210742 plus COMET departed last evening. WAR HAWK and TENNESSEE in collision at 1959 last night with minor damage to both ships. Harassing air attacks last evening and this morning. Two bombs fell near SAN CARLOS with no damage".\*

THIS SUMMARY IS OF PARTICULAR INTEREST IN THAT IT EMBRACES LARGELY THE GROUND OPERATION AND THE UNLOADING OPERATIONS AS OF THE PREVIOUS DAY. SINCE THE PRINCIPAL PROBLEM REMAINING WAS THE UNLOADING OF THE TRANSPORTS, CARGO SHIPS AND LST'S, THE SIMPLE STATEMENTS THAT "UNLOADING PROCEEDS SATISFACTORILY" AND "FIRST SECTION OF UNLOADED TRANSPORTS DEPARTED LAST EVENING" WERE NON-COMMITTAL TO SAY THE LEAST. WHILE THIS REPLY APPEARS TO HAVE BEEN SATISFACTORY TO CTF 77, DOES IT NOT SEEM CORRECT TO SAY THAT MORE SPECIFIC INFORMATION REGARDING THE UNLOADING SITUATION MIGHT WELL HAVE BEEN PROVIDED?

THIS POINT IS EMPHASIZED TODAY (1957) IN THE SAMPLE OPERATION ORDER FOR AN AMPHIBIOUS ATTACK FORCE WHEREIN, IN THE "UNLOADING PLAN", IT DIRECTS THE OFFICER IN CHARGE OF THE UNLOADING TO (A) SUBMIT TO THE ATTACK FORCE COMMANDER A MESSAGE REPORT EVERY FOUR HOURS COMMENCING WITH THE FIRST EVEN HOUR AFTER GENERAL UNLOADING HAS BEGUN, (B) INCLUDE IN THIS REPORT THE UNLOADING STATUS OF ALL MAJOR SHIPS OF THE TRANSPORT GROUPS GIVING THE PERCENTAGE UNLOADED (1) OF PERSONNEL, (2) OF VEHICLES, AND (3) OF CARGO.\*\*

At 1207 he directed each of his attack group commanders to advise him prior to 1400 what ships they expected to be ready to depart that evening.\*\*\*

At 1317, mindful of (a) the FS missions which might be

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\* CTF 79 Dispatch 220216 October 1944 to CTF 77.

\*\* The Amphibious Task Force Plan, NWIP 22-1, Department of the Navy, Chief of Naval Operations, 1953, Chapter IX, Pages 97, 98.

\*\*\* CTF 79 Visual Dispatch 220307 October 1944 to CTG's 79.1, 79.2.

required that evening and on the following day, and (b) the ammunition replenishment which was to commence also on the following day, he directed CTG 77.2 to (1) assign (a) two FS destroyers to CTG 79.1 and two to CTG 79.2 for that night, (b) two heavy ships to each of the above group commanders for FS duties commencing at 0700 the following morning, (2) arrange ammunition replenishment schedule for FS ships including ships temporarily assigned to screen, and (3) give priority to ships of TU 77.2.2.

At 1325 he received a visual dispatch from CTG 79.2 naming the ships expected to be ready to sail by 1800.\*

As discussed under "Operations of CTG 79.2, October 22nd", shortly after 1425 he was visited on the MOUNT OLYMPUS by CTG 79.2, who appears to have been seeking information regarding the propriety of an order received from the army to land the 170th Engineers (the shore party for the Army Reserve; i.e., 381st RCT).

It is not unlikely, at this meeting, that he discussed the whole unloading situation with CTG 79.2, who had been encountering considerable difficulty with his unloading, for CTG 79.2 remained on board the flagship for several hours. CTF 79 later said in his action report, in part, "While, in general, considering the loads which the transports were carrying (average 800 tons for APA's, and 2000 tons for AKA's and AK's), the rate of unloading was fairly satisfactory, there was some congestion on the beaches, particularly those of Group BAKER (TG 79.2) due to the shortage of labor details on the beach in the shore party organization, lack of efficient mechanical equipment to assist in unloading the boats, poor exploitation of organization of shore parties and beach parties, and to some extent, to poor terrain in dispersal areas."\*\* It is not unlikely that he obtained much of this information at this time.

At 1442, or soon thereafter, he received a visual dispatch from CTG 79.1 naming the ships which would be ready to sail at 1700.\*\*\*

At 1445 he approved CTU 79.11.2's recommendation, received earlier in the day, concerning the disposition of the screen and directed him to (a) move the antisubmarine screen in closer to the transport area, and (b) direct the outlying LST's and LCI's to close the transport area.\*\*\*\*

WHILE THESE INSTRUCTIONS APPEAR TO HAVE BEEN PURELY PRECAUTIONARY AND IN LINE WITH GOOD NAVAL PRACTICE IN THAT, BY MOVING THE SCREEN IN CLOSER TO THE TRANSPORT AREA, ITS DENSITY BECAME GREATER AND

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\* CTG 79.2 Visual Dispatch 220408 October 1944 to CTF 79.

\*\* Action Report CTF 79, Seizure of Leyte, Serial 00323, November 13th, 1944.

\*\*\* CTG 79.1 Visual Dispatch 220542 October 1944 to CTF 79.

\*\*\*\* CTF 79 Visual Dispatch 220545 October 1944 to CTU 79.11.2 (COMDESRON 49), info CTG's 79.1, 79.2.



THEREFORE THE POSSIBILITY OF SURPRISE LESS, AND BY MOVING THE LST'S AND LCI'S INSIDE THE SCREEN THEY BECAME SAFER THAN WHEN OPERATING FREELY BEYOND THE SCREEN, THE FACT THAT HE FELT IT NECESSARY TO ISSUE SUCH ORDERS INDICATES HIS APPREHENSION THAT SOME RAIDING EFFORT, PRESUMABLY BY SMALL CRAFT, MIGHT BE ATTEMPTED BY THE JAPANESE.

At 1450 he received a visual dispatch from CTG 77.2 assigning FS missions for the night to (a) the NEWCOMB and HEYWOOD L. EDWARDS with CTG 79.1, and (b) the ALBERT W. GRANT and the BRYANT with CTG 79.2.\*

At 1454, having received the necessary information thereon from his attack group commanders, he now formed a task unit under CTU 79.14.2 (who was also CTG 79.4) consisting of the CAMBRIA, FREDERICK FUNSTON, SHERIDAN, GEORGE CLYMER, STARLIGHT, RIXEY, ALCYONE, CASA GRANDE, BELLE GROVE, plus CATSKILL, ALMAACK, MONITOR and PRESIDENT HAYES if ready, and escorted by COM-DESDIV NINETY-SIX\*\* in KIDD, CHAUNCEY, HUMPHREYS, OVERTON, BELKNAP and BROOKS, and directed the unit to (a) depart the Leyte transport area at 1800, and (b) proceed to Hollandia.\*\*\*

During this time he continued his discussions with CTG 79.2 and by 1511 seems to have either (a) decided that the army's request that the 170th Engineers be landed was sound, or (b) and this appears the more likely, had communicated the problem to CTF 77 and had received authority to disembark the above engineers as requested, for at that time (1511) CTG 79.2 (from the MOUNT OLYMPUS) directed CTG 79.4 to carry out the army's wishes in this matter. The conclusion that item (b) appears the more likely is based on the fact that there were seven color beaches (WHITE, RED, ORANGE, BLUE, VIOLET, YELLOW, GREEN) where this army reserve might be landed and the only commander who could properly make the final decision at this time was CTF 77, with whom C.G. SIXTH Army was embarked.\*\*\*\*

Meanwhile, he studied the unloading situation. He knew from his discussion with CTG 79.2 and from the progress reports of his attack group commanders, that there was much unloading to be done if he was to get

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\* CTG 77.2 Visual Dispatch 220550 October 1944 to CTF 79, info CTG's 79.1, 79.2, CTF 77, COMDESRON 56, BRYANT, ALBERT W. GRANT, HEYWOOD L. EDWARDS, HARADEN.

\*\* Commander Theodore H. Kobey, U.S. Navy.

\*\*\* CTF 79 Dispatch 220554 October 1944 to CTG 79.4, KIDD, CHAUNCEY, HUMPHREYS, info CTG's 79.1, 79.2, 79.6, ATFC and TGC's of TF 77, COMDESDIV 48, CNB Hollandia.

\*\*\*\* That the latter supposition is correct was confirmed by dispatches which became available just before this volume went to press. At 1108 October 21st CTF 79 requested CTF 77 for authority to utilize the reserve shore party to expedite unloading the NINETY-SIXTH Division on the assumption that the Army Reserve would be unloaded over an established beach (CTF 79 Dispatch 210208 October 1944 to CTF 77). CTF 77 granted permission for this action on the morning of October 22nd by a visual dispatch received by CTF 79 at 1237 (CTF 77 Visual Dispatch 212330 October 1944 to CTF 79).

his ships away on the following day. He also knew from his experiences of the preceding two nights when he had likewise remained at anchor, that unloading during the night, while not as efficient as during the day, still contributed toward the earliest departure date. In addition he appears to have felt that, all things being considered, this shipping was safer at anchor under smoke and protected by a screen than it was underway. He therefore correctly decided that he would not retire the transports that night, and at 1545, issued orders to that effect.\*

At 1554 he received a dispatch from CTF 77 wherein he was directed to send one destroyer division to CTG 77.4 with orders to report on station by October 25th or earliest practicable date thereafter.\*\* He immediately commenced estimating the situation to determine which destroyer division he should assign to this duty.

At 1600 the KIDD and CHAUNCEY reported for duty in accordance with CTU 77.2.2's voice radio message sent at 1534.\*\*\*

At 1610 he received a request from CTF 77 for the names of ships in screen and station assignments for each.\*\*\*\* He passed this to CTU 79.11.2 for action.\*\*\*\*\* Meanwhile, he received from CTG 77.2 a recommended sequence of ships to be fueled the next day.\*\*\*\*\*

At 1649 he received a reply to his 220710 from the screen commander stating, in part, that the following ships were stationed (a) clockwise around the transport and LST area commencing 3000 yards east of Liberanan Head with 2000 yards between stations: BELKNAP, RATHBURNE, BRYANT, THORNE, BENNION, WELLES, PICKING, OVERTON, MacDONOUGH, HEYWOOD L. EDWARDS.\*\*\*\*\* This was in error as the RATHBURNE had departed the area the previous evening,\*\*\*\*\* and (b) in anti-submarine patrol stations; 14 ERBEN, 15 HALE, 16 LUETZE, 17 CLAXTON, 1 MCNAIR, 2 MERTZ, 3 MELVIN, 4 MCGOWAN, 5 REMEY, 6 MONSSEN, 7 MCDERMUT.\*\*\*\*\*

At 1658 he received a voice radio message from the Commanding Officer LST 472 (with LST's 24, 471, 472 and 606) to the effect that since they had been unable to beach at BLUE - ORANGE Beach as ordered, CTG 78.6 had directed them to report to him for further instructions.\*\*\*\*\*

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- \* CTF 79 Dispatch 220645 October 1944 to CTG's 79.1, 79.2, info CTU 79.11.2.
  - \*\* CTF 77 Dispatch 220357 October 1944 to CTF's 78, 79, CTG 77.4, info CINCPHA, COM3RDFLT, COM7THFLT, CTF 38.
  - \*\*\* CTU 77.2.2 TBS Voice Radio Message 221534/I October 1944 to KIDD, CHAUNCEY, info CTU 79.11.2, CTF 79.
  - \*\*\*\* CTF 77 TBS Voice Radio Message 220710 October 1944 to CTF's 78, 79.
  - \*\*\*\*\* CTF 79 TBS Voice Radio Message 220735 October 1944 to CTU 79.11.2, info CTF 77.
  - \*\*\*\*\* CTG 77.2 Visual Dispatch 220515 October 1944 to CTF 77, info CTF 79.
  - \*\*\*\*\* CTU 79.11.2 Dispatch 220749 October 1944 to CTF 79, info CTF 77.
  - \*\*\*\*\* War Diary RATHBURNE, October 21st, 1944.
  - \*\*\*\*\* LST 472 Voice Radio Message 220758 October 1944 to CTF 79.



Just prior to 1710 he completed his discussion with CTG 79.2 for at about that time that officer departed the MOUNT OLYMPUS for the ROCKY MOUNT.\*

At 1733 he received a dispatch from CTF 77 (a) advising him that the C.G. SIXTH Army desired the Army Reserve (381st RCT) unloaded in the area of the NINETY-SIXTH Division where it was to remain in the army reserve, and (b) requesting him to inform the C.G. TWENTY-FOURTH Corps, who was still embarked in the BLUE RIDGE, of the above.\*\*

At 1735 he received a visual dispatch from CTU 79.11.2 requesting authority to employ the HALLIGAN, HARADEN, TWIGGS, ISHERWOOD and CHARLES G. BADGER in the screen that night.\*\*\*

This message was prompted by (a) CTG 77.2's orders for night retirement, discussed under "Operations of CTG 77.2, October 22nd", which orders, by implication, indicated that these destroyers would not be employed by him,\*\*\*\* and (b) CTU 79.11.2's forehanded desire to employ them in the TF 79 screen if they were not to be employed elsewhere.

At 1756 he was informed by CTG 77.5 that (a) on the previous day, twelve mines had been swept (presumably in Area SWEEP), (b) on this day (1) nine mines had been swept in the main channel, which was now considered safe, and (2) eleven unreported mines had been swept in Area SWEEP, (c) total mines swept to date were 290, and (d) exploratory sweeps of all old areas and a new special area would be continued.\*\*\*\*\*

At 1800 he observed TU 79.14.2 depart the transport area.

At 1822 he received a TBS voice radio message from CTU 79.11.2 reporting having moved in destroyers from outer stations and stating that a new screening station assignment would be forwarded presently.\*\*\*\*\*

At 1852 he directed CTG 79.2 to land the 381st RCT on BLUE Beach ONE at daylight October 23rd.\*\*\*\*\*

At 1938 he directed the Commanding Officer LST 472 to start discharge of LST's 24, 471, 472 and 606 on YELLOW Beach TWO.\*\*\*\*\* (As will be shown later, the Commanding Officer LST 472 does not seem to have received this message).

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- \* Action Report CTG 79.2, Leyte Operation, Serial 0032, November 4th, 1944, Part III, Section 2, Page 33.
  - \*\* CTF 77 Dispatch 220619 October 1944 to CTF 79.
  - \*\*\* CTU 79.11.2 Visual Dispatch 220835 October 1944 to CTF 79.
  - \*\*\*\* CTG 77.2 TBS Voice Radio Message 220823 October 1944 to COMCRUDIV's 4, 12, COMDESDIV 112, info CTU 79.11.2.
  - \*\*\*\*\* CTG 77.5 Visual Dispatch 220830 October 1944 to CTF 79.
  - \*\*\*\*\* CTU 79.11.2 TBS Voice Radio Message 220912 October 1944 to CTF 79.
  - \*\*\*\*\* Action Report CTG 79.2, Leyte Operation, Serial 0032, November 4th, 1944.
  - \*\*\*\*\* CTF 79 Dispatch 221038 October 1944 to LST 472.

At 2130 he received a voice radio message from CTG 79.1 in which that commander made certain recommendations regarding the transfer of ammunition and smoke-making materials from ships leaving the area.\*

At 2136 he intercepted a voice radio message from LST 472 to CTF 78 wherein the Commanding Officer LST 472 complained that although he had reported to CTF 79 for duty at 0645, 1600 and again at 2000 he had not as yet received any instructions as to the beach at which to unload his LST's. In addition, he stated that the army shore party had recommended beaching at YELLOW TWO.\*\*

At 2137 he received CTU 79.14.2's departure report which reported the convoy consisting of six transports (CAMBRIA, FREDERICK FUNSTON, SHERIDAN, GEORGE CLYMER, STARLIGHT and RIXEY), two cargo ships (ALCYONE, ALMAACK), two LSD's (CASA GRANDE, BELLE GROVE), and one LSV (CATSKILL), escorted by two destroyers (KIDD, CHAUNCEY) and four APD's (BROOKS, BELKNAP, OVERTON, HUMPHREYS) as having departed the transport area at 1800 en route Hollandia, SOA twelve knots.\*\*\*

He could see from this that the convoy was exactly as ordered with the exception that the MONITOR and PRESIDENT HAYES from TG 79.1 had been unable to meet the schedule. However, since CTG 79.1 had forecast that this might occur and since he himself had only included them "if ready", he could not feel any concern about them, although naturally he should have preferred to have had them depart.

At 2201 he called the attention of LST 472 to his message, originated at 1938, regarding the discharge of LST's 24, 471, 472, 606 on YELLOW Beach TWO. (These LST's commenced unloading the following morning and will be dropped from discussion except to be included in a subsequent departing convoy).\*\*\*\*

At 2220 he advised COMSERVFORSEVENTHFLT of the arrival date at Hollandia of the damage transport WAR HAWK which was scheduled for a turn-around trip, and among other items, requested that repairs be effected at Hollandia as soon as practicable.\*\*\*\*\*

At 2225, with the departure of TU 79.14.2, he now had remaining at the southern beaches the following units of assault shipping yet to be withdrawn: Seven transports (CAVALIER, PRESIDENT HAYES, CLAY, ARTHUR MIDDLETON, BAXTER, WILLIAM P. BIDDLE, GEORGE F. ELLIOTT); six cargo

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\* CTG 79.1 Voice Radio Message 221230 October 1944 to CTF 79.  
 \*\* CO LST 472 Voice Radio Message 221236 October 1944 to CTF 78.  
 \*\*\* CTU 79.14.2 Dispatch 221023 October 1944 to CTF 79, info CTG's 79.2, 79.1, all TFC's 7THFLT, CNB Hollandia.  
 \*\*\*\* CTF 79 Dispatch 221301 October 1944 to LST 472.  
 \*\*\*\*\* CTF 79 Dispatch 221320 October 1944 to COMSERVFOR7THFLT, COM7THFLT, COMTRANSDIV 18, AP 168, WARHAWK.



ships (THUBAN, ALSHAIN, MERCURY, CHARA, AURIGA, CAPRICORNUS); one LSV (MONITOR); one LSD (RUSHMORE); and all fifty-five LST's which had arrived originally plus four LST's which had arrived this day with TG 78.6. (Reinforcement Group ONE). Thus, a sizeable number of targets remained for enemy surface or air attack. Nevertheless, he had the satisfaction of knowing that (a) considerable progress had been made in unloading, and (b) with the unloading of the army reserve early the next morning, he should have the remainder of his transport/cargo type vessels ready to depart the following afternoon. His assault tonnage unloaded this day was about the same as the preceding day (25,824 s/t vs 26,749 s/t).\*

At 2325 he received a message forwarded by CTF 77 in part that the ceremony for installation of the Philippine Government was to take place at Tacloban at noon Monday, October 23rd, and that COMSOWESPAC would like him to attend if practicable.\*\*

(a) Operations of CTG 79.1 (Attack Group ABLE), October 22nd.

CTG 79.1, in the APPALACHIAN, remained at anchor off the YELLOW and VIOLET Beaches.\*\*\* There he could observe (a) the unloading of his remaining transports, cargo vessels and LST's, and (b) the FS being provided by his ships.

With reference to item (a) he knew that, as of midnight, he had remaining to unload four transports (STARLIGHT, GEORGE CLYMER, PRESIDENT HAYES, RIXEY (APH)), four cargo ships (THUBAN, CHARA, ALSHAIN, MERCURY), one LSV (MONITOR), and twenty-four LST's (123, 125, 126, 205, 219, 223, 242, 451, 478, 482, 488, 565, 605, 608, 609, 611, 612, 670, 686, 693, 733, 738, 739, 909).\*\*\*\* With reference to item (b) he had assigned two destroyers (ISHERWOOD and HARADEN) to provide night illumination and harassing fire respectively as requested by the shore fire control parties, and had ordered them to exchange missions at 0100 in order to allow maximum expenditure and even distribution of AAC and illuminating ammunition.\*\*\*\*\*

Since his responsibilities for operations ashore had passed to the C.G. SEVENTH Infantry Division when that officer had assumed

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- \* Action Report CTF 79 (COM3RDPHIBFOR), Seizure of Leyte, Serial 00323, November 13th, 1944, Page 11.
  - \*\* CTF 77 Dispatch 220814 October 1944 to CTF 79.
  - \*\*\* War Diary APPALACHIAN, October 22nd, 1944.
  - \*\*\*\* Action Report CTG 79.1, Participation in Amphibious Operations for the Capture of Leyte, Philippine Islands, Serial 00454, October 26th, 1944; also Action Report CTG 79.3, Report of Amphibious Operations, Leyte, October 1944, Serial 0169, November 8th, 1944.
  - \*\*\*\*\* Action Report ISHERWOOD, Serial 0133, October 26th, 1944; also War Diary HARADEN, October 22nd, 1944.



command ashore at 1300 the previous day,\* he was now primarily concerned with the expeditious unloading of army personnel, equipment and supplies.

At 0355 he received a dispatch from CTF 79 requesting, in part, information as to the discharge of shipping of the TWENTY-FOURTH Corps.\*\* He realized from this message that CTF 79 was interested in discharging this cargo as expeditiously as possible in order to (a) expedite the transfer of responsibility for the ground offensive from CTF 79 to C.G. TWENTY-FOURTH Corps, and (b) show COMSOWESPAC, who was to visit the southern beaches on this day, how expeditiously TF 79 was accomplishing its objective.

At 0710 he replied to this message saying, in part, that the unloading percentages (as of 0600) of the TWENTY-FOURTH Corps shipping were: (a) GEORGE CLYMER, sixty-five per cent; PRESIDENT HAYES, twenty-five per cent; MERCURY, twenty-six per cent; and (b) LST 207, 100 per cent; LST 482, ninety-four per cent; LST 219, thirty-five per cent; LST's 123 and 451 had landed artillery parties only and LST's 478, 488, zero per cent. He further stated that "general unloading of Corps shipping is now underway, is progressing favorably and will be pressed".\*\*\*

At 0715 he ordered all of his LCI's, PC's, SC's and PCE's to fuel and provision from transports and LST's of his groups during daylight this day. This he accomplished in addition to providing the same service for the DMS/YMS's of CTG 77.5.\*\*\*\*

Except for a few shells, apparently coming from the beach, which fell close to PC 470, LONG and APPALACHIAN and wounding several men, the night was otherwise uneventful.

At 1240 he received a visual dispatch from CTF 79 directing him to advise prior to 1400 ships that he expected to be ready to depart this evening.\*\*\*\*\*

At 1442 he replied, also by visual dispatch, that (a) the GEORGE CLYMER, RIXEY and STARLIGHT would be ready to sail at 1700, (b) possibly the MONITOR and PRESIDENT HAYES would also be ready, and (c) he therefore requested these latter two be ordered to sail on an "if unloaded" basis.\*\*\*\*\*

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\* 6TH U.S. Army, Report of Leyte Operation, October 17th - December 25th, 1944, Page 39.

\*\* CTF 79 Visual Dispatch 211855 October 1944 to CTG 79.1.

\*\*\* CTG 79.1 Dispatch 212210 October 1944 to CTF 79.

\*\*\*\* Action Report CTG 79.1, Participation in Amphibious Operations for the Capture of Leyte, Philippine Islands, Serial 00454, October 6th, 1944; also CTG 79.1 Dispatch 220532 October 1944 to CTF 79, info CTU 79.11.2; CTG 77.5 Dispatch 220705 October 1944 to CTG's 79.1, 79.2, info CTF 79; also War Diary LONG, October 22nd, 1944.

\*\*\*\*\* CTF 79 Dispatch 220307 October 1944 to CTG's 79.1 and 79.2.

\*\*\*\*\* CTG 79.1 Visual Dispatch 220542 October 1944 to CTF 79.



At 1450 he received, as an information addressee, a visual dispatch from CTG 77.2 stating, among other items, that he was assigned the NEWCOMB and HEYWOOD L. EDWARDS for night FS missions.\*

At 1530 he directed that his night inshore screening plan again be executed on a line extending 120°(T) from the mouth of the Dao River.\*\*

At 1555 he was advised by CTF 79 that his transports would not retire that night and that his smoke boats should be stationed by 1800.\*\*\*

At 1630 he received, as an information addressee, a dispatch from CTF 79 to CTG 79.4 (a) forming TU 79.14.2 under command of CTG 79.4 as CTU 79.14.2, and (b) directing CTG 79.4 to dispatch the GEORGE CLYMER, STARLIGHT and RIXEY, plus the MONITOR and PRESIDENT HAYES if ready, to CTU 79.14.2, in CAMBRIA, for return to Hollandia. He noted in this dispatch that the CHAUNCEY was also detached to be part of the escort.\*\*\*\*

At 1800, in accordance with the above, the GEORGE CLYMER, STARLIGHT and RIXEY\*\* were detached and departed on schedule.\*\*\*\*\*

At 1920 he directed the unloading during the night to be at a maximum rate to insure departure of all transports the following day.\*\*

At 2130 he recommended that CTF 79 utilize one LST to receive ammunition and smoke-making equipment from ships leaving the area, using this LST as an auxiliary supply.\*\*\*\*\* He made this recommendation to provide further means for implementing his recommendation of the preceding day to retain in the area material which was critical and in short supply.

At 2200 he advised CTF 79 that his unloading percentages for 2000 October 22nd were: (a) CAVALIER (100%), MONITOR (90%), MERCURY (29%), PRESIDENT HAYES (1800)(90%), CHARA (1800)(61%), THUBAN (74%), ALSHAIN (82%); (b) LST's 34, 126, 169, 205, 207, 213, 219, 242, 461, 482, 608, 617, 686, 733, 739, 1006 (all 100%); (c) LST's 223 (95%), 609 (30%), 605 (45%), 612 (75%), 670 (45%), 693 (1730)(95%), 565 (1600)(5%), 125 (76%),

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- \* CTG 77.2 Dispatch 220550 October 1944 to CTF 79, info CTF 77, CTG's 79.1, 79.2, COMDESRON 56, BRYANT, HARADEN, GRANT, HEYWOOD L. EDWARDS.  
 \*\* Action Report CTG 79.1, Participation in the Amphibious Operations for the Capture of Leyte, Philippine Islands, Serial 0454, October 26th, 1944.  
 \*\*\* Ibid.; also CTF 79 Visual Dispatch 220645 October 1944 to CTG's 79.1, 79.2, info CTU 79.11.2.  
 \*\*\*\* CTF 79 Dispatch 220554 October 1944 to CTG 79.4, KIDD, CHAUNCEY, HUMPHREY.  
 \*\*\*\*\* CTU 79.14.2 Dispatch 221023 October 1944 to CTF 79, info CTG's 79.1, 79.2, etc.  
 \*\*\*\*\* CTG 79.1 Dispatch 221230 October 1944 to CTF 79.

909 (35%), 738 (18%), 451 (12%), 123 (66%), 488 (35%); and (d) LST's 478 and 611 (zero). He further stated that LST's 242, 451 and 733 were scheduled to remain in the area.\* Based on the action reports and war diaries of the above ships, this dispatch was surprisingly accurate and more correct than CTG 79.1's own war diary and action report.

Since, for night fire support, he had been assigned the NEWCOMB and HEYWOOD L. EDWARDS, he employed them as on former nights with instructions to interchange their missions at 0100 the following morning.\*\*

By the end of the day he could once again view his operations with satisfaction. Unloading had progressed even more smoothly and expeditiously than it had on the preceding day. Although none had as yet departed, his thirty-one LST's had now discharged more than seventy-five per cent of their cargo, while his four cargo ships (THUBAN, CHARA, ALSHAIN and MERCURY) plus one LSV (MONITOR) remaining were also about seventy-five per cent unloaded and his sole remaining transport (PRESIDENT HAYES) was ninety-seven per cent unloaded.

(b) Operations of CTG 79.2 (Attack Group BAKER),  
October 22nd.

CTG 79.2, in the ROCKY MOUNT, remained anchored in the LST area off ORANGE Beach\*\*\* where he could observe the unloading which had continued throughout the night.\*\*\*\* The ships of TRANSDIV TEN (381st RCT SIXTH Army Reserve embarked) now averaged sixteen per cent unloaded and the nine remaining ships of TRANSDIV's EIGHTEEN and TWENTY-EIGHT averaged eighty-two per cent unloaded including two APA's (CAMBRIA, FREDERICK FUNSTON) and three LSD's (CASA GRANDE, RUSHMORE, BELLE GROVE) which were completely unloaded.\*\*\*\*\*

His unloading problems of the preceding two days still obtained; i.e., (a) the ineffectiveness of the shore party,\*\*\*\* (b) the failure to utilize fully pontoon barges and causeways,\*\*\*\* and (c) the lack of control and utilization of amphibious vehicles (DUKW's and LVT's.) \*\*\*\*\*

Despite the poor conditions of the beach and the dump area, as well as the nature of the terrain immediately to the north and west

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\* CTG 79.1 Dispatch 221300 October 1944 to CTF 79.

\*\* War Diaries NEWCOMB and HEYWOOD L. EDWARDS, October 22nd, 1944; also Action Report CTG 79.1, Participation in Amphibious Operations for the Capture of Leyte, Philippine Islands, Serial 00454, October 26th, 1944.

\*\*\* War Diary ROCKY MOUNT, October 22nd, 1944.

\*\*\*\* Action Report CTG 79.4, Leyte Operation, Philippine Islands, Serial 0126, October 28th, 1944.

\*\*\*\*\* Ibid.; also Action Report CTG 79.2, Leyte Operation, Serial 0032, November 4th, 1944.



(Liberanan Head and Catmon Hill) from which the enemy had been able to keep the dump and beach area under fire almost at will,\* these problems would still have obtained since, in the opinion of CTG 79.2, the shore party having been formed, equipped and loaded for an entirely different type of operation where the flow to the beach would have been much slower, would not have been able to handle the cargo at the maximum discharge rate of the ships.\*\*

During the night he employed two destroyers (TWIGGS and HALLIGAN) to provide night illumination as requested by the shore fire control parties.\*\*\*

At 0740 he observed naval gunfire from three cruisers (MINNEAPOLIS, DENVER and COLUMBIA) being directed at Liberanan Head.\*\*\*\* (Actually, this naval gunfire commenced at 0725).\*\*\*\*\* This scheduled firing had been ordered by CTF 79 at 0615 for the period 0630 - 0800 but was not finally relayed to the ships until 0650. As a result the ships did not actually receive the order to commence firing until 0701 because of the delay in clearing with the shore fire control party.\*\*\*\*\* The interval between receiving the order and the time the ships commenced firing was due to the inability of the above ships to proceed to their proper stations through the smoke screen laid during the morning air alert.\*\*\*\*\*

At 0810 he was assigned two cruisers (PORTLAND and COLUMBIA) and three destroyers (TWIGGS, KIDD and HALLIGAN) for naval gunfire support during the day.\*\*\*\*\* He employed the two cruisers but used only one of the destroyers (TWIGGS).

At about this time he received a report from CTU 79.6.1 stating that as of 0800 his twenty-four LST's were approximately sixty-two per cent unloaded. This included (a) five (117, 118, 486, 567, 917) which were completely unloaded, and (b) one (1013) which had not yet commenced to

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- \* Action Report CTG 79.4, Leyte Operation, Philippine Islands, Serial 0126, October 28th, 1944; also Action Report CTG 79.2, Leyte Operation, Serial 0032, November 4th, 1944.
  - \*\* Action Report CTG 79.2, Leyte Operation, Serial 0032, November 4th, 1944.
  - \*\*\* Action Report TWIGGS, Assault and Occupation of Leyte Island, Philippine Islands, Serial 0183, November 8th, 1944; also War Diary HALLIGAN, October 22nd, 1944; Action Report CTG 79.2, Leyte Operation, Serial 0032, November 4th, 1944.
  - \*\*\*\* Action Report CTG 79.2, Leyte Operation, Serial 0032, November 4th, 1944, Part III, Section 2, Chronology.
  - \*\*\*\*\* Deck Log COLUMBIA, October 22nd, 1944.
  - \*\*\*\*\* Action Report CTG 79.2, Leyte Operation, Serial 0032, November 4th, 1944, Part V, Section 5.
  - \*\*\*\*\* Action Report CTG 77.2, Bombardment and Capture of Leyte Island, Philippine Islands, October 16th - 24th, 1944, Serial 00147, November 5th, 1944.

unload.\* This report was slightly in error in that item (b) should have included LST's 999\*\* and 568\*\*\* which commenced unloading at 0830 and 1000 respectively.

At 0845 he received a visual dispatch from CTF 79 directing him to expedite the discharge of LST's 123 and 451 and 216 tons of artillery ammunition on the MERCURY to VIOLET Beaches ONE or TWO.\*\*\*\* This is an interesting dispatch in that the above three ships were attached to CTG 79.1's command.

At 1010 he left his flagship to make an inspection of the beaches.\*\*\*\*\* He discovered that the congested conditions which had existed the previous day were little improved and that he must take further action to expedite the clearing of his beaches.

Accordingly, at 1140, shortly after returning to his flagship, he ordered additional army engineers to land immediately on BLUE Beach.\*\*\*\*\*

At 1240 he received a visual dispatch from CTF 79 directing him to advise, prior to 1400, the ships that he expected to be ready to depart this evening.\*\*\*\*\*

At 1308, in reply to the above request, he advised CTF 79 that the CAMBRIA, FREDERICK FUNSTON, ALCYONE, CASA GRANDE, SHERIDAN and BELLE GROVE would be ready to sail by 1800 and that the CATSKILL and ALMAACK might be ready.\*\*\*\*\*

At 1413 CTG 79.4 received an order from an army source to land the 170th Engineers.\*\*\*\*\* These engineers were the shore party for the 381st RCT (SIXTH Army Reserve).\*\*\*\*\* The C.G. NINETY-SIXTH Infantry Division had recognized the inability of his shore party to keep the supplies moving off the beaches and had requested the C.G. SIXTH Army to release the above engineers to augment his shore party personnel.\*\*\*\*\*

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- \* CTU 79.6.1 Mailgram 212101 (sic) October 1944 to CTG's 79.2, 79.4; also Action Report CTU 79.6.1, Assault and Occupation of Leyte Island, Philippine Islands, Serial 0210-44, November 7th, 1944; Part II, Enclosure B.
  - \*\* Action Report CTU 79.6.1, Assault and Occupation of Leyte Island, Philippine Islands, Serial 0210-44, November 7th, 1944, Part II, Enclosure C.
  - \*\*\* Action Report LST 568, Serial 103-44, October 30th, 1944.
  - \*\*\*\* CTF 79 Visual Dispatch 212345 October 1944 to CTG 79.2.
  - \*\*\*\*\* Action Report CTG 79.2, Leyte Operation, Serial 0032, November 4th, 1944.
  - \*\*\*\*\* CTF 79 Visual Dispatch 220307 October 1944 to CTG's 79.1 and 79.2.
  - \*\*\*\*\* CTG 79.2 Visual Dispatch 220408 October 1944 to CTF 79.
  - \*\*\*\*\* Action Report CTG 79.4, Leyte, Philippine Islands Operation, Serial 0126, October 28th, 1944.
  - \*\*\*\*\* Action Report CTU 79.4.1, Operations Against Leyte beginning October 22nd, 1944, Serial 00276, October 28th, 1944.



At 1425 CTG 79.2 again left his flagship, this time to report to CTF 79 in the MOUNT OLYMPUS. This visit was undoubtedly prompted by the aforementioned order to land the 170th Engineers. Although all such assistance could be used to help clear his beaches, he likely wanted to clarify this last order since there had yet been no indication as to the beach on which the SIXTH Army Reserve was to be committed and he felt that it would not be correct to take away its shore party without at least receiving confirmation from the attack force commander.\*

At 1450, as an information addressee, he received a visual dispatch from CTG 77.2 stating, among other items, that he was assigned the ALBERT W. GRANT and the BRYANT for night FS missions.\*\*

At 1511, after having ascertained from CTF 79 in the MOUNT OLYMPUS that the above instruction was correct, he ordered CTG 79.4 to land the 381st RCT shore party.

At 1545 he was advised by CTF 79 that the transports would not retire for the night and that his smoke boats should be stationed by 1800.\*\*\*

At 1710 he returned to his flagship.\*

A short time after 1715 he received a 1700 unloading report from CTU 79.6.1 to the effect that at that time all LST's were unloaded with the exception of nine LST's (20, 564, 568, 615, 672, 916, 918, 999, 1013) which LST's averaged eighty-two per cent unloaded.\*\*\*\* Thus, he knew that he had now completely unloaded fifteen LST's and that the remainder would most likely be unloaded within a matter of hours, and likely by the end of the following day. Actually, this report was slightly in error in that LST 671 was not unloaded until 1930.\*\*\*\*\*

At 1800 he observed that his transport group commander (CTG 79.4, in the CAMBRIA) was underway as CTU 79.14.2 (the commander of a convoy ordered to Hollandia by CTF 79).\*\*\*\*\* He was pleased to see this convoy depart as, besides the CAMBRIA, it included the FREDERICK FUNSTON, SHERIDAN, ALCYONE, CASA GRANDE, BELLE GROVE and CATSKILL also from his own command.

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- \* Action Report CTG 79.2, Leyte Operation, Serial 0032, November 4th, 1944.
  - \*\* CTG 77.2 Visual Dispatch 220550 October 1944 to CTF 79, info CTF 77, CTG's 79.1, 79.2, COMDESRON 56, BRYANT, HARADEN, ALBERT W. GRANT, HEYWOOD L. EDWARDS.
  - \*\*\* CTF 79 Visual Dispatch 220645 October 1944 to CTG's 79.1, 79.2, info CTU 79.11.2.
  - \*\*\*\* CTU 79.6.1 Mailgram 220815 October 1944 to CTG's 79.1, 79.4.
  - \*\*\*\*\* Action Report LST 671, Serial 093, November 1st, 1944.
  - \*\*\*\*\* Action Report CTG 79.4, Leyte, Philippine Islands, Operation, Serial 0126, October 28th, 1944.



At 1852 he received instructions from CTF 79 to land the 381st RCT on BLUE Beach ONE at daylight the following morning. He relayed this order to CTU 79.14.1 (Commander Transport Division TEN) in whose ships the Army Reserve was embarked.\*

By the end of the day he could view his operations with considerably more satisfaction than heretofore. His close personal attention to the unloading problems had finally resulted in a much improved situation. As of midnight the unloading situation of his larger ships was as follows: (a) Two (TRANSDIV's EIGHTEEN and TWENTY-EIGHT) of his three transport divisions had been completely unloaded, with the exception of the AURIGA (AK) which was now more than twenty-four per cent unloaded--the above unloaded transports, with the CATSKILL (from TRANSDIV TEN), had already departed; (b) his third transport division (TRANSDIV TEN), less the CATSKILL was now unloading and would unload the SIXTH Army Reserve at daylight; and (c) fifteen of his twenty-four LST's had been completely unloaded. Thus, he had to unload only five transports (CLAY, ARTHUR MIDDLETON, BAXTER, WILLIAM P. BIDDLE, GEORGE F. ELLIOTT), two cargo ships (AURIGA, CAPRICORNUS) and the nine LST's mentioned previously. The RUSHMORE, which had been unloaded since the previous day, he was employing as a repair facility.

(c) Operations of CTU 77.2.2 (Fire Support Unit SOUTH),  
October 22nd.

At 0519, upon receipt of orders to proceed independently, the units of this group proceeded to their various assigned stations as follows: (a) BATDIV TWO to the Southern Transport Area; (b) the MINNEAPOLIS to Point PETER, the DENVER to Point NAN, the COLUMBIA to Point GEORGE, the LOUISVILLE to a point 4,000 yards east of Leyte Island, the PORTLAND to a point off Rizal; and (c) the destroyers to screening stations to await fueling.\*\*

While proceeding to station CTU 77.2.2 noted at 0615 that the SAN CARLOS was under air attack.

Meanwhile, he also noted that the ships (MINNEAPOLIS, DENVER, COLUMBIA) which were scheduled for FS missions that morning had not arrived on station by 0630 as planned. He realized, of course, that this was due to the reduced visibility caused by the smoke screen laid by Allied forces during the morning air alert.\*\*\*

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\* Action Report CTG 79.2, Leyte Operation, Serial 0032, November 4th, 1944.

\*\* War Diaries of ships concerned, October 22nd, 1944; also Action Report COMCRUDIV 4 (CTG 77.2), Bombardment and Capture of Leyte Island, Philippine Islands, October 16th-24th, 1944, Serial 00147, November 5th, 1944.

\*\*\* Action Report CTG 77.2 (COMCRUDIV 4), Bombardment and Capture of Leyte Island, Philippine Islands, October 16th-24th, 1944, Serial 00147, November 5th, 1944.



Since this gunfire was in support of projected operations by army ground troops (discussed more fully under "Operations of CTF 79, October 22nd"), he was concerned at the delay but realized that he could do little about it. Therefore, it was with some satisfaction that at 0725 he noted that the COLUMBIA had commenced firing, followed by the MINNEAPOLIS at 0737 and by the DENVER at 0745. All firing was completed at 0800\* at which time all ships stood by in designated areas for call fire.

Meanwhile, the LOUISVILLE, PORTLAND, NEWCOMB and LEUTZE also stood by for call fire.

Shortly after 0844, as CTG 77.2, he received a visual message from CTF 77 (a) disapproving CTF 79's action in approving CTG 77.2's fueling plan, (b) stating that such recommendations from CTG 77.2 could only be approved by CTF 77, and (c) calling attention to certain dispatches which changed the entire fueling plan.\*\*

He noted at 1310 that the fueling operations had been completed and that the destroyers had returned to their various duties of screening and standing by for fire support. (The LEUTZE and NEWCOMB were the only two destroyers not to fuel).

At about 1313, as CTG 77.2, he received a dispatch from CTF 77 for a battleship or cruiser to be designated daily to provide two aircraft for air - sea rescue mission on fifteen minutes notice beginning at 0630. Duty ship to report to CSACP each morning.\*\*\*

Shortly after 1317, as CTG 77.2, he received a visual dispatch from CTF 79 directing that he (a) assign two destroyers for night FS missions to CTG 79.1 and two to CTG 79.2, (b) carry out Harbor Defense Plan ONE with the ships remaining, (c) designate two large ships to report to each group commander at 0700 the following morning for FS duties, and (d) arrange ammunition replenishment schedule as necessary throughout the day, including FS ships temporarily assigned screen, with first priority being given to ships of TU 77.2.2.\*\*\*\*

At 1415, as CTG 77.2, he submitted his fueling and ammunition replenishment plan by dispatch to CTF 77 wherein he recommended that the (a) order of fueling be TENNESSEE, CALIFORNIA, PENNSYLVANIA, LEUTZE, NEWCOMB, AULICK, SIGOURNEY, CONY, WEST VIRGINIA, MARYLAND and MISSISSIPPI, and (b) order of receiving ammunition be LOUISVILLE, MINNEAPOLIS and

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- \* Action Report COMCRUDIV 12, Bombardment of Leyte Island, Serial 0180, November 4th, 1944; also War Diary MINNEAPOLIS, October 22nd, 1944.
  - \*\* CTF 77 Visual Dispatch 212344 October 1944 to CTF 79 and CTG 77.2.
  - \*\*\* CTF 77 Dispatch 220125 October 1944 to CTG 77.2, info CTF's 78, 79, and CTG 77.4.
  - \*\*\*\* CTF 79 Visual Dispatch 220417 October 1944 to CTG 77.2, info CTG's 79.1 and 79.2.

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PORTLAND.\* It seems clear from this dispatch that the cruisers did not require fuel at this time. This was because they had refueled on October 16th.

In accordance with instructions from CTF 79, he at 1450 assigned the NEWCOMB and HEYWOOD L. EDWARDS to CTG 79.1 and the ALBERT W. GRANT and BRYANT to CTG 79.2 for night firing missions.\*\*

At 1534 he released the KIDD and CHAUNCEY from their present duties and directed them to report to CTF 79 at 1600 without relief.\*\*\*

At 1537, as CTG 77.2, he received dispatch instructions from CTF 77 to furnish, upon the departure of the attack force commanders, the anti-submarine patrol required by that commander's basic plan.\*\*\*\*

At 1540 he designated (1) the LOUISVILLE for air - sea rescue duty for the present day, (2) the PORTLAND for the following day and (3) the MINNEAPOLIS for October 24th.\*\*\*\*\*

At 1723 he directed the cruisers and destroyers of TU 77.2.2, less those destroyers assigned COMBATDIV THREE and FS missions, to proceed for night retirement at 1730 with the LOUISVILLE to be in position initially four miles east of Tay Tay Point on course 090°(T), speed five knots, and gave the circular disposition to be employed.\*\*\*\*\*

Since during the night he operated largely as CTG 77.2, his operations are now discussed under "Operations of CTG 77.2, October 22nd".

(3) Operations of CTG 77.2 (Bombardment and Fire Support Group), October 22nd.

CTG 77.2, in accordance with Harbor Defense Plan ONE, October 22nd, was operating with TG 77.2 in the southern portion of Leyte Gulf. At this time his command consisted (a) of the LOUISVILLE, COLUMBIA, PORTLAND, and MINNEAPOLIS screened by the NEWCOMB, LEUTZE, BENNION, CLAXTON, THORN and WELLES in one group which was operating to the eastward of Tay Tay Point at five knots on an east - west line, and (b) of the TENNESSEE, CALIFORNIA and PENNSYLVANIA screened by the ROBINSON, ALBERT W. GRANT, BRYANT,

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- \* CTG 77.2 Visual Dispatch 220515 October 1944 to CTF 77, info CTF 79.
  - \*\* CTU 77.2.2 Visual Dispatch 220550 October 1944 to CTF 79, info CTF 77, etc.
  - \*\*\* CTU 77.2.2 TBS Voice Radio Message 221534/I October 1944 to KIDD, CHAUNCEY, info CTU 79.11.2, CTF 79.
  - \*\*\*\* CANF SOWESPAC Operation Plan No. 13-44, Serial 00022A, September 26th, 1944, Paragraph 3(x)(10).
  - \*\*\*\*\* CTU 77.2.2 Visual Dispatch 220640 October 1944 to LOUISVILLE, PORTLAND, MINNEAPOLIS, info CTF's 77 and 79.
  - \*\*\*\*\* CTU 77.2.2 TBS Voice Radio Message 220823 October 1944 to COMCRU-DIV's 4, 12, COMDESDIV 112, info CTU 79.11.2.



HALFORD and HEYWOOD L. EDWARDS in another group which was operating to the eastward of Abuyog.\* Operating to the northward of the battleships of TU 77.2.2 was TU 77.2.1, which had moved down into FS Area THREE in order to closely support the other units of TG 77.2 should that be necessary. In fact, this unit got so close to the above battleships that at 0105 the destroyers of the two screens nearly collided.\*\*

At 0430 he directed COMBATDIV TWO in the TENNESSEE to (a) have his battleships fuel the destroyers commencing at 0800 as follows: the TENNESSEE fuel WELLES, HEYWOOD L. EDWARDS and ALBERT W. GRANT; the CALIFORNIA fuel CLAXTON, THORN and ROBINSON; the PENNSYLVANIA fuel HALFORD, BRYANT and BENNION, and (b) conduct the fueling with his ships at anchor in the southern part of the transport area and inside the screen.\*\*\*

At 0507, as CTU 77.2.2, he assigned ships to firing assignments for the day in compliance with CTF 79's request received at 2208 the previous evening. He directed the MINNEAPOLIS to operate in the vicinity of Point PETER, the DENVER in the vicinity of Point NAN, and the COLUMBIA in the vicinity of Point GEORGE. He further directed that (a) the firing of the above three cruisers was to commence at 0630 and was to continue until 0800, and (b) the PORTLAND and LOUISVILLE were to stand by for call fire.\*\*\*

At 0519, as CTG 77.2, he ordered the commanding officers of the cruisers to take charge and proceed as previously directed. This completes his operations for the period 0000 until 0519. After this time and until 1730, since he operated largely as CTU 77.2.2, his operations during this time are discussed under "Operations of CTU 77.2.2, October 22nd".

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At 1730, having largely completed the day's operations as CTU 77.2.2, CTG 77.2 departed the FS area and headed for his night covering station as prescribed in CTF 77's Harbor Defense Plan ONE,\*\*\* and in CTU 77.2.2's 220823\*\*\*\* (quoted in part under "Operations of CTU 77.2.2, October 22nd"). As on the previous night, he, in the LOUISVILLE with the PORTLAND, MINNEAPOLIS, DENVER, COLUMBIA, ROBINSON, CLAXTON, WELLES, HALFORD, BENNION, THORN, LEUTZE, operated on an east - west line off Tay Tay Point at five knots.\*\*\* However, he operated his battleships somewhat differently. On this night he assembled BATDIV TWO (less the TENNESSEE which was undergoing repairs because of her collision with the WAR HAWK) and BATDIV's THREE and

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\* War Diaries LOUISVILLE and COMDESRON 56, October 22nd, 1944.  
 \*\* Deck Log SIGOURNEY, October 22nd, 1944.  
 \*\*\* Action Report CTG 77.2 (COMCRUDIV 4), Bombardment and Capture of Leyte Island, Philippine Islands, October 16th - 24th, 1944, Serial 00147, November 5th, 1944.  
 \*\*\*\* CTU 77.2.2 Dispatch 220823 October 1944 to COMCRUDIV 4, COMCRUDIV 12, COMDESDIV 112, info CTU 79.11.2.

FOUR escorted by the AULICK, CONY and SIGOURNEY in the area off Abuyog\* but south of Latitude 10° - 46'E and directed them to lie to in this area.

At 2400 his command was approximately in the above area. Up to this hour the patrol had been uneventful.

(4) Operations of CTG 77.4 (Escort Carrier Group), October 22nd.\*\*

CTG 77.4, with a total of 287 VF and 169 VT, continued to provide air cover and support over the objective area and his own units in accordance with his basic air plan.\*\*\*

At 0603, after morning flight operations, CTU 77.4.2 detached TU 77.4.14, consisting of PETROF BAY, SAGINAW BAY, EDMONDS and R.S. BULL, to proceed and report to CTU 77.4.1 for duty. At 0644 TU 77.4.14 joined TU 77.4.1.\*\*\*\*

Throughout the day flying conditions were excellent in the sea operating area. The winds were light and variable, visibility twelve miles, with ceiling above 10,000 feet. Sunrise was at 0621.\*\*\*\*\* Over the objective area the weather was generally good. However, over Cebu there was a frontal condition just west of Cebu harbor which restricted to a degree the effectiveness of the afternoon strikes.\*\*\*\*\*

At 0705 the TCAP from the CHENANGO destroyed an enemy carrier-type attack plane in the vicinity of the northern tip of Dinagat Island (this was the only enemy aircraft intercepted by the CAP this day).\*\*\*\*\*

Meanwhile, having received no instructions from CTF 77 relative to the prospective detachment of DESRON FORTY-SEVEN from his command and feeling that it was likely that this squadron might be detached without relief, which could well be calamitous, he thought it wise to advise that

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\* Action Report CALIFORNIA, Participation in Operations off Island of Leyte, October 19th - 24th, 1944, Serial 0025, November 8th, 1944, Enclosure (A), Part II Chronological Narrative, October 22nd, 1944; Deck Log SIGOURNEY, October 22nd and 23rd, 1944.

\*\* All information here, except as otherwise indicated, obtained from Action Report CTG 77.4, Leyte Operations, October 12th - 29th, 1944, Serial 00120, November 15th, 1944.

\*\*\* CTG 77.4 Operation Plan No. 2-44, Serial 00075, October 15th, 1944, Annex D.

\*\*\*\* Deck Log PETROF BAY, October 22nd, 1944; also Action Report CTU 77.4.1, Leyte Operations, October 12th - 29th, 1944, Serial 00104, November 8th, 1944.

\*\*\*\*\* Action Report MANILA BAY, Operations in Support of Occupation of Leyte, P.I., October 12th - 30th, 1944, Serial 0103, November 2nd, 1944, Part II, Page 12.

\*\*\*\*\* Aircraft Action Report No. 44-44, Air Group 60, October 22nd, 1944.

\*\*\*\*\* Aircraft Action Report No. 71, VF 35, October 22nd, 1944.



commander of his thoughts in this matter. Therefore, at 0724 he informed CTF 77 by dispatch that (a) the detachment of DESRON FORTY-SEVEN before the completion of the present operation would unduly imperil the units of TG 77.4, and (b)(1) without destroyers his task group had no AA protection during the darkness due to lack of directors, (2) any reduction in numbers (of destroyers) would make antisubmarine coverage impossible, and also make night launchings and landings unduly hazardous.\*

At 0725 TU 77.4.24, consisting of the KADASHAN BAY, OMMANEY BAY. R.W. SUESENS and ABERCROMBIE, joined TU 77.4.2, having been detached from escort duty with TG 78.6 at 1827 the previous evening.\*\*

With the reporting for duty of the above task unit, TG 77.4 was finally assembled in full strength for the first time since the commencement of the KING II operation and now consisted of eighteen escort carriers with an approximate total of 321 VF and 191 VT aircraft (One VT from MARCUS ISLAND had been lost during the morning air operations.).

At 1240 he launched his afternoon strike of thirty-two VF and twelve VT against Lahug airfield on Cebu, Opon airfield on Mactan Island and certain shipping in Cebu harbor.\*\*\*

At 1541 he received a report from the ROWELL of a visual sighting (at 1508) of a submarine in Latitude 09° - 56'N, Longitude 126° - 37.5'E, which contact was investigated and proved to be negative.\*\*\*\* Actually, the ROWELL, in her action report, refers to this as a "possible contact with friendly sub".\*\*\*\*\* THIS ACTION BY THE ROWELL SEEMS CONTRARY TO THE GENERAL PRACTICE OF THE DAY, FOR THE SEA AREAS IN WHICH TG 77.4 WAS OPERATING WERE CLASSIFIED AT THIS TIME AS AIR - SURFACE ZONES WHEREIN BOTH AIRCRAFT AND SURFACE SHIPS COULD ATTACK ANY SUBMARINE ENCOUNTERED WITHOUT INQUIRY AS TO ITS ENEMY CHARACTER AND WHERE AMERICAN SUBMARINES WERE NOT PERMITTED TO ENTER.\*\*\*\*\* IN VIEW OF THIS, DOES IT NOT SEEM SURPRISING THAT THE COMMANDING OFFICER ROWELL, WHO CERTAINLY SHOULD HAVE BEEN FAMILIAR WITH THE FACT THAT HE WAS OPERATING IN AN AIR - SURFACE ZONE, DID NOT ATTACK THIS SUBMARINE IMMEDIATELY, GIVING NO THOUGHT TO THE POSSIBILITY SHE WAS A FRIENDLY SUBMARINE?

At or prior to 1554 he received CTF 77's dispatch directing (a) CTF's 78 and 79 each to provide one destroyer division to report to CTG 77.4 on station by October 25th or as soon thereafter as

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- \* CTG 77.4 Dispatch 212224 October 1944 to CTF 77.
  - \*\* Deck Log KADASHAN BAY, October 22nd, 1944.
  - \*\*\* CTG 77.4 Dispatch 230825 October 1944 to CTF 77, info CTF's 78, 79, all TGC's TF 77; also Aircraft Action Report No. 7, CVEG-35, October 31st, 1944.
  - \*\*\*\* Action Report CTG 77.4, Leyte Operations, October 12th - 29th, 1944, Serial 00120, November 15th, 1944.
  - \*\*\*\*\* War Diary ROWELL, October 22nd, 1944.
  - \*\*\*\*\* Submarine Operational History, World War II, prepared by Commander Submarine Force, U.S. Pacific Fleet, Volume I, Page 79.

practicable and (b) CTG 77.4 upon the reporting of these destroyers to detach DESRON FORTY-SEVEN for Ulithi.\*

At 1559 (approximately) he received a dispatch from CTF 77 (quoted in full under "Operations of CTF 77, October 22nd") which, in part, (a) authorized him to reduce his CAP's, (b)(1) recommended early morning fighter sweeps over enemy airfields in northern Mindanao and the western Visayas, and (2) late afternoon combined strikes with VT's used primarily against shipping.\*\*

Since this was what he had requested in his 210122 of the previous day,\*\*\* it can be accepted that he received this dispatch with satisfaction and proceeded to make necessary preparations for the following day.

His afternoon strike, which landed aboard about 1641, met no air opposition but encountered intense AA fire at Lahug, which (a) caused a loss of three VF (one from CHENANGO and two from SANGAMON) and one VT (from CHENANGO), and (b) damaged five other aircraft, all of which succeeded in returning to their carriers.

As a result of this day's operations CTG 77.4 claimed (a) having destroyed nine single engine fighters (on the ground) at Lahug and Opon Airfields, and (b) having destroyed or damaged gun emplacements, trenches, troop concentrations, buildings, bridges, fuel and ammunition dumps, and having shot down one single engine carrier attack plane.\*\*\*\*

There is no information in the Japanese documents available to this study to substantiate the above-reported claims of destruction and damage to enemy aircraft and facilities. However, it seems possible that the claims are excessive and that the planes reported destroyed on Opon Field were either dummies or were, in part, some of the planes reported destroyed on the previous day. This opinion is based on the fact that it hardly seems logical to assume that the Japanese, having had their aircraft destroyed on Opon Field on the previous day, would have parked additional planes in a line to be destroyed on the succeeding day.

After landing the dusk CAP, the three task units of TG 77.4 retired to their respective night retirement areas (Diagram D).

During the day the three carrier task units of TG 77.4 flew about 242 direct support sorties, forty-four fighter sweep and combined

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\* CTF 77 Dispatch 220357 October 1944 to CTF's 78, 79, CTG 77.4, info CINCPAC, COM3RDFLT, COM7THFLT, CTF 38.  
 \*\* CTF 77 Dispatch 220603 October 1944 to CTG 77.4, info CTF's 78, 79, CAAF SOWESPAC, C.G. 5TH Air Force, COM3RDFLT.  
 \*\*\* CTG 77.4 Dispatch 210122 October 1944 to CTF 77.  
 \*\*\*\* Action Report CTG 77.4, Leyte Operation, October 12th - 29th, 1944, Serial 00120, November 15th, 1944.



strike sorties against Cebu and Mactan Islands, an estimated 140 target CAP sorties and the scheduled twenty target ASP sorties.\*

During the day TG 77.4 lost a total of eight VF and two VT as follows: SANGAMON, two VF; CHENANGO, one VF, one VT; MANILA BAY, one VF; MARCUS ISLAND, one VT; KADASHAN BAY, two VF; SAVO ISLAND, one VF; and FANSHAW BAY, one VF. Of the above, five VF and one VT were combat losses, the remainder operational losses. At the completion of this day's flight operations, he had remaining 313 VF and 190 VT.

(5) Operations of CTG 70.1 (Motor Torpedo Boat Group),  
October 22nd.

At the beginning of the day CTG 70.1, in the OYSTER BAY with forty-one out of the forty-five MTB's of TG 70.1 in the Leyte area and with the WATCHAPREAGUE and WILLOUGHBY, was anchored in San Pedro Bay. Of the remaining MTB's, two (PT's 524 and 525) were covering San Junaico Strait, and two (PT's 129 and 492) were patrolling in area 100M. The forty-one boats at anchor were undergoing voyage repairs so that some of them might be available for the scheduled patrols that night. It will be recalled that these patrols were to consist of six MTB's in pairs in areas 100M and 101, and covering San Juanico Strait.

At 0441 CTG 70.1, having decided that sufficient MTB's would be available to station an additional pair in area 91, issued orders to that effect.\*\* Since this was exactly what CTF 77 had directed in his basic orders, it is assumed that this was a gratifying development.

It seems wise at this time to point out that the movements of the MTB's were guided, in part, by the following instructions: they were (a) to move to and from their patrol areas during daylight, (b) to be inside their patrol waters by thirty minutes after sunset, (c) not to leave their patrol waters until thirty minutes before sunrise, and (d) ordinarily to clear their patrol areas shortly after daylight.\*\*\*

Based on these instructions, it seems likely that at about 0600 (sunrise was at 0629) the four MTB's presently on patrol retired from their operating areas and returned to their anchorage areas. Their patrols were uneventful.

Meanwhile, in accordance with his basic orders which

\* Aircraft Action Reports Nos. 42, VC-37, 71, 72, VC-35, 17, VF 36, 58, 59, 60, VC-21, 61, 62, 63, VC-21, 13, 14, 15, 16, VC-27, 36, 37, 38, VC-75, 11, VC-68, 58, VC-4, 107, 108, VC-3, 48, 49, 50, VC-5, October 22nd, 1944; also CTG 77.4 Operation Plan No. 2-44, Serial 00075, October 5th, 1944 and War Diaries CQMCARDIVs 24, 26, October 22nd, 1944.

\*\* CTG 70.1 Dispatch 211941 October 1944 to CTF's 77, 79.

\*\*\* CTG 70.1 Operation Plan No. 2-44, No Serial, October 5th, 1944, Annex F, Paragraph I.4.

directed that, as additional boats became available, "patrols will be extended to include all practicable areas west of Leyte Gulf",\* he made preparations to extend his operations farther into the Mindanao and Camotes Seas. Having decided that this could best be accomplished by moving one of the tenders into an area nearer the above areas, he decided to move the tender WACHAPREAGUE with fifteen MTB's of MTBRON's SEVEN and TWELVE to Liloan (NW tip of Panaon Island) and made preparations to expedite this movement.\*\*

By 1515 (when it was received by CTF 79) he should have received a dispatch from CTF 77 directing him to cancel that portion of paragraph 3, appendix 5, annex E of his Operation Plan No. 13-44 which referred to the patrol of the southern entrance to San Juanico Strait.\*\*\*

However, it seems probable that he did not receive this dispatch until much later for, as shown below, his MTB's departed at about sunset for this very patrol.

During the late afternoon he likely observed that (a) the MTB's ordered to patrol areas in the vicinity of lower Surigao Strait had departed the MTB anchorage and were heading for their night operating areas. These were PT's 522 and 526 for area 91, PT's 321 and 496 for area 100M, and PT's 152 and 196 for area 101, and (b) at about sunset PT's 131 and 134, which were scheduled to cover San Juanico Strait, had also departed the MTB anchorage.

By midnight none of these patrols had made any enemy contacts.

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\* CANF SOWESPAC Operation Plan No. 13-44, Serial 00022A, September 26th, 1944, Appendix 5 to Annex E; also CTG 70.1 Operation Plan No. 2-44, No Serial, October 5th, 1944, Annex F, Paragraph 3.  
\*\* Action Report CTG 70.1, Surigao Straits, Night October 24th - 25th, 1944, Serial 03330, December 1st, 1944.  
\*\*\* CTF 77 Dispatch 220506 October 1944 to CTG 70.1.



(b) Operations of CTF 71 (Submarines, West Australia),  
October 22nd.

Just after midnight CTF 71 received (a) from COMSEVENTHFLT, a 1300 October 21st contact report, which was believed to be reliable, on two YUBARI-class light cruisers between Maricaban and Cape Santiago en route from Manila to Verde Island Passage at a SOA of twenty-five knots,\* and (b) from the ROCK, a dispatch stating that she was returning to her patrol station and requesting a one week extension of patrol.\*\*

It seems clear that since he had no submarines in the Sibuyan Sea area, he took no action relative to the cruisers but instead, awaited further reports thereon.

At 0330 he received a 0200 contact report from the DARTER to the effect that she was chasing three unidentified large ships, estimated as cruisers, in Latitude 07° - 31'N, Longitude 115° - 22'E, on course 020°(T), speed twenty-one knots.\*\*\*

SINCE HE MUST HAVE PLOTTED THE ABOVE POSITION, HE NOW KNEW THAT THE DARTER WAS ABOUT SEVENTY MILES TO THE WESTWARD OF HER ASSIGNED STATION IN THE WESTERN APPROACHES TO BALABAC STRAIT. WHAT HE THOUGHT OF THIS IS NOT KNOWN. HOWEVER, FROM THE FACT THAT HE TOOK NO ACTION TO DIRECT THE COMMANDING OFFICER TO RETURN TO HIS PROPER STATION, IT CAN BE ASSUMED THAT HE APPROVED OF IT. IF THIS IS SO, AND IT SEEMS HIGHLY PROBABLE THAT IT WAS SO, THIS LACK OF ACTION BY CTF 71 INDICATES A LOOSENESS OF COMMAND WHICH COULD NOT FAIL TO HAVE A DELETERIOUS EFFECT ON HIS SUBMARINE COMMANDING OFFICERS. THIS IS SO BECAUSE, IF COMMANDING OFFICERS ARE ASSIGNED ORDERS WHICH THEY FEEL ARE NOT NECESSARILY BINDING, THE AUTHORITY OF THE SUPERIOR CANNOT FAIL TO BE GRADUALLY UNDERMINED.

A CONDITION SIMILAR TO THIS OCCURRED IN CONNECTION WITH THE "OPERATIONS OF CTF 73 (NAVAL AIR FORCE, SEVENTH FLEET), OCTOBER 20TH" WHEREIN THE PLANE COMMANDERS ON SEARCH MISSIONS OFTEN DEVIATED FROM THEIR SEARCHES TO ATTACK ENEMY AIRCRAFT AND SHIPPING. THIS WAS IN VIOLATION OF THEIR BASIC ORDERS WHICH DIRECTED THAT PLANES ON SEARCH WERE TO AVOID ACTION WITH ENEMY SURFACE OR AIR FORCES UNLESS IT WOULD NOT INTERFERE WITH THEIR PRIMARY MISSION. SINCE, IN THESE AIRCRAFT DEVIATIONS, THE SQUADRON AND TASK UNIT COMMANDERS NOT ONLY CONDONED, BUT EVEN ENCOURAGED SUCH DEVIATIONS, AND SINCE THIS WAS EXACTLY WHAT WAS DONE BY CTF 71, IT SEEMS APPROPRIATE TO REPEAT HERE THE COMMENT MADE UNDER "OPERATIONS OF CTF 73 (NAVAL AIR FORCE, SEVENTH FLEET), OCTOBER 20TH": "WHAT IS IMPORTANT IS THE FACT THAT THE ORDERS AS PRESENTLY WRITTEN WERE BEING INTERPRETED SO BROADLY AS TO TEND TO MAKE THEM INEFFECTIVE. IN SUCH CASE THEY SHOULD HAVE BEEN MODIFIED OR CANCELLED. IT IS A FUNDAMENTAL MILITARY TENET THAT A LAWFUL ORDER MUST BE

\* CTF 77 Dispatch 211205 October 1944 to most commands including CTF 71.

\*\* War Patrol Report ROCK, Report of 4TH War Patrol, Serial 016, November 11th, 1944; War Diary CTF 71, October 22nd, 1944.

\*\*\* DARTER Dispatch 211755 October 1944 to U.S. Radio Perth.

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OBEYED. FAILURE TO DO SO CAN BE EXPECTED TO LEAD EVENTUALLY TO A HAPHAZARD AND FREQUENT DISREGARD OF ORDERS. THIS LEADS TO THE FURTHER CONCLUSION THAT A COMMANDER SHOULD NOT ISSUE AN ORDER WHICH HE DOES NOT EXPECT TO BE OBEYED".

Since the Commanding Officer DARTER failed to mention the fact that the DACE was also being employed in this search, it is assumed that CTF 71 felt that the DACE was likely on station in Palawan Passage. This of course, was in error for at this time the DACE was moving to the westward and was inside Dangerous Ground (Diagram D).

At 0441 he advised the principal commands in the KING II operation of the above contact report.\* What he thought it portended is not known. However, since there had been some thought of Coron Bay as a likely fueling base, he may have thought that these cruisers were en route that base or, since they were on 020°(T), perhaps they were headed for Manila Bay. In any event he took no action at this time.

Meanwhile, at 0620 he received a dispatch from the RATON giving her ETA Mios Woendi as 1000 October 25th and her SOA as fifteen knots.\*\*

At 0938 he received the amplifying dispatch from the DARTER which he had been expecting. It was thoroughly disappointing for in it the DARTER announced to the effect that she had lost contact on the three ships at 0800 in Latitude 09° - 23'N, Longitude 115° - 20'E, on course 332°(T), speed twenty-one knots, and that the tops of one, dimly seen, was probably a battleship.\*\*\*

Meanwhile, he studied the situation. He knew that in two days the DACE would be departing for Fremantle and that it was a question as to how long the DARTER would be able to remain on station. A relief was very necessary. Since he had reason to believe that he now had three submarines off western Luzon, he decided that it would be advantageous to divert to area D-6 the BLACKFIN, which at 0600 that morning in Latitude 18° - 30'N, Longitude 118° - 00'E had passed to his control, from area A-8, which she had been ordered to patrol. He therefore at 1054 sent her a dispatch to this effect, and at the same time directed her, in going south, to keep to the westward of Longitude 118° - 00'E and thence to proceed via Palawan Passage to her new area.\*\*\*\*

In issuing these orders CTF 71 was, of course, familiar with the fact that the Commanding Officer BLACKFIN was senior to the Commanding Officer DARTER and since he did not order the BLACKFIN and DARTER to form

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\* CTF 71 Dispatch 211941 October 1944 to CINCPAC, CTF 17, COM3RDFLT, COM7THFLT, C.G.'s 5TH and 13TH Air Forces, all TFC's 3RD and 7TH Fleets.

\*\* RATON Dispatch 212100 October 1944 to CTF 71.

\*\*\* DARTER Dispatch 212359 October 1944 to CTF 71.

\*\*\*\* CTF 71 Dispatch 220154 October 1944 to TG 71.1 (BLACKFIN).



a wolf pack, it seems clear that he expected the BLACKFIN to operate independently.

He did not order the BLACKFIN to take station in the southern approaches to Palawan Passage. This indicates that he either (a) considered that the DARTER would patrol that area, perhaps for some days until she was forced to retire, in which case he would consider ordering the BLACKFIN to that area, or (b) he felt that, since the BLACKFIN would not be in the area until October 24th, the necessity for patrolling the southern approaches to Palawan would no longer obtain. He perhaps also felt that by sending the BLACKFIN through Palawan Passage, he would likely have at least two submarines there on the 24th and 25th.

At 1107 he forwarded the substance of the DARTER's dispatch to all interested commanders.\*

At 1125 any question he may have had as to whether or not the DACE was engaged with the DARTER in chasing the three Japanese ships was dispelled for at this time he received a dispatch from the DACE reporting that she had covered all Dangerous Ground exits north and east of Tizard Bank and Reefs and had failed to contact the DARTER's battleships.\*\* Since Tizard Bank and Reefs was on the western side of Dangerous Ground, CTF 71 could see that the DACE was now about 165 miles from the southern end of Palawan Passage.

At 1133 he notified all of his submarines that an air sighting that morning had contacted eight small to medium cargo ships escorted by five destroyers, southbound in Latitude 11° - 10'N, Longitude 119° - 10'E.\*\*\* This dispatch was in error for this convoy had not been sighted that morning but instead, had been sighted on the previous morning (October 21st) and had been reported by C.G. FIFTH Air Force at 2253 that evening.\*\*\*\* It is not known whence the confusion arose, but it is clear that this contact was twenty-four hours old.

At 1436, having received a contact report on one carrier and four unidentified warships on course 210°(T), speed eighteen knots at 2400 October 21st in Latitude 21° - 47'N, Longitude 118° - 26'E,\*\*\*\*\* he advised his command to that effect.\*\*\*\*\*

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- \* CTF 71 Dispatch 220207 October 1944 to CINCPAC, CTF 17, COM3RDFLT, COM7THFLT, all TFC's 3RD and 7TH Fleets, C.G.'s 5TH and 13TH Air Forces.
- \*\* DACE Dispatch 220203 October 1944 to CTF 71.
- \*\*\* CTG 71.1 Dispatch 220233 October 1944 to TG 71.1.
- \*\*\*\* C.G. 5TH Air Force Dispatch 212253/I October 1944 to CAAF SOWESPAC, COM7THFLT.
- \*\*\*\*\* SEADRAGON Dispatch 212140 October 1944 to COMSUBPAC, rebroadcast by Radio Honolulu at 0832 October 22nd, 1944.
- \*\*\*\*\* CTF 71 Dispatch 220536 October 1944 to TG's 71.1, all interested in current operations SOWESPAC.

At 1512 he received a dispatch from the COD reporting that at noon over twenty enemy planes had passed Lingayen Gulf en route south.\* He immediately advised CTF 77 of this contact.\*\*

At 1624 he advised--addressees unknown, but presumably those commands interested in the operations of his submarines--that the moves of his submarines for the following day (referring to 0000 October 23rd) were as follows: "British TANTALUS, vicinity Lombok. Eastbound RATON, Latitude 02° - 30'N, Longitude 125° - 30'E. Going south. BLACKFIN, north Dangerous Ground. COBIA, Mindoro Strait. DACE, northwest Borneo. HAMMERHEAD, near South Natoena. BLUEGILL, north Sibutu. LAPON, west Celebes Sea. North-bound BATFISH, off Mangkalihat".\*\*\*

This was a fairly accurate estimate of the expected 0000 October 23rd positions of the submarines mentioned and their expected general courses although, as shown on Diagram D, several actual positions, notably that of the BLACKFIN, DACE, BLUEGILL and BATFISH, were somewhat behind the estimated positions. It will be noted that CTF 71 has omitted here the BREAM and the GUITARRO which were still far from their stations off western Luzon. This was because, in his war diary, CTF 71 lists these two submarines as having arrived in their patrol stations.\*\*\*\*

At 1644, having succeeded in obtaining information concerning the character of the air strikes to be made against Balikpapan, he, as CTG 71.1, notified the PADDLE that eight squadrons of B-24's and four squadrons of P-38's would strike there on the following day.\*\*\*\*\*

At 1730 he received a dispatch from CTF 72 reporting the BASHAW and FLOUNDER ready for sea about October 27th.\*\*\*\*\* These submarines, with the BLUEGILL, BREAM and ROCK (which were at sea) and the FLASHER (which was under overhaul at Fremantle) comprised Submarine Division 182. He now commenced estimating the situation to determine where to assign these submarines.

At 1806 he received a dispatch from the DACE requesting permission to remain in area D-6 until the evening of October 24th in order to "work" the eight transports reported earlier.\*\*\*\*\* He now studied the situation, apparently to see whether other matters, such as prospective overhaul date at Fremantle, might require a return on schedule. He may even

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\* COD Dispatch 220300 October 1944 to CTF 71.  
 \*\* CTF 71 Dispatch 220731 October 1944 to CTF 77, COM3RDFLT, CTF 38, CTG's 38.1, 38.2, 38.3, 38.4.  
 \*\*\* CTF 71 Dispatch 220724 October 1944 to unknown addressees.  
 \*\*\*\* War Diary CTF 71, Daily Disposition of submarines based western Australia, October 22nd, 1944.  
 \*\*\*\*\* CTG 71.1 Dispatch 220744 October 1944 to TG 71.1 (PADDLE).  
 \*\*\*\*\* CTF 72 Dispatch 220627 October 1944 to CTF 71.  
 \*\*\*\*\* DACE Dispatch 220730 October 1944 to CTF 71.



have considered the advisability of returning both the DACE and the DARTER to their assigned stations off Balabac Strait and southern Palawan Passage. Certainly this would have been his correct decision for were not his basic orders to his submarines to do exactly that and had he not so notified CTF 77?

At 1938 he (a) directed the STURDY, which was approaching Fremantle, to proceed unescorted into the harbor at 0700 the next morning and (b) informed her that she might encounter U.S. submarines in the exercise area.\* While it appears to have been routine to send information about Allied submarines departing and approaching Fremantle, it seems likely that in this case, he may have been motivated by the dispatch from the HOE on the preceding day inviting attention to a submarine which had submerged off Fremantle.\*\*

At 1943, having decided that he could permit the DACE to "work" over the convoy for two days, as requested, he authorized the commanding officer to do so and directed him to retire at dark on the 24th.\*\*\*

FROM THIS, IT SEEMS CLEAR THAT HE WAS MORE INTERESTED IN SINKING SHIPPING THAN IN GUARDING THE APPROACHES TO BALABAC STRAIT AND SOUTHERN PALAWAN PASSAGE, AND SUPPORTS THE VIEW EARLIER EXPRESSED THAT HE PERMITTED CONSIDERABLE DEVIATIONS FROM THEIR ORDERS BY HIS COMMANDING OFFICERS.

At 2101, having received a contact report to the effect that nine large cargo ships, escorted by five destroyers, had been sighted by aircraft at 1400 that afternoon in Latitude 11° - 47'N, Longitude 116° - 20'E, on course 240°(T), speed twelve knots, he so advised his command.\*\*\*\*

It seems possible that he may have been struck by the surprising similarity between this contact report and that reported as having been made that morning also by aircraft. Perhaps, because of this, he may have restudied the dispatches received concerning these contacts and may have discovered that these contacts were actually twenty-four hours and 165 miles apart. However, if he did so he appears to have done nothing about it for no correction appears to have been made.

(1) BREAM and GUITARRO.

(a) It will be recalled that the BREAM, on the surface, at midnight was just entering Mindoro Strait. She was proceeding at about twelve knots so that at 0601 on this day when she submerged she had

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\* CTF 71 Dispatch 221038 October 1944 to TG 71.7, Z4L/1.  
 \*\* War Diary CTF 71, October 21st, 1944.  
 \*\*\* CTF 71 Dispatch 221043 October 1944 to TG 71.1 (DACE)  
 \*\*\*\* CTF 71 Dispatch 221201 October 1944 to TG 71.1, Z4L.

practically completed the transit of the strait. At this point her commanding officer discontinued temporarily his movement toward his designated patrol area, A-3 - A-7 and instead, decided to conduct a submerged patrol in his present position which was twelve miles south of Cape Calavite.\*

IN MAKING THIS DECISION, IT IS CLEAR THAT THE COMMANDING OFFICER WAS GUIDED BY HIS BASIC ORDERS, WHICH DIRECTED HIM TO "EXPLOIT TRAFFIC LANES AND FOCAL POINTS EN ROUTE TO AND FROM AREAS". IT IS ALSO CLEAR THAT BY THIS DECISION, THE COMMANDING OFFICER DELAYED EVEN MORE HIS EVENTUAL ARRIVAL IN HIS DESIGNATED PATROL AREA. IN SO DOING, HIS ACTIONS WERE EXACTLY SIMILAR TO THOSE OF THE RATON SOME FIVE DAYS EARLIER. THEREFORE, IT SEEMS WELL AT THIS POINT TO EMPHASIZE THE FACT THAT THE COMMANDING OFFICER BREAM, NO MORE THAN THE COMMANDING OFFICER RATON, REALIZED THAT HE WAS EXPECTED TO EXPEDITE HIS ARRIVAL. IN VIEW OF THIS, IT SEEMS WISE TO QUOTE HERE WHAT WAS WRITTEN ON THIS SUBJECT UNDER "BREAM AND RATON, 0719 - 2400 OCTOBER 17TH, 1944" IN VOLUME II. THIS IS THE QUOTE:

"IT IS VERY LIKELY THAT HE DID NOT REALIZE THAT CTF 71 HAD REPORTED THAT HE (THE WOLF PACK COMMANDER WITH BREAM AND RATON) WOULD BE IN THE AREA A3 - A7 ON OCTOBER 15TH,\*\* AS STATED BY COMSOWESPAC TO CINCPAC BY DISPATCH ON OCTOBER 11TH. WHY CTF 71 GAVE SUCH INDEFINITE ORDERS TO THE COMMANDING OFFICER RATON IS NOT KNOWN ALTHOUGH IT IS KNOWN THAT HE GAVE SIMILAR ORDERS TO ALL SUBMARINES OF TG 71.1, WHICH INCLUDED THE BREAM. IT SEEMS LIKELY THAT HE HAD BEEN AFFECTED BY THE CONCEPT THAT NO MAJOR ELEMENTS OF THE JAPANESE FLEET WOULD BE INVOLVED IN OPPOSITION TO THE ALLIED LANDINGS AT LEYTE,\*\*\* AND THEREFORE FELT THAT IT WAS NOT NECESSARY FOR HIS SUBMARINES TO BE ON STATION AS PLANNED. INSTEAD, THEY WERE TO SINK MERCHANT SHIPPING AND TO OPERATE AS USUAL EN ROUTE TO STATION. IF THIS WAS HIS MOTIVATION, IT WAS UNSOUND, SINCE IT CAUSED VACANCIES TO BE CREATED IN THE ALLIED DEFENSIVE SUBMARINE SCREEN, INFORMATION OF WHICH HAD NOT BEEN TRANSMITTED TO THE INTERESTED COMMANDERS, NOTABLY COMSOWESPAC, COMSEVENTHFLT, CINCPAC AND COMTHIRDFLT".

At 1942, having had a most uneventful day, the Commanding Officer BREAM surfaced and continued on toward his assigned area. At 2045 he exchanged calls with the COBIA.\*\*\*\* During the day he steamed 201 miles and at 2400 was bearing 313°(T), distant forty miles from Cape Calavite.

(b) The GUITARRO, which at midnight and on the surface, was just west of the southern tip of Panay Island, continued on through East

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- \* War Patrol Report BREAM, Report of 3RD War Patrol, Serial 021-44, November 22nd, 1944.
  - \*\* CTF 71 Dispatch 101426 October 1944 to COM7THFLT, info various 7THFLT commands.
  - \*\*\* CANF SOWESPAC Operation Plan No. 13-44, Serial 00022A, September 26th, 1944, Annex M, Paragraph C(1)(d).
  - \*\*\*\* War Patrol Report COBIA, Report of 2ND War Patrol, Serial 035, November 5th, 1944.



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Cuyo Pass. At 0600 she submerged and continued on toward Mindoro Strait. At 1931 she surfaced and at 2205, as she was leaving East Cuyo Pass, she noted that she seemed to be in a floating minefield of about twelve mines so at 2231 she dove to avoid them. Whence came these mines is not known for there is no information thereon available to this study. It is of interest, however, that none of the other submarines which were transiting the area at about this time noted any mines.

(2) ROCK and BERGALL.

(a) The BERGALL continued on on the surface toward the sea area south of Saigon. At 0740, having arrived in the desired location, which was some 500 miles from her assigned station and therefore far removed from her lifeguard station, she submerged and commenced conducting a periscope patrol primarily for merchant shipping.\* At 1041 she made a sound contact and sighted a mast on what she believed to be a patrol craft without any convoy but since she was unable to close and remain outside the twenty fathom curve she ceased pursuit.\*

At 2004 she surfaced for the night and continued on patrol in this area.

Her patrol, except for the above, was uneventful.

(b) The Commanding Officer ROCK, having decided to return to the assigned patrol line (Cape Varella - North Danger Shoal), continued toward that station throughout the day. He submerged during daylight and operated on the surface during darkness. He made no contacts and received no lifeguard calls.\*\*

Whether or not he received the "weeks extension on station", which he had requested on the previous day, is not known. However, it seems likely that he did not receive a reply, since (a) there are no dispatches thereon available to this analysis, and (b) CTF71's war diary makes no mention of a reply but does mention receipt of the request. The fact that the Commanding Officer ROCK continued on patrol seems to show that he had properly interpreted CTF 71's instructions to remain on patrol for a few days longer\*\*\* as equivalent to a reply.

At 2400 he was approaching his assigned patrol station.

(3) BLUEGILL.

The BLUEGILL, en route to Mios Woendi, continued her

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\* War Patrol Report BERGALL, Report of 1ST War Patrol, Serial 0102, November 8th, 1944.

\*\* War Patrol Report ROCK, Report of 4TH War Patrol, Serial 016, November 11th, 1944.

\*\*\* CTF 71 Dispatch 210536 October 1944 to CTG 71.1 (ROCK, BERGALL, DARTER).

transit of Mindoro Strait on the surface. At 0245, having completed her passage, she entered the Sulu Sea. She remained on the surface both during daylight and darkness. She sighted several aircraft and a probable friendly submarine--likely the CERO (TF 72)--during the day, but made no contacts of importance.\*

## (4) ANGLER.

The ANGLER, at eleven knots, continued on toward her new station at the northern end of Palawan Passage. She patrolled on the surface except during the hours between 0817 and 1533 when she patrolled submerged. At 0620, in the vicinity of the RATON's attack of the 18th, the commanding officer found the area littered with debris and dead Japanese soldiers and discovered a lifeboat with twenty-six survivors. During the day, in this area, he sighted several boats and rafts. Finally, at 1905 he picked up from the original lifeboat three English-speaking Japanese survivors, two of whom were army officers. At 1927 he decided to remain in his present area which was ninety miles southwest of Lubang Island. Later at 2200, he commenced patrolling along the traffic route toward Manila.\*\* About this time he probably received a dispatch from CTF 71 of the contact made by the SEADRAGON (TF 17) on one carrier and four unidentified warships in Latitude 21° - 47'N, Longitude 118° - 26'E, on course 210°(T), speed eighteen knots.\*\*\*

## (5) DACE and DARTER.

(a) The DARTER which had been directed to cover the western approaches but was now covering the southwest approaches to Balabac Strait, was in a position bearing about 240°(T), distant sixty-five miles from her assigned station in the western approaches. At 0050 she made a radar contact on three targets bearing 261°(T), distant 26,000 yards, in position Latitude 07° - 09'N, Longitude 115° - 02'E. The commanding officer, who was also the wolf pack commander, immediately endeavored (a) to close, employing full power (18.8 knots), and (b) to inform the DACE.\*\*\*\* He employed voice radio for communication but it was not until 0140 that the DACE finally received the first message. Meanwhile, he tracked the enemy ships, which he estimated were cruisers and were zigzagging and found them on base course 020°(T), speed twenty-three knots, headed through Dangerous Ground. He therefore followed them but continued to lose ground.\*\*\*\* At 0215 he succeeded in notifying the DACE that the enemy's course was 020°(T), speed twenty knots.\*\*\*\*\* At 0255 he sent Radio Perth a contact report to the effect that at 0200 he had contacted three unidentified large ships, which

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\* War Patrol Report BLUEGILL, Report of 3RD War Patrol, Serial 039, November 25th, 1944.

\*\* War Patrol Report ANGLER, Report of 5TH War Patrol, Serial 09(10), November 9th, 1944.

\*\*\* CTF 71 Dispatch 220536 October 1944 to all submarines.

\*\*\*\* War Patrol Report DARTER, Report of 4TH War Patrol, Serial 020, November 5th, 1944.

\*\*\*\*\* War Patrol Report DACE, Report of 5TH War Patrol, Serial 09, November 6th, 1944.



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he estimated were cruisers, in Latitude  $07^{\circ} - 31'N$ , Longitude  $115^{\circ} - 22'E$ , on course  $020^{\circ}(T)$ , speed twenty-one knots, and that he was chasing the contact.\*

IT WILL BE NOTED THAT THE WOLF PACK COMMANDER, IN THE DARTER, DID NOT MENTION IN THIS DISPATCH THAT THE DACE WAS ALSO BEING EMPLOYED IN CHASING THIS CONTACT. THIS WAS UNWISE BECAUSE, THERE BEING NO CALL SIGN WHICH DISTINGUISHED THE COMMANDING OFFICER DARTER FROM THE WOLF PACK COMMANDER A DISPATCH OF THIS NATURE AND CONTENT COULD WELL BE MISLEADING, AND APPARENTLY WAS.

This contact was actually made on the Japanese CRUDIV SIXTEEN, consisting of the AOBA (CA) flagship, the KINU (CL), and the URANAMI (DD), which had departed Brunei Bay for Manila at 1710 on the previous day. None of these ships appear to have known of the presence of either the DARTER or the DACE since their action reports make no mention thereof.\*\*

Throughout the remainder of the night the Commanding Officer DARTER sent numerous voice radio messages to the DACE with the view of coaching her onto the enemy track.\*\*\*

At 0550 he noted that the targets had zigged to port to  $335^{\circ}(T)$  to pass to the westward of Alicia Annie Shoal. Unfortunately, it was not until ten minutes later that he realized that this course of  $335^{\circ}(T)$ , instead of being a leg of the zigzag, was a new base course. At 0600 he notified the DACE that the enemy course was now  $335^{\circ}(T)$ .\*\*\* At 0607 he lost radar contact. At this time he sighted the tops of one of the above ships which he thought was probably a battleship at a radar range of 38,000 yards.\*\*\* What he saw is not known since there were no Japanese battleships in this area but it was most likely the upper bridge structure of the AOBA.

At 0759, having fallen well astern--he believed that he was nineteen miles astern--he abandoned the chase and reversed course to head south through Dangerous Ground along the reverse of the targets track with the hope that he might encounter other enemy units following the leaders.\*\*\* He likely also desired to operate in waters through which he had already safely passed.

At 0859 he notified CTF 71 of the above chain of events stating that (a) he had lost contact on three ships, one of which, because of the tops dimly seen, he believed to be a battleship, (b) the speed of advance was twenty-one knots, (c) the course was  $332^{\circ}(T)$ , which he reported was likely the dawn zig from his previous report, and (d) his 0800 position was

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\* DARTER Dispatch 211755 October 1944 to U.S. Radio Perth.

\*\* Detailed Action Report CRUDIV 16, SHO Operation, October 17th - 27th 1944, WDC Document 161005, NA 11744.

\*\*\* War Patrol Report DARTER, Report of 4TH War Patrol, Serial 020, November 5th, 1944.

Latitude 09° - 23'N, Longitude 115° - 20'E.\*

At 1002 he submerged and continued his patrol in Dangerous Ground.

At 1918 he surfaced and headed for his station in the western approaches to Balabac Strait. However, he did not head in this direction long for at 2100, apparently after having (a) contacted the DACE, (b) learned from her of her request to remain in the area, and (c) established a rendezvous with her, he headed for that rendezvous.\*\*

It seems probable that en route to this rendezvous he received (a) CTF 71's dispatch reporting an air sighting that morning of a southbound convoy of eight small to medium cargo ships, escorted by five destroyers, in Latitude 11° - 10'N, Longitude 119° - 10'E,\*\*\* (b) CTF 71's dispatch authorizing the DACE to remain in the area until dark October 24th,\*\*\*\* and (c) a second contact on a convoy sighted by aircraft in Latitude 11° - 47'N, Longitude 116° - 20'E at 0500 this day.\*\*\*\*\*

(b) The DACE, which was patrolling the southern end of Palawan Passage, at 0140 received a voice radio message from the wolf pack commander in the DARTER relative to "three ships headed northeast".\*\*\*\*\* The commanding officer immediately increased speed to full speed and headed on the estimated intercepting course--no enemy course and speed had as yet been received. At 0215 this omission was rectified for, at this time, the DACE, also by voice radio, received an amplifying report from the DARTER giving the enemy course as 020°(T), speed twenty knots.\*\*\*\*\* The Commanding Officer DACE now knew that if the DARTER's estimates were correct he should contact these enemy ships at about 0600. He did not do so. At 0615 he received additional word from the DARTER that the enemy had changed course to 335°(T). Since this was a radical change of course of forty-five degrees to the westward and since the enemy were reportedly making approximately two knots faster than the DACE, the Commanding Officer DACE likely felt that he had lost his quarry; however, he continued on. At 0816 he received the disappointing information from the wolf pack commander that he had lost radar contact. He now continued the search, presumably with the view that the cruisers might change course to the northeast since Manila was in that direction. At 1103, feeling that it would be unfruitful to pursue the enemy longer, he informed CTF 71 by dispatch that he had covered all Dangerous Ground exits north and east of Tizard Bank and Reefs, and had failed to

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\* DARTER Dispatch 212359 October 1944 to CTF 71.

\*\* War Patrol Report DARTER, Report of 4TH War Patrol, Serial 020, November 5th, 1944.

\*\*\* CTG 71.1 Dispatch 220233 October 1944 to TG 71.1.

\*\*\*\* CTF 71 Dispatch 221043 October 1944 to TG 71.1 (DACE).

\*\*\*\*\* CTF 71 Dispatch 221201 October 1944 to TG 71.1, Z4L.

\*\*\*\*\* War Patrol Report DACE, Report of 5TH War Patrol, Serial 09, November 6th, 1944.



October 22nd

contact the DARTER's battleships.\* Then, at 1115, he discontinued the search and headed for Fremantle.\*\*

However, this did not complete his day for at 1150 he received a dispatch from CTG 71.1 of a contact made that morning by aircraft on eight small to medium cargo ships southbound and escorted by five destroyers in Latitude 11° - 10'N, Longitude 119° - 10'E.\*\*\* This report indicated that (a) this convoy was nearby, and (b) with a little good fortune, he might intercept it. He analyzed his fuel situation and decided that the prospect of rich sinkings justified remaining longer in the area. Therefore, at 1739 he cleared a dispatch request to CTF 71 for permission to remain in the area until the evening of October 24th in order to "work" the above contact. In the same dispatch, he reported (a) having sunk on October 14th, one large cargo ship (AK) and damaged one large troop transport (AP) and one oiler (AO), and (b) his fuel as 40,000 gallons, his torpedoes as ten forward.\*\*\*\*

THIS REQUEST OF THE COMMANDING OFFICER DACE IS INTERESTING IN THAT IT SHOWS HIS GENERAL ATTITUDE TOWARD SINKINGS VIS-A-VIS RECONNAISSANCE. HE VOLUNTEERED TO REMAIN ON STATION IN ORDER TO OBTAIN A CHANCE TO EFFECT SOME SINKINGS OF MERCHANT SHIPPING, BUT HE DID NOT VOLUNTEER TO REMAIN IN THE AREA FOR RECONNAISSANCE.

While awaiting CTF 71's reply to this dispatch, he headed on a southeasterly course (130°(T))\*\*\*\*\* to clear Dangerous Ground as well as to achieve a favorable position in Palawan Passage toward the reported convoy. Sometime after this he received authority from CTF 71 to remain on station until dark October 24th\*\*\*\*\* and later still, he received instructions by voice radio from the wolf pack commander to rendezvous with the DARTER.\*\* About this time he received a second contact report from CTF 71. This report referred to an aircraft sighting of another convoy of strikingly similar composition to the one previously reported.\*\*\*\*\* However, the latter convoy, which was reported to be in Latitude 11° - 47'N, Longitude 116° - 20'E, was therefore skirting the NW edge of Dangerous Ground. Since he was en route to a rendezvous with his wolf pack commander, he took no further action but awaited the results of that rendezvous.

(c) WHILE, AS POINTED OUT UNDER "DACE AND DARTER, OCTOBER 21ST", DEVIATIONS OF THIS NATURE APPEAR TO HAVE SELDOM, IF EVER, BEEN CRITICIZED BY IMMEDIATE SUPERIORS IN COMMAND AND THEREFORE APPEAR TO HAVE REPRESENTED CTF 71'S APPROVED POLICY, THEY ARE NOT NECESSARILY CORRECT, FOR

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\* DACE Dispatch 220203 October 1944 to CTF 71.  
 \*\* War Patrol Report DACE, Report of 5TH War Patrol, Serial 09, November 6th, 1944.  
 \*\*\* CTG 71.1 Dispatch 220233 October 1944 to TG 71.1.  
 \*\*\*\* DACE Dispatch 220730 October 1944 to CTF 71.  
 \*\*\*\*\* Deck Log DACE, October 22nd, 1944.  
 \*\*\*\*\* CTF 71 Dispatch 221043 October 1944 to CTG 71.1 (DACE).  
 \*\*\*\*\* CTF 71 Dispatch 221201 October 1944 to TG 71.1, Z4L.

IN THIS CASE, WAS NOT THE OBJECTIVE ASSIGNED THE WOLF PACK COMMANDER IN THE DARTER A PROTECTIVE OBJECTIVE? FOR WHAT OTHER REASON COULD HE HAVE BEEN DIRECTED "UNTIL FURTHER ORDERS COORDINATE PATROL YOUR GROUP SO THAT SOUTHERN APPROACHES PALAWAN PASSAGE AND WESTERN APPROACHES BALABAC STRAIT ARE EFFECTIVELY COVERED".\*

A study of Diagram D shows that during the chase of the Japanese cruisers (1) the DARTER had moved about 120 miles to the northwest of the western approaches to Balabac Strait, and the DACE had moved about 165 miles to the northwest of the southern approaches to Palawan Passage; thus leaving these objective areas uncovered, and (2) the Japanese FIRST Striking Force--which was headed for Palawan Passage--and the Japanese THIRD Section--which was headed for Balabac Strait--were both well en route.

At 2400 the DACE and DARTER had closed to about seven miles from one another and were in a mean position of Latitude  $08^{\circ} - 21'N$ , Longitude  $116^{\circ} - 12'E$ , which position (Diagram D) was in the southern entrance to Palawan Passage but on the eastern edge of Dangerous Ground.

At this same time the Japanese FIRST Striking Force was just entering southern Palawan Passage.

Thus, the two commands, entirely unknown to one another, were but twenty-five miles apart.

(6) HAMMERHEAD.

This submarine, which was returning to Fremantle, continued to clear patrol area D4 on a southwesterly course toward the pass south of Great Natoena Island.\*\* Since in departing, she had not been relieved directly by the GURNARD in the southwest approaches to Brunei Bay but instead, only in the general area D4 - D7, the southwest approaches, which were included in CTF 71's commitments for this period, were left unguarded. During daylight, the HAMMERHEAD operated submerged and during darkness she operated on the surface. She made no contacts.\*\*

(7) TANTIVY.

This submarine, which was patrolling the southern coast of the Celebes, continued action against schooners, trailing and sinking them, apparently by both gunfire and torpedoes. During the evening she set course for Kangean Island and opened the Celebes coast to the southwest.\*\*\* Being outside the limits of the diagram, she will now be dropped from further discussion until she returns, or makes a contact of importance.

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\* CTF 71 Dispatch 110504 October 1944 to CTG 71.1 (DARTER, DACE, HAMMERHEAD).

\*\* War Patrol Report HAMMERHEAD, Report of 2ND War Patrol, No Serial, November 2nd, 1944; also Deck Log HAMMERHEAD, October 22nd, 1944.

\*\*\* War Patrol Report TANTIVY, Report of 7TH War Patrol, COMSUB7THFLT Serial 00565, December 14th, 1944.



## (8) GURNARD.

The GURNARD, in the South China Sea, was in the vicinity of St. Petrus Island Light searching on the surface for a convoy that she had smoke-contacted on the previous day and had estimated would be at this hour in this vicinity. At 0537 she made radar contact on a ship, which she later identified as a small trawler, but she avoided this trawler and continued in search for the convoy. At 0706 she sighted masts and smoke of at least fifteen ships, including escorts, to the northward and because of daylight, promptly submerged to avoid detection. She then trailed submerged until 1241 when she surfaced with the hope of gaining a position ahead of the convoy by 2000. At 1945 she lost contact and promptly reversed course and soon regained contact. At 2154, while making an approach for an attack, the nearest escort fired a green flare and also fired three quick gunshots in GURNARD's direction. This alerted the convoy which scattered and the GURNARD retired temporarily. By midnight she was still attempting to gain a favorable attack position on the disorganized convoy.\*

## (9) BATFISH.

The BATFISH, which at midnight was off Cape Bulu Bulu (southwestern Celebes), was entering Makassar Strait northbound to her patrol station north of Scarborough Shoal. She proceeded submerged during daylight and on the surface during darkness and made no contacts of importance.\*\*

## (10) COD.

The COD, which was operating on the surface, continued to patrol in the vicinity of Cape Bolinao. She made numerous contacts on aircraft and small craft and engaged one group of small sea trucks by gunfire at 0918. At about noon the commanding officer, having sighted a flight of twenty aircraft, with more in the clouds, heading south and feeling that these planes were reinforcements to oppose Allied landings, decided that he should make a contact report thereon. Accordingly, at 1200 he originated (cleared at 1456) a dispatch to CTF 71 reporting that at 1200 over twenty planes had passed Lingayen Gulf headed south.\*\*\*

HIS ACTION IN SO DOING WAS CORRECT AND SHOWED (A) A CLEAR UNDERSTANDING OF THE NATURE OF THE TASK ASSIGNED, AND (B) A FINER STRATEGIC UNDERSTANDING THAN DID MANY OF HIS COLLEAGUES OF THE IMPORTANCE OF SENDING INTELLIGENCE CONCERNING THE MOVEMENTS OF ENEMY FORCES TO HIS COMMANDER. WHEN IT IS RECALLED THAT THE INTELLIGENCE ESPECIALLY REQUESTED RELATED PRIMARILY TO THE MOVEMENTS OF "ENEMY COMBATANT SHIPS OR UNITS", THE ACTION OF THE COMMANDING OFFICER COD BECOMES PARTICULARLY NOTEWORTHY.

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\* War Patrol Report GURNARD, Report of 7TH War Patrol, Serial 030, November 17th, 1944.

\*\* War Patrol Report BATFISH, Report of 5TH War Patrol, Serial 057, December 1st, 1944.

\*\*\* COD Dispatch 220300 October 1944 to CTF 71.

These aircraft appear to have been a portion of the SIXTH Base Air Force, which on this day was moving from Formosa to Luzon. This movement is discussed under "Operations of Commander SIXTH Base Air Force, October 22nd, 1944".

Although the Commanding Officer COD attempted to remain on the surface during daylight hours, he was forced on occasions, to submerge due to the unusual amount of aircraft activity in the area. Although not mentioned in his action report for this day, it seems highly probable, since he was generally on the surface, that he received the dispatch from CTF 71 of the contact made by the SEADRAGON (TF 17) on one carrier and four unidentified warships in Latitude 21° - 47'N, Longitude 118° - 26'E, on course 210°(T), speed eighteen knots.\* At 1824 he surfaced for the night and commenced a sweep toward the western edge of his area--A4.\*\* Why he made this sweep is not explained but it seems likely that he had hopes that the contact above referred to might decide to head on a more southerly course in which case he might make contact.

At 2400 the COD was bearing 312°(T), distant ninety miles from Cape Bolinao.

(11) LAPON.

The LAPON, en route to Fremantle, continued on toward Sibutu Passage, which passage she transited shortly after the beginning of this day. At 0015 she exchanged calls with the CERO (TF 72). During the day she passed through the Celebes Sea and by the end of the day had entered Makassar Strait. She remained on the surface during daylight as well as darkness and made no contacts of importance.\*\*\* At 2400 she was bearing 214°(T), distant ninety miles from North Watcher Island.

(12) COBIA.

The COBIA, which had come under the operational control of CTF 71 at 1800 on the previous day, was proceeding south en route to Fremantle via Mindoro Strait, Sibutu Passage, Makassar and Lombok Straits, in accordance with dispatch orders.\*\*\*\* During the morning she sighted lifeboats and Japanese survivors and at 1139 she picked up two men in army uniforms, who stated that their ship, the ARABIA MARU, had been torpedoed by a submarine. This sinking had been effected by the BLUEGILL on October 18th.

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\* CTF 71 Dispatch 220536 October 1944 to all submarines.

\*\* War Patrol Report COD, Report of 5TH War Patrol, Serial 06, November 20th, 1944.

\*\*\* Deck Log LAPON, October 22nd, 1944.

\*\*\*\* CTF 71 Dispatch 210618 October 1944 to COBIA and all submarines of TF 71.



During the day the COBIA sighted numerous aircraft and small craft which forced her to submerge temporarily.\* Finally, at 1708, she was attacked by a plane which dropped four bombs, all of which missed. At 2045 she exchanged calls with the BREAM and at 2240 she commenced transit of Mindoro Strait.\*\* She proceeded on the surface during daylight as well as darkness except when forced to submerge as mentioned above.

## (13) RATON.

The RATON, in the southern Sulu Sea, continued toward Mios Woendi for reloading and was approaching Sibutu Passage. She commenced transit of this passage at 0120 and completed transit at 0248.\*\*\* She continued on the surface during daylight and darkness and made no contacts. This submarine, no longer participating in KING II operation and now proceeding south of the NEI Barrier, will be dropped from discussion, but continued on the diagrams for reference.

## (14) PADDLE (Lifeguard Submarine).

The PADDLE, in Makassar Strait, had no lifeguard assignment for this day and therefore at 0547 she submerged to patrol the coast southwest of Cape Mangkalihah.\*\*\*\* Why she did not patrol across the strait from Cape Mangkalihah to North Watcher Island as ordered is not explained.\*\*\*\*\* During the latter part of the day she observed one small patrol boat which remained in her vicinity until 2100, when she (the PADDLE) reversed course to clear area. At 2045 she surfaced and commenced surface patrol to southwestward down Makassar Strait, intending to arrive on lifeguard station at dawn.\*\*\*\* About this time she received an amplifying dispatch from CTF 71 confirming a strike for the next day and the number and type of planes involved.\*\*\*\*\*

## (15) Submarines retiring from the area.

Submarines retiring from the area, in addition to those discussed above, were: SPITEFUL, TELEMACHUS, STURDY, ZWAARDVISCH. These submarines, since they were beyond the NEI barrier, are, for the purpose of this analysis, considered as no longer participating in the KING II operations and therefore are not discussed.

The HOE, BAYA and SEA ROVER arrived at Fremantle on this day as per schedule.

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\* Deck Log COBIA, October 22nd, 1944.  
 \*\* War Patrol Report COBIA, Report of 2ND War Patrol, Serial 035, November 5th, 1944.  
 \*\*\* War Patrol Report RATON, Report of 6TH War Patrol, No Serial, December 1st, 1944.  
 \*\*\*\* War Patrol Report PADDLE, Report of 6TH War Patrol, Serial 018, November 1st, 1944.  
 \*\*\*\*\* CTF 71 Dispatch 201024 October 1944 to CTG 71.1 (PADDLE).  
 \*\*\*\*\* CTG 71.1 Dispatch 220744 October 1944 to all U.S. submarines of TF 71.

October 22nd

## (2) Operations of CAAF SOWESPAC, October 22nd.

CAAF SOWESPAC remained with COMSOWESPAC aboard the NASHVILLE while the operation of his aircraft in support of KING II continued to be controlled from Hollandia.

At 1038 he went ashore at Dulag with COMSOWESPAC who wished to inspect conditions on the beach and to see how the ground offensive was progressing.\* During this visit he inspected Dulag airdrome which had only been captured the preceding day. He thought that the airdrome didn't look too promising. "It was big enough but not high enough above sea level when the rainy season came and that period was due in another couple of weeks."\*\* He felt that a layer of gravel or rock was required over the existing surface.

As a result of this inspection, he stated that he "didn't like the looks of the present airdrome situation on Leyte." Actually, the big problem was the fact that the Tacloban and Dulag airfields already captured, as well as those at San Pablo and Burauen which he hoped to presently capture, would, if the Filipinos could be believed, be quite muddy when the rains came.\*\*

At 1355 he returned aboard the NASHVILLE with COMSOWESPAC.\*

On this date his headquarters at Hollandia issued an intelligence summary wherein, under the heading "Situation Review", referring to the THIRDFLT devastating air attacks on the Nansei Shoto, Formosa and Luzon areas, it stated, "It must be recorded again that, in spite of extreme provocation, the Japanese fleet did not appear during these memorable eight days. With helpless though not indifferent eyes it saw the enactment of another phase in the smashing of the Japanese merchant marine". In this summary, under the heading "Late Information", his headquarters stated that the above situation review had been completed some days before publication and that since that time "excellent progress has been made by the Allied forces on Leyte. Air opposition has been slight".\*\*\*

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\* War Diary NASHVILLE, October 22nd, 1944.

\*\* George C. Kenney, "General Kenney Reports" (New York, 1949), Pages 451-452.

\*\*\* Intelligence Summary No. 246, Headquarters AAF SOWESPAC, October 22nd, 1944.



## (a) Operations of C.G. FIFTH Air Force, October 22nd.

C.G. FIFTH Air Force, having assigned among other tasks the following to be accomplished by his subordinate commanders in support of the Leyte operation on this day, awaited the results:\*

## (1) C.G. FIFTH Bomber Command:

- (a) To strike Cagayan town using three squadrons B-24's;
- (b) To ferret Philippine area night October 21st/22nd using one B-24;
- (c) To strike Matina Airdrome (Davao complex) night October 21st and 22nd using one B-24.
- (d) To strike Pagamikan (Davao area) warehouses night October 21st and 22nd using one B-24.

## (2) Commanding Officer 310th Bombardment Wing:

- (a) To conduct fighter sweep Jolo Island - Zamboanga using one squadron of P-38's;
- (b) To strike shipping in the Tawi Tawi - Sulu Archipelago using two squadrons of B-25's.

## (3) Commanding Officer 91st Photo Reconnaissance Wing:

- (a) To photo reconnoiter Davao area using two F-5's;
- (b) To photo reconnoiter Puerto Princesa using two F-5's.

## (4) CTG 73.4 (Commander Fleet Air Wing SEVENTEEN):

- (a) To carry out Search Plan FOX using ten PB4Y's.

At 0713 he advised all interested in current SOWESPAC operations of the degree of coverage and negative results of the PB4Y searches in sectors SIX and SEVEN (from Owi) October 21st. Sector SIX had been flown only to a distance of 600 miles due to engine failure whereas sector SEVEN had been flown the full distance (950 miles) and both had an average of ninety per cent visual coverage to the distance flown.\*\*

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\* HQ 5TH Air Force Fragmentary Field Order No. 296, October 22nd, 1944.

\*\* C.G. 5TH Air Force Dispatch 220713/I October 1944 to all interested in current SOWESPAC operations.

At 1214 he advised all commands directly concerned with the Leyte operation of his plans to strike on October 23rd (a) Coron Bay with four snoopers (B-24's equipped with low altitude bombing radars)\* between 0000 and 0200, and (b) Cotabato (southwest coast Mindanao) with two groups of heavies between 1115 and 1200.\*\*

The Coron Bay strike was in accordance with his 212104\*\*\* and was designed to (a) keep Coron Bay under close daily observation for enemy fleet elements, and (b) conduct attacks on harbor facilities in that area as requested by COMSEVENTHFLT.\*\*\*\*

During the day he learned that his prescribed tasks--employing forty-five planes--had been accomplished about as follows:

(1) Twelve B-24's had bombed Cagayan Town destroying five buildings, starting fires and causing explosions. There was no enemy interception or antiaircraft fire.

(2) One XB-24 had bombed Matina Airdrome with the bombs landing 2000 feet west of the strip.

(3) One XB-24 had bombed Pagamikan, damaging four warehouses and starting fires.

(4) Four P-38's and one navy PBY had destroyed one SC on the Mindanao River.

(5) Eighteen B-25's escorted by eight P-38's had damaged a 7000-ton freighter off Jolo, had damaged an SC, four luggers, one FTC, and had bombed the docks in Zamboanga Harbor, against ineffective AA fire.\*\*\*\*\*

While Japanese information on the above strikes is meager, the indications are that they were of nuisance value only. The claims of

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\* Air University, Maxwell AFB, Alabama, First Endorsement, May 15th, 1956, on Naval War College letter request for definition of word "snooper", Serial 904-56, April 26th, 1956.

\*\* C.G. 5TH Air Force Dispatch 221214/I October 1944 to COMSOWESPAC, COM3RDFLT, COM7THFLT, etc.

\*\*\* C.G. 5TH Air Force Dispatch 212104/I October 1944 to COM7THFLT, info COMSOWESPAC, CAAF SOWESPAC and COM3RDFLT; also COM7THFLT Dispatch 210526 October 1944 to CAAF SOWESPAC, C.G. 5TH Air Force, info COMSOWESPAC, COM3RDFLT.

\*\*\*\* COM7THFLT Dispatch 210526 October 1944 to CAAF SOWESPAC, C.G. 5TH Air Force, info COMSOWESPAC, COM3RDFLT.

\*\*\*\*\* 5TH Air Force Weekly Intelligence Review, No. 48, October 22nd - 28th, 1944.



sinking one 7000-ton freighter and a number of small craft are not supported at all.\*

Meanwhile, during the forenoon C.G. FIFTH Air Force had been conducting a special search of the west Celebes Sea to endeavor to amplify the contact of the previous forenoon on one BB, three CL's, three DD's and six unidentified ships (Plate XXVII, Contact 6). When this led to negative results, he at 1433 notified all commands concerned to this effect and stated further that the original sighting had been made from a distance of fifteen miles,\*\* thereby implying that the original report was doubtful.

At 2152 he summarized the contact reports which he had most recently received from his aircraft and dispatched this summary to all commands concerned with the current operations.\*\*\*

Since this dispatch for the large part listed only merchant shipping of very small types, some of which were in convoys, it is omitted here. However, it did include the contact report on nine large merchant ships escorted by five destroyers reported by the Search Plan FOX plane in Sector TWO and commented on in full under "Operations of CTF 73, October 22nd".

It is not clear whence came the above contact reports since the war diaries of the squadrons concerned do not list contact reports unless a successful attack follows. However, it seems probable that the reports were made by the planes of Search Plan FOX.

At 2251 he notified all concerned with present operations that his PB4Y searches from Owi--sectors SIX and SEVEN of Search Plan FOX--had been completed to 950 and 925 miles respectively, with an average coverage of ninety per cent and negative results.\*\*\*\* Unfortunately, he sent additional information but in the dispatch available to this analysis the first ten words are lost so what this information was is not known.

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- \* The Imperial Japanese Navy in World War II, prepared by Military History Section, Special Staff, GHQ, FEC, February 1952.
- \*\* C.G. 5TH Air Force Dispatch 221433/I October 1944 to all concerned with current operations SOWESPAC.
- \*\*\* C.G. 5TH Air Force Dispatch 222152/I October 1944 to all interested in current SOWESPAC operations.
- \*\*\*\* C.G. 5TH Air Force Dispatch 222251/I October 1944 to CAAF SOWESPAC, COMSOWESPAC, COM7THFLT, all concerned with current operations.

## (b) Operations of CTF 73 (Naval Air Force), October 22nd.

CTF 73 continued toward Morotai while his Morotai-based squadrons continued to function under the operational control of the Commanding Officer 310th Bombardment Wing, who under C.G. FIFTH Air Force, was responsible for air operations originating from Morotai.

Meanwhile, as on the previous two days, CTG 73.4 (Search and Support Group) continued to execute his part of Search Plan FOX with his three Morotai-based squadrons (VPB's 101, 115, 146). This search was uneventful except for the plane in sector TWO which sighted at 0500 and reported a convoy of nine large merchant ships escorted by five destroyers in Latitude 11° - 47'N, Longitude 116° - 20'E, on course 240°(T), speed twelve knots.\* The time of this sighting is confused because the plane commander did not, as prescribed in his communications instructions,\*\* suffix a zone designation letter to the above time of sighting. However, since there is no evidence available to support a time of other than afternoon for an airplane of Search Plan FOX to have been in this position it seems clear, despite the fact that COMSEVENTHFLT Headquarters later labeled it 0500/I,\*\*\* that this time was more likely 0500/Z. Therefore, the sighting would have had to be made at 1400 rather than at 0500.

Certain of the planes of VPB 101, while on search in Search Plan FOX, claimed attacking an SD and a tug off the northern tip of Borneo, strafing four SC's off the NW Celebes, destroying one twin engine transport plane thirty miles west of Puerto Princesa and one carrier-type attack plane on La Carlota airstrip (Los Negros Island) and sinking one SC off Maestro de Camp Island (east of Mindoro).\*\*\*\*

This deviation from their primary mission was similar to the deviations made by other PB4Y planes on other days operating from Morotai which is discussed fully under "Operations of CTF 73, October 20th".

At 2145 he directed CTG 73.4 (Commander Fleet Air Wing SEVENTEEN), among other items, to order five planes from VPB 33 and five from VPB 34 and fifteen crews to proceed to Leyte Gulf at first light October 23rd in accordance with previous instructions.\*\*\*\*\*

At 2205 he may have intercepted CTG 73.7's dispatch to CTF 77

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- \* Aircraft in Sector TWO Dispatch 220610 October 1944 to 5THBOMCOM.
  - \*\* COMAIR7THFLT Operations Plan No. 8-44, Serial 000166, October 15th, 1944, Annex A (Communication Plan), Page 1.
  - \*\*\* COM7THFLT Dispatch 220955 October 1944 to CTF's 71 and 73.
  - \*\*\*\* War Diary VPB 101, October 22nd, 1944.
  - \*\*\*\*\* CTF 73 Dispatch 221245 October 1944 to COMFAIRWING 17 (Admin), info VPB's 33, 34, C.G. 5TH Air Force, CAAF SOWESPAC, CTF's 77, 78, CTG 73.7, SAN CARLOS.



quoted in full under "Operations of CTG 73.7, October 22nd" wherein he answered, in part, that he expected to commence SEACAT operations about October 25th with the planes arriving about October 23rd.\*

Since CTF 73's basic plan called for these planes to be sent forward when directed by CTF 77,\*\* it seems likely that he received instructions relative thereto from CTF 77 particularly in view of the fact that on the previous day CTF 77 had requested the Commanding Officer 308th Bombardment Wing (then on board the BLUE RIDGE) to call the navy search Catalinas (PBY's) forward to arrive on D+3 day or as soon thereafter as practicable.\*\*\*

During the night of October 21st/22nd, the PBY's of VPB-29 under the operational control of CTG 73.2 searched sectors ONE, TWO and THREE of Search Plan FOX. The plane in sector ONE turned back at 2130 (October 21st) when 400 miles out after failure of the port engine, and was escorted back to base by the plane in sector TWO having also completed but 400 miles of the assigned 700 miles search. The plane in sector THREE flew 600 miles. No contacts were made by the three aircraft. The estimated coverage in sectors ONE, TWO and THREE was twenty-five, fifty and seventy per cent respectively.\*\*\*\*

(1) Operations of CTG 73.7 (Advanced Group) October 22nd.

During the night and early forenoon the SAN CARLOS, which was the flagship of TG 73.7 operating under CTG 77.2, continued on patrol between Abuyog and the Cadacan River.\*\*\*\*\* The HALF MOON which had reported for duty to CTG 73.7,\*\*\*\*\* on the previous day, was anchored presumably in San Pedro Bay.\*\*\*\*\*

At 0614 the SAN CARLOS was ineffectively bombed by a Japanese plane which escaped.\*\*\*\*\*

At 0733 the Commanding Officer HALF MOON in accordance with orders from CTG 73.7 proceeded down the eastern coast of Leyte Island to (a) check the accuracy of charts and (b) locate suitable seaplane moorings.\*\*\*\*\*

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- \* CTG 73.7 Dispatch 220921 October 1944 to CTF 77.
  - \*\* COMAIR7THFLT Operations Plan No. 8-44, Serial 000166, October 15th, 1944.
  - \*\*\* CTF 77 Dispatch 210922 October 1944 to BLUE RIDGE; also CTF 78 Dispatch 211251 October 1944 to unknown addressee.
  - \*\*\*\* CTU 73.2.2 Dispatch 220100 October 1944 to CTF 77, info COM7THFLT, C.G. 5TH Air Force, 310TH BOMWING, CTU 73.2.1.
  - \*\*\*\*\* War Diary SAN CARLOS, October 22nd, 1944.
  - \*\*\*\*\* Commander Jack C. Renard, U.S. Navy.
  - \*\*\*\*\* War Diary HALF MOON, October 22nd, 1944.

At 1256 he anchored in Hinunangan Bay which was to be his anchorage for some time.\*

Meanwhile at 1100 CTG 73.7 was detached from CTG 77.2 at which time he commenced operating independently. In the SAN CARLOS, he proceeded down the east coast of Leyte Island and at 1500 also anchored in Hinunangan Bay.\*\*

He now had the nucleus of his command anchored in a suitable anchorage and there made preparations to tend the patrol planes of VPB's 33 and 34 which were expected to arrive on the following day.

At 1821 he advised CTF 77 that (a) with the SAN CARLOS and HALF MOON he was now basing in Hinunangan Bay (b) he expected to start day and night SEACAT patrol operations about October 25th with planes arriving October 23rd (c) air operations routine patrols would normally fly track between base and Suluan Island during the period dawn plus or minus two hours and (d) his SEACATS would identify themselves to all ships on the flight track within the Leyte Gulf area.\*\*\*

At 2300 (when it was received by CTF 79) he received, as an information addressee, a dispatch from CTF 73 directing CTG 73.4 among other things to order five planes from VPB 33 and five from VPB 34 with fifteen crews to proceed to Leyte Gulf at first light October 23rd.\*\*\*\*

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\* War Diary HALF MOON, October 22nd, 1944.  
\*\* War Diary SAN CARLOS, October 22nd, 1944.  
\*\*\* CTG 73.7 Dispatch 220921 October 1944 to CTF 77.  
\*\*\*\* CTF 73 Dispatch 221245 October 1944 to COMFAIRWING 17 (Admin), info VPB's 33, 34, C.G. 5TH Air Force, CAAF SOWESPAC, CTF's 77, 78, CTG 73.7, SAN CARLOS.



## (B) Operations of CINCPAC - CINCPAO, October 22nd.

During the early morning CINCPAC continued to study COMTHIRDFLT's two dispatches to COMSOWESPAC--which dispatches he had received on the previous day as an information addressee--wherein COMTHIRDFLT had requested (a) an estimate of the earliest date for a safe passage through Surigao and Mindoro Straits to the South China Sea for major combatant ships and well escorted oilers since that area might suddenly become critical,\* and (b) early advice as to when the SOWESPAC transports and other vulnerable overseas movements would be removed to safe positions as he felt restricted by his covering responsibilities and wished to (1) rearm and (2) be free to take more offensive action.\*\* He appears to have felt that (a) COMTHIRDFLT's queries were based largely on the instructions which he (CINCPAC) had given him to the effect that "in case opportunity for destruction of major portions of the enemy fleet offer or can be created such destruction becomes the primary task",\*\*\* and (b) that commander was anticipating a possible movement through the central Philippines into the South China Sea for that purpose.

He was clearly alarmed at the implications of these dispatches for in his mind they plainly indicated that COMTHIRDFLT was contemplating a movement to the westward through the central Philippines in order to destroy a major portion of the Japanese fleet should that portion be located there. In fact, he had already received contact reports on limited Japanese forces moving north and south in the eastern South China Sea. Therefore (a) not knowing what COMSOWESPAC's attitude toward this plan might be but suspecting that it might be highly critical, at least as regards the covering function, and (b) desiring to prevent the TF 38 carriers from moving into the central Philippines without his permission, he at 0352, referring to both of COMTHIRDFLT's dispatches mentioned above, issued a restraining order to COMTHIRDFLT (quoted in full under "Operations of COMTHIRDFLT, October 22nd") wherein he emphasized that the limitations imposed by the necessity of covering SOWESPAC forces had to be accepted and further, that COMTHIRDFLT was forbidden to move major elements of the THIRDFLT into Japanese central Philippine waters without orders from him.\*\*\*\*

His action in so doing was sound for the Allies had landed only two days earlier and insufficient time had elapsed to determine what the Japanese counteraction, if any, was going to be.

By 0540, he had received a request from COMINCH for early amplification

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- \* COM3RDFLT Dispatch 210454 October 1944 to COMSOWESPAC, info CINCPAC, COMINCH, CTF's 38, 77, etc.
  - \*\* COM3RDFLT Dispatch 210645 October 1944 to COMSOWESPAC, info CINCPAC, COMINCH, CTF's 38, 77, etc.
  - \*\*\* CINCPAO Operation Plan No. 8-44, Serial 000851, September 27th, 1944.
  - \*\*\*\* CINCPAC Dispatch 211852 October 1944 to COM3RDFLT, info COMINCH, COMSOWESPAC.



of COMTHIRDFLT's 210454 above.\* Since he had already taken action to restrain COMTHIRDFLT, he seems to have decided not to reply at present.

Meanwhile, he evaluated his intelligence and estimated that the Main Force, or its supply force, had probably sortied the Inland Sea within the past day or so.

Later in the morning he advised his command that there was reason to believe that a Japanese plane had contacted a Japanese surface force at 0637 in either Latitude 10° - 32'N or 25° - 32'N, Longitude 133° - 28'E.

Whether or not he made any attempt (a) to identify the above contact with the sortie of the Main Force, or (b) to investigate the contact by air from the Marianas, is not known, but the lack of evidence thereon would indicate that he did not do so, at least in his advice to his command.

Why this was so is not known but there are continuing signs--notably the fact that he permitted the submarines to depart Bungo Suido--that there was a belief at CINCPAC - CINCPA headquarters, as well as in SOWESPAC, that the Japanese were not planning to engage in a major fleet battle at this time. Through what strait then, did he estimate the Main Force or its supply force had sortied? While there is no answer available, there seems reason to believe that Shimonoseki Suido was considered likely since this would place the Main Force in the East China Sea and beyond range of Allied aircraft. Therefore, it seems possible that he evaluated the contact as something other than the Main Force.

During the early afternoon he received COMTHIRDFLT's 220344 (quoted in full under "Operations of COMTHIRDFLT, October 22nd") wherein that commander, replying to COMINCH's 211535, referred to above, stated, among other items, that his query regarding a safe route to the South China Sea via Surigao Strait and Mindoro Strait for well-escorted fleet oilers and major combatant ships was purely exploratory, having in mind the reported widespread movements of Japanese fleet units and his basic instructions about destroying enemy surface forces.\*\*

Sometime before 1629, when it was received by COMTHIRDFLT, he received, as an information addressee, COMSOWESPAC's 212240 (quoted in full under "Operations of COMSOWESPAC, October 21st") wherein that commander replied to COMTHIRDFLT's 210645\*\*\* stating, among other things, that he considered COMTHIRDFLT's mission to cover the KING II operation was essential and paramount.\*\*\*\*

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\* COMINCH and CNO Dispatch 211535 October 1944 to CINCPAC, info COM-3RDFLT.

\*\* COM3RDFLT Dispatch 220344 October 1944 to CINCPAC.

\*\*\* COM3RDFLT Dispatch 210645 October 1944 to COMSOWESPAC, info CINCPAC, COMINCH, CTF's 38, 77, etc.

\*\*\*\* COMSOWESPAC Dispatch 212240 October 1944 to COM3RDFLT, info COMINCH CofS U.S. Army (Marshall), CINCPA, CTF's 38, 77, CTG 38.1.



In view of the importance of this subject, he invited COMINCH's attention to his 211852 and to COMTHIRDFLT's 220344 which he stated had been passed to COMINCH separately.\*

(1) Operations of Western Pacific Task Forces.

(a) Operations of COMTHIRDFLT, October 22nd.

COMTHIRDFLT, in the NEW JERSEY with TG 38.2, continued on toward Point READY where at 0600 he planned to rendezvous with CTG's 38.1 and 38.4. Meanwhile, he knew that if all had gone well CTG 38.3 was heading for Point MICK where he was to fuel commencing at 0700.

As he headed toward his rendezvous point he received three contact reports. The first, received at 0226, was by a plane of the FIFTH Air Force (likely from Search Plan FOX) and was made on the previous morning in Latitude 11°-10'N, Longitude 119°-10'E, on five 2000/4500-ton freighter transports, one 3500/6000 freighter, one 300/700 stack aft freighter and one subchaser in convoy, course 232°(T), speed twelve; \*\* the second, received at 0317, referred to a 1300 contact on the previous day on two light cruisers of YUBARI-class in Verde Island Passage; \*\*\* and the third, received at 0527, referred to a 0200 contact by a submarine (DARTER) on three large unidentified ships estimated cruisers in Latitude 07°-31'N, Longitude 115°-22'E, on course 025°(T), speed twenty-one knots. \*\*\*\* None of these contacts were particularly significant, but they did indicate enemy surface (cruiser) activity in the vicinity of Palawan Island. Since two of these contacts were beyond the range of his own search planes from his present covering position but were within the range of the planes of Search Plan FOX and also of certain submarines of TF 71, he awaited further information thereon.

At 0600 he rendezvoused as planned with CTG's 38.1 and 38.4 \*\*\*\*\* and noted that at 0610 the HANCOCK, also with TG 38.2, had launched a search of sector 290° - 360°(T) to a distance of 300 miles, \*\*\*\*\* which search he had ordered at 2122 on October 20th. \*\*\*\*\* The strategic implications of COMTHIRDFLT's operations on this day are discussed under "Operations of COMTHIRDFLT, October 20th".

At 0636 he received, as an information addressee, a dispatch from COMINCH (Commander-in-Chief, U.S. Fleet) \*\*\*\*\* to CINCPAC wherein

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\* CINCPOA Dispatch 220740 October 1944 to COMINCH, info COM3RDFLT.  
 \*\* C.G. 5TH Air Force Dispatch 212253/I October 1944 to CAAF SOWESPAC, COM7THFLT, info COM3RDFLT, all TFC's and TGC's 7THFLT, etc.  
 \*\*\* COM7THFLT Dispatch 211205 October 1944 to all commanders concerned.  
 \*\*\*\* CTF 71 Dispatch 211941 October 1944 to CINCPAC, COMSUBPAC, all TFC's and TGC's 3RD and 7TH Fleets, C.G.'s 5TH and 13TH Air Forces.  
 \*\*\*\*\* Deck Log INTREPID, October 22nd, 1944.  
 \*\*\*\*\* Deck Log HANCOCK, October 22nd, 1944.  
 \*\*\*\*\* COM3RDFLT Dispatch 201222 October 1944 to CTF 38, CTG 30.8 and all TFC's and TGC's of TF 38, info CINCPAC, COMSOWESPAC, CTF 77, etc.  
 \*\*\*\*\* Fleet Admiral Ernest J. King, U.S. Navy.

COMINCH stated that he desired "early amplification of COMTHIRDFLT's 210454 as to nature of operations in mind".\* COMTHIRDFLT's 210454 related to the possibility that the South China Sea might suddenly become a critical area and requested information as to a safe route to that area via Surigao and Mindoro Straits. He was likely surprised by this COMINCH dispatch because (a) he felt that COMINCH should have realized that this dispatch was purely exploratory and anticipatory, and (b) he had received no query thereon from CINCPAC. However, he now awaited any forthcoming query from that commander. Meanwhile, he considered the nature of his reply.

At 0644 he requested CTG 38.2, via TBS voice radio, to give him that morning's detailed search plan and promptly received a reply to the effect that CTG 38.2 (a) had launched a seven-sector search covering the larger sector 290° - 260°(T) to a distance of 300 miles, and (b) planned to repeat the same search in the same sector that afternoon.\*\* Since this was sufficiently dense to insure thorough coverage, he was satisfied as to its probable effectiveness.

At 0747 he received information from CINCPAC to the effect that his best estimate was that the Main Force, or its supply force, had probably sortied the Inland Sea very recently (within the past day or so).

It seems probable that about this time he received a dispatch also from CINCPAC which referred to his (COMTHIRDFLT's) 210454 and 210645 and advised him that the (a) general plan and tasks of CINCPAC Operation Plan No. 8-44 were still in effect, and (b) restrictions imposed by the necessity of covering the SOWESPAC forces were accepted. It also forbade him to move major units of the THIRDFLT into central Philippine waters without previous authority from CINCPAC.\*\*\*

What he thought of this dispatch is nowhere stated. However, it seems probable that he felt it was in the nature of a reproof since it might seriously restrict his freedom of action in complying with his basic directive from CINCPAC to destroy a major enemy force.

At 0832 he received on the Fox broadcast a dispatch from the SEADRAGON to CTF 17 reporting having attacked in Luzon Strait at 2335 on the previous day an enemy task group of one carrier and four unidentified warships on course 210°(T), speed nineteen knots.\*\*\*\*

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\* COMINCH and CNO Dispatch 211535 October 1944 to CINCPAC, info COM3RDFLT.

\*\* COM3RDFLT Voice Radio Message 220644/I October 1944 to CTG 38.2 and CTG 38.2's reply.

\*\*\* CINCPAC Dispatch 211852 October 1944 to COM3RDFLT, info COMINCH, COMSOWESPAC.

\*\*\*\* SEADRAGON Dispatch 212140 October 1944 to CTF 17.



At 1905 he sent COMSOWESPAC a short congratulatory dispatch regarding the successful progress of the Philippine operations in which he expressed hope of "swinging some blows in support".\* From the addressee and information addressees, it seems correct to say that COMTHIRDFLT's reason for sending this dispatch was to reassure all commands that, despite his queries to COMSOWESPAC regarding his desire to be relieved of his covering and support operations as soon as practicable, he nevertheless could be expected to remain in his present position until the situation was satisfactory to COMSOWESPAC. This, of course, is exactly what CINCPAC meant when, as pointed out above, he advised COMTHIRDFLT that any restrictions imposed by covering SOWESPAC forces were unavoidable.\*\*

Meanwhile, he continued to concern himself with Operation HOTFOOT and therefore, mindful of the fact that the Japanese commercial broadcasts would go off the air with the first air raid warning, and that the radios in the Japanese homes which were tuned to the Japanese broadcasts would likely remain so tuned, he suggested to CINCPAC that, when this occurred, the NEW JERSEY could immediately start broadcasting on the same frequency and announce to the Japanese people that the air attacks then being made on their homeland were by the same carrier force reported by their leaders as sunk off Formosa. This was in addition to his suggestion made previously (on the 19th) to CINCPAC that propaganda leaflets be prepared informing the Japanese public that (a) these planes were from the carriers which their leaders had told them had been previously destroyed off Formosa and (b) not a single carrier had been sunk.\*\*\*

SINCE THE EFFECT OF SUCH A BROADCAST, WHICH WOULD BE THE WHOLE TRUTH, COULD NOT BE EXPECTED TO HAVE ANY EFFECT ON THE HOTFOOT OPERATIONS BUT COULD HAVE A MARKED EFFECT ON CINCPAC'S OPERATIONS IN THAT IT MIGHT WELL (A) FOSTER RESISTANCE FRICTIONS AND DISAFFECTIONS AMONG ENEMY-CONTROLLED PEOPLES, (B) DEMORALIZE ENEMY ARMED FORCES, AND (C) CREATE IN THE ENEMY ARMED FORCES, AS WELL AS IN THE POPULATION, THE PSYCHOLOGICAL BASIS FOR CEASING RESISTANCE, ITS EMPLOYMENT FALLS IN THE CATEGORY OF STRATEGICAL PSYCHOLOGICAL WARFARE.\*\*\*\* THIS TYPE OF WARFARE DIFFERS FROM TACTICAL PSYCHOLOGICAL WARFARE IN THAT IT IS NOT IN SUPPORT OF A DISTINCT TACTICAL MILITARY SITUATION BUT IS, INSTEAD, USUALLY DIRECTED AT A LARGE AUDIENCE--PERHAPS AN ENTIRE NATION OR GROUP OF NATIONS.\*\*\*\*

COMTHIRDFLT'S RECOMMENDATION, THEREFORE, WAS SOUND AND SHOWS THAT HE WAS ALERT TO (A) CINCPAC'S LONG-RANGE OBJECTIVE, I.E., "THE DEFEAT OF JAPAN", AND (B) THE NECESSITY FOR SUBORDINATE COMMANDERS, WITH THAT OBJECTIVE IN MIND, TO MAKE CONSTRUCTIVE REPRESENTATIONS THEREON.

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\* COM3RDFLT Dispatch 220005 October 1944 to COMSOWESPAC, info CTF 77, CINCPAC and COMINCH.

\*\* Operations in the Pacific Ocean Areas, October 1944, CINCPAC - CINCPAC Serial 002397, May 31st, 1945, Page 57.

\*\*\* COM3RDFLT Dispatch 190252 October 1944 to CINCPAC.

\*\*\*\* Naval Operational Planning (NWP 11), Office of the Chief of Naval Operations, May 15th, 1953, Chapter 24, Paragraphs 2401, 2402.

At 0934 he intercepted from the DARTER a dispatch giving the 0800 position (Latitude 09° - 23'N, Longitude 115° - 25'E) of the three ships which had been contacted first at 0200. The DARTER reported (a) tops of one dimly seen and might possibly be a battleship, (b) speed of advance twenty-one knots, and (c) course of 332°(T), which may be dawn zig from first report.\*

At 1012, having learned that the "window" shipments were arriving shortly at Ulithi in the TICONDEROGA and NASSAU, he directed COMSERVRON TEN at Ulithi to distribute this "window" to each carrier, less the BUNKER HILL.\*\* He welcomed the receipt of this "window" for in the HOTFOOT operation the "window" would be employed by his planes for purposes of deception in his attacks on the Japanese homeland. In this connection, it should be emphasized here that the employment of "window" was not solely confined to the Allies--on the contrary, it was employed by the Japanese as well.\*\*\*

At 1015, by TBS voice radio, he directed CTG's 38.1 and 38.4 to proceed in company in time to arrive at Point CONDOR (Latitude 13° - 55'N, Longitude 130° - 15'E) at 0600 on the following morning where they were to rendezvous with CTG 38.3.\*\*\*\*

Since Point CONDOR was about 200 miles nearer Ulithi than was Point READY, and since it was along the line of retirement toward Ulithi these orders are of interest in that they are the first indication that COMTHIRDFLT was contemplating dispatching these two task groups to that harbor. Except for the fact that the task groups were TG's 38.1 and 38.4 rather than TG's 38.2 and 38.3, this would be a return to the basic schedule wherein CTF 38 planned on D+3 day to return two task groups to Ulithi to refuel and rearm.\*\*\*\*\*

At 1021, by TBS voice radio, he directed CTG 38.2 to transfer the HANCOCK to CTG 38.1 for temporary duty prior to his departure.\*\*\*\*\* Since CTG 38.1 had been directed to proceed to Ulithi for replenishment, it seems clear that COMTHIRDFLT planned similar replenishment for the HANCOCK.

At 1046 he acknowledged receipt of CINCPAC's 211852.\*\*\*\*\*

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- \* DARTER Dispatch 212359 October 1944 to CTF 71.
  - \*\* COM3RDFLT Dispatch 220112 October 1944 to COMSERVRON 10, info CINCPAC, COMAIRPAC, CTF 38, all TGC's of TF 38, all carriers of TF 38, COMAIR7THFLT (Logistics).
  - \*\*\* Weekly Intelligence Bulletin, CINCPAC-CINCPOA, Volume I, No. 17, November 3rd, 1944, Page 30.
  - \*\*\*\* COM3RDFLT TBS Voice Radio Message 220115 October 1944 to CTG's 38.1, 38.4, info CTG 38.2.
  - \*\*\*\*\* COM1STCARTASKFORPAC (CTF 38) Operation Order No. 11-44, Serial 00020, October 1st, 1944, Annex C, Employment Schedule.
  - \*\*\*\*\* COM3RDFLT TBS Voice Radio Message 220121 October 1944 to CTG 38.2, info CTG 38.1.
  - \*\*\*\*\* COM3RDFLT Dispatch 220146 October 1944 to CINCPAC, info COMINCH, COMSOWESPAC.



At 1107 he received a report from CTU 30.5.2 (seaplane squadrons and tenders at Saipan) that the searches, which had not obtained full coverage, were negative.\*

At 1114 he directed (a) CTG 38.3, who was fueling in Area MICK, to proceed to arrive at Point CONDOR at 0600 October 23rd where he was to rendezvous with CTG's 38.1 and 38.4, (b) COMBATPAC, in WASHINGTON, with ALABAMA and DESDIV 100 (COGSWELL, CAPERTON, INGERSOLL, KNAPP), to report to CTG 38.4 for temporary duty, (c) CTG 38.3, less the units in (b) above, to (1) operate in Area CONDOR, and (2) maintain morning and afternoon searches in sector 280° - 350°(T) to a distance of 300 miles, (d) CTG 38.2 to (1) proceed to Point MICK to arrive at 0700 October 23rd where he was to rendezvous with the oiler group and fuel, and (2) upon completion of fueling, rendezvous with CTG 38.3 not later than 0700 October 24th, and (e) both task groups 38.2 and 38.3 to operate in Area CONDOR until further orders.\*\*

Then, five minutes later (at 1119) he directed CTG 38.1, with TG 38.1, plus the HANCOCK, and CTG 38.4, with TG 38.4, plus the WASHINGTON, ALABAMA and DESDIV 100, to (a) depart Point CONDOR at 0600 the following morning and proceed in company to Ulithi to arrive entrance at 0600 October 25th (or forty-eight hours later), (b) rearm, fuel and provision and (c) be ready for sea dawn October 29th.\*\*\*

WHILE COMTHIRDFLT HAS NOWHERE GIVEN CLEAR EXPLANATION OF HIS VIEWS AT THIS TIME, THE ABOVE GIVES A FAIRLY COMPREHENSIVE IDEA OF HIS ESTIMATE OF THE SITUATION. DESPITE THE STATEMENT IN HIS ACTION REPORT THAT "ON 21-22 OCTOBER THERE WERE SIGNIFICANT SIGHTINGS OF ENEMY COMBATANT SHIPS IN THE EMPIRE, FORMOSA AREA AND THE SOUTH CHINA SEA. THE VAGUE OUTLINES OF A LARGE-SCALE JAPANESE COUNTEROFFENSIVE PLAN BEGAN TO APPEAR",\*\*\*\* THE FACTS ARE THAT HE HAD RECEIVED (A) FEW CONTACTS OF IMPORTANCE ON OCTOBER 21ST, AND (B) NONE SO FAR THIS DAY WHICH WERE OF SUCH SIGNIFICANCE AS TO INFLUENCE HIM TO ALTER HIS PRESENT ESTIMATE OF THE SITUATION. HE, OF COURSE, KNEW THAT THERE WERE RUMORS (A) OF A BUILDUP OF ENEMY STRENGTH IN THE CORON BAY AREA, BUT HE HAD RECONNOITERED THIS AREA WITH HIS OWN PLANES ON THE PRECEDING DAY AND HAD FOUND NO SHIPPING THERE OF CONSEQUENCE, AND (B) OF THE MAIN FORCE BEING AT SEA SOMEWHERE, BUT HE HAD RECEIVED NO INFORMATION AS TO WHERE FROM ANY SOURCE. HE REALIZED THAT HE HAD TO PROVIDE STRATEGIC COVER AND SOME SUPPORT TO COMSOWESPAC UNTIL RELIEVED, BUT HE ALSO REALIZED THAT HE HAD TO PREPARE FOR OPERATION HOTFOOT WHICH APPEARED TO BE OF INCREASED IMPORTANCE WITH EACH PASSING DAY. HE THEREFORE ARRIVED AT THE CONCLUSION THAT OPERATION HOTFOOT HAD A PRIORITY, SINCE THE POSSIBILITY OF BATTLE WITH OTHER THAN ENEMY RAIDING FORCES SEEMED REMOTE.

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\* CTU 30.5.2 Dispatch 220838 October 1944 to COM3RDFLT, info all TFC's 3RDFLT, CTG's 57, 59, CTG 30.5.

\*\* COM3RDFLT Dispatch 220214 October 1944 to CTG's 38.2, 38.3, info COMINCH, CINCPAC, all TFC's and TGC's 3RDFLT, all concerned with SOWESPAC operations, etc.

\*\*\* COM3RDFLT Dispatch 220219 October 1944 to CTG's 38.1, 38.4, info COMINCH, CINCPAC, all TFC's and TGC's 3RDFLT, all concerned with SOWESPAC operations, etc.

\*\*\*\* COM3RDFLT Action Report, Operations of Western Pacific Task Forces and the 3RDFLT, Serial 0085, January 25th, 1945, Page 10.



IN ARRIVING AT THIS CONCLUSION HE KNEW THAT BY NOON THE NEXT DAY (A) HIS COVERING FORCE WOULD BE REDUCED BY TEN CARRIERS, INCLUDING THE BUNKER HILL AND TWO BATTLESHIPS (WASHINGTON AND ALABAMA), LEAVING HIS REMAINING TWO GROUPS WITH BUT SEVEN CARRIERS AND FOUR BATTLESHIPS, AND (B) HIS AIRCRAFT STRENGTH WOULD BE REDUCED FROM 569 VF, 213 VB AND 233 VT TO APPROXIMATELY 221 VF, 78 VB AND 89 VT (THE LATTER SUM BEING SIGNIFICANTLY SMALLER THAN THE TOTAL AIRCRAFT EMBARKED IN TG 77.4 CARRIERS--318 VF AND 191 VT). FURTHERMORE, HE APPEARS TO HAVE FELT THAT (A) HIS REDUCED TASK GROUPS WERE ADEQUATE TO ACCOMPLISH HIS COVERING TASK, (B) IF CINCPAC DISAPPROVED, SUFFICIENT TIME WAS AVAILABLE IN WHICH TO TAKE ACTION, AND (C) ALTHOUGH THE SITUATION HAD NOT CLARIFIED, THE NECESSITY FOR GIVING REST AND RECREATION TO HIS TASK GROUPS AND TO PREPARE THEM FOR OPERATION HOTFOOT WARRANTED HIS TAKING A CALCULATED RISK.

Why he chose TG's 38.2 and 38.3 rather than TG's 38.1 and 38.4 is not explained but it seems likely that in view of the dispatches from COMSOWESPAC and CINCPAC relative to the necessity for him to continue to provide cover and support, he had correctly decided that since (a) the situation had not as yet fully clarified he thought it best that he remain in the strategic support area, (b) he and CTF 38 were in TG's 38.2 and 38.3 respectively, (c) he and CTF 38 had been operating closely together for some time, and (d) CTG 38.1 would soon relieve CTF 38 (November 1st) and therefore should be returned to the objective area by that time, he would retain TG's 38.2 and 38.3 in strategic support. Two secondary considerations may have been the fact that (a) TG's 38.2 and 38.3 contained the battleships and (b) TG's 38.1 and 38.4 were low on bombs.

At 1142 he received a TBS voice radio message from CTG 38.2 to the effect that since the HANCOCK planes reported very bad weather in the entire search area the afternoon search should be cancelled.\*

At 1148 he informed CTG's 38.1 and 38.4 that the CVE's NASSAU and STEAMER BAY, with planes and pilots, were scheduled to arrive at Ulithi October 28th, and directed them to (a) build the fighter strength of the FRANKLIN and ENTERPRISE to 54 VF from the above CVE's, (b) make arrangements for the HANCOCK to receive from the same source as practicable sufficient VF for complement of 54, and (c) furnish him with the resulting complements of the above carriers together with the planes and pilots remaining on the CVE's. Finally, he authorized the carriers concerned to transfer their excess VB and VT planes and crews to the CVE's for return to pools.\*\*

Since this dispatch was in accordance with his dispatch instructions of October 19th\*\*\* (quoted in full under "Operations of COMTHIRDFLT, October 20th") wherein he had informed the command that he

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\* CTG 38.2 Voice Radio Message 221142/I October 1944 to COM3RDFLT.

\*\* COM3RDFLT Dispatch 220248 October 1944 to CTG's 38.1 and 38.4, info CTF 38, COMAIR7THFLT (Logistics), CTU 30.8.12.

\*\*\* COM3RDFLT Dispatch 190540 October 1944 to CTF 38, CTG's 38.1, 38.2, 38.3, 38.4.



planned to increase the complement of each large carrier, except the BUNKER HILL, to 54 VF, the contents of this dispatch had already been anticipated by the task groups and carrier commanders concerned.

At 1150 he authorized CTG 38.2 to cancel the afternoon search and directed him to proceed to Point MICK to arrive at 0700 the following morning for fuel.\*

At 1203 he requested the HANCOCK and INTREPID to report the number of VF they had and was promptly informed that the INTREPID had 44 VF, including three flyable duds, 2 VF(P) and 2 VF(N), or 48; the HANCOCK had 42 VF.\*\*

At 1204 he requested CTG 38.1 to inform him of the number of VF aboard the WASP, HORNET, ENTERPRISE and FRANKLIN, and was promptly informed that the FRANKLIN had 30 plus 4 VF(N), or 34; the ENTERPRISE 26 plus 4 VF(N), or 30; the HORNET 47 plus 3 VF(N), or 50; and the WASP 46 plus 3 VF(N), or 49.\*\*\*

Also at 1204 he directed the Commanding Officer BUNKER HILL (a) that upon completion of fueling, the BUNKER HILL, together with the STEPHEN POTTER and BENHAM, was detached from TF 38 and was to proceed as CTG 30.4 to Manus to arrive at dawn October 27th, (b) to transfer (1) all VB and VT planes to the Manus aircraft pool, (2) Air Group EIGHT personnel to COMAIRSEVENTHFLT (Logistics) Force for return to Pearl Harbor, (c) retain (1) all VF planes and pilots which the Commanding Officer BUNKER HILL considered were still fit for combat operations, and (2) any additional Air Group EIGHT personnel who might be required to operate the 100 VF, and (d) obtain sufficient pilots to man all planes retained on board. Finally, he authorized at anchor availability with tender assistance until noon November 1st.\*\*\*\*

THIS DISPATCH IS OF IMPORTANCE BECAUSE IT INDICATES PLAINLY THAT, ALTHOUGH COMTHIRDFLT HAD DECIDED THAT HE WOULD DETACH, IN GENERAL, THE MAJOR PART OF THE AIR GROUP EIGHT PERSONNEL FROM THE BUNKER HILL IN ACCORDANCE WITH THE RECOMMENDATIONS OF CTG 38.2,\*\*\*\*\* HE NEVERTHELESS INTENDED TO RETAIN ALL VF PILOTS WHO WERE FIT FOR COMBAT AND ANY ADDITIONAL AIR GROUP EIGHT PERSONNEL REQUIRED. THUS, THERE WOULD NOT BE A COMPLETE REPLACEMENT EITHER OF THE FIGHTER SQUADRON OR OF THE AIR GROUP. WHILE HIS REASONS FOR THIS DECISION ARE NOT EXPLAINED, IT SEEMS HIGHLY PROBABLE THAT IT WAS DUE TO THE SHORTAGE OF PILOTS.

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- \* COM3RDFLT TBS Voice Radio Message 221150/I October 1944 to CTG 38.2.
  - \*\* COM3RDFLT TBS Voice Radio Message 221203/I October 1944 to HANCOCK, INTREPID, and the latter's replies.
  - \*\*\* COM3RDFLT TBS Voice Radio Message 221204/I October 1944 to CTG 38.1 and CTG 38.1's reply.
  - \*\*\*\* COM3RDFLT Dispatch 220304 October 1944 to BUNKER HILL, info all interested.
  - \*\*\*\*\* CTG 38.2 Visual Dispatch 200345 October 1944 to CTF 38, COM3RDFLT.



At 1224 he prepared a reply to SECNAV, information to CINCPAC, COMINCH and CTF 38, who had sent him commendatory dispatches, as follows: "I appreciate your combined messages but even more the striking forces appreciate the weapons that have been given us and your warm forceful farsighted backing".\* Actually this dispatch was delayed in transmission until 2039.

At 1233 he received a special report from CINCPAC reporting that (a) a Japanese plane had reported a contact at 0637 in either Latitude 10° - 32'N or Latitude 25° - 32'N, Longitude 133° - 38'E, and (b) this contact had been broadcast several times as a result of which a precautionary alert had been ordered for the Nansei Shoto.

This dispatch does not seem to have alarmed him in any way. In fact, he likely wondered what the contact was on and, despite other information which indicated that (a) the northern latitude was more likely correct and (b) the Japanese Main Force or its supply force had probably already sortied the Inland Sea, seems to have presumed that, since he had no forces in that area and since CTG 30.5's planes from Tinian had not reported anything, the latitude was more likely in SOWESPAC. Actually, from Diagram "D", this contact was on the Japanese Main Force. It seems likely that, had Commander Western Pacific Task Forces, as well as CINCPAC, given this contact the weight it deserved, the presence of the Main Force might well have been discovered on this day.

At 1244 he replied to COMINCH's query as to the nature of the operations he had in mind when he requested information from COMSOWESPAC as to what was the earliest estimate for a safe route to the South China Sea via Surigao and Mindoro Straits. In his reply, he stated that his query was purely exploratory, having in mind (a) reported widespread movements of Japanese fleet units, (b) paragraphs 3(a), 3(x)(1) and (2) of CINCPAC Operation Plan No. 8-44, (c) the undesirability of routing oilers north of Luzon at present, and (d) looking ahead to the carrier operations preceding and supporting SARTORIAL,\*\* and finally, for the second time, he acknowledged CINCPAC's 211852 (which has been referred to previously).\*\*\*

THIS IS AN INTERESTING DISPATCH BECAUSE IT SHOWS CLEARLY THAT COMTHIRDFLT WAS STRONGLY MOTIVATED BY THE BROAD INSTRUCTIONS WHICH HE HAD BEEN GIVEN BY CINCPAC.\*\*\*\* IN ORDER TO UNDERSTAND THIS, IT SEEMS WISE TO QUOTE HERE THE REFERENCES ABOVE REFERRED TO:

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- \* COM3RDFLT Dispatch 220234 October 1944 to SECNAV, info CINCPAC, COMINCH, CTF 38.
  - \*\* SARTORIAL involved the capture of Lingayan Gulf and was scheduled at this time for December 20th.
  - \*\*\* COM3RDFLT Dispatch 220344 October 1944 to CINCPAC.
  - \*\*\*\* CINCPAC Operation Plan No. 8-44, Serial 000851, September 27th, 1944.



(1) PARAGRAPH 3(A) CONTAINED INSTRUCTIONS TO COMMANDER WESTERN PACIFIC TASK FORCES TO "DESTROY ENEMY NAVAL AND AIR FORCES IN OR THREATENING THE PHILIPPINES AREA. PROTECT AIR AND SEA COMMUNICATIONS ALONG THE CENTRAL PACIFIC AXIS";

(2) PARAGRAPHS 3(X)(1) AND (2) CONTAINED THE COORDINATING INSTRUCTIONS FOR THOSE PACIFIC OCEAN AREA FORCES CONCERNED WITH KING II. PARAGRAPH 3(X)(1) DIRECTED THE ABOVE FORCES TO (1) "MAINTAIN AND EXTEND UNREMITTING MILITARY PRESSURE AGAINST JAPAN. APPLY MAXIMUM ATTRITION TO ENEMY AIR, GROUND AND NAVAL FORCES AND MERCHANT SHIPPING, BY ALL POSSIBLE MEANS IN ALL AREAS. IN CASE OPPORTUNITY FOR DESTRUCTION OF MAJOR PORTION OF THE ENEMY FLEET OFFER OR CAN BE CREATED, SUCH DESTRUCTION BECOMES THE PRIMARY TASK". AND PARAGRAPH 3(X)(2) INFORMED THEM THAT "NECESSARY MEASURES FOR DETAILED COORDINATION OF OPERATIONS BETWEEN THE WESTERN PACIFIC TASK FORCES AND FORCES OF THE SOUTHWEST PACIFIC WILL BE ARRANGED BY THEIR RESPECTIVE COMMANDERS".

THESE QUOTATIONS SHOW PLAINLY THAT COMTHIRDFLT WAS STRONGLY INFLUENCED BY THE DESTRUCTION OBJECTIVES HE HAD BEEN ASSIGNED AND NOTABLY BY THE CONCEPT THAT IF AN OPPORTUNITY TO DESTROY A MAJOR PORTION OF THE ENEMY FLEET DID NOT OFFER HE WAS TO ENDEAVOR TO CREATE SUCH AN OPPORTUNITY. IN EITHER CASE, SUCH DESTRUCTION BECAME HIS PRIMARY TASK.

THE MANNER WITH WHICH HE REACTED TO HIS ORDERS AS ABOVE EXPLAINED WAS FORECAST IN THE DISCUSSION OF THE COORDINATION OF OPERATIONS BETWEEN COMSOWESPAC AND CINCPAC IN VOLUME I. THEREIN, THE WEAKNESS OF ORDERS OF THIS NATURE, WITH PARTICULAR REFERENCE TO THE FACT THAT THEY COULD ADVERSELY AFFECT THE COVERING AND SUPPORT MISSIONS ASSIGNED COMTHIRDFLT, ARE DISCUSSED.\*

At 1300 he received a dispatch from CTG 30.5 requesting that, since the 1000-mile search with a PB4Y was an emergency procedure requiring an extreme overload take-off, he be authorized to reduce all searches by 200 miles (i.e., to 800 miles) as soon as the emergency was over.\*\* CTG 30.5 was here referring to the sectors (northwest quadrant) being flown by the PB4Y-1 (Fleet Air Wing ONE) land-based air squadrons operating from Tinian Island. COMTHIRDFLT took no action on this request at this time, possibly because, having planned to send his major strength to Ulithi for replenishment, he desired to maintain these searches which would cover his command from the north to a limited degree. Perhaps he felt that this would reduce his need for carrier searches in that direction. However, if this was the basis of his reasoning, should not his morning and afternoon search sectors have been expanded to cover the sectors somewhat more to the eastward in order to close the gap between the 1000-mile searches from Tinian and his own searches?

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\* Volume I, Battle for Leyte Gulf (NavPers 91973), Naval War College, 1953, Chapter II (a)(3)(a).

\*\* CTG 30.5 Dispatch 212357 October 1944 to COM3RDFLT.



At 1406, having received a dispatch from CTG 38.2 concerning a plane from the BUNKER HILL to be employed as a courier plane to Peleliu Island,\* he advised that commander that the BUNKER HILL would be released on the following day as soon as she had completed fueling.\*\*

At 1409 he directed CTU 30.9.1 and COMAIRSEVENTHFLT (Logistics) that, unless otherwise directed, he was to sail the CVE's BARNES, SITKOH BAY, CAPE ESPERANCE and KWAJALEIN with escorts to arrive at Enewitok November 4th where he was to report for duty to CTG 30.8.\*\*\* Thus, it is clear that COMTHIRDFLT was wisely making advance preparations for the supply of replacement aircraft during November.

At 1414 he advised COMAIRSEVENTHFLT (Logistics), in part, that the ESSEX and LEXINGTON would not have availability at Manus as planned and therefore he requested that all available space on the CVE's carrying replacement aircraft be employed to transport VF planes and pilots to meet needs of the carriers of TG's 38.2 less BUNKER HILL, 38.3 and 38.4.\*\*\*\*

At 1417 he informed CINCPAC that it was his present intention to send his carrier groups to Ulithi as follows: (a) two groups (to be in Ulithi) from October 25th to October 29th; and (b) two groups (to be there) from October 29th to November 3rd.\*\*\*\*\* It is to be noted, from this dispatch, that he included COMSEVENTHFLT as an information addressee but did not include COMSOWESPAC. Why this was so is not explained, but it seems probable that he felt that the method by which he accomplished his covering and support mission was a matter of his own judgement. Therefore, so long as he retained forces in a strategic position adequate to accomplish his covering and support responsibilities, his other actions were solely within the purview of CINCPAC.

At 1422, in the light of his previous dispatches, he asked COMAIRSEVENTHFLT (Logistics) to state his requirements and advised him that he planned to return the NASSAU and STEAMER BAY to Manus upon completion of their duty at Ulithi in early November.\*\*\*\*\*

At 1430 he received a dispatch from C.G. FIFTH Air Force stating that he planned to strike (a) Coron Bay from 0000 to 0200 the following morning with four snoopers (B-24's) and (b) Cagayan (Mindanao) with two groups of heavies (B-24's) between 1115 and 1200 the same day.\*\*\*\*\*

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- \* CTG 38.2 Dispatch 220425 October 1944 to COM3RDFLT.
  - \*\* COM3RDFLT Dispatch 220506 October 1944 to CTG 38.2.
  - \*\*\* COM3RDFLT Dispatch 220509 October 1944 to CTU 30.9.1 and COMAIR7THFLT (Logistics), info CTF 38, CTG's 38.1 and 30.8, COMAIRPAC, CINCPAC.
  - \*\*\*\* COM3RDFLT Dispatch 220514 October 1944 to TGC's of TF 38, CTG 30.9.1, COMAIRPAC, CINCPAC, CTF 32.
  - \*\*\*\*\* COM3RDFLT Dispatch 220517 October 1944 to CINCPAC info CTF 38, COM7THFLT.
  - \*\*\*\*\* COM3RDFLT Dispatch 220522 October 1944 to COMAIR7THFLT (Logistics), COMCARTRANSRONSPAC, COMAIRPAC, CINCPAC.
  - \*\*\*\*\* C.G. 5TH Air Force Dispatch 221214/I October 1944 to C.G. 310TH Bombardment Wing, CAAF SOWESPAC, CTF 73, C.G. 13TH Air Force, TG's 77, 78, 79, COMSOWESPAC, COM7THFLT, TG 38.



At 1440 he (a) advised CTG 30.8, among other items, that his previous instructions regarding fueling CTF 38 were cancelled and that he now planned to fuel (1) TG 38.2 on October 23rd in Area MICK, (2) TG 38.3 on October 26th in Area ALCOHOL, (3) TG 38.2 on October 27th in Area ALCOHOL, (4) TG's 38.1 and 38.4 on November 1st in Area KIMONO, and (5) TG's 38.1 and 38.4 on November 4th in Area GAMBOL, and (b) directed CTG 30.8 to maintain six oilers in Area ALCOHOL between October 23rd and November 4th.\*

A STUDY OF THIS DISPATCH AND HIS 210517 DISPATCH TO CINCPAC SHOWS THAT COMTHIRDFLT PLANNED TO HAVE, BETWEEN OCTOBER 23RD AND NOVEMBER 1ST, TWO CARRIER TASK GROUPS IN STRATEGIC SUPPORT AND TWO CARRIER TASK GROUPS EN ROUTE TO, IN, AND RETURNING FROM ULITHI. OWING TO THE FACT THAT EACH OF THE FUELING AREAS DESIGNATED WAS NEARER ULITHI THAN WAS THE PRECEDING ONE, I.E., MICK TO ALCOHOL TO KIMONO (PLATE VI), THE PLOT ALSO SHOWS CLEARLY THAT COMTHIRDFLT'S ABILITY TO OPERATE ADEQUATELY IN STRATEGIC SUPPORT BECAME LESS AND LESS AS HIS CARRIER TASK GROUPS MOVED MORE AND MORE TO THE EASTWARD FROM HIS PRESENT (DIAGRAM D) SUPPORT POSITION. (IT IS ABOUT 800 MILES FROM THIS SUPPORT POSITION TO ULITHI). HE WOULD BE LEAST ABLE TO OPERATE IN STRATEGIC SUPPORT ON OCTOBER 29TH WHEN ALL FOUR TASK GROUPS WOULD NECESSARILY BE IN THE VICINITY OF ULITHI WITH TG'S 38.2 AND 38.3 HEADING FOR THE ENTRANCE AND TG'S 38.1 AND 38.4 RETURNING TO WHATEVER STRATEGIC SUPPORT POSITION WAS TO BE DESIGNATED.

At 1458 he advised CTF 57 that he desired CTG 30.9 to route and sail all ships in direct support of the THIRDFLT.\*\*

At 1515 he received a dispatch from CTG 30.5 requesting that he order forward certain marine fighter squadrons and one utility squadron.\*\*\*

At 1530 he intercepted his seventh contact report of the day made at 1400 by a Morotai-based plane on nine large merchant ships escorted by five destroyers in Latitude 11° - 47'N, Longitude 116° - 20'E, course 240°(T), speed twelve.\*\*\*\*

At 1537 he advised CTF 57 and CTG 30.9 that (a) the ammunition ships (1) CANADA VICTORY, AUSTRALIA VICTORY and LASSEN were now at Ulithi, (2) SHASTA and MT HOOD were at Manus, and (3) MERIDIAN VICTORY was at Kossol Roads where she was available for issue to the SEVENTHFLT, (b) all other ammunition ships were under control of COMSEVENTHFLT and (c) he considered that this disposition was adequate to replenish four task groups at Ulithi and BUNKER HILL at Manus. Finally, he requested CTG 30.9

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\* COM3RDFLT Dispatch 220540 October 1944 to CTG 30.8, info COMINCH, CINCPAC, all TFC's 3RDFLT, CTU 30.9.1, all TGC's 3RDFLT.

\*\* COM3RDFLT Dispatch 220558 October 1944 to CTF 57, info CTG 30.9, etc.

\*\*\* CTG 30.5 Dispatch 220644 October 1944 to COMAIR7THFLT, CTF's 59, 57, info COM3RDFLT, C.G. FMFPAC, COMAIRSOPAC, COMSOPAC, etc.

\*\*\*\* Search Plane Dispatch 220610 October 1944 to C.G. 5TH Air Force.



to advise immediately if the ammunition available at Ulithi was insufficient for present requirements.\*

At 1629 he received COMSOWESPAC's reply to his 210645 wherein, after stating that his present operations in strategic position to meet the threat of enemy fleet forces were somewhat restricted by the necessity of covering the SOWESPAC transports and other vulnerable overseas movements, he had requested early advice regarding the withdrawal of such units to safe positions.\*\* In this reply, which is quoted in full under "Operations of COMSOWESPAC, October 21st", COMSOWESPAC, after pointing out that he had moved for the first time beyond his own land-based air cover because he was promised full support by the THIRDFLT, stated that he considered that COMTHIRDFLT's mission to cover KING II was essential and paramount.\*\*\*

Upon the receipt of this dispatch COMTHIRDFLT undoubtedly re-estimated the situation, giving thorough consideration to the orders which he had issued during the forenoon which, commencing with the following morning, would reduce his covering forces off Luzon Island from four to two carrier task groups. However, he clearly decided that, for the present, no changes in his plans were justified for he permitted his recent orders to stand as issued.

At 1705 he informed his command that, within the next few days he anticipated considerable increase in enemy submarine activity in the Philippine Sea in the vicinity of Palau and the Marianas. He therefore cautioned all hands to be particularly alert and to report all probable contacts immediately.\*\*\*\* This was a sound warning to his command for he had recently received reports of contacts on Japanese submarines on October 18th,\*\*\*\*\* 19th,\*\*\*\*\* and 21st,\*\*\*\*\* which appeared to be en route from the Empire. Why he included Palau and the Marianas is not quite clear unless, in the case of Palau, knowing that shipping both to and from Leyte passed nearby, he wished to alert CTF 77 to this enemy capability and in the case of the Marianas, he wished to alert aircraft primarily.

At 1720 he amplified his report of the previous day to COMSOWESPAC regarding the strikes by CTG's 38.2 and 38.3 on the Bicol - Visayas area, October 21st, by stating that (a) there were thirty-seven more planes

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- \* COM3RDFLT Dispatch 220637 October 1944 to CTF 57, CTG 30.9, info CINCPAC, CTF 38, etc.
  - \*\* COM3RDFLT Dispatch 210645 October 1944 to COMSOWESPAC, info CINCPAC, CTF 77, COMINCH, CTF 38, CTG 38.1.
  - \*\*\* COMSOWESPAC Dispatch 212240 October 1944 to COM3RDFLT, info COMINCH, CINCPAC, CTF 38, CTG 38.1, CofS U.S. Army (Marshall).
  - \*\*\*\* COM3RDFLT Dispatch 220805 October 1944 to 3RDFLT, info CINCPAC, CTF 77, COMSOWESPAC.
  - \*\*\*\*\* War Patrol Report BLACKFIN, Report of 1ST War Patrol, Serial 021, December 4th, 1944.
  - \*\*\*\*\* War Diaries CINCPAC, COMFWDAREA (CTF 57), October 1944.
  - \*\*\*\*\* BARBEL Dispatch 210907 October 1944 to COMSUBPAC, info COM3RDFLT.



remaining at the airfields in northern Negros, and (b) all of these, except one, were single-engine and most were camouflaged.\*

Also at this time he learned that CINCPAC had passed to COMINCH his (COMTHIRDFLT's) 220344.

At 1800 he received a dispatch from COMNAVGRPCHINA to the effect that (a) the search being made (over the South China Sea) had been turned back by weather, and (b) the weather forecast probably prevents the coming night search also.\*\* This was of course, disappointing news for, as early as 2207 October 19th, he had advised CINCPAC that he considered that so long as the activity and movement of the enemy continued as at present the continuation of the FOURTEENTH Air Force search was vital.\*\*\* Now it appeared that, at least until the following day, no reconnaissance of the above important waters would be made by Allied aircraft. This was correct for no night searches were conducted because of weather.\*\*\*\*

At 2037 he received a Fox broadcast of a contact report from the SEA DOG to the effect that at 0730 that day she had attacked a large convoy with numerous escorts in Latitude 29° - 18'N, Longitude 129° - 45'E, on course 215°(T), speed nine knots, and had made two hits in one cargo ship.\*\*\*\*\*

At 2201 he issued instructions for the transfer (a) from TG 30.3 of COMCRUDIV TEN in the BOSTON and the CHARRETTE, BELL, BURNS and BOYD temporarily to TG 38.4 and then later, upon arrival at destination, to TG 38.1 and (b) from TG 38.4 to TG 30.3 of DESDIV ELEVEN less CRAVEN, (MAURY, GRIDLEY, HELM, McCALL). He also directed that (a) with the departure of COMCRUDIV TEN, the Commanding Officer CANBERRA\*\*\*\*\* would become CTG 30.3 and (b) upon arrival Ulithi, CTG 38.4 was to detach COMDESDIV TWENTY-FOUR, with WILKES, NICHOLSON, SWANSON to CTF 57.\*\*\*\*\*

At 2204 he recommended to CINCPAC that weather from SOWESPAC be sent via Manus Fox only, as the weather reports were being duplicated on RDO Hollandia and MRDO Honolulu Foxes, thus crowding the schedules.\*\*\*\*\*

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- \* COM3RDFLT Dispatch 220820 October 1944 to COMSOWESPAC, CINCPAC info COM7THFLT and TGC's 3RDFLT.
  - \*\* COMNAVGRPCHINA Dispatch 220741 October 1944 to COMSOWESPAC, info CINCPAC and COM3RDFLT.
  - \*\*\* COM3RDFLT Dispatch 191307 October 1944 to CINCPAC, info COMSOWESPAC, CTF 38.
  - \*\*\*\* Director, Library Division, USAF History, Air University letter, November 8th, 1950, to President, Naval War College.
  - \*\*\*\*\* SEA DOG Dispatch 220149 October 1944 to COMSUBPAC.
  - \*\*\*\*\* Captain Alexander R. Early, U.S. Navy.
  - \*\*\*\*\* COM3RDFLT Dispatch 221301 October 1944 to CTG's 38.4, 30.3, info CINCPAC, CTF 38, CANBERRA, COMCRUDIV 10, etc.
  - \*\*\*\*\* COM3RDFLT Dispatch 221304 October 1944 to CINCPAC, info COM7THFLT, RDO's Honolulu, Manus, Hollandia.

At 2247 he received a dispatch from CTU 30.5.1 (seaplane squadrons and tenders at Kossol Passage) reporting that all searches were negative.\*

A REVIEW OF HIS DECISIONS AND ACTIONS ON THIS DAY INDICATES THAT HE (1) PLANNED TO OPERATE HIS FORCES MORE IN DISTANT SUPPORT THAN IN THE IMMEDIATE VICINITY OF THE OBJECTIVE AREA, (2) WAS NOT NOW ANTICIPATING A MAJOR FLEET ENGAGEMENT, AND (3) PLANNED A GRADUAL WITHDRAWAL OF HIS FORCES FROM SUPPORT OF KING II IN ORDER TO BE PREPARED AND IN POSITION FOR THE NEXT SCHEDULED OPERATION (HOTFOOT).

WHILE HIS ACTIONS IN SO DOING, IN THE LIGHT OF HINDSIGHT, MIGHT APPEAR UNSOUND, IT MUST BE REMEMBERED THAT AT THIS TIME HE WAS BETWEEN TWO GRINDSTONES--THE NECESSITY FOR COVERING AND SUPPORTING KING II AND THE NECESSITY OF READINGY FOR HOTFOOT. AS COMSOWESPAC STATED, IN REGARD TO THE COVERING AND SUPPORTING PHASE, "THE METHOD BY WHICH YOU FULFILL THAT RESPONSIBILITY RESTS, OF COURSE, ENTIRELY ON YOUR JUDGEMENT",\*\* SO COMTHIRDFLT FELT THAT WHAT HE HAD DONE WAS THE BEST HE COULD DO UNDER THE CIRCUMSTANCES.

However, despite this apparent fact, and in view of his actions in the early morning of the following day, it seems probable that sometime before midnight a question arose in his mind as to the wiseness of his planned operations for the morrow, for the searches which he had ordered CTG 38.3 to conduct on that day were all from Area CONDOR and all were to the NW ( $280^{\circ}$  -  $350^{\circ}(T)$ ), merely touching the eastern shores of Luzon (300 miles); he had ordered no searches through the Sibuyan Sea although the Japanese forces contacted on this day could conceivably arrive in the Coron Bay - Mindoro Strait - Sibuyan Sea area by the next morning. He commenced pondering the matter.

At 2400, in the NEW JERSEY with TG 38.2, he was bearing  $310^{\circ}(T)$ , distant seventy miles from Point MICK.

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\* CTU 30.5.1 Dispatch 221045 October 1944 to COM3RDFLT, info all TFC's 3RDFLT, CTF's 57, 59, CTG 30.5.

\*\* COMSOWESPAC Dispatch 212240 October 1944 to COM3RDFLT, info COMINCH, CINCPA, CTF's 77, 38, CTG 38.1.



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(1) TF 38 (Fast Carrier Force), October 22nd.

(a) Operations of CTG's 38.1, 38.2 and 38.4.

(1) At the beginning of the day CTG 38.1, who was CTC in the WASP with TG 38.1, in company with CTG 38.4 in the FRANKLIN with TG 38.4, was about 100 miles east of Point READY where, in accordance with COMTHIRDFLT dispatch instructions issued October 20th, he was to (a) rendezvous at 0600 with CTG 38.2, (b) assume tactical command of the task groups in company this day, and (c) operate in an area within a fifty-mile radius of Point READY. He knew, since it was contained in the same dispatch instructions, that CTG 38.2 had been directed to launch a morning and afternoon 300-mile search in sector 290° - 360°(T).\*

At 0148 he made radar contact with TG 38.2, bearing 230°(T), distant thirty miles.\*\* At this time he directed all groups to form fleet disposition 3W which was finally effected by 0309.\*\*\*

At 0610 he noted aircraft being launched by TG 38.2 (actually, these planes were being launched by the HANCOCK).\*\*\*\* He realized that this was the search which had been ordered by COMTHIRDFLT.\* At 0644 he intercepted (a) COMTHIRDFLT's request of CTG 38.2 for information concerning the details of the search plan, and (b) CTG 38.2's reply that he had launched a seven-sector search through 290° - 360°(T) to 300 miles.\*\*\*\*\*

At 0725 CTG 38.4 detached the BILOXI, escorted by the HELM and NICHOLSON, to proceed with orders to report to TG 38.2 for duty.\*\*\*\*\*

At 0758 he (CTG 38.1) detached the MARSHALL also to report to CTG 38.2.\*\*

At 1000 the BILOXI joined TG 38.2.\*\*\*\*\*

At 1023 he, as well as CTG 38.4, received a TBS voice radio message from COMTHIRDFLT in which that commander (a) directed them to proceed in company this day in time to arrive at Point CONDOR at 0600 October 23rd and there join TG 38.3 and (b) advised them that there

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\* COM3RDFLT Dispatch 201222 October 1944 to CTF 38, CTG 30.8 and all TFC's and TGC's of TF 38, info CINCPAC, COMSOWESPAC, CTF 77, etc.  
\*\* War Diary CTG 38.1, October 22nd, 1944.  
\*\*\* War Diary COWPENS, October 22nd, 1944.  
\*\*\*\* Action Report HANCOCK, October 6th - 31st, 1944, Serial 0100, November 3rd, 1944, Annex K.  
\*\*\*\*\* COM3RDFLT TBS Voice Radio Message 220644/I October 1944 to CTG 38.2 and CTG 38.2's reply.  
\*\*\*\*\* War Diary HELM, October 22nd, 1944.  
\*\*\*\*\* War Diary BILOXI, October 22nd, 1944.

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would be further orders on the fleet broadcast.\* Since he would continue as OTC and since Point CONDOR was about 200 miles ESE of his present position, he continued his routine air patrol (CAP, ASP and SNASP) while heading generally in an easterly direction.\*\*

At 1025 he noted, as an information addressee, that CTG 38.2 had received a TBS voice radio message from COMTHIRDFLT directing him to detach the HANCOCK to CTG 38.1 for temporary duty prior to the departure of that task group (for Point CONDOR).\*\*\* (In accordance with this dispatch, CTG 38.2 at 1105 by visual dispatch directed (a) the HANCOCK, escorted by the STOCKHAM and WEDDERBURN, to proceed at 1300 to join CTG 38.1, and (b) upon completion of this escorting task the two destroyers were to rejoin TG 38.2).\*\*\*\*

At 1142 he learned that (a) CTG 38.2, having been told by his search planes upon recovery that the weather conditions to the north and west were most unfavorable for flying, had advised COMTHIRDFLT by TBS voice radio to this effect and had recommended that the afternoon search be cancelled,\*\*\*\*\* and (b) at 1150 COMTHIRDFLT had approved of this recommendation and had directed CTG 38.2 to proceed to Point MICK for fueling to arrive at 0700 the following morning.\*\*\*\*\*

Although the above TBS voice radio messages were to CTG 38.2, they were, very likely, intercepted by both CTG's 38.1 and 38.4 who were in company. CTG 38.1 now knew that at this time CTG 38.2 was detached and was proceeding independently. For this reason, this latter task group will be treated as an independent unit for the remainder of the day.

By 1225, the HANCOCK morning search, (consisting of seven each VF and VB) which had made no contacts, had been recovered.\*\*\*\*\*

At 1457 the HANCOCK, which had been detached from TG 38.2, joined his task group (TG 38.1).\*\*\*\*\*

At 1535 HELM rejoined TG 38.4.\*\*\*\*\*

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\* COM3RDFLT TBS Voice Radio Message 220115 October 1944 to CTG's 38.1, 38.4, info CTG 38.2.

\*\* Deck Log WASP, October 22nd, 1944.

\*\*\* COM3RDFLT TBS Voice Radio Message 220121 October 1944 to CTG 38.2, info CTG 38.1.

\*\*\*\* CTG 38.2 Visual Dispatch 220205 October 1944 to STOCKHAM, WEDDERBURN, HANCOCK, info COM3RDFLT.

\*\*\*\*\* CTG 38.2 TBS Voice Radio Message 221142/I October 1944 to COM3RDFLT.

\*\*\*\*\* COM3RDFLT TBS Voice Radio Message 221150/I October 1944 to CTG 38.2.

\*\*\*\*\* War Diary HANCOCK, October 22nd, 1944.

\*\*\*\*\* War Diary HELM, October 22nd, 1944.



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At 1706 he received COMTHIRDFLT's dispatch 220248 (quoted in full under "Operations of COMTHIRDFLT, October 22nd") giving instructions for building up from the NASSAU and STEAMER BAY the VF strength of the (a) FRANKLIN and ENTERPRISE to fifty-four VF, (b) HANCOCK also to fifty-four VF, as practicable.\*

At 1732 he, as well as CTG 38.4, received COMTHIRDFLT's dispatch to which that commander had referred in his morning TBS voice radio message. This dispatch directed TG 38.1, plus HANCOCK in company with TG 38.4 plus WASHINGTON, ALABAMA, DESDIV 100, to depart Point CONDOR at 0600 October 23rd, to (a) proceed Ulithi to arrive 0600 October 25th, (b) rearm, fuel, provision, and (c) to be ready for sea at dawn October 29th.\*\*

At 1910 he received, as an information addressee, the orders from COMTHIRDFLT transferring COMBATPAC in WASHINGTON with the ALABAMA and DESDIV 100 from TG 38.3 to TG 38.4.\*\*\*

At 2055 he intercepted COMTHIRDFLT's dispatch advising CINCPAC of his present (1417 October 22nd) intention to send two carrier groups to Ulithi October 25th to 29th and two groups there October 29th to November 3rd. He realized that, with this dispatch, TF 38 had now returned to the basic employment schedule\*\*\*\* with the exception that TG's 38.1 and 38.4, rather than TG's 38.2 and 38.3, were the first two groups to be ordered to Ulithi.

From sunrise to sunset each group maintained routine air patrols consisting of a CAP of eight VF, an ASP of four VT, and a SNASP of four VT and four VF (CTG 38.1 maintained a CAP of twelve VF until early afternoon, presumably reducing to eight as he proceeded to withdraw to Point CONDOR).\*\*\*\*\*

During the day the disposition made (a) two enemy air contacts\*\*\*\*\* and one interception on a land attack plane which

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- \* COM3RDFLT Dispatch 220248 October 1944 to CTG's 38.1, 38.4, info CTF 38, COMAIR7THFLT (Logistics), CTU 30.8.12.
  - \*\* COM3RDFLT Dispatch 220219 October 1944 to CTG's 38.1, 38.4, info COMINCH, CINCPAC, all TFC's and TGC's 3RDFLT, etc.
  - \*\*\* COM3RDFLT Dispatch 220214 October 1944 to CTG's 38.2, 38.3, info COMINCH, CINCPAC, all TFC's and TGC's 3RDFLT, etc.
  - \*\*\*\* COMLSTCARTASKFORPAC (CTF 38) Operation Order No. 11-44, Serial 00020, October 1st, 1944, Annex C, Employment Schedule.
  - \*\*\*\*\* Action Report WASP, Operations against Okinawa, Miyako Jima, Northern Luzon, Formosa, Manila Bay Area, Leyte, Support of Battle of Leyte Gulf, and Enemy Naval Units Western Visayas, October 2nd - 27th, 1944, Serial 0040, October 28th, 1944; also War Diary HORNET, October 22nd, 1944.
  - \*\*\*\*\* War Diary CTG 38.4, October 22nd, 1944.

escaped in the clouds,\* and (b) two sound contacts (DUNLAP at 0215, FARENHOLT at 2212),\*\* both of which proved to be false.

At 2400, on course 100°(T), speed sixteen knots, his two task groups were in a mean position of Latitude 14° - 18'N, Longitude 128° - 40'E, bearing (mean) 281°(T), distant 100 miles from Point CONDOR. At this time TG 38.1 had a total of 187 VF, 67 VB and 72 VT and TG 38.4 a total of 109 VF, 44 VB and 54 VT.

(2) CTG 38.2, with TG 38.2, commenced operating independently at 1150 although he remained well within range of CTG 38.1.

At 1158, in accordance with instructions from COMTHIRDFLT, he detached the HANCOCK with orders to report to CTG 38.1.\*\*\* At 1354 the HANCOCK, escorted by the destroyers STOCKHAM and WEDDERBURN, departed in accordance with the above orders.\*\*\*

Having received, at 1304, a request from COMTHIRDFLT for a plane to go to Pelelieu,\*\*\*\* and having at 1325 recommended the BUNKER HILL,\*\*\*\*\* he received at 1406 authority to employ that carrier which would be released to him when fueled on the following morning.\*\*\*\*\* He therefore, at 1435, issued preliminary instructions thereon to the BUNKER HILL.\*\*\*\*\*

At 1449 he issued his fueling plan for the next morning,\*\*\*\*\* and at 1800 he noted that the STOCKHAM and WEDDERBURN, which had completed their escorting assignment, had rejoined the formation.\*\*\*\*\*

From sunrise to sunset he maintained a CAP of twelve VF and a SNASP of four VF and four VT in addition to the morning search to 300 miles in the northwest sector. He made no enemy contacts.

At 2400 on course 073°(T), speed sixteen knots, he was bearing 310°(T), distant seventy miles from Point MICK. At this time TG 38.2 had a total of 137 VF, 47 VB and 53 VT.

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- \* War Diary CTG 38.1, October 22nd, 1944; also Action Report WASP, Operations against Okinawa, Miyako Jima, Northern Luzon, Formosa, Manila Bay Area, Leyte, Support of Battle of Leyte Gulf, and Enemy Naval Units Western Visayas, October 2nd - 27th, 1944, Serial 0040, October 28th, 1944.
  - \*\* War Diary DESRON 46, October 22nd, 1944.
  - \*\*\* War Diary HANCOCK, October 22nd, 1944.
  - \*\*\*\* COM3RDFLT TBS Voice Radio Message 220404 October 1944 to CTG 38.2.
  - \*\*\*\*\* CTG 38.2 Visual Dispatch 220425 October 1944 to COM3RDFLT.
  - \*\*\*\*\* COM3RDFLT Visual Dispatch 220506 October 1944 to CTG 38.2.
  - \*\*\*\*\* CTG 38.2 Visual Dispatch 220535 October 1944 to BUNKER HILL, info COM3RDFLT.
  - \*\*\*\*\* CTG 38.2 Visual Dispatch 220549 October 1944 to TG 38.2.
  - \*\*\*\*\* War Diary DESRON 53, October 22nd, 1944.



## (b) Operations of CTG 38.3, October 22nd.

At the beginning of the day CTG 38.3, with TG 38.3, was about 120 miles west of and en route to Point MICK to fuel and receive replacement aircraft from units of TG 30.8 (Replenishment Group).\*

At 0545 he rendezvoused in Latitude 14° - 36'N, Longitude 129° - 32'E, with the fueling group which included nine oilers (NEOSHO, SCHUYLKILL, ESCAMBIA, MONONGAHELA, TOMAHAWK, KENNEBAGO, CHIKASKIA, PATUXENT, PECOS), and two escort carriers (NEHENTA BAY and SARGENT BAY), and a number of screening destroyers and destroyer units. There were no replacement carriers with this group as the SITKOH BAY had departed October 21st.

At 0628 he commenced fueling on course 105°(T), speed ten knots.\*\* Although his carriers required five replacement aircraft and had nineteen flyable duds\*\*\* which should have been exchanged for new aircraft, there were none available. Consequently, he received no new aircraft and therefore retained all of his flyable duds which he now either had to operate without or make fit for combat.

At 1128 he advised CTF 38 that, in view of the lack of any instructions, upon completion of fueling he intended to return to Point READY unless directed otherwise by that commander.

At 1135 he ordered CTG 30.8 to proceed as previously directed and he set his own group on course 280°(T) toward Point READY.

At 1635 he received COMTHIRDFLT's dispatch instructing his group (a) to proceed to Point CONDOR (Latitude 13° - 55'N, Longitude 130° - 15'E) to arrive at 0600 Item October 23rd, (b) to rendezvous there with TG's 38.1 and 38.4, at which time COMBATPAC, in WASHINGTON with ALABAMA and DESDIV 100 (COGSWELL, CAPERTON, INGERSOLL, KNAPP), was to report to CTG 38.4 for temporary duty, and (c) to operate in Area CONDOR and maintain morning and afternoon search in sector 280° - 350°(T) to a distance of 300 miles.\*\*\*\*

At 1732 he learned that COMTHIRDFLT now planned, on the following morning, to retire TG's 38.1 plus HANCOCK and 38.4 plus WASHINGTON, ALABAMA and DESDIV 100 to Ulithi to arrive October 25th.\*\*\*\*\*

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- \* COM3RDFLT Dispatch 201222 October 1944 to CTF 38, all TGC's of TF 38, COM7THFLT, CTG 30.8, info COMINCH, CINCPAC, all TFC's and TGC's 3RDFLT.  
 \*\* War Diary LEXINGTON, October 22nd, 1944.  
 \*\*\* Flyable duds were considered those aircraft incapable of properly performing their mission without being repaired.  
 \*\*\*\* COM3RDFLT Dispatch 220214 October 1944 to CTG's 38.2, 38.3, info COMINCH, CINCPAC, all TFC's and TGC's 3RDFLT, etc.  
 \*\*\*\*\* COM3RDFLT Dispatch 220219 October 1944 to CTG's 38.1 and 38.4, info COMINCH, CINCPAC, all TFC's and TGC's 3RDFLT, etc.

At 1808, having recovered his planes, he headed at seventeen knots via a circuitous route to rendezvous with TG's 38.1 and 38.4 the next morning at Point CONDOR (Diagram D). He steamed on course 150°(T) until 2330 when he changed course to 060°(T).\*

Because of his fueling operations, his air operations for the day were limited. Except for the usual CAP and ASP, his only air operations consisted of four night fighters from the ESSEX for a two-hour training exercise, which planes were recovered at dawn.

From sunrise to sunset he maintained a CAP of eight VF and an ASP of four VB/VT; in addition, during fueling and until noon, he maintained a three-plane inner ASP flown first by the NEHENTA BAY and then by his cruiser planes (OS2U KINGFISHER).\*\*

He made no enemy contacts and lost no aircraft nor pilots during the day from enemy action, although one VF from the LANGLEY suffered an operational casualty, and one VF from the LEXINGTON was jettisoned because of previous combat damage.\*\*\*

At 2400 CTG 38.3, on course 060°(T), speed seventeen, was about forty miles south of his 0600 rendezvous position (Point CONDOR). At this time TG 38.3 had a total of 137 VF, 55 VB and 54 VT.

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\* Deck Log ESSEX, October 22nd, 1944.

\*\* War Diary CTG 38.3, October 22nd, 1944.

\*\*\* War Diary LANGLEY, October 22nd, 1944; also Deck Log LEXINGTON, October 22nd, 1944.



(3) Operations of CTG 30.5 (Air Search, Reconnaissance and Photographic Group), October 22nd.

CTG 30.5, as on previous days, continued his air searches from Kossol Passage, Saipan and Tinian as shown on Diagram D.

At 0857 he requested that, since the 1000-mile search with the PB4Y was an emergency procedure requiring an extreme overload take-off, he be authorized to reduce all PB4Y searches--NW quadrant from Tinian--to 800 miles as soon as the emergency was over.\*

This dispatch is of interest in that it would appear that CTG 30.5, who it will be recalled was in the HAMLIN at Ulithi, believed that his planes were actually flying the 1000-mile searches from Tinian when, in fact (as pointed out under "Operations of CTG 30.5, October 21st"), most of them were more likely flying searches to about an 870 mile radius.

At 1027 he advised COMAIRPAC that two of his three squadrons based on Tinian were experiencing a critical shortage of spare parts and flight crews.\*\*

At 1230 a plane in sector  $326^{\circ} - 335^{\circ}(T)$  from Tinian reported sighting at 1215 two unidentified enemy warships (later amplified as being two destroyers) in Latitude  $26^{\circ} - 30^{\circ}N$ , Longitude  $138^{\circ} - 13^{\circ}E$ , on course  $250^{\circ}(T)$ , speed twenty-five knots, and that at time of sighting the warships changed course to  $160^{\circ}(T)$ \*\*\*

What these ships were is not known as the Japanese records available to this analysis are silent on this point. However, the chances are that they were small auxiliaries returning possibly from Iwo Jima.

At some time between 1100 and 1230, depending upon whether the sector was flown clockwise or counterclockwise, the two planes in sectors  $299^{\circ} - 308^{\circ}(T)$  and  $308^{\circ} - 317^{\circ}(T)$  should have made visual or radar contact on the Japanese Main Force (Plate XVI, and Diagram D) but failed to do so.

Since it is most unlikely that a patrol plane with radar functioning would have failed to contact a force of that magnitude, except under the most adverse weather conditions, it seems clear that either (a) the Japanese Main Force was not in the NW sector at this time, or (b) the patrol planes concerned did not fly within visual or radar range of the force by reason of either (1) faulty navigation, or (2) by having failed to

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\* CTG 30.5 Dispatch 212357 October 1944 to COM3RDFLT.

\*\* CTG 30.5 Dispatch 220127 October 1944 to COMAIRPAC, info COM3RDFLT, CTU 30.5.3, etc.

\*\*\* 49V223 Dispatches 220330 and 220630 October 1944 to officer controlling Flight V223.

fly the full distance--which means having flown a distance so short that even radar search along the course (about eighty miles for a convoy)\* was ineffective. (In the aircraft action reports reviewed, the searches were reported as being usually flown at low altitudes, i.e., about 2000 feet, although altitudes varying from 1000 to 6000 feet were recorded. Under ordinary atmospheric conditions an altitude of 5000 feet would have to be flown to gain radar contact on a surface object at a distance of eighty miles).\*\*

What are the facts? As regards item (a) there is no doubt as to the location of the Japanese Main Force. There are numerous positions available which clearly show that the track of the force closely approximated that shown on Diagram D and therefore at 1050 the force was about 900 miles from Tinian.

As regards item (b)(1), it is considered that patrol plane navigation should have been accurate to within approximately thirty miles but, to avoid undue conjecture stemming from the insufficiency of evidence available on this day to confirm or dispute this postulation, it will be given little weight in the discussion to follow; as regards item (b)(2), this problem will be analyzed in a manner similar to that employed under "Operations of CTG 30.5, October 21st".

In examining the master flight logs for VPB's 102, 116 and 117 (those squadrons responsible for flying the searches under discussion), the actual time on search for the planes averages out to 11.9 hours. This shows that the search planes on this day averaged even less range than did the planes on the previous day. However, this was not as serious as it was on the previous day because on this day, as pointed out above, the Main Force was 100 miles inside the 1000-mile circle.

Analysis of the minimum flight time which could have made contact (employing radar) gives 11.9 hours. This is based on the fact that a plane flying for that many hours at 150 knots ground speed should cover approximately 1800 miles. Since the crossleg was 100 miles, this would leave 850 miles the extreme limit of search. Assuming that at the time the patrol plane was at its outer limit, the Main Force was 100 miles inside the search circle, there would be a difference of fifty miles to be searched by radar. This was within the radar capabilities of the day although it was distinctly marginal.

Since all but three of the search planes in the NW sector flew distances greater than this, it became necessary to examine these three planes to discover whether or not one or two of them could

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\* Anti-Submarine Instructions, United States Fleet (USF-8), Department of the Navy, Office of the Chief of Naval Operations, 1947, Chapter 20, Page 20-1.

\*\* BOWDITCH, Table 8.



have been at fault. The master flight logs show that these three planes flew 11.9, 11.6 and 7.5 hours. Clearly, then, the 11.9-hour flight being marginal was suspect, whereas the planes which flew 11.6 and 7.5 hours, and particularly the latter, were more than suspect.

Mindful of this, letters of interrogation were written to each of the patrol plane commanders flying this day for whom there was not already information available. Of those who replied, none were able to positively identify the sector. One pilot reported that his flight included five hours of instrument flying, thereby introducing the factor of reduced visual search but not necessarily that of reduced radar coverage.

Based on the foregoing, it cannot be stated categorically that any specific plane flew short of the force a sufficient distance to preclude contact.

However, from these letters, and from certain other information available to this analysis, it can be stated categorically that:

(a) At least three of the search planes in the NW quadrant from Tinian flew searches short enough to preclude, or make doubtful, radar contact on the Main Force;

(b) The planes of the carrier ZUIKAKU did not contact any navy PB4Y-1's ("Operations of Commander Main Force, October 22nd");

(c) The weather was good in the vicinity of the Main Force.\*

Therefore, it seems likely that (a) the plane in the critical sector and the plane in the less critical sector adjacent thereto did not fly sufficiently far to gain contact, and (b) these planes were one or more of the three above referred to. Whether or not this was reported to their immediate superiors is not known since the usual daily search summary for this sector, if made, cannot be located.

However, at this point it seems wise to emphasize the fact that while the above, as stated, seems likely, it may not be entirely correct. This seems so for there was a tendency within the patrol plane squadrons flying the NW search from Tinian to deviate from their assigned search missions to attack shipping and shipping facilities.

A case in point occurred on this very day in this very search sector. Two planes flying the Iwo Jima or "hot" sector attacked enemy shipping in the vicinity of Kito Iwo Jima (about forty miles north

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\* War Diary ISUZU, October 22nd, 1944.

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of Iwo Jima). On their return they reported having flown to 1000 miles. Based on the factors submitted in their reports, it is clear that it was not possible for them to have made the attack on Kito Iwo Jima and then to have completed the 1000 mile search. Therefore, it is clear that the plane commanders flew a much shorter distance than they reported.\*

The conduct of these plane commanders was similar to the conduct of the plane commanders of other commands commented on earlier in this analysis and notably those from (a) TG's 38.1 and 38.2, who deviated from their search missions to attack enemy aircraft on October 16th, and (b) TF 73 who deviated from Search Plan FOX on October 19th, and again on October 20th, to attack enemy shipping and aircraft. Since this was contrary to their recently issued special instructions,\*\* and to long standing general instructions,\*\*\* and since no adverse action appears to have been taken against them by their squadron and task group commanders even though their actions did interfere with their search missions, it must be assumed that the latter commanders not only condoned but encouraged such deviations. This assumption, in this case, is based on the fact that in their forwarding endorsements to the reports of the aforementioned plane commanders (a) the squadron commander, after stating, among other items, that the primary mission of reconnaissance could not be sacrificed to the interests of attacking enemy shipping with satisfactory bomb loads, then went on to say that "this restriction against attacking is certainly deleterious to the morale of the aggressive type of pilot who desires to do his share in the war. It further undermines the morale of the crew members who have laboriously trained as gunners and bombardiers to be prevented from employing their weapons against the enemy. Radar operators are becoming thoroughly disgusted when they contact targets but no action is taken due to the fact that the plane has no bombs, does not have the proper bombs, or cannot risk an attack due to the fact that there are insufficient spare parts at the base for repairing damage to the aircraft", (b) CTG 30.5 simply stated that this was a "persistent and successful bombing and strafing attack against enemy shipping from a low level", and (c) COMTHIRDFLT made no comment.

THE ILL EFFECT OF ACTIONS AND OPINIONS SUCH AS THESE AND AN IMPORTANT BATTLE LESSON RESULTING THEREFROM HAS BEEN DISCUSSED UNDER "OPERATIONS OF CTF 73, OCTOBER 20TH". HOWEVER, BECAUSE OF THE ABOVE STATEMENTS OF THE SQUADRON COMMANDER WHICH SHOW CLEARLY THAT HE DID NOT FULLY UNDERSTAND THE REASONS FOR THE RESTRICTIONS AGAINST ATTACKING TARGETS WHEN ON PATROL--I.E., DID NOT UNDERSTAND IN WHAT MANNER HIS SEARCHES CONTRIBUTED TO THE ACCOMPLISHMENT OF THE STRATEGIC AIM, IT SEEMS WELL TO EMPHASIZE HERE THE NECESSITY FOR COMMANDERS TO INSURE THAT THEIR

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\* Aircraft Action Report No. 6, VPB 117, October 22nd, 1944, Serial 098, October 31st, 1944.

\*\* Special Instructions for Search Planes - Aircraft Seventh Fleet, Serial 000167, October 15th, 1944.

\*\*\* Current Tactical Orders and Doctrine, U.S. Fleet Aircraft (USF-76) (Revised), Volume III, Patrol Aircraft, Paragraph 8-102, prepared by Commander Aircraft Scouting Force, February, 1942.



SUBORDINATES FULLY UNDERSTAND THIS MATTER. FAILURE TO DO SO AS HERE EXEMPLIFIED MAY CAUSE BREAKDOWNS IN MORALE, AND EVEN DISLOYALTY.

WHATEVER MAY HAVE BEEN THE REAL REASON FOR FAILING TO DISCOVER THE MAIN FORCE THE GREAT FACT REMAINS THAT THE MAIN FORCE WAS IN THE SEARCH AREA AND WAS NOT LOCATED BY A SEARCH DESIGNED TO DISCLOSE THE PRESENCE OF EVEN LESSER TARGETS.

THUS THE CRITICISMS AND EVEN PREDICTIONS MADE OF PREVIOUS DAYS AND REFERRED TO ABOVE REGARDING THE INDEPENDENT ACTIONS OF PATROL PLANES IN ARBITRARILY DEPARTING FROM THEIR ASSIGNED SEARCHES TO ATTACK AND DESTROY ENEMY AIRCRAFT HAD NOW BECOME REALITIES.

At 1544, having determined that air facilities at Peleliu and Ulithi were now ready for the flight echelon of certain marine air units scheduled to be deployed to these bases, he requested that orders be issued for these units to move forward.\*

Sometime during the early evening he received (a) a warning from COMTHIRDFLT to the effect that within the next four days he anticipated considerable increase in enemy submarine activity in the Philippine Sea vicinity of Pagan and Marianas and cautioning all hands to be particularly alert and to report immediately probable contacts.\*\* Since this was addressed to THIRDFLT for action, he did not feel that any implementing instructions were necessary, (b) reports from several of his search unit commanders as follows: (1) from CTU 30.5.1 to the effect that the seaplanes searching the 600-mile sector 300° - 360°(T) from Kossol Passage had completed their searches to the full distance with a coverage of 100 per cent\*\*\* and (2) from CTU 30.5.2 to the effect that the PV's and PBM's searching the 600-mile sector 353° - 063°(T) from Saipan/Tinian had completed their searches to the full distance with a coverage of 100 per cent except sectors 353° - 003°(T), 033° - 043°(T), 043° - 053°(T) and 053° - 063°(T) where the coverage was eighty per cent, ninety-five per cent, seventy-five per cent and seventy per cent respectively with no explanation given for the reduced coverage.\*\*\*\*

As has been previously noted, he appears to have received no reports regarding the searches to the northwest of Tinian, nor did he receive any reports concerning the PV searches to the southeast of Tinian.

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- \* CTG 30.5 Dispatch 220644 October 1944 to COMAIR7THFLT, CTF's 57, 59 info COM3RDFLT, COMAIRPAC, etc., also COMFWDAREA Operation Plan No. 7-44, Serial 001477, October 1st, 1944; R. Sherrod, History of Marine Corps Aviation in World War II, (Combat Forces Press, 1952), Page 257.
- \*\* COM3RDFLT Dispatch 220805 October 1944 to 3RDFLT, info CINCPAC, CTF 77, COMSOWESPAC.
- \*\*\* CTU 30.5.1 Dispatch 221045 October 1944 to COM3RDFLT, info all TFC's 3RDFLT, CTF's 57, 59 and CTG 30.5.
- \*\*\*\* CTU 30.5.2 Dispatch 220838 October 1944 to COM3RDFLT, info all TFC's 3RDFLT, CTF's 57, 59 and CTG 30.5.

## (2) Operations of CTF 17 (Submarine Force Pacific), October 22nd.

By 0518 (when it was received by CTG 38.1) CTF 17 received his first contact report, but not from one of his own submarines. Instead, it was a dispatch from CTF 71 reporting a submarine contact on three large unidentified ships estimated to be cruisers at 0200 in Latitude 07° - 31'N, Longitude 115° - 22'E (west of Balabac Strait), on course 020°(T), speed twenty-one knots\* (Plate XXXIII, Contact 6).

At 0832 (when it was received by COMTHIRDFLT) he received a dispatch from the SEADRAGON reporting a contact at 2335 October 21st on one carrier and four unidentified ships in Latitude 21° - 47'N, Longitude 118° - 36'E, on course 210°(T), speed nineteen knots, and stating that she had scored two timed hits in the carrier but was forced down by escorts and unable to observe results\*\* (Contact 5).

He now had reports of (a) one CV, three CA's, four DD's at 1530 October 21st in Formosa Strait heading NE, (b) three probable cruisers at 0200 west of Balabac Strait on course 020°(T) and (c) one CV and four unidentified ships on course 210°(T) SW of Formosa. What he thought this portended is not known but, since he had information to the effect that Japanese oilers had been ordered to Coron Bay, it seems likely that he considered it a possibility that the units reported in items (b) and (c) were heading for that bay or perhaps for Manila, and if he considered it a possibility that the units contained in items (a) and (c) were one and the same (actually they were separate forces, one heading for Japan, the other was heading for Manila Bay) he could then visualize the possible concentration at Coron Bay or Manila Bay as one CV, six CA/CL's and four DD's. Knowing, as he did, that there were TF 17 submarines in Areas DELETE and DESTROY he hoped to hear further relative to item (c).

About this time, knowing that the SKATE had terminated her patrol and departed her station in Area ABDUCT, he appears to have issued routing instructions for her to proceed to Pearl Harbor.\*\*\*

Shortly after noon he received an amplifying report from CTF 71 stating that the chasing submarine had lost contact at 0800 on the three large ships in Latitude 09° - 23'N, Longitude 115° - 20'E (Dangerous Ground), on course 332°(T), speed twenty-one knots, and that the tops of one dimly seen was probably a battleship\*\*\*\* (Contact 9). Although this contact was in Dangerous Ground where the navigational dangers were not well known, he could see that in addition to the original concept of a rendezvous at Coron Bay or Manila Bay there was a possibility of a rendezvous in the South China Sea as well, with the force contacted earlier by the SEADRAGON.

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\* CTF 71 Dispatch 211941 October 1944 to CINCPAC, CTF 17, etc.

\*\* SEADRAGON Dispatch 212140 October 1944 to CTF 17.

\*\*\* War Patrol Report SKATE, Report of 6TH War Patrol, Serial 052, November 2nd, 1944.

\*\*\*\* CTF 71 Dispatch 220207 October 1944 to CINCPAC, CTF 17, COM3RDFLT, etc.



At 1221 he issued a movement notice to some of his submarines. In this notice he included, among others, the PARCHE, SAILFISH and BARBEL in Saipan safety lane; BONEFISH eastbound in Latitude 20° - 45'N, Longitude 126° - 09'E; WHALE and SEAHORSE eastbound in Latitude 22° - 00'N, Longitude 151° - 00'E; and HADDOCK, HALIBUT and TUNA westbound in Latitude 19° - 00'N, Longitude 133° - 00'E.\* Although not stated in the notice, in checking the diagram (Diagram E) it is clear that these positions must have been predicted for the following day, although in the latter two cases the positions were from 120 to 240 miles out of actual position.

At 1231 his force communication officer suggested to CTG 17.7 that, effective 0900 October 23rd, he issue instructions to his tenders and submarines to guard certain frequencies.\*\*

During the day he appears to have received information of a contact on the preceding day on enemy warships in Latitude 28° - 13'N, Longitude 138° - 15'E (NW of the Bonins) for at 1656 he advised the SEA FOX, which was operating in this area, of the contact.\*\*\*

In the late afternoon he learned that the FOURTEENTH Air Force daylight search for this day had been turned back by weather and that the night search would likely be cancelled also.\*\*\*\* This was of some concern to him for it temporarily eliminated a source of information for use by his submarines.

At 1842 he informed his command, among other items, (a) that the BONEFISH had joined, and (b) of the SEADRAGON's report of two timed hits in a heavily escorted carrier off Formosa.\*\*\*\*\*

At 1854 he amended his order of the previous day, in which he extended the SNOOK's patrol until October 31st, to read that she would remain with the SHARK wolf pack until completion of that pack's patrol at sunset November 7th.\*\*\*\*\* This approximated the date of November 10th requested by the SNOOK on October 20th.

Later he also received (a) the dispatch from the DRUM reporting three ASASHIO-class destroyers at 1745 in Latitude 19° - 33'N, Longitude 118° - 52'E, on course 180°(T), speed estimated at twenty-five knots\*\*\*\*\* (Plate XXXIII, Contact 12); although this was an interesting contact, he could see that these ships had by now crossed into the SOWESPAC area of

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\* CTF 17 Dispatch 220321 October 1944 to all interested commands.  
 \*\* CTF 17 Dispatch 220331 October 1944 to CTG 17.7.  
 \*\*\* CTF 17 Dispatch 220756 October 1944 to SEA FOX.  
 \*\*\*\* COMNAVGRPCHINA Dispatch 220741 October 1944 to COMSOWESPAC, info CINCPAC, COM3RDFLT.  
 \*\*\*\*\* CTF 17 Dispatch 220942 October 1944 to all submarines.  
 \*\*\*\*\* CTF 17 Dispatch 220954 October 1944 to all submarines.  
 \*\*\*\*\* DRUM Dispatch 221037 October 1944 to CTF 17, SEAFISH and ICEFISH.

responsibility (Latitude 18° - 30'N), and (b) a dispatch from the SEA DOG, patrolling Area ABANDON of MARU MORGUE, reporting (1) a large convoy with numerous escorts in Latitude 29° - 18'N, Longitude 129° - 45'E, at 0730, on course 215°(T), speed nine knots, and (2) two hits in a cargo ship,\* (Contact 8). From the fact that this report had been long delayed in receipt, he could see that the SEA DOG had either been forced down or had chosen to submerge for the day before sending this report.

During this time he learned that COMTHIRDFLT anticipated considerable increase in enemy submarine activity in the Philippine Sea, in the vicinity of Palau and the Marianas within the next few days. In the case of the Marianas, this was particularly important news, for Saipan, being an advanced submarine base, was being used by friendly submarines and confusion could result.\*\*

Near the end of the day he received another contact report (quoted under "SHARK, BLACKFISH, SEADRAGON"), this time from the SHARK, to the effect that she was amplifying an earlier contact report for which she had received no acknowledgement and stating, in part, that she had contacted four large ships and three additional ships at 0630 on course 190°(T), speed twenty-two knots (Contact 7) and further reporting that the SEADRAGON claimed two timed hits in the carrier.\*\*\* It seems highly probable, from this dispatch and from the fact that the SHARK and SEADRAGON were in the same wolf pack, that CTF 17 realized that both reports referred to the same Japanese task force in which case there was evidence that the carrier had been disabled and had fallen out of formation. He likely expected to hear more about the carrier.

As indicated both by the contents of this dispatch and by the delay in receipt from time of contact, CTF 17 could see that the SHARK had attempted to deliver this message many hours earlier and had correctly retransmitted it when failing to receive an acknowledgement on the Fox broadcast schedule.

About this same time he received still another contact report. The ICEFISH (in a message delayed due to communication difficulty)\*\*\*\* reported "two heavy cruisers and three destroyers in Latitude 19° - 44'N, Longitude 118° - 11'E, at 0930, on course 160°(T), speed sixteen knots, (Contact 10). Unable to close".\*\*\*\*\* She also stated it was the only contact to date and requested an extension of patrol.

At the end of the day CTF 17 could now summarize his days contacts and evaluate the enemy movements. Unfortunately, due to difficulty in

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\* SEA DOG Dispatch 220149 October 1944 to CTF 17, info MARU MORGUE.  
 \*\* COM3RDFLT Dispatch 220805 October 1944 to 3RDFLT, info CINCPAC.  
 \*\*\* SHARK Dispatch 221410 October 1944 to CTF 17, info COM3RDFLT.  
 \*\*\*\* War Patrol Report ICEFISH, Report of 1ST War Patrol, Serial 011, November 13th, 1944.  
 \*\*\*\*\* ICEFISH Dispatch 221301 October 1944 to CTF 17.



one form or another, all reports of the important combatant forces were delayed, but in plotting the contacts and evaluating the contact reports he could estimate that the contacts of the SEADRAGON, SHARK and ICEFISH were probably the same force and he could also see that this force had changed course from  $210^{\circ}(T)$  through south to the final course of  $160^{\circ}(T)$  with various speeds of sixteen to twenty-two knots. The final course of  $160^{\circ}(T)$  now indicated a possible destination of the Manila or Coron area instead of a rendezvous in the South China Sea. He could see by the DRUM's contact on three destroyers that they were operating separately but could have the same destination as the larger force.

If this was his estimate it was correct for (a) the contacts made by the SEADRAGON, SHARK and ICEFISH although somewhat dissimilar as regards composition, were all on the same force--the Japanese SECOND Striking Force which was en route Manila, and (b) the contact made by the DRUM was on Japanese DESDIV TWENTY-ONE also en route Manila.

Thus, if he had had any qualms concerning the fact that he had returned many of his submarines from their special reconnaissance stations to their normal antishipping stations, these contacts would have dispelled them. This seems so for (a) his submarines, even in their normal stations were continuing to contact enemy combatant forces and (b) the enemy forces so far contacted were of limited size and composition.

(a) CONVOY COLLEGE.

The submarines SAWFISH, ICEFISH, DRUM (in one coordinated attack group--wolf pack); SHARK, BLACKFISH, SEADRAGON (in another); with the SNOOK operating independently; patrolled CONVOY COLLEGE as before. All submarines experienced very heavy seas, strong winds, and reduced visibility\* which made operations during the day difficult.

(1) SAWFISH, ICEFISH, DRUM.

This coordinated attack group (wolf pack) patrolled Area DELETE, operating on the surface during darkness and submerged during daylight.\*\*

(a) The wolf pack commander, who was also the Commanding Officer SAWFISH, commencing about midnight heard numerous voice radio reports between the units of the SHARK wolf pack (well to the northward) relating to contacts on and tracking of an enemy force which, after a time, he determined to be a contact on a carrier force heading southwest at speeds from fifteen to twenty-two knots. He estimated, by plotting, that he could not close the contact under the present conditions of the sea and felt that by remaining where he was he had as good a chance of interception as he would by moving to the westward. He therefore decided to remain in the same

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\* War Patrol Report ICEFISH, Report of 1ST War Patrol, Serial 011, November 13th, 1944.

\*\* Deck Logs SAWFISH, ICEFISH, DRUM, October 22nd, 1944.

general area to his ultimate disappointment for the last course given for the carrier was 210°(T) "which left us out in the cold".\*

Actually, this was not an enemy carrier force but was, instead, the Japanese SECOND Striking Force en route from Mako to Manila consisting at this time of two heavy cruisers, one light cruiser, and four destroyers.

Why the wolf pack commander in the SAWFISH did not endeavor to obtain more information from the wolf pack commander in the SHARK is not known. Perhaps he expected the latter commander to broadcast the information on 450 kcs in accordance with doctrine.\*\* This matter is commented on more fully under "SHARK, BLACKFISH and SEADRAGON".

At 0600 the SAWFISH submerged to conduct submerged patrol. She surfaced at 1922, having had an uneventful patrol. Upon surfacing, she learned by SJ radar from the DRUM that that submarine had contacted three destroyers on course 180°(T), speed twenty-five knots and had made a contact report.\*

(b) Whether or not the ICEFISH intercepted the contact report from the SHARK, as did the SAWFISH, is not indicated but she submerged for patrol at 0600. At 0815 she sighted an unidentified medium bomber and shortly afterward (at 0855), she sighted by periscope a destroyer at 8000 yards distant. This contact later developed into a task force estimated to consist of two NACHI-class heavy cruisers on course 160°(T), speed sixteen knots to eighteen, escorted by three destroyers, (Contact 10). She was unable to close and therefore at 1031 surfaced in heavy seas and attempted to send a contact report to CTF 17, but because of enemy aircraft, was forced to submerge before she had accomplished this.\*\*\* The evaluation of the composition of this contact, which was also on the Japanese SECOND Striking Force, was short one light cruiser and one destroyer.

At 1959 she surfaced for the night and again made several attempts to transmit the contact report,\*\*\*\* experienced difficulty, and by midnight she was still not sure that this message had been cleared.\*\*\*

(c) The DRUM patrolled uneventfully during the day until 1745 when, between that time and 1756, she sighted by periscope, in Latitude 19° - 33'N, Longitude 118° - 52'E, three enemy destroyers, (Contact 12). Before she could fire, she was forced to submerge to 100 feet. In the meantime, the destroyer nearest her, which was not using echo

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\* War Patrol Report SAWFISH, Report of 8TH War Patrol, Serial 88-44, November 8th, 1944.

\*\* CTF 17 Operation Plan No. 1-43, Serial 0807, June 24th, 1943, Annex A, Article 2213.

\*\*\* War Patrol Report ICEFISH, Report of 1ST War Patrol, Serial 011, November 13th, 1944.

\*\*\*\* ICEFISH Dispatch 221301 October 1944 to CTF 17, info COM7THFLT.



ranging equipment (presumably due to her high speed), passed within 200 yards and appeared to have no knowledge of her presence. The commanding officer commented in his patrol report--"These were the first targets worthy of torpedoes that the DRUM has seen since November 22, 1943! The epitome of frustration!"\*

At 1853 she surfaced and sent a contact report to CTF 17, SAWFISH and ICEFISH reporting three ASASHIO-class destroyers on course 180°(T), speed twenty-five knots.\*\*

This contact was on DESDIV TWENTY-ONE, composed of the three destroyers WAKABA, HATSUSHIMA and HATSUHARU (all of the HATSUHARU-class); en route from Takao to Manila, and which was assisting in the movement of the SIXTH Base Air Force to the Philippines.\*\*\* Since the reports of these destroyers available to this study do not include this period of time, it cannot be stated whether or not the Japanese knew that they had been sighted by Allied submarines. (The HATSUHARU-class destroyer is very similar to the ASASHIO-class).\*\*\*\*

(2) SHARK, BLACKFISH, SEADRAGON.

This wolf pack was patrolling Area DETECT and had been alerted by a contact report from the SEADRAGON at 2345 on the previous night. The wolf pack commander proceeded to intercept the contact operating on the surface during darkness and submerged during daylight.\*\*\*\*\* During the period of contact and chase the pack exchanged a number of voice messages, some of which are included in the discussion below.\*\*\*\*\*

(a) At 0015 the SEADRAGON reached a good firing position ahead of the task force. The night was very dark and the targets were not sighted until range was 5000 yards. The Commanding Officer SEADRAGON estimated its composition as one aircraft carrier, four large unidentified ships, and three or four destroyers (Contact 5).

This was an erroneous estimate as the force was actually the Japanese SECOND Striking Force which as mentioned previously, was composed at this time of two heavy cruisers, one light cruiser and four destroyers. Why one of these ships was identified as a carrier is not known,

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\* War Patrol Report DRUM, Report of 11TH War Patrol, Serial 056, No Date, but about November 9th, 1944.

\*\* DRUM Dispatch 221037 October 1944 to CTF 17, SAWFISH, ICEFISH, etc.

\*\*\* War Diary DESRON 1, October 1944, WDC Document 161638, NA 11739.

\*\*\*\* A Statistical Summary of the Japanese Navy (ONI 222-J), Navy Department, Office of the Chief of Naval Operations, July 20th, 1944, Design Classes, Pages 25, 57.

\*\*\*\*\* Deck Logs BLACKFISH, SEADRAGON, October 22nd, 1944.

\*\*\*\*\* War Patrol Report SEADRAGON, Report of 11TH War Patrol, Serial 194, November 8th, 1944; also Report of Coordinated Patrol of TG 17.11 (SHARK, BLACKFISH, SEADRAGON), Serial 002, November 28th, 1944.

but it seems likely that the Commanding Officer SEADRAGON was affected by the report on the previous day by Allied search aircraft that a force consisting of one carrier, three heavy cruisers, and four destroyers was in Formosa Strait and had concluded that this contact was on the same force.

The SEADRAGON, on the surface, fired four torpedoes at a JUNYO-class carrier (sic) at 0035 but before the torpedoes were due to hit she was forced to submerge by one of the destroyers which dropped five depth charges.\* This latter statement of the SEADRAGON is not entirely supported by available Japanese documents. While the ABUKUMA reported the sound of depth charges at this time,\*\* neither her report nor the other available reports have any reference to any attack by Allied submarines or any counterattack by Japanese units.

She surfaced at 0220 and chased the enemy, during which time she learned, by voice radio message interception, that the SHARK and BLACKFISH had also contacted this enemy force. She continued to endeavor to close the enemy. Meanwhile, at 0412 she received a voice radio message from the wolf pack commander in the SHARK giving the location, course and speed of the enemy and asking if an aircraft carrier was present, thereby implying that the wolf pack commander also felt that perhaps this enemy force was the one previously reported by aircraft in Formosa Strait. To this, at 0418 she replied that she had fired at an aircraft carrier. At 0453 she advised the wolf pack commander that she could not close the enemy and then queried that commander as to whether or not he had sent a contact report.\*\*\*

Sometime before 0640, probably on authority of the wolf pack commander, she sent a contact report to CTF 17 reporting, among other items, that she had (a) at 0035 fired four torpedoes at a Japanese force of one carrier and four unidentified ships in Latitude 21° - 47'N, Longitude 118° - 36'E, course 210°(T), speed nineteen knots, and (b) scored two timed hits in the carrier.\*\*\*\*

At 0737 she submerged in her assigned area (a subdivision of Area DETECT).

From this time until the end of the day her patrol was uneventful. At 1859 she surfaced for the night.

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- \* War Patrol Report SEADRAGON, Report of 11TH War Patrol, Serial 194, November 8th, 1944.
  - \*\* War Diary ABUKUMA, October 16th - 26th, 1944, WDC Document 161636, NA 11973.
  - \*\*\* Report of Coordinated Patrol of TG 17.11 (SHARK, BLACKFISH, SEADRAGON), Serial 002, November 28th, 1944.
  - \*\*\*\* SEADRAGON Dispatch 212140 October 1944 to CTF 17.



THE SEADRAGON'S CLAIMS AS EXPRESSED IN HER (A) CONTACT REPORT MENTIONED ABOVE AND (B) HER WAR PATROL REPORT WHEREIN SHE CLAIMED TWO HITS IN THE CARRIER AND ONE IN A PROBABLE CRUISER WHICH WAS OVERLAPPING AT THE TIME OF FIRING, WERE INCORRECT. NOT ONLY WAS THERE NO CARRIER PRESENT BUT ALSO NOT HITS WERE MADE IN ANY OF THE JAPANESE SHIPS.

WHY, IF THE SEADRAGON BELIEVED THAT SHE HAD MADE TWO HITS IN THE CARRIER, SHE SEEMS TO HAVE MADE NO EFFORT TO LOCATE IT IS NOT EXPLAINED.

(b) The wolf pack commander in the SHARK had just (a) before midnight (at 2345) received a contact report on an enemy task force from the SEADRAGON giving its composition, course and speed, and the location of the contact relative to her own position, and (b) after midnight (at 0012) received a corrected enemy course, speed and composition.\*

From this time onward the sole communications between the three submarines of this wolf pack consisted entirely of reports of the enemy's course and speed, with submarine reference positions being given on occasions.\* It is clear therefore that the wolf pack commander did not attempt to coordinate the attacks of his submarines as set forth by wolf pack doctrine, which was to the effect that "the submarine that makes the initial contact should not attack until at least one other submarine has made contact, unless the delay involved would jeopardize any chance of attack.\*\*

While the reason for this is not entirely clear, it seems highly probable that the wolf pack commander felt that the high speed of the enemy force, which was variously reported as from sixteen to twenty-two knots, would prevent such coordination.

The wolf pack commander now commenced closing the enemy force and at 0220 he contacted it bearing 286°(T), distant twelve miles, on course 220°(T), speed fifteen knots.

He continued to close until he was five miles from the contact, at which time (0412), apparently seeing no carrier in the contact, he queried the SEADRAGON in part as follows, "interrogative aircraft carrier" and was promptly advised by the SEADRAGON in part, that she had "fired at aircraft carrier",\* which statement, although believed to be a fact, actually was erroneous. From this, it seems probable that the wolf pack commander now considered that this force was likely the force reported previously in Formosa Strait.

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\* Report of Coordinated Patrol of TG 17.11 (SHARK, BLACKFISH, SEADRAGON), Serial 002, November 28th, 1944.

\*\* Submarine Warfare Instructions, United States Fleets (USF 9), Navy Department, Office of the Chief of Naval Operations, 1946, Paragraphs 1408, 1410 and 1411.

HOWEVER, SINCE HE NOW HAD REASON TO BELIEVE THAT THE CARRIER WAS NO LONGER IN THE JAPANESE DISPOSITION SINCE HE COULD NOT SEE IT, DOES IT NOT SEEM SURPRISING THAT HE NEITHER NOW NOR LATER MADE ANY EFFORT TO SEARCH FOR THIS DAMAGED CARRIER?

He continued to endeavor to get into a firing position, but at 0504 broke off the chase. At this time he sent a contact report to CTF 17 which he presumably thought had cleared the ship for he now submerged to resume normal patrol, (Contact 7).

Shortly after surfacing for the night, he likely received a dispatch from CTF 17 to the effect that the SNOOK, already designated to join his wolf pack, had received an extension of patrol to remain with them until November 7th,\* the expiration date of the present patrol.

Later in the evening, having received no acknowledgement on the evening radio Fox broadcasts for his contact report sent during the morning, he now at 2310 transmitted a second report of his morning contact, stating that he had contacted at 0630 four large ships and three additional ships, on course 190°(T), speed twenty-two knots, in Latitude 20° - 28°N, Longitude 117° - 50°E and further reporting that the SEADRAGON claimed two hits in a small carrier.\*\* This report was in error for, although the number of Japanese ships reported was correct, the sizes, numbers and even the positions of these ships in the formation appear to have been reversed.

IT WILL BE NOTED THAT THE WOLF PACK COMMANDER APPEARS TO HAVE BELIEVED THAT HIS ORIGINAL CONTACT HAD BEEN SUCCESSFULLY TRANSMITTED AND TO HAVE WAITED FOR TWO OF THE SCHEDULED FOX BROADCASTS (AT 2000 AND 2200) FOR AN ACKNOWLEDGEMENT OF HIS ORIGINAL CONTACT REPORT. IF HE HAD ANY DOUBTS CONCERNING THE RECEPTION OF HIS ORIGINAL CONTACT REPORT, DOES IT NOT APPEAR THAT HE SHOULD HAVE TAKEN MEASURES MUCH EARLIER TO ENSURE ITS RECEPTION IN ACCORDANCE WITH STANDING INSTRUCTIONS?

At 2247 he attempted to regroup his pack and to determine what contact reports, if any, had been sent to CTF 17 but was unable to contact the SEADRAGON at this time\*\*\* and therefore did not know that that submarine had made a contact report sometime before 0640 to CTF 17. At 2310 he issued instructions for the next day's patrol, and at 2345 he ordered the BLACKFISH to form a scouting line and to patrol course 220°(T).\*\*\*

(c) The BLACKFISH was also receiving the running reports of the enemy's course and speed while en route to an intercepting position. At 0335 she made radar contact at 32,000 yards on a task force of eight ships in Latitude 20° - 58°N, Longitude 118° - 12°E, course 210°(T), speed

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\* CTF 17 Dispatch 220954 October 1944 to all submarines.

\*\* SHARK Dispatch 221410 October 1944 to CTF 17, info COM3RDFLT.

\*\*\* Report of Coordinated Patrol of TG 17.11 (SHARK, BLACKFISH, SEADRAGON), Serial 002, November 28th, 1944.



eighteen knots. The composition was evaluated as three very large with three smaller pips in separate groups and one pip to eastward of the main body and one to westward. At 0430 she observed the enemy speed increased to twenty-two knots, but she continued trailing until 0504 when she notified the wolf pack commander in the SHARK that she could not close.\* At 0600 she broke off the chase, changed course for patrol station, and submerged.\*\*

Upon surfacing for the night, the crew of the BLACKFISH, as on the previous days, experienced sickness from an undetermined cause with no apparent improvement.\*\*

### (3) SNOOK.

This submarine was patrolling Area DESTROY independently and at the beginning of the day was en route to an intercepting position across the extended track of a ship on which she had received a report. Between 0400 and 0630 the SNOOK intercepted reports from the SHARK on the SEADRAGON's carrier task force indicating that this force, although over 100 miles distant (actually it was about 180 miles away), was heading in her direction. At 0633 she submerged for patrol on the projected track of this task force.\*\*\*

At 1926 she surfaced and being under orders to report to and join the SHARK's wolf pack for patrol after dark on October 24th and realizing that the enemy force should be well past her by this time, set course to close the SHARK to be in a position to be able to join as ordered. Some time after this she received orders from CTF 17 which authorized her to patrol with the SHARK wolf pack until that wolf pack terminated its patrol at sunset on November 7th.\*\*\*\* She made no contacts.\*\*\*

### (4) BLACKFIN.

The BLACKFIN, west of Luzon Strait, was proceeding toward Latitude 18° - 30'N, Longitude 118° - 00'E, where at 0600 on this day she had orders to transfer to operational control of CTF 71 and patrol Area A8, north of Scarborough Shoal. Although there is no record of her reporting to CTF 71, she appears to have arrived in the designated position at 0600 for at 0929 she arrived in Area A8 and submerged for patrol.\*\*\*\*\*

At 1929 she surfaced and continued patrol of this area. At 2200 she received dispatch orders from CTF 71 (a) directing her to proceed

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- \* Report of Coordinated Patrol of TG 17.11 (SHARK, BLACKFISH, SEADRAGON), Serial 002, November 28th, 1944.
  - \*\* War Patrol Report BLACKFISH, Report of 9TH War Patrol, Serial 001, November 24th, 1944.
  - \*\*\* War Patrol Report SNOOK, Report of 7TH War Patrol, Serial 053, November 18th, 1944.
  - \*\*\*\* CTF 17 Dispatch 220954 October 1944 to all submarines.
  - \*\*\*\*\* War Patrol Report BLACKFIN, Report of 1ST War Patrol, Serial 021, December 4th, 1944.

south, remaining west of Longitude 118° - 00'E, thence via Palawan Passage to patrol Area D6 (Plate XII) (which is an area west of Balabac Strait), and (b) requesting (1) acknowledgement and (2) information on torpedoes, fuel on hand and weather.\* Sometime later (presumably after 2130) she reported to CTF 71 that she had remaining twenty-four torpedoes and 77,000 gallons of fuel.\*\* She made no contacts on this day. At 2207 she set course for her assigned patrol area.

Since the BLACKFIN was now attached to CTF 71, discussion of this submarine for subsequent days will be found under "Operations of CTF 71 (Submarines West Australia)".

(5) HADDOCK, HALIBUT, TUNA.

This wolf pack, having departed Saipan on the previous day, was proceeding toward its patrol station in CONVOY COLLEGE to arrive about October 24th. It proceeded generally on the surface during darkness as well as daylight but was forced to submerge several times during the day due to contacts on aircraft.\*\*\*

By the end of the day these submarines were entering the southeast corner of Area PARLOR. They made no contacts of importance.

(6) PINTADO, ATULE, JALLAO.

This coordinated attack group (wolf pack), composed of the above submarines, commenced departing Saipan at 0912\*\*\*\* with the wolf pack commander in the PINTADO and escorted by the PGM-9.\*\*\*\*\*

The wolf pack commander had orders to (a) patrol CONVOY COLLEGE in the Luzon Strait area, (b) not to arrive before October 27th as he was to relieve the SAWFISH wolf pack, whose patrol was due to expire at dark on October 26th, and (c) conduct offensive patrol in order to attack and destroy enemy forces encountered and to report information concerning the movements of important enemy men-of-war and convoys.\*\*\*\*\* He operated on the surface during daylight as well as darkness. At 1524 he entered the Saipan safety lane at which time his escort departed.\*\*\*\*\* He made no contacts of importance.

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\* CTF 71 Dispatch 220154 October 1944 to BLACKFIN.  
 \*\* War Diary CTF 71, October 22nd, 1944.  
 \*\*\* Deck Logs HADDOCK, HALIBUT, TUNA, October 22nd, 1944.  
 \*\*\*\* Deck Log JALLAO, October 22nd, 1944.  
 \*\*\*\*\* War Patrol Report ATULE, Report of 1ST War Patrol, Serial 013, December 11th, 1944.  
 \*\*\*\*\* CTF 17 Operation Order No. 344-44, Serial 00866, October 8th, 1944, to TG 17.16, PINTADO, ATULE, JALLAO.



## (7) BONEFISH.

The BONEFISH, in Luzon Strait, was proceeding eastward en route Pearl Harbor via Saipan. She had been under the operational control of CTF 17 since 0900 the previous day, having at that time reported from CTF 71 for duty and routing. During the morning she experienced numerous aircraft contacts, being forced to submerge once. At 1042 she surfaced and passed south of Sabtang Island and at 1345 completed transit of Balintang Channel. At 2104, while proceeding to Saipan, she received additional routing instructions from CTF 17 but what these instructions were is not indicated. She proceeded on the surface, except for the short interval described above, and made no contacts of importance.\*

## (b) Northwest coast of Formosa.

The TANG, in the area northwest of Formosa, was proceeding from the vicinity of the China coast toward the northwest coast of Formosa. She submerged for the day's patrol at about 1000. During the day the commanding officer sighted numerous aircraft, the quantity and type of which indicated that they were probably replacements for those destroyed in the Formosa raids and for the reinforcement of the Philippines. Although this may be true as the Japanese did commence moving such aircraft at about this time, the number and from whence they came is not fully explained in Japanese records.

THE QUESTION MAY ARISE AT THIS POINT AS TO WHY IT WAS THAT THE COMMANDING OFFICER FAILED TO REPORT THIS INFORMATION. WHILE THERE IS NO ACTUAL ANSWER AVAILABLE, ONE OF THE SHIP'S OFFICERS STATED IN JANUARY 1957 THAT THIS MATTER, AND OTHERS SIMILAR THERETO, HAD BEEN DISCUSSED BY THE COMMANDING OFFICER AND HAD BEEN REJECTED ON THE GROUND THAT THE SENDING OF SUCH DISPATCHES WOULD ALERT THE ENEMY TO HIS PRESENCE AND WOULD REDUCE HIS CHANCE OF SINKINGS.\*\*

BUT WAS THIS DECISION CORRECT IN THIS CASE? IT WOULD APPEAR NOT, FOR INFORMATION OF THE MOVEMENT OF SIZEABLE AIR REINFORCEMENTS INTO FORMOSA WAS OF GREAT IMPORTANCE TO THE ALLIED COMMANDER IN THE SUPERVISION OF HIS PLANNED ACTION AND COULD FORCE HIM TO MAKE MARKED CHANGES IN HIS BASIC PLAN. IN THIS CONNECTION, CURRENT U.S. NAVY INSTRUCTIONS STATE, IN PART, THAT NO MORE IMPORTANT DUTY EXISTS THAN THAT OF OBTAINING AND DELIVERING TO THE OTC INFORMATION OF THE ENEMY FORCES.\*\*\*

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\* War Patrol Report BONEFISH, Report of 6TH War Patrol, No Serial, November 8th, 1944.

\*\* Oral statement by Commander (then Lieutenant) Lawrence Savadkin, USN (Formerly Engineering Officer TANG) to Commodore R.W. Bates, USN (Ret), Head, World War II Battle Evaluation Group, Naval War College, January 9th, 1957.

\*\*\* Basic Fleet Operational Communication Doctrine (NWP 16), Department of the Navy, Office of the Chief of Naval Operations, September 1953, Paragraph 500.b.



Shortly after surfacing at dark, the TANG's radar became inoperative and she headed north for a safer operating area until repairs could be completed which seems to have been accomplished in about two hours for she soon headed south again. Other than the aircraft mentioned above, she made no contacts of importance during the day.\*

(c) Northeast coast of Formosa.

The SILVERSIDES and TRIGGER, less the SALMON, continued to patrol the area northeast of Formosa in the vicinity of Kiirun Harbor watching for the sortie of the Japanese force reported by the TRIGGER to consist of four cruisers and five destroyers which had been sighted on October 19th and which they thought might have entered that port to refuel. They patrolled on the surface during darkness and submerged during daylight. They made no contacts of importance.\*\*

During the evening, having surfaced for the night, the wolf pack commander in the SILVERSIDES communicated with the Commanding Officer TRIGGER by voice radio and then decided that it was no longer advantageous for them to guard Kiirun Harbor and directed that they assume their regular patrol stations.\*\*

The SALMON, having transferred a medical patient to the BARBEL on the previous day, was returning to her station northeast of Formosa. She remained on the surface until 1310 when, since she was approaching enemy-held territory and was about to pass through the strait east of Ishigaki Shima, she submerged.\*\*\*

She surfaced for the night at 1850. At 2135, having cleared the island of Ishigaki Shima, she set a westerly course for her patrol area northeast of Formosa. She made no contacts of importance.\*\*\*

(d) MARU MORGUE.

The six submarine patrol areas comprising this area in the Nansei Shoto were being patrolled by five submarines--the SEA DOG, BILLFISH, SAURY, BURRFISH and STERLET. One patrol area (ABLAZE) continued to remain unoccupied. These submarines patrolled on the surface during darkness and submerged during daylight.\*\*\*\* Moderate winds and seas predominated the area with visibility varying from good to poor because of haze.\*\*\*\*\* The patrols of the above submarines were uneventful except for the following:

(1) The SEA DOG, in Area ABANDON:

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- \* War Patrol Report TANG, Report of 5TH War Patrol, No Serial, September 10th, 1945.
  - \*\* War Patrol Report SILVERSIDES, Report of 11TH War Patrol, Serial 045, November 23rd, 1944.
  - \*\*\* War Patrol Report SALMON, Report of 11TH War Patrol, Serial 0-16, November 10th, 1944.
  - \*\*\*\* Deck Logs SEA DOG, BILLFISH, SAURY, BURRFISH and STERLET, October 22nd, 1944.
  - \*\*\*\*\* Deck Log BURRFISH, October 22nd, 1944.



While patrolling submerged, the SEA DOG sighted smoke by periscope observation at 0617. Upon approach, the smoke developed into a convoy in Latitude 29° - 20'N, Longitude 129° - 45'E. The composition was estimated to be eleven AK's and four escorts, (Contact 8).\*

At 0726 the SEA DOG attacked the convoy, firing six torpedoes. Owing to depth control difficulties, followed by enemy depth charge attacks from 0732 to 1000 (109 depth charges), she was forced to submerge to 500 feet and therefore did not observe results but estimated that she had torpedoed two cargo ships.\* This estimate was almost correct for she had actually sunk two ships; the converted gunboat TOMITSU MARU and an 8215-ton cargo ship, the MURATO.\*\*

Upon reaching periscope depth at 1156--it took her almost one hour to surface--she noted that the enemy had disappeared.\*

At 1618 she surfaced and made a contact report twice on the area frequency and likewise sent one to CTF 17.\*\*\*

(2) The SKATE, having departed Area ABDUCT in MARU MORGUE on the previous night (which area was now being patrolled by the BILLFISH), was proceeding toward Pearl Harbor. At 0915 she received routing instructions (which are not available) from CTF 17,\*\*\*\* She continued on the surface during daylight as well as darkness, except as forced to submerge by patrolling aircraft. This submarine, no longer participating in the KING II operations, will be dropped from discussion but continued on the diagrams for reference.

(e) Nagasaki - Sasebo.

The CROAKER, at the beginning of the day, was patrolling in the vicinity of Osei To in the Yellow Sea off the southwest coast of Korea. She operated on the surface during darkness and submerged during daylight.\*\*\*\*\* During the day she made no contacts. However, at 2138 she made radar contact on a small coastal freighter of about 2000 tons in Latitude 35° - 29'N, Longitude 126° - 05'E, and endeavored to gain an attack position which she had not achieved by midnight.\*\*\*\*\*

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\* War Patrol Report SEA DOG, Report of 1ST War Patrol, No Serial, No Date, but probably about November 5th, 1944.

\*\* Japanese Naval and Merchant Losses During World War II by U.S. Submarines, prepared by the Joint Army-Navy Assessment Committee, February 1947.

\*\*\* SEA DOG Dispatch 220149 October 1944 to CTF 17, info MARU MORGUE.

\*\*\*\* War Patrol Report SKATE, Report of 6TH War Patrol, Serial 052, November 2nd, 1944.

\*\*\*\*\* Deck Log CROAKER, October 22nd, 1944.

\*\*\*\*\* War Patrol Report CROAKER, Report of 2ND War Patrol, Serial 027, November 10th, 1944.

October 22nd

The PERCH remained in southern Tsushima Strait and patrolled across the Nagasaki - Shanghai convoy route during the day in a position to intercept the carrier task force reported headed this way on the previous day.\* She patrolled on the surface during darkness and submerged during daylight and made no contacts.\*\*

(f) HIT PARADE.

(1) The Approaches to Bungo Suido.

The BESUGO and RONQUIL continued guarding the approaches to Bungo Suido. They patrolled on the surface during darkness and submerged during daylight.\*\*\* The wind and seas, which had been quite high, were now decreasing.\*\*\*\* This group contacted several aircraft during the day but made no contacts of importance.

On this day the wolf pack commander, realizing that he had encountered no enemy shipping in his present position and suspecting that the shipping might be entering and departing Bungo Suido in the vicinity of Okinoshima, decided to cover the eastern approaches to Bungo Suido with the BESUGO while at the same time maintaining a coverage of the western approaches with the RONQUIL. He therefore at 1956 (a) advised the Commanding Officer RONQUIL, presumably by voice radio, that he was proceeding with the BESUGO to cover the eastern approaches to Bungo Suido, and (b) directed that commanding officer to remain in the western approaches as before but to extend his area to the northward to cover the area vacated by the BESUGO.\*\*\*\*\*

UNFORTUNATELY FOR THE ALLIES, THESE INSTRUCTIONS HAD BEEN ISSUED TOO LATE FOR, ON THIS VERY MORNING, UNKNOWN TO THE BESUGO WOLF PACK, THE JAPANESE MAIN FORCE FIRST SUPPLY GROUP, COMPOSED OF THE 10,000 TON OILER TAKANE MARU AND THREE ESCORTS, HAD SORTIED BUNGO SUIDO, PASSING OKINOSHIMA AT 0500 EN ROUTE SOUTHERN AMAMI O SHIMA.\*\*\*\*\*

THUS, THE UNHAPPY OCTOBER 18TH DECISION OF THE WOLF PACK COMMANDER IN THE BESUGO,\*\*\*\*\* WHICH DECISION HAD BEEN APPROVED BY

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- \* War Patrol Report PERCH, Report of 3RD War Patrol, No Serial, November 8th, 1944.
  - \*\* Deck Log PERCH, October 22nd, 1944.
  - \*\*\* Deck Logs BESUGO, RONQUIL and GABILAN, October 22nd, 1944.
  - \*\*\*\* War Patrol Report RONQUIL, Report of 2ND War Patrol, Serial 038, November 28th, 1944.
  - \*\*\*\*\* War Patrol Report BESUGO, Report of 1ST War Patrol, Serial 027, November 4th, 1944; also War Patrol Report RONQUIL, Report of 2ND War Patrol, Serial 038, November 28th, 1944.
  - \*\*\*\*\* Detailed Action Report Main Force Supply Force, October 21st - November 1st, 1944, WDC Document 161008.
  - \*\*\*\*\* BESUGO Dispatch 181424 October 1944 to CTF 17.









CTF 17,\* TO CHANGE (A) THE OBJECTIVE OF THE BESUGO WOLF PACK FROM "THE PREVENTION OF THE UNDETECTED SORTIE OF ENEMY TASK FORCES THROUGH BUNGO SUIDO" TO A DESTRUCTION OBJECTIVE--HIS MISSION WAS NOW TO ATTACK,\*\* AND (B) THE DEPLOYMENT OF HIS THREE SUBMARINES FROM ACROSS THE APPROACHES TO BUNGO SUIDO TO (1) TWO SUBMARINES (BESUGO, RONQUIL) ALONG THE 100-FATHOM CURVE OF EASTERN KYUSHU,\*\*\* AND (2) ONE SUBMARINE (GABILAN) NEAR OKINOSHIMA\*\* LATER CHANGED (OCTOBER 19TH) BY CTF 17 TO KII SUIDO,\* HAD CAUSED HIM TO MISS THE PASSAGE OF TWO IMPORTANT ELEMENTS OF THE JAPANESE FLEET (THE MAIN FORCE ON OCTOBER 20TH AND ITS SUPPLY FORCE ON THIS DAY--OCTOBER 22ND).

(2) The Approaches to Kii Suido.

The GABILAN was patrolling south of Muroto Saki in the western approaches to Kii Suido. During the morning she closed this cape and after submerging for the day's patrol, set easterly course to cross over and patrol off the Ichie Saki coast.\*\*\*\*

After surfacing at 1844, she headed into the moon on a southwesterly course until it set and then continued eastward again. She made no contacts of importance.\*\*\*\*

(3) The Approaches to Tokyo Bay.

The TAMBOR and GREENLING were assigned to patrol the eastern and western approaches to Tokyo Bay. These submarines patrolled on the surface during darkness and submerged during daylight.\*\*\*\*\*

The TAMBOR, somewhat eastward of her previous day's position, patrolled uneventfully until 1703 when she sighted a small cargo ship and two escorts heading for Tokyo Bay. She endeavored to get into a firing position but at 1833, having determined that she would not be able to overtake the contact before it reached safe water, she broke off the chase and returned to patrol.\*\*\*\*\*

The GREENLING was now patrolling Enshu Nada. The visibility in this area was poor. After surfacing at 1805 she patrolled between Omai Zaki and Daio Saki. She made no contacts of importance on this day.\*\*\*\*\*

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- \* CTF 17 Dispatch 191007 October 1944 to GABILAN, info BESUGO, RONQUIL.
  - \*\* BESUGO Dispatch 181424 October 1944 to CTF 17.
  - \*\*\* Detailed Action Report Main Force Supply Force, October 21st - November 1st, 1944 WDC Document 161008.
  - \*\*\*\* War Patrol Report GABILAN, Report of 3RD War Patrol, Serial 031, November 13th, 1944.
  - \*\*\*\*\* Deck Logs TAMBOR and GREENLING, October 22nd, 1944.
  - \*\*\*\*\* War Patrol Report TAMBOR, Report of 12TH War Patrol, Serial 08019, November 30th, 1944.
  - \*\*\*\*\* War Patrol Report GREENLING, Report of 11TH War Patrol, No Serial, November 23rd, 1944.

(C) China - Burma - India Theater, October 22nd.

(1) Operations of C.G. FOURTEENTH Air Force.\*

At the start of this day, but one of the two search planes which had departed Liuchow at 2000 the previous evening remained airborne; the other search plane had returned to base because of radar malfunction and had not been replaced. No contacts were made by either plane.

At about 0800 the two planes (LAB-24's) which were to make the day searches departed Liuchow. However, the search proved to be abortive for (a) the plane flying the east course lost an engine and turned back about one hour before reaching the end of her outbound leg, and (b) the plane flying the west course developed mechanical gasoline transfer trouble and also returned to base.

Neither search plane made any contacts.

Because of bad flying conditions, no replacement search planes were sent out.

As a result of the above, C.G. FOURTEENTH Air Force informed COMNAV-GRPCHINA that his daylight search had that day been turned back by weather and that because of the adverse weather forecast, he expected the night search to be cancelled likewise. COMNAVGRPCHINA then, at 1641, advised COMSOWESPAC to this effect by dispatch.\*\* Does it not seem surprising that C.G. FOURTEENTH Air Force did not also notify COMNAVGRPCHINA that the west course search of the previous night had also been aborted?

As C.G. FOURTEENTH Air Force had anticipated, because of weather conditions, he was unable to make the two evening searches. However, he does not appear to have notified COMNAVGRPCHINA to this effect for no dispatch thereon was sent by that commander to COMSOWESPAC. This was unwise for C.G. FOURTEENTH Air Force well knew that COMSOWESPAC considered these searches to be highly important and was basing the SOWESPAC estimates of the situation in part on the positive and negative information reported by these search planes.

As a matter of interest and of hindsight, it seems well to point out here that between late afternoon and evening the Japanese SECOND Striking Force, heading south (Diagram D), passed through that portion of the South China Sea covered twice daily by the east course plane. It is possible, but not probable, that this force might have been discovered had the east course night search been flown.

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\* All information here, except as otherwise indicated, obtained from "AAF Operations from China Bases in Support of the Leyte Campaign" letter from Historical Division, Air University Library, USAF Air University, Maxwell AFB, Alabama to President, Naval War College, November 8th, 1950.

\*\* COMNAVGRPCHINA Dispatch 220741 October 1944 to COMSOWESPAC.



CHAPTER VI - JAPANESE OPERATIONS, October 22nd

## (A) Operations of CinC Combined Fleet.

CinC Combined Fleet remained at his headquarters at Hiyoshi. He was watching the developing situation closely for certain of his surface and submarine forces were already en route to the Leyte area for the forthcoming penetration operation, and others--notably the FIRST Striking Force and the THIRD Section from Brunei Bay--were to get underway during the day. He still had to resolve several major problems relating to the SECOND Striking Force, which problems could not be resolved until Imperial General Headquarters (Navy Section) had decided whether to (a) retain the SECOND Striking Force in the counterlanding operations as presently assigned under Commander SW Area Force, or (b) accept the strong and repeated recommendations of the latter commander,\* as well as that of Commander SECOND Striking Force,\*\* to commit the SECOND Striking Force to the penetration operation. Once this matter had been decided, he then had to determine (1) whether to retain the SECOND Striking Force under Commander SW Area Force or to place it under Commander FIRST Striking Force as recommended by Commander SW Area Force,\* and (2) whether to direct the SECOND Striking Force to operate independently or to combine it with the THIRD Section.

Possibly at 0108 (it was received by COMCRUDIV SIXTEEN at this time) he received a dispatch from the Chief of Staff SW Area Force designating the transports for the movement of troops from Cagayan to Leyte, ordering them to concentrate at Cagayan on the evening of October 24th, at which time they were to report to COMCRUDIV SIXTEEN and advising, in part, that an agreement with C.G. THIRTY-FIFTH Army relating to the movement of troops might be concluded at Cagayan.\*\*\* Since this dispatch was in implementation of the agreement concluded between C.G. FOURTEENTH Area Army and Commander SW Area Force on the preceding day and since it showed that his Commander SW Area Force and C.G. THIRTY-FIFTH Army were coordinating closely it seems likely that he viewed it with considerable satisfaction. He now could have hope that the concern relating to the counterlanding operations and the movement of two infantry battalions from Cagayan to Leyte, which Imperial General Headquarters (Army Section) had been evidencing, might now be considerably lessened, in which case he could expect a favorable decision on the employment of the SECOND Striking Force.

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- \* CofS SW Area Force Dispatch 211914 October 1944 to CinC Combined Fleet, COMCRUDIV 16, Commander 2ND Striking Force, Imperial GHQ (Navy Section), info Commanders Main Force, 1ST Striking Force, 5TH and 6TH Base Air Forces, War Diary DESRON 10, October 1944, WDC Document 161638, NA 11739.
- \*\* CofS 2ND Striking Force Dispatch 201806 October 1944 to Commander SW Area Force, info CinC Combined Fleet, COMCRUDIV 16, Imperial GHQ (Navy Section), etc., Detailed Action Report CRUDIV 16, SHO Operation, October 17th - 27th, 1944, WDC Document 161005, NA 11744.
- \*\*\* CofS SW Area Force Dispatch 212211 October 1944 to COMCRUDIV 16, info CinC Combined Fleet, Commanders 2ND Striking Force, 33RD Special Base Force, Transports 6, 10, 131, 101, 102, Detailed Action Report CRUDIV 16, SHO Operation, October 17th - 27th, WDC Document 161005, NA 11744.



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It seems likely that about 0815 (when it was received by COMDESRON ONE) he received Commander FIRST Striking Force's "penetration operation" dispatch 212053, quoted in full under "Operations of Commander FIRST Striking Force, October 21st", dividing his command into two groups consisting of (a) Main Body (BATDIV's ONE and THREE, CRUDIV's FOUR, FIVE and SEVEN, and DESRON's TWO and TEN) and (b) THIRD Section (BATDIV TWO, MOGAMI and four destroyers) and giving the two group commanders instructions for executing the penetration operation, the former through San Bernardino Strait, the latter through Suri-gao Strait.\* He noted that this order (a) corresponded closely with his basic order of October 20th\*\* and (b) in its division into two groups embraced the suggestion thereon which his Chief of Staff had forwarded also on that day.\*\*\*

This completed the actions of his principal commanders based on his 200813 (referred to above). He had now received the necessary supplementary orders from these commanders as follows: (a) Commander Main Force's 200930 which covered the movement of the Main Force to the eastward of Luzon Strait\*\*\*\* and which was followed by numerous implementing dispatches; (b) Commander Advance Force's 202053 which directed the deployment of the submarines;\*\*\*\*\* (c) Commander SW Area Force's 211345 which covered the operations of the naval air forces in the Philippines area;\*\*\*\*\* and finally (d) Commander FIRST Striking Force's 212053 discussed above.\*

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- \* Commander 1ST Striking Force Dispatch 212053 October 1944 to 1ST Striking Force, Detailed Action Report 1ST Striking Force SHO Operation, October 16th - 28th, 1944, WDC Document 161641, NA 11839.
- \*\* CinC Combined Fleet Dispatch 200813 October 1944 to Fleet and Squadron Commanders Combined Fleet, C.G. Southern Army, Commander China Area Fleet, Imperial GHQ, (Combined Fleet DesOpOrd No. 363), Detailed Action Report Main Force, SHO No. 1 Operation, October 20th - 29th, 1944, WDC Document 161005, NA 11744.
- \*\*\* CofS Combined Fleet Dispatch 201006 October 1944, (Addressees Unknown), Information compiled by Captain Toshikazu Ohmae, ex-IJN, Japanese Research Division, HQ, USAFFE, Military History Section, relating to the Penetration Operations of the 1ST Striking Force, Battle for Leyte Gulf, contained in HQ, USAFFE, Military History Section letter March 30th, 1954 to President, Naval War College.
- \*\*\*\* Commander Main Force Dispatch 200930 October 1944 to CinC Combined Fleet, Commanders 5TH, 6TH and 7TH Base Air Forces, 1ST and 2ND Striking Forces, SW Area Force, etc., War Diary DESRON 10, October 1944, WDC Document 161638, NA 11739.
- \*\*\*\*\* Commander Advance Force Dispatch 202053 October 1944 to Advance Force, All Fleet and Squadron Commanders Combined Fleet, (Advance Force DesOpOrd No. 1), Detailed Action Report BATDIV 1, SHO No. 1 Operation, October 18th - 28th, 1944, WDC Document 161005, NA 11744.
- \*\*\*\*\* Commander SW Area Force Dispatch 211345 October 1944 to Commanders 5TH and 6TH Base Air Forces, 954TH and 955TH Air Groups, 1ST and 2ND Striking Forces, Mobile Force, (SW Area Force DesOpOrd No. 679), Detailed Action Report 1ST Striking Force, SHO Operations, October 16th - 28th, 1944, WDC Document 161641, NA 11839.



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He now could see that despite these supplementary orders it was necessary to clear up the question of the employment of the SECOND Striking Force; for although he had not mentioned this force in his basic order, it was clear from recent dispatches that until that had been settled there would be a "question" in the minds of his commanders.

At this point he seems to have (a) pressured for a decision from Imperial General Headquarters (Navy Section) as to whether or not the whole SECOND Striking Force was desired for the counterlanding operations and (b) received a negative reply for at about this time he ordered Commander SW Area Force to direct Commander SECOND Striking Force to (1) penetrate into Leyte Gulf through Surigao Strait and (2) in so doing to cooperate with Commander FIRST Striking Force.\*

This dispatch should now have settled the matter in the minds of the principal commanders for it clearly set forth either by fact or by implication that the SECOND Striking Force (CRUDIV TWENTY-ONE and DESRON ONE) would (a) not presently be employed in the counterlanding operations, (b) would be employed in the penetration operation under Commander SW Area Force rather than under Commander FIRST Striking Force and (c) would penetrate through Surigao Strait.

Although Captain Toshikazu Ohmae, ex-IJN, stated that (a) CinC Combined Fleet did not issue orders to this effect but (b) instead, his Chief of Staff notified Commander SW Area Force that "this headquarters concurs in the employment of the SECOND Striking Force (less CRUDIV SIXTEEN) in the impending SHO Operation to the support of the FIRST Striking Force penetration",\*\* the evidence of events and the pertinent dispatches which preceded and followed this decision, as well as the statement of Commander SECOND Striking Force's Torpedo Officer,\* indicate that Captain Ohmae's information thereon was in error.

There is no information available as to what arguments finally caused Imperial General Headquarters (Army Section) to agree to the release of the SECOND Striking Force for the penetration operation. However, it seems probable that this was caused by the knowledge that (a) the army and navy commanders in the Philippines had come to an agreement concerning the movement of troops; this covered basically the first reinforcement transport operation, i.e., the transportation of two infantry battalions from Cagayan to Leyte

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\* Action Summary 2ND Striking Force in SHO Operation, SW Area Operation, Commander Kokichi Mori, ex-IJN, 5TH Fleet Staff Torpedo Officer, GHQ, FEC, Special Historical Collection, Supporting Documents to General of the Army Douglas MacArthur's Historical Report on Allied Operations in the Southwest Pacific Area, (Item 22, Footlocker 5 of 10, SWPA Series, Volume II).

\*\* Letter from Captain Toshikazu Ohmae, ex-IJN, Senior Staff Officer Mobile Force to Mr. Clarke Kawakami, World War II Battle Evaluation Group, Naval War College, undated, but received Washington, D.C. April 13th, 1953.



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which had been concluded by Commander SW Area Force on the previous day,\* (b) except for these two battalions, there were no other army units of consequence ready for movement to Leyte, (c) the navy had offered, if the situation permitted, after the penetration operation had been completed, to make available for the second reinforcement transport operations not only the SECOND Striking Force in toto but other units as well.

The question now arises as to why CinC Combined Fleet decided not to transfer the SECOND Striking Force (CRUDIV TWENTY-ONE, DESRON ONE) to the FIRST Striking Force, but instead, directed it to operate under Commander SW Area Force and to attack through Surigao Strait. The Deputy Chief of Staff Combined Fleet answered this in 1949.

Since the reason he gave were, in general, those employed earlier in Volume II to explain why it was that the original SECOND Striking Force (CRUDIV SIXTEEN had not as yet been transferred to that command) was not transferred to the FIRST Striking Force on October 18th,\*\* most of the reasons given on October 19th are here repeated. These are:

(a) The limited strength of the SECOND Striking Force because of which it could not contribute significantly to the penetration operation;

(b) CinC Combined Fleet's fear that the transfer of the SECOND Striking Force to the FIRST Striking Force would throw the operations into confusion and would, at the same time, necessitate increased radio traffic which might divulge Japanese intentions to the enemy. This fear was based on the fact that the FIRST Striking Force was heavily occupied with sortie preparations and its operations plan had already been decided upon;

(c) "That subsequent arrangements with the FOURTEENTH Area Army might make it more advantageous to leave the SECOND Striking Force under Commander SW Area Force in view of the counterlanding operations which were expected to be carried out."\*\*\*

The reason given in (a) above, that the SECOND Striking Force would not contribute significantly to the penetration operation, cannot be supported by the facts. The FIRST Striking Force at this time consisted of seven battle-ships, eleven heavy cruisers, two light cruisers and nineteen destroyers, which force had been divided on the previous day by Commander FIRST Striking Force into two groups:

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\* Commander SW Area Force Dispatch 211910 October 1944, (Addressees Unknown), substance of which is referred to in Commander SW Area Force Dispatch 221320 October 1944 to COMCRUDIV 16, Transports 9, 10, 6, 102, info CinC Combined Fleet, 1ST and 2ND Striking Forces, Main Force, 6TH Base Air Force, Detailed Action Report CRUDIV 16, SHO Operation, October 17th - 27th, 1944, WDC Document 161005, NA 11744.

\*\* Volume II, Battle for Leyte Gulf (NavPers 92194), Naval War College, 1955, Chapter VI (A) Operations of CinC Combined Fleet, October 19th.

\*\*\* Statements of Japanese Officials on World War II, Volume IV, Page 20, Military History Section, FEC, Statement of Rear Admiral Toshitane Takata ex-IJN, October 10th, 1949.



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(1) The Main Body, consisting of five battleships (YAMATO, MUSASHI, NAGATO, KONGO, HARUNA), ten heavy cruisers (ATAGO, TAKAO, CHOKAI, MAYA, MYOKO, HAGURO, KUMANO, SUZUYA, TONE, CHIKUMA), two light cruisers (NOSHIRO, YAHAGI), and fifteen destroyers (SHIMAKAZE, HAYASHIMO, AKISHIMO, KIYOSHIMO, KISHINAMI, NAGANAMI, OKINAMI, ASASHIMO, HAMANAMI, FUJINAMI, URAKAZE, YUKIKAZE, ISOKAZE, NOWAKI, HAMAKAZE); and (2) the THIRD Section, consisting of two battleships (YAMASHIRO, FUSO), one heavy cruiser (MOGAMI), and four destroyers (MICHISHIO, ASAGUMO, YAMAGUMO, SHIGURE). This was not a very powerful force with which to attempt to penetrate Leyte Gulf against the powerful Allied forces which would be arrayed against it. This fact had already been pointed out about six weeks earlier by Commander Mobile Force, who had recommended strengthening the FIRST Striking Force rather than weakening it.\*

Since the FIRST Striking Force in toto was not a very powerful force with which to attempt to penetrate Leyte Gulf, it follows that the Main Body and the THIRD Section, considered separately, were even less powerful than the whole FIRST Striking Force. This is particularly true when it is recalled that these two commands were to penetrate Leyte Gulf from widely separated and land-interdicted approaches. Therefore, if the whole force required reinforcement, how much more did the Main Body and the THIRD Section require such reinforcement?

The reasons given in (b) above are also of doubtful validity. While they may have seemed sufficient to the Japanese High Command, from the point of view of sound operations they leave much to be explained. For example:

(1) How could the addition of the SECOND Striking Force (and this addition would have been solely by dispatch since the SECOND Striking Force was en route Manila) have interfered with the sortie preparations in view of the fact that the Main Body was already at sea and the THIRD Section would sortie Brunei Bay that afternoon.

(2) What objection could there be to changing the operation plans of either of these commands should the situation warrant it? Would this not be correct leadership?

(3) How could the transfer of the SECOND Striking Force to either the Main Body or the THIRD Section necessitate increased radio communications of serious consequence? Is it not clear that any basic dispatches concerning the SECOND Striking Force could, if necessary, have been sent by Commander Main Body or Commander THIRD Section to Brunei or Puerto Princesa by ship-based air and from there by radio to the SECOND Striking Force? Likewise, since the SECOND Striking Force and the Main Body, moving at sixteen knots, could readily rendezvous at about 1700 October 23rd at the northern entrance to Palawan Passage, and the SECOND Striking Force moving at twenty-three knots and the THIRD Section moving at sixteen knots could readily rendezvous at about 1700 October 23rd in the Sulu Sea in the vicinity of the northern end of Palawan Island, is it not clear that any further information necessary could have been

\* Mobile Force Headquarters Memorandum concerning Tactical Organization of Mobile Force, September 10th, 1944, Department of the Army, Historical Division Microfilm HS-26, Item A.



passed by numerous methods, among which were visual signal, destroyer, air message drop, and voice radio, none of which would affect the radio communication system?, and finally,

(4) How could the operation be thrown into confusion? The commanders were long experienced in warfare (a vice admiral commanded each of these elements under consideration) and all were thoroughly familiar with current Japanese orders and doctrines, although Commander SECOND Striking Force may not have been familiar with the special orders or directives of the FIRST Striking Force, if such existed. Perhaps it was here that the thought of confusion arose.

The reason given in (c) above is also considered of doubtful validity for all of the evidence shows that CinC Combined Fleet was fully aware of the fact, mentioned earlier, that except for the two battalions at Cagayan, there were no other army units of consequence ready for movement to Leyte. Therefore, there was no immediate need for units of the SECOND Striking Force, other than CRUDIV SIXTEEN, in the planned counterlanding operations and this was so recognized by CinC Combined Fleet in his directive to Commander SW Area Force to penetrate through Leyte Gulf.

What then were CinC Combined Fleet's reasons for not transferring the SECOND Striking Force to the FIRST Striking Force to join either (a) the Main Body or (b) the THIRD Section? While the answers still seem to be shrouded in mystery, they appear to have been based at least in part on the following:

(1) As regards item (a), on CinC Combined Fleet's desire to avoid having Vice Admiral Kiyohide Shima (Commander SECOND Striking Force) and Vice Admiral Matome Ugaki in the same disposition or even in the same command. This was because Vice Admiral Ugaki (Naval Academy class year 1912) had originally been junior to Vice Admiral Shima (Naval Academy class year 1911) but had now become senior, and would therefore succeed to command should Vice Admiral Takao Kurita (Commander Main Body) become killed or disabled. Japanese policy in matters of this nature is discussed more fully under the succeeding paragraphs.

(2) As regards item (b): (1) on CinC Combined Fleet's desire to avoid having Vice Admiral Kiyohide Shima (Commander SECOND Striking Force) and Vice Admiral Shoji Nishimura (Commander THIRD Section) together in the same command. This was because the former, who upon graduation from the Japanese Naval Academy, had been junior to Vice Admiral Nishimura (although both were of the Naval Academy class 1911) and had so remained for many years, had now become senior to that officer. This reversal of rank was due to the fact that ". . . due to illness Nishimura failed to enter the Naval War College "A" Course (Koshu-Gakusei) and his promotion to captaincy was delayed for one year after the promotion of Shima".\* This clearly created an unhappy situation and since "according to Japanese naval custom an officer from an earlier class would be

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\* HQ, USAFFE/8A (Rear), Military History Office letter December 21st, 1956 to President, Naval War College.



transferred from a position subordinate to an officer of a later class except in case of emergency",\* CinC Combined Fleet seems to have decided to avoid placing the two together, except in the event the two commands came within close range for unified command. In this latter case, Japanese doctrine was that when forces of different commands in the same area were engaged in joint operations, and when it was considered necessary by the senior officer present to place them under unified command, they automatically came under his orders. Therefore, Japanese postwar statements emphasize that there was no necessity for transferring the SECOND Striking Force to the FIRST Striking Force for incorporation into the THIRD Section as one command under Commander SECOND Striking Force\*\* for, in this case, should the SECOND Striking Force commence operating in combat with the THIRD Section, the senior commander (Commander SECOND Striking Force) would, if he so desired, automatically command both forces; and (2) on CinC Combined Fleet's desire to have Vice Admiral Nishimura who was a very experienced officer in night combat operations, conduct the Surigao Strait phase of the penetration operation. This could not be done if the two commands were joined for then, as pointed out above, Vice Admiral Shima would command. In this connection Captain Ohmae stated that Vice Admiral Nishimura was "highly regarded for his night combat ability, and that Vice Admiral Ozawa (Commander Mobile (Main) Force) still regarded Nishimura as the best night commander of all Japanese naval officers".\*\*\*

The inference from the above is that the SECOND Striking Force and the THIRD Section were expected to operate separately, albeit closely, in the Surigao Strait penetration. That this inference was not derived by everyone is illustrated by COMBATDIV ONE, who in his war diary implies the contrary when he states, "There have been frequent discussions regarding the movements of the SECOND Striking Force, but it has finally been decided to have it penetrate into the anchorage from the western entrance of Surigao Strait behind the THIRD Section in the early morning of October 25th. At times, having some reserve strength is the best policy".\*\*\*\*

EVEN ACCEPTING THE ABOVE-MENTIONED POSTWAR STATEMENTS AS VALID, THERE IS CONSIDERABLE DOUBT AS TO THE WISDOM OF THE CONCEPT IN THIS CASE; I.E., THAT LEAVING THE SECOND STRIKING FORCE UNDER COMMANDER SW AREA FORCE WAS THE BEST MEANS FOR OBTAINING THE MAXIMUM EFFECTIVENESS OF THE TWO COMMANDS (SECOND STRIKING FORCE AND THIRD SECTION) IN THE PENETRATION OPERATION. WOULD NOT ONE OF THE VERY FACTORS WHICH THE JAPANESE STATED EARLIER CAUSED THEM TO RETAIN THE SECOND STRIKING FORCE UNDER COMMANDER SW AREA FORCE--NOTABLY, THE FEAR

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- \* HQ, USAFFE/8A (Rear), Military History Office, 1st Endorsement, undated, but about December 7th, 1956 to President, Naval War College letter November 7th, 1956.
- \*\* Statement of Japanese Officials in World War II, Volume IV, Page 20, FEC Military History Section, Statement of Rear Admiral Toshitane Takata, ex-IJN, October 10th, 1949.
- \*\*\* HQ, USAFFE/8A (Rear), Military History Office, letter December 26th, 1956 to President, Naval War College.
- \*\*\*\* Vice Admiral Matome Ugaki, UJN, (COMBATDIV-1), Personal Diary SENSOROKU, Nippon Shuppan Kyodo Kabushiki Kaisha, (Tokyo, March 15th, 1953), Volume II.



THAT THE TRANSFER OF THIS FORCE TO THE FIRST STRIKING FORCE MIGHT THROW THE OPERATIONS INTO CONFUSION--APPLY WITH EVEN MORE VALIDITY HERE? THIS SEEMS SO FOR IF TRANSFERRING ONE FORCE TO ANOTHER SOME DAYS BEFORE EXPECTED BATTLE WOULD CAUSE CONFUSION, IS IT NOT LOGICAL TO SAY THAT FAILING TO DO SO--AND, INSTEAD, EXPECTING THE TWO COMMANDS (IF CONSIDERED NECESSARY BY THE SENIOR COMMANDER) TO OPERATE SEPARATELY, ALBEIT CLOSELY, UNDER A SINGLE COMMAND AND, IN THIS CASE IN THE IMMEDIATE PRESENCE OF THE ENEMY, WITHOUT ANY PRELIMINARY CONSULTATIONS WHATSOEVER--MIGHT WELL BE EXPECTED TO CAUSE EVEN MORE CONFUSION?

Sometime after 0637 (when the contact was made) and before 0925 (when he commented thereon by dispatch) he received a contact report on three large carriers, two battleships and ten other ships in Latitude 25° - 30'N or 10° - 30'N, Longitude 133° - 30'E (Plate XXXVI, Contact C). The two possible latitudes of this contact resulted from the fact that the grid code in which the position was sent apparently repeated every fifteen degrees and in this case the larger grid was not indicated or was garbled. Because the composition except for the absence of one carrier and one other ship was exactly that of the Main Force, he probably recognized it as the Main Force, although the Main Force if it was on its projected track should have been well to the westward. If he had had any concern as to whether or not this might be enemy, that concern was speedily removed, for sometime before 0925 he received an 0800 dispatch from Commander Main Force (a) modifying that commander's original movement plan with particular reference to this day (October 22nd), (b) pointing out that his command had been mistakenly reported by a Kanoya patrol plane as an enemy task force, and (c) giving his planned route for future guidance.\*

Disturbed by this contact report on friendly forces and by Commander Main Force's reaction thereto because the two events showed clearly that (1) the search plane's pilot had not been adequately briefed, and (2) the pilots navigation was seriously in error, he decided that it would be wise to alert all air commands to the situation.

Therefore, at 0925 he (a) advised all air commanders that the Main Force, composed of four carriers, two battleships, three cruisers and eight destroyers, would in addition to that authorized in Commander Main Force's dispatch 200930, operate along the following routes: (1) 0600 October 22nd, Latitude 24° - 20'N, Longitude 132° - 15'E (at which time it would commence replenishment), and (2) 0600 October 23rd, Latitude 22° - 10'N, Longitude 127° - 00'E, and (b) directed that care be taken to insure that the flying personnel of the base air forces were informed so that they "can clearly distinguish these friendly forces".\*\*

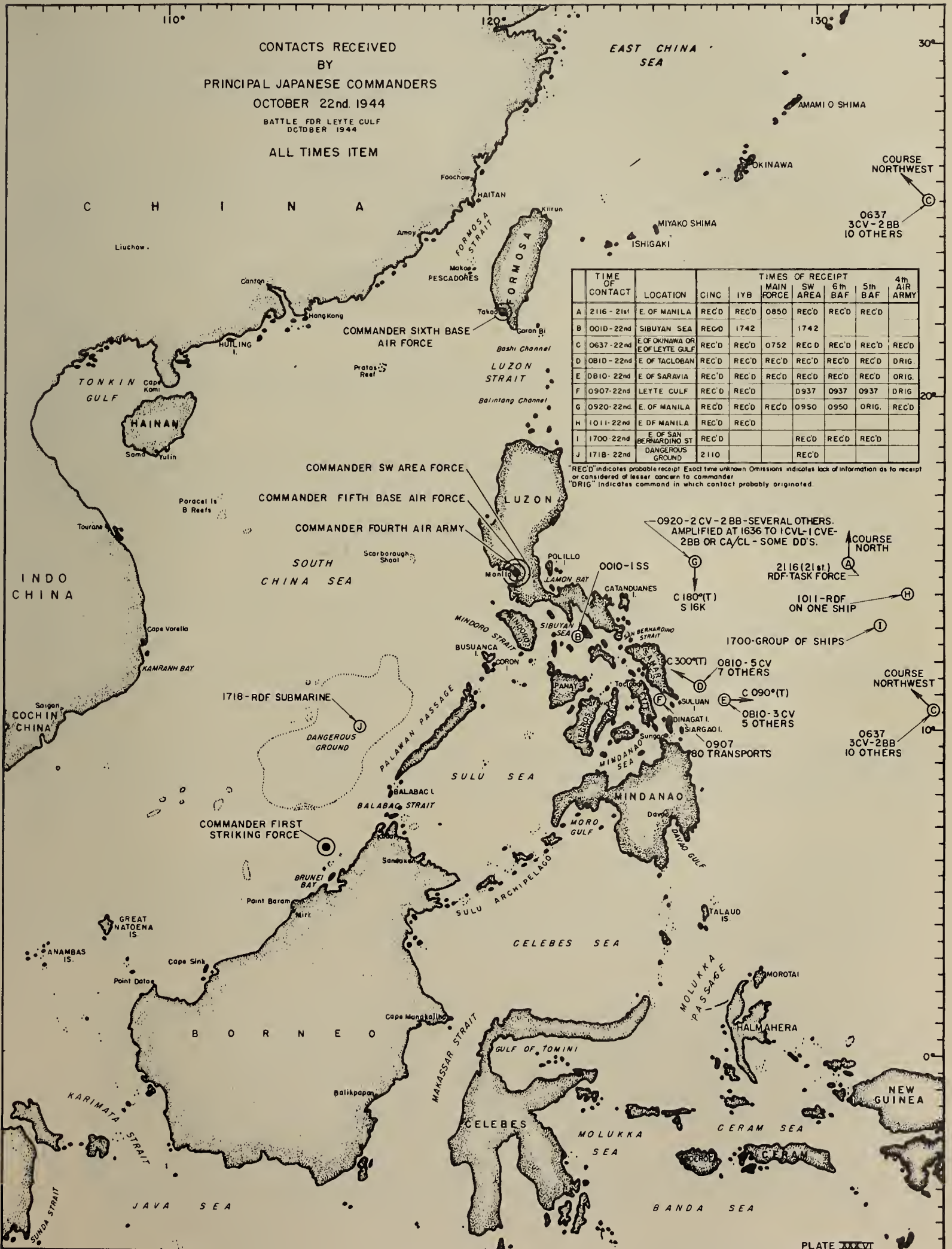
(In this connection and as will be shown later, it is interesting to note that COMBATDIV ONE recorded the southern position as bearing 095°(T), distant

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\* Detailed Action Report Main Force, SHO No. 1 Operation, October 20th - 29th, 1944, WDC Document 161005, NA 11744.

\*\* CofS Combined Fleet Dispatch 220925 October 1944 to Commanders 5TH, 6TH and 7TH Base Air Forces, 21ST, 25TH and 51ST Air Flotillas, "T" Attack Force, War Diary DESRON 10, October 1944, WDC Document 161638, NA 11739.









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500 miles from Tacloban and did not mention the northern position. It seems probable that he, as well as those commanders operating in the Formosa - Philippines area, received both positions and plotted the southern one as the more likely and more dangerous to himself, and therefore this contact has been so recorded under the Formosa - Philippines commanders in this analysis.)

During the early morning and continuing until about noon, CinC Combined Fleet, in addition to the 0637 contact on the Main Force, received numerous contact reports from aircraft and radio direction finder fixes. The contact reports were from both army and navy sources:

- (1) An 0445 report (Class D) of a 2116 October 21st radio direction finder fix on a task force bearing 087°(T), distant 600 miles from Manila (Contact A).\*
- (2) An 0810 contact on five carriers and seven other ships on course 300°(T), bearing 090°(T), distant 160 kilometers (eighty-six miles) from Tacloban (Contact D).\*\*
- (3) An 0810 contact on three carriers and five other ships bearing 090°(T), distant 400 kilometers (216 miles) from Saravia (NW Negros) (Contact E).\*\*
- (4) An 0907 report of eighty transports within Leyte Gulf, with no rear forces outside the gulf (Contact F).\*\*
- (5) An 0920 contact on two carriers, two battleships and several other ships bearing 087°(T), distant 330 miles from Manila (Contact G).\*\*
- (6) A 1011 radio direction finder fix on a ship, type unknown, bearing 093°(T), distant about 750 miles from Manila (Contact H).\*\*\*

Based on the above contact reports CinC Combined Fleet could estimate that his forces were opposed (a) off Luzon by a total of two carriers, distant 330 miles from Manila and (b) off Samar by a total of eight carriers within about 100 miles.

It will be noted that there are no contact reports on CVE's. Therefore, it can be assumed that CinC Combined Fleet estimated that all of these ten carriers were CV's or CVL's. However, since on the previous day he had received contact reports on numerous CVE's, it can be assumed also that he then realized that (a) some of the above carriers were likely CVE's and

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- \* Commander 31ST Communication Unit Dispatch 220445 October 1944 to Commander Main Force, etc., Detailed Action Report Main Force, SHO No. 1 Operation, October 20th - 29th, 1944, WDC Document 161005, NA 11744.
- \*\* Vice Admiral Matome Ugaki, IJN, (COMBATDIV 1), Personal Diary SENSOROKU, Nippon Shuppan Kyodo Kabushiki Kaisha, (Tokyo, March 15th, 1953), Volume II.
- \*\*\* Appended Chart III, Enemy Fleet Dispositions on October 22nd, 1944, Detailed Action Report Main Force, SHO No. 1 Operation, October 20th - 29th, 1944, WDC Document 161005, NA 11744.

particularly some of those off Leyte Island, and/or (b) the CVE's had not as yet been reported on this day.

Based on the 0445 report of the radio direction finder fix he could estimate that his forces were opposed, in addition, by a task force of from one to four carriers some 600 miles to the eastward of Luzon.

Thus, his command had contacted a total of from eleven to fourteen carriers with no CVE's as yet sighted. This checks closely the analysis of the preceding day where, under "Operations of CinC Combined Fleet, October 21st", it was estimated that CinC Combined Fleet was still opposed by Allied carrier forces at least equal to the sixteen carriers and five escort carriers sighted on October 19th.

Since his SIXTH Base Air Force was scheduled to commence its movement to the Philippines on this day and to attack enemy carriers off Lamon Bay this night, he noted the contact reports on enemy task forces off Luzon with considerable interest. It was very important that he pay close attention to these task forces and to receive immediate information as to whether or not they were (a) interfering with the movement of his aircraft to Luzon, and (b) if so, to what extent. This was so for, should the Allied carrier-based aircraft be sufficiently effective as to cause prohibitive losses to the SIXTH Base Air Force, it might become necessary for the Commander in Chief to recommend a cancellation of the entire SHO One Plan.

In view of the five-day deviation from the SHO One Plan--it will be recalled that (a) originally, the penetration operation was to strike the Allied landing forces, surface forces and transports at the moment of landing, and (b) owing to certain developments in the situation, it became impossible to do so and the operation had therefore been delayed for five days--CinC Combined Fleet watched the contact reports from Leyte Gulf to reassure himself that there was enough shipping in the gulf suitable in number and quality as targets for the penetration operation. Because of this, it must have been pleasing to him to learn that on this day there still remained eighty transports inside the gulf.\*

During the early forenoon he likely received (a) a dispatch from Commander 901st Air Group reporting that the two night search planes operating from Garan Bi had completed their searches with negative results,\*\* and (b) a movement report from Commander FIRST Striking Force reporting that he had sortied with the Main Body from Brunei Bay at 0805.

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\* Vice Admiral Matome Ugaki, IJN, (COMBATDIV 1), Personal Diary SENSOROKU, Nippon Shuppan Kyodo Kabushiki Kaisha, (Tokyo, March 15th, 1953), Volume II.

\*\* Commander 901ST Air Group Dispatch 220715 October 1944 to CinC Combined Fleet, Commander 6TH Base Air Force, Detailed Action Report 901ST Air Group, Night Searches, October 10th - 28th, 1944, WDC Document 160551, NA 12402.



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At 1205 he sent a dispatch to all forces exhorting them to do their utmost in the SHO Operation.\*

About this time he probably received a dispatch regarding jamming of enemy intelligence organizations in the Philippines by units of the SW Area Force.\*\*

At about 1309 he received, as an information addressee, a dispatch from COMCRUDIV SIXTEEN (a) informing addressees that CRUDIV SIXTEEN (AOBA, KINU, URANAMI) would arrive off the entrance to Manila Bay at about 0800 the following morning and expected to depart Manila at 2400, and (b) requesting that consideration be given to the assignment of additional units (three destroyers and two subchasers) for carrying out the transport operation\*\*\*--presumably to be employed as antisubmarine escorts.

What CinC Combined Fleet thought of this dispatch is nowhere stated. He could, of course, readily see from a simple plot that if COMCRUDIV SIXTEEN did not depart Manila until 2400 he could scarcely arrive at Cagayan on the evening of October 24th--he would have to employ an average speed of over twenty-six knots (500 miles divided by nineteen hours). He therefore could surmise that COMCRUDIV SIXTEEN did not plan to arrive at Cagayan until some time later, even though the transports were expected to arrive in the early evening. However, he wisely took no action in this matter since that was the responsibility of Commander SW Area Force.

He could also see that with the arrival of Commander SECOND Striking Force with CRUDIV TWENTY-ONE and DESRON ONE at Manila at 0700 October 23rd and COMCRUDIV SIXTEEN there at 0800 of the same day, the augmented SECOND Striking Force would be completely assembled for the first time and therefore, should the decision of Imperial General Headquarters (Navy Section) require that the SECOND Striking Force be employed for counterlandings, the planning would be greatly facilitated.

By 1600 (when COMCRUDIV SIXTEEN received it) he received Commander SW Area Force's orders concerning the first reinforcement transport operation, quoted in full under "Operations of Commander SW Area Force, October 22nd", to the effect that (a) four transports, as well as CRUDIV SIXTEEN were to arrive at Cagayan by evening of October 24th, (b) these ships, in accordance with the Army-Navy agreement recently completed by Commander SW Area Force, were to transport two infantry battalions to Leyte and were then to return to Manila,

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\* CinC Combined Fleet Dispatch 221205 October 1944 to Combined Fleet, Commanders China Area Fleet, Escort Force, Naval and Guard Districts, Detailed Action Report 1ST Striking Force, SHO Operations, October 16th - 28th, 1944, WDC Document 161641, NA 11839.

\*\* 31ST Communication Unit Dispatch 221136 October 1944 to 10TH, 31ST and 32ND Communication Units, info Commanders Combined Fleet, SW Area Force, etc., Detailed Action Report BATDIV 1, SHO No. 1 Operation, October 18th - 28th, 1944, WDC Document 161005, NA 11744.

\*\*\* COMCRUDIV 16 Dispatch 221239 October 1944 to Commanders SW Area Force, 2ND Striking Force, info CinC Combined Fleet, etc., Detailed Action Report CRUDIV 16, SHO Operation, October 17th - 27th, 1944, WDC Document 161005, NA 11744.



and (c) depending on the situation, CRUDIV SIXTEEN might be directed to support the FIRST Striking Force.\*

This dispatch was, of course, pleasing to him as it evidenced (a) continuing action on the part of Commander SW Area Force in support of the army's counterlanding operations and (b) the close attention that that commander was giving to the developing situation to the end that, should the army at the last moment be unable to move the above battalions, he might then recommend that CRUDIV SIXTEEN be made available to Commander FIRST Striking Force for employment in the penetration operation.

At 1612 his Chief of Staff sent out a cautioning dispatch in which, recognizing that a confusion of friendly and hostile ships, submarines and aircraft would exist east of the Philippines, he directed that care be exercised in identification to prevent attacks on friendly forces. He then directed his commanders concerned, commencing at 1200 October 24th, to (a) direct their air and ground units in the central Philippines to attack only carriers and transports, and (b) request the army land and air units to do likewise.\*\* It may well have been that one of the motivating factors for this dispatch was the error of the Japanese plane at 0637 which reported the Main Force as enemy.

At about 1636 he received an amplifying report relative to the contact originally reported at 0920; i.e., the contact bearing 087°(T), distant 330 miles from Manila (Contact G). This amplifying report was largely to the effect that the enemy force consisted of one light carrier (CVL), one special carrier (CVE?), two battleships or cruisers and some destroyers on course 180°(T), speed sixteen knots.\*\*\* Since this report made no important change in his estimate, except possibly to indicate that CVE's were present, he likely gave it little attention.

Meanwhile, knowing that his surface forces were now at sea, CinC Combined Fleet continued to study the developing situation. Having received an 0010 report of an enemy submarine in the Sibuyan Sea (Latitude 12°-45'N, Longitude 122°-50'E) (Contact B), he was particularly concerned over the submarine menace which he felt was growing ever more dangerous. Therefore, fearful that his commanders might not be sufficiently alert to this danger, his Chief of Staff at 1651 advised them as follows:

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- \* Commander SW Area Force Dispatch 221320 October 1944 to COMCRUDIV 16, Transports 9, 10, 6, 102, info CinC Combined Fleet, etc., (SW Area Force DesOpOrd No. 684), Detailed Action Report CRUDIV 16, SHO Operation, October 17th - 27th, 1944, WDC Document 161005, NA 11744.
  - \*\* CofS Combined Fleet Dispatch 221612 October 1944 to All Fleet and Squadron Commanders Combined Fleet, SW Area Force, 6TH Base Air Force, War Diary 61ST Air Flotilla, October 1944, WDC Document 161643, NA 12260.
  - \*\*\* Clark Air Base Dispatch 221606 October 1944 to Major Commanders, War Diary DESRON 10, October 1944, WDC Document 161638, NA 11739.



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(1) Enemy submarine(s) transmitted urgent dispatches at 0010 in Latitude 12°-45'N, Longitude 122°-50'E; (2) the enemy apparently is assembling submarines to cover channels and routes to scout movements of FIRST Striking Force and other units; and (3) in view of this, give this matter special attention.\*

Actually, the 0010 report was in error for there were no Allied submarines in the Sibuyan Sea nor were there any Allied submarines nearer than 100 miles.

Sometime in the early evening, he likely received (a) a movement report from Commander THIRD Section that he had sortied from Brunei Bay at 1500 and (b) a contact report from the I-54 at 1700 on a group of ships 450 miles east of San Bernardino Strait (Contact I).\*\* This contact, as discussed fully under "Operations of Commander Advance Expeditionary Force, October 22nd", was probably on TG 30.3.

It seems highly probable that about this time he received from Commander Main Force a second dispatch regarding changes in his projected movement plan. This new plan, quoted in full under "Operations of Commander Main Force, October 22nd", advised all commanders concerned of his projected movement and then announced that air action would be initiated beginning at dawn, October 24th.\*\*\*

If he had had any concern lest Commander Main Force by his projected movement--which was well to the eastward of his original planned route\*\*\*\*--might be forced to choose a position on October 24th other than that designated in the original SHO Plan (Plate XXIV), this dispatch would have removed it for he could see that the 0600 position on October 24th was almost exactly that of the original SHO Plan,\*\*\*\*\* and therefore Commander Main Force expected to be back on the planned route at that time.

During the day, and increasingly during the evening, CinC Combined Fleet awaited with intense interest the arrival of reports concerning the movement of the SIXTH Base Air Force to Luzon, which movement was to commence on this day.

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- \* CofS Combined Fleet Dispatch 221651 October 1944 to Commander SW Area Force, info Commanders 1ST and 2ND Striking Forces, COMCRUDIV 16, COMBATDIV 2 (3RD Section), War Diary DESRON 10, October 1944, WDC Document 161638, NA 11739.
  - \*\* Appended Chart III, Enemy Fleet Dispositions on October 22nd, 1944, Detailed Action Report Main Force, SHO No. 1 Operation, October 20th - 29th, 1944, WDC Document 161005, NA 11744.
  - \*\*\* Commander Main Force Dispatch 221624 October 1944 to All Forces, Detailed Action Report Main Force, SHO No. 1 Operation, October 20th - 29th, 1944, WDC Document 161005, NA 11744.
  - \*\*\*\* Commander Mobile Force Dispatch 200930 October 1944 to All Commands, Detailed Action Report No. 2, OYODO, SHO No. 1 Operation, October 20th - 28th, 1944, WDC Document 161007.
  - \*\*\*\*\* Mobile Force Operation Order No. 76, August 10th, 1944, Chapter VI, Outline of Operations, Appended Chart I, ATIS Document No. 39, Part I, April 22nd, 1945 (NACHI Document).



It will be recalled that (a) in his basic order issued on October 20th, he had directed that the above base air force was to exercise a general air offensive from Philippine bases against remaining Allied task forces,\* and (b) he had learned on the following day that Commander SIXTH Base Air Force (1) was moving his force to the Philippines on October 22nd, (2) was making a night attack against the enemy carriers off Lamon Bay also on October 22nd, and (3) had tentatively scheduled a general offensive for October 23rd.\*\*

Therefore, he knew that (a) a large portion of the SIXTH Base Air Force, including Commander SIXTH Base Air Force, if the situation permitted, was already en route to the Philippines and this night units of this force would be attacking the Allied carriers off Lamon Bay, should such carriers appear within suitable attack range, and (b) with the arrival of Commander SIXTH Base Air Force in the Philippines that commander would no longer operate directly under him but would, instead, in accordance with his DesOpOrd No. 363, come under Commander SW Area Force (Plate XXXVII).

At 1930 (COMDESRON TEN received it at this time) he received Commander THIRD Section's movement plan,\*\*\* quoted in full under "Operations of Commander FIRST Striking Force, October 21st". He now had the schedule of both elements of the divided FIRST Striking Force and could see the planned coordinated movements of the two forces. Since these movements conformed in general with his concept represented by his dispatch 201006, quoted in full under "Operations of CinC Combined Fleet, October 20th", it seems clear that it met with his approval.

At 2024 he issued a dispatch concerning training of flight personnel in the SIXTH Base Air Force requiring training.\*\*\*\* This is indicative of the state of Japanese forces in which personnel were assigned front line units but still required basic training.

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\* CinC Combined Fleet Dispatch 200813 October 1944 to Combined Fleet, CinC Southern Army, Imperial GHQ, China Area Fleet, etc., (Combined Fleet DesOpOrd No. 363), War Diary BATDIV 1, October 1944, WDC Document 161638, NA 11739.

\*\* Commander 6TH Base Air Force Dispatch 210013 October 1944 to 6TH Base Air Force, Detailed Action Report No. 2, 102ND and 103RD Attack Units, (701ST Air Group), Air Action in Philippines, October 23rd - November 15th, 1944, WDC Document 161293, NA 12505A.

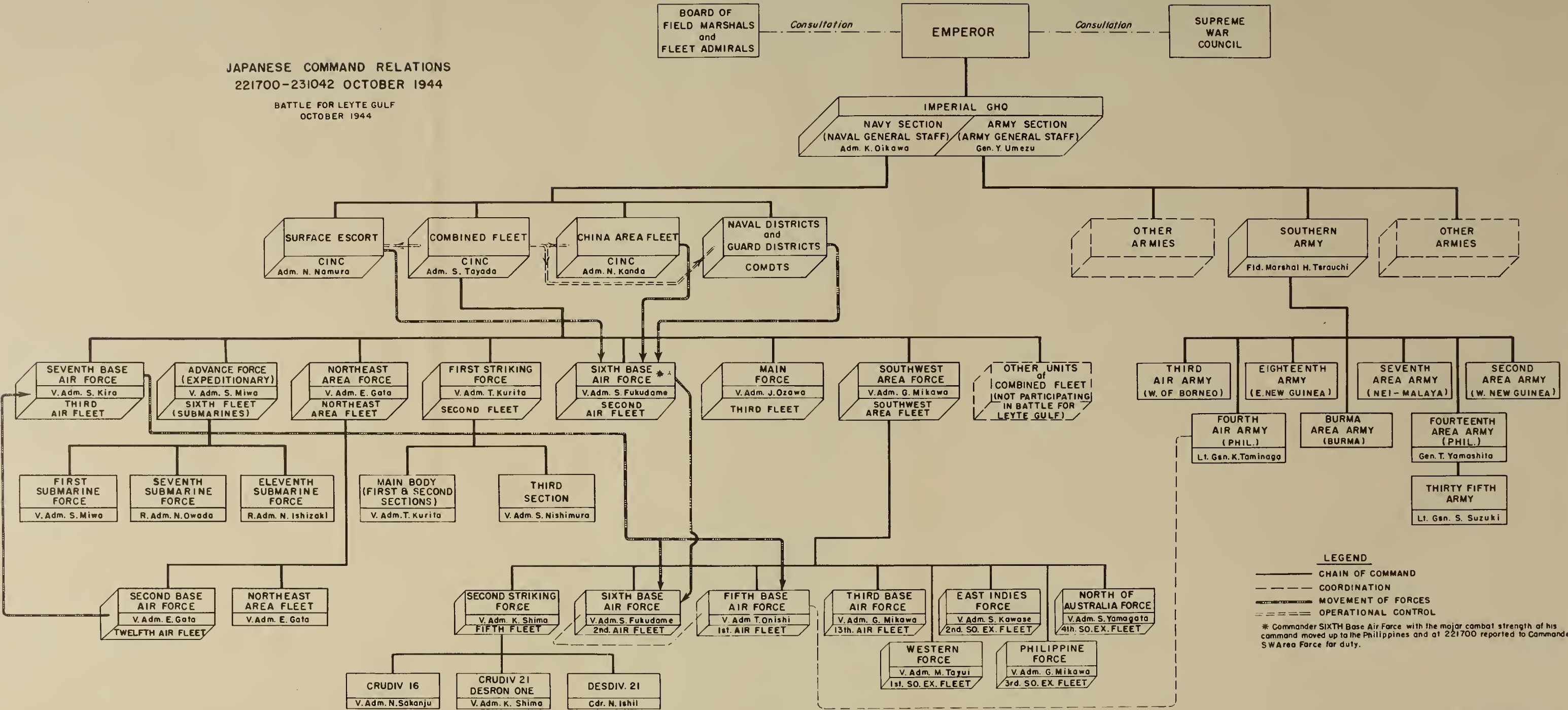
\*\*\* COMBATDIV 2 Dispatch 221155 October 1944 to CinC Combined Fleet, COMCRUDIV 16, Commanders 1ST and 2ND Striking Forces, 5TH Base Air Force, Main Force, SW Area Force, info Sandakan Air Base, 33RD Guard Unit, Detailed Action Report 1ST Striking Force, SHO Operations, October 16th - 28th, 1944, WDC Document 161641, NA 11839.

\*\*\*\* CinC Combined Fleet Dispatch 222024 October 1944 to Commanders 2ND, 6TH and 7TH Base Air Forces, 51ST Air Flotilla, (Combined Fleet DesOpOrd No. 370), Detailed Action Report No. 2, Northern Attack Force (2ND Base Air Force), October 10th - November 15th, 1944, WDC Document 161645, NA 12262.



JAPANESE COMMAND RELATIONS  
221700-231042 OCTOBER 1944

BATTLE FOR LEYTE GULF  
OCTOBER 1944



**LEGEND**

- CHAIN OF COMMAND
- - - COORDINATION
- MOVEMENT OF FORCES
- - - OPERATIONAL CONTROL

\* Commander SIXTH Base Air Force with the major combat strength of his command moved up to the Philippines and at 221700 reported to Commander SW Area Force for duty.





At about 2110 he received a radio direction finder fix (Class B) on a submarine in Latitude 10° - 00'N, Longitude 116° - 00'E, which was sending an urgent dispatch (Contact J).\* This likely was the DACE in Dangerous Ground requesting permission to extend its patrol in order to investigate a contact on a convoy in Latitude 11° - 10'N, Longitude 119° - 10'E, made that forenoon by aircraft.\*\*

During the day he learned that Allied aircraft were continuing to strike the Philippines; that, among other items, Mactan and Cebu had been bombed by B-24's and other type planes, and that there had been no attacks in the Manila area.\*\*\* From naval reports he learned that about 100 aircraft had struck the central Philippines,\*\*\*\* whereas if he maintained close contact with the army, he learned that these strikes were reported by the FOURTH Air Army to consist of about 189 planes of which eighty-six were land-based. Actually, the Allies had attacked with 162 aircraft (TG 77.4 with forty-four, the FIFTH Air Force with forty-five and the THIRTEENTH Air Force with seventy-three).

During the day he received intelligence information presumably from Allied broadcasts as follows:

(1) An announcement that the Philippine operations had been launched one and one-half months ahead of schedule.\*\*\*\*\*

This announcement was not exactly true. Actually, the Philippine campaign (MUSKETEER) was to be inaugurated on November 15th with the capture of the Sarangani Bay area of Mindanao (KING I). The Leyte operation (KING II) was scheduled to follow on December 20th.\*\*\*\*\* However, as discussed in Volume I, after COMTHIRDFLT's carrier-based strikes on Mindanao and the central Philippines in September had indicated an unexpected weakness in enemy air resistance, he (COMTHIRDFLT) recommended on September 13th that KING II be inaugurated immediately. As a consequence of this recommendation, and of CINCPAC's and COMSOWESPAC's concurrence, the Joint Chiefs of Staff, who were at the Octagon conference in Quebec, on September 15th, 1944, advanced KING II to October 20th.\*\*\*\*\* Thus, the re-entry into the Philippines was but one month ahead of schedule.

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\* Commander Owada Communication Unit Dispatch 222040 October 1944 to CINC Combined Fleet, Commanders 6TH Base Air Force, 1ST and 2ND Striking Forces, Main Force, War Diary DESRON 10, October 1944, WDC Document 161638, NA 11739.

\*\* War Patrol Report DACE, Report of 5TH War Patrol, Serial 09, November 6th, 1944.

\*\*\* Vice Admiral Matome Ugaki, IJN, (COMBATDIV 1), Personal Diary SENSOROKU Nippon Shuppan Kyodo Kabushiki Kaisha, (Tokyo, March 15th, 1953, Volume II.

\*\*\*\* Material for Situation Estimates, 1ST Section, Naval General Staff, October 1944, WDC Document 216764 (Microfilm).

\*\*\*\*\* COMSOWESPAC Warning Instruction No. 5, August 31st, 1944.

\*\*\*\*\* Volume I, Battle for Leyte Gulf (NavPers 91973), Naval War College, 1953, Introduction.



(2) A statement by the commander Leyte landing force that 600 ships were taking part in the Leyte operation.\*

Whence came this statement is not known since no records thereon are available to this analysis. However, it likely was information released to the press by COMSOWESPAC, for the New York Times published on October 21st an Associated Press dispatch from Leyte, which referred to a 600-ship convoy but which clearly meant that a total of 600 ships of all types were in the operation.\*\* This figure was a reasonable approximation.

(3) An announcement (from the Chungking Radio) that the Allied headquarters had been moved from Brisbane to Hollandia.\*

Since there is no date given here, the assumption is that the Japanese believed this event had occurred at this time. Actually, this was in error for COMSOWESPAC's general headquarters had been officially shifted to Hollandia on September 10th, although headquarters units had been moving to Hollandia commencing September 1st.\*\*\* It would appear likely that (a) either COMSOWESPAC or Washington had decided to release the above information at this time without giving an indication that this change had been made earlier, or (b) somehow the press release on the shift of headquarters (which press release may have been based on COMSOWESPAC's 200519 wherein he had announced that his advance headquarters had been established at Leyte and his general headquarters and his rear echelon headquarters remained at Hollandia and Brisbane, respectively)\*\*\*\* had been misinterpreted.

WHILE THERE IS NO INFORMATION AVAILABLE WHICH DISCUSSES THE JAPANESE HIGH COMMAND'S REACTIONS TO THE ABOVE ANNOUNCEMENTS, THE FACT THAT THEY WERE RECORDED IN THE INTELLIGENCE SECTION OF THE JAPANESE NAVAL GENERAL STAFF FOR USE IN THE RUNNING ESTIMATE SHOWS THAT THEY WERE CONSIDERED OF CONSIDERABLE IMPORTANCE. THIS SEEMS TO HAVE BEEN BECAUSE THE ABOVE THREE ANNOUNCEMENTS, IF TRUE, (A) GAVE STRONG INDICATIONS THAT THE ALLIES WERE HAVING MORE SUCCESS THAN ANTICIPATED EVEN BY THEMSELVES, AND (B) FORECAST MORE, AND EVEN MORE POWERFUL, ASSAULTS ON THE PHILIPPINES OR ADJACENT AREAS IN THE IMMEDIATE FUTURE.

Whether or not it was known to CinC Combined Fleet, it seems wise to point out here that, since the evening of October 20th, there had been continued disagreement between CinC Southern Army and C.G. FOURTEENTH Area Army relative to the defense of the Philippines because the latter commander persisted in insisting that the proper defense could only be effected by defending Luzon with maximum ground forces and Leyte with only local ground forces.

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\* Material For Situation Estimates, 1ST Section, Naval General Staff, October 1944, WDC Document 216764 (Microfilm).

\*\* The New York Times, October 21st, 1944, Page 1.

\*\*\* Office of the Chief of Military History 1ST endorsement (CMH September 13th, 1956) of November 15th, 1956 to President, Naval War College letter Serial 2044-56 of September 13th, 1956.

\*\*\*\* GHQ, SOWESPAC Dispatch 200519 October 1944 to All SOWESPAC Commanders, 3RDFLT, etc.



This matter is discussed more fully under "Operations of CinC Combined Fleet, October 20th".

While the true sequence of events is not entirely clear for (a) Colonel Hattori says that on this day (October 22nd) CinC Southern Army summoned C.G. FOURTEENTH Area Army to his headquarters and told him that he had decided to fight the decisive ground battle on Leyte\* (rather than on Luzon) and (b) Major General Nishimura says that this decision was made on October 23rd--that on that day he accompanied C.G. FOURTEENTH Area Army over to CinC Southern Army's house where they conferred for three hours in the hope that they could persuade him to change the plan but did not succeed,\*\* it is clear from both of the above versions that CinC Southern Army had decided to fight the decisive ground battle on Leyte and did not choose to discuss the matter further with C.G. FOURTEENTH Area Army or Imperial General Headquarters (Army Section).

According to Colonel Hattori, CinC Southern Army on October 22nd (both the FOURTEENTH Area Army record\*\*\* and Major General Nishimura say it was on the 23rd) issued the following order:

- "1. The time has come to destroy the arrogant enemy.
2. The FOURTEENTH Area Army will cooperate with air and naval forces and destroy the enemy attacking Leyte, employing the greatest possible strength."\*

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\* Colonel Takushiro Hattori, ex-IJA, "History of the Greater East Asia War", Volume III, Tokyo, June 1953.

\*\* USSBS Interrogation No. 506, Major General Nishimura, Staff Officer of the 14TH Area Army at the time of the Leyte Campaign, Lieutenant Colonel Matsumae, Staff Officer of the 14TH Area Army and Commander Tonosuke Otani, Staff Officer of the 1ST Striking Force.

\*\*\* Philippine Operation, The 14TH Area Army Command in Leyte, 1ST Demobilization Ministry, October 1946, Volume II, Phase 3.

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(1) Operations of Commander FIRST Striking Force and Commander Main Body, October 22nd, 1944.

With the commencement of this day Commander FIRST Striking Force, who was also Commander Main Body, in his flagship the heavy cruiser ATAGO, was making preparations to depart on the penetration operation at 0800. His force was largely fueled but some of his battleships were still fueling. He knew that his commanders were also preparing to depart and were complying with the provisions of Commander FIRST Striking Force DesOpOrd No. 4 for he received (a) Commander SECOND Section's (COMBATDIV THREE) sortie instructions at this time for the SECOND Section to the effect that (1) the SECOND Section would sortie following the FIRST Section, (2) the order of departure from the harbor for the SECOND Section would be: DESRON TEN, CRUDIV SEVEN, BATDIV THREE, and (3) after passing the harbor entrance and without waiting for further orders, would form Alert Cruising Disposition B-1,\* and (b) about one hour later, at 0103, orders transferring the KIYOSHIMO from DESRON TWO to DESRON TEN.\*\*

At 0500 he learned that his ships had now completed fueling.\*\*\* Actually, all thirty-nine of his ships had fueled to capacity; this had required a total of 15,800 tons of oil from the oilers HAKKO MARU and YUHO MARU. Since the cargo of oil carried by these oilers was 19,300 tons (HAKKO MARU, 13,000 tons; YUHO MARU, 6,300 tons),\*\*\* this left about 3500 tons in the two oilers.

Meanwhile, realizing that some of his oilers--all of which, with the exception of the NIPPO MARU, had been assigned to him on October 18th while he was en route Lingga to Brunei Bay\*\*\*--were far removed from his present vicinity and that therefore it would be some time before his Operation Order No. 4 was received by them, he decided that it would be advantageous to immediately organize his supply force in accordance with that order.

At 0700 he therefore issued the organization of his supply force by dispatch as follows:

(a) FIRST Supply Force (Commander ELEVENTH Maritime Transport Unit):

YUHO MARU, HAKKO MARU, ITSUKUSHIMA MARU, MANEI MARU, OMUROSAN MARU, NIPPO MARU, CHIBURI, YURISHIMA, CD Vessel #19;

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\* Commander 2ND Section (COMBATDIV 3) Visual Dispatch 212400 October 1944 to 2ND Section 1ST Striking Force, info Commander 1ST Striking Force, (2ND Section SigOrd No. 7), Detailed Action Report SUZUYA, SHO No. 1 Operation, October 18th - 25th, 1944, WDC Document 161747.

\*\* Commander 2ND Section (COMBATDIV 3) Visual Dispatch 220103 October 1944 to 2ND Section, info ATAGO, KIYOSHIMO (2ND Section DesOpOrd No. 6), Detailed Action Report No. 13, DESRON 10, SHO Operation, October 17th - 31st, 1944, WDC Document 161005, NA 11744.

\*\*\* Detailed Action Report 1ST Striking Force, SHO Operations, October 16th - 28th, 1944, WDC Document 161641, NA 11839.



## (b) SECOND Supply Force (Senior Commander):

NICHIEI MARU, RYOEI MARU, KURAHASHI, MIYAKE, MANJU.\*

NOTE: On this day (the 22nd) the above oilers operated as follows: HAKKO MARU and YUHO MARU with AM 34\*\* at Brunei Bay; MANEI MARU, ITSUKUSHIMA MARU escorted by CHIBURI and CD Vessel #19 from Singapore arrived Brunei Bay; OMUROSAN MARU, NIPPO MARU escorted by YURISHIMA and CD Vessel #27 en route Singapore to Brunei Bay; NICHIEI MARU from Sana (Hainan Island) arrived Ulugan Bay (Palawan Island); and the RYOEI MARU remained Mako.

Also at 0700, in accordance with instructions received the previous day from COMBATDIV ONE, the NAGATO transferred (a) one plane to the YAMATO and one to the MUSASHI, and (b) seven maintenance personnel (petty officers and men) to the MUSASHI.\*\*\* As a result of these transfers, the YAMATO had three planes (YAMATO Nos. 1 and 2 and NAGATO No. 1) and one reserve plane; the MUSASHI had three planes (MUSASHI Nos. 1 and 2, NAGATO No. 2) and two reserve planes; and the NAGATO had none.

At 0715 his reconnaissance seaplane was placed under command of his Reconnaissance Seaplane Unit for movement to San Jose via Balabac and Puerto Princesa airfields.\*\*\*

At 0720 he noted that two planes (type ninety-six two-engine land bombers) from the Miri Detachment at Miri, Borneo, had arrived over Brunei Bay. These planes were preparing to carry out direct escort (ASP) for the Main Body\*\*\*\* as it sortied and proceeded toward Palawan Passage.

At 0745 the units of the FIRST Section, in accordance with the basic orders, commenced getting underway preparatory to sortie.\*\*\*\*\* Since the various units were anchored in widely separated positions in the bay, upon getting underway they operated more or less independently as they headed for the entrance where they were to form cruising disposition. At 0855 they commenced evasive maneuvers against submarines. At 1003 the YAMATO passed Abana Rock abeam and exited from Brunei Bay, on base course 320°(T), speed eighteen knots.\*\*\*\*\*

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\* Commander 1ST Striking Force Dispatch 220700 October 1944 to KURAHASHI, MIYAKE, etc. (1ST Striking Force DesOpOrd No. 57), Detailed Action Report 1ST Striking Force, SHO Operations, October 16th - 28th, 1944, WDC Document 161641, NA 11839.

\*\* This may have actually been the ETOROFU as it was the ETOROFU which was ordered to escort the HAKKO MARU and the YUHO MARU (Commander 1ST Striking Force Dispatch 171125 October 1944 to HAKKO MARU, ETOROFU, DESRON 10, etc., War Diary DESRON 10, October 1944, WDC Document 161638, NA 11739).

\*\*\* Detailed Action Report BATDIV 1, SHO No. 1 Operation, October 18th - 28th, 1944, WDC Document 161005, NA 11744.

\*\*\*\* Detailed Action Report 901st Air Group (Miri Detachment), October 1944, WDC Document 160369, NA 12366.

\*\*\*\*\* War Diary MYOKO, October 1944, WDC Document 161636, NA 11973.

\*\*\*\*\* Detailed Action Report No. 3, YAMATO, SHO No. 1 Anti-air and Surface Actions, October 17 - 28th, 1944, WDC Document 161639.



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At this time the FIRST Section was composed of three battleships, six heavy cruisers, one light cruiser and nine destroyers organized as follows: BATDIV ONE (YAMATO (FF), MUSASHI, NAGATO); CRUDIV FOUR (ATAGO (FFF), MAYA, TAKAO, CHOKAI); CRUDIV FIVE less MOGAMI (MYOKO (F), HAGURO); DESRON TWO less SHIGURE, KIYOSHIMO plus SHIMAKAZE (NOSHIRO (F), SHIMAKAZE); DESDIV TWO less KIYOSHIMO (HAYASHIMO, AKISHIMO); DESDIV THIRTY-ONE (KISHINAMI, NAGANAMI, OKINAMI (F), ASASHIMO); and DESDIV THIRTY-TWO (HAMANAMI, FUJINAMI).

At 0820 the units of the SECOND Section, also in accordance with the basic orders, commenced getting underway preparatory to sortie.\* It is assumed that this section passed Abana Rock about 1030, likewise on base course 320°(T), speed eighteen knots.

At this time the SECOND Section was composed of two battleships, four heavy cruisers, one light cruiser and six destroyers organized as follows: BATDIV THREE (KONGO (FF), HARUNA); CRUDIV SEVEN (KUMANO (F), SUZUYA, CHIKUMA, TONE); DESRON TEN less DESDIV's FOUR, FORTY-ONE, SIXTY-ONE plus NOWAKI, KIYOSHIMO (YAHAGI (F), NOWAKI, KIYOSHIMO); and DESDIV SEVENTEEN (URAKAZE (F), HAMAKAZE, YUKIKAZE, ISOKAZE).

Commander FIRST Striking Force, who from now on will be known when referring to the Main Body as Commander Main Body, planned to hold this course of 320°(T) for several hours to avoid a possible submarine patrol area off Brunei Bay. Although he did not know it, there were no Allied submarines nearer than the DARTER which at this time was about 150 miles to the north-east in Palawan Passage. The HAMMERHEAD, which had been guarding the SW approaches to Brunei Bay, was at this time en route home. Thus, the Main Body was enabled to sortie without detection.

Meanwhile, the units of the THIRD Section, which section was not to depart until 1500, remained at anchor and continued sortie preparations. As this THIRD Section will be discussed separately, it will be dropped from discussion here.

THAT COMMANDER MAIN BODY WAS NOT TOO CONCERNED OVER POSSIBLE ALLIED SUBMARINES GUARDING THE APPROACHES TO BRUNEI BAY SEEMS CLEAR FOR, EXCEPTING FOR HIS MOVEMENT TO THE WESTWARD ON COURSE 320°(T), HIS ZIGZAGGING, AND THE EVASIVE MANEUVERS BY HIS SHIPS AGAINST SUBMARINES AS THEY SORTIED PREPARATORY TO FORMING THEIR CRUISING DISPOSITIONS, HE TOOK NO OTHER ACTION. CONTRARY TO USUAL JAPANESE PRACTICE,\*\* AND TO HIS OWN STANDING ORDER THEREON,\*\*\* HE NOT ONLY FAILED TO EMPLOY HIS DESTROYERS TO CONDUCT AN ANTISUBMARINE SWEEP OUTSIDE THE HARBOR PRIOR TO THE SORTIE OF THE HEAVY SHIPS, BUT LOCAL DEFENSE

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\* War Diary CRUDIV 7, October 1944, WDC Document 161638, NA 11739.

\*\* CINCPAC-CINCPOA Weekly Intelligence Bulletin, Vol. I, No. 4, August 4th, 1944, Addendum, KNOW YOUR ENEMY, Japanese Underwater Sound Gear and Methods.

\*\*\* 1ST Striking Force Standing Order No. 2, January 1944, ATIS Document No. 39, Part X, August 12th, 1945 (NACHI Document).



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FORCES--IF THERE WERE ANY--LIKEWISE FAILED TO DO SO. INSTEAD, HE APPEARS TO HAVE RELIED ENTIRELY ON THE COVERAGE GIVEN BY THE PLANES OF THE MIRI DETACHMENT. WHY THIS WAS IS NOT ENTIRELY CLEAR FOR HE HAD BEEN ADVISED BY DISPATCH ON THE 20TH--HE RECEIVED IT ON THE 21ST--THAT HIS FORCE HAD LIKELY BEEN DISCOVERED BY ALLIED PATROL PLANES,\* AND THEREFORE HE MIGHT REASONABLY HAVE EXPECTED ALLIED SUBMARINES TO BE IN WAITING OFF THE ENTRANCE. FOR THIS REASON, HIS LACK OF NORMAL SCREENING PRECAUTIONS, PARTICULARLY ON SORTIE, SEEMS UNSOUND.

IN THIS CONNECTION, IT SEEMS WISE TO POINT OUT HERE A FACT WHICH WILL BE DISCUSSED MORE FULLY PRESENTLY; THAT THIS LACK OF CONCERN OVER POSSIBLE ALLIED SUBMARINES GUARDING THE APPROACHES TO BRUNEI BAY WAS NOT RESTRICTED TO THE BRUNEI BAY AREA ALONE BUT SEEMS TO HAVE APPLIED TO THE WHOLE AREA THROUGH WHICH THE FIRST STRIKING FORCE WOULD PASS EN ROUTE TO LEYTE. THIS WAS HIGHLIGHTED BY THE POSTWAR STATEMENT (1945) OF THE CHIEF OF STAFF FIRST STRIKING FORCE WHO, IN REPLY TO A QUERY AS TO WHETHER THERE WAS "ANY EMPHASIS PLACED ON RADAR SEARCH AND ON ANTISUBMARINE MEASURES", REPLIED, "WE DID NOT WORRY MUCH ABOUT THE SUBMARINE PROBLEM, CONCENTRATING ON AIRCRAFT AND SURFACE VESSELS".\*\*

At the time of his sortie from Brunei Bay, he had at his disposal in the battleships and cruisers of the FIRST and SECOND Sections at least forty-one and probably forty-five reconnaissance seaplanes (Table 3). This disagrees with his clearly erroneous statement in his action report that he had transferred his reconnaissance seaplanes to San Jose (Mindoro) and therefore his forward patrol and direct escort patrols were carried out by the 901st Air Group.\*\*\*

As previously stated under "Operations of Commander FIRST Striking Force, October 21st", he had issued his plan for the operation of these planes on October 18th. Although this directive is not available to this study, it is clear from later dispatches that (a) it was a modification of his basic SHO Operations Order\*\*\*\* (Commander FIRST Striking Force Top Secret Operation Order No. 1) and provided, in part, for the formation of shore-based reconnaissance units to cover the movements of his force.\*\*\*\*\*

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\* Commander Communications Force Dispatch 202329 October 1944 to CinC Combined Fleet, Commander 1ST Striking Force, info Commanders SW Area Force, Mobile Force, War Diary DESRON 10, October 1944, WDC Document 161638, NA 11739.

\*\* USSBS Interrogations of Japanese Officials, Nav No. 35, Interrogation of Rear Admiral Tomiji Koyanagi, IJN, Page 147.

\*\*\* Detailed Action Report 1ST Striking Force, SHO Operations, October 16th - 28th, 1944, WDC Document 161641, NA 11839.

\*\*\*\* COMCRUDIV 5 Visual Dispatch 212122 October 1944 to CRUDIV 5, (CRUDIV 5 SigOrd No. 5), Detailed Action Report No. 15, MYOKO, Battle off the Philippines (Anti-Aircraft Action in Mindoro Sea), October 24th, 1944, WDC Document 161647.

\*\*\*\*\* COMBATDIV 1 Dispatch 231758 October 1944 to ships carrying aircraft, Detailed Action Report BATDIV 1, SHO No. 1 Operation, October 18th - 28th, 1944, WDC Document 161005, NA 11744.



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The above two operation orders provided for the employment of reconnaissance aircraft as follows: (a)(1) direct escort patrols (ASP) about the force, (2) forward patrol (searches) along the line of advance ahead of the force, and (3) searches into the area of enemy operations (Leyte Gulf and vicinity); (b) for the most part, upon completion of the task assigned, these planes were to proceed to San Jose (Mindoro) and thenceforth were to operate from land bases; and (c) the major part of these planes were organized into the FIRST, SECOND and THIRD Reconnaissance Units which were to operate first from the ships, and then from the shore bases as desired by the commander.

At 1020 Commander Main Body, who also commanded the FIRST Section, directed (a) the FIRST and SECOND Sections to form Alert Cruising Disposition Y-19\* (What this disposition was is not fully known but it seems to have been a disposition with the FIRST Section leading the SECOND Section in column by six kilometers), (b) the FIRST Section to form Alert Cruising Disposition Y-22,\* and (c) each unit to zigzag independently.\*\* The nature of Y-22 with the location of its units is known and is shown on Plate XXXVIII.

At this same time the SECOND Section commenced forming Alert Cruising Disposition B-1.\*\*\* What this disposition was is not known but it is assumed that it was similar to Y-22.

The result of the above was that, when Alert Cruising Disposition Y-19 was finally formed, the FIRST Section was in disposition Y-22, the SECOND Section in Disposition B-1, and the entire command was zigzagging by the "X" method at eighteen knots.

SINCE, IN SELECTING THE ROUTE THROUGH PALAWAN PASSAGE AND IN DISCUSSING THE SAME ON THE ATAGO AT THE CONFERENCE HELD ON THAT SHIP THE PREVIOUS EVENING, COMMANDER FIRST STRIKING FORCE HAD EMPHASIZED THE SUBMARINE THREAT IN THAT PASSAGE, HAD STATED THAT IT WAS GREATEST THERE, AND HAD PROBABLY DISCUSSED THE DISPOSITIONS TO BE EMPLOYED, IT CAN BE CONCLUDED THAT HE AND HIS CAPTAINS WERE FULLY AWARE OF THE POSSIBILITY OF ALLIED SUBMARINES INTERFERING WITH HIS OPERATIONS. THEY WERE ALSO AWARE OF THE FACT THAT JAPANESE ECHO RANGING EQUIPMENT DISPLAYED ITS GREATEST EFFECTIVENESS WHEN THE RANGING SHIP WAS PROCEEDING AT TEN KNOTS OR LESS WITH TWELVE KNOTS AS THE MAXIMUM EFFECTIVE SEARCHING SPEED, AND THAT IT TENDED TO DIMINISH RAPIDLY IN EFFECTIVENESS AS THE SPEED INCREASED\*\*\*\* AND THAT THE

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\* Detailed Action and Battle Lessons Report ATAGO, October 23rd, 1944, WDC Document 161747.

\*\* Commander 1ST Striking Force Visual Dispatch 221020 October 1944 to 1ST Striking Force, Detailed Action Report No. 2, DESDIV 31 (KISHINAMI), AA and Surface Actions, October 24th - 26th, 1944, WDC Document 161717, NA 11801.

\*\*\* War Diary CRUDIV 7, October 1944, WDC Document 161638, NA 11739.

\*\*\*\* CINCPAC-CINCPOA Weekly Intelligence Bulletin, Vol. I, No. 4, August 4th, 1944, Addendum, KNOW YOUR ENEMY, Japanese Underwater Sound Gear and Methods.



Aircraft in FIRST Striking Force upon sortie from Brunei Bay  
October 22nd, 1944

	<u>Aircraft Known to be aboard</u>	<u>Aircraft Probably on board</u>
<b>(a) <u>FIRST Section</u></b>		
(1) BATDIV ONE		
YAMATO	4	4
MUSASHI	5	5
NAGATO	0	0
(2) CRUDIV FOUR		
ATAGO	1	2
TAKAO	2	2
CHOKAI	2	2
MAYA	?	2
(3) CRUDIV FIVE		
MYOKO	2	2
HAGURO	2	2
(4) DESRON TWO		
NOSHIRO	2	2
(5) Total FIRST Section	20	23
<hr/>		
<b>(b) <u>SECOND Section</u></b>		
(1) BATDIV THREE		
KONGO	2	2
HARUNA	1	2
(2) CRUDIV SEVEN		
KUMANO	3	3
SUZUYA	3	3
CHIKUMA	5	5
TONE	5	5
(3) DESRON TEN		
YAHAGI	2	2
(4) Total SECOND Section	21	22
<hr/>		
(5) Total FIRST and SECOND Sections	41	45
<hr/>		
<b>(c) <u>THIRD Section</u></b>		
(1) BATDIV TWO		
YAMASHIRO	?	2
FUSO	2	2
(2) MOGAMI	6	6
(3) Total THIRD Section	8	10
<hr/>		
(d) Grand Total FIRST, SECOND, THIRD Sections	49	55

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DESTROYERS AND LIGHT CRUISERS EQUIPPED WITH SUCH ECHO RANGING COULD NOT HAVE BEEN PARTICULARLY EFFECTIVE AT EIGHTEEN OR EVEN SIXTEEN KNOTS, EVEN THOUGH, AS A RESULT OF TESTS CONDUCTED AT LINGGA, THERE HAD BEEN A "CONSIDERABLE IMPROVEMENT IN EFFICIENCY IN ANTISUBMARINE DETECTION".\* THERE IS NO STATEMENT AS TO THE SPEEDS EMPLOYED IN THESE TESTS. PERHAPS THE SOUND CONDITIONS IN THE LINGGA AREA WERE BETTER THAN AVERAGE.

WHY, THEN, DID HE EMPLOY (A) THE ABOVE CRUISING DISPOSITIONS (1) Y-22 AND (2) Y-19, AND (B) EIGHTEEN KNOTS WITH AN SOA OF SIXTEEN KNOTS?

AS REGARDS ITEM (A)(1) WHILE THE ANSWER IS NOWHERE AVAILABLE, SINCE COMMANDER MAIN BODY DOES NOT EXPLAIN HIS DECISION TO EMPLOY THESE DISPOSITIONS, IT SHOULD BE EMPHASIZED HERE THAT DISPOSITIONS WITH THE GENERAL CHARACTERISTICS OF Y-22 ARE SHOWN UNDER "ORDER OF CRUISING UNDER ALERT" DISPOSITIONS IN THE FIRST STRIKING FORCE ATTACK FORCE DOCTRINE.\*\* SINCE THESE LATTER DISPOSITIONS WERE ORIGINALLY ISSUED BY THE PRESENT COMMANDER FIRST STRIKING FORCE, IT SEEMS LIKELY THAT THEY FULLY MET HIS REQUIREMENTS. WHY THIS WAS SO IS NOT CLEAR FOR IT HAD LONG BEEN RECOGNIZED IN THE UNITED STATES NAVY THAT THE BEST DISPOSITION FOR OBTAINING A REASONABLE DEFENSE AGAINST SUBMARINES INCLUDED AS A PRIMARY ITEM AN ANTISUBMARINE SCREEN OF DESTROYERS EQUIPPED WITH SUPERSONIC EQUIPMENT FOR DETECTION, TRACKING AND ATTACK OF SUBMARINES AND SO STATIONED IN ADVANCE OF THE SHIPS SCREENED AS TO COVER ALL POSSIBLE SUBMARINE APPROACH SECTORS WITH THE NUMBER OF SHIPS AVAILABLE AND AT THE SAME TIME TO AVOID MUTUAL SONIC AND TACTICAL INTERFERENCE.\*\*\*

IT IS DIFFICULT TO BELIEVE THAT THE JAPANESE WERE NOT FULLY ALERT TO THIS CONCEPT. BUT WHETHER OR NOT THEY WERE SO ALERT IS NOT SO IMPORTANT AS THE FACT THAT THEY FAILED, AT LEAST IN THIS CASE, TO EMPLOY THEIR DESTROYERS IN THIS MANNER. INSTEAD, THEY LEFT THE AHEAD SECTORS ENTIRELY EXPOSED AND COVERED ONLY THE FLANKS. WHAT THEY HOPED TO GAIN BY THIS IS NOT CLEAR FOR, BY SO DOING, THEY MADE IT POSSIBLE FOR SUBMARINES TO ATTACK FROM AHEAD FROM THE MOST DESIRABLE ATTACK POSITIONS.

There are indications that a disposition such as Y-22 was normally employed astern of a destroyer screen, one example of which was composed of two lines of destroyers. This type screen required that one line search well ahead of the unit screened at eleven knots while the other line advanced at twenty-six knots. This enabled the force screened to

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\* Detailed Action Report No. 13, DESRON 10, SHO Operation, October 17th - 31st, 1944, WDC Document 161005, NA 11744.

\*\* 1ST Striking Force Standing Order No. 2 of January 1st, 1944 and No. 15 of May 1st, 1944, ATIS Document No. 39, Part X, August 12th, 1945 (NACHI Document).

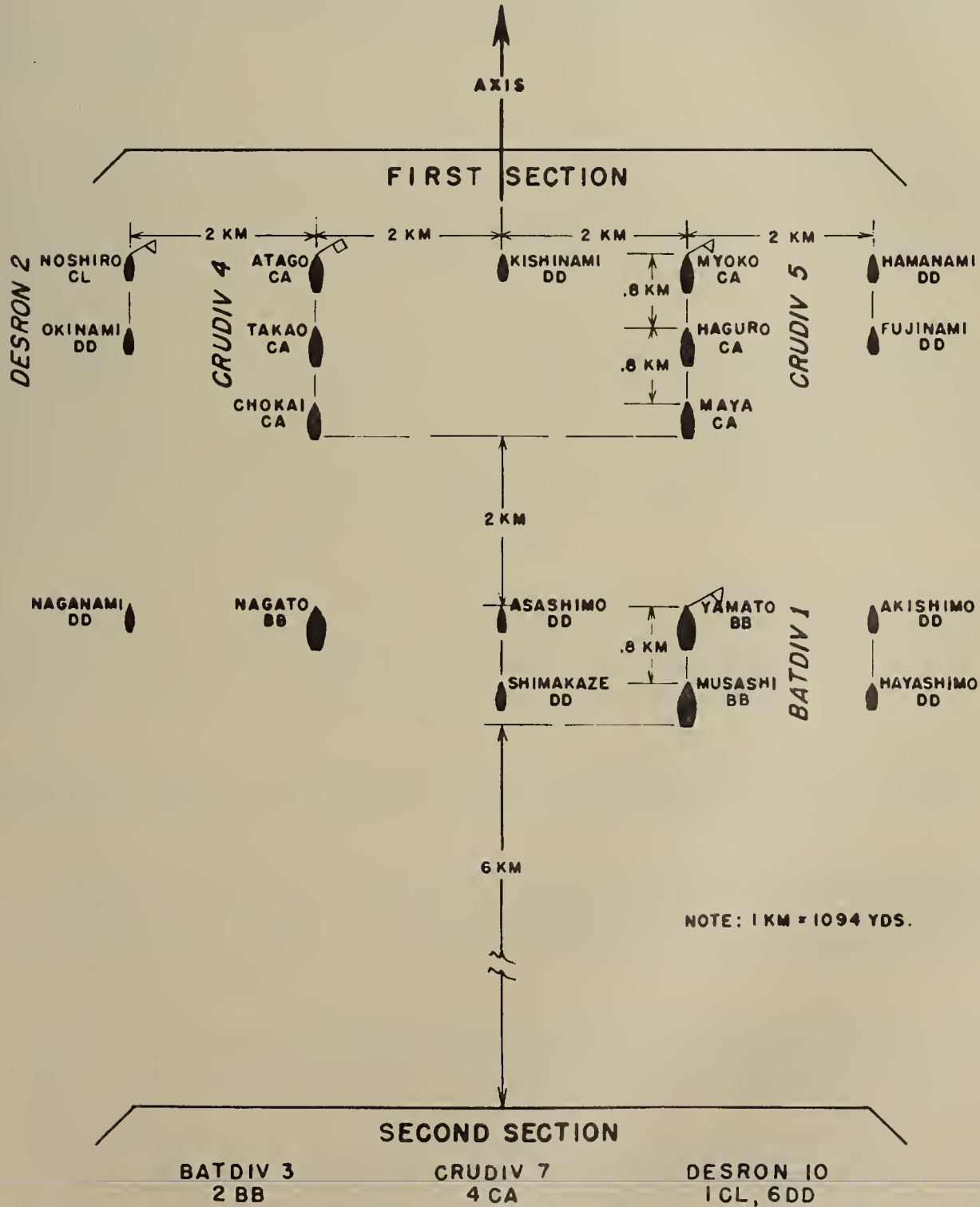
\*\*\* General Tactical Instructions, United States Navy (FTP 188), Office of the Chief of Naval Operations, Division of Fleet Training, 1940, Chapter X, Paragraph 1003.



MAIN BODY Y-22 ALERT CRUISING DISPOSITION  
WITH  
FIRST SECTION Y-19 ALERT CRUISING DISPOSITION  
(SECOND SECTION CRUISING DISPOSITION B-1 NOT SHOWN AS JAPANESE  
RECORDS OMIT THIS INFORMATION)

DETAILED ACTION AND BATTLE LESSON REPORT, ATAGO, OCTOBER 23RD, 1944

BATTLE FOR LEYTE GULF  
OCTOBER 1944







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zigzag independently of the screening units at a speed of eighteen knots.\* However, in the case under discussion, the only search well ahead was by the forward patrol planes. Could it have been that Commander FIRST Striking Force considered this plane search the equivalent of the destroyer screen?

AS REGARDS ITEM (A)(2) (THE OVERALL DISPOSITION Y-19), IT SEEMS WISE TO POINT OUT HERE THAT IT HAD LONG BEEN UNITED STATES NAVAL DOCTRINE TO AVOID HAVING SHIPS IN DEPTH WHEN THE PREDOMINANT THREAT WAS SUBMARINE ATTACK. THIS DOCTRINE WAS STATED AS FOLLOWS: "WHEN SUBMARINE ATTACK IS THE PREDOMINANT THREAT, THE DISPOSITION SHOULD HAVE WIDTH RATHER THAN DEPTH".\*\* IT WILL BE OBSERVED THAT DISPOSITION Y-19 WAS THE REVERSE; I.E., DEPTH RATHER THAN WIDTH.

As regards item (b), the SOA of sixteen knots, which he knew was too fast to give very efficient sonar performance, had been forced on him by several factors over which he had little control, notably his departure time from Brunei Bay (because of fueling requirements) and his arrival time at Leyte Gulf (which had been set by CinC Combined Fleet). (Discussed under "Operations of Commander FIRST Striking Force, October 21st").

MINDFUL OF THIS, HE SEEMS TO HAVE FELT THAT SINCE (A) ALLIED SUBMARINES WOULD BE KEPT SUBMERGED BY JAPANESE FORWARD AIRCRAFT, AND (B) HE WAS ZIGZAGGING, HE WAS REASONABLY SAFE UNLESS A SUBMARINE SIMPLY HAPPENED TO BE IN A CORRECT FIRING POSITION ON ONE OF THE ZIGZAG LEGS. IF THIS WAS HIS FEELING, IT HAD SOME JUSTIFICATION FOR DAYLIGHT OPERATIONS, BUT DOES IT NOT SEEM CLEAR THAT HIS FEELING WOULD HAVE HAD MORE JUSTIFICATION HAD HE EMPLOYED A DESTROYER SCREEN IN ADDITION?

At 1025, with the YAMATO bearing 244°(T), distant eight and three-tenths miles from Kuraman Light, the entire Main Body, while steaming at eighteen knots, commenced zigzagging by the "X" method\*\*\* which, as mentioned later, gave a speed made good of sixteen knots.

At 1110 the two direct escort planes from Miri were relieved by two additional planes from Miri. They then departed for Miri where they landed at 1200, having sighted no enemy craft of any kind.\*\*\*\*

During the night and the succeeding forenoon, he awaited with keen interest the reports of Japanese search planes as well as contact reports from other sources. It seems probable that he received the various contact reports as follows:

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\* CINCPAC-CINCPOA Weekly Intelligence Bulletin, Vol. I, No. 4, August 4th, 1944, Addendum, KNOW YOUR ENEMY, Japanese Underwater Sound Gear and Methods.

\*\* Current Tactical Orders and Doctrine, U.S. Fleet (USF 10A), United States Fleet, Headquarters of the Commander-in-Chief, 1944, Page 3-3.

\*\*\* Detailed Action Report No. 3, YAMATO, SHO No. 1 Anti-air and Surface Actions, October 17th - 28th, 1944, WDC Document 161639.

\*\*\*\* Detailed Action Report 901ST Air Group (Miri Detachment), October 1944, WDC Document 160369, NA 12366.

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(1) An 0445 report (Class D) of a 2116 October 21st radio direction finder fix on a task force bearing 087°(T), distant 600 miles from Manila;\* (Plate XXXVI, Contact A);

(2) Between 0637 and 0925 a contact on three large carriers, two battleships, and ten other ships in Latitude 25° - 30°N or 10° - 30°N, Longitude 133° - 30°E (Contact C). (That he accepted the lower latitude, as did COMBATDIV ONE, as the more correct seems likely for that commander in his personal diary gave the position of the contact as 095°(T), distant 500 miles from Tacloban.);

(3) An 0810 contact on five carriers and seven other ships on course 300°(T), bearing 090°(T), distant 160 kilometers (eighty-six miles) from Tacloban (Contact D);

(4) An 0810 contact on three carriers and five other ships bearing 090°(T), distant 400 kilometers (216 miles) from Saravia (NW Negros) (Contact E);

(5) An 0907 report of eighty transports within Leyte Gulf, with no rear forces outside the gulf (Contact F);

(6) An 0920 contact on two carriers, two battleships and several other ships bearing 087°(T), distant 330 miles from Manila (Contact G);

(7) A 1011 radio direction finder fix on a ship, type unknown, bearing 093°(T), distant about 750 miles from Manila (Contact H).

Based on the above contact reports, Commander FIRST Striking Force could estimate that his forces were opposed (a) off Luzon by a total of two carriers, distant 330 miles from Manila, and (b) off Samar by a total (1) of eight carriers within 100 miles, and (2) of three carriers well to the eastward (about 500 miles). And, if he gave any weight to the 0445 Class D radio direction finder report, he could estimate that his forces were opposed, in addition, by a task force of from one to four carriers some 600 miles to the eastward of Luzon. From this, he could see that, if these carriers remained off Philippine waters without much change in position, he might well be attacked while passing through the Sibuyan Sea by planes from a minimum of eight carriers which, assuming four were large carriers (CV) and four small carriers (CVL) and based on an average number of planes per carrier (large carrier ninety-six planes, small carrier thirty-three planes), would be 516 planes. This was not a pleasant eventuality to contemplate, but it is presumed that he hoped to be able to defeat these attacks by (a) the power of the three Japanese air forces (FIFTH and SIXTH Base Air Forces, FOURTH Air Army) which he knew would be operating in the Philippines at the time of his passage and (b) by his anti-aircraft guns and maneuver.

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\* Commander 31ST Communication Unit Dispatch 220445 October 1944 to Commander Main Force, etc., Detailed Action Report Main Force, SHO No. 1 Operation, October 20th - 29th, 1944, WDC Document 161005, NA 11744.



Exactly what information he had at this time relative to the strength of the (a) Japanese air forces and (b) enemy surface forces is not specifically recorded.

As regards item (a), since COMBATDIV ONE on October 20th had certain information thereon, it seems likely that he had it as well. This information follows:

(1) ". . . the air strength in the Philippines area is only 60 - 70 planes, the combined strength of the FIFTH Base Air Force and the FOURTH Air Army. The SIXTH Base Air Force is now regrouping its strength and it is learned that its total operational aircraft strength is 232. We, together with this strength, are going to have to destroy the enemy. Our responsibility is indeed heavy."\*

Whether he had the current information adjusting the SIXTH Base Air Force operational aircraft total to 330\*\* and the FOURTH Air Army's planned buildup to some 172\*\*\* operational aircraft by October 24th is not known, but as no mention is made in documents available it seems unlikely.

(2) The Main Force had sortied on October 20th; with 116 aircraft embarked.\* (Since he had known of the general lack of training of the carrier pilots, it is probable that he had no illusions as to the competence of the pilots).

That he and his staff were concerned about the support of the land-based air is evident from (a) COMBATDIV ONE's statement (Item (1) above), (b) his own postwar statement, "It was understood from the beginning . . . that we did not have enough aircraft";\*\*\*\* and (c) his Chief of Staff's postwar statement, ". . . It was indispensable that we have the cooperation of friendly air forces."\*\*\*\*\*

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\* Vice Admiral Matome Ugaki, IJN, (COMBATDIV 1), Personal Diary SENSOROKU, Nippon Shuppan Kyodo Kabushiki Kaisha, (Tokyo, March 15th, 1953), Volume II.

\*\* CofS 6TH Base Air Force Dispatch 200002 October 1944, (Addressees Unknown), War Diary 103RD Attack Unit, (701ST Air Group), Kokubu Detachment, October 13th - 31st, 1944, WDC Document 160258, NA 12592.

\*\*\* 2ND Air Division Operation Order A-207, October 22nd, 1944, Documents from file of Lieutenant Colonel Katsuo Sato, IJA, Staff Officer, 4TH Air Army, Department of the Army, Historical Division Microfilm HS-7.

\*\*\*\* USSBS Interrogations of Japanese Officials, Nav No. 9, Volume I, Interrogation of Vice Admiral Takeo Kurita, IJN, Page 36.

\*\*\*\*\* Rear Admiral Tomiji Koyanagi, ex-IJN, "The Battle of Leyte Gulf-- A Retrospection", MS Translation by Captain Toshikazu Ohmae, ex-IJN, edited by Roger Pineau, 1952, Office of the Chief of Naval Operations (Op-291).

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As regards item (b) there is considerable general evidence that he was seriously concerned over the strength of the enemy surface forces which he might encounter (1) when he passed through San Bernardino Strait and proceeded off the east coast of Samar toward Leyte and (2) inside Leyte Gulf. He likely received with concern those contact reports which emphasized carriers and neglected battleships, cruisers and destroyers, many of which he well knew were in Leyte Gulf. As discussed at some length under "Operations of Commander FIRST Striking Force, October 20th", he knew from POW interrogations that in addition to those battleships in TF 38 there were eight battleships attached directly to THIRDFLT.\* That he largely accepted the POW information is borne out by postwar interrogations in which he stated that he expected to find in Leyte Gulf "two hundred transports, seven battleships with appropriate accompanying cruisers and destroyers."\*

Thus, as the elements of the FIRST Striking Force put to sea, it is likely that he (a) had no illusions either of the strength of Japanese forces or that of the Allies which he opposed, and (b) approached the task with the same air of determination as did COMBATDIV ONE who said, "However, as the Ancients said, 'If you have enough determination, even the devil will avoid you.' "\*\*

At 1215, in accordance with orders which he had issued at 1140,\*\*\* he changed course to 015°(T), and at 1217 resumed zigzagging.\*\*\*\*

At 1400 he noted that two planes of the Takao Detachment, 901st Air Group, which had arrived at Miri at 1700 the preceding day, had arrived on station to relieve the two planes already there. At 1500 he noted that these latter two planes had departed for Puerto Princesa (where they landed at 1550, having sighted no enemy craft of any kind).\*\*\*\*\*

By going to Puerto Princesa, they made themselves available for escort duty on the following day for the Main Body as it passed through upper Palawan Passage.

Also at 1500 he knew that the THIRD Section should now be sortieing from Brunei Bay, and since he had heard nothing to the contrary, he undoubtedly assumed that all was going well—which was correct.

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- \* USSBS Interrogations of Japanese Officials, Nav No. 9, Volume I, Interrogation of Vice Admiral Takeo Kurita, IJN, Page 36.
- \*\* Vice Admiral Matome Ugaki, IJN, (COMBATDIV 1), Personal Diary SENSOROKU Nippon Shuppan Kyodo Kabushiki Kaisha, (Tokyo, March 15th, 1953), Volume II.
- \*\*\* Commander 1ST Striking Force Dispatch 221140 October 1944, Detailed Action Report No. 2, DESDIV 31 (KISHINAMI), Anti-Aircraft and Surface Actions, October 24th - 26th, 1944, WDC Document 161717, NA 11801.
- \*\*\*\* Detailed Action Report No. 3, YAMATO, SHO No. 1, Anti-Air and Surface Actions, October 17th - 28th, 1944, WDC Document 161639.
- \*\*\*\*\* Detailed Action Report 901ST Air Group (Miri Detachment), October 1944, WDC Document 160369, NA 12366.



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At 1523 he issued a directive for his search and escort aircraft for the movement from Brunei Bay to Leyte Gulf. This directive--his SigOrd No. 189--assigned his shipboard aircraft in accordance with his FIRST Striking Force OpOrd No. One as follows:

(a) Forward Patrol, No. Three Disposition: 1 plane each from ATAGO, CHOKAI and YAHAGI;

(b) Anti-Submarine Patrol, No. Six Disposition:

(1) First Group--one plane from BATDIV THREE, two from NOSHIRO.

(2) Second Group--two planes from CRUDIV SEVEN, one from CHOKAI.

(3) Third Group--two planes from CRUDIV SEVEN, one from YAHAGI.

(4) Fourth Group--two planes from CRUDIV SEVEN, one from ATAGO.

(c) Search and Anti-Submarine Attack Standby:

THIRD Shore-based Recco Unit (less CRUDIV FOUR and DESRON TEN planes).\*

This directive also ordered No. 3 (thirty-minute standby)\*\* aircraft alert\* for aircraft assigned.

At 1555 he received a message from the CinC Combined Fleet exhorting all forces to do their utmost in the SHO operation,\*\*\* and sometime after this he probably received CofS Combined Fleet's 221612 (discussed in full under "Operations of CinC Combined Fleet, October 22nd") which, in part, warned all commanders, and especially air commanders, of the forthcoming operations east of the Philippines and directed them (a) to take extreme care in identification and recognition in order to avoid possible attacks on friendly forces, and (b) after 1200 October 24th, aircraft to attack only carriers and transports and to refrain from attacking other surface ships except where positively identified as an enemy task force.\*\*\*\*

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\* Commander 1ST Striking Force Dispatch 221523 October 1944, addressees unintelligible but presumably included 1ST Striking Force (1ST Striking Force SigOrd No. 189), Detailed Action Report KONGO, SHO Operation, October 22nd - 28th, 1944, WDC Document 161637.

\*\* Derived from CARDIV 4 Top Secret Standing Order No. 20, ATIS Document No. 39, Part X, August 12th, 1945 (NACHI Document), Page 15.

\*\*\* CinC Combined Fleet Dispatch 221205 October 1944 to Combined Fleet, Detailed Action Report 1ST Striking Force, SHO Operations, October 16th - 28th, 1944, WDC Document 161641, NA 11839.

\*\*\*\* CofS Combined Fleet Dispatch 221612 October 1944 to All Fleet and Squadron Commanders, SW Area Force and 6TH Base Air Force, etc., War Diary, 61ST Air Flotilla, October 1944, WDC Document 161643, NA 12260.

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At 1700 he issued SigOrd No. 190 as follows:

(a) FIRST Reconnaissance Unit--Tomorrow (October 23rd) after carrying out the forward patrol this unit will transfer to San Jose. The forward patrol will consist of No. Four Disposition, base search line 035°(T), planes to search in parallel lines with "L" (interval between search lines) twenty miles and no "PA";

(b) THIRD Group: Two planes from CRUDIV SEVEN and one from YAHAGI;

(c) FOURTH Group: Two planes from CRUDIV SEVEN and one from ATAGO;

(d) Search and Anti-submarine Attack Standby: THIRD Shore-based Recco Unit (less CRUDIV FOUR and DESRON TEN aircraft); and

(e) All duty aircraft to be on No. 3 aircraft standby.\*

This SigOrd appears to have been a modification of SigOrd No. 189 issued several hours earlier and specified for the first time the date (October 23rd) upon which the movement ashore of his ship-based aircraft would commence.

At 1742 he received a dispatch from the Chief of Staff Combined Fleet to the effect that (a) enemy submarines transmitted urgent dispatches at 0010 in Latitude 12° - 45'N, Longitude 122° - 50'E (Contact B), (b) the enemy is apparently assembling submarines to cover channels and routes and to scout the movements of the FIRST Striking Force as well as other units, and (c) all commanders were to give this matter special attention.\*\*

While this dispatch did not present any concepts alien to those which Commander FIRST Striking Force had already given previous consideration in his planning for the penetration operation, the fact that it did present an affirmative indication of one or more submarines in the Sibuyan Sea and therefore near the planned route of his FIRST Striking Force should have emphasized the importance of antisubmarine measures.

The fact that, despite this, he as Commander Main Body made no change in his cruising disposition once again affirms the opinion expressed earlier that he was satisfied with its capabilities.

During the afternoon and early evening he received reports on aircraft, submarines and mines as follows:

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\* Commander 1ST Striking Force Dispatch 221700 October 1944 to CRUDIV 7, BATDIV 3, info all BATDIV's, CRUDIV's and DESRON's (1ST Striking Force SigOrd No. 190), Detailed Action Report BATDIV 1, SHO No. 1 Operation, October 18th - 28th, 1944, WDC Document 161005, NA 11744.

\*\* CofS Combined Fleet Dispatch 221651 October 1944 to Commander SW Area Force, info 1ST and 2ND Striking Forces, COMCRUDIV 16, COMBATDIV 2 (3RD Section), War Diary DESRON 10, October 1944, WDC Document 161638, NA 11739.



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(1) Just prior to 1356 from the CHOKAI on two to five aircraft bearing 090°(T), distant fifty-eight kilometers (approximately thirty-one miles) for at that time the ATAGO notified the FIRST Section of this contact;\*

(2) At 1431 from the NOSHIRO on a submarine periscope bearing 040°(T) which at 1434 she reported to be a dummy;\*\*

(3) At 1535 from the TAKAO on a submarine bearing 030°(T) which at 1540 she reported to be a false contact;\*\*\*

(4) At 1548 from the YAMATO on a floating mine;\*\*\*

(5) At 1735 (a) from the MUSASHI on a floating mine bearing 270°(T)\*\*\*  
(b) from the ATAGO on a submarine periscope bearing 075°(T) which at 1745 she reported to be a false contact;\*\*\*\* and

(6) At 1758 from one of his forward patrol aircraft (Takao Detachment--operating from Miri) on a submarine; although this was a false contact, he did not know it and assumed No. One alert which he held for some time.\*\*\*\*\*

He took evasive maneuvers to avoid contacts (2) and (5). Actually, all of the above contacts on submarines were false contacts as there were no Allied or Japanese submarines in the immediate area at this time.

Since (a) sunset was at about 1856, and (b) the 901st Air Group considered that, owing to a lack of the necessary facilities, the night use of airfields was difficult, it seems probable that the two planes from the Takao Detachment departed the FIRST Striking Force at about 1830 and landed at Kudat (northwest Borneo) before dark.\*\*\*\*\* By landing here, they were enabled to remain on escort duty somewhat longer than they would have had they been forced to Miri or to move forward to Puerto Princessa.

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\* ATAGO Dispatch 221356 October 1944 to 1ST Section 1ST Striking Force, Detailed Action Report No. 2, DESDIV 31 (KISHINAMI), AA and Surface Actions, October 24th - 26th, 1944, WDC Document 161717, NA 11801.

\*\* NOSHIRO Visual Dispatch 221430 October 1944 to 1ST Section 1ST Striking Force, Detailed Action Report No. 2, DESDIV 31 (KISHINAMI), AA and Surface Actions, October 24th - 26th, 1944, WDC Document 161717, NA 11801.

\*\*\* Detailed Action Report No. 3, YAMATO, SHO No. 1 Anti-air and Surface Actions, October 17th - 28th, 1944, WDC Document 161639.

\*\*\*\* ATAGO Signal (Flag) 221735 October 1944 to 1ST Striking Force, Detailed Action Report No. 3, HAGURO, SHO Operation, October 23rd - 26th, 1944, WDC Document 161747.

\*\*\*\*\* War Diary CRUDIV 7, October 1944, WDC Document 161638, NA 11739.

\*\*\*\*\* Detailed Action Report 901ST Air Group (Miri Detachment), October 1944, WDC Document 160369, NA 12366.

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At 1850 he issued his instructions for the night as follows:

- (a) At 1915 begin zigzagging "A" method with simultaneous turns;
- (b) At 2300 cease zigzagging and steam at sixteen knots;
- (c) At 0400 change course to 035°(T); and
- (d) At 0530 commence zigzagging "A" method and steam at eighteen knots.\*

It will be recalled that at this time (1850) the Main Body was zigzagging by the "X" method at eighteen knots. From an analysis of the tracks of the YAMATO (which are quite complete), it is estimated that the "X" method made good eighty-nine per cent or sixteen knots (approximately), and the "A" method ninety-four per cent or seventeen knots (approximately).

IN THE LIGHT OF (A) THE WARNING BY CINC COMBINED FLEET IN THIS MATTER, AND (B) HIS OWN ESTIMATE THAT THE ALLIED SUBMARINE THREAT WOULD BE GREATEST IN THE PALAWAN PASSAGE, IT IS NOT CLEAR WHY HE CHOSE TO PENETRATE THIS PASSAGE DURING THE MIDWATCH STILL IN DISPOSITION Y-19, Y-22 AND B-1 AND ON A FIXED COURSE (040°(T)) AT AN SOA OF SIXTEEN KNOTS, WHICH SPEED WAS ABOUT FOUR KNOTS SLOWER THAN THE SURFACE SPEED OF ALLIED SUBMARINES. SINCE JAPANESE PLANES WERE NOT FLYING AT NIGHT AND THEREFORE ALLIED SUBMARINES COULD APPROACH ON THE SURFACE WITH RADAR, WOULD NOT THIS DIFFERENCE IN SPEED MAKE IT POSSIBLE FOR ALLIED SUBMARINES TO MANEUVER FOR POSITION AHEAD OF THE FORCE? WAS NOT THIS STANDARD PRACTICE FOR ANY SUBMARINE ATTACK? AND WAS NOT COMMANDER MAIN BODY FULLY COGNIZANT OF THIS?

BASED ON THESE FACTORS, IT WOULD APPEAR THAT COMMANDER MAIN BODY, WITH HIS PRESENT DISPOSITION, ERRED IN ORDERING A REDUCTION IN SPEED. INSTEAD, HE SHOULD HAVE ORDERED AN INCREASE IN SPEED IN ORDER TO REDUCE THE (A) PERIOD OF TIME HE WAS IN PALAWAN PASSAGE AND (B) TIME IN WHICH HE MIGHT BE SUBJECT TO THE ALLIED SUBMARINE ATTACKS WHICH HE EXPECTED MIGHT OCCUR IN THIS AREA.

THIS LATTER IS SO BECAUSE (1) HIGH SPEED PRESENTS LIMITING BEARINGS OF APPROACH TO AN ATTACKING SUBMARINE RELATIVE TO THE COURSE OF THE FORMATION, AND (2) IN ORDER TO CLOSE WITHIN TORPEDO RANGE, THE SUBMARINE MUST APPROACH WITHIN THESE LIMITING BEARINGS.\*\*

At 1915 his command commenced zigzagging according to plan by the

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\* Commander 1ST Striking Force Dispatch 221850 October 1944, Detailed Action Report No. 2, DESDIV 31 (KISHINAMI), Anti-air and Surface Actions, October 24th - 26th, 1944, WDC Document 161717, NA 11801.

\*\* Antisubmarine Operations (NWP 24), Department of the Navy, Office of the Chief of Naval Operations, September 15th, 1953, Part I, Chapter III, Paragraph 343.



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"A" method and at 1946 he set Antisubmarine Condition Two and Special Antiaircraft Condition Two.\*

At 2105 he noted that the YAHAGI had fired a red flare and had changed course to port.\*\*

At 2300 his command ceased zigzagging and reduced speed to sixteen knots.\*

THUS, AS MIDNIGHT APPROACHED, COMMANDER MAIN BODY WAS PREPARING TO ENTER THE SOUTHERN END OF PALAWAN PASSAGE IN A DISPOSITION WHICH COULD NOT BE EXPECTED TO BE VERY EFFECTIVE AGAINST SUBMARINES AND PARTICULARLY SO WHEN ON A DIRECT COURSE WITHOUT ZIGZAGGING AND AT A RELATIVELY SLOW SPEED OF SIXTEEN KNOTS. WHY HE DID THIS IS NOT UNDERSTOOD FOR, AS MENTIONED EARLIER, HE (A) WELL KNEW THAT ALLIED SUBMARINES COULD BE EXPECTED TO BE IN PALAWAN PASSAGE, (B) HAD BEEN WARNED ABOUT SUBMARINES ALONG HIS TRACK (ACTUALLY, BUT ONE ALLIED SUBMARINE HAD BEEN STATIONED IN THIS AREA—EITHER DACE OR DARTER DEPENDING ON THE ROTATION), (C) HAD MENTIONED THIS PROBABILITY AT HIS CONFERENCE IN THE ATAGO ON THE PREVIOUS EVENING, AND (D) SEEMS TO HAVE MADE NO REQUESTS ON PALAWAN FOR ASSISTANCE IN KEEPING THE SUBMARINES SUBMERGED THROUGH THE EMPLOYMENT OF AIRCRAFT AND SMALL CRAFT.

At this time, unknown to this commander, the Allied submarines DACE and DARTER were in southern Palawan Passage. However, due in part to the (a) contact on CRUDIV SIXTEEN on the previous morning, (b) ensuing chase and (c) desire to work over a convoy, they were in a most unfavorable intercepting position for ships entering south Palawan Passage. This was because as discussed under "Operations of CTF 71, October 22nd, (5) DACE and DARTER" they were on the western side of the passage where their limited radar range might be ineffective.

At 2400 (DESRON TEN received it at this time) he received a dispatch from the Owada Communication Unit reporting an RDF fix at 1718 (likely 1800--see discussions under "Operations of Commander SW Area Force, October 22nd") on a submarine in position Latitude 10° - 00'N, Longitude 116° - 00'E\*\*\* (Contact J). As he took no additional defensive action, it appears that this contact came as no great surprise and that he considered his previous precautions adequate.

At this time the Main Body was bearing 277°(T), distant forty-eight miles from Balabac Island.

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- \* Detailed Action Report No. 3, YAMATO, SHO No. 1 Operation, Anti-air and Surface Actions October 17th - 28th, 1944, WDC Document 161639.
- \*\* Detailed Action Report 1ST Striking Force, SHO Operations, October 16th - 28th, 1944, WDC Document 161641, NA 11839.
- \*\*\* Commander Owada Communication Unit Dispatch 222040 October 1944 to CinC Combined Fleet, Commanders 6TH Base Air Force, 1ST and 2ND Striking Forces, Main Force, War Diary DESRON 10, October 1944, WDC Document 161638, NA 11739.

## (a) Operations of Commander THIRD Section, October 22nd, 1944.

With the commencement of this day, Commander THIRD Section, in his flagship (YAMASHIRO), was (a) preparing his plans for the departure of the THIRD Section, and (b) making preparations to depart Brunei Bay in the afternoon in accordance with Commander FIRST Striking Force's instructions of the previous evening.\* All of his ships had either completed fueling or would complete fueling by 0500 when fueling of all ships of the FIRST Striking Force was completed.\*\*

At 1000 he notified his command by flag signal that the THIRD Section would sortie at 1500.\*\*\*

Sometime during the forenoon, working with his staff and basing his concepts on his own studies as well as those developed at the conference on the ATAGO the previous evening, he completed his plans and issued them as follows:

(a) His written plan, which was his Operations Order No. 1, stated that,

"In accordance with 1st Striking Force Top Secret Operations Order No. 4, the THIRD Section will operate separately from the Main Body of the force and will cooperate with the Main Body's operations by penetrating into Tacloban anchorage at dawn on X-day (October 25th) and destroying the enemy forces present.

## 1. Outline of Operations:

The THIRD Section will sortie from Brunei at 1500 on X-3 and will proceed under strict anti-aircraft and anti-submarine alert via the route shown on the separate chart. In general, it will penetrate from SURIGAO Strait into TACLOBAN Anchorage two hours before sunrise on X-day and, in coordination with the Main Body, will attack and destroy the enemy transport group and landing forces before and after sunrise."\*\*\*\*

(b) At 1155 his movement plan by dispatch as follows:

"Outline of movements in FIRST Striking Force THIRD Section (BATDIV TWO, MOGAMI, DESDIV FOUR (less NOWAKI) plus SHIGURE):

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- \* Commander 1ST Striking Force Dispatch 212053 October 1944 to CinC Combined Fleet, Commanders Main Force, 2ND Striking Force, War Diary DESRON 1, October 1944, WDC Document 161638, NA 11739.
  - \*\* Detailed Action Report 1ST Striking Force, SHO Operations, October 16th - 28th, 1944, WDC Document 161641, NA 11839.
  - \*\*\* Detailed Action Report MOGAMI, Battle off the Philippines, October 18th - 25th, 1944, WDC Document 160463, NA 12653.
  - \*\*\*\* Commander 3RD Section Written Operations Order No. 1, October 22nd, 1944, Detailed Action Report SHIGURE, Battle of Leyte Gulf, October 23rd - 27th, 1944, WDC Document 161717 (Part 4), NA 11801.



X-3: sortie from Brunei.

X-2: pass through Balabac Strait at 1100 and proceed on course 050°(T).

X-1 day: At 0630, in position 10° - 30'N, 121° - 35'E, change course to 140°(T) and thereafter proceed along northern edge of Mindanao Sea.

X-day: 0100, reach point south of Pt. Binit and penetrate into Leyte Gulf on course 350°(T).\*\*

At 1500 the THIRD Section sortied from Brunei Bay as planned.

At this time it consisted of two battleships, one heavy cruiser and four destroyers organized as follows: BATDIV TWO (YAMASHIRO (FF), FUSO), MOGAMI, and DESDIV FOUR less NOWAKI plus SHIGURE (MICHISHIO (F), ASAGUMO, YAMAGUMO, SHIGURE).

Upon clearing the bay, Commander THIRD Section formed an alert cruising disposition and set a strict antisubmarine and antiaircraft alert. What the cruising disposition was is not known since the information thereon is silent. However, based on the interrogation of the Commanding Officer SHIGURE, it seems likely that the disposition was the cruising disposition shown on Diagram D.

THIS DISPOSITION, FOR THE SAME REASONS GIVEN IN DISCUSSING THE CRUISING DISPOSITION OF THE MAIN BODY, WAS NOT A SATISFACTORY CRUISING DISPOSITION AGAINST SUBMARINES. WHY THE DESTROYERS WERE NOT EMPLOYED AS A SCREEN AHEAD OF THE HEAVY SHIPS BUT WERE, INSTEAD, EMPLOYED AS SCREENS ON THE FLANKS OF THE HEAVY SHIPS IS NOT KNOWN, BUT IT APPEARS AS IF THE DISPOSITION WAS MORE AN AN ANTIAIRCRAFT THAN AN ANTISUBMARINE DEFENSE.

After clearing the bay Commander THIRD Section, although he had no specific information at this time (concerning submarines off Brunei Bay), headed on course 322°(T) to avoid submarine patrol areas (close into the coast).\*\* At 2100 he changed course to 042°(T) to head for Palawan Passage which course he held until after midnight.

At 1742 (it was received by DESRON TEN at that time) he received, as an information addressee, a dispatch from CinC Combined Fleet

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\* COMBATDIV 2 Dispatch 221155 October 1944 to CinC Combined Fleet, COMCRUDIV 16, Commanders 1ST and 2ND Striking Forces, 5TH Base Air Force, Main Force, SW Area Force, info Sandakan Air Base, 33RD Guard Unit, Detailed Action Report 1ST Striking Force, SHO Operations, October 16th - 28th, 1944, WDC Document 161641, NA 11839.

\*\* USSBS Interrogations of Japanese Officials, Nav No. 79, Interrogation of Commander Shigeru Nishino, IJN, Volume II, Page 343.

(a) reporting an enemy submarine at 0010 in the Sibuyan Sea transmitting urgent dispatches, (b) pointing out the apparent fact that the enemy was assembling submarines to cover the channels and routes of the FIRST Striking Force as well as of other units, and (c) directing that special attention be given to this matter.\*

This was important information as he would be passing through Balabac Strait during the forenoon of the following day and this was a likely station for enemy submarines. However, since he knew that the MAYA, on the preceding afternoon, had sent "one reconnaissance seaplane to Balabac Strait to make arrangements with ships present there concerning the setting up of course markers",\*\* he likely felt that the presence of the ships there (presumably small craft) would be helpful in reducing the submarine danger.

It is assumed that during the day he received the same reports as Commander FIRST Striking Force and therefore was thoroughly familiar with the (a) character and capabilities of the Allied carrier forces to the eastward of the Philippines, (b) fact that there were eighty Allied transports still in Leyte Gulf, and (c) general situation.

ALTHOUGH THE MOGAMI STATES THAT CLOSE AIR COVER AGAINST AIR AND SUBMARINE ATTACK WAS PROVIDED\*\*\*--PRESUMABLY FROM MIRI--IT APPEARS THAT NONE WAS GIVEN BY THE THIRD SECTION'S OWN PLANES, OF WHICH THERE WERE SIX IN THE MOGAMI AND TWO IN THE FUSO WITH PERHAPS OTHERS IN THE YAMASHIRO. THEREFORE, IN RELYING ENTIRELY ON THE PROTECTION HE MIGHT GET FROM THE SHORE-BASED PLANES, IT SEEMS EMINENTLY FAIR TO SAY THAT COMMANDER THIRD SECTION DID NOT TAKE ADEQUATE PRECAUTIONS AGAINST THE SUBMARINE MENACE IN THE APPROACHES TO BRUNEI BAY AND TO BALABAC STRAIT, AND BY SO DOING, INDICATED THAT, DESPITE THE STRICT ANTISUBMARINE AND ANTI-AIRCRAFT ALERTS WHICH HE HAD SET ON SORTIE, HE WAS NOT ANY MORE CONCERNED THAN WAS COMMANDER FIRST STRIKING FORCE OVER THE SUBMARINE CHALLENGE TO HIS COMMAND IN THE WATERS OF THE SOUTH CHINA SEA.

At 2400 the THIRD Section was bearing 242°(T), distant 150 miles from Balabac Island.

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- \* CofS Combined Fleet Dispatch 221651 October 1944 to Commander SW Area Force, info Commanders 1ST and 2ND Striking Forces, CRUDIV 16, BATDIV 2, War Diary DESRON 10, October 1944, WDC Document 161638, NA 11739.
- \*\* Commander 1ST Striking Force Dispatch 211208 October 1944 to MAYA, (1ST Striking Force SigOrd No. 145), Detailed Action Report BATDIV 1, SHO No. 1 Operation, October 18th - 28th, 1944, WDC Document 161005, NA 11744.
- \*\*\* Detailed Action Report MOGAMI, Battle off the Philippines, October 18th - 28th, 1944, WDC Document 160463, NA 12653.



## (2) Operations of Commander Main Force, October 22nd.

At 0000, in position about 275 miles east of Okinawa,\* Commander Main Force, with the Main Force, was on course 205°(T), approximate speed sixteen knots, and presumably in Antisubmarine Alert Disposition One (Plate XXXV). It will be recalled that he was heading for a station about due east of Luzon Strait from which he could (a) decoy the enemy carrier force (TF 38) away from Leyte Gulf and (b) deliver an effective daylight air attack on that force.

During the night he pondered the developing situation and endeavored to visualize the various actions he might be called upon to execute in order best to accomplish the above tasks. He now had only 113 planes.

At 0245 he learned from the THIRTY-THIRD Special Base Force dispatch 211900 that the earlier report of an enemy landing on Rapu Rapu Island was erroneous.\*\*

At 0420 his flagship, having detected the apparent sound of diesel engines, manned battle stations and took evasive action.\*\*\* Presumably, he ordered this evasive action as a force maneuver for at 0430 he changed course to 105°(T), probably to avoid suspected submarine waters.

At 0505 he directed the force (by visual signal) to prepare to make full speed on fifteen-minute notice. As an indication of the time required to be ready, it seems well to point out here that it was not until 0551 that the ZUIHO, for example, was ready to make this speed.\*\*\*\*

At 0515 he noted that the ZUIHO had sighted a submarine periscope almost on her starboard beam, bearing 200°(T), and three minutes later had sighted a torpedo track off her bow. At 0520 he noted that the ZUIKAKU had sighted a torpedo track on her starboard beam because of which she had taken evasive action, swinging toward the torpedo track.

As a result of the above contacts, a chain reaction was triggered off among some of the other ships, notably the OYODO which at 0523 had gone to general quarters; the HYUGA at 0524; the ZUIHO at 0535 (which latter ship executed a depth charge "distracting" attack, dropping four depth charges); and at 0540 when the ISUZU carried out an "embarrassing" depth charge attack. It is assumed that both the "distracting" and the "embarrassing" attacks were similar, with the difference merely being in the translators wording.

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\* Appended Track Chart for Main Force, October 20th - 30th, 1944,  
Detailed Action Report Main Force, SHO No. 1 Operation, October 20th -  
29th, 1944, WDC Document 161005, NA 11744.

\*\* Detailed Action Report Main Force, SHO No. 1 Operation, October 20th -  
29th, 1944, WDC Document 161005, NA 11744.

\*\*\* Detailed Action Report ZUIKAKU, SHO No. 1 Operation, October 20th -  
25th, 1944, WDC Document 161008.

\*\*\*\* Detailed Action Report ZUIHO, SHO No. 1 Operation, October 20th - 25th,  
1944, WDC Document 161008.

Since there were no (a) Allied submarines in this area nor within 200 miles of the Main Force, and (b) Japanese submarines in the area, it is readily apparent that these sightings were all false.

However, as a result of these submarine "scares", Commander Main Force at 0535 changed the course of the Main Force from 105°(T) to 018°(T).

THE INDIVIDUAL MOVEMENTS OF THE ABOVE SHIPS IN ORDER TO AVOID SUBMARINES AND TORPEDOES INDICATE A FREEDOM OF ACTION IN THIS REGARD. WHETHER THIS WAS A COMPLETE FREEDOM OF ACTION OR WHETHER IT WAS RESTRICTED TO MANEUVERS WHICH DID NOT INVOLVE HAZARD OF COLLISION IS NOT KNOWN. HOWEVER, IT SEEMS LIKELY THAT THE JAPANESE DOCTRINES IN THIS CONNECTION WERE SIMILAR TO THOSE OF THE U.S. NAVY WHICH PRESCRIBED, IN PART, "THE RESTRICTIONS ON INDIVIDUAL ACTION BY SHIPS IN FORMATION ARE NOT CONSTRUED TO PREVENT MANEUVERS TO AVOID TORPEDOES WHEN THESE OBVIOUSLY WOULD NOT INVOLVE SERIOUS RISK OF COLLISION WITH OTHER VESSELS IN THE FORMATION".\*

At about 0530, in Latitude 25° - 30°N, Longitude 132° - 40°E, he launched an eight-plane search consisting of five planes from the ZUIKAKU and three from the CHITOSE to search the sector 109° - 212°(T) to a radius varying from 300 miles to 375 miles with the base search line 200°(T).\*\*

At 0543,\*\*\* or about one-half hour before sunrise (0611), he launched his antisubmarine air patrol which was to be flown continuously until 1800,\*\*\*\*

At the time of launching, the weather conditions were not particularly satisfactory, being cloudy with a density of about eight, a sixteen knot northeasterly wind, and a visibility of about one mile.\*\*\*\*\* This latter condition had largely prevailed on the preceding day and throughout the preceding night\*\*\*\*\* and was commented on by the Commanding Officer ZUIKAKU as follows: "During the advance to the decisive battle area under cruising alert, the weather was generally unsatisfactory with poor visibility." This frequently hindered searches, patrols and lookout observations.\*\*\*\*\*

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- \* War Instructions (FTP 143(A)), United States Navy, United States Fleet, Headquarters of the Commander in Chief, Navy Department, 1944, Chapter 7, Paragraph 716.
  - \*\* Detailed Action Report No. 1 653RD Air Group, SHO Operations, October 20th - 25th, 1944, WDC Document 161004, NA 12605; also Detailed Action Report ZUIKAKU, SHO No. 1 Operation, October 20th - 25th, 1944, WDC Document 161008.
  - \*\*\* War Diary ZUIHO, October 1st - 25th, 1944, WDC Document 161636, NA 11973.
  - \*\*\*\* Detailed Action Report Main Force, SHO No. 1 Operation, October 20th - 29th, 1944, WDC Document 161005, NA 11744.
  - \*\*\*\*\* War Diary ISUZU, October 1944, WDC Document 161636, NA 11973.
  - \*\*\*\*\* Detailed Action Report ZUIKAKU, SHO No. 1 Operation, October 20th - 25th, 1944, WDC Document 161008.



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At 0600 he changed course to 090°(T) and in accordance with instructions issued by the force commander on the previous evening,\*the units of the Main Force commenced assuming conditions of alert as follows: No. One Radar, No. Three Sonar,\*\* and No. Three Antisubmarine Alert.

At the same time his command assumed the day cruising disposition-- AA Alert Disposition No. Four (Plate XXIII). Evidently, certain of his ships were slow in forming the disposition for at 0607 he directed the force to take designated stations without delay.\*\*\*

At 0615 he changed the force course to 180°(T).

At 0625 a Type Two large flying boat was sighted to the northeast (the ISE reported it bearing 060°(T)).\*\*\*\*

At 0630 all attack aircraft (twenty-eight VBF, forty VF, six VA, four VB) were placed on No. Two Alert.\*\*\*\*\*

At 0642 Commander Main Force ordered the Main Force to prepare for twenty-two knots (No. Four Battle Speed)\*\*\*\*\* immediately.\*\*\*\*\*

At 0645 he changed the force course to 155°(T).\*\*\*\*\*

About 0700 he noted that a carrier attack plane from his flagship had delivered two tail wheels to the CHITOSE and had taken off immediately.\*\* This must have concerned him somewhat for (a) his command had only been at sea about thirty-six hours and already shortages in articles which were clearly standard and should have been in sufficient number on all carriers, were appearing, and (b) he had endeavored to make sure prior to sortie that

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- \* Detailed Action Report ZUIKAKU, SHO No. 1 Operation, October 20th - 25th, 1944, WDC Document 161008.
  - \*\* Detailed Action Report CHITOSE, SHO No. 1 Operation, October 20th - 25th, 1944, WDC Document 161008.
  - \*\*\* Commander Main Force Visual Dispatch 220607 October 1944 to Main Force, Detailed Action Report ZUIHO, SHO No. 1 Operation, October 20th - 25th, 1944, WDC Document 161008.
  - \*\*\*\* Detailed Action Report ISE, SHO No. 1 Operation, October 25th, 1944, WDC Document 161006, NA 12604.
  - \*\*\*\*\* Appendix to Detailed Action Report Main Force, SHO No. 1 Operation, October 20th - 29th, 1944, WDC Document 161005, NA 11744.
  - \*\*\*\*\* The speeds used by the Main Force were (a) standard speed, twelve knots, (b) forced speed, fourteen knots, (c) No. 1 battle speed, sixteen knots, (d) No. 2 battle speed, eighteen knots, (e) No. 3 battle speed, twenty knots, (f) No. 4 battle speed, twenty-two knots, (g) No. 5 battle speed, twenty-four knots.
  - \*\*\*\*\* Detailed Action Report ZUIHO, SHO No. 1 Operation, October 20th - 25th, 1944, WDC Document 161008.
  - \*\*\*\*\* Appended Track Chart and Action Chart, C700-1730 October 25th, 1944, Detailed Action Report HYUGA, SHO No. 1 Operation, October 20th - 29th, 1944, WDC Document 161006, NA 12604; also Detailed Action Report ZUIHO, SHO No. 1 Operation, October 20th - 25th, 1944, WDC Document 161008.

his force, in so far as standard articles were concerned, was logistically ready. He had estimated that his major logistic requirement would be fuel oil and for this reason an oiler (TAKANE MARU) was already at sea in the FIRST Supply Group.

At 0710 he changed course to 205°(T).

At 0730 he changed the course of the Main Force to 180°(T)\* and then began zigzagging, simultaneous turns.\*\*

Meanwhile, he noted that the planes from the Okinawa Air Group, which were to carry out in the area from Latitude 27° - 00'N to Latitude 22° - 00'N, (a) forward patrols along his scheduled route, and (b) direct antisubmarine patrol employing two planes at a time,\*\*\* had not appeared. Because of this fact, it seems probable that he believed that none of the above patrols had been flown.

This would have been a partially erroneous conclusion for the evidence shows that, while the direct antisubmarine patrols were not flown, the forward patrols were flown but were unable to locate the Main Force.\*\*\*\* Why this was so is not entirely clear for the Main Force was, at all times, within the prescribed search areas (300 miles from Okinawa) and within the prescribed latitudes.

There are two likely reasons: (a) the first, and most probable, is the fact that Commander Main Force failed to keep the proper authorities ashore apprised of his numerous changes in his scheduled route. This apparently confused the Okinawa Air Group which was to provide the antisubmarine patrol, for this air group naturally expected to locate the Main Force close to its planned position when, in fact, it was about 190 miles to the eastward thereof; and (b) the second reason is the fact that the force was moving through an area of reduced visibility (two kilometers) and may have been hidden from the planes.

At 0752 (since the ISUZU received it at that time) he learned that

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\* Appended Track Chart and Action Chart, 0700-1750 October 25th, 1944, Detailed Action Report HYUGA, SHO No. 1 Operation, October 20th - 29th, 1944, WDC Document 161006, NA 12604; also Detailed Action Report ZUIHO, SHO No. 1 Operation, October 20th - 25th, 1944, WDC Document 161008.

\*\* War Diary ISUZU, October 1944, WDC Document 161636, NA 11973.

\*\*\* Commander Western Attack Force 2 Dispatch 211100 October 1944 to Okinawa Air Group, 4TH Escort Force (Western Attack Force 2 Sig DesOrd No. 1), War Diary 25TH Air Flotilla, October 1944, WDC Document 160137, NA 12278.

\*\*\*\* Commander 25TH Air Flotilla Dispatch 231751 October 1944 to Commanders 6TH Base Air Force, Main Force, War Diary 25TH Air Flotilla, October 1944, WDC Document 160137, NA 12278.



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at 0637\* a friendly patrol plane had reported an enemy task force of three large carriers, two battleships and ten other ships in either Latitude 25° - 30'N or 10° - 30'N, Longitude 133° - 30'E, on a northwesterly course\*\* (Plate XXXVI, Contact C). While the source of this report is uncertain, it seems probable that it was received from the plane's base, probably Kanoya. He plotted this contact and noted that the northern position was about thirty-four miles, bearing 090°(T), from the location of his force at 0637. Since, as regards his own command, the northwesterly course was in error and since his battleships were hermaphrodite and should have been readily recognized, he studied the situation to discern whether an enemy force was in the area.

At 0755 he issued his SigOrd No. 10 which revised the antisubmarine patrol dispositions specified in his SigOrd No. 8 by directing that (a) antisubmarine patrols by the No. Two method were to be flown by the CHIYODA between 0530 and 0800 and by the ZUIHO between 0800 and 0930, with subsequent assignments to be ordered later, and (b) one plane from the CHIYODA until 1130 and one from the CHITOSE between 1130 and 1400 was to neutralize an enemy submarine in the vicinity of Latitude 25° - 20'N, Longitude 132° - 40'E.\*\*\*

The effect of this dispatch was to (a) shorten the forenoon anti-submarine patrol originally assigned to the CHIYODA by four hours, (b) assign a portion of this time to the ZUIHO and (c) provide for a neutralization mission.

This neutralization mission is interesting in that up to this time (0755) the only submarine contacts had been those some hours earlier (at 0420 and 0515). Therefore, it seems likely that it was these two contacts which motivated Commander Main Force to take action against the submarine concerned. Why he delayed so long in deciding to take such offensive action is not explained.

At 0800, as a result of his study relative to the 0637 contact report, he decided that the friendly patrol plane (which he knew was a Q-32\*\*\*\* plane from Kanoya) had mistaken the Main Force for an enemy

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\* Vice Admiral Matome Ugaki, IJN, (COMBATDIV 1), Personal Diary SENSOROKU, Nippon Shuppan Kyodo Kabushiki Kaisha (Tokyo, March 15th, 1953), Volume II.

\*\* War Diary ISUZU, October 1944, WDC Document 161636, NA 11973.

\*\*\* Commander Main Force Visual Dispatch 220755 October 1944 to Main Force, (Main Force SigOrd No. 10), Detailed Action Report ZUIKAKU, SHO No. 1 Operation, October 20th - 25th, 1944, WDC Document 161008.

\*\*\*\* According to Japanese search procedures "Q" designates a patrol whose point of origin is Toi Mi Saki (southeastern tip of Kyushu), and "32" indicates a mean direction of 157½°. The search extended to a distance of 650 miles. (Combined Fleet Operation Order No. 82, August 1st, 1944, ATIS Document No. 39, Part VIII, June 4th, 1945 (NACHI Document).



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force.\* He therefore notified those commanders concerned (a) of this error, (b) of the composition of his force, and (c) of his present and future positions.

This was, of course, a sound decision but one which should not have been necessary had he estimated the situation adequately for he well knew that he (a) had issued a plan which was a guide to all friendly units, and (b) had failed, even though for good and adequate reasons, to follow this plan, as a result of which, as pointed out earlier, he was far to the eastward of the planned track. Why he did not detach a destroyer during the night to transmit, when well removed from the force, the route modifications is not known. Perhaps he felt that this would not be necessary; perhaps he was reluctant to detach the destroyer as it might be difficult for it to rejoin without having to break radio silence and without expending oil which could be ill-spared; perhaps he desired to await morning and then to send this information to Okinawa by aircraft. Certainly, the manner in which he informed the commanders concerned of his 0800 decision above referred to is not known and was most likely by aircraft radio.

Also at 0800 he (a) commenced flying submarine neutralization employing one plane at a time,\*\* and (b) issued his fueling schedule wherein, fueling in tandem, commencing (1) at 1000, the ZUIHO was to fuel the SUGI and then the ISUZU, and the OYODO was to fuel the KIRI, (2) at 1200, the ZUIKAKU was to fuel the TAMA, and the CHIYODA was to fuel the KUWA and then the MAKI.\*\*\*

At 0805 he issued his fueling plan wherein he directed, in part, that the fueling course would be 180°(T), the fueling speed nine knots.\*\*\*\*

As the morning drew on he awaited contact reports on the enemy not only from his own search planes but also from other Japanese intelligence sources. At 0850 he commenced receiving his first reports. These were (a) one from the THIRTY-FIRST Communications Unit\*\*\*\*\* on an enemy task force

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\* Detailed Action Report Main Force, SHO No. 1 Operation, October 20th - 29th, 1944, WDC Document 161005, NA 11744.

\*\* Ibid, Appendix 2.

\*\*\* Commander Main Force Visual Dispatch 220800 October 1944 to Main Force, Detailed Action Report ZUIHO, SHO No. 1 Operation, October 20th - 25th, 1944, WDC Document 161008.

\*\*\*\* Commander Main Force Visual Dispatch 220805 October 1944 to Main Force, Detailed Action Report ZUIHO, SHO No. 1 Operation, October 20th - 25th, 1944, WDC Document 161008.

\*\*\*\*\* 31ST Communication Unit, a specially established communication unit administratively assigned to the Maizuru Naval District, was located in Manila and operated communications command station for code and voice signal sending and receiving, RDF (radio direction finder) control, and a receiving station, with separate detachment to operate a transmitter station and an RDF installation. (CINCPAC-CINCPOA Weekly Intelligence Bulletin, Volume I, No. 25, January 1st, 1945, Enclosure "Japanese Navy Communication and Radio Intelligence", Page 7). All Japanese Navy communication units were equipped for radio direction finding under unified control (Page 17).



October 22nd

which was located at 2116 October 21st by radio direction finder with a reliability of Class D in Latitude 15° - 00'N, Longitude 131° - 00'E\* (about 735 miles to the southward of the Main Force) (Contact A), and (b) one from the HYUGA which (1) reported having intercepted enemy radio and telephone traffic with a frequency of 6970 kilocycles and a signal strength of three or four, and (2) estimated this contact to be four to six enemy carriers on course 340°(T) in the process of launching and recovering aircraft.\*\*

Meanwhile, he had been reviewing the pertinent enemy information which he had received on the previous day, which information consisted of sighting reports, radio direction finder reports, and radio intelligence reports which had been plotted in his flag plot in the ZUIKAKU. While these plots are available to this analysis,\*\*\* the dispatch reports themselves were not in most cases preserved so that, in discussing them, reference has been made to other sources as well.

By 0900 he had selected, out of the above information, those reports relating largely to enemy carrier forces, since it was these forces which he hoped to divert to the northeast. He listed these reports under the heading, "Enemy situation at this time". This heading was a misnomer for it was not the situation at this time but rather the situation as of perhaps the afternoon of the previous day. His listing follows:

"Enemy situation at this time:

"1. On October 21st two enemy task groups spotted on bearing of about 100°, distance 235 miles from Manila:

1st Group - 1 CV, 1 CVE, 4 BB, about 10 other ships.

2nd Group - 1 CV, 1 CVE, 5 BB, about 12 other ships. Course - 180°(T).

"2. According to radio intelligence, about 20 ships, apparently enemy, located in the area east of Luzon, (Plate XXIX, Contact A).

"3. 2 CV, 10 CVE, 2 BB and 51 AP east of San Bernardino Strait (sic).

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\* Commander 31ST Communication Unit Dispatch 220445 October 1944 to Commander Main Force, etc., Detailed Action Report Main Force, SHO No. 1 Operation, October 20th - 29th, 1944, WDC Document 161005, NA 11744.

\*\* Detailed Action Report Main Force, SHO No. 1 Operation, October 20th - 29th, 1944, WDC Document 161005, NA 11744.

\*\*\* Appended Chart II, Enemy Fleet Dispositions on October 21st, 1944, Detailed Action Report Main Force, SHO No. 1 Operation, October 20th - 29th, 1944, WDC Document 161005, NA 11744.

(Divided into approximately three groups). In Leyte Gulf 14-15 battleships and cruisers and 80 transports".\*

It seems clear from analysis that the groups listed under (a) item (1) above are the same as contact "J" (Plate XXIX, October 21st) although the composition is somewhat in error--it will be noted that contact "J" lists four CV's, five BB's and twenty-two other ships which differs somewhat from the above and therefore it would seem from this that there was either some confusion in the flagship regarding these contacts, or the contact reports were not received correctly for COMBATDIV ONE, in his war diary, indicates that he had received the report (Contact "J") correctly, (b) item (2) above is the same as contact "A" (same plate) and (c) item (3) is, in general, a combination of contacts "D", "E", "F" and "K", also of the same plate, although the units in Leyte Gulf itself were contact "M".

Surprisingly enough, having determined the situation as it existed on the previous afternoon, he now seems to have employed this determination solely as a refresher and to have based his estimate primarily on the two contact reports received at 0850 on this day (October 22nd); i.e., the THIRTY-FIRST Communication Unit's report on a task force in Latitude 15° - 00'N, Longitude 131° - 00'E, at 2116 October 21st, and the HYUGA's report of a task force on course 340°(T) on October 22nd.

His estimate follows:

"Estimate and Course of Action.

"1. Enemy force reported by HYUGA believed closely connected with that reported by THIRTY-FIRST Communication Unit. Assuming that the enemy force has proceeded north since the time its position was fixed, there is a possibility that the Main Force may enter within range of the enemy's air search and attack radius during the morning.

"2. In view of the above, afternoon air search and radar watch will be performed while refueling is carried out as scheduled. All attack units will be placed on No. Two Alert.

"3. Refueling course is fixed at 90°. Enemy air detection will be avoided as much as possible and precautions taken against enemy submarine tracking. Efforts will be made to reduce effects of waves on inadequately trained destroyers.

"4. Aircraft of OYODO will carry out antisubmarine patrol."\*

The decision of Commander Main Force as above expressed is considered correct. Certainly, his command could be within the range of the aircraft of the 2116 October 21st contact if the contact happened to be to the north

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\* Detailed Action Report Main Force, SHO No. 1 Operation, October 20th - 29th, 1944, WDC Document 161005, NA 11744.



of the reported location (Latitude 15° - 00'N, Longitude 131° - 00'E). Actually, as pointed out under "Operations of Commander SW Area Force, October 22nd", TG 38.1 was bearing 278°(T), distant ninety miles from this contact. Had this task group moved north at twenty knots, it would have been about 364 miles south of the Main Force at 0900, and since the two commands would have been approaching one another at about thirty-six knots, it is clear that by about noon TG 38.1 could have been in a threatening position. However, none of the carriers of TF 38 moved very far in a northerly direction and therefore the danger, although real to Commander Main Force, did not, in fact, exist. While, for security purposes (i.e., to avoid the land-based air searches from the Marianas), it would have been preferable to steam on a westerly rather than on an easterly course, there was the problem of fueling with inadequately trained destroyers under the existing sea conditions--the wind had been blowing steadily from the northeast at about sixteen knots. Here, he was likely referring to the MAKI, KIRI and KUWA, and perhaps, to the ISUZU, all of which on October 17th had been transferred to his command from the Anti-Submarine Patrol Force\* where there was little likelihood of fueling from large ships and particularly from carriers.

WHILE THERE IS NO EXPLANATION AS TO WHY HE CHOSE THE EASTERLY DIRECTION FOR FUELING RATHER THAN A WESTERLY OR EVEN A NORTHEASTERLY DIRECTION, IT SEEMS LIKELY THAT (A) HE DID NOT WISH TO LOSE DISTANCE TO THE NORTH WHICH MIGHT REQUIRE HIGH SPEED STEAMING TO RECOVER, (B) HE DID NOT WISH TO CLOSE THE ENEMY UNNECESSARILY WHILE FUELING, AND (C) ALTHOUGH, IN JAPANESE NAVAL PRACTICE, FUELING WAS GENERALLY ACCOMPLISHED "IN TANDEM" WITH THE FUELING SHIP TOWING THE SHIP BEING FUELED ASTERN, AND THEREFORE THE COURSE STEERED WAS NOT IMPORTANT, IT HAPPENED IN THIS FUELING THAT ONE OR MORE OF THE JAPANESE SHIPS WERE PLANNING TO FUEL ALONGSIDE. IN ALONGSIDE FUELING, THE DIRECTION OF THE SEA WAS LIKELY AS IMPORTANT TO THE JAPANESE AS IT WAS TO THE U.S. NAVY WHERE THE SHIP TO BE FUELED STEAMED ALONGSIDE THE FUELING SHIP AND WHERE THE FUELING SHIP GENERALLY HEADED ON A COURSE WHICH PUT THE WIND OR SEA, WHICHEVER PREDOMINATED, ABOUT TWO POINTS ON THE UNENGAGED BOW.\*\* BECAUSE OF THE ABOVE THREE BASIC FACTORS, IT SEEMS PROBABLE THAT HE WAS FORCED TO CHOOSE AN EASTERLY COURSE.

At 0925 he issued his SigOrd No. 11, which supplemented the earlier SigOrd No. 10 dealing with antisubmarine dispositions in substance as follows:

(a) Antisub patrol--No. Two method--OYODO to assume the patrol from 0930 until ZUIHO completed fueling at which time and until sundown ZUIHO would resume the patrol.

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\* CinC Combined Fleet Dispatch 171427 October 1944 to Commander Mobile Force, etc., Detailed Action Report KUWA, Battle off the Philippines, October 20th - 26th, 1944, WDC Document 161717, NA 11801.

\*\* Current Tactical Orders and Doctrine, U.S. Fleet (USF 10A), United States Fleet, Headquarters of the Commander-in-Chief, Navy Department, February 1st, 1944, Appendix 4, Section I, Paragraph 111.



(b) For submarine neutralization already ordered the ZUIHO was to furnish one plane per watch from completion of fueling until sundown.

(c) Three carrier attack planes were to transfer from ZUIKAKU to ZUIHO, taking off at 0930 and returning after sundown.\* (This latter provision was undoubtedly (1) to equalize the burden of flight deck operations on the ZUIKAKU which had six planes on search at this time, and (2) to assist the plane load on the ZUIHO which was charged with the after-fueling local antisubmarine operations).

As has been noted earlier, orders for flight operations were not issued in a timely manner. Available records of the ships and air groups involved do not reflect the above-ordered transfer; presumably it was accomplished.

At 0940 (the ZUIKAKU lists it as at 0930) he noted that a plane on direct antisubmarine patrol had sighted an enemy submarine as a result of which one land attack plane had carried out a bombing attack and one destroyer had carried out a depth charge attack with undetermined results. What this plane had mistaken for an enemy submarine is not known as there were no Allied or Japanese submarines in the area at this time.

Because of the submarine contact he now delayed the fueling which was scheduled to commence at 1000 until he had determined what action he should take. In this regard he (a) likely suspected that he was in the path of Allied submarines which were being vectored along his probable course, and (b) knew that the wind, which had been sixteen knots from a northeasterly direction, was diminishing in intensity.\*\*

At 1026, having as a result of his estimate, decided to change course to an easterly direction, he changed course to 090°(T).\*\*\*

At 1045 he issued instructions by visual dispatch (a) deferring the commencement of fueling for the time being, (b) modifying his fueling instructions as follows: the ZUIHO to fuel the TAMA; the CHITOSE, the SUGI followed by the ISUZU; the CHIYODA, the KUMA followed by the MAKI; the OYODO, the KIRI; and (c) changing the fueling course to 090°(T).\*\*\*\* Although there were marked changes in the fueling assignments, the most important change was the substitution of the CHITOSE for the ZUIKAKU.

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\* Commander Main Force Dispatch 220925 October 1944 to Main Force (Main Force SigOrd No. 11), Detailed Action Report ZUIKAKU, SHO No. 1 Operation, October 20th - 25th, 1944, WDC Document 161008; also War Diary CHITOSE, October 1st - 25th, 1944, WDC Document 161636, NA 11973.

\*\* War Diary ISUZU, October 22nd, 1944, WDC Document 161636, NA 11973.

\*\*\* Appended Track Chart, Detailed Action Report ZUIHO, SHO No. 1 Operation, October 20th - 25th, 1944, WDC Document 161008.

\*\*\*\* Commander Main Force Visual Dispatch 221045 October 1944 to Main Force, Detailed Action Report ISUZU, Battle off the Philippines, October 20th-29th, 1944, WDC Document 161007.



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Also about this time he issued instructions for the afternoon search wherein he directed, in part, that (a) the search was to depart at 1100, (b) search plan 6-B was to be employed (exactly what this was is not known), (c) the ZUIKAKU planes were to search along five designated search lines, and (d) the base search line was to be 190°(T)\* and, as will be shown later, was to cover an arc of sixty-eight degrees.

While this search sector may seem strange since the Main Force was now on course 090°(T), it was a logical search for Commander Main Force planned, when the fueling was completed, to assume a course for the night which would pass directly through this search sector.

At 1055 he advised his command that (a) at approximately 2116 on the previous evening an enemy force estimated to be a task force was in Latitude 15° - 00'N, Longitude 131° - 00'E, (b) there was a suspicion that it was heading north, (c) all ships were to tighten their antiaircraft alerts, and (d) in the case of an enemy attack all fighters were to be launched immediately and were to intercept the enemy.\*\*

At 1100 he changed the radar alert from No. One to No. Two and directed that it cover the arc 090°(T) to 170°(T).\*\*\*

Since he was expecting a possible attack from a southerly direction, his setting the arc above is, to say the least, startling. While his reasons for so doing are not explained, it seems probable that, since he was covering the southern sector with his planes, he had decided that it would be well to cover the southeast approaches from Allied patrol planes operating from the Marianas.

At 1101, having decided that the situation was favorable, he directed that fueling operations be started immediately\*\*\*\* and later, at 1115, directed that the tow lines and hoses be so secured that they could be cast off quickly.\*\*\*\*\*

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\* Commander Main Force Visual Dispatch (no time group) October 22nd, 1944, to Main Force, Detailed Action Report ZUIHO, SHO No. 1 Operation, October 20th - 25th, 1944, WDC Document 161008.

\*\* Commander Main Force Dispatch (no time group) October 22nd, 1944, to Main Force (Main Force SigOrd No. 13), Detailed Action Report ZUIHO, SHO No. 1 Operation, October 20th - 25th, 1944, WDC Document 161008.

\*\*\* Commander Main Force Dispatch 221100 October 1944 to Main Force (Main Force SigOrd No. 12), Detailed Action Report ZUIHO, SHO No. 1 Operation, October 20th - 25th, 1944, WDC Document 161008.

\*\*\*\* Commander Main Force Visual Dispatch 221101 October 1944 to Main Force, Detailed Action Report ZUIHO, SHO No. 1 Operation, October 20th - 25th, 1944, WDC Document 161008.

\*\*\*\*\* Commander Main Force Visual Dispatch 221115 October 1944 to Main Force, Detailed Action Report ZUIHO, SHO No. 1 Operation, October 20th - 25th, 1944, WDC Document 161008.

At 1105 he observed that the ZUIKAKU had launched a search group which he recorded consisted of five aircraft (three attack planes and two reconnaissance planes)\* but which Commander 653rd Air Group reported consisted of but four aircraft (two attack planes and two reconnaissance planes).\*\* Since the air group commander was likely correct, it seems probable that one of the 653rd Air Group planes flying one of the inner lines failed to depart--this view, as shown later, is supported by the fact that the ZUIKAKU reported that four planes had returned from the afternoon search--or, as seems unlikely, the fifth plane actually flew but was provided by the 601st Air Group, a detachment of which (twenty-five planes) was in the ZUIKAKU.

At 1113 he directed CARDIV THREE to assume No. Two alert for the air attack unit.\*\*\* He sent these instructions to CARDIV THREE only because (a) this was the only CARDIV with aircraft embarked, (b) it was in accordance with his decision in his 0900 estimate of the situation, and (c) he had cancelled his morning alert at 0915--it had been originally scheduled to expire at 1000.

Evidently, as regards fueling preparations, the Main Force did not measure up to his expectation for at 1140, having noted that only the CHITOSE had commenced fueling (the SUGI), he directed the command to "begin fueling immediately".\*\*\*\* The reasons for the delays in the other ships are not known, but it is assumed that they were largely due to what he had referred to in his estimate as the "inadequately trained destroyers".

At 1153 he noted that his flagship, sighting a torpedo track bearing 040°(T), had taken evasive action but had soon (1156) discovered that it was a false alarm and had resumed her station in the disposition.\*\*\*\*\*

During the forenoon and continuing until about noon, he received carrier contacts as follows: (a) two 0810 contacts on Allied carrier groups--one, on five carriers and seven other ships on course 300°(T), bearing 090°(T) distant eighty-six miles from Tacloban (Contact D), and one on three carriers and five other ships bearing 090°(T), distant 216 miles from Saravia (NW Negros) (Contact E); and (b) one 0920 contact on two carriers, two battleships, and several other ships bearing 087°(T), distant 330 miles from Manila (Contact G). If he combined the groups off Luzon and gave an estimate of from four to six carriers to the 0445 Class D radio direction finder

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\* Appendix to Detailed Action Report Main Force, SHO No. 1 Operation, October 20th - 29th, 1944, WDC Document 161005, NA 11744.

\*\* Detailed Action Report No. 1, 653RD Air Group, October 20th - 25th, 1944, WDC Document 161005, NA 12605.

\*\*\* Commander Main Force Visual Dispatch 221113 October 1944 to CARDIV 3, Detailed Action Report ZUIHO, SHO No. 1 Operation, October 20th - 25th, 1944, WDC Document 161008.

\*\*\*\* Commander Main Force Dispatch 221140 October 1944 to Main Force, Detailed Action Report ZUIHO, SHO No. 1 Operation, October 20th - 25th, 1944, WDC Document 161008.

\*\*\*\*\* Detailed Action Report ZUIKAKU, SHO No. 1 Operation, October 20th - 25th, 1944, WDC Document 161008.



report, (this assumption is based on his estimate wherein he stated that the 0445 report and the HYUGA report were closely connected), he could readily see that he was opposed by from fourteen to sixteen carriers of which eight were relatively close in to Samar (within 100 miles) and the remainder were from 330 to 600 miles eastward of Luzon. Since no CVE's had been reported this day, it seems likely that he estimated that some of them were CVE's but, from his 1200 estimate which follows, he appears to have considered them in general, as large carriers.

Having completed his dispositions in accordance with his 0900 estimate and having succeeded in having some ships of his command commence fueling, he now commenced reestimating the situation in order to determine what his course of action should be as regards his movements until 0600 October 24th. His estimate as of 1200 follows:

"(1) Estimate.

(a) Since the enemy is probably aware of the approximate position of the FIRST Striking Force, he will make every effort to interdict its movement and by the 24th, will have assumed suitable dispositions for an interdiction attack.

(b) Since October 19th the enemy task forces, divided into several groups, were first located in the area east of Luzon but now appear to be gradually moving southward.

(c) Even in the event the enemy forces east of Luzon have moved south to the area east of San Bernardino Strait by the 24th, it will still be necessary for the Main Force to be so disposed that it can launch its first air strike during the 24th and divert the enemy northward.

"(2) Course of Action.

(a) Radio deception will be employed to divert the enemy to the northeast, and the Main Force will then press its attack to the southwest.

(b) For this purpose, the Main Force will move so as to reach position 20°N 127°E by 0600 on the 24th.

(c) Especially strict AA alert will be maintained from the 23rd".\*

It seems clear from this estimate that Commander Main Force had heard nothing further about the idea of a double penetration of Leyte Gulf which had been originally suggested by the Chief of Staff Combined Fleet at 1006 October 20th and did not know that (a) the FIRST Striking Force had been

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\* Detailed Action Report Main Force, SHO No. 1 Operation, October 20th - 29th, 1944, WDC Document 161005, NA 11744.

divided on the previous evening into the Main Body which was to pass through San Bernardino Strait and the THIRD Section which was to pass through Surigao Strait, and (b) the SECOND Striking Force was to participate in the penetration operation and was also to pass through Surigao Strait. This seems so for this estimate refers to the position of the FIRST Striking Force and makes no reference to the THIRD Section or to the SECOND Striking Force. The above is a further confirmation of the opinion expressed heretofore that the original concept was for the FIRST Striking Force to pass through San Bernardino Strait as a single concentrated force.

Based on this concept of a single concentrated force passing through San Bernardino Strait, his estimate appears sound. In the first place, item (1) (a) he was correct in assuming that, since the enemy were aware of the approximate position of the FIRST Striking Force (he knew that the FIRST Striking Force reportedly had been sighted by Allied planes entering Brunei Bay), they (the enemy) could be expected to (1) observe by aircraft or submarines its movements thereafter, (2) make every effort to interdict its movement, and (3) take stations suitable to the accomplishment of this task by October 24th.

This is so despite the fact that the Allies did not know either of the presence of the THIRD Section in Brunei Bay at this time, or of the fact that the Main Body of the FIRST Striking Force had sortied at 0800 and was now en route Palawan Passage.

As regards item (b), his opinion that Allied carrier forces were gradually moving southward, although based on contact reports received that forenoon, was not entirely correct as the THIRDFLT had been in the same approximate latitude ( $15^{\circ} - 00^{\circ}N$ ) for the past three days and was now moving more to the eastward than to the southward. Unfortunately for him, most of his contacts were on TG 77.4.

All of this shows that he did not realize that there were two separate Allied carrier task forces operating off the Philippines--one, TF 38, which was operating largely off Luzon; the other, TG 77.4, which was operating off Leyte Gulf.

As regards item (c), his opinion that, even if the enemy succeeded in moving to the area east of San Bernardino Strait by the 24th, it would still be necessary for him to be in a position on October 24th from which he could divert the Allied carriers to the NW, is also considered sound. His objective was the protection of the FIRST Striking Force passing through the Sibuyan Sea and San Bernardino Strait on the 24th. In view of his limited forces, how better could this be accomplished than by presenting himself as a lure with the hope that the attraction of enemy carriers to the north might be sufficient to draw the Allied carrier commander from his covering position?

If the above is accepted, then the course of action to (a) commence employing radio deception (apparently this day) is sound for the fact that an enemy force appears to be en route from the north and is not too far away



might be expected to draw the attention of the Allied commanders away from a continuous watch of the Sibuyan Sea area, and (b) move toward the position Latitude 20° - 00'N, Longitude 127° - 00'E, is also sound for this position is not only within the attack range of Allied carrier planes (300 miles) but it allows freedom of action for movement to the west, north and east.

At 1210 one of his search planes returned--was damaged on landing and was jettisoned. At 1239 two additional planes landed. The fact that only three of the eight search planes which he had originally launched had returned and one of them had been jettisoned must have been of considerable concern to Commander Main Force.

At 1340 he received Commander FIRST Striking Force's 212053 (quoted in full under "Operations of Commander FIRST Striking Force, October 21st") wherein that commander issued the penetration operation movement order for both the Main Body and the THIRD Section.\* He now knew that (a) the FIRST Striking Force had been divided into a Main Body and a THIRD Section, (b) the Main Body would pass south of Mindoro at dawn X-1 day (October 24th) then through the Sibuyan Sea that day and would arrive at the eastern entrance to San Bernardino Strait at sunset also on that day, and (c) the THIRD Section would arrive at the western entrance to the Mindanao Sea at sunset on X-1 day (October 24th).

Also, it seems probable that he had received by this time Commander SW Area Force's instructions to Commander SECOND Striking Force to penetrate into Leyte Gulf and in so doing, to cooperate with the FIRST Striking Force (THIRD Section).

From these dispatches, he could see that both the THIRD Section and the SECOND Striking Force would pass through Surigao Strait and he likely wondered as to how these two commands were to be coordinated.

Meanwhile, at 1342, having noted that the land-based planes from Okinawa which were to provide antisubmarine patrols had failed to materialize and realizing that without these planes he would have no antisubmarine cover since his own submarine patrols were to expire at 1400, he directed the ZUIKAKU to provide such antisubmarine patrols from 1500 until sunset employing two planes.\*\*

At 1555 (it was received by the OYODO at this time) he received CinC Combined Fleet's dispatch to all forces exhorting them to do their

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\* Commander 1ST Striking Force Dispatch 212053 October 1944 to 1ST Striking Force, CinC Combined Fleet, Commander Main Force, info Commander 2ND Striking Force, War Diary DESRON 1, October 1944, WDC Document 161638, NA 11739.

\*\* Commander Main Force Visual Dispatch 221342 October 1944 to Main Force, War Diary ZUIHO, October 1st - 25th, 1944, WDC Document 161636, NA 11973.

utmost in the SHO Operation.\* He does not appear to have decyphered this dispatch until 2000 for it was at this latter time that he logged its receipt.\*\*

In accordance with the previous discussion regarding radio deception, he determined to send his next dispatch directly from the flagship. Therefore, having decided (presumably because his fueling took so long and carried him farther to the east than planned) that changes in his schedule were necessary, he determined on what changes he would make, and at 1624 sent them out by dispatch as follows:

"2000 22 Oct - position Latitude  $24^{\circ}$  -  $30'$ N, Longitude  $134^{\circ}$  -  $50'$ E.

0600 23 Oct - position Latitude  $23^{\circ}$  -  $32'$ N, Longitude  $132^{\circ}$  -  $48'$ E.

1600 23 Oct - position Latitude  $22^{\circ}$  -  $18'$ N, Longitude  $129^{\circ}$  -  $54'$ E.

0600 24 Oct - position Latitude  $19^{\circ}$  -  $00'$ N, Longitude  $126^{\circ}$  -  $40'$ E.

Air Action will be initiated beginning at dawn on 24th."\*\*\*

It will be noted from this dispatch that in the approximately four hours which had elapsed since his 1200 estimate he had changed his 0600 October 24th position, and had chosen a new position about sixty miles to the southward and about twenty miles more to the westward. While the reason for this is not known, it seems that, since he had heard little about contacts on enemy carriers off Luzon and much about carriers east of Leyte Gulf, he had decided to give more weight to this fact than he had in his 1200 estimate.

At 1700 his staff (in the ZUIKAKU) advised the Main Force that the two searches conducted that day had failed to sight the enemy.\*\*\*\*

At 1732 he received a dispatch from the HYUGA (but more likely from COMCARDIV FOUR in the HYUGA) informing all ships that, in view of the confusion of friendly and enemy aircraft and ships anticipated in operations

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\* CinC Combined Fleet Dispatch 221205 October 1944 to Combined Fleet, Commander China Area Fleet, Commanders Escort Force, Naval and Guard Districts, Detailed Action Report 1ST Striking Force, SHO Operations, October 16th - 28th, 1944, WDC Document 161641, NA 11839.

\*\* Detailed Action Report Main Force, SHO No. 1 Operation, October 20th - 29th, 1944, WDC Document 161005, NA 11744.

\*\*\* Commander Main Force Dispatch 221624 October 1944 to all forces, Detailed Action Report Main Force, SHO No. 1 Operation, October 20th - 29th, 1944, WDC Document 161005, NA 11744.

\*\*\*\* ZUIKAKU Dispatch 221700 October 1944 to Main Force, Detailed Action Report ZUIKAKU, SHO No. 1 Operation, October 20th - 25th, 1944, WDC Document 161008.



after tomorrow, all ships were requested to exercise thorough care with regard to recognition and recognition signals.\*

Whether the substance of this dispatch originated (a) within the HYUGA, or (b) was the result of the receipt of the Chief of Staff Combined Fleet's 221612 (quoted in full under "Operations of CinC Combined Fleet, October 22nd") which, referring to the confusion of friendly and hostile ships, submarines and aircraft which would exist east of the Philippines, directed that care be exercised in identification,\*\* is not known but there is a definite similarity. In either case, it was a very sensible dispatch. It is unusual in that it was sent from the HYUGA rather than from Commander Main Force.

At 1815 he issued his air operations plan for the 23rd. It provided for (a) a search departing at 0530 by eight planes from the ZUIKAKU and one from the CHITOSE (with base search line 195°(T)), (b) air antisubmarine patrol of two planes from CHIYODA from 0530 - 1000, one each from CHIYODA and ZUIHO from 1000 - 1300, two from OYODO from 1300 - 1600, and two from CHIYODA from 1600 until sunset, (c) the attack group planes to be on the alert from 0530 until 1000, (d) a three-plane CAP to be on No. Two Alert from 0530 until 1000 (ZUIKAKU), (e) after the search planes had been recovered all fighters on the ZUIKAKU, CHITOSE and ZUIHO to assume No. Two Alert.\*\*\*

It will be noted that the antisubmarine patrols were to continue throughout the day, presumably because the antisubmarine patrols from the shore-based aircraft had failed on this day to materialize.

At 1834 he directed his command to assume No. One Alert Cruising Disposition (Plate XXV) at 1900 without awaiting orders and to be prepared to make twenty knots immediately. Since this was an antisubmarine disposition, it is clear that Commander Main Force visualized his night problem to be essentially submarines rather than aircraft.\*\*\*\*

At 1900 the Main Force assumed the above disposition.\*\*\*\*\* At this

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- \* HYUGA Dispatch 221730 October 1944 to all ships, Detailed Action Report ISUZU, Battle off the Philippines, October 20th - 29th, 1944, WDC Document 161007.
  - \*\* CofS Combined Fleet Dispatch 221612 October 1944 to all Fleet and Squadron Commanders Combined Fleet, SW Area Force, 6TH Base Air Force, War Diary 61ST Air Flotilla, October 1944, WDC Document 161643, NA 12260.
  - \*\*\* Commander Main Force Visual Dispatch 211800 October 1944 to Main Force (Main Force SigOrd No. 8), Detailed Action Report ZUIKAKU, SHO No. 1 Operation, October 20th - 25th, 1944, WDC Document 161008.
  - \*\*\*\* Commander Main Force Visual Dispatch 221834 October 1944 to Main Force, Detailed Action Report ZUIHO, SHO No. 1 Operation, October 20th - 25th, 1944, WDC Document 161008.
  - \*\*\*\*\* Detailed Action Report ISE, SHO No. 1 Operation, October 25th, 1944, WDC Document 161006, NA 12604.



same time Commander Main Force (a) directed his command to set from (1) 1800 (sic) No. One Radar Alert and No. Three Sonar Alert, and (2) 0600 the following morning No. Two Radar Alert,\* and (b) received the Imperial Rescript\*\* (quoted in full under "Operations of CinC Combined Fleet, October 21st"). What he thought of this rescript is nowhere stated, but since he knew that the Allies (1) had landed successfully two days earlier, (2) had not been dislodged because of which the penetration operation was underway, and (3) had very strong forces in the Leyte area as shown by his 0900 estimate, it seems probable that he felt that the dispatch left something to be desired even though the originator was the Emperor. He may have felt that the High Command had not fully advised the Emperor as to the great seriousness of the situation. Could he have felt that (a) the High Command was endeavoring to set the Emperor's mind at peace? (In the case of an earlier rescript (October 13th) COMBATDIV ONE had written in his personal diary, "We who are engaged in war should reflect and endeavor to set the Emperor's mind at peace".\*\*\*), or (b) this dispatch was designed primarily as a message of assurance and exhortation for the purpose of raising the morale of the Japanese armed forces as well as of the Nation itself?

The lack of training of his air group, as evidenced by the loss of three aircraft on the previous day, continued to be in evidence, for on this day he lost a total of six carrier-type attack planes as follows: (a) one plane was lost on search, and one proceeded to Oita; (b) three others were lost on search because of forced landings (1) one near Okino Daito Island, (2) one on Minami Daito Island which was safe, and (3) one on Okinoerabu Island which was safe and proceeded on to Oita; and (c) one plane heavily damaged on return at 1210 to ZUIKAKU,\*\*\*\* which was jettisoned. This reduced the planes in his command by six, giving him a total of 107.

At 1930 the ISUZU ceased fueling from the CHITOSE because the fuel hose carried away.\*\*\*\*\* Whether or not the MAKI was fueling at this time or whether, as seems more likely, Commander Main Force observed the ISUZU discontinuing fueling is not known, but it is known that at 1940 he ordered fueling continued until 2000.\*\*\*\*\* It seems doubtful however, if it continued beyond 1930 (the ISUZU says 1942).\*\*\*\*\*

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- \* Commander Main Force Visual Dispatch 221900 October 1944 to Main Force (Main Force SigOrd No. 17), Detailed Action Report ZUIKAKU, SHO No. 1 Operation, October 20th - 29th, 1944, WDC Document 161008.
  - \*\* Detailed Action Report ISE, SHO No. 1 Operation, October 25th, 1944, WDC Document 161006, NA 12604.
  - \*\*\* Vice Admiral Matome Ugaki, IJN (COMBATDIV 1), Personal Diary SENSOROKU, Nippon Shuppan Kyodo Kabushiki Kaisha (Tokyo, March 15th, 1953), Volume II.
  - \*\*\*\* Detailed Action Report Main Force, SHO No. 1 Operation, October 20th - 29th, 1944, WDC Document 161005, NA 11744.
  - \*\*\*\*\* Detailed Action Report CHITOSE, SHO No. 1 Operation, October 20th - 25th, 1944, WDC Document 161008.
  - \*\*\*\*\* Commander Main Force Visual Dispatch 221940 October 1944 to Main Force, Detailed Action Report ISUZU, Battle off the Philippines, October 20th - 29th, 1944, WDC Document 161007.
  - \*\*\*\*\* War Diary ISUZU, October 1944, WDC Document 161636, NA 11973.



October 22nd

The fueling on this day must have been a disheartening performance to Commander Main Force for not only did the fueling require a total of eight and one-half hours, but only four of his ships--TAMA, SUGI, MAKI and KIRI received the oil desired. The other two ships--ISUZU and KUWA--had taken far less than planned. And, even worse than this, the KIRI had endeavored to fuel alongside the OYODO but had failed because the conditions for fueling in this manner were bad--a swell which struck her abeam had carried away the fuel hose and the securing lines. She had therefore discontinued fueling from the OYODO after having received but twenty tons. Later, commencing at 1540, she had completed fueling from the ZUIHO.

Because of the poor fueling performance which indicates the state of training in this regard, the fueling record of the command is entered here as follows:

<u>Supplying Ship</u>	<u>Time Began</u>	<u>Ship Fueled</u>	<u>Time Ceased</u>	<u>Amount Planned (Tons)</u>	<u>Reported Supplied (Tons)</u>	<u>Corrected Data (Tons)</u>
ZUIHO	1215	TAMA	1510	200	210	
CHITOSE	1100	SUGI		100	115	
	1619	ISUZU	1930	200	75	
CHIYODA		KUWA		100	75	
		MAKI		100	97	
OYODO	1300	KIRI		100	30	(20)
ZUIHO	1540	KIRI	1815			(75)
(Time columns supplied)			Totals	800	602	(667)

Because of (a) the poor fueling operations--even though he was mentally prepared for them, and (b) his heavy air losses on the past two days--he had already lost six planes on this day and three on the preceding day--a total of nine planes, it seems clear that he could not have been too happy about the readiness of his force for the operations before him.

During the day the (a) antisubmarine patrols were carried out from 0530 to 1800 employing a total of ten attack planes from the four carriers and two reconnaissance seaplanes from the OYODO, (b) submarine neutralization was carried out from 0800 to 1800 employing a total of five attack planes, (c) direct air cover was carried out from (1) 0600 to 1000 employing four fighters on No. Two Alert, and (2) 1000 to 1800 employing fifty-two fighters on No. Two Alert, and (d) attack unit employing all attack aircraft--a total of seventy-eight aircraft (twenty-eight fighter-bombers, forty fighters, six attack planes and four bombers) was held on No. Two Alert from 0630 to 1000.\*

\* Appendix to Detailed Action Report Main Force, SHO No. 1 Operation, October 20th - 29th, 1944, WDC Document 161005, NA 11744.

ALTHOUGH THE FUELING WAS NOW COMPLETED COMMANDER MAIN FORCE APPEARS TO HAVE CONTINUED ON HIS EASTERLY COURSE. WHILE HIS REASON FOR DOING SO IS NOT EXPLAINED, IT SEEMS PROBABLE THAT HE DID SO TO MISLEAD THE ALLIED SUBMARINES AS TO HIS INTENDED COURSE. IF THIS WAS HIS REASONING IT WAS SOUND AND COULD BE VERY DECEPTIVE. IN FACT, THE PRACTICE OF THE U.S. NAVY AT THIS TIME WAS TO MAKE A RADICAL CHANGE OF COURSE AFTER DARK. IN THIS CONNECTION, WAR INSTRUCTIONS 1944 STATED, "SUBMARINES TRAILING OR LYING IN WAIT IN ANTICIPATION OF MAKING A NIGHT SURFACE ATTACK MAY BE EVADED BY A RADICAL CHANGE OF COURSE SOON AFTER DARK".\*

That the Main Force was submarine conscious is clear for at 2014 the ZUIKAKU, having sighted a torpedo track, maneuvered to evade,\*\* and at 2015 the ISUZU reported sighting a submarine on the CHIYODA's starboard bow at which time some units took evasive action.\*\*\* Actually, since there were no Allied nor Japanese submarines in the area, it seems clear the contacts were false.

Since the fueling was now completed, Commander Main Force, likely feeling that he had succeeded to a degree in deceiving the Allied submarines, decided that the time had come to change course to his planned course for the night. Therefore at 2019 he changed course to 235°(T) to (a) get out of these submarine waters, and (b) head for the planned station east of Luzon Strait.

In so doing he did not proceed quite as far eastward as he had contemplated earlier that afternoon when he issued his route points. At that time he had indicated that at 2000 he would be in Latitude 24° - 30'N, Longitude 134° - 50'E.\*\*\*\* Actually he made his change of course when about 20 miles short of that position at which time he followed approximately the track shown on Diagram D.

He now, apparently feeling that he was passing through waters wherein he might encounter Allied submarines which, because of his slow fueling speed to the eastward, had been attracted to the area, (a) decided to reduce the enemy submarine capability against his command by zigzagging and therefore (b) directed the command to commence zigzagging at 2210.\*\*\*

Having changed course he increased speed to sixteen knots and set No. Two Alert at 2025 which he reduced to No. Three Alert at 2100.\*\*\*

Meanwhile, he appears to have rechecked his navigation for at 2130,

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- \* War Instructions (FTP 143A), United States Navy, Headquarters of the Commander in Chief, Navy Department, 1946, Paragraph 709.
  - \*\* Detailed Action Report ZUIKAKU, SHO No. 1 Operation, October 20th - 25th, 1944, WDC Document 161008.
  - \*\*\* War Diary ISUZU, October 1944, WDC Document 161636, NA 11973.
  - \*\*\*\* Commander Main Force Dispatch 221624 October 1944 to all forces, Detailed Action Report Main Force, SHO No. 1 Operation, October 20th - 29th, 1944, WDC Document 161005, NA 11744.



in Latitude 23° - 00'N, Longitude 132° - 06'E (sic),\* he changed course ten degrees to the west to 245°(T).\*\*

At 2210 he commenced zigzagging and likely increased speed to about eighteen knots as the speed averaged through the night was sixteen point eight knots.

At 2300 the TAMA reported sighting a submarine, but this was also a false contact.

At this same time Commander Main Force intercepted a dispatch from the Chief of Staff Combined Fleet to the various air commands (quoted in full under "Operations of CinC Combined Fleet, October 22nd") giving the composition of the Main Force, its planned track and directing that flying personnel be adequately briefed thereon in order that they could clearly distinguish these forces.\*\*\* Since he had been reported that morning as enemy by a Japanese patrol plane as a result of which he had notified the commanders concerned of the pilot's error, he likely viewed this dispatch with great satisfaction as it should suffice to prevent further errors of this type.

During the day he plotted the various contacts received. His contact chart contains a total of thirty-three contacts, of which (a) twelve were from the previous day, (b) at least fourteen were RDF fixes, and (c) twelve were on submarines\*\*\*\* (two RDF, the rest presumably visual sightings). Since, based on his estimate of the situation, only a limited number of these contacts were of direct concern to him these have been shown on Plate XXXVI.

At 2400 the Main Force, on course 245°(T), speed eighteen knots and zigzagging, was in Latitude 23° - 50'N, Longitude 133° - 54'E (about 680 miles due east of Formosa).

(a) Operations of Commander Main Force Supply Force, October 22nd.

Commander Supply Force, who was with the FIRST Supply Group en route Koniya, concerned himself with the operations of the first Supply Group and made no significant decisions as Commander Supply Force this day.

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\* This was more likely Longitude 134° - 06'E for it was not until after 0600 October 23rd that the Main Force arrived at this point (Appended Track Chart, Detailed Action Report No. 2, OYODO, SHO No. 1 Operation, October 20th - 28th, 1944, WDC Document 161007.).

\*\* Detailed Action Report No. 2, OYODO, SHO No. 1 Operation, October 20th - 28th, 1944, WDC Document 161007.

\*\*\* CofS Combined Fleet Dispatch 220925 October 1944 to Commanders 5TH, 6TH, 7TH Base Air Forces, 21ST, 25TH, 51ST Air Flotillas, War Diary DESRON 10, October 1944, WDC Document 161638, NA 11739.

\*\*\*\* Appended Chart III, Enemy Fleet Dispositions on October 22nd, 1944, Detailed Action Report Main Force, SHO No. 1 Operation, October 20th - 29th, 1944, WDC Document 161005, NA 11744.

## (1) Operations of Commander FIRST Supply Group.

At 0000 Commander FIRST Supply Group, with the FIRST Supply Group, was proceeding through the Inland Sea at thirteen knots.

At 0500 (approximately) he sortied from Bungo Suido, passing close to Okinoshima, and proceeded on course 130°(T).\*

At 0800 (approximately), when he had reached a point nineteen miles south of Ashizuri Saki, he changed course to 200°(T).\*

During the morning, as a result of sonar contacts, he carried out evasive maneuvers. In the course of these maneuvers, several of his ships suffered mishaps: (a) the oiler TAKANE MARU lost her torpedo net and developed rudder trouble; and (b) Escort No. 33 had a break-down of her port engine. This forced him to reduce speed to eleven knots for the remainder of the trip.\*\*

These sonar contacts were not on Allied submarines for, although the Allied wolf pack, consisting of the BESUGO and RONQUIL, was guarding the approaches to Bungo Suido, it was at this time operating along the Kyushu side of the strait, and was therefore far removed from Okinoshima. (At mid-morning the BESUGO was some fifty-five miles to the west of the group and the RONQUIL about seventy-five miles to the southwest).

The fortunes of war in this instance were indeed with Commander FIRST Supply Group for, later this day, as discussed more fully under "Operations of CTF 17, October 22nd", the wolf pack commander, suspecting that enemy shipping must be slipping by him through the eastern approaches to Bungo Suido, (a) decided to (1) cover those approaches with the BESUGO, and (2) leave the RONQUIL to cover the western approaches, and (b) gave orders accordingly.\*\*\* Thus, had the FIRST Supply Group transited Bungo Suido some hours later, it very likely would have been contacted by the BESUGO.

At 1900 Commander FIRST Supply Group changed course to 170°(T) and at midnight was in position Latitude 09° - 32'N, Longitude 132° - 18'E.\*

## (2) Operations of Commander SECOND Supply Group, October 22nd.

During the day Commander SECOND Supply Group, with the SECOND Supply Group, remained at Kure continuing preparations for his departure on October 23rd.

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\* Appended Chart, Detailed Action Report Main Force Supply Force, October 21st - November 1st, 1944, WDC Document 161008.

\*\* Detailed Action Report Main Force Supply Force, October 21st - November 1st, 1944, WDC Document 161008.

\*\*\* War Patrol Report BESUGO, Report of 1ST War Patrol, Serial 027, November 4th, 1944; also War Patrol Report RONQUIL, Report of 2ND War Patrol, Serial 038, November 28th, 1944.



## (3) Operations of Commander Advance Expeditionary Force, October 22nd.

By this date all submarines, which were to be in the area east of the Philippines on October 25th, were at sea,\* and en route to the stations assigned them by Commander Advance Expeditionary Force on October 20th (Plate XXVI).\*\*

The day passed uneventfully with but one contact being recorded.

This was by the I-54, which at 1700 contacted a group of ships some 450 miles to the eastward of San Bernardino Strait.\*\*\* This contact could have been on TG 30.3 (Salvage Group) or on TG 30.7 (Hunter-Killer Group). However, since TG 30.7 was about five miles to the northeast of TG 30.3, the probability is that the contact, if a good contact, was on TG 30.3. In support of the idea that it may have been a good contact is the report of the SEID, operating about ten miles to the south of TG 30.7, of a contact at 2123 she believed to be on a submarine.\*\*\*\*

If it is accepted that the I-54's contact was on TG 30.3 and the SEID's contact was on the I-54, or on another of the Japanese submarines moving south, then the position of the contact reported by the Japanese submarine was either erroneous or the position plotted by Commander Main Force was in error, for the divergence between the Japanese contact and the actual positions of TG's 30.3 and 30.7 is in the neighborhood of some sixty miles. There appear to have been no other contacts made by or on these submarines during the day.

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- \* Submarine Operations in the 3rd Phase Operations, Part IV, September 1944 - February 1945, Japanese Monograph No. 184, compiled by the 2ND Historical Records Section of the Repatriation Relief Bureau of the Welfare Ministry, June 1954.
- \*\* Supra., Operations of Commander Advance Expeditionary Force, October 20th, 1944.
- \*\*\* Appended Chart III, Enemy Fleet Dispositions on October 22nd, 1944, Detailed Action Report Main Force, SHO No. 1 Operation, October 20th - 29th, 1944, WDC Document 161005, NA 11744.
- \*\*\*\* War Diaries HOGGATT BAY and BOSTON, October 22nd, 1944.

## (4) Operations of Commander SIXTH Base Air Force, October 22nd.

Commander SIXTH Base Air Force remained at his Takao headquarters completing final preparations for the movement of his force to the Philippines. Since Formosa had been last attacked (a) by carrier planes (of the THIRD Fleet) on October 14th, and (b) by B-29's on October 17th, he had had from four to seven days of relative quiet during which time he had worked hard to (a) move in planes from the homeland and the Nansei Shoto, (b) repair aircraft, and (c) reorganize and regroup his dispersed and shattered command. Owing to the failure of the Allies to interfere with the above, he had now succeeded even better than he had reason to believe would have been possible. His command, while not up to its highest standard, was nonetheless in fairly good condition and his pilots eager for combat. Because it would shortly be departing for Luzon, he was now concerned with enemy capabilities to interfere with its movement. He therefore awaited reports from (a) the night searches by radar equipped flying boats from Formosa which he knew had departed Toko at 2145, and (b) the day searches from Luzon.

He appears to have felt that, although the search pattern for the flying boats did not give complete coverage of the approaches to Formosa,\* there was reason to believe that, if the Allied carrier forces were to move north from the Philippines for an early morning strike on Formosa, the flying boats would provide sufficient warning.

Meanwhile, in view of the movement operation soon to be underway, it seems probable that he reviewed his plans to see whether, in the light of present information, they were adequate. He had designed these plans with a special objective in view—"the insurance of the safe arrival of the SIXTH Base Air Force in the Philippines". While his manner of reviewing his plans, and in what order, is unknown, it seems proper to say that he reviewed them in the order indicated in the basic orders thereon. That he was satisfied seems apparent for the record shows no important changes. What, then, was his final plan? This plan consisted of:

(a) Two morning searches, one a 650-mile search by a patrol unit of three planes departing early in the morning, the other a search of roughly from 400 - 500 miles by a reconnaissance unit of four planes departing at 0900. These searches, which covered the southeastern approaches to Formosa, were designed to locate any Allied forces in position to strike Luzon or to intercept the SIXTH Base Air Force planes en route.

(b) Two Special Attack Units (the FIRST Special Attack Unit consisting of fourteen carrier attack planes, and the SECOND Special Attack Unit consisting of thirty-one reconnaissance seaplanes),\*\* both departing

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\* Detailed Action Report 901ST Air Group, Night Searches, October 10th - 28th, 1944, WDC Document 160551, NA 12402.

\*\* Table 2, 6TH Base Air Force Tactical Organization (Operations of Commander 6TH Base Air Force, October 21st).



at 0900 and both well-escorted by fighters from the FIRST Attack Group. One of these units was headed for Clark Field, the other for Cavite.

(c) A CAP over Clark Field to be provided by the above-mentioned fighters upon their arrival there.

(d) The remaining units of the FIRST Attack Group departing Formosan bases to arrive at Clark Field at 1700.

(e) A dusk attack on any Allied carriers east of Lamon Bay (1) by the FIRST Special Attack Unit (item (b) above) which at this time would be based at Clark Field, (2) by the SECOND Special Attack Unit (item (b) above) which at this time would be based at Cavite, and (3) by the SECOND Attack Group consisting of six flying boats and thirty land attack planes\* operating from bases in the Takao area.\*\*

At 0245 he received information that the report concerning the landings at Rapu Rapu of the day before had been untrue.\*\*\* Any concern he may have had over the Legaspi airfield and the broadening of the operation area was thus allayed.

Since, with the arrival of dawn, he had received no contact reports from his night search, he realized that the possibility of a carrier-based air attack on Formosa from that direction was remote. Being thus relieved of the necessity for defensive action there, he now could devote his attention to the movement of his forces to the Philippines.

Although there is no information available thereon, it is presumed that the first echelon of his search departed Formosa as planned in the "early morning",\*\*\*\* which is reasoned to be about 0600 - 0700.

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\* Table 2, 6TH Base Air Force Tactical Organization (Operations of Commander 6TH Base Air Force, October 21st).

\*\* 6TH Base Air Force Operation Order No. 110, October 21st, 1944, File of 6TH Base Air Force Operation Orders and Supplemental Material obtained from Captain Bunzo Shibata, IJN, Senior Staff Officer, 6TH Base Air Force, GHQ, FEC, Military History Section Microfilm (unnumbered); also Commander 6TH Base Air Force Dispatch 211458 October 1944 to 6TH Base Air Force, Main Force (6TH Base Air Force DesOpOrd No. 85), War Diary ZUIHO, October 1st - 25th, 1944, WDC Document 161636, NA 11973.

\*\*\* 33RD Special Base Force Dispatch 211900 October 1944, addressees unknown, Detailed Action Report Main Force, SHO No. 1 Operation, October 20th - 29th, 1944, WDC Document 161005, NA 11744.

\*\*\*\* 6TH Base Air Force Operation Order No. 110, October 21st, 1944, File of 6TH Base Air Force Operations Orders and Supplemental Material obtained from Captain Bunzo Shibata, IJN, Senior Staff Officer, 6TH Base Air Force, GHQ, FEC, Military History Section Microfilm (unnumbered).



Shortly thereafter he received a report of a contact at 0637 on three large carriers, two battleships, and ten other ships, bearing 095°(T), distant 500 miles from Tacloban\* (Plate XXXVI, Contact C). This report was completely erroneous although he, of course, could not have known it.

Also by this time he should have received from the THIRTY-FIRST Communication Unit a Class D radio direction finder fix at 2116 October 21st on a task force 600 miles, bearing 087°(T), from Manila\*\* (Contact A).

During the early forenoon (about 0745) he received a dispatch from Commander 901st Air Group reporting that the two night search planes operating from Garan Bi had completed their searches to 450 miles with negative results.\*\*\*

About 0830 he may have received a dispatch, as information addressee, from Commander FIFTH Base Air Force directing all forces within that command to employ their full strength to assist in the base activities of the SIXTH Base Air Force upon its arrival in the Philippines.\*\*\*\* Although such action was to have been expected, it was very important to SIXTH Base Air Force operations. Initially, his units would have only the maintenance personnel being airlifted and, until the arrival of personnel and equipment being moved by ship (it will be recalled that DESDIV TWENTY-ONE had been directed to accomplish this), would be dependent upon outside assistance in the repair and servicing of aircraft. Under the pressure of intensive operations, such an arrangement would be most difficult.

During the forenoon he received a report of two 0810 contacts made by army reconnaissance planes off Leyte Gulf.\*\*\*\*\* One consisted of three carriers and five other ships and the other was reported as five carriers and seven other ships (Contacts E and D). It is not apparent, from available information, whether these carriers were correctly evaluated as escort carriers. However, if they were not so identified, the contacts could have given a false impression of the location of the Allied "task force".

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\* Vice Admiral Matome Ugaki, IJN (COMBATDIV 1), Personal Diary SENSOROKU, Nippon Shuppan Kyodo Kabushiki Kaisha (Tokyo, March 15th, 1953), Volume II.

\*\* 31ST Communication Unit Dispatch 220445 October 1944 to Main Force (other addressees unknown), Detailed Action Report Main Force, SHO No. 1 Operation, October 20th - 29th, 1944, WDC Document 161005, NA 11744.

\*\*\* 901ST Air Group Dispatch 220715 October 1944 to CinC Combined Fleet, Commander 6TH Base Air Force, Detailed Action Report 901ST Air Group, Night Searches, October 10th - 28th, 1944, WDC Document 160551, NA 12402.

\*\*\*\* Commander 5TH Base Air Force Dispatch 220800 October 1944 to 5TH Base Air Force, War Diary 23RD Air Flotilla, October 1944, WDC Document 160264, NA 12546.

\*\*\*\*\* Documents from file of Lieutenant Colonel Katsuo Sato, IJA, Staff Officer, 4TH Air Army, Department of the Army, Historical Division Microfilm HS-7.



Information in the various unit action reports is insufficient to determine whether the movement of SIXTH Base Air Force units was executed as scheduled. However, in the absence of contrary evidence, it is assumed that the schedule was followed—at least approximately. About 0900, then, Commander SIXTH Base Air Force knew of the departure of the carrier-type reconnaissance planes and of the FIRST and SECOND Special Attack Units with their escorting fighters. It seems likely that it was these planes which the COD, operating off Lingayen Gulf, reported as over twenty aircraft overhead, heading south.\*

At about 0937 Commander SIXTH Base Air Force received the additional information that at 0907 eighty transports were inside Leyte Gulf,\*\* (Contact F). Shortly thereafter he was likely aware of an air raid warning in southern Kyushu.\*\*\* Although not so stated, this alert most probably stemmed from the warnings on the previous day of the possibility of further attacks by China-based B-29's.\*\*\*\*

At about 0950 he received a contact report on "carriers east of Lamon Bay" which were at this time his primary concern. This contact, evaluated as a "task force", was reported by a Manila search plane as two carriers, two battleships, and several other ships, bearing 087°(T), distant 330 miles from Manila at 0920,\*\* (Contact G).

Because his plans were already made, Commander SIXTH Base Air Force does not appear to have taken any immediate action, but rather awaited contact by his own search planes, or at least the further development of the above contact by the FIFTH Base Air Force.

About this time he received reports from the Philippines to the effect that Allied aircraft had been striking the central Philippines but that, surprisingly enough, there had been no air strikes on Luzon. This was, of course, good news for his SIXTH Base Air Force was already moving to Luzon and now at this crucial time the Allies, for reasons known only to themselves, had conveniently decided to withhold their morning air strikes from that vital area.

However, although this was a happy circumstance which boded well for

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\* USS COD Dispatch 220300 October 1944 to CTF 71.

\*\* Vice Admiral Matome Ugaki, IJN (COMBATDIV 1), Personal Diary SENSOROKU, Nippon Shuppan Kyodo Kabushiki Kaisha (Tokyo, March 15th, 1953, Volume II; also Appended Chart III, Enemy Fleet Dispositions on October 22nd, 1944, Detailed Action Report Main Force, SHO No. 1 Operation, October 20th - 29th, 1944, WDC Document 161005, NA 11744.

\*\*\* War Diary Kanoya Detachment, 252ND Attack Unit, (701ST Air Group), October 13th - 31st, 1944, WDC Document 160258, NA 12592.

\*\*\*\* CinC Combined Fleet Dispatch 212106 October 1944 to 5TH and 7TH Base Air Forces, etc., Detailed Action Report No. 2, Northern Attack Force (2ND Base Air Force), October 10th - November 15th, 1944, WDC Document 161645, NA 12262.



the whole day, he realized that since he, himself, would be departing for Manila by air at about 1330 and would only have facilities while in the air for emergency communication, the morning contacts should be studied to ascertain their effect, if any, on the continued movement of his aircraft to Luzon. While how he reasoned is not known, it seems probable it was along these lines: so far he had received contact reports on (a) eleven carriers off the central Philippines (Contacts C,D and E) and (b) (1) two off Luzon (Contact G, and (2) an RDF fix on a task force (Contact A) (presumably of from one to four CV's) also off Luzon. Thus, he had within attack range thirteen carriers which had been sighted and from one to four carriers which had been located by direction finder.

He now had to think about other Allied carriers. He must have reasoned that all of the Allied carriers had not as yet been discovered for (a) on the previous day, he had estimated from his contact reports and RDF fixes that there was a possibility of from thirteen to twenty-one CV's and CVL's with an additional ten CVE's or a total of from twenty-three to thirty-one carriers of all types off the Philippines, and (b) today, he had estimates of but from fourteen to seventeen CV's and CVL's with no CVE's reported. Thus, he could see that, based on the above reports, there was still a strong enemy capability of having additional enemy CV's, CVL's and CVE's in the area as yet unlocated. But where were they? He could see by comparison with the previous day's contact reports off Luzon that, whereas on the previous day a minimum of four CV's had been reported about forty miles from Catanduanes Island, today the nearest contact was about 330 miles. This fact, plus the fact that there had been no air strikes on Luzon, likely gave him the thought that perhaps the Allied carriers were fueling. (This would have been a partially correct estimate for on this day one task group (TG 38.3) was fueling. The other three task groups (TG's 38.1, 38.2 and 38.4), which had been operating off Luzon and which he had largely failed to discover, continued to so operate but they now operated from a position about 350 miles to the eastward of Manila, rather than close in, because they were operating as cover for the SOWESPAC operations rather than as support and therefore were not scheduled to make any air strikes on this day).

Whatever may have been Commander SIXTH Base Air Force's estimate of the situation with relation to the Allied carriers, it seems correct to say that he realized that certain enemy capabilities would have to be observed closely as the day passed. The first and most dangerous to himself was the enemy ability to strike northern Luzon about the time the majority of his planes were landing in the Philippines as, for reasons previously stated, everything would necessarily be in confusion at that time. The other was the capability of the enemy to strike the Formosa airfields during the day. He had reason to believe that the latter capability was not likely for (a) as pointed out earlier, such strikes against Formosa had not been made since October 14th, (b) his early morning search which was searching in a southeasterly direction for a distance of about 650 miles had made no contact, (c) the only carriers located so far were about 600 miles southeast of Takao (330 miles east of Manila), and (d) recent Allied air strikes, including those today, were solely against the central Philippines.



As regards the former capability, this also seemed unlikely, because (1) the carriers to the south (Contacts D, D and E) would be unable to strike before 1800 which would require night carrier landings for the returning aircraft, and (2) even though the carriers east of Luzon (Contact G) could be able to strike Manila by mid-afternoon, the pattern of attacks launched by Allied carriers since October 10th made such an attack seem quite unlikely. In these operations there were only two instances of such mid-afternoon (approximately 1500) attacks, both by TF 38. However, he had anticipated this capability by having ordered (a) a CAP from the incoming fighters to be flown upon arrival over the Clark Field complex, and (b) a dusk attack against any Allied carriers east of Lamon Bay.

IN THE LIGHT OF THE ABOVE, IT SEEMS LIKELY THAT HE CONSIDERED THAT FOR THE PRESENT HIS MOVEMENT PLAN WAS SUITABLE, FEASIBLE AND ACCEPTABLE AND REQUIRED NO CHANGE, AND THEREFORE WOULD BE CARRIED OUT AS PLANNED.

However, he had another problem. That was to determine whether, in view of the scarcity of information on Allied carriers within easy air range of Luzon, it would be wise to launch the above-ordered dusk attack.

It is not known whether or not he decided to (a) cancel this attack prior to his departure from Formosa, (b) make the decision while in the air en route Manila, or (c) since the Formosa arm of this dusk attack would have to depart Takao at about 1500 at which time he would be in the air, leave the decision to his senior commander in Formosa (Commander Western Attack Force THREE).

This latter would be the logical thing to do because (a) despite all preparations, he might not be able to communicate while in the air, and (b) having decided to cancel that flight, the senior commander in Formosa would then have three to four hours in which to notify the Luzon arm, which latter arm would probably not depart for the attack area before 1730.

What his decision was is not known. However, it is known that the dusk attack was cancelled. This fact was expressed by COMBATDIV ONE in his war diary as follows: "Today the SIXTH Base Air Force was scheduled to carry out a dusk attack but it was cancelled owing to the inability to determine the enemy situation".\*

Meanwhile, since he was personally to command the Headquarters Transport Plane Unit with its fighter escort, he most likely made communication arrangements to permit him to receive or transmit vital messages while in the air en route to the Philippines, leaving the more routine information to be delivered to him upon his arrival at Nichols Field.

Having received no further contacts prior to 1330, he at that time

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\* Vice Admiral Matome Ugaki, IJN (COMBATDIV 1), Personal Diary SENSOROKU, Nippon Shuppan Kyodo Kabushiki Kaisha (Tokyo, March 15th, 1953), Volume II.



boarded his plane for the Philippines. Since there were no further contacts on Allied forces and no Allied attacks on Luzon during the day, it may be presumed that he had an uneventful trip. It is not clear whether or not he received any information while in the air or made any decision during that time. He arrived in Manila about 1700.\*

His arrival in the Philippines made quite a change in his command relationships for, while in Formosa, he had been an independent commander operating under CinC Combined Fleet with the EIGHTH Air Division under his command, now he, in so far as his operations in the Philippines were concerned, would be operating directly under Commander SW Area Force and in cooperation with Commander FIFTH Base Air Force and C.G. FOURTH Air Army.

Shortly after his arrival, he received such routine information as had become available subsequent to his departure from Formosa. Among this information was a dispatch (a) from CinC Combined Fleet exhorting all forces to do their utmost,\*\* (b) amplification of the 0920 contact on "two carriers, two battleships, and several other ships"\*\*\* to the effect that, as of 0900, the contact consisted of one light carrier, one special carrier, two battleships or cruisers and some destroyers on course 180°(T), speed sixteen knots\*\*\*\*(The position given was the same as reported earlier--330 miles, bearing 087°(T), from Manila--and the weather reportedly was fair, visibility ten miles with occasional squalls.), (c) from the Chief of Staff Combined Fleet which, after pointing to the difficult situation to be expected off the east coast of the Philippines with respect to recognition and identification, requested that, subsequent to 1200 October 24th, air and ground units in the Philippines (both army and navy) be directed to refrain from attacking targets other than carriers and transports unless positively identified as an enemy task force,\*\*\*\*\* (d) from Commander Main Force giving a new route and announcing that air action by that force would be initiated at dawn on October 24th,\*\*\*\*\* (e) from Commander FIRST Striking Force announcing the division of his forces into the FIRST Striking Force and the THIRD Section,

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- \* Memorandum Notes of Captain Bunzo Shibata, IJN, Senior Staff Officer, 6TH Base Air Force, October 10th - 23rd, 1944, Department of the Army, Historical Division Microfilm HS-22, Item B.
  - \*\* CinC Combined Fleet Dispatch 221205 October 1944 to all forces, War Diary DESRON 1, October 1944, WDC Document 161638, NA 11739.
  - \*\*\* Vice Admiral Matome Ugaki, IJN (COMBATDIV 1), Personal Diary SENSOROKU, Nippon Shuppan Kyodo Kabushiki Kaisha (Tokyo, March 15th, 1953), Volume II; also Appended Chart III, Enemy Fleet Disposition on October 22nd, 1944, Detailed Action Report Main Force, SHO No. 1 Operation, October 20th - 29th, 1944, WDC Document 161005, NA 11744.
  - \*\*\*\* Clark Air Base Dispatch 221606 October 1944 to major commanders, War Diary DESRON 10, October 1944, WDC Document 161638, NA 11739.
  - \*\*\*\*\* CofS Combined Fleet Dispatch 221612 October 1944 to all Fleet and Squadron Commanders, War Diary 61ST Air Flotilla, October 1944, WDC Document 161643, NA 12260.
  - \*\*\*\*\* Commander Main Force Dispatch 221624 October 1944 to all forces, Detailed Action Report Main Force, SHO No. 1 Operation, October 20th-29th, 1944, WDC Document 161005, NA 11744.



and giving the routes each part would follow proceeding to Leyte Gulf,\* and finally, (f) a dispatch from Commander THIRD Section, based on the preceding dispatch, giving the proposed route of the THIRD Section from Brunei to Surigao Strait.\*\*

From a study of these dispatches, Commander SIXTH Base Air Force could see (1) from item (a) above, that the die was cast—that there would be no turning back, (2) from item (b) that no new carriers had been located and therefore his estimate of the number of carriers contacted on this day remained the same, (3) from item (c) that CinC Combined Fleet seems to be somewhat concerned over the possibility that air strikes might be made by own aircraft against own surface forces within the central Philippines (this must have been confusing to him for, if the basic plan were followed, the striking forces would be the only Japanese forces of consequence to appear in Philippine waters on X-1 day and these forces would be in central Philippine waters until 1830 when the FIRST Striking Force was to pass through San Bernardino Strait), (4) from item (d), that the Main Force was not following the route which had been designated originally but, instead, was following a new route and that, despite this, air action would be initiated according to plan, (5) from items (e) and (f), that Commander FIRST Striking Force had finally decided to accept the Chief of Staff Combined Fleet's suggestion that he divide his force into a San Bernardino Strait Group and a Surigao Strait Group, and had assigned certain general routes to be followed by each of the above two groups (this was important information as he was charged with giving them air protection).

Although not so stated in available records, it seems quite likely that, immediately after studying these dispatches and other information, he reported to Commander SW Area Force under whose command he would now operate. And, since Commander FIFTH Base Air Force was already operating under Commander SW Area Force and would temporarily operate in coordination with, rather than under, Commander SIXTH Base Air Force, it is assumed that he conferred with that commander as well. Perhaps, as indicated under "Operations of Commander SW Area Force, October 22nd", Commander SW Area Force held at this time a coordination conference at which time the three commanders discussed the problems facing them.

Since his headquarters and the headquarters of the C.G. FOURTH Air Army were both in Manila, and since the base air forces were to cooperate with that army, it seems highly probable that sometime after he had arrived at Manila (after 1700) he learned of Commander SECOND Air Division's plans for the air offensive against Allied shipping in Leyte Gulf which air

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\* Commander 1ST Striking Force Dispatch 212053 October 1944, addressees unknown, Detailed Action Report Main Force, SHO No. 1 Operation, October 20th - 29th, 1944, WDC Document 161005, NA 11744.

\*\* Commander 3RD Section Dispatch 221155 October 1944 to CinC Combined Fleet, CRUDIV 16, Commanders 6TH Base Air Force, Mobile Force, SW Area Force, etc., Detailed Action Report No. 13, DESRON 10, October 17th - 31st, 1944, WDC Document 161005, NA 11744.



offensive was tentatively scheduled for early morning October 24th.\* It was quite important for him to be fully familiar with the plans of the FOURTH Air Army--including those of an important unit such as the SECOND Air Division--for (a) he would likely presently command both the FIFTH and SIXTH Base Air Forces, and (b) the C.G. FOURTH Air Army would be moving to Bacolod on the following day which would make coordination even more difficult than at present. It would be wise to have a thorough understanding now!

BECAUSE HE HAD LANDED AT MANILA, COMMANDER SIXTH BASE AIR FORCE MAY NOT HAVE BEEN IMMEDIATELY AWARE OF THE CONFUSION ATTENDING THE ARRIVAL OF HIS VARIOUS UNITS IN THE CLARK FIELD COMPLEX. HOWEVER, HE WAS SOON AWARE OF IT FOR IT WAS UNDOUBTEDLY DISCUSSED IN A COORDINATION CONFERENCE HELD SOON THEREAFTER AT CLARK FIELD AND ATTENDED BY THE UNIT COMMANDERS. IT IS DESCRIBED IN ONE ACTION REPORT WHICH IS HERE QUOTED IN PART: "... BASE ARRANGEMENTS IN THE PHILIPPINES DIFFERED FROM THOSE WHICH HAD BEEN AGREED UPON IN THE STAFF COORDINATION CONFERENCES HELD ON FORMOSA. CONSEQUENTLY, A LARGE NUMBER OF PLANES SIMULTANEOUSLY FLEW INTO THE CLARK AREA JUST BEFORE SUNDOWN ON THE 22ND, CAUSING SERIOUS CONFUSION IN THE AIR TRAFFIC. ALSO, DUE TO UNFAMILIARITY WITH THE TERRAIN, SOME AIRCRAFT LANDED AT OTHER THAN THE SCHEDULED BASES. AS A RESULT, MAINTENANCE PERSONNEL, WHO MOVED UP ABOARD THE AIRCRAFT AND BY TRANSPORT PLANE, WERE SCATTERED AT DIFFERENT BASES . . . ALTHOUGH CLARK BASE COMPRISES NUMEROUS AIRFIELDS, REFUELING AND COMMUNICATION FACILITIES ARE INADEQUATE, AS WELL AS ORDNANCE SUPPLIES AT ALL AIRFIELDS. THE BASE WAS THEREFORE EXTREMELY POORLY EQUIPPED FOR OPERATIONS OF LARGE AIR GROUPS".\*\*

The confusion above reported is supported by reports from other units. It appears that, among other examples, (a) three carrier aircraft of the 252nd Attack Unit, which were to deploy to Bamnan or Angeles,\*\*\* actually landed at Clark North,\*\*\*\* (b) eight planes of the 752nd Air Group, which were supposed to deploy to Mabalacat East or Bamnan, instead landed at another Clark field (Marcot),\*\* and (c) seven carrier attack aircraft of the 256th Attack Unit, which were to deploy to Bamnan or Angeles, also landed at another Clark field.\*\*\*\*\*

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- \* 2ND Air Division Operation Order A-207, October 22nd, 1944, Documents from file of Lieutenant Colonel Katsuo Sato, IJA, Staff Officer, 4TH Air Army, Department of the Army, Historical Division Microfilm HS-7.
- \*\* Detailed Action Report No. 2, 5TH Attack Unit (752ND Air Group), October 22nd - 29th, 1944, WDC Document 161004, NA 12605.
- \*\*\* 6TH Base Air Force Operation Order No. 110, October 21st, 1944, File of 6TH Base Air Force Operation Orders and Supplemental Material obtained from Captain Bunzo Shibata, IJN, Senior Staff Officer, 6TH Base Air Force, GHQ, FEC, Military History Section, Microfilm (unnumbered); also Table 2, 6TH Base Air Force Tactical Organization (Operations of Commander 6TH Base Air Force, October 21st, 1944).
- \*\*\*\* War Diary 252ND Attack Unit (701ST Air Group), October 14th - November 15th, 1944, WDC Document 160258, NA 12592.
- \*\*\*\*\* War Diary 256TH Attack Unit (Katori Detachment), 752ND Air Group, October 13th - 25th, 1944, WDC Document 161634, NA 12320.



IT SEEMS CLEAR THAT THE OFFICERS AT THIS CONFERENCE LEARNED THAT, BECAUSE OF THE ABOVE CONFUSION, IT WOULD TAKE SOME TIME, PERHAPS EVEN THROUGH THE FOLLOWING DAY, TO STRAIGHTEN MATTERS OUT, AND THAT COMMANDER SIXTH BASE AIR FORCE WAS PROMPTLY ADVISED OF THIS UNHAPPY DEVELOPMENT.

During the evening he likely received (a) a report of a contact made at 1700 by the submarine I-54 on a group of ships some 450 miles to the eastward of San Bernardino Strait\* (Contact I), and (b) a dispatch from CinC Combined Fleet ordering the SECOND Striking Force to penetrate Leyte Gulf in coordination with the FIRST Striking Force.\*\*

This latter order gave him great concern for it increased his anti-aircraft protection mission in the Philippine area. He would now have to provide air cover there for three Japanese forces (FIRST and SECOND Striking Forces and THIRD Section) rather than one (the original penetration was to be by the concentrated FIRST Striking Force) or two (the modified penetration was to be by the FIRST Striking Force--through San Bernardino Strait--and the THIRD Section--through Surigao Strait). He recalled that Commander SW Area Force had assigned the antisubmarine and anti-aircraft patrols to the SIXTH Base Air Force and the fleet antisubmarine patrols and the protection of surface traffic to the 954th and 955th Air Groups.\*\*\* He reestimated the situation and (a) seems to have recommended to Commander SW Area Force that all antisubmarine patrols for the above three Japanese surface forces be assigned to the 954th and 955th Air Groups for, as will be shown later, such an order was issued on the following day by that commander,\*\*\*\* and (b) reaffirmed his decision of the previous day that, since he had only limited air strength, it would be best to concentrate his air force and to attack the Allied carriers, and thus give anti-aircraft protection in that manner.\*\*\*\*\* This matter is discussed more fully under "Operations of Commander SIXTH Base Air Force, October 21st".

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\* Appended Chart III, Enemy Fleet Dispositions on October 22nd, 1944, Detailed Action Report Main Force, SHO No. 1 Operation, October 20th - 29th, 1944, WDC Document 161005, NA 11744.

\*\* CinC Combined Fleet Dispatch (date-time-group and addressees unknown), Action Summary 2ND Striking Force in SHO Operation, SW Area Operation, Commander Kokichi Mori, ex-IJN, 2ND Striking Force Staff Torpedo Officer, GHQ, FEC, Special Historical Collection, Supporting Documents to General of the Army Douglas MacArthur's Historical Report on Allied Operations in the Southwest Pacific Area (Item 22, Footlocker 5 of 10, SWPA Series, Volume II).

\*\*\* Commander SW Area Force Dispatch 211345 October 1944 to Commanders 5TH and 6TH Base Air Forces, 954TH and 955TH Air Groups, etc. (SW Area Force DesOpOrd No. 679), Detailed Action Report 1ST Striking Force, SHO Operation, October 16th - 28th, 1944, WDC Document 161641, NA 11839.

\*\*\*\* Commander SW Area Force Dispatch 231254 October 1944 to Commanders 954TH and 955TH Air Groups (SW Area Force DesOpOrd No. 688), ATIS Document No. 39, Part V, May 28, 1945, Page 36 (NACHI Document).

\*\*\*\*\* USSBS Interrogation of Japanese Officials, Nav No. 115, Interrogation of Vice Admiral Shigeru Fukudome, IJN, Volume II, Page 504.



Meanwhile, partially as a result of the agreements reached at his recent conference with Commander SW Area Force, he issued at 2000 his Des-OpOrd No. 88 which assigned tasks for the following day.\* Unfortunately, this important dispatch is not available; however, from information contained in a number of aircraft action reports, the general provisions of the order may be ascertained. It seems to have included: (a) an early morning takeoff from Philippine bases by the FIRST Attack Group for a search-attack to the east of Manila, the returning planes to land at assigned bases,\*\* (b) a dusk and night attack by the SECOND Attack Group still operating from Takao bases,\*\*\* and (c) a routine search of the Manila patrol sector.\*\*\*\*

At about 2104 he received a dispatch from CinC Combined Fleet directing him to assemble flight personnel requiring training in southern Kyushu where they were to be trained under the command of Commander SEVENTH Base Air Force.\*\*\*\*\* Since this dispatch had no importance to his immediate operations, he most likely left the necessary action thereon to his subordinate commanders in Formosa and the Nansei Shoto.

At 2110 (DESRON ONE received it at this time) he received a dispatch from Commander SECOND Striking Force informing him that DESDIV TWENTY-ONE would reach Manila by 1500 on October 23rd.\*\*\*\*\* Since this was the group transporting basic equipment and personnel from Formosa to the Philippines, it was clear that the SIXTH Base Air Force would still have to rely, in part, on the FIFTH Base Air Force personnel for servicing its aircraft, at least for the first day's offensive strikes.

During the course of the evening, he was compiling information on the strength and readiness of his units which had moved to the Philippines. The exact number of SIXTH Base Air Force planes in the Philippines at this time cannot be determined. Neither, apparently, was it known to Commander

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- \* Commander 6TH Base Air Force Dispatch 222000 October 1944 to 6TH Base Air Force Battle Report Addressees (6TH Base Air Force DesOpOrd No. 88), War Diary 701ST Air Group, October 1944, WDC Document 160258, NA 12592.
  - \*\* Detailed Action Report No. 2, 102ND and 103RD Attack Units (701ST Air Group), October 22nd - November 15th, 1944, WDC Document 161293, NA 12505-A; also Philippine Area Naval Operations, Part II, October - December 1944, 2ND Demobilization Bureau, Japanese Government, October 1947, Department of the Army, Historical Division, File No. 8-5, JS 104.
  - \*\*\* Commander 6TH Base Air Force Dispatch 230103 October 1944 to 6TH Base Air Force (6TH Base Air Force DesOpOrd No. 89), Detailed Action Report 901ST Air Group, Night Searches, October 10th - 28th, 1944, WDC Document 160551, NA 12402.
  - \*\*\*\* CofS 6TH Base Air Force Dispatch 230100 October 1944 to "T" Force and Main Force, War Diary ZUIHO, October 1st - 25th, 1944, WDC Document 161636, NA 11973.
  - \*\*\*\*\* CinC Combined Fleet Dispatch 222024 October 1944 to Commanders 2ND, 6TH, 7TH Base Air Forces and 51ST Air Flotilla, War Diary 51ST Air Flotilla, October 1944, WDC Document 161641, NA 12258.
  - \*\*\*\*\* Commander 2ND Striking Force, Dispatch 221332 October 1944 to DESDIV 21, info Commander 6TH Base Air Force, War Diary DESRON 1, October 1944, WDC Document 161638, NA 11739.



SIXTH Base Air Force at the time. A tabulation contained in the notes of one of his staff officers indicates that he had about 178 aircraft in the Clark area.\*

This figure of 178 planes \* cannot be fully supported from the limited information available to this analysis. However, it is known that the following planes landed in the Clark Complex north of Manila: (a) 252nd Attack Unit, three carrier attack planes;\*\* (b) 701st Air Group (3rd, 5th, 102nd and 103rd Attack Units), about sixty carrier attack planes,\*\*\* one of which was damaged upon landing;\*\*\*\* (c) FIFTH Attack Unit, eight carrier attack planes;\*\*\*\*\* (d) 304th Fighter Unit, twenty-nine carrier fighters, three of which were damaged upon landing;\*\*\*\*\* (e) 256th Attack Unit, seven carrier attack planes;\*\*\*\*\* (f) 203rd Air Group, one transport;\*\*\*\*\* and (g) 653rd Air Group, twelve carrier fighters, one carrier fighter bomber (damaged upon landing), eight carrier attack planes.\*\*\*\*\* This totals 129 aircraft and does not include reports from some of the major units; i.e., 221st, 252nd and 341st Air Groups. It is assumed therefore that the remaining forty-nine planes actually arrived.

On October 21st, 1944, when he ordered this deployment, he contemplated that 305 - 315 land planes and thirty-five seaplanes would deploy to the Philippines on October 22nd (Table 2). If the figure of 178 is the proportion of land planes that arrived, then about nineteen seaplanes should also have deployed using the same proportion. The figure of 178 included no seaplanes. If the above is so, then about 197 aircraft of the SIXTH Base Air Force deployed to Luzon on this date.

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- \* Memorandum Notes of Captain Bunzo Shibata, IJN, Senior Staff Officer 6TH Base Air Force, October 10th - 23rd, 1944, Department of the Army, Historical Division, Microfilm HS-22, Item B.
  - \*\* War Diary 252ND Attack Unit (701ST Air Group), October 14th - November 15th, 1944, WDC Document 160258, NA 12592.
  - \*\*\* Summary of Operations, 2ND Kamikaze Special Attack Force (701ST Air Group), October 1944, WDC Document 160258, NA 12592.
  - \*\*\*\* War Diary 701ST Air Group, October 1st - 31st, 1944, WDC Document 160258, NA 12592.
  - \*\*\*\*\* Detailed Action Report No. 2, 5TH Attack Unit (752ND Air Group), October 22nd - 29th, 1944, WDC Document 161004, NA 12605.
  - \*\*\*\*\* Detailed Action Report 2ND Fighter Striking Unit, 304TH Fighter Unit (203RD Air Group), October 21st - 29th, 1944, WDC Document 160517, NA 12309.
  - \*\*\*\*\* War Diary 256th Attack Unit (Katori Detachment), 752ND Air Group, October 13th - 25th, 1944, WDC Document 161634, NA 12320.
  - \*\*\*\*\* War Diary 203RD Air Group, October 1944, WDC Document 161633, NA 12464.
  - \*\*\*\*\* War Diary 653RD Air Group, October 1944, WDC Document 120295, NA 12530.

ALSO DURING THE COURSE OF THE EVENING HE STUDIED HIS RUNNING ESTIMATE OF THE SITUATION TO SEE WHAT NEW DEVELOPMENTS, IF ANY, MIGHT REQUIRE CHANGES IN HIS BASIC PLAN. IT CAN, OF COURSE, BE ACCEPTED THAT HE DID THIS BECAUSE HE REALIZED THAT DEVIATIONS FROM THE PLAN OF ANY COMMANDER ARE OFTEN REQUIRED DURING THE ACTION PHASE, AND THEREFORE THE COMMANDER CONCERNED MUST MAINTAIN A CONSTANT CLOSE OBSERVATION OF THE UNFOLDING SITUATION TO DETERMINE WHETHER OR NOT DEVIATIONS OBSERVED ARE (A) OF RELATIVELY MINOR TYPE--WHICH WILL NOT OCCASION ANY SERIOUS DISLOCATION OF THE PLAN, OR (B) OF A MORE MOMENTOUS TYPE WHICH (1) MAY CHALLENGE THE BASIC PLAN--IN WHICH CASE A DEPARTURE FROM THE PLAN IS NECESSARY, OR (2) DO NOT IN THEMSELVES CHALLENGE THE BASIC PLAN, PROVIDING, OF COURSE, THAT THE COMMANDER TAKES APPROPRIATE ACTION IN DUE TIME TO CONTROL THE SITUATION.

As a result of this study, he noted that there was a likelihood that (a) the enemy would have strong air patrols, and (b) there would be bad weather in the Philippines area on the following day. Whether or not he personally did anything about this is not known but it is known that, because of the above conditions, someone made a decision to employ in some cases single aircraft attack units in order to take advantage of the weather and to avoid attracting the attention of the Allied patrols. This fact was reported by one of the attack units in the following language: "To meet the possibility of strong enemy air patrols and bad weather conditions, it was decided that the SECOND Attack Unit would employ surprise search - attacks by single aircraft".\* Although this was a deviation from the tactics originally prescribed for the FIRST Attack Group (which was to make daytime attacks in strength),\*\* it was only a minor deviation and did not dislocate his plan.

At about 2300 he received a dispatch from the Chief of Staff Combined Fleet (quoted in full under "Operations of CinC Combined Fleet, October 22nd") which, after giving the composition of the Main Force and certain information as to its probable route, cautioned the various commanders of the base air forces to keep their flying personnel informed of the above so that these friendly forces could be readily distinguished.\*\*\*

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\* Detailed Action Report No. 2, 5TH Attack Unit (752ND Air Group), SHO No. 1 Operation, October 22nd - 29th, 1944, WDC Document 161004, NA 12605.

\*\* Detailed Action Report No. 2, 102ND and 103RD Attack Units (701ST Air Group), October 22nd - November 15th, 1944, WDC Document 161293, NA 12505A; also 6TH Base Air Force Operation Order No. 110, October 21st, 1944, File of 6TH Base Air Force Operation Orders and Supplemental Material obtained from Captain Bunzo Shibata, IJN, Senior Staff Officer, 6TH Base Air Force GHQ, FEC, Military History Section, Microfilm (unnumbered).

\*\*\* CofS Combined Fleet Dispatch 220925 October 1944 to Commanders, 5TH, 6TH, 7TH Base Air Forces, etc., War Diary DESRON 10, October 1944, WDC Document 161638, NA 11739.



October 22nd

## (5) Operations of Commander SW Area Force, October 22nd.

Commander SW Area Force remained at his headquarters in Manila. Here, he and his staff continued to watch the situation (a) in the Leyte area very carefully for the reasons discussed under "Operations of Commander SW Area Force, October 21st", and (b) in the Philippines in general, because not only were the FIRST Striking Force and the THIRD Section approaching the central Philippines from the south and the Main Force from the north, but his own surface forces were well en route Manila Bay and were scheduled to arrive there October 23rd as follows:

(1) SECOND Striking Force at 0700, DESDIV TWENTY-ONE at 1500, and CRUDIV SIXTEEN at 0800.

In addition, he expected that (a) on this day a minimum of 330 aircraft of the SIXTH Base Air Force, presently on Formosa, would begin moving to Luzon,\* and (b) Commander SIXTH Base Air Force, himself, would arrive in Manila at about 1700 to establish his headquarters there. It was important that nothing that could be avoided should be permitted to interfere with his movement.

However, he was well aware that the air bases would not be completed due to the short period of time for preparation even though a great number of laborers and materials were being employed in the reconstruction of newly assigned air bases.\*\*

The first contact that he received was a 0445 radio direction finder report (Class D) of a 2116 October 21st fix\*\*\* on a task force bearing 087°(T), distant 600 miles from Manila,\*\*\*\* (Contact A). It is of interest that this RDF fix was fairly accurate in that at the time of the fix TG 38.1 was bearing 278°(T), distant ninety miles and TG 30.3 was bearing 195°(T), distant sixty-five miles from the contact.

Sometime after 0637 (when the contact was made) he received a contact report on three large carriers, two battleships, and ten other ships, bearing 095°(T), distant 500 miles from Tacloban\*\*\*\*\* (Contact C). Since

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\* Commander 6TH Base Air Force Dispatch 200002 October 1944, addressees unknown, War Diary Kokobu Detachment, 103RD Attack Unit (701ST Air Group), October 13th - 31st, 1944, WDC Document 160258, NA 12592.

\*\* Philippine Area Naval Operations, Part I, May 1942 - September 1944, 2ND Demobilization Bureau, Japanese Government, August 1947, Historical Section, G-2, GHQ, FEC, File No. 8-5, JS-14, Chapter I, Section C, Paragraph 2.

\*\*\* Appended Chart III, Enemy Fleet Dispositions on October 22nd, 1944, Detailed Action Report Main Force, SHO No. 1 Operation, October 20th - 29th, 1944, WDC Document 161005, NA 11744.

\*\*\*\* 31ST Communication Unit Dispatch 220445 October 1944, addressees unknown, Detailed Action Report Main Force, SHO No. 1 Operation, October 20th - 29th, 1944, WDC Document 161005, NA 11744.

\*\*\*\*\* Vice Admiral Matome Ugaki, IJN (COMBATDIV 1), Personal Diary SENSOROKU, Nippon Shuppan Kyodo Kabushiki Kaisha (Tokyo, March 15th, 1953), Volume II.



October 22nd

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this contact was far away, it seems likely that he did not give it serious consideration at this time but, instead, put it aside for later consideration.

At about 0745 he likely learned of the negative reports from the night search planes from Garan Bi.\* From these reports he could see that the Allied carriers off Luzon were likely still off Luzon and not headed toward Formosa.

Since their headquarters were also in Manila, he knew that at 0800 Commander FIFTH Base Air Force had directed his command to assist the SIXTH Base Air Force in getting organized for action.\*\*

As on the previous day, information as to the extent of long range searches is meager. It appears, however, that his Commander FIFTH Base Air Force ordered the "L" (Manila) sector searches conducted, but left search and reconnaissance in the vicinity of Leyte Gulf to the FOURTH Air Army.

His first contacts from the latter source arrived just after 0810 when the FOURTH Air Army headquarters notified him of two 0810 contacts; one on three carriers and five other ships, bearing 090°(T), distant 216 miles from Saravia (NW Negros) (Contact E); the other, on five carriers and seven other ships, bearing 090°(T), distant eighty-six miles from Tacloban (Contact D).

It seems highly probable that at about 0815 (it was received by COMDESRON ONE at this time) he received Commander FIRST Striking Force's "penetration operation" dispatch 212053 (quoted in full under "Operations of Commander FIRST Striking Force, October 21st") dividing his command into two groups consisting of (a) Main Body (BATDIV's ONE and THREE, CRUDIV's FOUR, FIVE and SEVEN, and DESRON's TWO and TEN), and (b) THIRD Section (BATDIV TWO, MOGAMI and four destroyers), and giving the two group commanders instructions for executing the penetration operation, the former through San Bernardino Strait, the latter through Surigao Strait.\*\*\*

This was very important information for it affected largely the air operations of his command although it also affected the operations of his

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\* Commander 901ST Air Group Dispatch 220715 October 1944 to CinC Combined Fleet, Commander 6TH Base Air Force, Detailed Action Report 901ST Air Group, Night Searches, October 10th - 28th, 1944, WDC Document 160551, NA 12402.

\*\* Commander 5TH Base Air Force Dispatch 220800 October 1944 to 5TH Base Air Force, War Diary 23RD Air Flotilla, October 1944, WDC Document 160264, NA 12546.

\*\*\* Commander 1ST Striking Force Dispatch 212053 October 1944 to 1ST Striking Force, CinC Combined Fleet, Commander Main Force, info Commander 2ND Striking Force, Detailed Action Report 1ST Striking Force, SHO Operation, October 16th - 28th, 1944, WDC Document 161641, NA 11839.



lesser forces, and notably of the SECOND Striking Force should that force remain under his command. He could see that the THIRD Section was to arrive at the western entrance to the Mindanao Sea at sunset (1827) on October 24th whereas, under Commander SECOND Striking Force's 201932, the SECOND Striking Force was to arrive at this same point at 1500 or three and one-half hours before the THIRD Section.\* He doubted that this would be satisfactory to either Commander FIRST Striking Force or Commander SECOND Striking Force. He appears to have decided to take no action in this matter but, instead, to await reactions from the above two commanders which he expected would be forthcoming shortly.

He likely referred the air matters to his air force commanders.

Soon after this (at about 0937) he received a report that about eighty transports were inside Leyte Gulf (Contact F). Since this report is included in Japanese naval intelligence records\*\* as well as in the report of the Japanese FOURTH Air Army,\*\*\* it is not clear whence came the report, but the chances are that it came from the latter command as shown under "Operations of C.G. FOURTH Air Army, October 22nd".

At about 0950 he received his sixth contact report. This was a 0920 sighting of an Allied task group consisting of two carriers, two battleships, and several other ships, bearing 087°(T), distant 330 miles from Manila (Contact G). He was not particularly concerned over the above contacts, nor over the previous contacts, for they indicated that the Allied carrier strength off the Philippines was about the same as on the previous day--with the exception that no escort carriers had as yet been reported.\*\*\*\*

Sometime during the forenoon he received CinC Combined Fleet's dispatch (not available to this study) which directed him to order Commander

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\* CofS 2ND Striking Force Dispatch 201932 October 1944 to Commander 1ST Striking Force, info CinC Combined Fleet, Commander SW Area Force, Imperial GHQ (Navy Section), War Diary DESRON 10, October 1944, WDC Document 161638, NA 11739.

\*\* Material For Situation Estimates, 1ST Section, Naval General Staff, October 1944, WDC Document 216764 (Microfilm).

\*\*\* Daily Record of the War Situation, 4TH Air Army, GHQ, FEC, Special Historical Collection, Supporting Documents to General of the Army Douglas MacArthur's Historical Report on Allied Operations in the Southwest Pacific Area (Item 4, footlocker 10 of 10, SWPA Series, Vol. II).

\*\*\*\* Vice Admiral Matome Ugaki, IJN (COMBATDIV 1), Personal Diary SENSOROKU, Nippon Shuppan Kyodo Kabushiki Kaisha (Tokyo, March 15th, 1953), Vol. II; also Appended Chart III, Enemy Fleet Dispositions on October 22nd, 1944, Detailed Action Report Main Force, SHO No. 1 Operation, October 20th - 29th, 1944, WDC Document 161005, NA 11744.

SECOND Striking Force to penetrate into Leyte Gulf and, in so doing, to cooperate with Commander FIRST Striking Force.\*

This dispatch he received with satisfaction and concern: (a) satisfaction, because it completely supported his repeated recommendations that the SECOND Striking Force (CRUDIV TWENTY-ONE, DESRON ONE) be employed in the penetration operation rather than in the counterlanding operations; and (b) concern, because, rather than transfer them to Commander FIRST Striking Force, it left the above units under his command.

Although there are no dispatches or other data thereon available to this analysis, it seems that, upon receipt of this dispatch, he immediately directed Commander SECOND Striking Force to comply.

Meanwhile, he continued making every effort to insure that the movement of the two army battalions from Cagayan to Leyte was carried out effectively. He had received--in the afternoon of October 20th--a reply from COMCRUDIV SIXTEEN relative to the additional number of large and small landing craft which could be loaded on the three ships of that division. This reply had shown that the AOBA (which presently had on board two motor launches, one small landing craft and two cutters) and the URANAMI (which presently had on board one motor launch and one cutter) could load no more, but that the KINU (which presently had on board two motor launches and two cutters) could load two additional small landing craft. It seems clear that he made an analysis of the loading and unloading situation, notably with regard to the AOBA--which was to transport troops--and decided that the motor launches and cutters she carried would not be satisfactory as landing craft. He therefore presumably planned to disembark them, leaving only the small landing craft. This would, of course, increase the troop carrying capacity. Meanwhile, he received information on the landing craft carried in the transports to be employed in this operation and therefore at 1056 advised Commander THIRTY-THIRD Special Base Force (who, as pointed out earlier, was at Cebu) that a total of twelve large and three small landing craft could be carried aboard ships to be employed in the first troop reinforcement transport operation to Leyte as follows: (a) AOBA, one small landing craft, (b) Transports 101 and 102, one small landing craft each, (c) Transports 6, 9 and 10, four large landing craft each.\*\*

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\* Action Summary 2ND Striking Force in SHO Operation, SW Area Operation, Commander Kokichi Mori, ex-IJN, 2ND Striking Force, Staff Torpedo Officer, GHQ, FEC, Special Historical Collection, Supporting Documents to General of the Army Douglas MacArthur's Historical Report on Allied Operations in the Southwest Pacific Area (Item 22, Footlocker 5 of 10, SWPA Series, Volume II); Vice Admiral Matome Ugaki, IJN (COMBATDIV 1), Personal Diary SENSOROKU, Nippon Shuppan Kyodo Kabushiki Kaisha (Tokyo, March 15th, 1953), Volume II.

\*\* Commander SW Area Force Dispatch 221056 October 1944 to Commander 33RD Special Base Force, info COMCRUDIV 16, Detailed Action Report CRUDIV 16, SHO Operation, October 17th - 27th, 1944, WDC Document 161005, NA 11744.



He then, mindful of (a) the necessity for expediting the loading at Cagayan and the disembarkation at Leyte, and (b) of COMCRUDIV SIXTEEN's concern in this matter (that commander had insisted that since the capacity of the boats which could be carried was inadequate, it was absolutely essential to dispatch boats for unloading and loading to the scheduled points in advance),\* and (c) the fact that the headquarters of C.G. THIRTY-FIFTH Army were also on Cebu, included (in the same dispatch instructions above referred to) the following:

"In order to reduce unloading time at the landing point to a minimum, you are requested to negotiate with THIRTY-FIFTH Army Headquarters with a view to dispatching as many landing craft as possible to the expected landing point ahead of time. Also notify that Transports Nos. 101 and 102 can each carry nine tanks and fourteen light tanks; and

"Request you effect liaison with army concerning all above matters."\*\*

In addition to the above, he was concerned over how to neutralize the Allied "intelligence organs" which the Allies and the Filipino guerillas had established in the Philippines and which he well knew had been providing and would continue to provide radio intelligence concerning the movements of Japanese forces. He quite properly decided to take action against these "organs" by jamming them and issued instructions accordingly. These instructions divided the responsibility between three communication units, placed Commander THIRTY-FIRST Communication Unit--based in Manila--in charge of the whole jamming operation, and directed that preparations thereon be completed by 1200 October 23rd.\*\*\*

Then, at 1320, having finally completed his plans for the movement of the two battalions from Cagayan to Leyte, he advised COMCRUDIV SIXTEEN--who now became Commander Guard Force--and the other commands concerned of these plans, in general, as follows:

(a) Transports Nos. 6 and 101 are to depart Manila on October 22nd and to arrive Cagayan by the evening of October 24th;

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- \* COMCRUDIV 16 Dispatch 201823 October 1944 to Commander SW Area Force, info CinC Combined Fleet, Commander 2ND Striking Force, Chief 1ST Section, Imperial GHQ (Navy Section), Detailed Action Report CRUDIV 16, SHO Operation, October 17th - 27th, 1944, WDC Document 161005, NA 11744.
  - \*\* Commander SW Area Force Dispatch 221056 October 1944 to Commander 33RD Special Base Force, info COMCRUDIV 16, Detailed Action Report CRUDIV 16, SHO Operation, October 17th - 27th, 1944, WDC Document 161005, NA 11744.
  - \*\*\* Commander 31ST Communication Unit Dispatch 221136 October 1944 to 10TH, 21ST and 32ND Communication Units, info CinC Combined Fleet, Commanders SW Area Force, Main Force, 1ST Striking Force (SW Area Force DesOpOrd No. 638), Detailed Action Report BATDIV 1, SHO No. 1 Operation, October 18th - 28th, 1944, WDC Document 161005, NA 11744.



(b) Similarly, after completing their current assignment at Cebu, Transports Nos. 9 and 10 are to proceed to Cagayan;

(c) Both units are to proceed under command of the senior ship captain (no mention was made of antisubmarine forces); (Transport 102, for some unknown reason, was omitted from this dispatch although it participated in the operation and was given as an addressee.);

(d) CRUDIV SIXTEEN is to arrive at Cagayan at the same time, perhaps, depending on the situation, first putting into Manila;

(e) The transports, upon arrival, are to come under the command of COMCRUDIV SIXTEEN, who is designated Commander SW Area Force Guard Force;

(f) Commander Guard Force is then to carry out the transport of two infantry battalions to Leyte;

(g) Upon completion of the above operation, all ships are to return to Manila and prepare to carry out a second troop transport operation; and finally,

(h) Depending on the situation respecting the decisive battle operations, CRUDIV SIXTEEN may be directed by special order to operate in support of the FIRST Striking Force.\*

The final paragraph of this order is very interesting and illuminating. This shows that, although Commander SW Area Force had made all preparations possible to insure that his forces were ready to move the army troops from Cagayan to Leyte, he was not convinced that the army would be ready. Therefore, mindful of the fact that it would be unwise not to commit all forces into the penetration operation, he was alerting COMCRUDIV SIXTEEN to the possibility that he might be ordered into battle--presumably in support of the THIRD Section. His action in so doing is considered forehanded and sound.

By early afternoon Commander SW Area Force, who had been studying the contact reports as they were received, could estimate that his forces were opposed (a) off Luzon, by a total of two carriers, distant 330 miles from Manila, and (b) off Samar, by a total of (1) eight carriers within 100 miles, and (2) three large carriers well to the eastward (500 miles). Since the planes of the SIXTH Base Air Force would be moving from Formosa to Luzon on this day, he likely viewed with satisfaction the fact that the carriers off Luzon were so far to the eastward because this indicated strongly that there would be no interference to this phase of operation from this source.

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\* Commander SW Area Force Dispatch 221320 October 1944 to COMCRUDIV 16, Transports 9, 10, 6, 101, 102, info CinC Combined Fleet, Commander 2ND Striking Force, etc., (SW Area Force DesOpOrd No. 684), Detailed Action Report CRUDIV 16, SHO Operation, October 17th - 27th, 1944, WDC Document 161005, NA 11744.



However, he could also estimate from the number of carriers sighted off Samar that the air strikes on the central Philippines and the air support strikes on Leyte would continue in strength.

About the time he sent the above dispatch he received a dispatch from COMCRUDIV SIXTEEN in which COMCRUDIV SIXTEEN (a) stated that he (1) would arrive at the entrance to Manila Bay about 0800 October 23rd, and (2) planned to depart Manila at 0000 October 24th after taking on 1500 tons of fuel, and (b) requested consideration of attaching three destroyers and two subchasers in order to assist in carrying out the movement of troops.\*

What Commander SW Area Force thought of this request for additional forces is not known. He had no source of additional destroyers other than those of the SECOND Striking Force which force he was preparing to commit in the penetration operation. It seems probable that he decided that COMCRUDIV SIXTEEN would have to accomplish his mission with his own anti-submarine forces for he issued no further orders thereon. In this connection, it seems wise to emphasize here that it was Japanese naval practice for light cruisers and certain smaller ships to be equipped with sonar (echo ranging) and depth charges, whereas the heavy cruisers and larger had listening gear (hydrophones) only and possibly depth charges.\*\*

At about 1555 (DESRON ONE received it at this time) he received the dispatch from CinC Combined Fleet exhorting all forces to do their utmost in the forthcoming operations.\*\*\*

At 1636, and probably even earlier, he had an amplifying report on the 0920 contact, bearing 087°(T), 330 miles from Manila, (Contact G) to the effect that the (a) contact consisted of one carrier, one special carrier, two battleships or cruisers, some destroyers on course 180°(T), speed sixteen knots, and (b) weather was cloudy with occasional squalls, visibility ten miles.\*\*\*\*

Sometime after this he received a dispatch from the Chief of Staff Combined Fleet requesting that (a) extreme care be exercised in identifying ships, submarine and aircraft, (b) beginning 1200 October 24th, air and

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\* COMCRUDIV 16 Dispatch 221239 October 1944 to Commanders SW Area Force, 2ND Striking Force, 31ST Communication Unit, info CinC Combined Fleet, Commander 1ST Striking Force, Detailed Action Report CRUDIV 16, SHO Operation, October 17th - 27th, 1944, WDC Document 161005, NA 11744.

\*\* Detailed Action and Battle Lessons Report ATAGO, (0633-0653), October 23rd, 1944, WDC Document 161747; also CINCPAC-CINCPOA Weekly Intelligence Bulletin, Vol. 1, No. 4, August 4th, 1944, Addendum, KNOW YOUR ENEMY.

\*\*\* CinC Combined Fleet Dispatch 221205 October 1944 to all commanders, Detailed Action Report 1ST Striking Force, SHO Operation, October 16th - 28th, 1944, WDC Document 161641, NA 11839.

\*\*\*\* Commander Clark Air Base Dispatch 221606 October 1944 to 41ST Base Force, Commanders Main Force, 6TH Base Air Force, War Diary DESRON 10, October 1944, WDC Document 161638, NA 11739.



ground units attack only carriers and transports in the Philippine operating area and refrain from attacking other surface ships unless positively identified, and (c) army units be similarly cautioned.\* Because of item (c), it can be assumed that he promptly notified by telephone CinC Southern Army and C.G. FOURTEENTH Area Army, both of whom were also in Manila and notified C.G. THIRTY-FIFTH Army at Cebu by the readiest available means.

During the early evening he knew that at 1700 Commander SIXTH Base Air Force had landed in the Philippines and had established his headquarters in Manila.\*\* Whether or not that commander reported to him for duty is not known, but, since (a) he (Commander SW Area Force) was in command of all naval air forces in the Philippines, (b) the SIXTH Base Air Force, upon its arrival in the Philippines, was to come under his tactical command,\*\*\* and (c) a general offensive was scheduled for the following day,\*\*\*\* it seems quite logical to say that not only did Commander SIXTH Base Air Force report for duty but a coordination conference was held, attended by Commander FIFTH Base Air Force, who likewise was based in Manila.

It seems well to emphasize here that the arrival of Commander SIXTH Base Air Force in the Philippines in no way changed the relationships between Commander FIFTH Base Air Force and Commander SW Area Force. This was because Commander SW Area Force, in implementing the basic instructions "when the main or full strength (of the SIXTH Base Air Force) deploys to the northern Philippines and conducts operations"\*\*\*\*\* these operations were "to be conducted either in cooperation with the FIFTH Base Air Force or under unified command of the SIXTH Base Air Force",\*\*\*\*\* despite the seniority of Commander SIXTH Base Air Force and the much greater number of planes in that air force, had decided to conduct the operations of these two air forces by the cooperative method.\*\*\*\*\* This is discussed under "Operations of Commander SW Area Force, October 21st".

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- \* CofS Combined Fleet Dispatch 221612 October 1944 to Fleet and Squadron Commanders of Combined Fleet, War Diary 61ST Air Flotilla, October 1944, WDC Document 161643, NA 12260.
- \*\* Memorandum Notes of Captain Bunzo Shibata, IJN, Senior Staff Officer, 6TH Base Air Force, October 10th - 23rd, 1944, Department of the Army, Historical Division, Microfilm HS-22, Item B.
- \*\*\* CinC Combined Fleet Dispatch 200813 October 1944 to all Fleet and Squadron Commanders Combined Fleet, China Area Fleet, Combined Escort Force, etc., Detailed Action Report BATDIV 1, SHO No. 1 Operation, October 18th - 28th, 1944, WDC Document 161005, NA 11744.
- \*\*\*\* Commander 6TH Base Air Force Dispatch 210013 October 1944 to 6TH Base Air Force, Detailed Action Report 102ND and 103RD Attack Units, Air Action in Philippines, October 23rd - November 15th, 1944, WDC Document 161293, NA 12505-A.
- \*\*\*\*\* File of Orders kept by Captain Bunzo Shibata, IJN, Senior Staff Officer, 6TH Base Air Force, Basic SHO Operation Orders of 6TH Base Air Force, Army Historical Division, Microfilm HS-18, Item D.
- \*\*\*\*\* Commander SW Area Force Dispatch 211345 October 1944 to Major Fleet Commanders (SW Area Force DesOpOrd No. 679), Detailed Action Report BATDIV 1, SHO No. 1 Operation, October 18th - 28th, 1944, WDC Document 161005, NA 11744.



From action the following day, it seems clear that it was settled that the FIFTH Base Air Force would launch Kamikaze operations against the carriers off Leyte Gulf while the SIXTH Base Air Force would concentrate its operations (of orthodox type) against the Allied "task force" which was still correctly presumed to be operating to the eastward of Luzon. This assignment of tasks was in accordance with Commander SW Area Force's order issued the afternoon of the previous day.\*

It also seems likely that since (a) C.G. FOURTH Air Army was to move his headquarters from Manila to Bacolod on the following day,\*\* and (b) the FIFTH and SIXTH Base Air Forces were to cooperate with the FOURTH Air Army,\*\*\* a representative of the latter command may have been present at this conference, although information that this was so is not available.

Shortly thereafter he received a dispatch from Commander Main Force giving the proposed movements of the Main Force through 0600 October 24th. This dispatch also stated that, "air action will be initiated beginning at dawn on the 24th".\*\*\*\* This was an extremely important dispatch in that it supplied the final information necessary for the coordination of the air strikes of the FIFTH and SIXTH Base Air Forces with those of the carrier-based air strikes of the Main Force and those of the FOURTH Air Army. He now knew that, although the SIXTH Base Air Force, possibly supported by certain Kamikaze units of the FIFTH Base Air Force, if ready, (It will be recalled that the Commander 201st Air Group had been ordered on the 20th to have his Kamikaze units ready for attack by this day.)\*\*\*\*\* was going to commence its general air offensive on October 23rd, or one day ahead of the original schedule, the FOURTH Air Army and the Main Force were going to maintain the original schedule and to commence their operations on October 24th.

At 1742 (COMDESRON TEN received it at this time) he received a dispatch from the Chief of Staff Combined Fleet (a) warning that an enemy submarine had transmitted urgent dispatches at 0010 October 22nd in

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- \* Commander SW Area Force Dispatch 211345 October 1944 to Major Fleet Commanders (SW Area Force DesOpOrd No. 679), Detailed Action Report BATDIV 1, SHO No. 1 Operation, October 18th - 28th, 1944, WDC Document 161005, NA 11744.
  - \*\* Philippine Air Operations, Phase II, 1944-1945, FIRST Demobilization Bureau Monograph, Japanese Government, October 1946, Vol. 46, Part I (Colonel Matsumae Misao, ex-IJA), Chapter III, Section B.3.(g).
  - \*\*\* Documents from file of Lieutenant Colonel Katsuo Sato, IJA, Staff Officer, 4TH Air Army, Department of the Army, Historical Division, Microfilm HS-7 (2ND Air Division OpOrd A-207).
  - \*\*\*\* Commander Main Force Dispatch 221634 October 1944 to Commanders all Forces, Detailed Action Report Main Force, SHO No. 1 Operation, October 20th - 29th, 1944, WDC Document 161005, NA 11744.
  - \*\*\*\*\* Commander 5TH Base Air Force Dispatch 202347 October 1944 to Mabalacat Air Base (5TH Base Air Force DesOpOrd No. 52), War Diary 61ST Air Flotilla, October 1944, WDC Document 161643, NA 12260.



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Latitude 12° - 45'N, Longitude 122° - 50'E, (Contact B), (b) estimating that the enemy was assembling submarines to cover channels and routes to scout movements of the FIRST Striking Force and other units, and (c) directing him to give this matter special attention.

This dispatch increased his worries. Of course, he had long known that Allied submarines were operating in Philippine waters, but heretofore, the contacts had all been in waters exterior to the Philippines; that is, there had been no recent contacts between Leyte and Palawan, but there had been numerous contacts in the South China Sea, in Palawan Passage, and off western Luzon. Now, the above position revealed that at least one Allied submarine was operating in the Sibuyan Sea, with a likelihood of others nearby.

He realized that (a) it was inherent in his command responsibility for the SW area that such antisubmarine measures as were within the capacity of his command were in order but he noted that, lest he fail to give this matter the attention it deserved, CinC Combined Fleet had reaffirmed the SW area responsibility in this matter, and (b) despite this reaffirmation, there was little he could do with his surface forces as his SECOND Striking Force was committed to (1) the penetration operation (Main Body), (2) counterlanding operations (CRUDIV SIXTEEN),\* and his local defense forces, as pointed out under "Operations of Commander SW Area Force, October 20th", were very weak indeed.

He probably felt that, since the SIXTH Base Air Force would be arriving in Luzon this day and since he had given this command as well as the 954th and 955th Air Groups orders to provide antisubmarine and air patrol duties,\* there was little more that he could do. However, in his supervision of the planned action, he planned to watch the situation closely in order that he might make any new dispositions of his limited forces which would better accomplish this objective.

At about 1930 (DESRON TEN received it at this time) he received a dispatch from Commander THIRD Section (COMBATDIV TWO) giving the outline plan of the movements of the THIRD Section to Leyte Gulf, which dispatch is quoted in full under "Operations of Commander FIRST Striking Force, October 21st".\*\*

These movements were, in general, to depart Brunei Bay on this day,

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\* Commander SW Area Force Dispatch 211345 October 1944 to Commanders 5TH and 6TH Base Air Forces, 954TH and 955TH Air Groups, 1ST and 2ND Striking Forces, Main Force (SW Area Force DesOpOrd No. 679), Detailed Action Report 1ST Striking Force, SHO Operations, October 16th - 28th, 1944, WDC Document 161641, NA 11839.

\*\* COMBATDIV 2 Dispatch 221155 October 1944 to CinC Combined Fleet, CRUDIV 16, Commanders 6TH Base Air Force, Main Force, SW Area Force, SE Area Force, info 33RD Guard Unit, San Dakan Air Base, Detailed Action Report No. 13, DESRON 10, SHO Operation, October 17th - 31st, 1944, WDC Document 161005, NA 11744.



to pass through Balabac Strait on the following day at 1100, and then, after following a course well to the northeast, thence to the southeast to Binit Point and thence at 0100 October 25th to penetrate into Leyte Gulf on course 350°(T).

This was important information as it gave specifically the planned route of this section, which information was necessary in order that the antisubmarine protection which was directed in CinC Combined Fleet's dispatch earlier in the day might be provided.

Probably of even more importance was the negative nature of this dispatch regarding coordination with, or rendezvousing with, the SECOND Striking Force. Certainly, the dispatch implied that the THIRD Section planned to operate independently and to enter Surigao Strait alone.

At about 1945 (COMCRUDIV SIXTEEN received it at this time) he received a dispatch (221640) (presumably, since the origin is missing, from Commander THIRTY-THIRD Special Base Force) which, referring to Commander Philippine Force's 211954, reported the results of his consultations with SHO headquarters (presumably THIRTY-FIFTH Army headquarters). While the above dispatch (211954) is not available to this analysis, it must have had some connection with Commander SW Area Force's 221056 for the substance of the dispatch (221640) could well be an answer to the above dispatch. The dispatch (221640), in substance, stated that the results of consultations with the THIRTY-FIFTH Army headquarters were: (1) ten boats and ten large landing craft would be unloaded at Ormoc tomorrow (October 23rd); (2) there are over twenty large landing craft at Cagayan; (3) it was recommended that transports No. 9 and No. 10 not carry any large landing craft; and, finally (4) in order to facilitate embarkation, the ships should enter the harbor at intervals.\*

There was also issued by Commander SECOND Striking Force a written order, OpOrd No. 5 of October 22nd.\*\* Of course, no one but the ships in company with the commander received this order. However, during the afternoon of October 22nd, Commander SECOND Striking Force dispatched a plane to Manila to report on his operations.\*\*\* Therefore, from the staff officer in this plane, Commander SW Area Force could well have learned of the proposed plan.

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\* (Originator unknown) Dispatch 221640 October 1944 to Commander Philippine Force, info COMCRUDIV 16, Detailed Action Report CRUDIV 16, SHO Operation, October 17th - 27th, 1944, WDC Document 161005, NA 11744.

\*\* 2ND Striking Force OpOrd No. 5, War Diary DESRON 1, October 1944, WDC Document 161638, NA 11739.

\*\*\* Action Summary 2ND Striking Force, in SHO Operation, Southwest Area Operation, Commander Kokichi Mori, ex-IJN, 2ND Striking Force Staff Torpedo Officer, GHQ, FEC, Special Historical Collection, Supporting Documents to General of the Army Douglas MacArthur's Historical Report on Allied Operations in the Southwest Pacific Area (Item 22, Footlocker 5 of 10, SWPA Series, Volume II).



About 2110 (DESRON ONE received it at this time) Commander SW Area Force probably received a dispatch from Commander SECOND Striking Force directing DESDIV TWENTY-ONE to reach Manila by 1500 October 23rd and, after immediately refueling, to sortie and rejoin the SECOND Striking Force the morning of October 24th.\* Although this dispatch was addressed to COMDESDIV TWENTY-ONE and Commander SIXTH Base Air Force, it seems clear that, since Commander SIXTH Base Air Force was in the Manila area, Commander SW Area Force would have been informed as to its substance.

During the early evening he undoubtedly received the I-54's contact report on a surface contact at 1700\*\* (Contact I). He could see, from his plot, that although the force contacted was some 450 miles from San Bernardino Strait, it was possible--if it was a carrier force--for it to be within range of the Philippines by morning.

Although there were no air attacks on this day in the Manila area, Commander SW Area Force well knew that the Philippines had been struck by Allied aircraft. He wondered by how many, for his information from his naval sources was to the effect that a total of 100 aircraft (fifty carrier-based and fifty land-based) had been employed by the Allies of which the Japanese had succeeded in shooting down eleven,\*\*\* whereas his army colleagues reported strikes by 189 Allied aircraft of which eighty-six were land-based.\*\*\*\*

If it is assumed that these attacks were exclusive of those made by (a) the Allied aircraft (TG 77.4) in the Leyte area in support of ground operations, and (b) TF 73, the army figure was more nearly correct for TG 77.4 had launched forty-four and lost four aircraft\*\*\*\*\* and the AAF SOWESPAC had launched 118 sorties (forty-five by FIFTH Air Force, forty-nine bombers escorted by twenty-four fighters by THIRTEENTH Air Force) and lost no

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- \* Commander 2ND Striking Force Dispatch 221332 October 1944 to COMDES-DIV 21, info Commander 6TH Base Air Force, War Diary DESRON 1, October 1944, WDC Document 161638, NA 11739.
  - \*\* Appended Chart III, Enemy Fleet Dispositions on October 22nd, 1944, Detailed Action Report Main Force, SHO No. 1 Operation, October 20th - 29th, 1944, WDC Document 161005, NA 11744.
  - \*\*\* Philippine Area Naval Operations, Part II, October - December 1944, 2ND Demobilization Bureau, Japanese Government, October 1947, Department of the Army, Historical Division, File No. 8-5, JS-104.
  - \*\*\*\* Daily Record of the War Situation, 4TH Air Army, GHQ, FEC, Special Historical Collection, Supporting Documents to General of the Army Douglas MacArthur's Historical Report on Allied Operations in the Southwest Pacific Area (Item 4, Footlocker 10 of 10, SWPA Series, Volume II).
  - \*\*\*\*\* Action Report CTG 77.4, Leyte Operation, October 12th - 29th, 1944, Serial 00104, November 8th, 1944.



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aircraft\*--a grand total of 162 air strikes against the Philippines with a loss of four planes.

Since the time he had received Commander THIRD Section's 221155, Commander SW Area Force had been awaiting Commander SECOND Striking Force's dispatch which would embrace any modifications that commander thought necessary because of Commander THIRD Section's planned arrival off Binit Point at 0100 October 25th. While the hour at which he received this dispatch is not known, it seems very probable that he received it before midnight. The most important information which he obtained from this dispatch was the fact that Commander SECOND Striking Force planned to arrive at the entrance to Surigao Strait at 0600\*\* (or five hours after the THIRD Section). (That this is the correct interpretation of the above two orders is affirmed by Commander SECOND Striking Force's Torpedo Officer, who in a postwar interrogation, stated that prior to leaving Coron, he knew that the THIRD Section and the SECOND Striking Force were to go through Surigao Strait on the 25th as follows:\*\*\* (a) THIRD Section at 0100; (b) SECOND Striking Force at 0600.)

The fact that Commander SW Area Force did not issue any instructions relating thereto is a reasonable indication that he tacitly approved.

At about midnight he received from the Owada Communication Unit in Japan a report of a 1718 radio direction finder fix on a submarine transmitting an urgent dispatch in Latitude 10° - 00'N, Longitude 116° - 00'E (150 miles west of Puerto Princesa),\*\*\*\* (Contact J).

Since this dispatch is only listed in the report of COMDESRON TEN, and since an 1800 radio direction finder fix in exactly the same location\*\*\*\*\*

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\* HQ AAF SOWESPAC Intelligence Summary, Serial No. 248, November 5th, 1944, Part I, Section A.II.; also Commander 13TH Air Force Dispatch 231145/I October 1944 to Commander Far Eastern Air Force, info COMSO-WESPAC, CINCPAC, Commander 5TH Air Force, COM3RDFLT, COM7THFLT, etc.; GHQ SOWESPAC Dispatch CM-IN-21929 October 1944 to War Department; C.G. 5TH Air Force Dispatch 230104/I October 1944 to CAAF SOWESPAC, COMSOWESPAC, etc.

\*\* Commander 2ND Striking Force Dispatch 222000 October 1944, addressees unknown, Detailed Action Report Main Force, SHO No. 1 Operation, October 20th - 29th, 1944, WDC Document 161005, NA 11744.

\*\*\* USSBS Interrogation of Japanese Officials, Nav No. 58, Interrogation of Commander Kokichi Mori, IJN, Vol. I, Page 237.

\*\*\*\* Commander Owada Communication Unit Dispatch 222040 October 1944 to CinC Combined Fleet, Commanders 6TH Base Air Force, 1ST and 2ND Striking Forces, Main Force, War Diary DESRON 10, October 1944, WDC Document 161638, NA 11739.

\*\*\*\*\* Appended Chart I, Detailed Action Report TAKAO, Antisubmarine Action, October 23rd - 25th, 1944, WDC Document 160141, NA 11839; also Appended Chart IV, Enemy Fleet Dispositions on October 23rd, 1944, Detailed Action Report Main Force, SHO No. 1 Operation, October 20th - 29th, 1944, WDC Document 161005, NA 11744.

is shown on the movement charts of several other ships and commands, it seems probable that the contact report at 1718 and the 1800 contact are one and the same and that somehow COMDESRON TEN received the dispatch in error.

This was an important fix in that it supported the view of CinC Combined Fleet previously expressed, that Allied submarines were assembling to cover channels and routes of the FIRST Striking Force.

It seems highly probable that this contact was on the DACE which, in position some sixty miles, bearing 206°(T), from the above fix, as pointed out under "Operations of CTF 71, October 22nd" (DACE and DARTER), about this time was transmitting a dispatch to CTF 71.\* This report should have served to alert Commander SW Area Force to the submarine danger in Palawan Passage, which (in view of the presence of the DACE and DARTER there) was quite real.

(a) Operations of Commander SECOND Striking Force, October 22nd.

At 0000 COMCRUDIV TWENTY-ONE, in the NACHI with CRUDIV TWENTY-ONE and part of DESRON ONE, was heading toward Manila Bay on course 210°(T), zigzagging and making good about fourteen knots.

At 0035, apparently unknown to his command, his force was fired at by the SEADRAGON, which had sighted it at 2335 October 21st in the South China Sea about 145 miles due west of Garan Bi, had maneuvered to get into suitable attack position, and had fired four torpedoes, all of which had missed. The SEADRAGON reported hearing three explosions from hits and at 0041 five depth charge explosions.\*\* (This attack is discussed under "Operations of CTF 17, October 22nd".) Since (a) the Japanese reports available to this analysis do not indicate that depth charges were dropped but (b) the light cruiser ABUKUMA does record detecting the sound of depth charges at 0041,\*\*\* and (c) this latter time checks exactly with the SEADRAGON's report, it is concluded that one of the Japanese destroyers dropped these depth charges in passing. Whether or not Commander SECOND Striking Force considered that his command had now been located by Allied submarines is not known, but from submarine contact reports, he seemed to have increased speed at this time from about sixteen knots to eighteen knots.

Commander SECOND Striking Force continued on, not knowing that he had also been contacted by the SHARK and the BLACKFISH (the other units of the wolf pack operating in Area DETECT) which were unable to close and had gradually fallen astern. The latter broke off the stern chase at 0600,\*\*\*\* the former at 0630.\*\*\*\*\*

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\* DACE Dispatch 220730 October 1944 to CTF 71.

\*\* War Patrol Report SEADRAGON, Report of 11TH War Patrol, Serial 194, November 8th, 1944.

\*\*\* War Diary ABUKUMA, October 1944, WDC Document 161636, NA 11973.

\*\*\*\* War Patrol Report BLACKFISH, Report of 9TH War Patrol, Serial 001, November 24th, 1944.

\*\*\*\*\* SHARK Dispatch 221410 October 1944 to CTF 17.



At 0108 (COMCRUDIV SIXTEEN received it at this time) he received, as an information addressee, a dispatch from the Chief of Staff SW Area Force informing COMCRUDIV SIXTEEN that, among other items, (a) the transports for the movement of troops from Cagayan to Leyte would concentrate at Cagayan on the evening of October 24th at which time they would come under command of COMCRUDIV SIXTEEN, and (b) final arrangements with C.G. THIRTY-FIFTH Army (presently at Cebu) might be concluded at Cagayan.\*

At 0245 (Commander Main Force received it at this time) he learned that the report of landings at Rapu Rapu had been false.\*\*

At 0345 he received Chief of Staff SW Area Force's 211914 wherein the chief of staff (a) reiterated the recommendation he had made at 1322 on the previous day that CRUDIV TWENTY-ONE and DESRON ONE participate in the decisive battle operations of the FIRST Striking Force and execute a penetration through Surigao Strait,\*\*\* and (b) recommended for the first time that these units operate directly under Commander FIRST Striking Force.\*\*\*\*

Since he had recommended previously--i.e., directly in his dispatch 201806 and indirectly in his dispatch 201932--that CRUDIV TWENTY-ONE and DESRON ONE be employed in the penetration operations at dawn October 25th and immediately behind the FIRST Striking Force and implied that the command should operate separately from the FIRST Striking Force, this dispatch was likely at the same time a cause for satisfaction and a cause for disagreement; satisfaction, because Commander SW Area Force was still recommending that he participate in the penetration operation behind the FIRST Striking Force, and disagreement, because he preferred to operate independently and had already given evidence of this fact in his dispatch (201932) above referred to.

During the forenoon he steamed in a southerly direction unaware of his narrow escape from three Allied submarines. His mind was now on the

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- \* CofS SW Area Force Dispatch 212211 October 1944 to COMCRUDIV 16, info CinC Combined Fleet, Commanders 2ND Striking Force, 33RD Special Base Force, Transports 6, 10, 131, 101, 102, Detailed Action Report CRUDIV 16, SHO Operation, October 17th - 27th, 1944, WDC Document 161005, NA 11744.
  - \*\* 33RD Special Base Force Dispatch 211900 October 1944, addressees unknown, Detailed Action Report Main Force, SHO No. 1 Operation, October 20th - 29th, 1944, WDC Document 161005, NA 11744.
  - \*\*\* CofS SW Area Force Dispatch 211322 October 1944 to Commander 2ND Striking Force, info CinC Combined Fleet, Commander 1ST Striking Force, etc., Detailed Action Report CRUDIV 16, SHO Operation, October 17th - 27th, 1944, WDC Document 161005, NA 11744.
  - \*\*\*\* Commander SW Area Force Dispatch 211914 October 1944 to CinC Combined Fleet, COMCRUDIV 16, Commander 2ND Striking Force, Imperial GHQ (Navy Section), etc., War Diary DESRON 1, October 1944, WDC Document 161638, NA 11739.



(a) task which was presently being accomplished by a unit of his command (i.e., to cooperate in the transport of the SIXTH Base Air Force ground and maintenance personnel to the Philippines), (b) task which would shortly be accomplished by another unit of his command (i.e., to transport initial army troop reinforcements), (c) possible outcome of the discussion in Tokyo. This discussion was whether or not CRUDIV TWENTY-ONE and DESRON ONE were to continue to be available for counterlanding operations, or whether they were to be employed in the penetration operations.\*

He knew that task (a) was being accomplished at this time by COMDESDIV TWENTY-ONE who had sortied from Takao sometime that morning for Manila (actually, this DESDIV had sortied at 0700),\* and that task (b) was to be accomplished by COMCRUDIV SIXTEEN who, like himself, was en route Manila in accordance with orders from Commander SW Area Force.\*\*

At 0804 he sighted a large aircraft.\*\*\* Although there is nothing to indicate the friendly or enemy character of this plane, it seems most likely that it was a SIXTH Base Air Force plane which was flying an antisubmarine patrol for the SECOND Striking Force as ordered by Commander SIXTH Base Air Force in his 182012.\*\*\*\* Whether or not these planes were assisted in this work at this time by the three shipboard planes\*\*\*\*\* in the cruisers of the SECOND Striking Force is not stated, but it seems unlikely as they were being employed, in part, for liaison with Manila.

Also during the forenoon, mindful of the fact that he had heard nothing regarding the planned movements of the FIRST Striking Force and feeling that the earlier he received the above information the easier it would be to prepare his own plans, he decided to take action. He weighed the situation and concluded that, if he sent a competent representative to Manila, that representative could (a) explain his plans, and (b) radio to him from Manila any pertinent information received concerning the planned operations of the FIRST Striking Force. He therefore, after passing the Pratas Islands (Latitude 20° - 40'N, Longitude 116° - 50'E), launched one (perhaps two) seaplanes on this mission.\*\*\*\*\*

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- \* War Diary DESRON 1, October 1944, WDC Document 161638, NA 11739.
  - \*\* Commander SW Area Force Dispatch 211252 October 1944 to CRUDIV 16, 2ND Striking Force, 6TH Base Air Force, SW Area Force, Detailed Action Report KINU, SHO No. 1 Operation, October 18th - 26th, 1944, WDC Document 161007.
  - \*\*\* War Diary ABUKUMA, October 1944, WDC Document 161636, NA 11973.
  - \*\*\*\* Commander 6TH Base Air Force Dispatch 182012 October 1944 to 6TH Base Air Force (6TH Base Air Force DesOpOrd No. 80), War Diary Western Attack Force 2, October 18th, 1944, WDC Document 160137, NA 12278.
  - \*\*\*\*\* Action Summary 2ND Striking Force in SHO Operation, Southwest Area Operation, Commander Kokichi Mori, ex-IJN, 2ND Striking Force Staff Torpedo Officer, GHQ, FEC, Special Historical Collection, Supporting Documents to General of the Army Douglas MacArthur's Historical Report on Allied Operation in the Southwest Pacific Area (Item 22, Footlocker 5 of 10, SWPA Series, Volume II).



THE EMPLOYMENT OF SHIP-BASED PLANES (A) BY COMMANDER SECOND STRIKING FORCE IN THE ABOVE ASSIGNMENT AND (B) BY COMMANDER FIRST STRIKING FORCE ON THE PREVIOUS DAY RELATIVE TO COURSE MARKERS IN BALABAC STRAIT, ARE FINE EXAMPLES OF THE OFT RECURRING REQUIREMENTS FOR THE EMPLOYMENT OF AIR TRANSPORTATION WITHIN A COMMAND. OTHER OBVIOUS EXAMPLES ARE (1) THE DELIVERY OF MESSAGES BY AIRCRAFT WHEN OPERATING IN RADIO SILENCE AND (2) THE EXPEDITION OF A COMMANDER'S CONFERENCE IN HIS FLAGSHIP OR ELSEWHERE.

THIS EMPHASIZES THE IMPORTANCE FOR A COMMANDER ABOUT TO DEPART ON A MISSION TO STUDY CAREFULLY HIS POSSIBLE REQUIREMENTS IN THESE MATTERS IN ORDER TO INSURE THAT ADEQUATE PROVISION HAS BEEN MADE FOR NECESSARY AIRCRAFT.

It seems probable that it was also during the forenoon that he (a) intercepted instructions from CinC Combined Fleet to Commander SW Area Force to direct Commander SECOND Striking Force to penetrate into Leyte Gulf and, in so doing, to cooperate with Commander FIRST Striking Force, and (b) a little later received instructions from Commander SW Area Force to comply.\*

THE REMAINDER OF THE FORENOON PASSED UNEVENTFULLY. HOWEVER, IT SEEMS LIKELY THAT, SINCE HE WAS NOW COMMITTED TO THE PENETRATION OPERATION, HE AND HIS STAFF MADE SEVERAL ESTIMATES OF THE SITUATION BASED UPON A NUMBER OF ASSUMPTIONS AS TO WHAT COMMANDER FIRST STRIKING FORCE'S PLANS MIGHT BE.

IF THIS WAS DONE IT WAS THE CORRECT PROCEDURE, FOR IT FAMILIARIZED HIM AND HIS STAFF WITH (A) THE SALIENT FEATURES OF THE SITUATION, (B) THE MEANS AVAILABLE AND OPPOSED AS INFLUENCED BY THE CHARACTER OF THE THEATER OF OPERATIONS, (C) ENEMY CAPABILITIES, AND (D) OWN COURSE OF ACTION. THIS WOULD FACILITATE MAKING HIS PLAN ONCE HE HAD RECEIVED THE DESIRED INFORMATION FROM COMMANDER FIRST STRIKING FORCE.

THIS IS TERMED IN PRESENT-DAY PLANNING (1957) AS PRELIMINARY STAFF WORK AND IS STATED AS FOLLOWS:

"AT THE DIRECTION OF HIGHER AUTHORITY OR ON HIS OWN INITIATIVE IN ORDER TO MEET ANY EXISTING OR FORESEEABLE SITUATION, A COMMANDER MAY ORDER HIS STAFF TO START COLLECTING ALL PERTINENT INFORMATION. A PROPERLY ORGANIZED AND SMOOTHLY FUNCTIONING STAFF WILL HAVE ALREADY COLLECTED OR LOCATED SUCH DATA ON CHARACTERISTICS OF AREAS, OWN AND PROSPECTIVE ENEMY COMBAT POWER, ENEMY CAPABILITIES, AND OTHER FACTORS WHICH WOULD BE APPLICABLE TO ANY SUCH EXISTING OR FORESEEABLE OPERATIONS. THEN, WHEN A PARTICULAR OPERATION IS AN IMMINENT POSSIBILITY, THE STAFF WILL HAVE DRAWN

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\* Action Summary 2ND Striking Force in SHO Operation, Southwest Area Operation, Commander Kokichi Mori, ex-IJN, 2ND Striking Force Staff Torpedo Officer, GHQ, FEC, Special Historical Collection, Supporting Documents to General of the Army Douglas MacArthur's Historical Report on Allied Operations in the Southwest Pacific Area (Item 22, Footlocker 5 of 10, SWPA Series, Volume II).



ON THIS STOREHOUSE OF FACTUAL DATA AND COMPILED SIGNIFICANT FACTS FOR THE COMMANDER'S USE."\*

While he was doing this he received, as an information addressee, a dispatch from COMCRUDIV SIXTEEN to Commander SW Area Force which likely gave him cause for concern. This dispatch, after giving the proposed movements of CRUDIV SIXTEEN (AOBA, KINU, URANAMI), requested three additional destroyers and two subchasers.\*\* Since he had reason to believe that his seven destroyers were the only destroyers within the SW Area Force, it seems clear that he could visualize losing three of them--most likely DESDIV TWENTY-ONE.

It will be recalled that he had four destroyers (AKEBONO (F), USHIO, KASUMI, SHIRANUHI) in company with him, and that the three destroyers (WAKABA (F), HATSUSHIMO, HATSUHARU in DESDIV TWENTY-ONE), presently on a special assignment, were to rejoin him upon completion of this assignment.

It also seems clear that he felt that (a) DESDIV TWENTY-ONE should rejoin his command as soon as possible, and (b) the detachment, even though temporary, of any destroyers would be a serious reduction of his fighting strength and might affect the feasibility of his operations.

He therefore, in order to avoid delays and perhaps to forestall contrary action by Commander SW Area Force, decided to issue movement orders to COMDESDIV TWENTY-ONE and accordingly, at 1332 instructed COMDESDIV TWENTY-ONE, info Commander SIXTH Base Air Force, to (a) arrive at Manila by 1500 October 23rd, (b) fuel as soon as possible, and (c) sortie in time to rejoin the SECOND Striking Force during the morning of October 24th.\*\*\*

Having issued the above orders, he now awaited information relative to the penetration operation from the representative he had had flown into Manila, who by now had probably arrived there. However, before he heard anything from this source, he at 1340\*\*\*\* received Commander FIRST Striking Force's 212053 (quoted in full under "Operations of Commander

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- \* Naval Operational Planning (NWP 11), Department of the Navy, Office of the Chief of Naval Operations, January 1st, 1956, Chapter 2, Section 200 (Preliminary Staff Work).
- \*\* COMCRUDIV 16 Dispatch 221239 October 1944 to Commanders SW Area Force, 2ND Striking Force, etc., Detailed Action Report CRUDIV 16, SHO Operation, October 17th - 27th, 1944, WDC Document 161005, NA 11744.
- \*\*\* Commander 2ND Striking Force Dispatch 221332 October 1944 to COMDESDIV 21, info Commander 6TH Base Air Force, War Diary DESRON 1, October 1944, WDC Document 161638, NA 11739.
- \*\*\*\* While COMDESRON 1 received Commander 1ST Striking Force's 212053 at 0815 and the exact TOR by Commander 2ND Striking Force is unrecorded, nevertheless the sequence of events seems to indicate that Commander 2ND Striking Force received the 1ST Striking Force operation plan on the afternoon of this day--probably at 1340 which was the TOR by Commander Main Force.



FIRST Striking Force, October 21st") which gave him the information he desired. He could see from this dispatch that the FIRST Striking Force was to be divided into two groups (i.e., the Main Body and the THIRD Section) and that the former would pass through San Bernardino Strait while the latter would pass through Surigao Strait.\* This was not entirely a surprise for he had probably received several days earlier the Chief of Staff Combined Fleet's 201006 to Commander FIRST Striking Force in which a double penetration was suggested.

HE ALSO COULD SEE FROM THIS DISPATCH THAT THIS DOUBLE PENETRATION WOULD CHANGE HIS OWN PLANS FOR, WHEREAS (A) HE HAD ORIGINALLY EXPECTED TO PENETRATE SURIGAO STRAIT ALONE BUT IN COORDINATION WITH THE PENETRATION OF THE FIRST STRIKING FORCE THROUGH SAN BERNARDINO STRAIT,\*\* HE NOW HAD TO COORDINATE MORE PARTICULARLY WITH THE MOVEMENTS OF THE THIRD SECTION THROUGH SURIGAO STRAIT, AND (B) IN HIS SUGGESTED PLAN HE HAD INDICATED THAT AT ABOUT 1500 OCTOBER 24TH HE WOULD PASS THROUGH THE WESTERN ENTRANCE TO THE MINDANAO SEA, HE NOW KNEW THAT, SINCE THE THIRD SECTION UNDER COMMANDER FIRST STRIKING FORCE'S PLAN WAS TO ARRIVE IN THE SAME PLACE AT 1830 OCTOBER 24TH\*\*\* (OR SOME THREE AND ONE-HALF HOURS LATER), HE WOULD LIKELY HAVE TO DELAY SUFFICIENTLY TO ARRIVE THERE AFTER THAT TIME.

HOWEVER, SINCE HE COULD NOT DETERMINE HIS MOVEMENTS FULLY UNTIL HE HAD HEARD FROM COMMANDER THIRD SECTION, HE AWAITED A DISPATCH FROM THAT COMMANDER IN AMPLIFICATION OF COMMANDER FIRST STRIKING FORCE'S 212053. THIS WAS NECESSARY BECAUSE, ALTHOUGH HE KNEW THAT THE THIRD SECTION WAS TO BE AT THE WESTERN ENTRANCE TO THE MINDANAO SEA AT 1830 OCTOBER 24TH, HE DID NOT KNOW ITS PLANNED MOVEMENTS EITHER BEFORE OR AFTER THIS TIME IN SUFFICIENT DETAIL TO PROPERLY COORDINATE HIS OWN ACTIVITIES WITH IT.

He does not seem to have received any information of consequence from his plane(s) which by now had likely returned from Manila, for the information available to this analysis indicates that he received the needed information from Commander THIRD Section by radio rather than by aircraft.

At 1600 (when COMCRUDIV SIXTEEN received it) he received, as an information addressee, a dispatch from Commander SW Area Force wherein that commander, in part, (a) directed Transports 6, 9, 10, 101, (102) and CRUDIV SIXTEEN to arrive at Cagayan by the evening of October 24th at which time

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- \* Commander 1ST Striking Force Dispatch 212053 October 1944 to 1ST Striking Force, CinC Combined Fleet, Commander Main Force, info Commander 2ND Striking Force, Detailed Action Report Main Force, SHO No. 1 Operation, October 20th - 29th, 1944, WDC Document 161005, NA 11744.
  - \*\* USSBS Interrogation of Japanese Officials, Nav No. 58, Interrogation of Commander Kokichi Mori, IJN, Volume I, Page 236.
  - \*\*\* CofS 2ND Striking Force Dispatch 201932 October 1944 to Commander 1ST Striking Force, info CinC Combined Fleet, Commander SW Area Force, Imperial GHQ (Navy Section), War Diary DESRON 10, October 1944, WDC Document 161638, NA 11739.

the transports were to come under the command of Commander SW Area Guard Force, (b) established COMCRUDIV SIXTEEN as Commander SW Area Guard Force, and (c) directed him to carry out the transport of two infantry battalions from Cagayan to Leyte.\*

He noted that, if COMCRUDIV SIXTEEN was to arrive at Cagayan on the evening (this is assumed to be about 2000) of October 24th, that commander would likely desire to depart Manila at an earlier hour than planned (0000 October 24th)\*\* for the distance to Cagayan was about 500 miles which, in twenty hours (0000 to 2000), would require a speed made good of at least twenty-five knots with the corresponding increase in fuel consumption. However, feeling that COMCRUDIV SIXTEEN had received this dispatch and would modify his plans as necessary, he likely dismissed this matter from his mind.

During the early evening he received (a) an information dispatch from Commander Main Force giving the planned route to be followed by the Main Force for the next two days (until 0600 October 24th),\*\*\* and (b) a dispatch from the Chief of Staff Combined Fleet giving the 0010 position of an enemy submarine in the Sibuyan Sea and cautioning all commanders that the enemy seemed to be assembling submarines to cover the movements of the FIRST Striking Force and other units.\*\*\*\*

At 1830 he received the message from CinC Combined Fleet exhorting all forces to do their best.\*\*\*\*\*

About 1930 (it was received by COMDESRON 10 at this time) he received from Commander THIRD Section the long awaited dispatch outlining

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- \* Commander SW Area Force Dispatch 221320 October 1944 to CRUDIV 16, Transports 6, 9, 10, 101, (102), info CinC Combined Fleet, Combined Fleet Commanders (SW Area Force DesOpOrd No. 684), Detailed Action Report CRUDIV 16, SHO Operation, October 17th - 27th, 1944, WDC Document 161005, NA 11744.
  - \*\* COMCRUDIV 16 Dispatch 221239 October 1944 to Commanders SW Area Force, 2ND Striking Force, 31ST Communication Unit, info CinC Combined Fleet, Commander 1ST Striking Force, Detailed Action Report CRUDIV 16, SHO Operation, October 17th - 27th, 1944, WDC Document 161005, NA 11744.
  - \*\*\* Commander Main Force Dispatch 221624 October 1944 to all commands, Detailed Action Report Main Force, SHO No. 1 Operation, October 20th - 29th, 1944, WDC Document 161005, NA 11744.
  - \*\*\*\* CofS Combined Fleet Dispatch 221651 October 1944 to Commander SW Area Force, info Commanders 1ST and 2ND Striking Forces, CRUDIV 16, COMBATDIV 2, War Diary DESRON 10, October 1944, WDC Document 161638, NA 11739.
  - \*\*\*\*\* CinC Combined Fleet Dispatch 221205 October 1944 to Combined Fleet, China Area Fleet, etc., War Diary DESRON 1, October 1944, WDC Document 161638, NA 11739.



the movements of the THIRD Section as follows: X-3 day--sortie from Brunei; X-2 day--pass through Balabac Strait at 1100 and proceed on course 050°(T); X-1 day--at 0630, in position Latitude 10° - 30'N, Longitude 121° - 35'E, change course to 140°(T) and thereafter proceed along northern edge of the Mindanao Sea; X-day--at 0100 reach point south of BINIT Point and penetrate into Leyte Gulf on course 350°(T).\*

The receipt of this dispatch now provided him with the necessary information to prepare his own plan. According to his Torpedo Officer, he estimated the situation along the following lines:

HE FIRST DETERMINED HIS BASIC TASK TO BE "TO COORDINATE THIS FORCE'S ACTIONS WITH THE PENETRATION OF THE FIRST STRIKING FORCE--I.E., THE THIRD SECTION--INTO LEYTE GULF AT DAWN OCTOBER 25TH". HE THEN DETERMINED THAT THE FURTHER EFFECT DESIRED WAS "TO EXPAND THE BATTLE RESULTS DURING THE MELEE CAUSED BY THE FIRST STRIKING FORCE'S PENETRATION ATTACK". THIS WAS AN EXPLOITATION OBJECTIVE. HE CLEARLY RECOGNIZED THE IMPORTANCE OF THIS OBJECTIVE, BUT HE FELT THAT IT WOULD BE UNWISE TO FOLLOW THE THIRD SECTION INTO LEYTE GULF TOO CLOSELY BECAUSE, AMONG OTHER ITEMS, (A) THE WATERS WERE RESTRICTED AND UNKNOWN, (B) HIS STRENGTH WAS INADEQUATE, AND (C) OF THE TIME OF SUNRISE (0627). BASED ON THESE, AS WELL AS OTHER UNDESIRABLE FACTORS, AND ON HIS KNOWLEDGE OF NIGHT ACTION, HE CONCLUDED THAT, SHOULD HE ENTER INTO THE ABOVE MELEE, HE WOULD HAVE LITTLE PROSPECTS OF SUCCESS. HE THEREFORE DECIDED TO PASS THROUGH THE SOUTHERN ENTRANCE TO SURIGAO STRAIT AT 0600--WHICH HIS TORPEDO OFFICER TERMED AS ON THE "HEELS OF THE THIRD SECTION".\*\*

Having made this decision, he at 2000 issued the following dispatch:

"SECOND Striking Force (CRUDIV TWENTY-ONE and DESRON ONE) will penetrate through Surigao Strait behind the THIRD Section, FIRST Striking Force.

(a) Evening October 23rd--arrive Coron and refuel.

(b) 0200 October 24th--sortie, and

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\* COMBATDIV 2 Dispatch 221155 October 1944 to CinC Combined Fleet, COMCRUDIV 16, Commanders 1ST and 2ND Striking Forces, 5TH Base Air Force, Main Force, SW Area Force, info Sandakan Air Base, 33RD Guard Unit, Detailed Action Report 1ST Striking Force, SHO Operations, October 16th - 28th, 1944, WDC Document 161641, NA 11839.

\*\* Action Summary, 2ND Striking Force in SHO Operation, Southwest Area Operation, Commander Kokichi Mori, ex-IJN, 2ND Striking Force Staff Torpedo Officer, GHQ, FEC, Special Historical Collection, Supporting Documents to General of the Army Douglas MacArthur's Historical Report on Allied Operations in the Southwest Pacific Area (Item 22, Footlocker 5 of 10, SWPA Series, Volume II).

(c) 0600 October 25th--arrive Point "C" (entrance to Surigao Strait)."\*

THIS DISPATCH SHOWS CLEARLY THE SIMPLE FACT THAT COMMANDER SECOND STRIKING FORCE HAD NO INTENTION AT THIS TIME OF PASSING THE SOUTHERN ENTRANCE TO SURIGAO STRAIT "ON THE HEELS OF THE THIRD SECTION" BUT, INSTEAD, PLANNED TO ARRIVE THERE FIVE HOURS AFTER THE THIRD SECTION HAD PASSED--AND TO ARRIVE THERE JUST BEFORE SUNRISE, APPARENTLY TO INSURE ADEQUATE IDENTIFICATION.

In discussing this decision, it seems wise to recall that his chief of staff on October 20th had stated that penetration by CRUDIV TWENTY-ONE and DESRON ONE should be at dawn October 25th immediately behind the FIRST Striking Force,\*\* and that Commander SW Area Force had stated (a) also on the 20th, that he considered it more advantageous to employ CRUDIV TWENTY-ONE and DESRON ONE as a support force in the decisive battle operations,\*\*\* (b) on October 21st, that it was his opinion that at least CRUDIV TWENTY-ONE and DESRON ONE should carry out a penetration attack through Surigao Strait in coordination with the penetration of the FIRST Striking Force,\*\*\*\* and (c) again on October 21st, that CRUDIV TWENTY-ONE and DESRON ONE, operating under Commander FIRST Striking Force, should participate in the decisive battle operations of the FIRST Striking Force and should execute a penetration through Surigao Strait.\*\*\*\*\*

From all of these dispatches, it is clear that Commander SW Area Force wished Commander SECOND Striking Force, with CRUDIV TWENTY-ONE and DESRON ONE, to (1) participate in the decisive battle operations of the FIRST Striking Force, (2) act in coordination with that force, and (3) penetrate through Surigao Strait, and that this coincided with the original thoughts of the Chief of Staff SECOND Striking Force.

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\* Commander 2ND Striking Force Dispatch 222000 October 1944, addressees missing but believed to include all concerned with penetration operation, Detailed Action Report Main Force, SHO No. 1 Operation, October 20th - 29th, 1944, WDC Document 161005, NA 11744.

\*\* CofS 2ND Striking Force Dispatch 201806 October 1944 to Commander SW Area Force, etc., Detailed Action Report CRUDIV 16, SHO Operation, October 17th - 27th, 1944, WDC Document 161005, NA 11744.

\*\*\* CofS SW Area Force Dispatch 202137 October 1944 to Imperial GHQ (Navy Section), info CinC Combined Fleet, Commanders 1ST and 2ND Striking Forces, Main Force, CRUDIV 16, Detailed Action Report CRUDIV 16, SHO Operation, October 17th - 27th, 1944, WDC Document 161005, NA 11744.

\*\*\*\* CofS SW Area Force Dispatch 211322 October 1944 to Commanders 2ND Striking Force, CRUDIV 16, info CinC Combined Fleet, Commanders 1ST Striking Force, Main Force, Imperial GHQ (Navy Section), Detailed Action Report CRUDIV 16, SHO Operation, October 17th - 27th, 1944, WDC Document 161005, NA 11744.

\*\*\*\*\* CofS SW Area Force Dispatch 211914 October 1944 to CinC Combined Fleet, Commanders 2ND Striking Force, CRUDIV 16, Imperial GHQ (Navy Section), info etc., Detailed Action Report CRUDIV 16, SHO Operation, October 17th - 27th, 1944, WDC Document 161005, NA 11744.



Since "in coordination with" means "to bring into common action, movement and condition" and "to participate in" means "to share in common with others",\* do not these dispatches imply that Commander SW Area Force felt that (a) the SECOND Striking Force should be coordinated so as to share in the FIRST Striking Force's activities during the penetration operation, and (b) this was to be so whether or not Commander FIRST Striking Force decided to divide his command?

On the other hand, since CinC Combined Fleet did not choose to attach CRUDIV TWENTY-ONE and DESRON ONE to the FIRST Striking Force but, instead, directed them to operate under a different command--SW Area Force-- there is a distinct impression that he desired the THIRD Section and CRUDIV TWENTY-ONE and DESRON ONE to operate separately. This view is also supported by COMBATDIV ONE, who stated in this connection in his personal diary, "At times having some reserve strength is the best policy".\*\*

But did CinC Combined Fleet thereby mean (a) a five-hour separation which at twenty knots would be one hundred miles, or (b) an entrance sufficiently close to the THIRD Section to permit CRUDIV TWENTY-ONE and DESRON ONE to benefit greatly from the results of the THIRD Section's penetration and support the THIRD Section in case of need?

As regards item (a), it would seem that an interval of approximately one hundred miles was not intended. This seems so for, if CRUDIV TWENTY-ONE and DESRON ONE delayed entering Leyte Gulf until five hours after the THIRD Section, it could not contribute to the battle success to any significant degree, since the action would most likely have ended long before its arrival.

As regards item (b), it would seem that the meaning given here was most likely correct. This view is supported by the postwar statement of the Deputy Chief of Staff Combined Fleet who, in discussing the reasons why the above units were not transferred to the FIRST Striking Force, stated, in part, "It was believed that the senior commander would naturally assume over all command of local units whenever necessary in accordance with the customs and tradition of the Japanese Navy".\*\* This matter is discussed fully under "Operations of CinC Combined Fleet, October 22nd". Does not this statement imply that the two forces might well be close enough together to warrant the senior commander assuming command of both forces?

THEREFORE, FOR THE REASONS ABOVE STATED, IT IS CONSIDERED THAT THE DECISION TO ARRIVE AT THE SOUTHERN ENTRANCE TO SURIGAO STRAIT AT 0600

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\* Websters New International Dictionary (Second Edition), 1934.

\*\* Vice Admiral Matome Ugaki, IJN (COMBATDIV 1), Personal Diary SENSOROKU, Nippon Shuppan Kyodo Kabushiki Kaisha (Tokyo, March 15th, 1954), Volume II.

\*\*\* Statements of Japanese Officials on World War II, Vol. IV, FEC, Military History Section, Page 20, Statement of Rear Admiral Toshitane Takata, ex-IJN, October 10th, 1949.

WAS UNSOUND AND THAT THE CORRECT DECISION SHOULD PROPERLY HAVE BEEN TO ARRIVE AT THE SOUTHERN ENTRANCE MUCH EARLIER--I.E., AT SUCH TIME AS WOULD PERMIT CRUDIV TWENTY-ONE AND DESRON ONE TO CONTRIBUTE SIGNIFICANTLY TO THE PENETRATION OPERATION, EVEN TO THE EXTENT OF BEING SO CLOSE AS TO PERMIT COMMANDER SECOND STRIKING FORCE TO ASSUME COMMAND SHOULD HE CONSIDER IT NECESSARY.

It seems probable that at about this time he issued SECOND Striking Force Operation Order No. 5,\* a written directive for the penetration operation which directive unfortunately is not available. Whether or not he sent the substance of this directive to Commander SW Area Force via the representative sent by plane that forenoon is not known but it seems highly probable.

At 2400 (when it was received by DESRON TEN) he probably received another submarine radio fix.\*\* This dispatch said that at 1718 a submarine in Latitude 10° - 00'N, Longitude 116° - 00'E (Class B fix), (Plate XXXVI, Contact J), had transmitted one urgent dispatch. This seems to have been from the Commanding Officer DACE who at the moment was operating in Dangerous Ground and who, commencing at 1630, was requesting authority to extend his patrol in order to investigate an air contact on a convoy.\*\*\*

At 2400 (a) CRUDIV TWENTY-ONE and DESRON ONE were west of Lingayen Gulf, in position bearing 305°(T), distant 150 miles from Manila, and on approximate course 160°(T), and (b) DESDIV TWENTY-ONE, bound for Manila with the personnel of the SIXTH Base Air Force, was bearing 330°(T), distant 220 miles from Manila.

(1) Operations of COMCRUDIV SIXTEEN, October 22nd.

At 0000 COMCRUDIV SIXTEEN, with CRUDIV SIXTEEN, was in position bearing 345°(T), distant ninety miles from Labuan Island in Brunei Bay and was on base course 020°(T), twenty-two knots, zigzagging. He was en route Manila in accordance with Commander SW Area Force's instructions of the previous day.\*\*\*\*

At this time, entirely unknown to himself, he was being

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\* War Diary DESRON 1, October 1944, WDC Document 161638, NA 11739.

\*\* Owada Communication Unit Dispatch 222040 October 1944 to CinC Combined Fleet, Commanders 6TH Base Air Force, 1ST and 2ND Striking Forces, Main Force, War Diary DESRON 10, October 1944, WDC Document 161638, NA 11739.

\*\*\* War Patrol Report DACE, Report of 5TH War Patrol, Serial 09, November 6th, 1944.

\*\*\*\* Commander SW Area Force Dispatch 211251 October 1944 to Commanders 2ND Striking Force, CRUDIV 16 (SW Area Force DesOpOrd No. 678), Detailed Action Report CRUDIV 16, SHO Operation, October 17th - 27th, 1944, WDC Document 161005, NA 11744.



October 22nd

trailed by the DARTER which had initially contacted him at 2350 on the previous evening and was endeavoring to close.\*

Since he (a) had been assigned counterlanding operations and had been directed to proceed to Manila, presumably for the purpose of discussing the transportation of (1) the SIXTY-EIGHTH Brigade from Formosa to Luzon, and (2) one or two regiments from Manila to Leyte, and (b) had received word on the previous evening that Commander SW Area Force (1) had made an agreement with the army to transport two battalions from Cagayan to Leyte under COMCRUDIV SIXTEEN, and (2) saw no objection to his being sent to Cagayan (Mindanao) instead of Manila, he probably wondered exactly what counterlandings were being contemplated and whether or not he would suddenly be directed to Cagayan.

As regards the counterlandings, he did not have long to ponder for at 0108 he received a dispatch from the Chief of Staff SW Area Force which, among other items, listed five transports to be employed in transporting troops from Cagayan to Leyte and directing that they concentrate at Cagayan on the evening of October 24th at which time they were to come under his command.\*\* From this, he could see that this was the operation to which he was committed and that he therefore could expect to receive orders shortly.

As he proceeded on toward Manila, he estimated the situation. He realized that time was important and that, if he was to approximate the schedule given him, he could not afford to have delays at Manila. He also realized that his force was too weak to cover the transports adequately against submarines which he feared might be in the area. He therefore decided to (a) notify, among others, Commander SW Area Force that he (1) expected to arrive off Manila Bay with the AOBA, KINU, and URANAMI at about 0800 October 23rd, (2) expected to depart at midnight, (3) required 1500 tons of fuel, and (b) requested a reinforcement of three destroyers and two subchasers.

Then, at 1239, in accordance with this decision, he sent a dispatch to Commander SW Area Force advising that commander of his needs as above described.\*\*\*

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\* War Patrol Report DARTER, Report of 4TH War Patrol, Serial 020, November 5th, 1944.

\*\* CofS SW Area Force Dispatch 212211 October 1944 to COMCRUDIV 16, info CinC Combined Fleet, Commanders 2ND Striking Force, 33rd Special Base Force, Transports 6, 10, (9), 131, 101 and 102, Detailed Action Report CRUDIV 16, SHO Operation, October 17th - 27th, 1944, WDC Document 161005, NA 11744.

\*\*\* COMCRUDIV 16 Dispatch 221239 October 1944 to Commander SW Area Force, Commanders 2ND Striking Force, 31st Communication Unit, info CinC Combined Fleet, Commander 1ST Striking Force, Detailed Action Report CRUDIV 16, SHO Operation, October 17th - 27th, 1944, WDC Document 161005, NA 11744.



About a half an hour later (at 1313) he received, as an information addressee, a dispatch from the Chief of Staff SW Area Force to Commander THIRTY-THIRD Special Base Force (quoted in full under "Operations of Commander SW Area Force, October 22nd") (a) informing him of the landing craft that could be carried by the ships assigned to the first troop reinforcement operation, (b) requesting him to endeavor to get C.G. THIRTY-FIFTH Army to dispatch as many landing craft as possible to the unloading point in order to speed up unloading, and (c) authorizing him to deal directly with C.G. THIRTY-FIFTH Army.\*

At 1555 (Commander FIRST Striking Force received it at this time) he received CinC Combined Fleet's exhortation to all forces to do their utmost.\*\*

At 1600 he received a dispatch from Commander SW Area Force (a) (1) directing transports 6, 9, 10, 101 and (102) to be at Cagayan by evening of October 24th, (2) CRUDIV SIXTEEN to proceed to Cagayan by evening of October 24th; however, depending on the situation "the division may put into Manila Harbor", (3) that, upon arrival at Cagayan, he (COMCRUDIV SIXTEEN) was to take charge of all ships as Commander SW Area Force Guard Force, and was to transport troops to Leyte, and (4) that, upon completion of this operation, all ships were to proceed to Manila and prepare for the second troop transportation operation, and (b) warning him (COMCRUDIV SIXTEEN) that, depending on the situation respecting the decisive battle operations, CRUDIV SIXTEEN might be directed by special order to operate in support of the FIRST Striking Force.\*\*\*

This dispatch likely concerned him greatly for, if he departed Manila as he planned (i.e., at 0000 October 24th), it was clear that he could not arrive at Cagayan by the evening (1900) of October 24th without expending fuel unnecessarily in making excessive speed. This was so for the average speed required would be approximately twenty-six knots (the distance from Manila to Cagayan was roughly 500 miles, the number of hours but nineteen). Because of this, it seems clear that he realized that this dispatch had been sent by Commander SW Area Force prior to the receipt of his dispatch (221239) mentioned previously.

The question now likely arose in his mind as to the meaning of the instruction, "depending on the situation the division may put into

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\* CofS SW Area Force Dispatch 221056 October 1944 to 33rd Special Base Force, info COMCRUDIV 16, Detailed Action Report CRUDIV 16, SHO Operation, October 17th - 27th, 1944, WDC Document 161005, NA 11744.

\*\* CinC Combined Fleet Dispatch 221205 October 1944 to Combined Fleet and China Area Fleet, etc., Detailed Action Report 1ST Striking Force, SHO Operations, October 16th - 28th, 1944, WDC Document 161641, NA 11839.

\*\*\* Commander SW Area Force Dispatch 221320 October 1944 to COMCRUDIV 16, Transports 6, 9, 10, (101), 102, info CinC Combined Fleet, Commanders 1ST and 2ND Striking Force, Main Force, 6TH Base Air Force, 33rd Special Base Force, Detailed Action Report CRUDIV 16, SHO Operation, October 17th - 27th, 1944, WDC Document 161005, NA 11744.



Manila Harbor". Who was going to determine the nature of the situation? He appears to have decided that (a) if it was to be himself, he would continue on to Manila even though this might delay his arrival at Cagayan--this statement of his intention is derived, in part, from the fact that he would require upon arrival in Manila some 1500 tons of fuel oil which was about forty-four per cent of his division oil capacity (From this, it seems probable that he did not fuel to capacity at Brunei Bay where on October 20th his division had fueled from BATDIV TWO.)--and (b) if it was to be Commander SW Area Force, that commander would issue him modifying instructions.

About this time he received a dispatch from Commander Main Force giving that force's movements and indicating that air action would be initiated by that force at dawn on October 24th.\*

At 1742 (DESRON TEN received it at this time) he received a dispatch from the Chief of Staff Combined Fleet giving the 0010 position of an enemy submarine (Contact B) and suggesting that, since the enemy was apparently assembling submarines to cover channels and routes to scout movements of the FIRST Striking Force and other units, the commanders should give special consideration to the matter.\*\*

He noted that this fix was in the Sibuyan Sea. Because of this, and because of the suggestion that all commanders pay special attention to the possibility that enemy submarines might well be in the waters which he would transverse between Manila and Cagayan, he undoubtedly was pleased that he had asked for the additional destroyers and subchasers.

At 1810 he sent a visual dispatch to his command giving the changes during the night: 0135, change course to 075°(T); 0145, resume zig-zagging; 0500, speed twenty-four knots.\*\*\*

At 1930 (it was received by DESRON TEN at this time) he received COMBATDIV TWO's dispatch movement plan for the THIRD Section.\*\*\*\* This was an important dispatch for it was necessary that he know the movements of the THIRD Section should he be ordered to proceed directly to Cagayan

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\* Commander Main Force Dispatch 221624 October 1944 to all forces, Detailed Action Report Main Force, SHO No. 1 Operation, October 20th - 29th, 1944, WDC Document 161005, NA 11744.

\*\* CofS Combined Fleet Dispatch 221651 October 1944 to Commander SW Area Force, info Commanders 1ST and 2ND Striking Forces, CRUDIV 16, BATDIV 2, War Diary DESRON 10, October 1944, WDC Document 161638, NA 11739.

\*\*\* COMCRUDIV 16 Visual Dispatch 221810 October 1944 to CRUDIV 16, Detailed Action Report No. 6, AOBA, Antisubmarine Action West of Philippines, October 23rd, 1944, WDC Document 161747.

\*\*\*\* COMBATDIV 2 Dispatch 221155 October 1944 to CinC Combined Fleet, CRUDIV 16, Commanders 6TH Base Air Force, Main Force, SW Area Force, info 33rd Guard Unit, Sandakan Air Base, Detailed Action Report No. 13, DESRON 10, SHO Operation, October 17th - 31st, 1944, WDC Document 161005, NA 11744.

instead of continuing on to Manila. This was so for the two commands might well encounter one another in the eastern Sulu Sea at about sundown with the possibility of resulting confusion.

At 1945 he received, as an information addressee, a dispatch (quoted in full under "Operations of Commander SW Area Force, October 22nd") giving the boats available to the Guard Force at Ormoc, and Cagayan for loading and unloading troops. Two recommendations were made: (1) transports Nos. 9 and 10 should not carry any large landing craft; and (2) in order to facilitate embarkation, ships should enter the harbor at intervals.\*

Sometime during the evening, since both COMBATDIV ONE and Commander SECOND Striking Force received it, he likely received the dispatch from CinC Combined Fleet ordering the SECOND Striking Force to take part in the Leyte penetration operation.\*\*

At 2400 (DESRON TEN received it at this time) he received a radio direction finder fix on another submarine\*\*\* (Contact J). While this contact was 250 miles astern, it nevertheless indicated the need for continuing antisubmarine measures.

At this time CRUDIV SIXTEEN was bearing about 247°(T), distant 175 miles from Manila, on course 050°(T) and zigzagging.

(2) Operations of COMDESDIV TWENTY-ONE, October 22nd.

COMDESDIV TWENTY-ONE with DESDIV TWENTY-ONE (WAKABA, HATSUSHIMA and HATSUHARU) was at Takao where he had arrived on the previous evening. He was there to assist in the movement of the SIXTH Base Air Force to Manila.

At 0700 he sortied Takao and headed for Manila.\*\*\*\*

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\* Originator unknown (presumed to be Commander 33RD Special Base Force) Dispatch 221640 October 1944 to Commander 3RD Southern Expeditionary Force, info COMCRUDIV 16, Detailed Action Report CRUDIV 16, SHO Operation, October 17th - 27th, 1944, WDC Document 161005, NA 11744.

\*\* Action Summary, 2ND Striking Force in SHO Operation, Southwest Area Operation, Commander Kokichi Mori, ex-IJN, 2ND Striking Force Staff Torpedo Officer, GHQ, FEC, Special Historical Collection, Supporting Documents to General of the Army Douglas MacArthur's Historical Report on Allied Operations in the Southwest Pacific Area (Item 22, Footlocker 5 of 10, SWPA Series, Volume II); also Vice Admiral Matome Ugaki, IJN (COMBATDIV 1), Personal Diary SENSOROKU, Nippon Shuppan Kyodo Kabushiki Kaisha (Tokyo, March 15th, 1953), Volume II.

\*\*\* Commander Owada Communication Unit Dispatch 222040 October 1944 to CinC Combined Fleet, Commanders 1ST and 2ND Striking Forces, Main Force, 6TH Base Air Force, War Diary DESRON 10, October 1944, WDC Document 161638, NA 11739.

\*\*\*\* War Diary DESRON 1, October 1944, WDC Document 161638, NA 11739.



His movement proceeded uneventfully until 1745 when unknown to him his command was sighted by the DRUM in Latitude 118° - 52'N, Longitude 118° - 52'E, on course 180°(T), speed twenty-five knots.\* Actually although there is no definite information thereon his speed appears to have been about nineteen knots.

At 2110 he received a dispatch from Commander SECOND Striking Force directing him to (a) arrive at Manila by 1500 October 23rd, (b) fuel as soon as possible and (c) sortie to rejoin the SECOND Striking Force during the morning of October 24th.\*\*

At 2400 DESDIV TWENTY-ONE was bearing 325°(T), distant ninety miles from Cape Bolinao, Luzon.

(b) Operations of Commander FIFTH Base Air Force, October 22nd.

Commander FIFTH Base Air Force was in his headquarters in Manila. He was perhaps disappointed that his attacks on the preceding day had been fruitless. Although records are not specific, but presumably because he had only twenty-four operational aircraft, he appears to have issued orders only for search operations on this day. Judging by the contacts made, the search covered only the Manila sector—leaving search and reconnaissance in the vicinity of Leyte Gulf to the FOURTH Air Army. It may be that he utilized some of his fighter strength to defend the air bases until the arrival of the SIXTH Base Air Force fighters which were scheduled to be the first to arrive. However, this seems unlikely as the number of fighters was limited and most, if not all of them, were preparing for Kamikaze operations.

His first contact of the day was a 0445 direction finder fix (Class D) report of a task force at 2116 the previous evening, bearing 087°(T), distant 600 miles from Manila,\*\*\* (Plate XXXVI, Contact A).

What evaluation he gave to this contact is not known but, since it was reportedly a task force, and since Allied carrier task forces had heretofore been sighted with from one to four carriers it seems likely that he evaluated the carrier composition as from one to four carriers (CV and/or CVL). However, since it was some 600 miles away he gave it little attention, although he recognized that a RDF fix was not particularly accurate.

Some time after this he received a report of a contact at 0637 on three large carriers, two battleships and ten other ships bearing

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\* DRUM Dispatch 221037 October 1944 to CTF 17, SAWFISH and ICEFISH.

\*\* Commander 2ND Striking Force Dispatch 221332 October 1944 to COMDESDIV 21, info Commander 6TH Base Air Force, War Diary DESRON 1, October 1944, WDC Document 161638, NA 11739.

\*\*\* 31ST Communication Unit Dispatch 220445 October 1944 to Main Force, others unknown, Detailed Action Report Main Force, SHO No. 1 Operation, October 20th - 29th, 1944, WDC Document 161005, NA 11744.

095°(T), distant 500 miles from Tacloban,\* (Contact C).

At about 0745 he likely learned that the night search by the flying boats from Garan Bi had been negative.\*\*

Meanwhile realizing that (a) the planes of the SIXTH Base Air Force were scheduled to arrive in his area on this day, (b) these planes were scheduled to launch a general offensive on the following day (October 23rd), (c) the SIXTH Base Air Force would arrive with only a bare minimum of ground personnel and (d) since his own combat strength had been heavily reduced by enemy action there remained an excess of FIFTH Base Air Force maintenance personnel, he decided (or it had been agreed on previously during the conferences held at his headquarters on the previous two days) to make the utmost use of his forces to assist Commander SIXTH Base Air Force in the activation of his base activities. Therefore at 0800 he directed his command by dispatch to utilize its full strength to assist in the base activities of the SIXTH Base Air Force and the "T" Force (both of which units were presently attached to CinC Combined Fleet), when those commands moved to the Philippines.\*\*\*

This dispatch is of interest in that it shows clearly that there was considerable cooperation between the FIFTH and SIXTH Base Air Force commanders. Whether this was usual within the Japanese Naval Air Forces or was due to the fact that both were (a) after 1700 to be under the same commander (Commander SW Area Force) and (b) later to be either (1) merged into one command or (2) operated separately under one commander (Commander SIXTH Base Air Force) is not known but these latter facts could have had a stimulating effect.

Shortly thereafter he received two 0810 contact reports made by SECOND Air Division reconnaissance planes.\*\*\*\* One was reported as three carriers and five other ships 216 miles, bearing 090°(T) from Saravia (NW Negros) (Contact E), and the other was reported as five carriers and seven

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- \* Vice Admiral Matome Ugaki, IJN (COMBATDIV 1), Personal Diary SENSOROKU, Nippon Shuppan Kyodo Kabushiki Kaisha (Tokyo, March 15th, 1953), Volume II.
- \*\* Commander 901ST Air Group Dispatch 220715 October 1944 to CinC Combined Fleet, etc., Detailed Action Report 901ST Air Group Night Searches, October 10th - 28th, 1944, WDC Document 160551, NA 12402.
- \*\*\* Commander 5TH Base Air Force Dispatch 220800 October 1944 to 5TH Base Air Force, 5TH Base Air Force DesOpOrds and Staff Messages, War Diary 23RD Air Flotilla, October 1944, WDC Document 160264, NA 12546.
- \*\*\*\* Documents from file of Lieutenant Colonel Katsuo Sato, IJA, Staff Officer, 4TH Air Army, Department of the Army, Historical Division Microfilm HS-7.



other ships, eighty-six miles, bearing 090°(T), from Tacloban\* (Contact D).

These contacts did not unduly alarm him as Allied carrier task forces had been operating in this area for some time. However, since he was planning to destroy these Allied carriers largely by the use of Kamikaze attack planes--in fact, he had interpreted the task given him in the order by Commander SW Area Force on the previous day to make "surprise attacks on enemy carriers"\*\*\* as Kamikaze attacks, as well as the orthodox types, he likely determined to (a) follow any amplifying reports on these contacts as closely as possible so that he might launch an attack if his planes were ready, and (b) keep his command alerted to the possibility of air strikes by the aircraft from these and other carriers. Certainly, with his limited planes he could not afford to lose any unnecessarily.

At about 0937 he received a report from C.G. FOURTH Air Army that, as of 0907, eighty transports were in Leyte Gulf\* (Contact F).

Shortly thereafter he received the first contact report from his own search planes. This was an 0920 contact report by a Manila search plane on two carriers, two battleships and several other ships bearing 087°(T), distant 330 miles from Manila\* (Contact G). This contact could have been on any one of three task groups, TG 38.1, TG 38.2 or TG 38.4, since all were operating in the vicinity throughout the day. However, it seems probable that the contact was made on TG 38.2 since the radar contacts made by the Allied task groups place the two air contacts of the day closest to that group. Whether he took any action to develop this contact further is not indicated.

At about 1300, since the SIXTH Base Air Force planes appear to have moved in accordance with their schedule (it will be recalled that the COD at 1142 sighted aircraft heading south)\*\*\*he was aware of the arrival of the first units of that command in the Philippines. Since he had ordered his command to employ its full strength to assist the base activities of the SIXTH Base Air Force, he now likely awaited reports as to the effectiveness of this assistance.

At 1340 or earlier (Commander Main Force received it at this

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\* Vice Admiral Matome Ugaki, IJN (COMBATDIV 1), Personal Diary SENSOROKU, Nippon Shuppan Kyodo Kabushiki Kaisha (Tokyo, March 15th, 1953), Volume II; also Appended Chart III, Enemy Fleet Dispositions on October 22nd, 1944, Detailed Action Report Main Force, SHO No. 1 Operation, October 20th - 29th, 1944, WDC Document 161005, NA 11744.

\*\* Commander SW Area Force Dispatch 211345 October 1944 to Commanders 5TH and 6TH Base Air Forces, 954TH and 955TH Air Groups, 1ST and 2ND Striking Forces, Main Force (SW Area Force DesOpOrd No. 679), Detailed Action Report 1ST Striking Force, SHO Operation, October 16th - 28th, 1944, WDC Document 161641, NA 11839.

\*\*\* COD Dispatch 220300 October 1944 to CTF 71.

time) he received a dispatch from Commander FIRST Striking Force in which was given the division of his force and the prospective routes of each part.\*

At about 1555 he received a message of exhortation from CinC Combined Fleet.\*\*

He received no further search reports, but at about 1636 he received a dispatch in amplification of the one contact which had been made by his planes. This dispatch gave the time of contact as 0900 and the composition as one light carrier, one special carrier, two battleships or cruisers and some destroyers, in the position previously reported, on course 180°(T), speed sixteen knots (Contact G); the weather was reported as cloudy with occasional squalls and visibility ten miles.\*\*\*

At about 1642 he received, as an information addressee, a dispatch from the Chief of Staff Combined Fleet which (a) suggested that precautions be taken in order to prevent attacks on friendly ships, and (b) requested that, subsequent to 1200 October 24th, air and ground units in the Philippines be directed to attack only carriers and transports unless positively identified as an enemy task force.\*\*\*\* Although his specific action thereon is not recorded, it can be assumed that he complied with the spirit of this request.

Shortly thereafter he received Commander Main Force's 221624 which gave a new route for that force and announced that air action would be initiated at dawn October 24th.\*\*\*\*\*

At about 1930 (DESRON TEN received it then) he may have received a dispatch from COMBATDIV TWO (Commander THIRD Section) outlining the movements of the THIRD Section for the next three days.\*\*\*\*\* This

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- \* Commander 1ST Striking Force Dispatch 212053 October 1944, addressees unknown, Detailed Action Report Main Force, SHO No. 1 Operation, October 20th - 29th, 1944, WDC Document 161005, NA 11744.
  - \*\* CinC Combined Fleet Dispatch 221205 October 1944 to all forces, War Diary DESRON 1, October 1944, WDC Document 161638, NA 11739.
  - \*\*\* Clark Air Base Dispatch 221606 October 1944 to Major Commanders, War Diary DESRON 10, October 1944, WDC Document 161638, NA 11739.
  - \*\*\*\* CofS Combined Fleet Dispatch 221612 October 1944 to all Fleet and Squadron Commanders, War Diary 61ST Air Flotilla, October 1944, WDC Document 161643, NA 12260.
  - \*\*\*\*\* Commander Main Force Dispatch 221624 October 1944 to all forces, Detailed Action Report Main Force, SHO No. 1 Operation, October 20th - 29th, 1944, WDC Document 161005, NA 11744.
  - \*\*\*\*\* COMBATDIV 2 Dispatch 221155 October 1944 to CinC Combined Fleet, COMCRUDIV 16, Commanders 6TH Base Air Force, Main Force, SW Area Force, SE Area Force, info Sandakan Air Base (Borneo), Detailed Action Report No. 13, DESRON 10, SHO Operation, October 17th - 31st, 1944, WDC Document 161005, NA 11744.



seems so for, although he is not listed as an addressee, Commander SIXTH Base Air Force is so listed. Therefore, since the information also appears to have been of importance to Commander FIFTH Base Air Force, it seems correct to say that Commander SIXTH Base Air Force on his arrival in the Philippines made known the contents of this dispatch. Although Japanese records do not indicate the extent of personal visits made by the commanders at this time, it seems probable that, as the junior commander, he met Commander SIXTH Base Air Force upon the latter's arrival in Manila at about 1700, and that he briefed that commander on the current situation in the Philippines including the preparations which had been made for basing and servicing the arriving units.

It seems probable that in the early evening he (a) received a contact report from the I-54 that at 1700 she had contacted a group of ships some 450 miles to the eastward of San Bernardino Strait,\* (Contact I) and (b) since he was in close coordination with C.G. FOURTH Air Army, he learned of Commander SECOND Air Division's plans for the general offensive commencing at dawn October 24th.\*\* This plan is quoted in full under "Operations of C.G. FOURTH Air Army, October 22nd". It will be recalled that the original general principle for the employment of the army and navy air forces in the SHO Operation was for these forces to conduct a general offensive on D-1 and D-day,\*\*\* operating in close coordination with one another. It will also be recalled that Commander SIXTH Base Air Force had decided to commence his general offensive on D-2 (October 23rd).\*\*\*\*

Since Commander SECOND Air Division's plan followed, in general, the plan issued by the same commander on October 20th,\*\*\*\*\* and the order

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- \* Appended Chart III, Enemy Fleet Dispositions on October 22nd, 1944, Detailed Action Report Main Force, SHO No. 1 Operation, October 20th - 29th, 1944, WDC Document 161005, NA 11744.
- \*\* 2ND Air Division Operation Order A-207, October 22nd, 1944, Documents from the file of Lieutenant Colonel Katsuo Sato, IJA, Staff Officer, 4TH Air Army, Department of the Army, Historical Division Microfilm HS-7.
- \*\*\* Mobile Force Operation Order No. 76, August 10th, 1944, Chapter II, Concrete Operational Policy, Section A, Paragraph 1., ATIS Document No. 39, Part I, April 22nd, 1945 (NACHI Document).
- \*\*\*\* 6TH Base Air Force Operation Order No. 110, October 21st, 1944, File of 6TH Base Air Force Operation Orders and Supplemental Material obtained from Captain Bunzo Shibata, IJN, Senior Staff Officer 6TH Base Air Force, GHQ, FEC, Military History Section, Microfilm (unnumbered).
- \*\*\*\*\* 2ND Air Division "Plan of Operations for Philippines Decisive Battle", October 20th, 1944, Documents from the file of Lieutenant Colonel Katsuo Sato, IJA, Staff Officer, 4TH Air Army, Department of the Army, Historical Division Microfilm HS-7.

issued by C.G. FOURTH Air Army on October 21st,\* Commander FIFTH Base Air Force could see that there was nothing really new in this order except possible the anticipated available aircraft strength--172 planes.

Also about this time (dusk) Commander FIFTH Base Air Force learned (a) of the cancellation of the scheduled dusk and night attack by the SIXTH Base Air Force, and (b) of the confusion attending the arrival of SIXTH Base Air Force units in the Philippines.\*\* This matter is discussed rather fully under "Operations of Commander SIXTH Base Air Force, October 22nd".

HE LIKELY WAS GREATLY CONCERNED FOR HE HAD DIRECTED HIS BASE AIR FORCE TO ASSIST THE BASE ACTIVITIES OF THE SIXTH BASE AIR FORCE AND NOW, WITH THE PLANES OF THE LATTER FORCE LANDING ON FIELDS OTHER THAN THOSE DESIGNATED, ADDITIONAL PROBLEMS COULD WELL FALL UPON HIS UNITS.

At about 2000, since his headquarters were near by, he learned of the order issued by Commander SIXTH Base Air Force for operations the following day.\*\*\* As pointed out under "Operations of Commander SIXTH Base Air Force, October 22nd", neither this dispatch nor its substance are available to this analysis.

At about 2030 he received a dispatch from Commander SECOND Striking Force announcing that that force (CRUDIV TWENTY-ONE and DESRON ONE) would participate in the penetration operation through Surigao Strait behind the THIRD Section of the FIRST Striking Force, and giving the time of arrival at the southern entrance to that strait.\*\*\*\*

At 2300 (it was received by DESRON TEN at this time) he received a dispatch from the Chief of Staff Combined Fleet giving (a) the composition of the Main Force, and (b) information on its planned route with the caution that flying personnel be kept informed so that these

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\* 4TH Air Army Operation Order A-518, 1000 October 21st, 1944; CofS 4TH Air Army Dispatch No. 6406 October 21st, 1944; 2ND Air Division "Plan of Operations for Philippines Decisive Battle", October 20th, 1944, Documents from the file of Lieutenant Colonel Katsuo Sato, IJA, Staff Officer, 4TH Air Army, Department of the Army, Historical Division Microfilm HS-7.

\*\* Detailed Action Report No. 2, 5TH Attack Unit (752ND Air Group), October 22nd - 29th, 1944, WDC Document 161004, NA 12605.

\*\*\* Commander 6TH Base Air Force Dispatch 222000 October 1944 (6TH Base Air Force DesOpOrd No. 88), War Diary 701ST Air Group, October 1944, WDC Document 160258, NA 12592.

\*\*\*\* Commander 2ND Striking Force Dispatch 222000 October 1944, addressees missing but believed to include all concerned with penetration operation, Detailed Action Report Main Force, SHO No. 1 Operation, October 20th - 29th, 1944, WDC Document 161005, NA 11744.



friendly units might be readily recognized.\* This route had already been changed by Commander Main Force's 221624.

During the remainder of this day Commander FIFTH Base Air Force reestimated the situation. He knew that, as Commander SIXTH Base Air Force had now arrived in the Philippines and was preparing to launch a general offensive on the following day, it was incumbent upon the FIFTH Base Air Force to coordinate its activities therewith in whatever way possible. Although he was at the present moment employing his full strength to cooperate in the base activities of these newly arrived units, he was in addition preparing for the combat activities on the morrow.

In this connection, it will be recalled that at the commencement of this day he had about twenty-four operational aircraft. Since (a) there seems to be no evidence that he received any reinforcements on this day, (b) the claims of CTG 77.4 that (1) nine planes had been destroyed on the ground at Opon Field\*\* (Mactan) do not seem reasonable (they were likely dummies either fabricated or unserviceable because of the air strikes against them on the previous day)--this matter is discussed under "Operations of CTG 77.4, October 22nd", and (2) he had shot down one single-engine carrier attack plane, (c) CTF 73 claimed destroying two planes, one in the air off Puerto Princesa which appears correct and one on La Carlota airstrip, Negros Island (likely an army plane as La Carlota was an army airstrip) which may have been incorrect in that the plane may have been a dummy,\*\*\* and (d) it is likely that at least one damaged plane was repaired, it can be assumed that, as of this time, he still had about twenty-four operational aircraft.

In connection with items (b) and (c) above, it seems pertinent to emphasize at this point that the Japanese were very adept in employing dummies as a means of passive defense. This was shown by (1) the report of the Air Evaluation Board SOWESPAC wherein it stated, in part, that:

"EVIDENCE OF THE SUCCESSFUL USE OF DUMMIES WAS REVEALED AFTER ALLIED OCCUPATION OF AIRFIELDS. THIS WAS PARTICULARLY TRUE OF UNSERVICEABLE AIRCRAFT. IT WAS KNOWN THAT, IN SOME INSTANCES, ALLIED AIRCRAFT HAD REPEATEDLY STRAFED THESE UNSERVICEABLE PLANES, BELIEVING THEM TO BE OPERATIONAL."

There were two types of aircraft dummies used in the Philippines prior to and during the Leyte campaign; unserviceable aircraft and fabricated dummies. The use of unserviceable aircraft was in keeping with past Japanese policies; however, it was more pronounced in the

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\* CofS Combined Fleet Dispatch 220925 October 1944 to Commanders of Base Air Forces, etc., War Diary DESRON 10, October 1944, WDC Document 161638, NA 11739.

\*\* Action Report CTG 77.4, Leyte Operations, October 12th - 29th, 1944, Serial 00120, November 15th, 1944.

\*\*\* War Diary VPB 101, October 22nd, 1944.

Philippines than it had been previously. Airfields in Luzon revealed great numbers of unserviceable aircraft thus used. Fabricated aircraft dummies reached a new zenith of perfection in detailed construction. Intelligence sources learned of two factories, one at Davao and one at Manila, devoted to the manufacture of dummy aircraft.

There was a report that the Davao factory was capable of producing thirty dummy aircraft per month. These dummies were consistently located in revetments and in the open, while serviceable aircraft were afforded protection by being located beneath trees out of sight and at great distances from the airfield. Air Evaluation Board Photographic Teams and observers reported that an estimated twelve per cent of the approximate 425 aircraft found on the main airdrome at Clark Air Center upon occupation were dummies, either unserviceable aircraft or fabricated aircraft. SO EARNEST WERE THE JAPANESE IN THEIR EFFORTS TO DECEIVE ALLIED AIR OBSERVERS THAT SHAM MAINTENANCE OF DUMMY AIRCRAFT WAS OFTEN PERFORMED. "THIS USE OF DUMMY AIRCRAFT IN MANY INSTANCES PROVED QUITE DECEPTIVE AND EFFECTIVELY CREATED THE ILLUSION OF SERVICEABLE AIRCRAFT."\*, AND (2) THE WAR DIARY OF COMMANDER FIFTH BASE AIR FORCE WHEREIN FOR OCTOBER 15TH, IN REFERRING TO AN ATTACK ON NICHOLS AIRFIELD (MANILA) BY TF 38, HE STATED, IN PART, "AT THE NICHOLS NAVAL AIRFIELD, SINCE THE ENEMY ATTACKED MAINLY THE EXPOSED DECOY PLANES, THERE WAS PRACTICALLY NO OTHER DAMAGE."\*\*

But, to return to the estimate! As stated earlier, Commander FIFTH Base Air Force now had to determine what combat activities, if any, he would undertake in coordination with the general offensive of the SIXTH Base Air Force. He was committed largely to Kamikaze operations. He now studied the distribution of his aircraft. These appear to have been mainly at Mabalacat in the Clark Field complex and in the Cebu area, including Mactan Island. But, whereas the Clark Field area had not been attacked for the past three days, the Visayas had been repeatedly attacked and on the previous day he had lost heavily (six planes) at Opon Field in his first attempt to launch a Kamikaze attack. The question now arose in his mind as to the advisability of moving a large part of his aircraft to Davao.

At 2400 he was still pondering this matter.

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\* Leyte Campaign, Philippines, 1944, Air Evaluation Board SOWESPAC, June 1st, 1945, Section V, Pages 162-166.

\*\* Diary of Vice Admiral Kimpei Teraoka, IJN, August 1st - November 1st, 1944, 5TH Base Air Force in SHO Operation, GHQ, FEC, Special Historical Collection, Supporting Documents to General of the Army Douglas MacArthur's Historical Report on Allied Operations in the Southwest Pacific Area (Item 30, Footlocker 7 of 10, SWPA Series, Volume II).



## (B) Operations of C.G. FOURTH Air Army, October 22nd.

C.G. FOURTH Air Army remained at his headquarters in Manila. He was watching the situation closely because on this day (a) the SIXTH Base Air Force would be moving to the Philippines and would be using airfields which they had obtained largely from the FOURTH Air Army (It will be recalled that on the previous day he had discussed this matter with a senior staff officer from the SIXTH Base Air Force), and (b) reinforcement aircraft (from FIRST, ELEVENTH, FOURTEENTH and TWENTIETH Air Regiments) for his own command would also be arriving on this day.

He was concerned as to Allied air operations because Allied aircraft had for some days been striking certain of the FOURTH Air Army airfields as well as certain of the airfields of the FIFTH Base Air Force.

Because of the above, it was important to know the nature of the Allied air threat on this day so that any action required of his command in coordination with the movement of the SIXTH Base Air Force into the Philippines might be effected promptly. He awaited the results of the morning searches and reconnaissance. Unfortunately, like the searches of the FIFTH Base Air Force, the nature of his searches is not fully known. But, as will be shown later, since a number of contacts made by his planes were on shipping inside Leyte Gulf and on task groups to the eastward of Leyte Gulf, it is clear that reconnaissance and search operations were conducted by his command in these areas at the least.

It seems likely that during the morning he received a report of a contact made at 0637 on three large carriers, two battleships, and ten other ships, bearing 095°(T), distant 500 miles from Tacloban\*, (Contact C).

Since this contact was well to the eastward and beyond the range of his attack planes, he gave this report only limited attention. He was more interested in contacts nearby and primarily in those made by his own planes.

Shortly after this he received two 0810 contact reports from his SECOND Air Division reconnaissance planes on two separate task groups to the eastward of Leyte Gulf as follows:

(a) Three carriers and five other ships, bearing 090°(T), distant 400 kilometers (216 miles) from Saravia (NW Negros), course 090°(T)\*\* (Contact E);

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\* Vice Admiral Matome Ugaki, IJN (COMBATDIV 1), Personal Diary SENSOROKU, Nippon Shuppan Kyodo Kabushiki Kaisha (Tokyo, March 15th, 1953), Volume II.

\*\* Documents from file of Lieutenant Colonel Katsuo Sato, IJA, Staff Officer, 4TH Air Army, Department of the Army, Historical Division, Microfilm HS-7.

October 22nd

(b) Five carriers and seven other ships, bearing 090°(T), distant 160 kilometers (eighty-six miles) from Tacloban, course 300°(T)\* (Contact D).

Although the reported composition of both of these contacts was in error, since both of the task groups sighted were actually escort-- rather than regular-carrier groups with six escort carriers per group, the locations given were reasonably accurate. Contact E appears to have been on TU 77.4.2 and Contact D on TU 77.4.3.

WHETHER OR NOT HE REALIZED THAT THE CARRIERS REPORTED WERE, IN FACT, ESCORT CARRIERS IS NOT KNOWN BUT THE EVIDENCE IS TO THE CONTRARY SINCE THE REPORT WAS REBROADCAST WITHOUT CHANGE. EVIDENTLY, THE ARMY PILOTS HAD NOT BEEN ADEQUATELY TRAINED IN IDENTIFICATION.

At about 0937 he received a report that at 0907 there were "no carriers sighted in Leyte Gulf, eighty transports"\*\*\* (Contact F). This report was from one of his reconnaissance planes.

While the report was correct in that there were no carriers in the gulf, it was incorrect as regards the eighty transports for at this time there were but twenty transports there.

However, if all of the support shipping other than LST's, were included, this figure would be forty-nine (seventeen APA's, three AP's, eight AKA's, four AK's, six XAK's, three LSD's, two LSV's and six AGC's), and, if the ninety-five LST's were included as well, this figure would be 144.

Therefore, the figure eighty, if it was meant to be fairly accurate, was far from correct but, if it was meant to be merely an indication of many, it was sufficiently accurate to indicate to C.G. FOURTH Air Army and to other commands (CinC Combined Fleet, Commander FIRST Striking Force, Commander Main Force, among others) that unloading operations of considerable consequence were still underway. This information was of great value to his Commander SECOND Air Division for he had ordered that commander to restrict his attacks to enemy ships other than warships and here were at least eighty suitable targets.\*\*\*

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\* Documents from file of Lieutenant Colonel Katsuo Sato, IJA, Staff Officer, 4TH Air Army, Department of the Army, Historical Division, Microfilm HS-7.

\*\* Daily Record of the War Situation, 4TH Air Army, GHQ, FEC, Special Historical Collection, Supporting Documents to General of the Army Douglas MacArthur's Historical Report on Allied Operations in the Southwest Pacific Area (Item 4, Footlocker 10 of 10, SWPA Series, Volume II).

\*\*\* C.G. 4TH Air Army Dispatch No. 6406, October 21st, 1944, Documents from the file of Lieutenant Colonel Katsuo Sato, IJA, Staff Officer, 4TH Air Army, Department of the Army, Historical Division Microfilm HS-7.



Soon thereafter, he received, through the navy, a report from a Manila search plane. This report was of a contact at 0920 on two carriers, two battleships, and several other ships, bearing 087°(T), distant 330 miles from Manila,\* (Contact G).

Throughout the afternoon, he received no further contact reports but did receive a dispatch through the navy amplifying the above contact.\*\*

Shortly thereafter, he was requested to comply with the Chief of Staff Combined Fleet's dispatch instructions to the Combined Fleet that, subsequent to 1200 October 24th, air and ground units in the Philippines attack only carriers and transports unless positively identified as an enemy task force.\*\*\* Although, as pointed out earlier, his chief of staff had advised the Chief of Staff SECOND Air Division on the preceding day that "attack targets will be restricted to enemy ships other than warships",\*\*\*\* it seems likely that he cautioned his command again as desired by CinC Combined Fleet.

During the day, since he was still at Manila, he likely learned from naval sources that (a) (1) the FIRST Striking Force had been separated into two units; i.e., the Main Body to pass through San Bernardino Strait and the THIRD Section to pass through Surigao Strait, and (2) these two units had already sortied, the former in the forenoon, the latter in the afternoon, and were following a definite plan, which plan undoubtedly was made available to him, and (b) the SECOND Striking Force was to enter Surigao Strait after the THIRD Section. He also learned, from his own planes as well as from navy sources, that the planes of the SIXTH Base Air Force which had been moving down all day were doing so without any Allied opposition whatsoever.

In the afternoon or evening--the time of promulgation is not indicated--he received SECOND Air Division Operation Order A-207.\*\*\*\*\* This order was called, "Plan of General Offensive in Leyte Annihilation

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- \* Vice Admiral Matome Ugaki, IJN (COMBATDIV 1), Personal Diary SENSOROKU, Nippon Shuppan Kyodo Kabushiki Kaisha (Tokyo, March 15th, 1953,) Volume II; also Appended Chart III, Enemy Fleet Dispositions on October 22nd, 1944, Detailed Action Report Main Force, SHO No. 1 Operation, October 20th - 29th, 1944, WDC Document 161005, NA 11744.
  - \*\* Clark Air Base Dispatch 221606 October 1944 to Major Commanders, War Diary DESRON 10, October 1944, WDC Document 161638, NA 11739.
  - \*\*\* CinC Combined Fleet Dispatch 221612 October 1944 to all Fleet and Squadron Commanders, War Diary 61ST Air Flotilla, October 1944, WDC Document 161643, NA 12260.
  - \*\*\*\* 4TH Air Army Operation Order No. A-518, 1000 October 21st, 1944, Documents from the file of Lieutenant Colonel Katsuo Sato, IJA, Staff Officer, 4TH Air Army, Department of the Army, Historical Division, Microfilm HS-7.
  - \*\*\*\*\* 2ND Air Division Operation Order A-207, October 22nd, 1944, Documents from the file of Lieutenant Colonel Katsuo Sato, IJA, Staff Officer 4TH Air Army, Department of the Army, Historical Division Microfilm HS-7.

Battle", and was the supporting plan of C.G. SECOND Air Division to FOURTH Air Army Operation Order A-518 issued the day before.\* Because of its importance, its provisions are summarized:

(1) The division with attached reinforcements was to commit its entire strength to annihilate enemy shipping in and around Leyte Gulf commencing tentatively in the early morning of October 24th. "THE OBJECTIVE WILL BE TO DESTROY 100 SHIPS BY THE END OF THE SECOND DAY. FOR THIS PURPOSE THE DIVISION WILL THOROUGHLY APPLY THE PRINCIPLE OF ONE PLANE FOR ONE SHIP."

(2) (a) Deployment was to be completed by the evening of October 23rd with forces concentrated in the Bacolod area except for light bombers at Lipa and heavy bombers at Clark, (b) reconnaissance was to commence on the morning of October 23rd and to use radar equipped bombers for night reconnaissance.

(3) Attack operations: (a) first day, were to commence in the early morning of October 24th with an attack in full strength followed by a second attack in two waves, each to consist of approximately half the strength available from the airplanes returning from the first attack exclusive of the heavy bomber force. The third attack was to be in full strength (all available) during the evening. This was to be followed by a night attack to be carried out in waves throughout the night by elements of heavy bombers, light bombers, and attack planes; (b) second day, were to continue with a full strength attack in the early morning of October 25th followed by continuous attacks in successive waves without interruption; (c) both days, were to include surprise attacks by small numbers of aircraft prior to the first attack on October 24th and thereafter between each attack.

(4) General instructions: (a) to employ the main fighter strength to maintain control of the air during attacks as a primary tactic, but to employ small composite units consisting of fighters and other types if called for by the situation; (b) to provide the greatest degree of air protection prior to take-off of attack forces, but to include defensive patrols at night as well. Also, depending on the weather or other circumstances, to execute surprise attacks employing a small number of specially designated units.

(5) Commander THIRTIETH Fighter Group was to be charged with the responsibility for air protection of bases and interception.

(6) An annex to the order indicated the strength anticipated for the initial attack on October 24th as (a) two radar equipped bombers, for night radar search, three land reconnaissance planes for

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\* 4TH Air Army Operation Order A-518, 1000 October 21st, 1944, Documents from file of Lieutenant Colonel Katsuo Sato, IJA, Staff Officer, 4TH Air Army, Department of the Army, Historical Division Microfilm HS-7.



reconnaissance immediately before the attack, and three to four fighters as a preliminary small scale dawn strike, and (b) an attack force of 100 fighters and sixty-four other types, which included nine heavy bombers.

WHILE THIS ORDER CONFORMED CLOSELY WITH C.G. FOURTH AIR ARMY'S BASIC ATTACK ORDER (A-518) ISSUED THE DAY BEFORE, AND WHILE THE MANNER OF MAKING ATTACKS SEEMS LOGICAL, THERE IS ONE STATEMENT THEREIN; I.E., THE STATEMENT THAT THE OBJECTIVE WILL BE "TO DESTROY 100 SHIPS BY THE END OF THE SECOND DAY. FOR THIS PURPOSE THE DIVISION WILL THOROUGHLY APPLY THE PRINCIPLE OF ONE PLANE FOR ONE SHIP", WHICH, BASED ON THE FACTORS OF SUITABILITY, FEASIBILITY AND ACCEPTABILITY, IS RECOGNIZABLY FAR FROM FEASIBLE. THIS IS SO FOR, IN THIS OPERATION TO DATE, THE JAPANESE NAVY HAD LAUNCHED HUNDREDS OF PLANES AGAINST ALLIED SHIPPING WITH ONLY LIMITED SUCCESS, AND, WHILE THE ARMY HAD ONLY LAUNCHED LIMITED ATTACKS, THE RESULTS HAD ALSO BEEN OF LIMITED SUCCESS.

Based on their experience of three years of war, the Japanese air commanders must have known well that they were unable to accomplish this objective and that, even if they gained surprise and even if they employed Kamikaze tactics (which at this time had not been adopted by the army as it had not been fully tested), their percentage of hits would be low. Why, then, did they issue this directive? While the answer can only be conjectured, it seems probable that it was psychological--the fact that it was included was to indicate to the subordinate commanders that the High Command considered that the pilots were capable of accomplishing it. This would improve morale.

As the day passed on C.G. FOURTH Air Army closely followed the (a) arrival of the various units of the SIXTH Base Air Force as well as their commander in the Philippines, and (b) the arrival of his scheduled reinforcements.

As regards item (a), he knew that, although these units were arriving without any interference from the Allies, (1) those which had arrived during full daylight had had little difficulty in finding the correct landing fields, but (2) those which had flown just before sundown (a large number of planes flew in at this time) had caused considerable confusion in the air traffic and some had landed at other than their scheduled fields, even on FOURTH Air Army fields! This was, in part, because both navy and army reinforcement aircraft had arrived in the Clark area at about the same time and, in some cases, on the same field. For example, at Bamban, a field assigned to the SIXTH Base Air Force, where army planes had arrived at the same time as the navy planes, three out of twenty-nine navy aircraft had been heavily damaged on landing\* and at Angeles Field a navy plane had collided with an army plane which was making a forced landing.\*\* He also knew that at 1700 Commander SIXTH Base

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\* War Diary 203RD Air Group, October 1944, WDC Document 161633, NA 12464.

\*\* War Diary 701ST Air Group, October 1st - 31st, 1944, WDC Document 160258, NA 12592.

Air Force had landed in the Philippines and had established his headquarters in Manila.

As regards item (b), he noted that his reinforcements were arriving as planned. By midnight about sixty-one planes had arrived consisting of (1) nineteen heavy bomber (twin-engine land attack) planes of the FOURTEENTH Air Regiment which landed at one of the Clark fields; (2) possibly seventeen fighter planes of the TWENTIETH Air Regiment which landed at Bambang; (3) twenty fighter planes of the FIRST Air Regiment and five fighter planes of the ELEVENTH Air Regiment which landed at Del Carmen (Luzon).\*

During the day he received reports which indicated that (a) the Philippines had been attacked by a total of 189 planes of which eighty-six were land-based planes,\* (b) eleven of his own aircraft had attacked shipping in Leyte Gulf with limited success and had lost one plane\*\* (This latter plane may have been the one in the vicinity of the northern tip of Dinagat Island claimed destroyed by CTG 77.4),\*\*\* and (c) La Carlota airstrip had been attacked by Allied aircraft,\*\*\*\* and one plane destroyed. Since there is no mention of this plane in the Japanese reports available to this analysis, it may have been a dummy plane.

Thus he knew that, because of the above attacks, he had lost one and possibly two planes, and therefore, since he had commenced the day with thirty-seven operational planes, had lost one plane (possibly two), and had received about sixty-one planes, he now had a total of about ninety-seven operational planes. (In arriving at this figure, it is assumed that all sixty-one planes which had newly arrived continued to be operational.)

It is of course, possible that additional planes arrived on this day since the number arriving was more than doubled on the following day but the information thereon is meager.

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\* Daily Record of the War Situation, 4TH Air Army, GHQ, FEC, Special Historical Collection, Supporting Documents to General of the Army Douglas MacArthur's Historical Report on Allied Operations in the Southwest Pacific Area (Item 4, Footlocker 10 of 10, SWPA Series, Volume II).

\*\* Attached Sheet #17 to Philippine Air Operations, Phase II, 1944 - 1945, 1ST Demobilization Bureau Monograph, Japanese Government, October 1946, Volume 46, Part I (Colonel Misao Matsumae, ex-IJA).

\*\*\* Aircraft Action Report No. 71, VF 35, October 22nd, 1944.

\*\*\*\* War Diary VPB 101, October 22nd, 1944.



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CHAPTER VII - ALLIED OPERATIONS, 0000 - 1042, October 23rd

(A) Operations of COMSOWESPAC.

COMSOWESPAC, in the NASHVILLE with the flagship group, continued on his night retirement in the eastern portion of Leyte Gulf.\*

Sometime after midnight he received contact reports (quoted in full under "Operations of CTF 17, October 22nd") on Japanese shipping heading on southerly courses toward the Manila - Coron Bay area as follows: (a) at 0005 on three destroyers,\*\* (b) at 0106 on four large ships and three additional ships at 0630 the preceding day,\*\*\* (c) at 0344 two heavy cruisers and three destroyers.\*\*\*\*

It seems very likely that at 0435 (when it was received by CTF 79) he received a dispatch from COMTHIRDFLT to CTF 38 directing that commander to proceed immediately with TG 38.3 toward a rendezvous for 0600 October 24th (Latitude 15°-00'N, Longitude 123°-30'E) and among other items, to search that afternoon to the westward to cover as much of the Sibuyan Sea as practicable.\*\*\*\*\* Since this was in accordance with (a) his dispatch to COMTHIRDFLT wherein he had stated that he considered it essential and paramount that COMTHIRDFLT cover his operations,\*\*\*\*\* (b) CINCPAC's dispatch instructions to COMTHIRDFLT to continue to cover the SOWESPAC operations,\*\*\*\*\* and (c) COMTHIRDFLT's dispatch of the previous day expressing hope of "swinging some blows in support",\*\*\*\*\* he likely felt gratified that COMTHIRDFLT was acting so rapidly to implement these dispatches.

Except for these contacts his retirement was uneventful until 0520 when he received from the submarine DARTER a report of three probable battleships in Palawan Passage heading on course 040°(T), speed eighteen knots.\*\*\*\*\*

At 0615 the NASHVILLE, screened by BUSH and ABNER READ, left the flagship group and headed for the anchorage off RED Beach where she anchored at 0742.\*

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- \* War Diary NASHVILLE, October 23rd, 1944.
  - \*\* DRUM Dispatch 221037 October 1944 to CTF 17, SAWFISH and ICEFISH.
  - \*\*\* SHARK Dispatch 221410 October 1944 to CTF 17, info COM3RDFLT.
  - \*\*\*\* ICEFISH Dispatch 221301 October 1944 to CTF 17.
  - \*\*\*\*\* COM3RDFLT Dispatch 221722 October 1944 to CTF 38, info all concerned with SOWESPAC operations, COMINCH, CINCPAC, all TFC's and TGC's 3RDFLT.
  - \*\*\*\*\* COMSOWESPAC Dispatch 212240 October 1944 to COM3RDFLT, info COMINCH, CINCPOA, Cofs U.S. Army, CTF's 77, 78, CTG 38.1.
  - \*\*\*\*\* CINCPAC Dispatch 211852 October 1944 to COM3RDFLT, info COMINCH, COMSOWESPAC.
  - \*\*\*\*\* COM3RDFLT Dispatch 200005 October 1944 to COMSOWESPAC, info CTF 77, CINCPOA and COMINCH.
  - \*\*\*\*\* DARTER Dispatch 221725 October 1944 to CTF 71.



At 0625 he received a second dispatch from the DARTER amplifying the enemy composition to at least nine ships with five on the near side of two heavies\* and at 0758 a third dispatch amplifying the previous report to eleven ships.\*\*

It seems likely that although he was highly interested in the above contact reports and noted that their presence supported his estimate that Allied shipping at this time was subject to raiding enemy elements both air and surface, he nevertheless left this matter to the competence of his naval and air commanders.

Meanwhile, since he was to install the Philippine Civil Government at noon, which was a matter of world-wide importance, it appears probable that he was busily engaged in insuring that the preparations being made were complete.

In this connection it seems wise to point out here that the President of the Philippines\*\*\* was in the BLUE RIDGE and it was COMSOWESPAC's plan, at noon in the Philippine Commonwealth Building at Tacloban, to install the Philippine Commonwealth Government at which time Tacloban (the capitol of Leyte) was to be named the provisional capitol pending the recapture of Manila.\*\*\*\* As a matter of interest, the plan was for the Philippine government to take over the civil administration of the (a) municipal governments, (b) then, of the provincial governments, and (c) finally, of the national administration.\*\*\*\*\*

At 0923, referring to COMNAVGRPCHINA's dispatch 190441 to CINCPAC (re-addressed to COMTHIRDFLT), he advised COMNAVGRPCHINA that he desired that the FOURTEENTH Air Force searches in the South China Sea be continued until long range air searches from Leyte could be established about November 30th. In this connection it will be recalled that (a) in COMNAVGRPCHINA's dispatch above referred to COMNAVGRPCHINA had requested information for C.G. FOURTEENTH Air Force as to how long the FOURTEENTH Air Force would be required to provide search planes over the northern half of the South China Sea,\*\*\*\*\* and (b) COMTHIRDFLT had answered, in part, that he could not at this time estimate the duration of this requirement.\*\*\*\*\*

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- \* DARTER Dispatch 221850 October 1944 to CTF 71.
  - \*\* DARTER Dispatch 222025 October 1944 to CTF 71.
  - \*\*\* President Sergio Osmena.
  - \*\*\*\* CTF 77 Dispatch 220814 October 1944 to CTF 79; also George C. Kenney, "General Kenney Reports" (New York, 1949), Page 453.
  - \*\*\*\*\* Statement of Brigadier General Carlos P. Romulo, Resident Commissioner for the Philippine Commonwealth Government to the United States, October 21st, 1944, at COMSOWESPAC Advance Headquarters in Leyte (The New York Times, October 22nd, 1944, Section 1, Page 5).
  - \*\*\*\*\* COMNAVGRPCHINA Dispatch 190441 October 1944 to CINCPAC (Readdressed by CINCPAC to COM3RDFLT, info CTF 38, COMSOWESPAC as CINCPAC 190856).
  - \*\*\*\*\* COM3RDFLT Dispatch 191307 October 1944 to CINCPAC, info CTF 38, COMSOWESPAC.



October 23rd

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Why COMSOWESPAC decided to reopen this question is not clear, but it seems probable that about this time he realized the continuing importance of the South China Sea searches and decided to establish such searches from Leyte when possible. Therefore, he wisely decided to alert C.G. FOURTEENTH Air Force to this fact and to inform that command that he (COMSOWESPAC) would require these searches for some time; i.e., until November 30th.

(1) Operations of COMSEVENTHFLT, 0000 - 1042 October 23rd.

During the day COMSEVENTHFLT took no unusual action either as COMSEVENTHFLT or in his capacity as CANF SOWESPAC in so far as the Leyte operation was concerned. However, his headquarters at Hollandia continued to exercise (a) control of all SEVENTHFLT operations, other than those directly connected with KING II, and (b) routine administration of the SEVENTHFLT.

It is assumed that these headquarters received most, if not all, of the dispatches relating to the operation and acted as necessary on those items which fell to that headquarters. About the only dispatch of consequence sent during the forenoon was one to CTF 71 advising that (a) a life-guard submarine was not now needed at Balikpapan, and (b) stating that COMSEVENTHFLT had requested CAAF SOWESPAC to give four days advance notice to COMSEVENTHFLT and CTF 71 if he planned to strike Balikpapan and required a lifeguard submarine.\*

COMSEVENTHFLT, of course, received all of the dispatches which he received as CTF 77; and therefore, he was familiar with the developing situation and of the actions being taken by all commands. He appears to have taken no direct action thereon but, instead, to have employed them as factors in his running estimate.

(a) Operations of CTF 77 (Central Philippines Attack Force),  
0000 - 1042 October 23rd.

At the beginning of the day CTF 77, embarked in the WASATCH, continued his usual night retirement in the eastern portion of Leyte Gulf with his flagship group (TG 77.1) consisting, as heretofore, of the WASATCH, NASHVILLE, (COMSOWESPAC embarked), BUSH, ABNER READ, AMMEN, and MULLANY.

In view of certain contacts which he had received on the previous day, notably (a) DARTER's report on three ships in Dangerous Ground, one of which dimly seen might be a battleship,\*\* and (b) SEADRAGON's report on one large carrier (CV) and four unidentified ships to the westward of Luzon Strait,\*\*\* he was somewhat concerned over the significance, if any, of these contacts for it will be recalled that he had anticipated enemy air and

\* COM7THFLT Dispatch 230011 October 1944 to CTF 71, info CAAF SOWESPAC, C.G.'s 5TH and 13TH Air Forces.

\*\* DARTER Dispatch 212359 October 1944 to CTF 71.

\*\*\* SEADRAGON Dispatch 212140 October 1944 to CTF 17.



surface raids against his Leyte forces and as yet, except for minor air strikes (largely of single planes), Japanese reaction had been extremely light. However, since he still had some transports and many LST's to unload from his forces presently in the area and would have TG 78.7, with its thirty-three LST's and twenty-four Liberty ships additional to unload, which group would enter Leyte Gulf that evening,\* it seems probable that he watched the contact reports very closely.

His interest in the movements of enemy surface forces to the westward of the Philippines undoubtedly increased somewhat when he received (a) at 0005 a dispatch from the DRUM reporting that at 1745 the previous day she had contacted in Latitude 19°-33'N, Longitude 118°-52'E three ASASHIO-class destroyers on course 180°(T), speed twenty-five knots,\*\* (Plate XXXIX) (Contact 3) and (b) at 0106 a contact report from the SHARK to the effect that she was amplifying an earlier contact report for which she had received no acknowledgement and reporting that (1) at 0630 the previous day, she had contacted four large ships and three additional ships on course 190°(T), speed twenty-two knots (Contact 1) and (2) the SEADRAGON had claimed two timed hits in the carrier\*\*\* and (c) at 0344 a report from the ICEFISH to the effect that at 0930 the previous day in Latitude 19°-44'N, Longitude 118°-11'E she had sighted two heavy cruisers (CA) and three destroyers (DD) on course 160°(T), speed sixteen knots (Contact 2) and had been unable to close.\*\*\*\* What he thought of these contacts is not known, but it seems probable that he recognized contacts (b) and (c) above as one and the same and most likely as the Japanese SECOND Striking Force.

At 0435 he received, as an information addressee, a dispatch from COMTHIRDFLT to CTF 38 quoted in full under "Operations of COMTHIRDFLT 0000 - 1042 October 23rd", which in part directed CTF 38 with TG 38.3 to (a) proceed immediately to arrive in position about ninety miles due east of Polillo Island by 0600 the following morning (b) extend this afternoon's search to westward to cover as much of the Sibuyan Sea as practicable (c) leave WASHINGTON, ALABAMA and DESDIV ONE HUNDRED at Point CONDOR to rendezvous with CTG 38.4 as previously directed and (d) advised that CTG 38.2 would join upon completion of fueling.\*\*\*\*\*

Since (a) it was clear that these new searches, from the viewpoint of the forces in Leyte Gulf, were a marked improvement over the searches previously ordered from Area CONDOR in that the latter would only cover the waters between Area CONDOR through an arc well short of the east coast of Luzon, whereas the new searches scheduled for the next morning

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\* Action Report CTG 78.7, Central Philippines Operation, Serial 0176, November 10th, 1944.  
 \*\* DRUM Dispatch 221037 October 1944 to CTF 17 info SAWFISH, ICEFISH.  
 \*\*\* SHARK Dispatch 221410 October 1944 to CTF 17.  
 \*\*\*\* ICEFISH Dispatch 221301 October 1944 to CTF 17 info COM7THFLT.  
 \*\*\*\*\* COM3RDFLT Dispatch 221752 October 1944 to CTF 38 info COMINCH, CINCPAC, All TFC's and TGC's 3RDFLT, All concerned SOWESPAC Operations.



CONTACTS RECEIVED  
BY  
PRINCIPAL ALLIED COMMANDERS  
0000 - 1042 OCTOBER 23rd 1944  
BATTLE FOR LEYTE GULF  
OCTOBER 1944  
ALL TIMES ITEM



TIME OF CONTACT	LOCATION	TIMES OF RECEIPT		
		C5WPAC	CTF 77	C 3rd FLT
1 0630-22nd	N W. OF LUZON	0106	0106	0053
2 0930-22nd	N W. OF LUZON	0344	0344	0834
3 1745-22nd	N W. OF LUZON	0005	0005	0553
4 0200-23rd	S. PALAWAN PASS	0520	0520	0916
5 0300-23rd	S. PALAWAN PASS	0625	0625	0620
6 0525-23rd	PALAWAN PASS	0758	0758	0745

⊙ COMTHIRDFLT





would embrace the waters about 100 miles to the westward of Luzon and Mindoro including Coron Bay and therefore should discover any Japanese units of consequence moving in that direction and (b) it showed that COMTHIRDFLT (1) was alert to the possibilities inherent in the situation developing in the waters to the west of the Philippines, and (2) in accordance with CINCPAC's instructions to provide cover and support, was making the searches necessary to the accomplishment of this task, CTF 77 viewed the new search plans with satisfaction.\*

At 0520 he received a contact report from CTF 71 forwarding the DARTER's No. 6 reporting that at 0200 in Latitude 08°-28'N, Longitude 116°-30'E she had sighted three probable battleships on course 040°(T), speed eighteen knots with radar pips at 34,000 yards.\*\*

Whether or not he considered that these three probable battleships were the three ships which had been last contacted by the DARTER in Dangerous Ground on the previous day is not known, but it seems clear that these two reports gave every indication that battleships were now operating in the vicinity of Palawan Passage. Since he knew from his intelligence that six Japanese battleships had been in the Singapore - Brunei area with the FIRST Striking Force, it can be estimated that he now had reason to believe that either this force, or certain major units of it, had now moved into the Palawan Passage area. If this was his opinion it was correct for these three battleships were part of the Main Body, FIRST Striking Force.

At 0615 the NASHVILLE, BUSH and ABNER READ (TU 77.1.2) left the Flagship Group to proceed to the vicinity of RED Beach.\*\*\* The WASATCH then, with CTF 77 on board (escorted by the AMMEN and MULLANY), proceeded toward the Northern Transport Area.\*\*\*\*

At 0625 he received a report from the DARTER (Serial Seven—her second report) that at 0300 the enemy was in Latitude 08°-37'N, Longitude 116°-37'E and consisted of nine ships, five medium on near side of two heavies, with many radars, course 039°(T), speed fifteen knots\*\*\*\*\* (Contact 5).

FOR SOME REASON NOT EXPLAINED HE CONSIDERED THIS FORCE TO BE ENTIRELY SEPARATE FROM THE THREE BATTLESHIPS PREVIOUSLY REPORTED. THIS IS STRANGE FOR THE WOLF PACK COMMANDER IN THE DARTER, IN ORDER TO AVOID CONFUSION, HAD LISTED THE CONTACT REPORTS AS "SECOND" AND "THIRD" REPORTS, HOPING THEREBY TO CONVEY THE FACT THAT THEY WERE ON THE SAME FORCE. HOWEVER, IT IS CLEAR THAT THIS METHOD WAS NOT SUCCESSFUL FOR, AS WILL BE SHOWN LATER,

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\* Statement of Admiral Thomas C. Kinkaid, USN(Ret), (Formerly CTF 77) to Commodore R.W. Bates, USN(Ret), Head, World War II Battle Evaluation Group, Naval War College, May 16th, 1957.

\*\* CTF 71 Dispatch 221923 October 1944 to CINCPAC, C.G.'s 5TH and 6TH Air Forces, COM3RDFLT and All TFC's 3RDFLT, CTF 17.

\*\*\* War Diary NASHVILLE, October 23rd, 1944.

\*\*\*\* War Diary WASATCH, October 23rd, 1944.

\*\*\*\*\* DARTER Dispatch 221850 October 1944 to Radio Perth.

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CTF 77 BELIEVED THAT IN THE PALAWAN PASSAGE AREA HE NOW HAD CONTACTS ON TWO FORCES OF THE COMPOSITION INDICATED ABOVE.

FROM THESE TWO FORCES, AND FROM THE FORCE OR FORCES REPORTED PREVIOUSLY BY SUBMARINES AS COMING DOWN FROM THE NORTH, HE COULD READILY SEE THAT ENEMY COUNTERACTION OF SOME TYPE WAS UNDERWAY.

At 0707 he found it necessary, owing to the extreme distance involved, to deny C.G. FIFTH Air Force's request for carrier fighter escort for a rescue PBY.\* This is discussed fully under "Operations of C.G. FIFTH Air Force, 0000 - 1042 October 23rd".

At 0732 he directed CTF 79, in part, to be prepared to take casualties aboard COMFORT between 1300 and 1500.\*\*

At 0745 he received a dispatch from the DARTER (DARTER's Serial Six) on three battleships at 0200 which she was chasing.\*\*\* He had already received the information contained therein at 0520 in CTF 71's 221923.

At 0755 (when it was received by COMTHIRDFLT) he received intelligence from CINCPAC to the effect that Commander SECOND Striking Force had requested that an oiler be dispatched to Coron Bay to arrive at about 0230 and to stand by to refuel his command.

At 0758 he received (a) the DARTER's third report (Serial Eight) estimating, in part, a minimum of eleven ships on the same course and speed,\*\*\*\* (Contact 6) and (b) but three minutes later, CTF 71's report of the same contact giving additional information as follows: enemy position 0300 Latitude 08°-37'N, Longitude 116°-37'E, course 039°(T), speed fifteen knots, many radars.\*\*\*\*\*

He now commenced estimating the situation with renewed vigor. How he accomplished this reestimate is not known since his thoughts at the time are not available to this analysis. However, it seems likely, from the dispatch which he sent several hours later, that his thought processes were about as follows:

(a) He knew that there were a relatively large number of Japanese combatant ships heading toward the Coron Bay - Manila area (Plates XXXIII and XXXIX), among the most important being:

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- \* CTF 77 Dispatch 222207 October 1944 to C.G. 5TH Air Force, CTG 73.7, SAN CARLOS.
  - \*\* CTF 77 Dispatch 222332 October 1944 to CTF 79.
  - \*\*\* DARTER Dispatch 221725 October 1944 to CTF 71.
  - \*\*\*\* DARTER Dispatch 222025 October 1944 to CTF 71.
  - \*\*\*\*\* CTF 71 Dispatch 222218 October 1944 to all Commanders and TFC's 3RD and 7TH Fleets, info CINCPAC, CTF 17, C.G.'s 5TH and 13TH Air Forces.



(1) From the north, the Japanese SECOND Striking Force as well as possibly another group which reportedly had had a carrier torpedoed and\*

(2) from the south, two groups, one consisting of three probable battleships, the other of eleven ships with many radars.

(b) He knew from the report of the COD on the previous day that the anticipated aircraft reinforcements were moving into Luzon. Although this is the only report on this matter available to this analysis, it seems probable that he had (1) other reports of aircraft movements, or (2) intelligence thereon, or estimated from the general nature of the situation that this would be so.

(c) Since he had (1) information to the effect that the Main Force and/or its Supply Force had sortied from the Inland Sea but had not been reported by Allied submarines or aircraft, and (2) contact reports over several days on several carriers in the South China Sea, it seems likely that he estimated that these carriers were likely from CRUDIV's THREE and FOUR and were planning to support the operations of the surface forces from that sea. (It will be recalled that COMTHIRDFLT on October 20th had stated that the South China Sea might become a vital area.)

(d) He had intelligence which showed that oilers might be in the Coron Bay area (which intelligence had been affirmed that morning) and for that reason had earlier requested air strikes against Coron Bay and its environs.

(e) Since these forces were much stronger than had been reported heretofore, the question now arose as to how the Japanese planned to employ them. He decided that they were planning to make Tokyo Express runs against Leyte in much greater strength than had heretofore been contemplated. (It will be recalled that previous Tokyo Express run estimates limited them largely to cruisers and destroyers.) There are no indications of where he thought the troops were to be landed, but it seems likely that he estimated that (1) the greatest number would be headed for the Ormoc area of western Leyte since in his original intelligence estimates he stated, "It is possible that the Japanese may attempt to utilize Ormoc as a port for reinforcements and/or evacuation",\*\* and (2) others might be headed for eastern Leyte

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\* During the past few days he had received intelligence which could have led him to believe that there may have been at sea in the Formosa - Philippines area a larger force of which the 2ND Striking Force was a part, and which, in addition to the units of the 2ND Striking Force (CRUDIV TWENTY-ONE and DESRON ONE), included two battleships (FUSO and YAMASHIRO), DESRON ELEVEN, and probably CARDIV's THREE and FOUR.

(Actually this intelligence was erroneous for the only force at sea in this area was the 2ND Striking Force (CRUDIV 21 and DESRON 1)).

\*\* CANF SOWESPAC Operation Plan No. 13-44, Serial 00022A, September 26th, 1944, Annex M.

through Surigao Strait. (This matter is discussed more fully later in this analysis).

(f) It became important to disrupt these operations and, if possible, to destroy the Japanese ships. Since he clearly did not have the forces available to accomplish this—TG 77.4 was heavily engaged in other operations—he decided that he should ask for assistance. But from whom? Since the Japanese forces could best be attacked by aircraft, he decided to request this assistance from COMTHIRDFLT, who he knew was already alert to the developing situation, and from C.G.'s FIFTH and THIRTEENTH Air Forces.

He therefore commenced preparing a dispatch to this effect which dispatch he hoped to have ready when CTF 79 arrived. (CTF 79 was reporting on board shortly for further transportation via MTB to Tacloban where at noon the President of the Philippines would be installed.)

At 0800 he observed the Replenishment Group (TU 77.7.1) enter the area and anchor in the designated anchorage off Liberanan Head. He likely was pleased at their safe arrival and at the correctness of his decision to bring them into the gulf rather than to allow them to operate outside the gulf as originally planned. Now he would have his combatant forces close at hand at all times whereas, under the former plan, his combatant forces would have had to depart the gulf for resupply.

Sometime after 0800 he received a dispatch from CTF 79 listing the units of TF 79 and TU 77.2.2 present in the area.\*

At 0920 he requested CTF's 78 and 79 to provide an operation summary as of 1000 daily until further notice.\*\*

At 0930 he received, as an information addressee, CTG 77.2's visual dispatch to COMDESRON FIFTY-SIX concerning ammunition replenishment for his destroyers from the MAZAMA and DURHAM VICTORY.\*\*\*

At 0940 the WASATCH anchored in the Northern Transport Area.\*\*\*\*

At 1015 (approximately) he received CTG 77.2's visual dispatch to the LOUISVILLE and MINNEAPOLIS concerning ammunition replenishment from the MAZAMA and DURHAM VICTORY.\*\*\*\*\*

He was pleased to see that replenishment activities for his forces in the gulf were progressing satisfactorily. His forces had been

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\* CTF 79 Dispatch 222300 October 1944 to CTF 77 (Delivered by Hand).  
 \*\* CTF 77 Dispatch 230020 October 1944 to CTF's 78, 79.  
 \*\*\* CTG 77.2 Visual Dispatch 222145 October 1944 to COMDESRON 56, info CTF's 77, 79, MAZAMA and DURHAM VICTORY.  
 \*\*\*\* War Diary WASATCH October 23rd, 1944.  
 \*\*\*\*\* CTG 77.2 Visual Dispatch 222135 October 1944 to LOUISVILLE, MINNEAPOLIS, info DURHAM VICTORY, CTF's 77, 79.



steadily expending fuel and ammunition in support of the landings, and there had been a twenty-four hour delay in the arrival of the Replenishment Group due to changing the replenishment area to within the gulf. With raids by enemy units becoming more of a possibility because of the increase in enemy surface contacts, it was important that his ships fill up with fuel and ammunition.

At about this time—the exact time is not available—CTF 79 reported on board. CTF 77 then discussed with that commander the situation developing in the Coron Bay area, the significance of the DARTER contacts in particular and his (CTF 77's) proposed plan relative thereto.\*

As a result of his estimate of the situation and of this discussion with CTF 79, he decided that it would be wise to advise all commanders of his views and to request those additional supporting measures which he considered necessary to provide adequate security for the current and future operations at Leyte.

He therefore at 1042 issued the above by dispatch. Owing to its importance the dispatch is quoted in full as follows:

"I regard the approach of enemy combatant ships and tankers toward Coron Bay as the first phase of the build up of magnified Tokyo Express runs against Leyte. Believe highly probable that a tanker group arrived Coron Bay area between 0200/I 23 and 0300/I 23 for purpose of refueling major task force of enemy fleet which has been assembling for several days in southern Formosa. Submarine reports indicate three probable battleships approaching from the southern position to arrive Coron Bay tonight Monday. Another group of 11 enemy ships with many radars could arrive about the same time. There are indications of a concentration of large number of enemy aircraft in the Luzon area. It is also very important that early preparations for enemy operations be disrupted. Commander FIFTH Air Force and THIRTEENTH Air Force requested continue thorough reconnaissance Coron Bay and approaching routes and to strike as practicable day and night. COMTHIRDFLT requested strike Coron Bay earliest practicable and extend search as far as practicable to westward and northwestward. Primary objective enemy combat ships and aircraft. It is possible that enemy carriers will support surface forces and strike from west of Palawan. TG 77.4 is striking in western Visayas twice daily."\*\*

At this point it seems well to look into the background of this dispatch. It will be remembered that the original Intelligence estimates for the operation, which had been widely circulated, envisioned that the Japanese

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\* Statement of Admiral Thomas C. Kinkaid, USN(Ret) (formerly CTF 77), to Commodore R.W. Bates, USN(Ret), Head, World War II Battle Evaluation Group, Naval War College, May 16th, 1957.

\*\* CTF 77 Dispatch 230142 October 1944 to COM3RDFLT, C.G.'s 5TH and 13TH Air Forces, info all TFC's and TGC's 3RD and 7TH Fleets, CINCPAC, COMINCH, COMSOWESPAC, CAAF SOWESPAC.



reaction would most probably fall within the category of limited raids and "Tokyo Express" operations. Major fleet action, although to be sought, was not anticipated as a primary or immediate result of the initial invasion. In fact, it was believed that major elements of the Japanese fleet would not be involved and also that participation by Japanese battleships was not probable. These considerations certainly formed a background or a foundation for the thinking of all the Commanders during the course of the Leyte operation to date, and these considerations would be bound to influence the estimates and the reactions of each of them.

Current intelligence in the form of contact reports and scattered radio intelligence continued to be received by all those Commanders as it became available.

In addition to being a Task Force Commander, CTF 77 also occupied the position of the Commander Allied Naval Forces under COMSOWESPAC. Developments in the situation which would warrant a departure from his operation plan or an extension of, or activation of certain features of his operation plan would only be major changes in the situation. These would normally be expected to be announced as such; and these would be considered as being directly based upon his running estimate of the situation. The foregoing dispatch falls within that category. It was designed to be the result of an estimate of a new situation which was developing and which would shortly face Allied forces. It could be said to represent the estimate of the Commander of the commencement of a new phase in the campaign. Consequently, as representing the considered opinion of the Commander facing a new situation whose developments posed a new and potentially grave threat to the execution of plans for the operation, this dispatch was of great importance to all Allied forces involved.

Because of the importance of this dispatch, CTF 77 and his Operations Officer\* of the time have been questioned concerning the matter. It is of interest that both of them--acting independently--had the same view; i.e., that this dispatch was meant to convey something more than simple Tokyo Express runs. In fact, (a) CTF 77 stated that he felt that his employment of the term "Magnified Tokyo Express" was unfortunate in that based on today's memory he was sure that at the time he had visualized operations of greater scope than Tokyo Express,\*\* and (b) the Operations Officer stated, in part, "By a 'Magnified Tokyo Express' I am confident that Admiral Kinkaid intended to imply much greater enemy capabilities than a mere troop replenishment run"; again "While the written record may justify the interpretation given in the portion of the record which I received, of the phrase 'Magnified Tokyo Express runs against Leyte', I consider this interpretation too restrictive. I am convinced that in the conversations held on the morning of the 23rd Admiral Kinkaid (CTF 77) was keenly aware of the enemy's various capabilities and

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\* Vice Admiral R.H. Cruzen, USN(Ret) (then Captain).

\*\* Statement of Admiral Thomas C. Kinkaid, USN(Ret) (formerly CTF 77), to Commodore R.W. Bates, USN(Ret), Head, World War II Battle Evaluation Group, Naval War College, May 16th, 1957.



that he intended 'Tokyo Express runs' to include the possibility of a raid in force against our forces in Leyte Gulf, especially the transports and landing craft."; and further, "I refer to your interpretation of the phrase 'Magnified Tokyo Express runs against Leyte' which I believe has been misinterpreted by you and quite possibly others."\*

SINCE THE GIST OF BOTH OF THESE STATEMENTS IS THAT CTF 77 BY THE TERM "MAGNIFIED TOKYO EXPRESS RUNS" MEANT TO IMPLY SOMETHING MORE THAN TOKYO EXPRESS OPERATIONS PER SE, IT SEEMS WELL AT THIS POINT TO DRAW ATTENTION TO THE FACT THAT EVEN IF THIS WERE SO IT WOULD NOT NECESSARILY IMPLY THE SAME THOUGHT TO THOSE WHO RECEIVED IT. SINCE THE NAVAL WAR COLLEGE ANALYSTS CONSIDERED THIS DISPATCH TO MEAN EXACTLY WHAT IT SAID, IS IT NOT LIKELY THAT THE ACTUAL RECIPIENTS MAY WELL HAVE BEEN OF THE SAME BELIEF? THIS EMPHASIZES THE NECESSITY FOR CLARITY IN PREPARING DIRECTIVES. WHAT IS CLARITY? "CLARITY DEMANDS THE USE OF PRECISE EXPRESSIONS SUSCEPTIBLE OF ONLY THE DESIRED INTERPRETATION. NORMALLY, THE AFFIRMATIVE FORM IS PREFERABLE TO THE NEGATIVE. THE IMPORTANCE OF CLARITY HAS BEEN SUMMED UP IN THE SAYING, 'AN ORDER WHICH CAN BE MISUNDERSTOOD WILL BE MISUNDERSTOOD.' IF MISUNDERSTANDINGS ARISE ON THE PART OF TRAINED SUBORDINATES, THE CHIEF FAULT OFTEN LIES WITH THE PERSON WHO ISSUED THE DIRECTIVE."\*\*

What then did CTF 77 mean by his 230142? To discern this fully, there are two parts of the dispatch which require study; i.e., the first sentence, "I regard the approach of enemy combatant ships and tankers toward Coron Bay as the first phase of the build up of magnified Tokyo Express runs against Leyte" and the next to last sentence, "It is possible that enemy carriers will support surface forces and strike from west of Palawan".

(a) As regards the first sentence, it seems wise to redefine here Tokyo Express. This was an operation developed by the Japanese at Guadalcanal, wherein they endeavored to reinforce that base with ground troops and material, employing combatant ships only. Originally, it was a high speed operation, but later it embraced low speed operations as well. It was dubbed Tokyo Express because whenever employed, it operated on a regular schedule.\*\*\*

According to Japanese practice in the past, these Tokyo Express runs usually started from the improvised base whose location was such that (a) it had heavy air and other cover; and (b) that its distance from the point of landing of troops and reinforcements would be a

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\* Letter from Vice Admiral R.H. Cruzen, USN(Ret) (then Captain), to Commodore R.W. Bates, USN(Ret), Head, World War II Battle Evaluation Group, Naval War College, May 27th, 1957.

\*\* Sound Military Decision, Naval War College, 1942, Page 186.

\*\*\* Statement of Fleet Admiral William F. Halsey, USN(Ret), who at the time of the capture of Guadalcanal in 1943 was COMSOPAC to Commodore R.W. Bates, USN(Ret), Head, World War II Battle Evaluation Group, Naval War College.



relatively short shuttle run which would have air cover during the day run, darkness to unload, and air cover for the run back to the security of the base.

Intelligence—widely disseminated—had indicated the movement of tankers and possibly other support units to Coron Bay itself and had further indicated that it and "harbors in its vicinity appear to be highly likely concentration or fueling areas for important elements of the Jap fleet that may attempt to strike against our Leyte forces."\*

(Coron Bay was an area suitably located geographically for the projection or support of operations such as strikes against the Leyte forces or Tokyo Express operations.)

Accordingly, it can be safely said that CTF 77 was visualizing at this time that a Tokyo Express operation from the Coron Bay area was about to commence for the reinforcement of the ground troops. This view is sustained by three parts of the first sentence: (1) "... approach of enemy combatant ships and tankers toward Coron Bay ...."; (2) "... the first phase of the build-up ...."; and (3) "... magnified Tokyo Express runs ...."

Does it not seem clear that the employment of the term (a) "first phase of the build-up" was meant to imply that enemy forces were gathering for some operation and that this operation was not to be immediate; (b) "Coron Bay", was meant to indicate the location which CTF 77 estimated would be the gathering point and fueling area for those forces, and (c) "magnified Tokyo Express runs", was meant to imply that this operation when commenced would be a series of Tokyo Express runs in much greater strength than those composed of cruisers and destroyers which had been heretofore anticipated.

In connection with this concept, it is not intended to imply here that the operations contemplated were "a mere troop replenishment run". Instead, although the objective was the "reinforcement of the ground troops at Leyte", this analysis recognizes that the employment of a strong force to accomplish this replenishment would bring Allied reaction in strength and therefore important battles might result at each attempted reinforcement. It is believed that this is the concept to which CTF 77 referred when he stated that he believed that he had visualized operations of greater scope than Tokyo Express.

This view is also supported, among numerous other examples, by (1) CTG 77.2's instructions to COMBATDIV TWO in the CALIFORNIA at 1702 October 21st (quoted in full under "Operations of CTG 77.2, October 21st") wherein he directed that commander, in part, to be prepared on signal in case of a Tokyo Express run by fast surface forces to form one-eight on an easterly course across Surigao Strait and to patrol at five knots to

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\* COM7THFLT Dispatch 210526 October 1944 to C.G. 5TH Air Force and CAAF SOWESPAC, info COMSOWESPAC, COM3RDFLT.



Longitude 125°-15'E at which point he was to reverse course by turn signal,\* (2) CTF 77's own action report on the Battle for Leyte Gulf wherein in discussing the enemy force which entered Surigao Strait the early morning of October 25th he stated, "This force was divided into an attack group and a second group of probably troop carrying ships".\*\* (Tokyo Express?)

(b) As regards the next to last sentence—"it is possible that enemy carriers will support surface forces and strike from west of Palawan"—does not this further support CTF 77's concept previously stated that action by major forces but on a much lesser scale than fleet action might be expected?

This seems so for the distance from the South China Sea to Leyte Gulf is approximately 350 miles, thereby making it (a) feasible to employ the carrier aircraft to cover the daylight approach of the enemy forces and troop carriers (assuming that the landing of troops is a night operation) while at the same time not unnecessarily exposing own carriers to Allied air action, (b) of doubtful feasibility to employ large numbers of carrier aircraft in support of a major fleet action in the Leyte area since (1) 350 miles is about the maximum radius of Japanese fighters, and (2) staging such aircraft through the Visayan fields would be, to say the least, difficult as these fields were now under daily attack by CTG 77.4 and intermittently by C.G. FIFTH Air Force.

If fleet action were expected, is it likely that the enemy carriers would be confined to operating in the South China Sea?

BASED ON THE ABOVE ANALYSIS, IT SEEMS CORRECT TO SAY THAT CTF 77 WAS CLEARLY DISREGARDING THE POSSIBILITY OF (A) MAJOR FLEET ACTION AND (B) RAIDS BY SURFACE FORCES REFERRED TO BY COMSOWESPAC IN HIS 212240 AND BY HIMSELF AS COMSEVENTHFLT IN HIS 210526 MENTIONED LATER IN THIS DISCUSSION, BUT WAS INSTEAD, OPERATING ON THE CONCEPT THAT THE JAPANESE NOW CONTEMPLATED THE MOVEMENT OF GROUND TROOPS TO LEYTE BY TOKYO EXPRESS OPERATIONS THROUGH THE VISAYAS EMPLOYING MAJOR FORCES AND POSSIBLY SUPPORTED BY CARRIERS OPERATING SOLELY FROM THE SOUTH CHINA SEA.

This new concept seems to have been the first actual deviation from the original concept expressed in CTF 77's basic plan; i.e., that major elements of the Japanese fleet would not be involved in the present operations.\*\*\*

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\* Action Report CALIFORNIA, Participation in Operations off Island of Leyte, October 19th - 24th, 1944, Serial 0025, November 18th, 1944.

\*\* Action Report Commander Central Philippines Attack Force (CTF 77, COM-7THFLT), Operations for the Capture of Leyte Island, including Action Report of Engagement in Surigao Strait and off Samar Island on October 25th, 1944 (KING II Operation), Serial 00302-C, January 31st, 1945.

\*\*\* CANF SOWESPAC Operation Plan No. 13-44, Serial 00022A, September 26th, 1944, Annex M.



CTF 77's evaluation here depicted was very similar to the action of the Allied commanders at the time of the Battle of Savo Island (August 1942) when they estimated that the Japanese forces noted off Bougainville were heading for Rekata Bay and therefore overlooked the enemy capability of attacking the Savo Island area that night. Therefore, it seems well to repeat what was said thereon in the Naval War College analysis of that battle:

"A COMMANDER, IN MAKING HIS PLANS, SHOULD FOLLOW THE METHOD OF ENEMY CAPABILITIES RATHER THAN THE METHOD OF ENEMY INTENTIONS. THE METHOD OF ENEMY INTENTIONS, WHICH HAS BEEN DISCARDED BY THE UNITED STATES ARMED FORCES, AS THE ENEMY'S INTENTIONS ARE SUBJECT TO CHANGE, BUT WHICH IS STILL USED BY CERTAIN IMPORTANT NAVIES, CONSISTED OF AN ESTIMATE BY THE COMMANDER, BASED ON THAT COURSE OF ACTION WHICH HE THOUGHT OR EVEN KNEW THE ENEMY INTENDED TO FOLLOW. THE METHOD OF CAPABILITIES CONSISTS OF AN ESTIMATE BY THE COMMANDER BASED ON THOSE COURSES OF ACTION WHICH THE ENEMY IS CAPABLE OF DOING AND WHICH IF ADOPTED WILL MATERIALLY AFFECT THE ACCOMPLISHMENT OF THE COMMANDER'S OBJECTIVES. HE SHOULD, WHERE POSSIBLE, LIST THE ENEMY COURSES OF ACTION IN ORDER OF PRIORITY--THAT IS, HE SHOULD LIST THE MORE LIKELY BEFORE THE LESS LIKELY. IN CASE OF DOUBT, HE SHOULD GIVE THE HIGHER PRIORITY TO THOSE ENEMY COURSES WHICH HE CONSIDERS MORE DANGEROUS TO HIMSELF."\*

Students of naval history may wonder why CTF 77 was willing to accept as the enemy objective the reinforcement of Leyte by magnified Tokyo Express operations, (of which the enemy forces presently located were only the first phase of the build-up) and by omission to disregard other enemy capabilities. The answer, while not entirely discernible, seems to have been based, in part, on the fact that:

(a) As of this date the Japanese had frequently employed their surface forces for this purpose. The battles in the Solomons and notably the struggle for Guadalcanal were excellent examples of this employment.

(b) CTF 77 in his annex on attack plans to his OpPlan No. 13-44 had stated, among other things, "The enemy may attempt Tokyo Express runs to reinforce, evacuate, harass or interfere with our operations.";\*\* and

(c) COMTHIRDFLT had sent two dispatches warning of Tokyo Express operations; one at 1809 October 17th,\*\*\* and one at 1000 October 19th.\*\*\*\*

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\* Battle of Savo Island (NavPers 91187), Naval War College, 1950, Chapter XXIII, Battle Lessons, Lesson No. 7.

\*\* CANF SOWESPAC Operation Plan No. 13-44, Serial 00022A, September 26th, 1944, Appendix 2 to Annex E.

\*\*\* COM3RDFLT Dispatch 170909 October 1944 to COMSOWESPAC, info CINCPAC, COM7THFLT, all TFC's 3RDFLT.

\*\*\*\* COM3RDFLT Dispatch 190100 October 1944 to COMSOWESPAC, COM7THFLT, info CINCPAC, COMINCH, all TFC's 3RD and 7TH Fleets.



THIS BRINGS FORTH AN ADDITIONAL BATTLE LESSON TO THE EFFECT THAT IN WAR EVERY SITUATION SHOULD BE THOUGHT THROUGH, EVEN IF THE IMPLICATIONS OF THE APPEARANCE OF THE SITUATION ARE SUPERFICIALLY OBVIOUS. SOUND MILITARY DECISION HAS EXPRESSED THIS IN PART AS FOLLOWS: "THE COMMANDER MAY NOT SAFELY VIEW THE SUCCESSION OF EVENTS WITH COMPLACENCY, EVEN THOUGH THE SITUATION APPEARS TO BE UNFOLDING ACCORDING TO PLAN . . . AS THE SITUATION UNFOLDS, EVERYTHING IS VIEWED WITH INTELLIGENT SUSPICION."\*

It must not be imagined that this employment of the method of intentions was restricted to CTF 77 alone. Under "Operations of COMTHIRDFLT, 0000 - 1042 October 23rd", it is pointed out that that commander likewise employed the method of intentions, although to a lesser degree than did CTF 77. This fact is mentioned here to emphasize the erroneous trend of thought relative to Japanese plans prevalent within the Allied forces at this time.

(1) Operations of CTF 78 (Northern Attack Force) and CTG 78.1, 0000 - 1042 October 23rd.

CTF 78, who was also CTG 78.1, in BLUE RIDGE remained at anchor off RED Beach in San Pedro Bay. Since he (a) was responsible for the expeditious unloading of all of the shipping allotted to the TENTH Corps area and for the departure of his unloaded shipping, and (b) had received certain contact reports (discussed under "Operations of CTF 77, 0000 - 1042 October 23rd") which gave cause for concern, he watched the progress of the unloading during the night and forenoon of the twenty LST's and the JUPITER (AK) remaining to be unloaded. (This unloading presumably did not trouble him too much for all of the above ships excepting LST 741--which grounded on a sand bar--departed on this day.)\*\*

It seems probable (although there is no information to this effect) that during the early forenoon he made preparations to depart for Tacloban to attend the ceremony for the installation of the Philippine government which was to occur at noon.

At 0920 he received a request from CTF 77 for an operation summary as of 1000 daily until further notice.\*\*\*

Nothing unusual happened during the forenoon.

At 1042 CTF 78 in the BLUE RIDGE continued to remain at anchor off RED Beach.

(Since nothing unusual occurred as of 1042 on this day and since both CTF 78 and CTG 78.1 were one and the same officer, the operations of CTG 78.1 have been included under CTF 78).

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\* Sound Military Decision, Naval War College, 1942, Page 200.

\*\* Action Report CTG 78.11 (COMLSTGRP 23), Report of Operations while en route from Leyte Island, Philippines to Hollandia, New Guinea, October 23rd - 26th, 1944, Serial 001, November 2nd, 1944.

\*\*\* CTF 77 Visual Dispatch 230020 October 1944 to CTF's 78, 79.

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(a) Operations of CTG 78.2 (San Ricardo Attack Group),  
0000 - 1042 October 23rd.

CTG 78.2, as on the previous day, remained at anchor off WHITE Beach from which position he could observe the unloading of his remaining shipping. There remained to unload one cargo ship (JUPITER), six LST's, and six XAK's.

Between 0007 and 0029 he observed the RUSSELL firing into the San Juanico Strait area in accordance with his orders of the previous evening.\*

During the night and the forenoon until 1042 the unloading, especially that of the JUPITER and the six LST's, proceeded rapidly. The six XAK's also appear to have been unloading albeit much more slowly than the other ships as they were not scheduled to depart until D+9 day.\*\* (Actually, none appear to have departed before D+10 day.\*\*\*) However, the rate of discharge of most of his ships was likely pleasing to him for he could see that by nightfall all of his LST's as well as the JUPITER would be able to depart the area.

This was important as the numerous contacts on Japanese surface forces which he had received since midnight gave strong indications that Japanese counteroperations of some type might be underway.

Also during the forenoon he noted that two of his gunboats (LCI(G)'s 64 and 69) had commencing at 1000 begun reconnoitering San Juanico Strait with representatives of the FIRST Cavalry Division.

(b) Operations of CTU 77.2.1 (Fire Support Unit NORTH) and CTG 77.3 (Close Covering Group), 0000 - 1042, October 23rd.

(1) Operations of CTU 77.2.1.

This unit, consisting of BATDIV's THREE and FOUR with AULICK, CONY and SIGOURNEY and temporarily of BATDIV TWO (less the TENNESSEE), was lying to in Area DRUM, north of Tay Tay Point in the vicinity of Abuyog. The OTC was COMBATDIV THREE in the MISSISSIPPI, who in this position was available to CTG 77.2 in the event the enemy was contacted during the night.

At 0606 he received orders from CTG 77.2 to proceed to his firing stations upon the arrival of daylight and the CAP.\*\*\*\*\*

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\* War Diary RUSSELL, October 23rd, 1944.  
\*\* CTF 78 Operation Plan No. 101-44, Serial 0008, October 3rd, 1944, Annex B, Part III.  
\*\*\* Action Report CTG 78.2, Leyte Operation, Serial 0085, November 28th, 1944, Enclosure A.  
\*\*\*\* Ibid.; also Action Report LCI(R) 230, Leyte Operation, No Serial, October 30th, 1944.  
\*\*\*\*\* Action Report CALIFORNIA, Operations off Island of Leyte, Philippine Islands, October 19th - 24th, 1944, Serial 0025, November 8th, 1944.



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CTU 77.2.1  
CTG 77.3  
October 23rd

Apparently, in accordance with this order, he at 0611 released the CALIFORNIA and PENNSYLVANIA to proceed independently to their stations in FS Area SOUTH.\*

At 0625 he received orders from CTG 77.2 for all ships to proceed independently, at which time he got underway with his unit and proceeded toward San Pedro Bay.\*\* In the meantime, at 0645 he likely intercepted CTG 77.2's 222145 concerning the ammunition replenishment of destroyers including the AULICK, CONY and SIGOURNEY with ships of TU 77.2.2 having priority.\*\*\*

By 0931 all ships of his unit had anchored in San Pedro Bay where they remained on FS missions as on the previous day.

By 1042, having received no requests for FS, they continued preparations for the replenishment of fuel and ammunition.

(2) Operations of CTG 77.3, 0000 - 1042 October 23rd.

This group, less KILLEN, continued patrolling the area two to five miles east and southeast of the transport area in accordance with Harbor Defense Plan ONE.

At 0458 CTG 77.3 directed ships of TG 77.3 to proceed independently at which time they proceeded to FS stations in fashion similar to the previous day.\*\*\*\*

The KILLEN, which had been on night firing duty was relieved at 0810 of the ready FS duty by the ARUNTA.\*\*\*\*\*

By 1042 the (a) PHOENIX, SHROPSHIRE, BEALE, HUTCHINS, DALY and KILLEN had anchored in San Pedro Bay awaiting call fire assignments, and (b) BOISE, BACHE, and ARUNTA were underway and available for FS as requested.

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- \* War Diary COMBATDIV 4, October 23rd, 1944.
  - \*\* Action Report MINNEAPOLIS, Participation in Bombardment of Leyte Island, Philippine Islands, October 18th - 24th, 1944, Serial 0212, November 1st, 1944.
  - \*\*\* CTG 77.2 Visual Dispatch 222145 October 1944 to COMDESRON 56, info CTF 77, 79, DURHAM VICTORY and MAZAMA.
  - \*\*\*\* War Diary PHOENIX, October 23rd, 1944.
  - \*\*\*\*\* War Diary KILLEN, October 23rd, 1944.

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(c) Operations of CTG's 78.7 (Reinforcement Group TWO) and 78.8 (Reinforcement Group THREE), 0000 - 1042, October 23rd.

(1) Operations of CTG 78.7.

At the beginning of this day TG 78.7 was bearing 112°(T), distant 224 miles from Leyte Gulf. During the period until 1042, nothing of importance occurred and at 1042 the task group was bearing 108°(T), distant about 120 miles from Leyte Gulf.\*

(2) Operations of CTG 78.8.

At 0700 CTG 78.8, who had been at anchor at Hollandia preparing to depart for Leyte Gulf, sortied from Humboldt Bay with TG 78.8 and headed for Leyte Gulf at an SOA of nine knots.\*\*

(2) Operations of CTF 79 (Southern Attack Force), 0000 - 1042 October 23rd.

CTF 79, in the MOUNT OLYMPUS, remained anchored in the vicinity of the Southern Transport Area where he continued to observe the unloading operations of his task group commanders who had still seven transports, six cargo ships, one LSV, one LSD and fifty-nine LST's to unload, as well as the 381st RCT which was embarked in the transports of TG 79.2.

He was naturally concerned about this unloading for C.G. TWENTY-FOURTH Corps had not as yet assumed command ashore, although both of the army division commanders had already done so.

Except for the unloading which was continuing throughout the night, the night was uneventful except for the dispatches from Allied submarines concerning contacts on strong enemy forces (a) in west Luzon Strait heading south and (b) in Palawan Passage heading on course 040°(T). These dispatches are reported in full under "Operations of CTF 71, 0000 - 1042 October 23rd" (DACE and DARTER) and under "Operations of CTF 17, 0000 - 1042 October 23rd".

What consideration he gave to these contacts is not known, but it seems probable that he realized that the enemy capability of making raids by employing both air and surface elements--which capability had been postulated to COMTHIRDFLT by COMSOWESPAC\*\*\*--was becoming more and more possible. He therefore likely desired to press the unloading of his ships so that their retirement might be expedited.

At 0711 he directed CTU 79.11.2 (COMDESDIV FORTY-NINE) to assign a destroyer to transport him at 0900 to the WASATCH and return.\*\*\*\*

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\* War Diary NICHOLAS, October 23rd, 1944.

\*\* War Diary COMCORTDIV 29, October 23rd, 1944.

\*\*\* COMSOWESPAC Dispatch 212240 October 1944 to COM3RDFLT, info COMINCH, CofS U.S. Army, CINCPA, CTF 77, CTF 38, CTG 38.1.

\*\*\*\* CTF 79 Dispatch 222211 October 1944 to CTU 79.11.2.



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(The SPROSTON was so designated at 0837). He desired this transportation because, as pointed out under "Operations of CTF 79, October 22nd", he had been (a) invited to attend the ceremony for the installation of the Philippine Government which was to occur at noon at Tacloban and (b) requested to be on the WASATCH prior to 1045.

At 0732 he received a visual dispatch from CTF 77, which dispatch he transmitted to CTG's 79.1 and 79.2, to be prepared to load casualties on the COMFORT between 1300 and 1500.\*

At 0800 he advised CTF 77 of the TF 79 and TU 77.2.2 units present in the area.\*\* Since this appears to have been the first dispatch of its kind sent to date, it seems highly probable that this information was requested by CTF 77 who was concerned over the continuing assembly of enemy naval forces in the Coron Bay area.

Soon after 0839, when the SPROSTON reported for duty, he transferred from the MOUNT OLYMPUS to that destroyer and was transported to the WASATCH.\*\*\* He then directed the destroyer (a) to return to the screen and (b) to close the WASATCH again at 1300 for the purpose of transporting him back to his flagship.\*\*\*\*

Upon his arrival in the WASATCH, he was consulted by CTF 77 as to the significance of the DARTER contacts and the earlier reported Japanese movements.\*\*\*\*\* It seems probable that at this time, and prior to 0920 (when it was received by the MOUNT OLYMPUS) he knew that CTF 77 had requested an operation summary as of 1000 daily until further notice.\*\*\*\*\*

At 0921 he directed CTG 79.1 to send six LCI gunboats and four LCI mortar boats to report to CTG 78.2 for duty. These units had been requested by that command as he was to be SOPA (Administrative) upon the departure of the task group commanders, and he desired these units as part of his local defense force.

(a) Operations of CTG 79.1 (Attack Group ABLE), 0000 - 1042  
October 23rd.

CTG 79.1 continued to remain at anchor off the YELLOW and VIOLET Beaches. From this position, as on the previous day, he could observe (a) the unloading of his remaining transports, cargo vessels and LST's and (b) night firing missions being provided by his ships—NEWCOMB and HEYWOOD L. EDWARDS.

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\* CTF 77 Dispatch 222232 October 1944 to CTF 79.

\*\* CTF 79 Dispatch 222300 October 1944 to CTF 77 (Delivered by hand).

\*\*\* SPROSTON Dispatch 222339 October 1944 to CTF 79.

\*\*\*\* CTF 79 Dispatch 222357 October 1944 to SPROSTON.

\*\*\*\*\* Statement of Admiral Thomas C. Kinkaid, USN(Ret) (formerly CTF 77), to Commodore R.W. Bates, USN(Ret), Head, World War II Battle Evaluation Group, Naval War College, May 16th, 1957.

\*\*\*\*\* CTF 77 Visual Dispatch 230020 October 1944 to CTF's 78, 79.

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CTG 79.1  
CTG 79.2  
October 23rd

With reference to item (a) he knew that as of midnight he had still to unload fifteen LST's, four cargo ships, one LSV and one APA.

With reference to item (b) he noted that these destroyers were delivering call night illumination fire and that they were also conducting harassing fire on an enemy troop concentration on Leyte.\*

Since his principal problem lay in the unloading of his ships, as with their unloading his immediate responsibilities would be at an end, he watched this unloading closely. At 0400, when the MONITOR completed unloading, and also at 0800, he received additional unloading reports which showed that if the unloading continued unabated it was quite likely that by late afternoon he would have all of his heavy ships unloaded and ready for departure as well as a large portion of his LST's. At 1000 he learned that the PRESIDENT HAYES had completed unloading. He now had unloaded three (CAVALIER, MONITOR, PRESIDENT HAYES) of his remaining larger ships and had but four to go (MERCURY, CHARA, THUBAN, ALSHAIN); these, except for the MERCURY, were now almost unloaded.

All of this was good news to him for since midnight he had received numerous contacts from Allied submarines on Japanese surface forces moving toward the Manila - Coron Bay area which gave indications of Japanese counteraction. It would be wise to remove as much shipping as possible.

He therefore commenced preparing his departure plan.

(b) Operations of CTG 79.2 (Attack Group BAKER), 0000 - 1042  
October 23rd.

CTG 79.2, in the ROCKY MOUNT, continued to remain at anchor in the LST area off ORANGE Beach where he could observe the night firing missions by the ALBERT W. GRANT and the BRYANT and the unloading of his ships. At this time certain LST's were being unloaded. Since some of these LST's were being used as lighters, they were being unloaded for the second or third time.

Although TRANSDIV TEN (less the CATSKILL which had already departed) had not completed unloading--the five transports (CLAY, ARTHUR MIDDLETON, BAXTER, WILLIAM P. BIDDLE, GEORGE F. ELLIOTT) of this division had so far only unloaded those elements of the NINETY-SIXTH Division which had been transported in TRANSDIV TEN--the final unloading of the transports could not be completed until the 381st RCT had been unloaded. Therefore, CTG 79.2 awaited the arrival of daylight for at that time he had been directed to land the above RCT on BLUE Beach ONE. Once he had done this and had unloaded the five transports of TRANSDIV TEN and had unloaded the CAPRICORNUS of the same division, he would be able to retire TRANSDIV TEN from the area.

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\* War Diaries NEWCOMB and HEYWOOD L. EDWARDS, October 23rd, 1944.



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CTG 79.2  
CTU 77.2.2  
October 23rd

This would leave only the AURIGA and certain LST's to be unloaded and thus complete the unloading of his command. He was working hard to expedite this unloading.

At 0815 he received word that all of the 170th Engineer Battalion had been landed from TRANSDIV TEN. Since this was the shore party for the 381st RCT, it seems clear that he expected to hear presently of the successful landing of that RCT.

At 0927 he received word that the above landing of the 381st RCT on BLUE Beach ONE had been completed and he so advised CTF 79.\*

During the forenoon and prior to 1042 FS missions were fired by the BRYANT, COLUMBIA and CALIFORNIA.\*\*

(c) Operations of CTU 77.2.2 (Fire Support Unit SOUTH),  
0000 - 1042 October 23rd.

At 0625, upon receipt of the order from CTG 77.2 as CTU 77.2.2 to proceed independently, the ships of TU 77.2.2 commenced proceeding to various FS stations as previously assigned.\*\*\* The LOUISVILLE (FF), with CTU 77.2.2 aboard, took station 4000 yards east of Leyte Island presumably in the same location as on the previous day.\*\*\*\*

At 0700 the remaining ships, which were destroyers, were ordered to proceed to covering positions and commenced proceeding to the Southern Transport Area.\*\*\*\*\* Shortly after 0700 the DENVER and PORTLAND commenced firing followed later by the COLUMBIA and CALIFORNIA.\*\*\*\*\* Of the four destroyers that had remained on night fire support duty, the ALBERT W. GRANT, NEWCOMB and HEYWOOD L. EDWARDS had completed their mission but remained in the vicinity of their FS stations while the BRYANT, although it had completed its scheduled mission, fired twelve rounds at Tarwin Tarwin at 0800.\*\*\*\*\*

At 0800 he observed the Replenishment Group (TU 77.7.1) enter the area and in accordance with orders anchor in an area 10,000 yards from the shore in Latitude 11°-00'N (which is a position off Liberanan Head).

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- \* Action Report CTG 79.2, Leyte Operation, Serial 0032, November 4th, 1944.
  - \*\* Ibid., Part V, Section 5.
  - \*\*\* War Diaries CALIFORNIA, MINNEAPOLIS, October 23rd, 1944; also Deck Logs PENNSYLVANIA, DENVER, PORTLAND, COLUMBIA, October 23rd, 1944.
  - \*\*\*\* Deck Log LOUISVILLE, October 23rd, 1944.
  - \*\*\*\*\* Action Report CTG 77.2 (COMCRUDIV 4), Bombardment and Capture of Leyte Island, Philippine Islands, October 16th - 24th, 1944, Serial 00147. November 5th, 1944.
  - \*\*\*\*\* Deck Logs DENVER, PORTLAND, COLUMBIA, CALIFORNIA, October 23rd, 1944.
  - \*\*\*\*\* War Diaries ALBERT W. GRANT, NEWCOMB, HEYWOOD L. EDWARDS and BRYANT, October 23rd, 1944.

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The battleships scheduled for fueling at this time were not ready due to deballasting problems.\* Although apparently unavoidable, it no doubt gave CTG 77.2 some concern not to have his schedule carried out.

At 0849 the RICHARD P. LEARY, which had returned from escort duty with TG 70.6, reported for duty.\*\* At 0945, having noted that as CTG 77.2 he had omitted this destroyer from the replenishment plan, he directed COMDESRON FIFTY-SIX to add this ship to the list of destroyers to receive ammunition.\*\*\*

By 1042 the ships of this group continued to carry out the days mission in addition to making preparations to replenish fuel and ammunition as scheduled.

(3) Operations of CTG 77.2 (Bombardment and Fire Support Group),  
0000 - 1042 October 23rd.

CTG 77.2—with his cruisers LOUISVILLE, COLUMBIA, DENVER, MINNEAPOLIS and PORTLAND screened by the destroyers ROBINSON, BENNION, LEUTZE, HALFORD, CLAXTON, THORN and WELLES, all from TU 77.2.2—continued to patrol southern Leyte Gulf east of Tay Tay Point in accordance with Harbor Defense Plan ONE. Meanwhile, his battleships (i.e., BATDIV TWO (less TENNESSEE), BATDIV's THREE and FOUR, all under command of COMBATDIV THREE, CTU 77.2.1 in MISSISSIPPI and screened by AULICK, CONY and SIGOURNEY) lay to in the vicinity of Abuyog to be available as needed and his four destroyers (ALBERT W. GRANT, NEWCOMB, HEYWOOD L. EDWARDS and BRYANT) continued on night FS duty.\*\*\*\* (At 0440 the TENNESSEE, at anchor near Catmon Hill, had completed repairs and had cast off the tugs.\*\*\*\*\*)

His patrol was uneventful except for the presence of enemy aircraft beginning at 0530.\*\*\*\*\* At 0606 he directed TU 77.2.2 (he was also CTU 77.2.2) that when it became daylight and the CAP was overhead, to proceed to its FS stations.\*\*\*\*\* At 0625 he ordered all ships to proceed independently.\*\*\*\*\*

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- \* Action Report CTG 77.2 (COMCRUDIV 4), Bombardment and Capture of Leyte Island, Philippine Islands, October 16th - 24th, 1944, Serial 00147, November 5th, 1944.
  - \*\* War Diaries COMDESRON 56, RICHARD P. LEARY, October 23rd, 1944.
  - \*\*\* CTG 77.2 Visual Dispatch 230045 October 1944 to COMDESRON 56, info MAZAMA, DURHAM VICTORY, CTF's 77, 79.
  - \*\*\*\* Deck Log PENNSYLVANIA, October 23rd, 1944.
  - \*\*\*\*\* War Diary TENNESSEE, October 23rd, 1944.
  - \*\*\*\*\* War Diary COMBATDIV 3, October 23rd, 1944.
  - \*\*\*\*\* Action Report CALIFORNIA, Operations off Island of Leyte, Philippine Islands, October 19th - 24th, 1944, Serial 0025, November 8th, 1944.
  - \*\*\*\*\* Action Report MINNEAPOLIS, Participation in Bombardment of Leyte Island, Philippine Islands, October 18th - 24th, 1944, Serial 0212, November 1st, 1944.



During the night, realizing that TU 77.7.1 would arrive in the forenoon, he made plans for the replenishment of his command and in accordance with these plans (a) at 0635 requested CTF 79 to make available to him for his group three LST's for unloading empty powder cans and for transferring remnants,\* (b) at the same time he directed the LOUISVILLE and MINNEAPOLIS, among other items, to replenish five inch ammunition to bombardment loading level from the MAZAMA and from the DURHAM VICTORY respectively, going alongside the starboard side of these ammunition ships,\*\* and (c) at 0645 he (1) advised COMDESRON FIFTY-SIX that the Replenishment Group would anchor at about 1000 and that the port sides of these ships would be available for the ammunition replenishment of the following destroyers: WELLES, THORN, CLAXTON, BRYANT, ALBERT W. GRANT, ROBINSON, HALFORD, HEYWOOD L. EDWARDS, BENNION, LEUTZE, NEWCOMB, AULICK, CONY and SIGOURNEY, and (2) directed that commander to (a) arrange the replenishment schedule for these destroyers, relieving ships as necessary, (b) keep him informed, and (c) give priority to ships of TU 77.2.2.\*\*\* He directed all ships loading ammunition to submit ammunition reports upon completion of replenishment.

(4) Operations of CTG 77.4 (Escort Carrier Group), 0000 - 1042  
October 23rd.\*\*\*\*

CTG 77.4 with a total of 313 VF and 190 VT continued to provide (a) air cover and support over the objective area and (b) air protection for his own units, in accordance with his basic air plan.\*\*\*\*\* In addition, as authorized by CTF 77's 220603 (quoted in full under "Operations of CTF 77, October 22nd") he was on this day to initiate (a) early morning fighter sweeps against enemy airfields in northern Mindanao and (b) late afternoon combined strikes (employing both VF and VT) against enemy airfields and shipping in the western Visayas.

At 0514 the first TCAP of the day was launched.\*\*\*\*\* Its numerical strength is in doubt since available records are obscure on this point. However, it is known that (a) the TCAP consisted of thirty-six VF on the 20th and 21st, (b) his operation plan specified a TCAP of twenty-eight VF, (c) CTF 77 authorized it be reduced to sixteen VF this day and (c) at 1215 this day it was reduced to twelve VF (four from each task unit)--why it was reduced below the authorized sixteen is not known.

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- \* CTG 77.2 Visual Dispatch 222135 October 1944 to CTF 79.
  - \*\* CTG 77.2 Visual Dispatch 222135 October 1944 to LOUISVILLE, MINNEAPOLIS, info DURHAM VICTORY, CTF's 77, 79.
  - \*\*\* CTG 77.2 Visual Dispatch 222145 October 1944 to COMDESRON 56, info CTF's 77, 79, DURHAM VICTORY and MAZAMA.
  - \*\*\*\* All information here, except as otherwise indicated, obtained from Action Report CTG 77.4, Leyte Operations, October 12th - 29th, 1944, Serial 00120, November 15th, 1944.
  - \*\*\*\*\* CTG 77.4 Operation Plan No. 2-44, Serial 00075, October 15th, 1944, Annex D.
  - \*\*\*\*\* Aircraft Action Report No. 73, VF 35, October 23rd, 1944.

At 0530 the first of the day's direct support missions was launched with one VF being lost after swerving and striking the water on take-off.\*

At 0605 one of the CHENANGO's TCAP fighters shot down a single engine carrier attack plane off the SE coast of Leyte.\*\*

Sunrise was at 0621. Flying conditions were good in the sea operating area. The winds were from the SE, eight to thirteen knots, visibility twelve miles, sky partly cloudy.\*\*\*

Commencing about 0700 the above support groups, composed of VF and VT aircraft, were over the objective area. Ten VT from the OMMANEY BAY, in concert with eight VF each from the KADASHAN BAY and the MARCUS ISLAND, hit pill boxes and trenches in the San Pablo area. Antiaircraft fire was meager, while aircraft opposition was nil.\*\*\*\*

Also at this time four VF and six VT (including one photo plane) from the WHITE PLAINS with four VF and four VT from the KITKUN BAY were hitting troops and gun emplacements in support of the troops attacking in northern Leyte.\*\*\*\*\*

Commencing at 0745 he launched (a) the second flight of direct support group aircraft,\*\*\*\*\* and (b) fighters from the PETROF BAY, SANTEE and SUWANEE scheduled to conduct sweeps against northern Mindanaon airfields.\*\*\*\*\*

Commencing at approximately 0912 the fighter sweeps consisting of twenty-four VF struck the Del Monte airfield complex and other fields and installations in the area, with SANTEE pilots claiming the destruction of two single engine carrier-type fighters on the ground. Antiaircraft fire, which was light to moderate, shot down one of the SANTEE's fighters.\*\*\*\*\* No air opposition was mentioned in the reports of these aircraft actions. Only Del Monte airfield No. 2 was reported operational.\*\*\*\*\*

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- \* Action Report MARCUS ISLAND, Serial 053, November 1st, 1944.
  - \*\* Aircraft Action Report No. 73, VF 35, October 23rd, 1944.
  - \*\*\* Action Report MANILA BAY, Operations in Support of Occupation of Leyte, P.I., October 12th - 30th, 1944, Serial 0103, November 2nd, 1944, Part II, Page 13.
  - \*\*\*\* Aircraft Action Report No. 39, VC 75, October 23rd, 1944; also Aircraft Action Report No. 64, VC 20, October 23rd, 1944.
  - \*\*\*\*\* Aircraft Action Report No. 56, VC 4, October 23rd, 1944.
  - \*\*\*\*\* Aircraft Action Report No. 17, VC 27, October 23rd, 1944.
  - \*\*\*\*\* Aircraft Action Report No. 68, VC 76, October 23rd, 1944.
  - \*\*\*\*\* Aircraft Action Report No. 18, VF 26, October 23rd, 1944.
  - \*\*\*\*\* Action Report SUWANEE, Leyte Operation, Serial 008, November 6th, 1944.



Regarding the claims made by the SANTEE pilots, available Japanese records do not positively confirm or deny the existence of operational aircraft on Del Monte airfields this day.

During the morning CTG 77.4 had doubtlessly received or intercepted (a) those contact reports (quoted in full under "Operations of CTF 77, 0000 - 1042 October 23rd") revealing the movements of Japanese warships (1) northward in Palawan Passage, and (2) southward in the waters to the NW of Luzon, and (b) COMTHIRDFLT's orders modifying the operations of three groups of TF 38 by (1) stationing TG's 38.2 and 38.3 ninety miles due east of Polillo Island, and (2) stationing TG 38.4 bearing about 050°(T), distant fifty miles from the southern tip of Samar—the three groups to fly reinforced searches to the westward commencing at dawn the following morning. (COMTHIRDFLT's order stationing TG 38.2 off San Bernardino Strait was not received prior to 1042 and therefore cannot be included in this discussion.)

He quite likely (a) estimated the effect this enemy surface ship movement—ostensibly toward the Coron Bay - Manila Bay area—might possibly have on present operations, and (b) wondered, since his returning morning flights had reported practically no enemy air opposition, whether or not there would be a concurrent increase in enemy air activity and what effect, if any, this would have also on his present operations.

He studied the situation and clearly arrived at the opinion that the new disposition of TF 38 carriers tended to increase his ability not only to execute his present operations, but to enlarge their scope.

Accordingly, he awaited further developments, envisioning for the time being little change in his own operations.

About 1000 he launched the third flight of direct support aircraft.\*

By 1042 the three carrier task units of TG 77.4 had completed about sixty-nine direct support sorties, twenty-four fighter sweep sorties, probably fifty-six target CAP sorties and eight target ASP sorties.\*\* (The third flight of direct support aircraft launched at 1000 is not included in this summary.)

Having lost but two aircraft this day, one VF in combat and one VF operationally, he had remaining 311 VF and 190 VT.

At 1042 CTG 77.4, with his three groups of six carriers each, continued to operate in the general area sixty - ninety miles to the eastward of a NS line through Leyte Gulf—as shown in Diagram E.

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\* Aircraft Action Report No. 57, VC-4, October 23rd, 1944.

\*\* Aircraft Action Reports No. 18, VF-26; No. 68, VC-76; No. 61, VC-21; Nos. 64, 65, VC-20; No. 17, VC-27; No. 58, VC-4; No. 51, VC-5 October 23rd, 1944; also CTG 77.4 Operation Plan No. 2-44, Serial 00075, October 5th, 1944, Annex D.

(5) Operations of CTG 70.1 (Motor Torpedo Boats), 0000 - 1042  
October 23rd.

At the beginning of this day CTG 70.1, in the OYSTER BAY with the WACHAPREAGUE and WILLOUGHBY and thirty-seven out of the forty-five MTB's in the Leyte area, was at anchor in San Pedro Bay. Of the remaining MTB's, eight of them were on the night patrol as assigned on the previous afternoon; i.e., PT's 522, 526 in Area 91; PT's 321, 496 in Area 100M; PT's 152, 196 in Area 101; and PT's 131, 134 in San Juanico Strait. These boats do not appear to have made any contacts of importance and to have returned to the tenders shortly after daylight in accordance with basic orders as discussed under "Operations of CTG 70.1, October 22nd".

It will be recalled, also from "Operations of CTG 70.1, October 22nd", that CTG 70.1 had, in accordance with his plan,\* been making preparations to extend his operations farther into the Mindanao and Camotes Seas. He now directed the Commanding Officer WACHAPREAGUE, with fifteen MTB's, to proceed to Liloan Bay, Panaon Island and establish there an advance base. Therefore, at 0744 the Commanding Officer WACHAPREAGUE, with PT's 127, 128, 129, 130, 131, 146, 150, 151, 152, 190, 191, 192, 194, 195, 196, departed San Pedro Bay for Liloan Bay where he would arrive in the early afternoon. This left thirty MTB's with CTG 70.1, which MTB's appear to have continued completion of voyage and other repairs and prepared for immediate service.

Except for noticing limited numbers of enemy aircraft flying overhead on what appeared to be reconnaissance missions, the operations of CTG 70.1 up to 1042 were uneventful.

(b) Operations of CTF 71 (Submarines West Australia), 0000 - 1042  
October 23rd.

At the beginning of this day CTF 71 had reason to believe that (a) the Japanese surface forces, consisting of one carrier and four unidentified warships contacted on the previous day by TF 17 submarines on course 210°(T), had entered his area of responsibility although it had not been contacted by TF 71 submarines, and (b) the group contacted in Palawan Passage on the previous day by the DARTER and which, at first report, had been heading through Palawan Passage and later had changed course toward the area west of Dangerous Ground, had not been sighted since for he had received no reports. He likely regretted the absence of air searches over this area by the planes of the FOURTEENTH Air Force on the preceding day.

However, he realized that all that he could do was to await further contacts on these or other Japanese units. He did not have long to wait for at 0250 he received a contact report from the DARTER on three probable battleships at 0200 in Latitude 08°-28'N, Longitude 116°-30'E, on

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\* CTG 70.1 Operation Plan No. 2-44, No Serial, October 5th, 1944, Annex F, Paragraph I.4.



course 040°(T), speed eighteen knots.\* This was followed (a) at 0449 by a second report increasing the composition as above reported to at least nine ships including five medium and two heavies with many radars, on course 039°(T), speed fifteen knots, and giving the 0300 position as Latitude 08°-37'N, Longitude 116°-37'E,\*\* and (b) at 0542 by a third report estimating a minimum of eleven ships on the same course and speed and stating that there was a possibility that both the DACE and DARTER might attack.\*\*\*

He seems to have passed this information to (a) the senior Allied commanders as follows: (1) the first report at 0423,\*\*\*\* and (2) the second report at 0718\*\*\*\*\* (the third report was passed by Radio Hollandia),\*\*\*\*\* and (b) his submarines as follows: (1) first report at 0235,\*\*\*\*\* (2) second report at 0441,\*\*\*\*\* and (3) third report at 0540.\*\*\*\*\* (It will be noted that the time of origin of the readdressal by CTF 71 of each of these DARTER dispatches appears to be sometime earlier than the time of receipt recorded by CTF 71—an obvious anomaly which cannot be readily explained.)

During the morning (the exact time is unknown, although probably between 0558 and 0834 when COMTHIRDFLT received them) he likely received contact reports forwarded to him by reencypherment of additional contacts made by TF 17 submarines.\*\*\*\*\*

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\* DARTER Dispatch 221725 October 1944 to CTF 71.  
 \*\* DARTER Dispatch 221850 October 1944 to CTF 71.  
 \*\*\* DARTER Dispatch 222025 October 1944 to CTF 71.  
 \*\*\*\* CTF 71 Dispatch 221923 October 1944 to CINCPAC, COM7THFLT, COM3RDFLT, TGC's 3RD and 7TH Fleets, CTF 17. C.G.'s 5TH and 13TH Air Forces.  
 \*\*\*\*\* CTF 71 Dispatch 222218 October 1944 to COM7THFLT, COM3RDFLT, all TFC's 3RD and 7TH Fleets, info CINCPAC, CTF 17. C.G.'s 5TH and 13TH Air Forces.  
 \*\*\*\*\* DARTER Dispatch 222025 October 1944 to CTF 71 (readdressed by RDO Hollandia, apparently with same date and time group to all TFC's 3RD and 7TH Fleets).  
 \*\*\*\*\* CTF 71 Dispatch 221735 October 1944 to all TF 71 submarines.  
 \*\*\*\*\* CTF 71 Dispatch 221941 October 1944 to all TF 71 submarines.  
 \*\*\*\*\* CTF 71 Dispatch 222040 October 1944 to all TF 71 submarines.  
 \*\*\*\*\* DRUM Dispatch 221037 October 1944 to CTF 17, info SAWFISH, ICEFISH, (reencyphered as CINCPAC Dispatch 221658 October 1944 to COMINCH, COMSOWESPAC, COM3RDFLT, CTF 77, all TFC's and TGC's 3RDFLT); ICEFISH Dispatch 221301 October 1944 to CTF 17, info COM7THFLT (reencyphered as COM7THFLT Dispatch 221301 October 1944 to COM3RDFLT, CTF's 38, 57, 71, 72, CTG's 38.1, 38.2, 28.3, 38.4); SHARK Dispatch 221410 October 1944 to CTF 17, info COM3RDFLT (reencyphered as CINCPAC Dispatch 221757 October 1944 to COMINCH, COMSOWESPAC, COM3RDFLT, CTF 77, all TFC's and TGC's 3RDFLT, COMNAVGRPCINA).

From these contact reports, from their reported positions, and from the earlier report of the SEADRAGON, he could estimate that (a) exclusive of the DRUM contact, these contacts were likely on one and the same force and that this force consisted of from one carrier and four unidentified ships to a maximum of four large ships and three additional ships, and (b) the DRUM contact was on a separate force. However, since they were all heading in the same general direction, he likely thought that they were headed toward Coron Bay or even toward Manila. His lack of further contacts from his own submarines probably caused him to regret that he had failed to maintain on station the four submarines which he had promised.\*

He now thought that he had three submarines on station west of Luzon (i.e., COD in Area A2; BREAM and GUITARRO in Area A3 - A7).\*\* Actually as regards the latter two submarines this was not the case (Plate XII and Diagram E).

He also likely regretted that these contact reports had been long delayed (eleven to twenty-three hours) for, with but three submarines off western Luzon, he might have restationed them in order to intercept the enemy force and now had but little time even to alert them. Perhaps he felt the growing need for a quicker delivery of contact reports from the CINCPOA area, especially from those by the submarines in CONVOY COLLEGE.

Since on the 21st he had received COMSEVENTHFLT's dispatch to C.G. FIFTH Air Force to the effect that Coron Bay was a likely concentration or fueling area for important elements of the Japanese fleet which might attempt to strike against the Allied Leyte forces,\*\*\* it seems probable that he considered it likely that the above Japanese forces could be considered in the above category.

(1) BREAM and GUITARRO.

The BREAM and GUITARRO were proceeding independently to their patrol stations in Areas A3, A7, off western Luzon to form a coordinated attack group upon arrival. The BREAM was off Lubang Island, while the GUITARRO was transiting Mindoro Strait northbound.

(a) The BREAM at 0340, while on the surface southwest of Manila, made radar contact on three targets in column, bearing  $240^{\circ}(T)$ , range 15,000 yards and commenced tracking.\*\*\*\* At 0423 the range had closed

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\* CTF 71 Dispatch 101426 October 1944 to COM7THFLT, info CTF 78, CTG's 77.2, 77.3, etc.

\*\* War Diary CTF 71, October 23rd, 1944, Daily Dispositions Submarines Based Western Australia.

\*\*\* COM7THFLT Dispatch 210526 October 1944 to COMAAF, C.G. 5TH Air Force info COMSOWESPAC, COM3RDFLT.

\*\*\*\* War Patrol Report BREAM, Report of 3RD War Patrol, Serial 021, November 22nd, 1944.



and the targets were identified as two ATAGO or AOBA-class cruisers (very large) preceded by a destroyer or light cruiser. The middle cruiser was selected by the commanding officer as the target and at 0424, in Latitude 14°-05'N, Longitude 119°-40'E, he fired six torpedoes.\* He immediately dove to 350 feet during which time he received at least two depth charges believed dropped from the second large cruiser.

His estimate that he had made hits in his target was partially correct for the three ships observed comprised CRUDIV SIXTEEN (AOBA--CA, KINU--CL and URANAMI--DD) en route Manila and the ship torpedoed was the AOBA, the flagship, which had received one torpedo hit.\*\*

The BREAM now, over a period of five hours, was depth-charged ineffectively by the URANAMI as a result of which her commanding officer decided to remain submerged and to attempt no further attacks.\*

About five hours later (at 0820) he estimated that four A/S ships from Manila were now searching for him.\* This appears to have been incorrect for the Japanese reports indicate that it was not until much later (1500) that two subchasers arrived to assist in A/S screening;\*\*\* air cover seems to have arrived before 0942.

At 1042 the BREAM was submerged in about the same position as she was at the time she torpedoed the AOBA. Meanwhile, the AOBA, being towed by the KINU and screened by the URANAMI, was en route Manila.\*\*

(b) The GUITARRO was in Mindoro Strait where she had submerged to avoid what she believed were loose floating mines. At 0144 she surfaced and continued northward. At 0218 she contacted a friendly submarine, presumably the COBIA and exchanged calls with her.\*\*\*\*

While on the surface it seems highly probable that at 0335, when it was received by the ANGLER\*\*\*\*\* which was nearby, (although she makes no mention of this in her war patrol report or deck log) she received the DARTER's first contact report on three battleships moving up Palawan Passage at 0200 on course 040°(T), speed eighteen knots. This seems so for at 0502, when she had cleared Mindoro Strait, her commanding officer took a westerly course, apparently to be in an intercepting position should the enemy force head toward Manila. HE WAS AUTHORIZED TO DO THIS IN HIS BASIC ORDERS WHICH DIRECTED HIM "TO EXPLOIT TRAFFIC LANES AND FOCAL POINTS

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\* War Patrol Report BREAM, Report of 3RD War Patrol, Serial 021, November 22nd, 1944.

\*\* Detailed Action Report No. 6, AOBA, Antisubmarine action west of the Philippines, October 23rd, 1944, WDC Document 161747.

\*\*\* Appendix to Detailed Action Report CRUDIV 16, SHO Operation, October 17th - 27th, 1944, WDC Document 161005, NA 11744.

\*\*\*\* Deck Log GUITARRO, October 23rd, 1944.

\*\*\*\*\* War Patrol Report ANGLER, Report of 5TH War Patrol, Serial 09(10), November 9th, 1944.

EN ROUTE TO AND FROM AREAS". WHILE THIS WOULD DELAY HIS ARRIVAL IN HIS PATROL AREA (WHICH WAS ABOUT EIGHTY MILES TO THE NORTH), HIS DECISION TO DELAY SEEMS SOUND FOR THE ENEMY FORCE BEING PURSUED BY THE DARTER WAS SUFFICIENTLY STRONG TO MERIT PRIMARY ATTENTION.

At 0609 he submerged and, except for sighting enemy aircraft, his patrol until 1042 was uneventful.

(2) ROCK and BERGALL.

These two submarines had been assigned a patrol line in the South China Sea from Cape Varella to North Danger Shoal, but at the beginning of this day, they were both off station.

The ROCK, which had previously departed her patrol station and had headed south but was now returning, arrived on her regular patrol station at 0708 and submerged for the day's patrol.\*

The BERGALL, in the sea area south of Saigon and some 500 miles from her assigned patrol line, commenced returning to her assigned patrol station at 0200, having sighted nothing of importance during the search of this area.\*\* She remained on the surface during daylight as well as darkness and at 1042 was about 480 miles from her patrol line.\*\*\* Neither of these submarines made any contacts during this period.

(3) BLUEGILL.

The BLUEGILL, in the Sulu Sea, was proceeding southward en route Mios Woendi. She proceeded generally on the surface during daylight as well as darkness with fair weather and good visibility\*\*\*\* She made no contacts.

(4) ANGLER.

The ANGLER was patrolling on the surface in an area about ninety miles SW of Lubang Island and along the traffic route toward Manila. At 0335 she intercepted the DARTER's contact report of three battleships at 0200 in Latitude 08°-28'N, Longitude 116°-30'E (southern Palawan Passage), on course 040°(T), speed eighteen knots.\*\*\*\*\* With this information, the commanding officer estimated that he might be able to intercept these ships at about 1800. He therefore reversed course and headed for Palawan Passage at

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\* War Patrol Report ROCK, Report of 4TH War Patrol, Serial 016, November 11th, 1944.

\*\* War Patrol Report BERGALL, Report of 1ST War Patrol, Serial 0102, November 8th, 1944.

\*\*\* Deck Log BERGALL, October 23rd, 1944.

\*\*\*\* Deck Log BLUEGILL, October 23rd, 1944.

\*\*\*\*\* War Patrol Report ANGLER, Report of 5TH War Patrol, Serial 09(10), November 9th, 1944.



full speed toward the above estimated 1800 position.\*

While, as pointed out in the discussion of the ANGLER's operations on October 21st, the decision of the commanding officer to operate in the northern end of Palawan Passage, rather than in the waters north of Lubang Island, was inconsistent with his orders to cover the southwest approaches to Manila, it seems correct to say that the imminence of the approach of the battleship force made it unwise to attempt at this time to move to the north and made his decision to endeavor to intercept the battleship force in its 1800 position correct.

At 0830 the ANGLER submerged to avoid closing aircraft and at 1042 was 160 miles from Manila.

(5) DACE and DARTER.

At 0100 the DACE and DARTER, which had rendezvoused for this purpose in Latitude 08°-29.5'N, Longitude 116°-12'E, held a megaphone conference to plan the "remainder of (their) coordinated patrol".\*\* Since the DACE, which had been due to depart the area for Fremantle on the previous day, had received authority to remain in the area until the 24th in order to work a convoy of eight ships, it seems probable that the DARTER/DACE discussions related to wolf pack tactics which might be employed in that operation. Thus, it appears that the wolf pack commander felt authorized to seek out the convoy and to leave the western approaches to Balabac Strait and the southern approaches to Palawan Passage unguarded.

While the conference was still underway, the DARTER at 0116\*\* and the DACE at 0125\*\*\* made radar contact on a force bearing 131°(T) and 137°(T) respectively, distant 30,000 yards. This was the Main Body of the Japanese FIRST Striking Force which was just entering southern Palawan Passage.

Both submarines immediately commenced making nineteen knots and began maneuvering for a suitable attack position. However, they encountered great difficulty in reaching this position because of what the DARTER referred to as the high speed of the enemy and which she initially estimated as twenty-two knots. Although there is some slight evidence that the Japanese ships may have undergone torpedo evasion measures until 0040\*\*\*\* which might account for the twenty-two knot estimate of the DARTER, the major

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\* War Patrol Report ANGLER, Report of 5TH War Patrol, Serial 09(10), November 9th, 1944.

\*\* War Patrol Report DARTER, Report of 4TH War Patrol, Serial 020, November 5th, 1944.

\*\*\* War Patrol Report DACE, Report of 5TH War Patrol, Serial 09, November 6th, 1944.

\*\*\*\* Commander 1ST Striking Force Visual Dispatch 221850 October 1944 to 1ST Striking Force, Detailed Action Report SUZUYA, SHO No. 1 Operation, October 18th - 25th, 1944, WDC Document 161747.

weight of evidence is to the effect that, even if the ships did undergo torpedo evasion measures, they did so at sixteen knots, which speed they maintained for hours.

About one hour later (at 0225) the DARTER reported to CTF 71 by dispatch that she had contacted three probable battleships at 0200 in Latitude  $08^{\circ}-28'N$ , Longitude  $116^{\circ}-30'E$ , course  $040^{\circ}(T)$ , speed eighteen knots, with radar pips at 34,000 yards.\* This evaluation was (a) not particularly accurate as regards composition as there were actually five battleships, ten heavy cruisers, two light cruisers and fifteen destroyers in the entire disposition. However, it seems probable that the evaluation was made on the FIRST Section (which was in the van) alone, in which case there were three battleships, six heavy cruisers, one light cruiser and nine destroyers, and (b) fairly accurate as regards course and speed for the force was on course  $040^{\circ}(T)$ , speed sixteen knots and was not zigzagging.\*\* The 34,000 yards here given was the maximum range obtained by the DARTER on the Japanese ships in formation.\*\*\*

Both the DARTER and the DACE, operating apparently close together, endeavored to get ahead of the Japanese but the progress was slow.

At 0300 the DACE estimated the enemy to be on course  $038^{\circ}(T)$ , speed fifteen knots; further, that the disposition appeared to consist of twelve ships in two columns of four heavy ships each with destroyers flanking, distance between columns 5,000 yards.\*\*\*\* This estimate of the character of the disposition was generally correct (Plate XXXVIII).

At 0350 the DARTER reported by dispatch that at 0300, in Latitude  $08^{\circ}-37'N$ , Longitude  $116^{\circ}-37'E$ , the enemy, consisting of at least nine ships with five on the near side of two heavies, was on course  $039^{\circ}(T)$ , speed fifteen knots and that there were many radars.\*\*\*\*\*

The DACE and DARTER continued to forge ahead until 0500 when it was clear that both submarines were sufficiently ahead of the enemy to close the track. At this time the wolf pack commander (Commanding Officer DARTER) directed (a) the DACE to take station ahead of the eastern column and some 10,000 yards further along the track than was the DARTER while he would take station ahead of the western column, and (b) both submarines to make

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\* DARTER Dispatch 221725 October 1944 to CTF 71.

\*\* Detailed Action Report No. 3, NOSHIRO, Anti-air and Surface Actions, October 23rd - 26th, 1944, WDC Document 161007.

\*\*\* War Patrol Report DARTER, Report of 4TH War Patrol, Serial 020, November 5th, 1944; also War Patrol Report DACE, Report of 5TH War Patrol, Serial 09, November 6th, 1944.

\*\*\*\* War Patrol Report DACE, Report of 5TH War Patrol, Serial 09, November 6th, 1944.

\*\*\*\*\* DARTER Dispatch 221850 October 1944 to CTF 71.



submerged dawn attacks on their own columns with the DARTER making the first attack. He later stated that (a) the reason for waiting to deliver a dawn attack was to determine accurately the composition of this force as it might be headed for Leyte Gulf, and (b) he felt that he could safely do this as, owing to the size of the enemy force and the narrowness of Palawan Passage, there could be no radical dawn zig.

The above comment about Leyte Gulf seems to have been "hindsight" for, on the 21st, the wolf pack commander had stated that he felt that the Singapore - Balabac - Mindanao Sea route was the shortest route for any part of the Japanese fleet which might be heading for Leyte. Therefore, he most likely thought that this force was headed for the Manila area or, if he knew of Coron Bay, possibly for that harbor.

At 0525 the wolf pack commander, in position ten miles dead ahead of the western column, reported by dispatch that (a) he estimated the enemy force to consist of a minimum of eleven ships on the same course and speed, and (b) he thought that both the DACE and DARTER might get in attacks.\*

The DARTER reversed course toward the enemy and submerged at 0609. She planned to fire "down the throat shots" but suddenly at 0630 she noted that the enemy force had changed course to 350°(T) which placed her to the eastward, in a much better firing position. Actually, the enemy had changed course to 035°(T) at 0400, had commenced zigzagging at 0500, had increased speed to eighteen knots at 0547,\*\* and had altered course to 010°(T),\*\*\* rather than 350°(T) at 0630.

At 0632 she commenced firing her bow tubes at the leading heavy cruiser of the ATAGO-class—which happened to be the ATAGO herself, the flagship of Commander Main Body who was also Commander FIRST Striking Force, average range 980 yards. She noted that she had made five hits—actually she had made four which were so devastating that the ATAGO sank at 0653 in Latitude 09°-30'N, Longitude 117°-18'E.\*\*\*\*

At 0633 she commenced firing four torpedoes from her stern tubes at the second heavy cruiser, also of the ATAGO-class. She then submerged to deep submergence and heard four hits of which three were thought to be in the target and one possibly in the third cruiser. Actually, the target was the TAKAO which received two hits.\*\*\*\*\* The third cruiser (CHOKAI) was not hit.

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\* DARTER Dispatch 222025 October 1944 to CTF 71.

\*\* Detailed Action Report 1ST Striking Force, SHO Operations, October 16th - 28th, 1944, WDC Document 161641.

\*\*\* Appended Charts, Detailed Action Report TAKAO, Anti-submarine Action, October 23rd - 25th, 1944, WDC Document 160141, NA 11839.

\*\*\*\* Detailed Action and Battle Lessons Report ATAGO, October 23rd, 1944, WDC Document 161747.

\*\*\*\*\* Detailed Action Report TAKAO, Anti-submarine Action, October 23rd - 25th, 1944, WDC Document 160141, NA 11839.

The DARTER remained submerged and underwent an inaccurate depth charge attack from Japanese destroyers.

Meanwhile, the Commanding Officer DACE, who had been watching the attack by the DARTER and had noted that this attack had disabled two Japanese heavy cruisers, prepared to attack himself. He noted that in the eastern column there were two heavy cruisers in column followed by a KONGO-class battleship. He decided to fire at the battleship and at 0654 he commenced firing six bow tubes and thought that he had made four hits. This was correct, excepting that the target was the heavy cruiser MAYA which sank at 0700.\*

Immediately after firing, the DACE submerged and underwent ineffective attacks by thirty-six depth charges.

At 0920 the Commanding Officer DARTER, at periscope depth, noted all Japanese shipping was out of sight excepting one ATAGO-class heavy cruiser (TAKAO), bearing 019°(T), distant 12,000 yards, which was dead in the water with an A/S screen of three destroyers and a CAP of three aircraft.

At 0930 he observed one destroyer depart to the north.

At 1042 (a) the DARTER, still at periscope depth, was observing the situation preparatory to attacking the cruiser, and (b) the DACE remained submerged.

\* \* \*

This narrative of the attacks by the DACE and DARTER on the Japanese FIRST Striking Force is a remarkable example of the fortunes of war. While it is true (as discussed under "Operations of Commander FIRST Striking Force, October 22nd" and also under "Operations of Commander FIRST Striking Force, 0000 - 1042 October 23rd") that the Japanese disposition was poorly chosen for antisubmarine operations at medium speed in a passage such as Palawan Passage, it should be clear that this fact became important in this case only because the two submarines, by a series of good breaks, happened (1) to make contact on the FIRST Striking Force and then (2) to be able to get into good firing positions.

What were these breaks?

(a) In the first place the DACE, which was due to return home, had been granted permission to remain in the area until October 24th to chase a merchant convoy which had been reported at the northern approaches to Palawan Passage, but which may have been later at the NW edge of Dangerous Ground, and thus, there were two submarines rather than one available for action.

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\* Detailed Action Report 1ST Striking Force, SHO Operations, October 16th - 28th, 1944, WDC Document 161641, NA 11839.



(b) The wolf pack commander in the DARTER (which submarine, owing to the new assignment of the DACE, should properly have taken station in the southern approaches to Palawan Passage and in the western approaches to Balabac Strait in order to cover those approaches as effectively as possible with one submarine) had instead, (a) decided to discuss the DACE's new assignment with the apparent plan of operating the DARTER in cooperation with the DACE against the convoy, and (b) had directed the DACE to rendezvous with him on the eastern edge of Dangerous Ground in the southern approaches to Palawan Passage (Diagram E) which rendezvous was poorly chosen in that it left the major width of the passage largely uncovered.

(c) The Main Body commenced zigzagging at 0530. This resulted in it being on a zigzag leg of  $035^{\circ}(T)$ , reported as early as 0617 as headed directly for the DARTER.\*

At 0627 the Commanding Officer DARTER stated that it "still looked like 'down the throat' shots".\* Suddenly he noted that at 0630 the Japanese units had zigged to the left to course  $350^{\circ}(T)$ —actually they had changed course to  $010^{\circ}(T)$ —and were therefore presenting excellent targets. This zigzag had occurred at a most opportune time, for the DARTER now, instead of being forced to fire "down the throat" shots with a low percentage of hit probability, was enabled to fire at an average of but 980 yards with a track angle close to the beam.\*

(d) The two submarines had only been at their rendezvous for sixteen minutes when the DARTER detected the Main Body, FIRST Striking Force by radar, bearing  $131^{\circ}(T)$ , distant 30,000 yards, and on course  $040^{\circ}(T)$ , which was at right angles to the bearing. This indicates that the DARTER likely picked up the enemy force at the one point at which she might have done so as the range thereafter would tend to increase.

(e) The radar conditions in the area, or the radar performances of both the DACE and DARTER, were unusually good at this time for war experience has shown that the reliable range at which a submarine on the surface might be expected to contact escorted combatant ships was 19,000 yards and here the contact had been made at 30,000 yards.\*\* Is it not probable that, had the Main Body been but a few thousand yards to the eastward of its present course, which was entirely possible, it might have passed by undetected?

(f) The Main Body, which had been making eighteen knots and zigzagging, had but two hours earlier (2300) slowed to sixteen knots and had ceased zigzagging. Why Commander Main Body did this is not clear for he well knew of the submarine menace in Palawan Passage. Because of the range of the original contact (30,000 yards), does it not seem correct to say that,

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\* War Patrol Report DARTER, Report of 4TH War Patrol, Serial 020, November 5th, 1944.

\*\* Submarine Warfare Instructions USF 9, Navy Department Office of the CNO 1946, Chapter 16, Paragraph 1604, Table 2, Page 16-5.

had the Japanese force continued on at eighteen knots, even if on a fixed course (040°(T)), the two submarines could not have closed it before daylight, at which time they would likely have been forced to submerge by Japanese aircraft?

\* \* \*

Based on Napoleon's concept that certain generals are lucky (Augereau) and certain unlucky (Sauret),\* it would appear that the wolf pack commander would have been characterized by Napoleon as being one of the lucky ones.

(6) HAMMERHEAD.

The HAMMERHEAD, which was departing her patrol area for Fremantle, at 0650 cleared Area D4 and set course for Karimata Strait.\*\* She proceeded on the surface during darkness and submerged during daylight.\*\*

At 1042 the HAMMERHEAD was about thirty miles southwest of St. Petrus Island.

(7) GURNARD.

The GURNARD continued to chase a convoy which was nearing the approaches to Singapore. Although the convoy was scattered into separate groups, the GURNARD continued to press the attack while on the surface. At 0039 she fired six torpedoes at two AK's in Latitude 01°-25'N, Longitude 105°-38'E, but all torpedoes missed.\*\*\*

Later, at 0228 in Latitude 01°-42'N, Longitude 105°-11'E, she fired four torpedoes at another AK, but once again, all torpedoes missed.\*\*\*

At 0313, with the convoy so well-scattered that targets were difficult to find and having ineffectively fired ten of his twenty-one torpedoes (it was customary when a submarine of the GURNARD type was to be employed in minelaying with twelve mines to carry twenty-one rather than twenty-four torpedoes), the commanding officer broke off the chase and set course for Point Datoe\*\*\* where he planned to conduct the minelaying operations which he had been directed to do in his patrol orders\*\*\*\* but which, owing to his chase of the above convoy, he had not yet commenced.

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\* J.M. Thompson, "Napoleon Self-Revealed" (Boston and New York, 1934), Letter 23, General's Characters, Page 31.

\*\* War Patrol Report HAMMERHEAD, Report of 2ND War Patrol, No Serial, November 2nd, 1944.

\*\*\* War Patrol Report GURNARD, Report of 7TH War Patrol, Serial 030, November 17th, 1944.

\*\*\*\* CTG 71.1 Operation Order No. 145-44, October 8th, 1944, to GURNARD.



At 0720 he submerged to patrol along the routes to Singapore and to give all hands a rest.\* At 1042 the GURNARD was bearing 264°(T), distant 190 miles from Point Dateo.

## (8) BATFISH.

The BATFISH, in Makassar Strait, was northbound en route to her patrol station north of Scarborough Shoal. She proceeded on the surface during darkness and submerged during daylight\*\* and made no contacts of importance. At 1042 she was bearing 189°(T), distant 210 miles from Cape Mangkalahat.

## (9) COD.

The COD, off western Luzon, was making a search sweep to the western edge of her patrol area, presumably in an effort to locate the task force previously contacted by the SEADRAGON. Although the course of the task force was reported to be 210°(T), the Commanding Officer COD appears to have done his utmost to locate this force by searching westward as far as his area would allow. He was doomed to failure for, unknown to him, the Japanese SECOND Striking Force had passed through this area only six hours prior to this time (Diagram E).

It is of note that, unknown to the COD, the three Japanese destroyers of DESDIV TWENTY-ONE were about twenty-five miles distant en route Manila (Diagram E).

At 0644 the COD commenced patrolling toward Cape Bojeador. Although she submerged for about one hour at 0713, she operated otherwise on the surface.

At 1042 she was bearing 260°(T), distant 135 miles from Cape Bojeador.\*\*\*

## (10) LAPON.

The LAPON was proceeding southward in Makassar Strait en route to Fremantle. At 0700 the commanding officer learned of the intended air strike schedule for Balikpapan\*\*\*\* and being in that vicinity, decided to remain in the area to render any possible assistance to the PADDLE. He patrolled off Balikpapan on the surface.\*\*\*\*

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\* War Patrol Report GURNARD, Report of 7TH War Patrol, Serial 030, November 17th, 1944.

\*\* War Patrol Report BATFISH, Report of 5TH War Patrol, Serial 057, December 1st, 1944.

\*\*\* War Patrol Report COD, Report of 5TH War Patrol, Serial 06, November 20th, 1944.

\*\*\*\* War Patrol Report LAPON, Report of 6TH War Patrol, Serial 44, October 31st, 1944.

At 1042 the LAPON was bearing 192°(T), distant 210 miles from Cape Mangkalihat.

(11) COBIA.

The COBIA was proceeding southward in Mindoro Strait en route Fremantle. At 0127 she completed transit of Mindoro Strait and entered the Sulu Sea.\*

At 1042 she was bearing 252°(T), distant fifty miles from Naso Point, Panay Island.

(12) BLACKFIN.

Having reported to CTF 71 on the previous day for operational control and having received additional orders to patrol Area D6 (the area west of Balabac Strait), the BLACKFIN was proceeding as directed on southerly courses.\*\* She proceeded on the surface during darkness as well as daylight.\*\*\*

At 1042 she was bearing 286°(T), distant fifty miles from Scarborough Shoal.

(13) Lifeguard Submarine PADDLE.

The PADDLE, in Makassar Strait, arrived in her lifeguard station off Balikpapan at 0600. She circled on station and remained on the surface during darkness as well as daylight.\*\*\*\*

At 1042 she was bearing 096°(T), distant fifty miles from Balikpapan.

(14) Submarines Retiring from the area.

Submarines retiring from the area, in addition to those discussed above, were SPITEFUL, TELEMACHUS, STURDY, RATON and ZWAARDVISCH.

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\* War Patrol Report COBIA, Report of 2ND War Patrol, Serial 035, November 5th, 1944.

\*\* War Patrol Report BLACKFIN, Report of 1ST War Patrol, Serial 021, December 4th, 1944.

\*\*\* Deck Log BLACKFIN, October 23rd, 1944.

\*\*\*\* War Patrol Report PADDLE, Report of 6TH War Patrol, Serial 018, November 1st, 1944.



CONFIDENTIAL

CAAF SOWESPAC  
C.G. FIFTH AIR FORCE  
October 23rd

(2) Operations of CAAF SOWESPAC, October 23rd.

CAAF SOWESPAC remained with COMSOWESPAC aboard the NASHVILLE while the operation of his aircraft in support of KING II continued to be controlled from Hollandia.

At 1042 he was preparing to depart the NASHVILLE to attend the installation of Sergio Osmena as President of the Philippine Commonwealth, at Tacloban (the capitol of Leyte).\*

(a) Operations of C.G. FIFTH Air Force, 0000 - 1042 October 23rd.

C.G. FIFTH Air Force, having assigned among other tasks the following to be accomplished by his subordinate commanders in support of the Leyte operation on this day, awaited results:

(1) C.G. FIFTH Bomber Command:

(a) To strike Cotobato (SW Mindanao) using eight squadrons B-24's;

(b) To strike shipping and harbor installations in the Coron - Culion Islands area the night of October 22nd/23rd using four B-24's;

(2) Commanding Officer 310th Bombardment Wing:

(a) To conduct shipping sweep to Zamboanga using one squadron of P-47's;

(b) To strike shipping Tawi Tawi using two squadrons of B-25's;

(c) To conduct shipping sweep Cagayan, Karimai, and Dijogo using three flights of P-38's.

(3) Commanding Officer NINETY-FIRST Photo Reconnaissance Wing:

(a) To photo reconnoiter Coron Bay using two F-5's (P-38's);

(b) To photo reconnoiter Cagayan town using two F-5's.

(4) CTG 73.4 (Commander Fleet Air Wing SEVENTEEN):

(a) Carry out Search Plan FOX using ten PB4Y's.\*\*

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\* War Diary NASHVILLE, October 23rd, 1944; also George C. Kenney, General Kenney Reports, New York, Duell, Sloan and Pierce, 1949, Page 452.

\*\* HQ 5TH Air Force Fragmentary Field Order No. 296, October 23rd, 1944.

Sometime around midnight October 22nd, but quite likely shortly before, he learned that ten planes (five from VPB THIRTY-THREE and five from THIRTY-FOUR) had been ordered to proceed to Leyte Gulf at dawn this day.\*

Since he planned to strike Puerto Princesa between 1045 and 1100 on the following day, he now visualized the possibility of providing air rescue for his bomber crews in the event of an effective enemy defense over the target. He, therefore, at 0114 requested CTF 77, CTG 73.7 and the Commanding Officer SAN CARLOS to arrange (a) for a rescue PBY to be on station off Puerto Princesa during the above strike and (b) for a fighter escort from the carriers off Leyte to be provided for the protection of the PBY.

Although the desirability of having a rescue PBY so stationed is quite apparent, it seems clear that, in this instance, C.G. FIFTH Air Force was either unduly optimistic or had incorrect information regarding the operation radius of the carrier-based fighters. This seems so because (a) the shortest distance from the suggested rescue station (fifteen miles east of Puerto Princesa) is about 410 miles, even with TG 77.4 operating just off the SE tip of Samar and (b) the fighter with the longest combat radius operating in TG 77.4 was the F6F-5 (carrying external fuel) and this fighter had a maximum radius of but 390 miles.\*\*

This situation marginal at best would have been aggravated by other factors such as (a) time dissipated in rendezvousing with and escorting the PBY, and (b) failure of the attack to be executed on schedule.

WHILE, AS POINTED OUT ABOVE, THIS REQUEST WAS BASED ON A POSSIBLY MARGINAL SITUATION AND MAY HAVE HAD SOME MERIT IT IS CONSIDERED WISE TO EMPLOY IT HERE AS AN INDICATION OF THE IMPORTANCE WHICH COMMANDERS SHOULD ATTACH TO THE NECESSITY FOR UNDERSTANDING SOMETHING OF THE CAPABILITIES AND LIMITATIONS OF THE WEAPONS AND TECHNOLOGICAL DEVICES EMPLOYED BY THEIR SISTER SERVICES, AS WELL AS BY THEIR OWN SERVICE.

THIS MATTER IS RECOGNIZED TODAY IN "JOINT ACTION ARMED FORCES" WHICH STATES IN PART THAT (A) "THE COMPLEXITIES OF MODERN MATERIAL AND TECHNIQUE TEND TO LIMIT THE COMMANDERS DETAILED KNOWLEDGE IN THESE MATTERS" AND (B) TO EFFECTIVELY UTILIZE THEIR FORCES COMMANDERS SHOULD (1) SELECT COMPETENT SUBORDINATE COMMANDERS AND (2) INSURE THAT COMPETENT ADVISORS ARE ASSIGNED TO THEIR STAFFS.\*\*\*

At about 0920 (when CTF 79 received the dispatch) C.G. FIFTH Air Force received CTF 77's answer to his request for a rescue PBY which stated,

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\* CTF 73 Dispatch 221245 October 1944 to COMFAIRWING 17 (Admin), info VPB's 33, 34, C.G. 5TH Air Force, CTF 77, CTG 73.7, etc.

\*\* Representative Enemy and Allied Aircraft, Technical Air Intelligence Center Manual No. 2 (TAIC Manual No. 2), October 1944.

\*\*\* Joint Action Armed Forces, Department of the Army, the Navy and the Air Force, Washington, D.C., September 19th, 1951, Chapter 3, Section 2, paragraph 30208.



"regret that due to distance involved carriers cannot provide fighter escort required to comply your 230114/I; action addressee pass to rescue group."\*

He could now see that if a rescue PBY were to be provided it would be required to make the flight without fighter protection and therefore considerable doubt would be raised concerning the justification for a rescue PBY. Since his prospects for securing air rescue had greatly diminished, it seems likely that he re-estimated the situation to determine whether or not a bombing strike against Puerto Princesa without rescue services would be justified.

During the forenoon, because his headquarters were at Biak, he likely learned that (a) sometime between midnight and 0200, (that was the scheduled time),\*\* two B-24's from Biak staging through Morotai had bombed Malabato airfield with three tons of bombs (Busanga Island forms part of Coron Bay\*\*\* and (b) forty-four B-24's from Biak had departed to strike enemy headquarters near Cotobato in SW Mindanao. These were the two principal missions assigned C.G. FIFTH Bomber Command.

As regards item (a) it is not clear why these two planes bombed Malabato airfield, instead of the designated targets. It seems probable, however, that the flight leader either did not observe any shipping or harbor facilities of importance or, despite his radar, could not see any because of the darkness—the moon had set—and therefore selected a new target nearby which would contribute toward COMSEVENTHFLT's objective (the discouragement of the use of Coron Bay by the enemy). IF THIS WAS THE REASON FOR HIS ACTION, IT WAS SOUND FOR THE TASK ASSIGNED HAD BEEN A PREDETERMINED COURSE OF ACTION WHICH PRESCRIBED THAT THE OBJECTIVE WAS TO BE ACCOMPLISHED BY DESTROYING SHIPPING AND HARBOR FACILITIES. SINCE NO SUCH TARGETS COULD BE LOCATED, IT WAS OBLIGATORY THAT THE FLIGHT LEADER RE-ESTIMATE THE SITUATION AND SELECT NEW TARGETS WHICH WOULD BEST CONTRIBUTE TO THE OBJECTIVE. HIS FAILURE TO DO SO WOULD HAVE DISCLOSED A LACK OF THE HIGHER QUALITIES OF COURAGE, JUDGEMENT, INITIATIVE AND LOYALTY.

Whether or not he knew by 1042 that neither (a) the shipping sweep to Zamboanga or (b) the photo reconnaissance of Coron Bay and Cagayan Town were not being made is not known.

By 1042 he had received the reports of contacts on enemy warships by the DARTER in southern Palawan Passage and was very likely anticipating an amplification by his Search Plan FOX planes in Sectors ONE, TWO and THREE, one of which should shortly cross Palawan and be in the vicinity of the sightings.

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\* CTF 77 Dispatch 222207 October 1944 to C.G. 5TH Air Force, CTG 73.7, SAN CARLOS.

\*\* C.G. 5TH Air Force Dispatch 221214/I October 1944 to 310TH BombWing, CTF's 73, 77, 79, COM7THFLT, COM3RDFLT.

\*\*\* C.G. 5TH Air Force Dispatch 240058/I October 1944 to all concerned SWPA operations, etc.

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However he heard nothing, for the only plane—the search plane in Sector ONE—which might have made contact by this time on the THIRD Section FIRST Striking Force which had just passed through Balabac Strait had been shot down as mentioned under "Operations of CTF 73, 0000 - 1042 October 23rd."

(b) Operations of CTF 73 (Naval Air Force), 0000 - 1042 October 23rd.

CTF 73, in the CURRITUCK, continued toward Morotai while his Morotai-based squadrons continued to function under the operational control of the Commanding Officer 310th Bombardment Wing who, under C.G. FIFTH Air Force, was responsible for air operations originating from Morotai.

At 0215 his flagship made radar contact on Morotai and after entering the harbor, at 0600 moored alongside the TANGIER.\*

Available records do not reveal fully the reasons for CTF 73's visit to Morotai, but it is quite probable that he wished (a) to determine at first hand the conditions of the airfield (particularly in view of the fact that he had made arrangements to comply with CTG 77.4's request to have replacement carrier aircraft flown there from Manus for pick-up by one of the latter's CVE's),\*\* (b) to inspect his Morotai-based squadrons which were performing a major role in the execution of Search Plan FOX, and (c) to discuss administrative and operational matters with Commanding Officer 310th Bombardment Wing.

It appears that he quickly appraised the seriousness of the congested condition of the airfield for at 0726 he requested CTG 77.4 for the foregoing reason to have a CVE arrive as early as possible after the 24th.\*\*\*

Then at 0932, again referring to the congestion at Morotai, he (a) requested when and where CTG 77.4 would pick up the planes, and (b) stated that if CTG 77.4 could not pick them up on October 25th, he would hold the planes at Owi pending advice from that commander.\*\*\*\*

Meanwhile, as on the previous three days, CTG 73.4 (Search and Support Group) still under the operational control of C.G. FIFTH Air Force continued to execute his part of Search Plan FOX with his three Morotai-based squadrons (VPB's 101, 115 and 146). Through 1042 these planes had made no important contacts on enemy warships.

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\* War Diary CURRITUCK, October 23rd, 1944.

\*\* CTG 77.4 Dispatch 180749 October 1944 to COMAIR7THFLT, info CTF 77, COMAIR7THFLT (Logistics); also CTF 73 Dispatch 201215 October 1944 to CAC Manus, COMAIR7THFLT (Logistics), CTG 77.4, CTF 77, C.O. 310th BombWing, etc.

\*\*\* CTF 73 Dispatch 222226 October 1944 to CTG 77.4, info C.G. 5TH Air Force, CTF 77, C.O. 310th BombWing, CTG 73.4.

\*\*\*\* CTF 73 Dispatch 230132 October 1944 to CTG 77.4, info CTF 77, CTG 73.4 C.O. 310TH BombWing.



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It would appear that about this time, the plane in Sector ONE should have contacted the THIRD Section, FIRST Striking Force which had just transitted Balabac Strait. However, it is apparent it did not for (a) no record of enemy contact reports by this plane have been found, (b) at 1633 (quite likely in the vicinity of Mindanao, returning to Morotai) the plane transmitted a message reporting its being under attack by enemy fighters\* and was subsequently shot down\*\*, and (c) the MOGAMI in her action report stated that no planes or submarines were sighted during the Balabac Strait passage. The failure of this and other FOX Plan Searches to disclose the presence of large enemy surface forces on this day is discussed in Volume IV.

(1) Operations of CTG 73.7 (Advanced Group), 0000 - 1042 October 23rd.

During this day the SAN CARLOS, which was the flagship of CTG 73.7, remained anchored in Hinunangan Bay.\*\*\* Since the first elements of VPB's THIRTY-THREE and THIRTY-FOUR were to arrive this day, CTG 73.7 was quite likely paying close attention to the preparations being made by his ships (SAN CARLOS and HALF MOON) to tend them.

At about 0500 (when it was received by CTG 79) he received C.G. FIFTH Air Force's request for a rescue PBY to be on station during the Puerto Princesa strike scheduled for the next day.\*\*\*\* Since the request included a requirement for fighters to escort the PBY, he considered the matter but awaited CTF 77's reaction before replying.

At 0757 the HALF MOON got underway to shift anchorage and at 0821 anchored and continued preparations to tend aircraft.\*\*\*\*\*

At about 0920 (when it was received by COMSEVENTHFLT) he received CTF 77's reply to C.G. FIFTH Air Force's request (discussed in full under "Operations of C.G. FIFTH Air Force, 0000 - 1042 October 23rd") which (a) denied the provision of fighter escort, and (b) advised C.G. FIFTH Air Force to pass the request to the latter's rescue group for action.

At about 1015 (when it was received by CTF 79) he received a dispatch from Commander Fleet Air Wing SEVENTEEN (Administration), based in Mios Woendi, reporting the departure for Leyte of two five-plane sections of PBY's at 0700.\*\*\*\*\*

Based on the fact that his (CTG 73.7's) PBY's on arrival in Leyte Gulf would be nearer Puerto Princesa than any other available air rescue units, he was aware of the possibility that he might be further queried regarding his willingness to provide the rescue service. Anticipating that he would have sufficient planes, he now attempted to weigh the

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\* Aircraft in Sector ONE Dispatch 230733 October 1944 to C.G. 5TH Air Force.

\*\* War Diary VPB 101, October 23rd, 1944.

\*\*\* War Diary SAN CARLOS, October 23rd, 1944.

\*\*\*\* C.G. 5TH Air Force Dispatch 230114/I October 1944 to CTF 77, CTG 73.7, SAN CARLOS, info COM7THFLT.

\*\*\*\*\* War Diary HALF MOON, October 23rd, 1944.

\*\*\*\*\* COMFAW (Admin) Dispatch 222211 October 1944 to CTG 73.7, info 308TH BombWing, CTF's 77 and 78, SAN CARLOS.

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requirement against the hazard to which an unescorted PBY would be exposed. Although he knew the risk would be great, he apparently felt he was not in the position to determine the relative merits of the issue. Accordingly, he decided to report his intentions, with the reasons therefor, to his commander who could either override or support his proposed action in the event C.G. FIFTH Air Force pressed the issue.

Therefore, at 1030 he advised CTF 77 regarding the rescue mission stating, in part, "Daylight Catalina\* available; however do not consider flight practicable without adequate fighter escort; will not send Seacat unless otherwise directed; advise."\*\*

AS HAD BEEN DISCUSSED UNDER "OPERATIONS OF CTG 38.2, 0000 - 1042 OCTOBER 23RD", THE GENERAL EMPLOYMENT OF THE PHRASE, "UNLESS OTHERWISE DIRECTED" IS NOT RECOMMENDED BECAUSE OF THE MISUNDERSTANDING OR CONFUSION THAT MIGHT BE CREATED THEREBY. IN THIS INSTANCE, HOWEVER, WITH BOTH CTF 77 AND CTG 73.7 WITHIN TBS VOICE RANGE, ANY MISUNDERSTANDING ARISING COULD BE QUICKLY CLARIFIED.

(B) CINCPAC - CINCPOA, 0000 - 1042 October 23rd.

During the early morning CINCPAC advised his command that an oiler was expected to arrive in Coron Bay that forenoon for the purpose of replenishing the Japanese force of which the SECOND Striking Force was a part.

Also during the forenoon he was aware that a Japanese plane, for the second straight day, had contacted a Japanese surface force, this time in Latitude 23°-20'N, Longitude 131°-38'E. Since this report was a repetition of (a) a similar contact on the previous day and (b) it did not seem possible that Japanese planes would make the same error twice, he decided that his interpretation of his intelligence had been faulty and therefore he minimized the report.

This was a great error for this contact, as was that on the previous day, was on the Japanese Main Force. What might have happened had CINCPAC, instead of minimizing this report, directed that an effort be made to discover its character, can only be conjectured. Certainly if such an effort had located this force and had discovered its true character the effect on Allied operations, and notably on those of COMTHIRDFLT, might have been considerable.

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\* Assigned daily Catalina on rescue mission.

\*\* CTG 73.7 Dispatch 230130 October 1944 to CTF 77.



## (1) Western Pacific Task Forces, 0000 - 1042

## (a) Operations of COMTHIRDFLT

At the beginning of the day COMTHIRDFLT, in the NEW JERSEY, with TG 38.2, was bearing 310°(T), distant seventy miles from Point MICK. As has been discussed at considerable length under "Operations of COMTHIRDFLT, October 22nd", an important exchange of dispatches between COMINCH, CINCPAC, COMSOWESPAC and himself had occurred during the previous two days which clearly revealed at this stage in the operation a marked difference of opinion in the minds of those commanders regarding the strategic employment of TF 38 in support and cover of the Leyte forces.\*

As a result of these dispatches, as well as of other factors— notably the SEADRAGON's contact report on one carrier and four unidentified ships to the westward of Luzon Strait which he had received at 0832 the previous day\*\*—he seems to have been watching the developing situation closely to determine whether or not his planned replenishment schedule was sound.

At 0053 he intercepted a report from the SHARK repeating an earlier unrepeated—for 0630 October 22nd contact on a force of seven ships (four large and three additional) in Latitude 20°-28'N, Longitude 117°-50'E, course 190°(T), speed twenty-two knots\*\*\* (Contact 1). (This contact was in effect an amplification of the SEADRAGON's report, which submarine was in the same wolf pack with the SHARK.)

How he evaluated these two reports is not known, but it seems likely that owing to the (a) reported composition (one CV, four DD), course (210°(T)), and speed (nineteen knots) of the SEADRAGON contact, (b) the same factors of the SHARK contact, (c) distance between these contacts (ninety miles), (d) time difference (six hours and thirty-five minutes), and (e) further fact that he knew that the SEADRAGON had claimed two timed hits in the carrier,\*\* he considered that these two contacts might well be on the same force and that this force might well be part of the force mentioned in his intelligence during the past few days.

This intelligence could have led him to believe that there may have been at sea in the Formosa - Philippines area a larger force of which

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\* COM3RDFLT Dispatch 210454 October 1944 to COMSOWESPAC, info CINCPAC, COMINCH, CTF 77, CTF 38, CTG 38.1; COM3RDFLT Dispatch 210645 October 1944 to COMSOWESPAC, info CINCPAC, COMINCH, CTF 77, CTF 38, CTG 38.1; COMINCH and CNO Dispatch 211535 October 1944 to CINCPAC, info COM3RDFLT; CINCPAC Dispatch 211852 October 1944 to COM3RDFLT, info COMINCH, COMSOWESPAC; COM3RDFLT Dispatch 220344 October 1944 to CINCPAC; COMSOWESPAC Dispatch 212240 October 1944 to COM3RDFLT.

\*\* SEADRAGON Dispatch 212140 October 1944 to CTF 17.

\*\*\* SHARK Dispatch 221410 October 1944 to COMSUBPAC, info COM3RDFLT, COMSOWESPAC, CTF 77, COMINCH, COMNAVGRPCHINA, all TFC's and TGC's 3RDFLT.

the SECOND Striking Force (referred to as FIFTH Fleet) was a part, and which, in addition to the units of the SECOND Striking Force (CRUDIV TWENTY-ONE and DESRON ONE), included two battleships (FUSO and YAMASHIRO), DESRON ELEVEN, and probably CARDIV's THREE and FOUR.

Actually this intelligence was erroneous, for the only force at sea in this area was the SECOND Striking Force (CRUDIV TWENTY-ONE and DESRON ONE).

At 0201 he received Headquarters COMSEVENTHFLT's intelligence summary for the period October 21st through noon on October 22nd. He noted that much of the information contained therein he had by other means and that nothing in the summary showed real evidence of a major reaction to the invasion of Leyte which might require positive intervention by his command.\*

However, despite this fact he realized that there was considerable concern, not only in SOWESPAC but also in CINCPAC - CINCPAC, over the security of the Allied forces in the Leyte area. In fact, he had been advised by the latter commander in positive language that the limitations imposed by the necessity of covering SOWESPAC forces had to be accepted. Therefore, he seems to have reviewed his instructions to his command for the morrow, as well as for the following days, and to have arrived at the conclusion that (a) his planned operations for CTG's 38.1 and 38.4 were sound including the transfer of COMBATPAC in the WASHINGTON with the ALABAMA and DESDIV 100 from TG 38.3 to TG 38.4, but that (b) his planned operations for CTG's 38.2 and 38.3 were perhaps not sound in that operating these two groups in Area CONDOR with air searches merely covering the sea area to the eastern coast of Luzon for the purpose of giving early warning of enemy surface forces approaching via Luzon Strait would in no way provide information concerning the movements of any Japanese forces operating (1) in the waters to the westward of Luzon and the Visayas, (2) in the Manila and Coron Bay areas in particular.

Perhaps he recalled that it was only on the previous day that he had expressed his desire to "swing some blows in support" and realized that it was a little bit difficult to swing blows in support from Area CONDOR.

He now studied the charts to see whether this could be done without forcing a change in his planned replenishment schedule. He could see that he could easily change the operating area of TG's 38.2 and 38.3 to a position about ninety miles to the eastward of Polillo Island which position could be readily reached by 0600 October 24th without affecting the planned replenishment schedule for these two groups. This was so because the schedule called for TG 38.3 to fuel in Area ALCOHOL on October 26th and as this area was but 500 miles from the above position, there was sufficient time to arrive there from the Polillo Island position by that date providing nothing occurred to prevent it; i.e., enemy contacts of great importance.

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\* COM7THFLT Dispatch 220305 October 1944 to addressees concerned with SOWESPAC operations.



Because of this, he decided that it would be wise to (a) change CTG's 38.2 and 38.3's present orders, which were to operate commencing 0600 October 24th and until further orders in Area CONDOR and (b) direct them, instead, to operate in an area about ninety miles due east of Polillo Island and (c) make air searches to the westward from there rather than from Area CONDOR. However, he realized that, if he was going to accomplish this, time was of the essence and since TG 38.2 would be fueling and would be delayed for some time, it would be wise to direct CTF 38 (who was in TG 38.3) to (a) proceed immediately with TG 38.3 to the above vicinity (Latitude 15°-00'N, Longitude 123°-30'E), (b) extend his afternoon air search for this day to the westward to cover as much of the Sibuyan Sea as practicable, (c) launch an early-morning reinforced search on October 24th to maximum distance in sector 220° - 295°(T), striking targets of opportunity, (d) leave the battleships (WASHINGTON, ALABAMA) and DESDIV 100 (COGSWELL, CAPERTON, INGERSOLL, KNAPP) at Point CONDOR to rendezvous with CTG 38.4 as previously directed.

He therefore at 0252 issued dispatch instructions to this effect to CTF 38 saying, in addition, that TG 38.2 would join CTF 38 (who was in TG 38.3) upon completion of fueling.\*

HIS DECISION TO MAINTAIN HIS PLANNED SCHEDULE FOR TG'S 38.1 AND 38.4 AND TO CHANGE THAT FOR TG'S 38.2 AND 38.3 SEEMS SOUND. HOWEVER, HIS DESIGNATED AIR SEARCH SECTOR DOES NOT APPEAR SOUND FOR THIS SECTOR SEARCH, WHILE IT COVERED THE ABOVE APPROACHING ENEMY SHIPPING AS WELL AS THE MAJOR JAPANESE AIRFIELDS ON LUZON (WHICH, AS SHOWN ON PLATE XV WERE ALL SOUTH OF LINGAYEN GULF), COULD WELL HAVE BEEN ENLARGED TO RECONNOITER (A) THE FEW NORTHERN AIRFIELDS ON LUZON AT THE SAME TIME (LAOAG, APPARI, TUGUEGARAO), AND (B) BABUYAN AND PERHAPS BALINTANG CHANNELS.

Meanwhile, realizing that CTG 38.2's 0600 October 24th rendezvous with CTG 38.3 was some 360 miles to the westward and that if the fueling were delayed into the afternoon this might require a rejoining speed of twenty-five knots, he decided to endeavor to reduce the fueling time and the distance to the rendezvous. Therefore, at 0303 he sent a TBS voice radio message to CTG 38.2 (a) directing that commander to expedite his refueling that morning employing a westerly course if practicable, and (b) inviting attention to his (COMTHIRDFLT's) 221752 to CTF 38 which he considered urgent.\*\*

At 0307 he intercepted a message from the wolf pack commander in the BESUGO reporting that the BESUGO (a) was now patrolling the eastern half of Area SEVEN (Bungo Suido and approaches thereto) while RONQUIL was patrolling the western half,\*\*\* and (b) had made no further contacts since his last serial (Serial Three, discussed in full under "Operations of CTF 17, October 18th"—Volume II of this analysis).

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\* COM3RDFLT Dispatch 221752 October 1944 to CTF 38, info all concerned with SOWESPAC operations, COMINCH, CINCPAC, all TFC's and TGC's 3RDFLT.

\*\* COM3RDFLT TBS Voice Radio Message 230303/I October 1944 to CTG 38.2.

\*\*\* BESUGO Dispatch 221514 October 1944 to COMSUBPAC.

Since he had received a special report from CINCPAC at 0747 the previous morning estimating that the Main Force and/or its Supply Force had probably sortied from the Inland Sea very recently (likely the 20th), this BESUGO dispatch likely caused him to feel that if the sortie had occurred either (a) Kii Suido or Shimonoseki Suido had been employed, rather than Bungo Suido, or (b) the Bungo Suido submarines had failed to intercept the enemy.

(Actually, as is shown under "Operations of CTF 17, October 20th", (Plate XX) the Main Force sortied Bungo Suido on October 20th but was not discovered by the submarines off that strait, owing to the fact that they had been reassigned by the wolf pack commander in the BESUGO and by CTF 17. Whether or not COMTHIRDFLT was alert to this reassignment is not clear.)

At 0429 he received, as an information addressee, CTF 77's dispatch reply to CTG 77.4's recommendation of the previous day that morning and afternoon sweeps be made against Visayan and northern Mindanao airfields. In this dispatch (quoted in full under "Operations of CTF 77, October 22nd") CTF 77 (a) directed CTG 77.4 to reduce his target CAP to sixteen VF and direct support groups to six VF/six VT, and (b) suggested that CTG 77.4 conduct (1) early morning fighter sweeps, and (2) afternoon attacks against enemy airfields in northern Mindanao and western Visayas and against enemy shipping in those areas.\* He likely received this dispatch with satisfaction since he seems to have been of the opinion that CTG 77.4 was entirely capable of meeting this threat.

At 0455 he knew that contact had been made with the fueling group, bearing 214°(T), distant fourteen miles.\*\*

At 0518 he received, as an information addressee, a report from CTF 71 of a contact by the DARTER on three probable battleships at 0200 in the southern end of Palawan Passage on course 040°(T), speed eighteen knots\*\*\* (Contact 4).

At 0553 he received, as an information addressee, the DRUM's report of three ASASHIO-class destroyers contacted at 1745 the previous evening in position Latitude 19°-13'N, Longitude 118°-52'E, course 090°(T), estimated speed twenty-five knots\*\*\*\* (Contact 3).

At about 0600 he noted that TG 38.2 had rendezvoused with the fueling group and at 0615 had commenced fueling on course 270°(T), speed ten knots\*\*\*\*\*

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\* CTF 77 Dispatch 220603 October 1944 to CTG 77.4, info C.G. 5TH Air Force, CAAF SOWESPAC, CTF's 78, 79, COM3RDFLT, CTF 38.

\*\* War Diary COMDESDIV 104, October 23rd, 1944.

\*\*\* CTF 71 Dispatch 221923 October 1944 to CINCPAC, COM3RDFLT, C.G. 5TH Air Force, etc.

\*\*\*\* DRUM Dispatch 221037 October 1944 to COMSUBPAC, info COMSOWESPAC, COMINCH, COM3RDFLT, etc.

\*\*\*\*\* Deck Log NEW JERSEY, October 23rd, 1944; also War Diary COMDESDIV 104, October 23rd, 1944.



At 0620 he intercepted the DARTER's second report (Serial SEVEN) of the enemy force sighted in the southern end of Palawan Passage which report amplified the 0200 contact report to at least nine ships, five medium on near side of two heavies with many radars and gave the 0300 position as Latitude 08°-37'N, Longitude 116°-37'E, course 039°(T), speed fifteen knots\* (Contact 5).

At 0745 he received DARTER's third report of the enemy force in Palawan Passage, quoted in part as follows: "Estimate minimum eleven ships. Same course, speed.\*\* Comparing the three reports by DARTER made over a period of three hours, he could see that (a) the course and speed had not changed appreciably, and (b) there were at least eleven ships of which two or three might be battleships with the remainder cruisers and destroyers.

At 0805 he received a dispatch from CTF 71 advising that the DARTER had reported the enemy at 0300 as composed of a minimum of eleven ships with many radars in Latitude 08°-37'N, Longitude 116°-37'E, on course 039°(T), speed fifteen knots.\*\*\*

At 0834 he received a dispatch from COMSEVENTHFLT retransmitting the ICEFISH's contact made at 0930 the previous day on two heavy cruisers and three destroyers in Latitude 19°-44'N, Longitude 118°-11'E, on course 160°(T), speed sixteen knots.\*\*\*\* By comparing this contact with one obtained earlier by the SHARK, he could see that this force was very likely the one reported by the SHARK; i.e., the Japanese SECOND Striking Force.

(It may be appropriate to insert parenthetically at this point that, since COMTHIRDFLT listened regularly on the submarine reporting frequencies, quite often intercepting their contact reports, he may have received the original contact report directly from the ICEFISH and therefore much earlier than 0834. However, he does not appear to have done so in this case.)

At 0845 he received a visual message from CTG 38.2 estimating completion of fueling by 1200 and announcing the latter's intention to arrive by 0600 the next day at the same position assigned TG 38.3 unless otherwise directed.\*\*\*\*\*

As a result of these additional contact reports, but mainly as a result of the DARTER's reports,\*\*\*\*\* he now re-estimated the situation to

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- \* DARTER Dispatch 221850 October 1944 to Radio Perth Australia.
  - \*\* DARTER Dispatch 222025 October 1944 to CTF 71.
  - \*\*\* CTF 71 Dispatch 222218 October 1944 to all TFC's 3RD and 7TH Fleets, COM3RDFLT, COM7THFLT, info CINCPAC, CTF 17, C.G.'s 5TH and 13TH Air Forces.
  - \*\*\*\* ICEFISH Dispatch 221301 October 1944 to COMSUBPAC, info COM7THFLT, (Readdressed by COM7THFLT to CTF's 71, 72, 57, 38, COM3RDFLT and all TGC's of TF 38).
  - \*\*\*\*\* CTG 38.2 Visual Dispatch 222345 October 1944 to COM3RDFLT.
  - \*\*\*\*\* Admiral Halsey's Story, by Fleet Admiral W.F. Halsey, USN, and Lieutenant Commander J. Bryan III, USNR, (New York, 1947), Page 211.

determine whether or not his plans as presently ordered were adequate. While the nature of his mental processes at this time are not known, it seems probable, from the directives which he issued later, that he reasoned along these lines:

(a) As regards the DARTER contacts, these were moving steadily in a northeasterly direction through Palawan Passage and consisted of a minimum of eleven ships of which a number (perhaps three) were heavy ships, likely battleships. These ships, if they maintained their present course and speed, could arrive in the Coron Bay area by about sundown.

(b) As regards the ICEFISH contact of the previous day which he had just received at 0834 this morning, these ships, if they headed directly for the Coron Bay area, could also arrive there easily by sundown.

(c) From these two facts, it could be estimated that a minimum of two Japanese forces (and likely other forces as well, since the DARTER on the previous day had reported three large ships one of which dimly seen appeared to be a battleship in Dangerous Ground), consisting of not less than eighteen ships, and probably many more, could, among other capabilities, concentrate in the Coron Bay area by sundown (where there were likely to be oilers), or even strike directly against Leyte.

But, if they did so, what were their objectives? He likely recalled (a) COMSEVENTHFLT's 210526 wherein that commander had pointed out that Coron Bay and the harbors in the vicinity appeared to be highly likely concentration or fueling areas for important elements of the Japanese fleet which might attempt to strike against the Allied Leyte forces,\* (b) his own dispatch (190100) wherein he had cited the enemy capability of attempting to deploy his fleet in small dispersed groups near the objective area in such manner that they could concentrate quickly for short, fast, unheralded Tokyo Express runs,\*\* and (c) COMSOWESPAC's 212240 wherein that commander had pointed out that until land-based air forces were established on Leyte, his forces were subject to raiding enemy elements both air and surface.\*\*\*

He now estimated the strength and weakness factors. He knew from his contact reports that the Japanese forces included battleships--how many he could not say with any sureness for he did not know, but he had reason to believe that the FIRST Striking Force in the Singapore - Brunei area numbered six battleships\*\*\*\* and since three battleships had been observed this morning by the DARTER and one on the previous day (also by the

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\* COM7THFLT Dispatch 210526 October 1944 to C.G. 5TH Air Force, CAAF SOWESPAC, info COMSOWESPAC, COM3RDFLT.

\*\* COM3RDFLT Dispatch 190100 October 1944 to COMSOWESPAC, COM7THFLT, info CINCPAC, COMINCH, all TFC's 3RD and 7TH Fleets.

\*\*\* COMSOWESPAC Dispatch 212240 October 1944 to COM3RDFLT, info CINCPAC, CTF 38, CTG 38.1, CofS U.S. Army (Marshall).

\*\*\*\* COMLSTCARTASKFORPAC (CTF 38) Operation Order No. 11-44, Serial 00020, October 1st, 1944, Annex F.



DARTER), he knew that at least four battleships were in the vicinity of Palawan Island with a possibility of more.

As regards his own command, he had at present in TG's 38.2 and 38.3 but four battleships, two in each group. Thus, he might well be outnumbered by Japanese battleships.

He then likely estimated the air situation. He naturally had reason to expect Japanese land-based aircraft reinforcements would arrive in the Philippines if and when the Japanese surface forces attempted counteraction. Thus, he could expect that any aircraft employed by the Japanese would consist of both (a) land-based aircraft operating from bases in the Philippines and (b) carrier aircraft (several carriers had recently been sighted in the South China Sea). However, it seems probable that he felt that his aircraft in his two task groups (TG's 38.2 and 38.3—about 388 planes), presently ordered to station about ninety miles to the eastward of Polillo Island, would be sufficiently strong to gain air supremacy within the range of their aircraft.

He now considered enemy capabilities. What could the enemy, with the surface forces already located and with those additional forces not as yet located, do to interfere with the Allied operations at Leyte? As pointed out earlier, he realized that they might (a) attempt to reinforce their ground troops at Leyte by Tokyo Express runs (1) in small dispersed groups so located as to be enabled to concentrate quickly, and (2) by light surface forces moving in more or less directly (Actually, in connection with Tokyo Express possibilities, he had advised COMSOWESPAC on October 17th as well as on October 19th relative thereto.), (b) make strong air and surface raids against his Leyte forces (This was the principal concern of both COMSOWESPAC and COMSEVENTHFLT (CTF 77).), or (c) make a strong attack on the Leyte forces employing major forces.

He decided that his present plans were inadequate for, while his two task groups off Polillo Island were well disposed to reconnoiter the air search sector designated and to strike the airfields south of Lingayen Gulf, they were not adequately disposed to guard the approaches through the Philippines; i.e., (1) Sibuyan Sea and San Bernardino Strait, and (2) Mindanao Sea and Surigao Strait, against enemy surface forces.

He clearly saw that in view of his instructions to cover and support COMSOWESPAC's forces (which instructions had been recently affirmed by CINCPAC)\* it had become imperative to clarify the picture\*\* and to do so adequately required (a) a redistribution of his forces, and (b) the employment of three rather than two task groups to cover the approaches through the Philippines. He decided that he would (1) leave TG 38.3 in its

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\* CINCPAC Dispatch 211852 October 1944 to COM3RDFLT, info COMINCH, COM-SOWESPAC.

\*\* Action Report COM3RDFLT, Report on the Operations of Western Pacific Task Forces and the 3RDFLT, Serial 0085, January 25th, 1945.



previously designated position about ninety miles to the eastward of Polillo Island, (2) station TG 38.2 with the IOWA and NEW JERSEY (the strongest battleships in his command) off San Bernardino Strait (COMTHIRDFLT was in the NEW JERSEY), and (3) station one of his two retiring task groups (TG's 38.1 and 38.4) off Leyte Gulf. (While his reasons for selecting TG 38.4 are not known, it seems likely that, since TG 38.1 had approximately 326 planes and TG 38.4 had but 207 planes, it was because this task group was temporarily composed in part of the two battleships (WASHINGTON and ALABAMA) with COMBATPAC. This would give him a total of six modern battleships and about 595 planes if the three task groups were concentrated.)

He therefore, in accordance with this decision, issued the implementing orders as follows:

(a) At 0859 a dispatch directing TG 38.4 (plus ALABAMA, WASHINGTON and DESDIV 100) to proceed immediately to arrive in the vicinity Latitude  $11^{\circ}$ - $30'$ N, Longitude  $126^{\circ}$ - $30'$ E, by 0600 October 24th, and to launch a reinforced search to westward at dawn, striking targets of opportunity;\* and

(b) At 0903 a dispatch directing TG 38.2 to proceed, upon completion of fueling, to the vicinity Latitude  $13^{\circ}$ - $00'$ N, Longitude  $125^{\circ}$ - $00'$ E, to arrive by 0600 October 24th and to launch a reinforced search to westward at dawn to include Coron Bay, striking targets of opportunity.\*\*

FROM THESE TWO DISPATCHES, AND THAT SENT AT 0252 TO CTF 38, IT CAN READILY BE SEEN THAT COMTHIRDFLT HAD MADE A SERIES OF DECISIONS WHICH, IN EFFECT, WOULD STRATEGICALLY DISPOSE HIS FORCES ALONG THE EASTERN LITTORAL OF THE PHILIPPINES BY THE NEXT DAWN AS FOLLOWS: (A) TG 38.3 WOULD BE IN A POSITION APPROXIMATELY NINETY MILES DUE EAST OF THE NORTHERN TIP OF POLILLO ISLAND; (B) TG 38.2 WOULD BE ASTRIDE THE EASTERN EXIT FROM SAN BERNARDINO STRAIT; AND (C) TG 38.4 WOULD BE IN A POSITION BEARING  $050^{\circ}$ (T), DISTANT FIFTY MILES FROM THE SE TIP OF SAMAR ISLAND (SUNGI POINT). FROM THESE POSITIONS HE COULD READILY PROJECT HIS CONSIDERABLE STRENGTH AGAINST ANY JAPANESE MOVE EITHER TO REINFORCE THE LEYTE GARRISON OR TO ATTACK THE ALLIED FORCES IN OR NEAR LEYTE GULF.

BASED ON PROBABLE ENEMY COURSES OF ACTION, HIS DECISIONS RELATING THERETO SEEM SOUND. YET, IT IS APPARENT THAT ALTHOUGH THE WESTERN APPROACHES TO LEYTE (WHICH INCLUDED THE EASTERN PORTION OF THE SOUTH CHINA SEA AS WELL AS BALABAC STRAIT) WERE TO BE WELL COVERED BY THE COMBINED EFFORTS OF CARRIER-BASED AND FOX PLAN SEARCHES, LITTLE CONCERN WAS SHOWN BY COMTHIRDFLT FOR THE LIKELIHOOD OF AN ENEMY THRUST FROM THE NORTH OR NORTHEAST. THIS MATTER HAS BEEN DISCUSSED AT CONSIDERABLE LENGTH UNDER "OPERATIONS OF

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\* COM3RDFLT Dispatch 222359 October 1944 to CTG 38.4, info COMINCH, CINCPAC, all TFC's and TGC's 3RDFLT, all concerned with SOWESPAC operations.

\*\* COM3RDFLT Dispatch 230003 October 1944 to CTG 38.2, info COMINCH, CINCPAC, all TFC's and TGC's 3RDFLT, all concerned with SOWESPAC operations.



COMTHIRDFLT, OCTOBER 20TH". IT IS REASONABLE TO ASSUME THAT HE CONTINUED TO DEPEND UPON (A) THE TF 17 SUBMARINES STATIONED OFF BUNGO SUIDO AND KII SUIDO, AND (B) THE TG 30.5 LAND AND TENDER-BASED AIR SEARCHES FROM THE MARIANAS AND PALAU (DIAGRAM B) TO WARN HIM OF AN ENEMY APPROACH FROM HIS NORTHERN FLANK (WHICH HE CLEARLY CONSIDERED UNLIKELY).

It appears also that he continued largely to discount the threatening portent of the two intelligence reports received at 0747 and 1233 respectively on the previous day, the first estimating the Japanese Main Force and/or its supply force as having probably sortied from the Inland Sea (within the past day or so), and the second reporting that a Japanese plane had reported a contact at 0637 on the 22nd in either Latitude 10°-32'N, or Latitude 25°-32'N, Longitude 133°-38'E, as a result of which a precautionary alert had been ordered for the Nansei Shoto. Parenthetically, it would appear quite unlikely that a contact other than on aircraft carriers would have prompted such an alert.

The foregoing thesis, that he gave little weight to the above intelligence, is substantiated by the fact that he issued no special instructions to CTG 30.5 to investigate the contact position within the latter's area of search responsibility.

Since he had now assigned CTG 38.4 new duties he at 0911 cancelled his orders of the previous day for a series of ship transfers (mainly destroyers) which would have occurred with the arrival of TG 38.4 at Ulithi.\*

At 0917 he sent a visual message to CTG 38.2 which largely repeated and called attention to his earlier dispatch (220003) which would appear on the FOX broadcast.\*\*

At 0936 he directed the LIPAN (ATF) to turn around, proceed to Point CONDOR and remain there awaiting further orders.\*\*\*

Meanwhile, he continued to study the situation to determine whether or not he should make any change in the operations planned for CTG 38.1. As a result of this study he decided not to change CTG 38.1's orders. While he issued no instructions to this effect, the fact that he made this decision is clearly shown by the dispatch which he sent at 1021 to CTG 38.1 directing that commander upon arrival at Ulithi to (a) detach CRUDIV FIVE and DESRON FOUR (less ELLET and ROE), (b) reform TG 30.2 as directed in previous instructions, (c) detach COMDESRON TWELVE with FARENHOLT, WOODWORTH, CALLA and GRAYSON with orders to report to CTF 57 for duty.\*\*\*\*

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\* COM3RDFLT Dispatch 230011 October 1944 to CTG's 38.4, 30.3, info CINC-PAC, COMCRUDIV 10, CANBERRA, CTF's 38, 57, CTG 30.9, COMDESRON 12.

\*\* COM3RDFLT Dispatch 230017 October 1944 to CTG 38.2.

\*\*\* COM3RDFLT Dispatch 230036 October 1944 to LIPAN, info COMINCH, CINC-PAC, all TGC's 3RDFLT, all concerned with SOWESPAC Operations.

\*\*\*\* COM3RDFLT Dispatch 231021 October 1944 to CTG 38.1, info CTF's 38, 57, CINCPAC, COMDESDIV 24.



The question now arises as to the correctness of this decision. Clearly he based his decision on the following facts, some of which are discussed fully under "Operations of COMTHIRDFLT, October 21st", (a) he had to prepare for Operation HOTFOOT which, as has been stated earlier, was scheduled for November 11th, (b) this required that the groups of TF 38 be returned to Ulithi or to other replacement areas for rest, recreation, and replenishment of aircraft and pilots, (c) this was particularly true because of combat fatigue which was developing in his command (FITERON EIGHT in BUNKER HILL), (d) enemy forces of major strength had not as yet been contacted by Allied aircraft or submarines or reported by Allied Intelligence, (e) except for several contacts on single carriers (presumably considered as being units of the larger force of which the SECOND Striking Force was a part) there had been no indications of the presence of the Japanese main carrier strength anywhere, and (f) he had, as pointed out earlier, in TG's 38.2, 38.3 and 38.4 forces of sufficient strength to meet successfully in combat any of the enemy naval forces presently located.

But in so doing did he adequately weigh certain other factors, notably the facts that (a) on the preceding day he had been advised by CINCPAC that the limitations imposed by the necessity of covering SOWESPAC forces had to be accepted,\* (b) he knew that (1) an increasing number of enemy contacts were being made by Allied submarines to the westward of Luzon on southerly courses and to the westward of Palawan on northerly courses which contacts included several carriers, at least four battleships, numerous cruisers and destroyers and some reinforcement aircraft and (2) there had been indications that the surface forces might be headed for Coron Bay where they expected to fuel from one or more oilers and then initiate some counteraction, (c) he had not received any search reports from his own planes for almost twenty-four hours. (It will be recalled that his own searches on the previous day covering a sector from Area CONDOR to the east coast of Leyte, had been cancelled because of bad weather, and his forenoon searches presently underway covering the same sector had not completed their searches.), (d) neither the objective nor the magnitude of the expected Japanese counteraction had been determined.

The available evidence would indicate that he did not weigh the "certain other factors" adequately for, although it is clear that he felt himself to be sufficiently strong to give adequate protection to the Allied forces inside Leyte Gulf against raids by Japanese surface ships and aircraft and against normal Tokyo Express runs, there is no indication that he felt strong enough to give such adequate protection should the Japanese Fleet decide on major action, supported by maximum airpower from land bases. In fact, the evidence is to the contrary for, on the following day after sighting the Main Body FIRST Striking Force in the Sibuyan Sea, he directed CTG 38.1 to "reverse course, proceed toward Point Mick best speed."\*\*

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\* CINCPAC Dispatch 211852 October 1944 to COM3RDFLT, info COMINCH, COMSOWESPAC.

\*\* COM3RDFLT Dispatch 232346 October 1944 to CTG 38.1, info all TGC's of TF 38.



While his basic reason for not changing CTG 38.1's orders is nowhere stated, it would appear that it was largely due to his continued adherence to the concept, often reoccurring in the course of this analysis, that major fleet action was not expected. In fact, CTF 38 had stated in his basic plan, in part, as follows:

(1) "Although almost all of the enemy's carriers are listed as available for combat, actually probably only a few of them have air groups sufficiently trained for combat. It is most unlikely that he will risk any large portion of his fleet in combat until his carriers are fully prepared for action."\*

It also seems to have been due to the fact that he was still concerned over the necessity for preparing for Operation HOTFOOT, which as has been mentioned earlier in this volume, was scheduled for about November 11th, and which would require the full strength of TF 38. This concern was perhaps increased by the fact that CINCPAC had not as yet either delayed or cancelled Operation HOTFOOT but had instead by his silence thereon given the impression that that operation was to be made effective as planned.

BASED ON THE ABOVE, IT SEEMS CORRECT TO SAY THAT COMTHIRDFLT'S DECISION TO RETIRE CTG 38.1 WAS UNSOUND, EVEN THOUGH IT SEEMS TO HAVE BEEN IN CONSONANCE WITH THE BELIEF OF HIS COORDINATE COMMANDER--CTF 77 (COMSEVENTHFLT) WHO AS SHOWN UNDER "OPERATIONS OF CTF 77, 0000 - 1042 OCTOBER 23RD", HAD JUST DECIDED THAT THE ENEMY BUILD UP IN THE CORON BAY AREA WAS THE "FIRST PHASE OF MAGNIFIED TOKYO EXPRESS RUNS AGAINST LEYTE."

WHAT THEN SHOULD HE HAVE DONE? ONE ANSWER PRESENTS ITSELF. WOULD HE NOT HAVE MADE A BETTER DECISION HAD HE DIRECTED CTG 38.1 TO OPERATE IN AREA CONDOR UNTIL THE SEARCHES HE HAD ORDERED FOR THE FOLLOWING MORNING (WHICH SEARCHES WOULD EMBRACE THOSE AREAS WHEREIN JAPANESE SURFACE FORCES HAD BEEN REPORTED) HAD BEEN COMPLETED. THEN, WITH THE INFORMATION THUS GAINED PLUS THE INFORMATION OBTAINED FROM OTHER SOURCES (I.E., SUBMARINES, LAND-BASED AIRCRAFT, AND HIGH LEVEL INTELLIGENCE), HE WOULD (A) BE BETTER ABLE TO DECIDE WHETHER OR NOT TO PERMIT CTG 38.1 TO PROCEED TO ULITHI, AND (B) HAVE TG 38.1 IN A MUCH BETTER RELATIVE POSITION SHOULD ITS SERVICES BE REQUIRED.

At 1042 COMTHIRDFLT in TG 38.2 was bearing due east distant 405 miles from northern tip of Polillo Island.

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\* COMFIRSTCARTASKFORPAC (CTF 38) Operations Plan No. 11-44, Serial 00020, October 1st, 1944.

(1) TF 38 (Fast Carrier Force), 0000 - 1042 October 23rd.

(a) Operations of CTG's 38.1 and 38.4.

At the beginning of the day CTG 38.1, who was OTC in the WASP with TG 38.1 in company with CTG 38.4 with TG 38.4, was en route to Point CONDOR where he was to rendezvous with TG 38.3 for the transfer of COMBATPAC in the WASHINGTON with the ALABAMA and DESDIV 100 from that task group to TG 38.4 for passage to Ulithi.\*

At 0500 he learned that COMTHIRDFLT had decided to station TG's 38.2 and 38.3 about ninety miles due east of the northern tip of Polillo Island in order to search the Sibuyan Sea and the western approaches to the Philippines. He noted that no change was contemplated at this time in the plans for the (a) retirement of his two groups to Ulithi, or (b) transfer of CTG 38.3's two battleships and DESDIV 100\*\* to TG 38.4 at Point CONDOR.

As he continued eastward he observed the preparations being made within TG 38.1 for topping off destroyers and flying routine patrols.\*\*\*

At 0536 he observed the HORNET launching the first of the day's air patrols which consisted of a CAP of twelve VF and a SNASP of three VF and three VT.\*\*\*\* In the meanwhile, the ENTERPRISE, in TG 38.4, was launching the first patrols for her group consisting initially of an eight-VF CAP and a four-VT ASP.\*\*\*\*\*

At 0555 he sighted TG 38.3 bearing 130°(T).

At about 0640 heavy ships of his group on a fueling course 115°(T) commenced topping off destroyers.\*\*\*\*\*

At 0758 the battleships WASHINGTON and ALABAMA, with DESDIV 100, reported for duty with CTG 38.4.

TG 38.4 now consisted of FRANKLIN, SAN JACINTO, ENTERPRISE, BELLEAU WOOD, WASHINGTON, ALABAMA, WICHITA, NEW ORLEANS, MAURY,

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- \* COM3RDFLT Dispatch 220214 October 1944 to CTG's 38.2, 38.3, info COMINCH, CINCPAC, all TFC's and TGC's 3RDFLT, all concerned with SOWESPAC operations, etc.
  - \*\* COM3RDFLT Dispatch 221752 October 1944 to CTF 38, info COMINCH, CINCPAC, all TFC's and TGC's 3RDFLT, all concerned with SOWESPAC operations, etc.
  - \*\*\* War Diary CTG 38.1, October 23rd, 1944; also War Diary HORNET, October 23rd, 1944.
  - \*\*\*\* Deck Log HORNET, October 23rd, 1944; also CTG 38.1 Dispatch 220915 1944 to TU 38.1.1.
  - \*\*\*\*\* Deck Log ENTERPRISE, October 23rd, 1944.
  - \*\*\*\*\* Deck Logs WASP and FRANKLIN, October 23rd, 1944.



GRIDLEY, HELM, MUGFORD, RALPH TALBOT, PATTERSON, BAGLEY, WILKES, NICHOLSON, SWANSON, COGSWELL, CAPERTON, INGERSOLL, KNAPP, McCALL.

At 0819 he advised Commander Naval Base Ulithi that he would arrive with TG's 38.1 and 38.4 in accordance with COMTHIRDFLT's 220219 and requested certain information.\*

Although he records as having received at 1047, as an information addressee, an order from COMTHIRDFLT to CTG 38.4 to proceed with the WASHINGTON, ALABAMA and DESDIV 100 to the vicinity of the eastern entrance to San Bernardino Strait--to arrive there by 0600 October 24th and to launch a reinforced search to westward, striking targets of opportunity,\*\* it seems probable that he received this dispatch earlier, for COMCRUDIV SIX in TG 38.4 records having intercepted it at 1000.\*\*\*

He could now see that COMTHIRDFLT's plans for the following day had been modified to the extent that (a) at 0600 TG's 38.2 and 38.3 would be operating about ninety miles due east of Polillo Island, (b) TG 38.4 would be operating about seventy miles, bearing 050°(T) from the SE tip of Samar, and (c) he (CTG 38.1) himself, with TG 38.1, would presumably be continuing on to Ulithi as planned.

Up to this time he had received numerous contact reports by Allied submarines on enemy forces in the South China Sea, all of which are given in full under "Operations of COMTHIRDFLT, 0000 - 1042 October 23rd". These reports showed that enemy forces in some strength appeared to be concentrating in the Coron Bay - Manila Bay area. From these contacts and from the dispatch changes COMTHIRDFLT was making in his basic plans, it seems clear that both CTG's 38.1 and 38.4 could readily discern COMTHIRDFLT's concern in the developing situation.

(a) At 1042 CTG 38.4, who continued to top off his destroyers on an easterly heading, was bearing 072°(T), distant 295 miles from his 0600 October 24th position (Latitude 11°-30'N, Longitude 126°-30'E, bearing 050°(T) from SE Samar).

(b) CTG 38.1, on course 270°(T), speed ten knots, zig-zagging, was bearing 293°(T), distant (approximately) 530 miles from Ulithi (his present destination).

(c) So far this day neither task group had suffered any losses of aircraft or pilots.

(d) As of this hour TG 38.1 had a total of 187 VF, 72 VB and 67 VT and TG 38.4 a total of 109 VF, 44 VB and 54 VT.

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\* CTG 38.1 Dispatch 222319 October 1944 to COMNAVBASE Ulithi, info CTG's 38.4 and 30.9.

\*\* COM3RDFLT Dispatch 222359 October 1944 to CTG 38.4, info COMINCH, CINCPAC, all TFC's and TGC's 3RDFLT, all concerned with SOWESPAC operations, etc.

\*\*\* War Diary COMCRUDIV 6, October 23rd, 1944.

## (b) Operations of CTG 38.2, 0000 - 1042 October 23rd.

At the beginning of the day CTG 38.2, in the INTREPID with TG 38.2, on course 073°(T), speed sixteen knots, and zigzagging, was heading toward a fueling rendezvous with TU 30.8.4 at 0700 at Point MICK.\*

Shortly after 0303 he received a TBS voice radio message from COMTHIRDFLT, who was in his task group in the NEW JERSEY, ordering him to (a) expedite his fueling schedule for this day, (b) employ a westerly heading if practicable, and (c) direct his attention to his (COMTHIRDFLT's) 221752 which was urgent and would soon appear on the FOX broadcast.\*\* Although he had probably received the greater portion of the intelligence available to COMTHIRDFLT, nevertheless this order must have come as a surprise since he had been previously directed after fueling at Point MICK to proceed to Area CONDOR to arrive not later than 0700 October 24th and to operate there with CTG 38.3 until further orders.

At 0455 he made radar contact with the fueling group bearing 214°(T), distant fourteen miles.\*\*\*

He likely wondered what new instructions he was to receive. However, any conjectures which he may have had were set at rest at 0500 when he received COMTHIRDFLT's dispatch above referred to. From this, he could see that, whereas on the morrow he was still to operate with CTG 38.3, he would not operate in Area CONDOR but, instead, would operate in Latitude 15°-00'N, Longitude 123°-30'E (about ninety miles due east of the northern tip of Polillo Island).

At 0549 the first of the morning's defensive air patrols, consisting of an eight-VF CAP and a four-VT ASP, was launched from the CABOT.\*\*\*\*

At about 0600 he rendezvoused with the fueling group which included six oilers (TOMAHAWK, KENNEBAGO, MARIAS, PECOS, CACHE and SAUNGATUCK), one escort carrier (NEHENTA BAY) and five destroyers and destroyer escorts (WEAVER, DAVID W. TAYLOR, ELDEN, JOHN D. HENLEY and HILBERT).\*\*\*\*\* At 0615 he commenced fueling on course 270°(T), speed ten knots.\*\*\*

Meanwhile, knowing that COMTHIRDFLT was anxious to expedite the fueling and feeling that that commander, by directing his attention to COMTHIRDFLT's 221752, meant him to comply, he decided to do so without further signal. Therefore, at 0845 he advised COMTHIRDFLT to this effect as follows: "Estimate completion fueling by 1200. Unless otherwise directed,

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\* Deck Log INTREPID, October 23rd, 1944.  
 \*\* COM3RDFLT TBS Voice Radio Message 230303/I October 1944 to CTG 38.2.  
 \*\*\* War Diary COMDESDIV 104, October 23rd, 1944.  
 \*\*\*\* War Diary CABOT, October 23rd, 1944.  
 \*\*\*\*\* War Diary BRUSH, October 24th, 1944.



will head for Latitude 15°-00'N, Longitude 123°-30'E, to arrive by 0600 October 24th".\* However, if he had had any concern as to whether or not this decision to head for the rendezvous point with CTG 38.3 for 0600 the following morning met with the approval of COMTHIRDFLT, this concern was soon removed for at 0935 he received a visual dispatch from that commander (a) directing him to proceed to the vicinity of Latitude 13°-00'N, Longitude 125°-00'E (the eastern entrance to San Bernardino Strait), where he was to arrive by 0600 October 24th, and (b) referring him to COMTHIRDFLT 230003 which would soon appear on the FOX broadcast.\*\*

SINCE COMTHIRDFLT WAS WITH HIM IN TG 38.2, THE SENDING OF THIS DISPATCH WITH THE WORDING "UNLESS OTHERWISE DIRECTED" DID NOT CREATE CONFUSION; NEVERTHELESS, THE EMPLOYMENT OF SUCH PHRASEOLOGY IS NOT RECOMMENDED AS GENERAL PRACTICE. THIS IS BECAUSE ITS EMPLOYMENT CAN READILY CAUSE DIFFICULTIES. DURING THE BATTLE OF MIDWAY, CTF 8 (COMMANDER NORTH PACIFIC FORCE),\*\*\* WHO WAS AT SEA OFF KODIAK, ALASKA, IN THE NASHVILLE, STATED IN A MEMORANDUM TO HIS SENIOR COMMANDERS THAT, AS HE WAS MAINTAINING RADIO SILENCE BY NECESSITY, HE DID NOT WANT THEM TO SEND HIM A SIGNAL "UNLESS OTHERWISE DIRECTED, CERTAIN ACTION WILL BE TAKEN". HE FURTHER STATED THAT (A) HE WAS OPPOSED TO THIS TYPE OF DISPATCH ON THE GROUND THAT IT REQUIRED (1) BREAKING RADIO SILENCE, OR (2) ASSUMPTION ON THE PART OF THE SENDER THAT IF NO ANSWER WAS RECEIVED HE (CTF 8) WAS IN FULL ACCORD WITH THE ACTION TAKEN, AND (B) SUCH AN ASSUMPTION COULD WELL BE INCORRECT.\*\*\*\*

Possibly at 1000 (when it was received by COMCRUDIV SIX in TG 38.4) he received, as an information addressee, COMTHIRDFLT's orders to CTG 38.4 to (a) arrive in vicinity Latitude 11°-30'N, Longitude 126°-30'E (about seventy miles, bearing 050°(T), from the SE tip of Samar) by 0600 October 24th, and (b) launch a reinforced search to westward at dawn on the 24th.\*\*\*\*\*

He now had a fairly clear picture of COMTHIRDFLT's plans for the following day as follows: (a) by 0600 October 24th three task groups (TG's 38.2, 38.3 and 38.4), for the purpose of making air searches over the western Visayas, were to be stationed about 140 miles apart (mean), and in that order along a 320°-140°(T) line, and (b) one task group (TG 38.1) was to continue on toward Ulithi as previously ordered.

Up to this time he had received numerous contact reports on enemy forces made by Allied submarines in the South China Sea, all of which are given in full under "Operations of COMTHIRDFLT, 0000 - 1042 October 23rd". These reports showed that enemy forces in some strength appeared to

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\* CTG 38.2 Visual Dispatch 222345 October 1944 to COM3RDFLT.  
 \*\* COM3RDFLT Visual Dispatch 230017 October 1944 to CTG 38.2.  
 \*\*\* Rear Admiral Robert A. Theobald, USN.  
 \*\*\*\* War Diary CTF 8, June 4th, 1942; CTF 8 Memorandum, June 3rd, 1942.  
 \*\*\*\*\* COM3RDFLT Dispatch 222359 October 1944 to CTG 38.4, info COMINCH, CINCPAC, all TFC's and TGC's 3RDFLT, all concerned with SOWESPAC operations.

be concentrating in the Coron Bay - Manila Bay area. From these contacts and from the dispatch changes COMTHIRDFLT was making in his basic plans, he could readily discern COMTHIRDFLT's concern in the developing situation.

At 1035 he detached the BUNKER HILL, STEPHEN POTTER and BENHAM with orders to join TG 30.4 with CTG 30.4 in the BUNKER HILL\* and to proceed to Ulithi in accordance with previous orders. (Since this group (TG 30.4) does not contribute to any of the subsequent action, it will be dropped from further discussion).

At this time TG 38.2 consisted of the INDEPENDENCE, INTREPID, CABOT, IOWA, NEW JERSEY, VINCENNES, MIAMI, BILOXI, TINGEY, OWEN, HICKOX, HUNT, LEWIS HANCOCK, HALSEY POWELL, CUSHING, COLAHAN, UHLMANN, YARNALL, TWINING, STOCKHAM, WEDDERBURN, MILLER, THE SULLIVANS, MARSHALL.

From sunrise and until 1042 he maintained a CAP of eight VF and an ASP of four VT. As of this hour his command had suffered no losses of aircraft or pilots.

By 1042 CTG 38.2, in the INTREPID, on course 270°(T), speed ten knots and zigzagging, was about 255 miles, bearing 063°(T), from his 0600 October 24th position (Latitude 13°-00'N, Longitude 125°-00'E). He had not as yet received the detailed orders (COMTHIRDFLT's 230003) to which COMTHIRDFLT had earlier referred. At this time TG 38.2 had a total of 85 VF, 23 VB and 35 VT.

(c) Operations of CTG 38.3, 0000 - 1042 October 23rd.

At the beginning of the day CTG 38.3 in the ESSEX with TG 38.3, on course 060°(T), speed sixteen knots (zigzagging) was about fifty miles south of his 0600 rendezvous position (Point CONDOR) where he was to (1) rendezvous with CTG's 38.1 and 38.4, (2) transfer COMBATPAC in WASHINGTON with ALABAMA and DESDIV 100 to CTG 38.4 for temporary duty, and (3) operate in Area CONDOR and maintain morning and afternoon search in sector 280°-350°(T) to a distance of 300 miles.

Commencing at 0030 he changed course to 330°(T) and headed thereafter on various courses to the northward following a circuitous route to Point CONDOR.

Everything appeared to be going according to plan when at 0500 he received, as an information addressee, a dispatch from COMTHIRDFLT to CTF 38\*\* (quoted in full under "Operations of COMTHIRDFLT 0000 - 1042 October 23rd") which changed his plans for this day somewhat. Among other items, it (a) directed CTF 38 on this day to (1) proceed immediately with TG 38.3 to arrive vicinity of Latitude 15°-00'N, Longitude 123°-30'E (about ninety miles due east of the northern tip of Polillo Island) by 0600 the following morning, (2) extend this day's afternoon air search westward to

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\* Deck Log BUNKER HILL, October 23rd, 1944.

\*\* COM3RDFLT Dispatch 221752 October 1944 to CTF 38.



cover as much of the Sibuyan Sea as practicable, (3) leave WASHINGTON, ALABAMA and DESDIV 100 at Point CONDOR to rendezvous with CTG 38.4 as previously directed, and (b) advised that CTG 38.2 would join upon completion of fueling. It seems highly probable that he now received instructions from CTF 38 to comply.

He likely at this time made an estimate of the situation to determine how best to handle the transfer of his battleships to CTG 38.4 for the distance from his present position to his 0600 position the next morning was about 420 miles. This was to be covered in about twenty-seven hours which required an SOA of about fifteen knots. From his track, it seems clear that he decided that since he had sufficient time he would continue in a northerly direction until he was due east of Point CONDOR and then would change course to the westward to pass through that point.

At 0427, in accordance with this plan, he changed course to the west to close that point. Except for course changes necessary in connection with flight operations, he maintained this westerly heading throughout the remainder of the period.\*

At 0534 he changed speed to twenty-three knots.\*

At 0555, in accordance with instructions from CTF 38, his flagship (ESSEX) commenced launching a 300-mile sector search of the area 280°-350°(T), employing seven VF and seven VB with one VF and one VB in each ten-degree sector.\*\*

At 0601 he detached COMBATPAC in WASHINGTON with ALABAMA and DESDIV 100 and directed them to join CTG 38.4.\*\* At 0611, in accordance with these orders, COMBATPAC departed the disposition and headed for TG 38.4 which at this time was approximately twenty-two miles to the southwest.\*\*\*

TG 38.3 now consisted of the ESSEX, LEXINGTON, PRINCETON, LANGLEY, MASSACHUSETTS, SOUTH DAKOTA, SANTA FE, BIRMINGHAM, MOBILE, RENO, CLARENCE K. BRONSON, COTTEN, DORTCH, GATLING, HEALY, PORTERFIELD, CALLAGHAN, CASSIN YOUNG, IRWIN, PRESTON, LAWS, LONGSHAW, MORRISON.

At 0640 he (a) sighted TG 38.4 bearing 260°(T), distant seventeen miles, and (b) contacted by radar TG 38.1 bearing 240°(T), distant twenty-eight miles.\*\*\*\*

Possibly at 1000 (when it was received by COMCRUDIV SIX in TG 38.4)\*\*\*\*\* he received, as an information addressee, COMTHIRDFLT's orders

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- \* Deck Log ESSEX, October 23rd, 1944.
  - \*\* War Diary CTG 38.3, October 23rd, 1944.
  - \*\*\* Deck Log WASHINGTON, October 23rd, 1944.
  - \*\*\*\* War Diary LANGLEY, October 23rd, 1944; also Deck Log ESSEX, October 23rd, 1944.
  - \*\*\*\*\* War Diary COMCRUDIV SIX, October 23rd, 1944.

CTG 38.3  
CTG 30.5  
October 23rd

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to CTG 38.4 (a) to arrive in vicinity Latitude 11°-30'N, Longitude 126°-30'E by 0600 October 24th, and (b) launch a reinforced search to the westward at dawn that morning.\*

Thus, at 1042 he knew that the plans for the following morning had been modified as follows: (a) at 0600 TG's 38.2 and 38.3 would be operating about ninety miles due east of Polillo Island, (b) TG 38.4 would be operating about seventy miles, bearing 050°(T), from the SE tip of Samar, and (c) TG 38.1 would presumably return to Ulithi as planned. He had not received as yet COMTHIRDFLT's dispatch 230003 which reassigned TG 38.2 from the above position to a position off San Bernardino Strait.

During the day and until 1042 he received numerous contact reports by Allied submarines on enemy forces in the South China Sea, all of which are given in full under "Operations of COMTHIRDFLT, 0000 - 1042 October 23rd", and which reports show that the enemy forces in some strength appeared to be concentrating in the Coron Bay - Manila Bay area. From their contacts and from the dispatch changes COMTHIRDFLT was making in his basic plans, it seems clear that he (CTG 38.3) was fully alert to COMTHIRDFLT's concern in the developing situation.

At 1042 CTG 38.3, on course 275°(T), speed twenty-three knots, was about 420 miles east of Polillo Island and was heading for his position, about ninety miles east of that island.\*\* At this time TG 38.3 had a total of 136 VF, 55 VB and 54 VT.

(2) Operations of CTG 30.5 (Air Search Reconnaissance and Photographic Group), 0000 - 1042 October 23rd.

CTG 30.5, as on previous days, continued his air searches from Kossol Passage, Saipan and Tinian as shown on Diagram E.

During the morning while embarked in the HAMLIN in Ulithi he most probably received (a) the contact reports on Japanese warships to the northwest of Luzon and in southern Palawan Passage, and (b) COMTHIRDFLT's orders to CTF 38 which would place TG's 38.2 and 38.3 about ninety miles to the eastward of Polillo Island, and (c) possibly received COMTHIRDFLT's orders to CTG 38.4 to proceed to a position about seventy miles, bearing 050°(T) from the southeast tip of Samar.

In examining the reported positions of the contacts he could easily discern they were well beyond the radius of his searches and he therefore quite likely felt that no special instructions to his command were appropriate at this time.

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\* COM3RDFLT Dispatch 222359 October 1944 to CTG 38.4, info COMINCH, CINCPAC, all TFC's and TGC's 3RDFLT, all concerned with SOWESPAC operations.

\*\* Deck Log ESSEX, October 23rd, 1944.



By 1042 the search planes from Tinian had reached the points shown by the 1042 arc. In this portion of the search they made no contacts of importance. One plane—the plane in sector 308° - 317°(T)—attacked a merchant ship and was damaged by enemy machine gun fire. Fortunately the damage was not so serious as to prevent the completion of the search. HOWEVER, THIS EVENT IS MENTIONED HERE AS ANOTHER EXAMPLE OF THE TENDENCY OF THE PLANE COMMANDERS TO DISREGARD THEIR BASIC INSTRUCTIONS. Since this matter has been commented on fully under "Operations of CTG 30.5 October 22nd", it will not be elaborated on here.

During the day, his seaplanes under TU 30.5.1, based in Kossol Passage continued to escort TG 30.3.\*

(2) Operations of CTF 17 (Submarine Force Pacific), 0000 - 1042 October 23rd.

At the beginning of this day, CTF 17 was probably still engrossed with the contact reports which he had received from his submarines just before midnight, and which he had observed were on units heading toward the west coast of Luzon.

Since (a) the contacts on the larger units had all been made during the forenoon, and (b) they were reported at speeds from sixteen to twenty-two knots, he could see that by midnight they should have crossed Latitude 18°-30'N, and therefore should be in CTF 71's area. He likely awaited with interest contact reports thereon from the TF 71 submarines.

Shortly after the beginning of this day (at about 0100) he received a dispatch from the wolf pack commander in the BESUGO to the effect that, having made no contacts since October 18th, (a) he had changed the patrolling plan, and (b) the BESUGO was now patrolling the eastern half, the RONQUIL the western half, of Area SEVEN\*\* (Plate XIX).

Since he did not take any contrary action, he seems to have approved of the change in the patrol stations of these two submarines. This seems so for it will be recalled that on October 19th, when the wolf pack commander had stationed the BESUGO and RONQUIL off the eastern coast of Kyushu and the GABILAN off Okinoshima, CTF 17 had changed the orders to the GABILAN, had detached her from the wolf pack and had moved her to Kii Suido. He now permitted the wolf pack commander's new assignment of the BESUGO and RONQUIL to stand. It seems likely that at this time he re-examined his instructions to the GABILAN and found them sound for he likewise issued her no new orders.

His decision to do so seems correct for he knew that other Japanese forces still in the Inland Sea might be sortieing presently; i.e., he had reason to believe that the Japanese Main Force and/or its Supply Group had sortied perhaps through Bungo Suido but his intelligence thereon was

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\* War Diary MACKINAC, October 23rd, 1944.

\*\* BESUGO Dispatch 221544 October 1944 to CTF 17.

indefinite. Therefore, it was wise to cover against the possibility that only one of the above had sortied. What he did not know was that both the Japanese Main Force (on October 20th) and the Japanese Main Force First Supply Group (on October 22nd) had already sortied through Bungo Suido without being contacted by his submarines.

Shortly after 0121 he received a dispatch from the BONEFISH in which she acknowledged her routing instructions to Saipan which had been sent on October 21st, and included a report of the full names of the rescued airmen she had on board.\*

During this time he no doubt learned from CINCPAC's headquarters that the contacts made by his submarines on the previous day were being readdressed to the principal commanders, including CTF 71.\*\*

A short time later (at 0520) he received a contact report from CTF 71 that one of his submarines had contacted an enemy force.

But, to his surprise, the units contacted were not those which had been reported by the SEADRAGON, SHARK, ICEFISH and DRUM, but were, instead, three probable battleships in southern Palawan Passage at 0200, on course 040°(T), speed eighteen knots,\*\*\* which had been contacted by the DARTER of TF 71.

This alerted him to the fact that there were a number of Japanese units, some on southerly courses and some on northerly courses, heading in the general direction of the Manila - Coron Bay area, and possibly alerted him to the fact that some Japanese counteraction of limited scope was underway.

Shortly after this he received another report from CTF 71 that the same submarine in southern Palawan Passage had now reported that at 0300 the contact consisted of at least nine ships, five medium on near side of two heavies, on course 039°(T), speed fifteen knots, with many radars,\*\*\*\* and then at 0745 (as COMTHIRDFLT received it at this time) he learned that the

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\* War Patrol Report BONEFISH, Report of 6TH War Patrol, No Serial, November 8th, 1944.

\*\* DRUM Dispatch 221037 October 1944 (Re-encyphered as CINCPAC Dispatch 221658 October 1944 to COMSOWESPAC, COMINCH, COM3RDFLT, CTF 77, all TFC's and TGC's 3RDFLT); also ICEFISH Dispatch 221301 October 1944 (Re-encyphered as COM7THFLT Dispatch 221301 October 1944 to CTF's 71, 72, 57, 38, CTG's 38.1, 38.2, 38.3, 38.4, COM3RDFLT); SHARK Dispatch 221410 October 1944 (Re-encyphered as CINCPAC Dispatch 221757 October 1944 to COM3RDFLT, all TFC's and TGC's 3RDFLT, COMSOWESPAC, CTF 77, COMINCH, COMNAVGRPCHINA on another system).

\*\*\* CTF 71 Dispatch 221923 October 1944 to CINCPAC, C.G.'s 5TH and 13TH Air Forces, CTF's 3RD and 7TH Fleets, CTF 17.

\*\*\*\* CTF 71 Dispatch 222218 October 1944 to all TFC's 3RD and 7TH Fleets, info CINCPAC, CTF 17, C.G.'s 5TH and 13TH Air Forces.



submarine was the DARTER whose latest report was that the contact consisted of a minimum of eleven ships and that both the DACE and DARTER had hopes of attacking the above force.\*

What he now thought of the developing situation is not known, but since he issued no instructions to his command, it would seem that he continued to feel that if the Japanese planned any operations against the Leyte area they would be limited in scope and could be handled adequately by the Allied forces in that area.

At 1021 he informed COMTHIRDFLT of the rescued airmen being returned by the BONEFISH and that they would arrive Saipan on October 27th.\*\*

This completed the operations of CTF 17 until 1042 on this day, October 23rd, 1944.

During the period 0000 - 1042 October 23rd the submarines of CTF 17 operated in a manner similar to the previous day and patrolled, proceeded to, or from station uneventfully, except as discussed below. For this reason, the discussion of individual submarines, as has been done on the previous days, will be omitted for this period and only those submarines experiencing events of interest during the period 0000 - 1042 October 23rd will be so discussed.

(a) CONVOY COLLEGE.

The BONEFISH continued eastward in the CONVOY COLLEGE safety lane en route Pearl Harbor via Saipan. At 0121 she acknowledged the routing instructions she had received from CTF 17 on the evening of October 21st and included the full names of the rescued airmen that were on board. She remained on the surface during daylight as well as darkness.\*\*\*

(b) Northwest Coast of Formosa.

The TANG continued patrolling off the northwest coast of Formosa. Her radar now being operative, she made radar contact on a convoy shortly after the beginning of the day. She estimated the convoy to consist of three large modern tankers in column, a transport on the starboard side and a freighter on the port side, flanked by DE's on both beams and quarters. Sometime prior to 0600 (the exact time is not known since she lost her records when she sank on October 25th) she fired five torpedoes at a range of 300 to 800 yards and claimed hits on three tankers. She later fired four stern torpedoes at the freighter and transport, overlapping with an undisclosed number of hits, but claimed sinking the freighter. She was then

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\* DARTER Dispatch 222025 October 1944 to CTF 71 (Readdressed by Radio Hollandia and CTF 71).

\*\* CTF 17 Dispatch 230121 October 1944 to COM3RDFLT, info TF 38, CINCPAC, COMAIRPAC.

\*\*\* War Patrol Report BONEFISH, Report of 6TH War Patrol, No Serial, November 8th, 1944.

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attacked by a DE escort but succeeded in escaping the escort on the surface. At 0600 she submerged north of Formosa Strait for patrol.\*

In this attack she sank three 1900-ton cargo ships (TOUN MARU, WAKATAKE MARU, TATSUJU MARU) in Latitude 24°-57'N, Longitude 120°-25'E.\*\*

(c) Northeast Coast of Formosa.

No comments.

(d) MARU MORGUE.

No comments.

(e) Nagasaki - Sasebo.

The CROAKER, in the Yellow Sea off the southwest coast of Korea, had made contact on a small coastal freighter—the 887-ton cargo ship BYAKURAN MARU—on the previous evening and was now endeavoring to obtain an attack position. At 0052 she fired four torpedoes and scored one hit,\*\*\* sinking the freighter in Latitude 35°-39'N, Longitude 126°-05'E.\*\* At 0130 she sighted a small schooner which she engaged with her deck gun until the target appeared to capsize. She then broke off the engagement and at 0600 submerged for the day.\*\*\*

The PERCH, as before, continued to patrol across the Nagasaki - Shanghai convoy route in a position to intercept the carrier force reported in Formosa Strait at 1530 October 21st and which her estimate indicated might well be intercepted on this day.\*\*\*\* However, since the possibility of contact was present, she remained on the surface during daylight as well as during darkness, presumably in order to obtain increased radar and visual ranges.

While, as discussed under "Operations of C.G. FOURTEENTH Air Force, October 21st", what this force actually was is not known, it seems possible that it was a convoy of merchant ships escorted by the SHINYO (CVE) en route Hainan Island to Mutsure (an island in the western approaches to Shimonoseki Suido) where it arrived at 0600 the following morning.

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\* War Patrol Report TANG, Report of 5TH War Patrol, No Serial, September 10th, 1945.

\*\* Japanese Naval and Merchant Losses during World War II by U.S. Submarines, prepared by the Joint Army - Navy Assessment Committee, February 1947.

\*\*\* War Patrol Report CROAKER, Report of 2ND War Patrol, Serial 027, November 10th, 1944.

\*\*\*\* War Patrol Report PERCH, Report of 3RD War Patrol, No Serial, November 8th, 1944.



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(f) HIT PARADE.

(1) Approaches to Bungo Suido.

The submarine BESUGO and RONQUIL continued to guard the approaches to Bungo Suido. The BESUGO during the night had moved over to the eastern approaches while the RONQUIL expanded her station to the northward. At 0044 the wolf pack commander in the BESUGO informed CTF 17 of his disposition.\* The BESUGO submerged at 0523 for the day's patrol and the RONQUIL submerged at 0725.\*\*

(2) Approaches to Kii Suido.

No comments.

(C) China - Burma - India Theater, 0000 - 1042 October 23rd.

(1) Operations of C.G. FOURTEENTH Air Force.

As was discussed under "Operations of C.G. FOURTEENTH Air Force, October 22nd", the searches for the night of October 22nd - 23rd were canceled because of anticipated unfavorable flying conditions. The day searches taking off at about 0800 through the time terminating this volume made no important sightings.\*\*\*

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\* BESUGO Dispatch 221544 October 1944 to CTF 17.

\*\* Deck Logs BESUGO and RONQUIL, October 23rd, 1944.

\*\*\* "AAF Operations from China Bases in Support of the Leyte Campaign" letter from Historical Division, Air University Library, USAF Air University, Maxwell AFB, Alabama to President, Naval War College, November 8th, 1950.

CHAPTER VIII - JAPANESE OPERATIONS, 0000 - 1042 October 23rd.

## (A) Operations of CinC Combined Fleet

CinC Combined Fleet, in his headquarters at Hiyoshi, learned shortly after midnight that Commander SIXTH Base Air Force had arrived safely at Manila with the main flying strength of his command,\* and therefore was now operating under Commander SW Area Force.

This safe arrival was likely highly gratifying to him for movements incident to the transfer of a large base air force from one major island to another are difficult even in peacetime and, in the case of the SIXTH Base Air Force, would be even more difficult because of the inexperience of many of the pilots, the lack of adequate preparations in the Philippines to receive these planes, the possibility of bad weather, and the danger of enemy interference by carrier aircraft.

Knowing that the night units of the above SIXTH Base Air Force were attacking any Allied carriers found off Lamon Bay, he awaited with interest the results of these attacks.

By this time he knew that if they carried out their planned movements (a) the Main Body FIRST Striking Force, en route Leyte Gulf via San Bernardino Strait, was now passing through Palawan Passage, (b) the THIRD Section, en route Leyte Gulf via Balabac Strait and Surigao Strait, was now in the South China Sea and was about to enter Balabac Strait, (c) the Main Force was 800 miles east of Formosa on a southwesterly course en route to position Latitude 19°-00'N, Longitude 126°-40'E (approximately 260 miles east of Cape Engano, the position Commander Main Force expected to reach at 0600 October 24th and the approximate position from which he expected to initiate his air action, (d) CRUDIV SIXTEEN was fast approaching Manila where it was scheduled to arrive at 0800, (e) the SECOND Striking Force, which had been scheduled to arrive Manila Bay at 0700 but which might now not be going there, was likely somewhere in the South China Sea to the westward of that bay. He hoped to hear from Commander SECOND Striking Force shortly as to his new plans.

That he was watching the movements of these forces with great concern seems clear for all of them were now operating in areas where Allied submarines had been active; so active, in fact, that on the previous evening he had warned his commanders to this effect and had directed them to "give this matter special attention".\*\*

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\* Commander 6TH Base Air Force Dispatch (time group unknown) October 23rd, 1944, to CinC Combined Fleet, etc., Detailed Action Report 2ND Fighter Striking Unit, 304TH Fighter Unit (203RD Air Group), October 21st - 29th, 1944, WDC Document 160517, NA 12309.

\*\* CofS Combined Fleet Dispatch 221651 October 1944 to Commander SW Area Force, info Commanders 1ST and 2ND Striking Forces, CRUDIV 16, BATDIV 2, (3RD Section), War Diary DESRON 10, October 1944, WDC Document 161638, NA 11739.



It seems probable that shortly after midnight he finally learned of Commander SECOND Striking Force's plans for the penetration operation for, at this time, he received that commander's 222000 (quoted in full under "Operations of Commander SECOND Striking Force, October 22nd") which gave his movement plan of which the salient features were to (a) arrive at Coron Bay evening (October 23rd) and fuel, (b) sortie the following morning at 0200, and (c) arrive Binit Point at 0600 October 25th and pass into Surigao Strait behind the THIRD Section.\*

From this dispatch and from his knowledge of the time when Commander THIRD Section expected to pass Binit Point (0100 October 25th), he could readily see that the SECOND Striking Force would enter the strait some five hours after the THIRD Section and therefore could not possibly be close enough to that section to provide "the reserve strength" to which COMBATDIV ONE referred.

What he thought of this development is nowhere stated, but there is no indication that he disapproved of it at this time. Whether this was (a) because he felt that, since he had assigned this SECOND Striking Force to Commander SW Area Force, he would await the reaction of that commander to the matter, or (b) he actually approved of it, is not known.

A discussion of certain factors relating to this point--notably the fact that he desired to avoid having Vice Admiral Kiyohide Shima (Commander SECOND Striking Force) and Vice Admiral Shoji Nishimura (Commander THIRD Section) in the same command--is provided in full under "Operations of CinC Combined Fleet, October 22nd".

Commencing with early morning he began receiving contact reports, three of which were on Allied submarines, as follows:

(1) At 0100 an RDF fix on a submarine bearing  $112^{\circ}$ (T), distant 190 miles from the southern tip of Formosa (Contact A)\*\*--this contact was on the BONE-FISH which was actually thirty miles, bearing  $150^{\circ}$ (T), from the contact position;

(2) At 0215 a carrier undergoing air attack about 225 miles east of Tacloban (Contact B)\*\*--it is not known to what this contact referred as no Allied carrier group reported being under attack at this time, but TU 77.4.2 was sixty miles west of the contact;

(3) At 0230 an RDF fix on a submarine west of Mindoro Island, bearing

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\* Commander 2ND Striking Force Dispatch 222000 October 1944, addressees missing but believed to include all concerned with penetration operation, Detailed Action Report Main Force, SHO No. 1 Operation, October 20th - 29th, 1944, WDC Document 161005, NA 11744.

\*\* Appended Chart IV, Enemy Fleet Dispositions on October 23rd, 1944, Detailed Action Report Main Force, SHO No. 1 Operation, October 20th - 29th, 1944, WDC Document 161005, NA 11744.

250°(T), distant 230 miles from Manila (Contact C)\*--this contact was some 100 miles west of the GUITARRO and ANGLER;

(4) At 0230 an RDF fix on a submarine west of lower Palawan Island in Palawan Passage (Contact D)\*--DARTER and DACE were approximately fifty miles, bearing 223°(T), from this contact position;

(5) At 0302 an RDF fix, evaluation unknown, bearing 073°(T), distant 520 miles from Manila (Contact E)\*--this contact was about eighty miles north of TG 38.2.

From these contacts his concern lest one or more of his ships be torpedoed was intensified. That this concern was justified was apparent when at about 0515 he learned that the AOBA, flagship of CRUDIV SIXTEEN, en route to Manila, had been attacked by an enemy submarine and had received one torpedo hit. He plotted the position of this attack (Latitude 14°-00'N, Longitude 119°-28'E) and noted that it was about seventy miles from the entrance to Manila Bay.\*\*

Since he had assigned CRUDIV SIXTEEN to Commander SW Area Force for counterlanding operations, he now studied the situation to determine whether or not this disaster to the AOBA would require that he assign any additional units to Commander SW Area Force in order to maintain the strength of the forces assigned that commander.

Meanwhile he watched the situation closely for he had additional forces underway as pointed out earlier, and the possibility of enemy submarine attack on any of these forces was great. Therefore, it can be safely assumed that when sometime later he received an additional report on a submarine as follows:

(6) At 0532 an RDF fix on a submarine west of Palawan Island at the north-eastern edge of Dangerous Ground (Contact G); he quickly plotted it.

What weight he gave this contact is not known, but it seems probable that since this was an RDF fix and therefore very likely in error, he visualized that the submarine might well be in Palawan Passage and therefore dangerous to the Main Body, FIRST Striking Force. (This fix was not very accurate for the nearest Allied submarines (DACE and DARTER in Palawan Passage and ANGLER off Mindoro Strait were 170 miles away).

Then about one hour after this he received a contact report on Allied carriers to the eastward of Luzon as follows:

(7) At 0633 by submarine I-41 on two Allied carrier aircraft in Latitude 15°-35'N, Longitude 130°-12'E (500 miles east of Lamon Bay).

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\* Appended Chart IV, Enemy Fleet Dispositions on October 23rd, 1944, Detailed Action Report Main Force, SHO No. 1 Operation, October 20th - 29th, 1944, WDC Document 161005, NA 11744.

\*\* COMCRUDIV 16 Dispatch 230445 October 1944 to CinC Combined Fleet, Commander SW Area Force, etc., Detailed Action Report CRUDIV 16, SHO Operation, October 17th - 27th, 1944, WDC Document 161005, NA 11744.



Since this was the second contact he had had on Allied carriers, it seems highly probable that he now studied the situation to discern whether these contacts indicated much change in the carrier operating areas over those of the previous day. If he did study the situation for this purpose, he readily noted that the (a) 0215 contact (Contact B) was on carriers to the eastward of Tacloban and therefore in the general area where carriers had been observed on the previous day although somewhat farther to the eastward, and (b) 0633 contact (Contact H) was to the eastward of Luzon and was in the same general area as were several contacts on the previous day. Therefore, he could estimate that there had been little change in the (1) operating areas, and (2) number of carriers operating eastward of the Philippines. While this was not a particularly pleasing development, it was clearly one which he had visualized.

His concern was not great for the bad weather east of Manila made it highly unlikely that the enemy would launch major air attacks on this day on Luzon. This would allow his base air forces there an additional day for mounting the all-out attack, now scheduled for the 24th. However, he realized from his wartime experience that the Allies were capable of attacking at almost any time and under almost any conditions, and he hoped that this fact would not be forgotten by his interested commanders.

In this connection, one of his commanders at sea with the Main Body FIRST Striking Force stated in his war diary, in part, "Today the weather was bad in the Manila area and practically no searches were carried out... The enemy, however, was extremely active and a major development is expected in the battle area."\*

During the early forenoon he likely received a contact report on an enemy force made by a Type Two large flying boat at 0727.\*\* What action he took on this contact report is not known, but it seems probable that he realized that this plane had reported the Main Force, through error, as enemy.

Since a similar error had been made on the previous day, it can be assumed he viewed this failure in recognition with concern and considerable annoyance. It will be recalled he had sent a message of caution on the subject after the first occurrence and the fact that the error had been repeated indicated either a gross lack of briefing or serious incompetence in his pilots.

It is of interest that this contact was picked up by Allied sources and rejected on the ground that since this was the second error of this nature in two days it was most unlikely that it was on a Japanese force.

Later on in the morning he received additional contacts as follows:

(8) At 0915 an RDF fix on a surface target 200 miles east of Catanduanes

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\* Vice Admiral Matome Ugaki, IJN, (COMBATDIV 1), Personal Diary SENSOROKU, Nippon Shuppan Kyodo Kabushiki Kaisha, (Tokyo, March 15th, 1953), Volume II.

\*\* Detailed Action Report ISE, SHO No. 1 Operation, October 25th, 1944, WDC Document 161006, NA 12604.

Island (Contact I)\*--TG 38.2 was the closest group, 115 miles north and refueling;

(9) That inside Leyte Gulf at 0930 there were four battleships or cruisers, thirteen large and four small transports (Contact J);\*\*

(10) And, of course, at least one submarine in the vicinity of the AOBA attack at 0445 (Contact F).

Since these contacts were not unusual and indicated that the Allied forces, while still in the area, were showing no unusual activity, he likely felt that the situation was satisfactory.

It seems probable that at some time prior to 1042 he intercepted a dispatch from the Chief of Staff Main Body FIRST Striking Force to the Chief of Staff SW Area Force quoted in full under "Operations of Commander Main Body (FIRST Striking Force) 0000 - 1042 October 23rd" reporting that the TAKAO had been torpedoed by a submarine and requesting assistance.\*\*\*

This probability is based on the fact that the Intelligence Officer\*\*\*\* for the Combined Fleet stated (1957) that (a) since this dispatch was undoubtedly relayed to Tokyo by the Takao Radio Station (Formosa) it would have been received by approximately 0930 and (b) such a dispatch would normally require about one hour for transmission, receipt, decoding and telephoning.\*\*\*\*\*

He now had information which showed that two of his task groups had been located and attacked by Allied submarines and that two of his heavy cruisers had been disabled. While this had been clearly anticipated the reality must have been disturbing!

He could see that the enemy was now aware of the presence of two of his forces in the Manila Bay - Palawan Passage area and therefore he could expect that they would initiate strong countermeasures against him. He commenced reestimating the situation to determine whether or not in the light of the developing situation he should proceed with the operations as planned. (In this connection it seems clear that at this time he did not know that the ATAGO had been torpedoed and sunk at 0633 (by the DARTER) and the MAYA at 0700 (by the DACE) even though the sinkings had occurred about four hours earlier.

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- \* Appended Chart IV, Enemy Fleet Dispositions on October 23rd, 1944; Detailed Action Report Main Force, SHO No. 1 Operation, October 20th - 29th, 1944, WDC Document 161005, NA 11744.
- \*\* Detailed Action Report No. 2, 5TH Attack Unit (752ND Air Group), October 22nd - 29th, 1944, WDC Document 160258, NA 12592.
- \*\*\* CofS Main Body 1ST Striking Force Dispatch 230830 October 1944 to CofS SW Area Force (info addressees unknown), Detailed Action Report 1ST Striking Force, SHO Operations, October 16th - 28th, 1944, WDC Document 161641, NA 11839.
- \*\*\*\* Commander Chikataka Nakajima, ex-IJN.
- \*\*\*\*\* HQ U.S. Army, Japan ltr MH 319.1, undated but received July 19th, 1957, to President, Naval War College.



(1) Operations of Commander FIRST Striking Force, 0000 - 1042 October 23rd.

At midnight Commander FIRST Striking Force, who was also Commander Main Body, in his flagship the ATAGO with the Main Body (FIRST and SECOND Sections of the FIRST Striking Force) was proceeding northeast in Palawan Passage.

He was watching the general situation closely for the penetration operation was now underway. He was interested primarily in the operations of his FIRST Striking Force which it will be recalled was divided into two parts, one, the much larger and the principal part, the Main Body which he commanded directly, the other, the lesser part, the THIRD Section. It seems fair to say that he knew that the THIRD Section was underway on its planned schedule and was about 150 miles from Balabac Passage through which it would pass that forenoon.

As the night passed and he heard no especially disquieting news he likely hoped that his command would get through the night without mishap. He realized, however, that with the arrival of daylight and the passage of the Main Body into the Sibuyan Sea and the THIRD Section into the Sulu Sea both of these commands would be subject to air attack. In the case of the THIRD Section this was of particular concern because of the Allied large type planes which were operating over the Sulu Sea.

He had reason to hope for the best, however, for his THIRD Section was being "provided with close air cover against air and submarine attack."\*

With the Main Body's commencement of zigzagging at 0530 and the increase of speed to eighteen knots at the same time he likely felt that his passage through Palawan Passage would continue to be uneventful as there had been no submarine contacts whatsoever, although there had been strong radio emissions at 0250.

If this was his belief it was due to be quickly changed for at 0633, entirely without warning, his flagship the ATAGO was struck by four torpedoes which caused her to commence sinking.\*\*

As a result of this, since he was Commander Main Body as well, he knew that the KISHINAMI had been ordered alongside to rescue him and his staff. Before the destroyer could arrive he was forced into the water. Meanwhile at 0653 the ATAGO sank.\*\*\* He was not forced to remain in the water very long, however, for at 0658 he was recovered by the

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\* Detailed Action Report MOGAMI, Battle off the Philippines, October 18th - 25th, 1944, WDC Document 160463, NA 12653.

\*\* Detailed Action and Battle Lessons Report ATAGO, October 23rd, 1944, WDC Document 161747.

\*\*\* Detailed Action Report No. 3, YAMATO, SHO No. 1 Operation, Antiair and Surface Actions, October 17th - 28th, 1944, WDC Document 161639.

KISHINAMI,\* which also recovered several hundred other survivors.

Once he was aboard the KISHINAMI he learned that the facilities and the capability for handling communications of any important character were poor. In fact his Chief of Staff stated later that they had experienced "great inconvenience on the destroyer as communication (presumably between ships present) was possible only by light flash (flashing light?)."\*\*\*

(This statement of his Chief of Staff seems incorrect and was probably the result of a lapse of memory, for there are messages recorded as early as 0711 which were sent by voice radio.)

Therefore realizing (a) the inadequacy of the destroyer communication system and (b) the importance of informing his next in command of the fact that he was alive and on board the KISHINAMI he, also at 0658, advised that commander (COMBATDIV ONE) of this fact and further directed the YAMATO to "take over communications."\*\*\*\*

Meanwhile he learned that the condition of the TAKAO, which had been torpedoed shortly after the ATAGO; was in doubt and that at 0656 the MAYA had been torpedoed. He likely witnessed the sinking of the MAYA at 0700.

He now decided that he must regain a position in the force from which he could better exercise command and therefore at 0700 he directed (a) the KISHINAMI to rejoin the FIRST Section, which was moving generally to the northward, and (b) the ASASHIMO to carry out rescue operations. Both destroyers immediately executed these orders.

It seems probable that he discussed at the earliest moment the various aspects of the situation with his staff. The first matter was undoubtedly the selection of a flagship. Certainly the KISHINAMI would not do if for no other reason than her inadequate communications.

He therefore considered a cruiser or a battleship. He (a) rejected the cruiser presumably because of her limited torpedo defensive capability and (b) selected a battleship. But what battleship? This was not a difficult choice for he had (a) long considered the YAMATO class battleship the most suitable ship of his force for the purpose,\*\*\*\* (b) desired to have

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\* Detailed Action Report No. 2, DESDIV 31 (KISHINAMI), Antiair and Surface Actions, October 24th - 26th, 1944, WDC Document 161717, NA 11801.

\*\* USSBS Interrogations of Japanese Officials, Nav No. 35, Interrogation of Rear Admiral Tomiji Koyanagi, IJN, Volume I, Page 147.

\*\*\* KISHINAMI (Commander Main Body) Visual Dispatch 230658 October 1944 to COMBATDIV 1, Detailed Action Report BATDIV 1, SHO No. 1 Operation, October 18th - 28th, 1944, WDC Document 161005, NA 11744.

\*\*\*\* Rear Admiral Tomiji Koyanagi, ex-IJN, "The Battle of Leyte Gulf--A Retrospection", MS Translation by Captain Toshikazu Ohmae, ex-IJN, edited by Roger Pineau, 1952, Office of Chief of Naval Operations (Op-291).



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BATDIV ONE under his direct command\* and (c) already made some preparations in the YAMATO should a transfer be necessary,\*\* thus indicating a preference for the YAMATO.

Why he chose the YAMATO, which already had a flag on board, rather than the MUSASHI which did not—the commanding officer of the MUSASHI had been a Rear Admiral since October 15th but did not exercise a flag command—is not fully known. However, the best evidence is that he weighed the obvious disadvantages of being in the same ship with his second in command against the advantages of having (a) COMBATDIV ONE readily available for counsel and (b) COMBATDIV ONE's staff available to assist his staff\*\* (which had lost half of its communication personnel in the sinking of the ATAGO).\*\*\*

In connection with the above it is of interest that while this transfer to the YAMATO would be contrary to the oft expressed wishes of CinC Combined Fleet—who had rejected the idea of a battleship as flagship on the ground that the FIRST Striking Force was expected to be in night action and therefore should be in a heavy cruiser the key ship of night action\*\*\*\*—it was completely satisfactory to Commander FIRST Striking Force. Thus a long cherished wish would be "accidentally achieved through misfortune."\*

Having decided to transfer to the YAMATO he then at 0736 by visual dispatch notified the Main Body as follows: "Force flag scheduled to be transferred to the YAMATO."\*\*\*\*\*

This decision to transfer his flag to a battleship in general and to the YAMATO in particular seems to have been the correct decision for the reasons given. Certainly he had (1) in COMBATDIV ONE one of the more brilliant officers of the Japanese Navy, (2) in COMBATDIV ONE's staff, a staff experienced in the YAMATO organization and in its capabilities and limitations, (3) and in the YAMATO a twenty-seven knot ship reputedly able to deliver and withstand heavy blows either by gun, bomb or torpedo.

He now having lost two heavy cruisers by sinking and one by heavy damage had to reestimate the situation to determine whether these losses

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- \* Vice Admiral Matome Ugaki, IJN, (COMBATDIV 1), Personal Diary, SENSOROKU, Nippon Shuppan Kyodo Kabushiki Kaisha (Tokyo, March 15th, 1953) Volume II.
- \*\* USSBS Interrogations of Japanese Officials, Nav No. 41, Interrogation of Commander Tonosuku Otani, IJN, Volume I, Page 171.
- \*\*\* USSBS Interrogations of Japanese Officials, Nav No. 35, Interrogation of Rear Admiral Tomiji Koyanagi, IJN, Volume I, Page 147.
- \*\*\*\* Rear Admiral Tomiji Koyanagi, ex-IJN, "The Battle for Leyte Gulf—A Retrospection", MS Translation by Captain Toshikazu Ohmae, ex-IJN, edited by Roger Pineau, 1952, Office of Chief of Naval Operations (Op-291).
- \*\*\*\*\* KISHINAMI Visual Dispatch 230736 October 1944 to All Ships, Detailed Action Report BATDIV 1, SHO No. 1 Operation, October 18th - 28th, 1944, WDC Document 161005, NA 11744.



were acceptable at this time, and if not acceptable what action he should take.

At 0830 he knew since he was also Commander Main Body that that commander had relinquished the tactical command to COMBATDIV ONE.

At this same time his Chief of Staff sent a dispatch to the Chief of Staff SW Area Force (a) reporting the torpedoing of the TAKAO and (b) requesting immediate screening and towing services.\*

At 0905 he (a) ordered the CHIBURI (PF No. 21) from Brunei to act as screen for the TAKAO and (b) announced that the TAKAO would make urgent repairs at Ulugan (Palawan Island) and thereafter proceed to Brunei.\*\*

At 0915 he received a visual dispatch from COMBATDIV ONE announcing that that officer had assumed command.\*\*\*

Upon assuming command of the Main Body COMBATDIV ONE has recorded in his diary "... the entire force was notified by visual communication (0915) of my assumption of command and of the whereabouts of Commander FIRST Striking Force. I then took over command assuming complete responsibility."\*\*\*\* However, based on the evidence of several dispatches subsequently originated by Commander FIRST Striking Force it would appear that that commander retained the basic authority for control and direction of FIRST Striking Force while COMBATDIV ONE's function was limited to that comparable to the OTC in the U.S. naval terminology.

At 0938 he received a dispatch from COMBATDIV ONE to the effect that he (COMBATDIV ONE) planned to carry out the transfer of the force flag at about 1300 in the vicinity of Latitude 11°-02'N, Longitude 118°-06'E.\*\*\*\*\* This position is just outside the northeastern entrance to Palawan Passage and its selection by COMBATDIV ONE clearly indicates that that commander had also decided that the submarine threat was too great in Palawan Passage to permit transfer.

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- \* CofS 1ST Striking Force Dispatch 220830 October 1944 to CofS SW Area Force, Detailed Action Report 1ST Striking Force, SHO Operations, October 16th - 28th, 1944, WDC Document 161641, NA 11839.
  - \*\* Ibid., Commander 1ST Striking Force Dispatch 230905 October 1944 (Addressees unknown but believed to be CHIBURI, info COMBATDIV 1, and TAKAO).
  - \*\*\* Detailed Action Report BATDIV 1, SHO No. 1 Operation, October 18th - 28th, 1944, WDC Document 161005, NA 11744.
  - \*\*\*\* Vice Admiral Matome Ugaki, IJN, (COMBATDIV 1), Personal Diary, SENSOROKU, Nippon Shuppan Kyodo Kabushiki Kaisha (Tokyo, March 15th, 1953), Volume II.
  - \*\*\*\*\* COMBATDIV 1 Visual Dispatch 230938 October 1944 to Commander 1ST Striking Force, Detailed Action Report BATDIV 1, SHO No. 1 Operation, October 18th - 28th, 1944, WDC Document 161005, NA 11744.



What he thought of this dispatch is not known; but as the wording clearly gave him the opportunity to object if he so desired and as he took no action, the proposal seems to have met with his approval.

At 1026 he received a dispatch from COMBATDIV ONE informing the interested high commanders of the morning's action:

"1. At 0634 (daybreak) ATAGO and MAYA were sunk and TAKAO rendered inoperational by actions of three enemy submarines. Two destroyers have been assigned to TAKAO.

"2. CinC is presently aboard the KISHINAMI and plans to board the YAMATO at about 1300.

"3. I am temporarily assuming command of FIRST Striking Force. Operations are being continued as scheduled."\*

Of particular interest in this dispatch is the statement that "Operations are being continued as scheduled." Certainly this was an important decision and one which was properly a function of Commander FIRST Striking Force and one which required a complete estimate of the situation before it was determined. Whether or not this decision was the result of Commander FIRST Striking Force's estimate and was made known to COMBATDIV ONE or whether it was COMBATDIV ONE's own estimate remains unclear. However, in either case it was sound, for the Japanese High Command from the beginning anticipated that it would be a costly operation and therefore heavy losses were to be expected. (Commander FIRST Striking Force stated after the war that he expected to lose more than half of his force.)\*\* Whether or not they expected to lose so heavily so early in the operation is doubtful.

Since the information contained in this dispatch (a) could seriously influence the running estimates of the addressees and in particular that of CinC Combined Fleet, and (b) had been available for sometime within the Main Body, does it not seem surprising that COMBATDIV ONE delayed so long to forward it? In this connection, U.S. Naval Doctrine today (1957) in commenting upon Vital Information states: "VITAL INFORMATION, POSITIVE AND NEGATIVE... REPORTS OF BATTLE DAMAGE... OPERATIONAL DIRECTIVES, AND OTHER SIMILAR OPERATIONAL INFORMATION, MUST GET THROUGH TO THE APPROPRIATE PERSONNEL WITH THE MINIMUM POSSIBLE DELAY." ALSO "PARTIAL INFORMATION PROMPTLY RECEIVED IS OF VASTLY GREATER IMPORTANCE THAN COMPLETE INFORMATION RECEIVED TOO LATE."\*\*\*

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\* COMBATDIV 1 Dispatch 231026 October 1944 to CinC Combined Fleet, Commanders Main Force, SW Area Force, Chief of Naval General Staff, Detailed Action Report 1ST Striking Force, SHO Operations, October 16th - 28th, 1944, WDC Document 161641, NA 11839.

\*\* USSBS Interrogation of Japanese Officials, Nav No. 9, Interrogation of Vice Admiral Takeo Kurita, IJN, Volume I, Page 33.

\*\*\* Basic Fleet Operational Communication Doctrine (NWP 16) Department of the Navy, Office of the Chief of Naval Operations, September 1953, Chapter 5, Paragraphs 500-501.



The reason for making this information available to CinC Combined Fleet in particular as early as possible is simple. CinC Combined Fleet was charged with the success or failure of the naval phase of this operation. Therefore, it was imperative that he be kept informed at all times of the developments in the various areas and in the naval forces under his command so that he might be enabled to maintain his running estimate up to date and to (a) make any changes necessary within his command or (b) make proper representations to Imperial General Headquarters (Navy Section) concerning the whole SHO One Operation.

It is assumed that during the morning Commander FIRST Striking Force in the KISHINAMI received Commander SECOND Striking Force's 222000\* in which that commander announced the schedule of movements for the SECOND Striking Force in the penetration operation.

While this dispatch did not give any specific route, it did specify that the SECOND Striking Force was to arrive at Coron Bay that evening, would refuel and sortie the following morning at 0200. Knowing that this force had departed Mako on October 22nd and would probably steam at about twenty knots, Commander FIRST Striking Force could readily estimate that at this time (1042) the two forces (Main Body and SECOND Striking Force) were rapidly approaching one another and should pass fairly close to one another within a matter of hours. The question likely arose in his mind as to the possibility of including this force in the Main Body. Although he knew that the suggestion that this be done had been denied heretofore by CinC Combined Fleet, he also knew that the loss of the three cruisers had changed the situation considerably. He now commenced studying this new situation to see what action, if any, he might (a) take on his own or (b) recommend to be taken by CinC Combined Fleet.

Because of the communication limitations of the KISHINAMI, Commander FIRST Striking Force may not have had all the contact reports of the morning. It seems likely, however, that they were received by COMBATDIV ONE in the YAMATO and that that commander screened the contacts with the purpose of passing those of sufficient importance to Commander FIRST Striking Force. These contacts included:

(1) At 0215 a carrier undergoing air attack about 225 miles east of Tacloban\*\* (Contact B Plate XL);

(2) At 0230 an RDF fix on a submarine west of Mindoro Island, bearing 250°(T), distant 230 miles from Manila\*\* (Contact C);

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\* Commander 2ND Striking Force Dispatch 222000 October 1944 (addressees missing but believed to include all concerned with the penetration operation), Detailed Action Report Main Force, SHO No. 1 Operation, October 20th - 29th, 1944, WDC Document 161005, NA 11744.

\*\* Appended Chart IV, Enemy Fleet Dispositions on October 23rd, 1944, Detailed Action Report Main Force, SHO No. 1 Operation, October 20th - 29th, 1944, WDC Document 161005, NA 11744.









October 23rd

(3) At 0230 an RDF fix on a submarine west of lower Palawan Island in Palawan Passage (Contact D);\*

(4) At 0302 an RDF fix, evaluation unknown, bearing 073°(T), distant 520 miles from Manila (Contact E);\* and

(5) At 0532 an RDF fix on a submarine west of Palawan Island at the northern edge of Dangerous Ground (Contact G).\*

And also that at 0445 the AOBA had been torpedoed about seventy miles west of the entrance to Manila Bay (Contact F).

At 1042 Commander FIRST Striking Force in the KISHINAMI was on station on the port bow of the YAMATO in Y-23 Alert Cruising Disposition.

(a) Operations of Commander Main Body (FIRST Striking Force), 0000 - 1042 October 23rd.

At midnight Commander Main Body, who was also Commander FIRST Striking Force, in the flagship ATAGO, was proceeding with the Main Body (FIRST and SECOND Sections of the FIRST Striking Force) northeastward in Palawan Passage on course 040°(T), speed sixteen knots. The Main Body was in Cruising Disposition Y-22; the FIRST Section in Cruising Disposition Y-19 (Plate XXXVIII), and the SECOND Section in Cruising Disposition B-1.

As will be shown from his later actions, he does not appear to have been apprehensive about the next few hours, although he well knew that on his present course and speed he would enter lower Palawan Passage in about one hour and that thereafter he could expect submarine attack at any time. He had forecast this (a) on October 21st when he decided to choose the Palawan Passage route at which time he said that he had selected this route "although the submarine threat was greatest along that route", and (b) this concept had been strengthened during the past several days when he had received a number of radio fixes on submarines in this passage.

In this latter connection it will be recalled that at about midnight he had received further indications of possible submarine attack, for at that time he had received an RDF fix on a submarine at 1800 October 22nd in a position about 100 miles north of his 2400 position, and apparently had received several other RDF fixes which should have been alarming, for the TAKAO, in her plot of enemy submarine positions, shows two additional submarine contacts, one about fifty miles and the other about fifteen miles to the left of the course.

Despite these facts it seems fair to say that when at 0250 he heard an extremely loud submarine radio transmission he was not surprised

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\* Appended Chart IV, Enemy Fleet Dispositions on October 23rd, 1944, Detailed Action Report Main Force, SHO No. 1 Operation, October 20th - 29th, 1944, WDC Document 161005, NA 11744.

nor was he unduly alarmed for he (a) seems to have made no effort to alert his command until sometime later and (b) took no additional antisubmarine precautions.

(As a matter of information the Japanese knew at this time that Allied submarines had, among other characteristics, extremely efficient radar which was superior to anything they had; that Allied wolf pack tactics were very good, particularly at night and that these night operations were successful largely because of the excellence of the radar, the high speed and the extremely good intersubmarine communication by means of wireless telephone (voice radio)).\*

This radio transmission was from the submarine DARTER which as shown in Diagram "E" was in lower Palawan Passage at this time, and which at 0225 had commenced transmitting to CTF 71 her first contact report on the Main Body (FIRST Striking Force).\*\* It will be recalled from "Operations of CTF 71, Submarines West Australia (5) DACE and DARTER, 0000 - 1042, October 23rd" that the DARTER, while holding a megaphone conference with the DACE in western Palawan Passage, had at 0116 contacted the Main Body (the DACE did not make contact until 0125) and then with the DACE had immediately increased speed to nineteen knots and had begun to maneuver for a suitable attack position. It is of interest that this dispatch was (a) receipted for by CTF 71 at 0250 and (b) picked up by the Japanese Direction Finder Net and in a position which present information shows was bearing 043°(T), distant fifty miles from the DARTER.

The question now arises as to whether, based on his own concepts as to what constituted correct antisubmarine defense in submarine waters, he should have taken additional precautions, and if so what. The answer seems to be "no" for the fact that he took no additional action shows that he felt that he was accomplishing all necessary security factors by (a) retaining his present antisubmarine disposition (this is discussed under "Operations of Commander FIRST Striking Force, October 22nd"), (b) not zigzagging, and (c) cruising at sixteen knots.

But were these concepts correct? A discussion of each follows:

(a) As regards item (a) above, i.e., retaining his present A/S disposition, there seems to be no major criticism from any Japanese source. Therefore, it would appear that, based on Japanese standards, this disposition at this time was, in general, satisfactory, although based on U.S. Naval standards as discussed under "Operations of Commander FIRST Striking Force, October 22nd", it was unsound because it failed to provide adequate A/S protection from ahead.

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\* USSBS Interrogation of Japanese Officials, Nav No. 110, Interrogation of Captain Tokuma Abe, IJN, Volume II, Pages 485-486.

\*\* DARTER Dispatch 221725 October 1944 to CTF 71.



(b) As regards item (b) failing to zigzag, there seems to be divided opinion. The commanding officers of two of his cruisers, which were torpedoed later on this morning, are critical. The Commanding Officer TAKAO states, "It is profitable to employ a zigzag method with formation changes of front"\* and the Commanding Officer ATAGO states, "At about 0230 on 23 October, radar emission from an enemy submarine was detected. Since, however, it was difficult to carry out any concealment maneuvers, it is felt that consideration should have been given to selecting the most complex type of zigzag method which the circumstances allowed, in order to make it difficult for the enemy to get into firing position."\*\*

These comments not only imply that it was Japanese naval doctrine to zigzag under the circumstances but that it was feasible.

Why then did Commander Main Body not zigzag? While the answer is not available from Japanese sources, it may well have been that he felt that since the moon had set at 2300 the general visibility conditions did not warrant a zigzag plan. Perhaps Japanese doctrine in this matter was similar to U.S. Naval doctrine which prescribed that "During thick weather and at night, except on very clear nights or during bright moonlight, vessels normally cease zigzagging"\*\*\* and again "Ships and dispositions shall zigzag during good visibility including bright moonlight, in areas where enemy submarines may be encountered, unless the accomplishment of the task assigned will be jeopardized by the reduced speed of advance, increased fuel consumption, or both. The officer in tactical command should signal the time to commence zigzagging and to cease zigzagging. Zigzagging should normally cease after evening twilight and commence prior to morning twilight, unless the phase of the moon requires that zigzagging be continued."\*\*\*\*

However, since the Commanding Officers of both the TAKAO and ATAGO stated that zigzagging should have been employed, it would appear that the visibility was probably a border-line condition. In such case does it not seem likely that if Commander Main Body had been really apprehensive, he would have zigzagged? THEREFORE, ONCE AGAIN, BASED ON U.S. NAVAL DOCTRINE THE VISIBILITY CONDITIONS SEEM LIKELY TO HAVE BEEN SUFFICIENTLY GOOD TO WARRANT ZIGZAGGING, AND THEREFORE, ALSO BASED ON U.S. NAVAL DOCTRINE, ZIGZAGGING OR SOME EVASIVE MANEUVERS SHOULD HAVE BEEN EMPLOYED.

(c) As regards item (c) above, failure to increase speed, there evidently was also divided opinion, for the only commanding officers who

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\* Detailed Action Report TAKAO, Antisubmarine Action, October 23rd - 25th, 1944, WDC Document 160141, NA 11839.

\*\* Detailed Action Report and Battle Lessons ATAGO, October 23rd, 1944, WDC Document 161747.

\*\*\* War Instructions, United States Navy (FTP 143(A)), United States Fleet, Headquarters of the Commander in Chief, 1944.

\*\*\*\* Current Tactical Orders and Doctrine, U.S. Fleet (USF 10B), United States Fleet, Headquarters of the Commander in Chief, 1945, Page 3-65, Paragraph 3410.



mentioned this in their action reports were (a) the Commanding Officer MAYA, whose ship was torpedoed later that morning, who stated (1) that "Since there had previously been frequent ship sinkings by enemy submarines in the vicinity of the southern entrance to Palawan Passage, it was obviously necessary to traverse this area at high speed",\* and (2) from this fact he had drawn the battle lesson that "When navigating through a submarine danger area, it is necessary to cruise at a speed of twenty knots or higher";\* (b) the Commanding Officer TONE, who stated as a battle lesson, "When proceeding through enemy submarine-infested waters a speed of at least 22 knots should be maintained just so long as the hydrophone is able to pick up torpedo sounds";\*\* (c) the Commanding Officer TAKAO, who formulated as a battle lesson, "During daytime, the fleet should break through (submarine-infested waters) at high speed with direct air escort".\*\*\*

However, it seems wise to insert here the fact that Commander Main Body was not anticipating the need for increased speed in Palawan Passage. This is clearly shown by the fact that while steaming at sixteen knots he had set an engineering condition readiness "of the specified standard of eighteen knots immediately and twenty knots on twenty minutes notice".\*\*\*\*

Why this was so is not explained for any commander who is forced to operate in dangerous waters--in this case submarine waters--should have enough reserve power instantly available to permit necessary increases in speed. And in this case, since Commander Main Body well knew that Allied submarines were capable of a top speed (on the surface) of twenty knots, does it not seem correct to say that that speed should have been the minimum employed during the six hours from moonset until dawn, during which time the Main Body would have been completing the transit of Palawan Passage?

Because the above seems fairly obvious, the question arises as to why Commander Main Body did not (a) increase speed and (b) set a condition of readiness which would have permitted an immediate increase in speed sufficient to "outrun" Allied submarines.

While there is no answer available from Japanese sources, there seems reason to believe that he (a) did not give sufficient weight to the submarine menace in the passage and (b) realizing that high speed would be required on the morrow during the passage through the Sibuyan Sea and along

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- \* Detailed Action Report MAYA, Battle off Philippines, October 22nd - 26th, 1944, WDC Document 161747.
  - \*\* Detailed Action Report TONE, SHO Operation, Battle off the Philippines, October 24th - 26th, 1944, WDC Document 161747.
  - \*\*\* Detailed Action Report TAKAO, Antisubmarine Action, October 23rd - 25th, 1944, WDC Document 160141, NA 11839.
  - \*\*\*\* Vice Admiral Matome Ugaki, IJN, (COMBATDIV 1), Personal Diary SENSOROKU, Nippon Shuppan Kyodo Kabushiki Kaisha, (Tokyo, March 15th, 1953), Volume II.



the coast of Samar had decided to rest his engineer personnel during this night, and (c) desired to maintain his fuel consumption at a relatively low level to give more freedom of action in this matter later.

At 0400 Commander Main Body changed course to 035°(T) in accordance with his night orders issued the previous day\* and continued on at sixteen knots.

At 0530, also in accordance with his night orders,\* he directed the Main Body to commence zigzagging and to increase speed to eighteen knots. \*\* Since the zigzag plan was Method "A", the speed made good was seventeen knots.

Apparently at about this time the flag and commanding officers, at least of the FIRST Section, went to their bridge stations as follows: (a) COMBATDIV ONE states, "Ordered to take the regular station for one hour before sunrise, I was on the bridge";\*\*\* (b) MYOKO states that she set No. 1 Shipboard Alert at 0600;\*\*\*\* (c) TAKAO states that she manned stations for daytime action at 0610;\*\*\*\*\* (d) YAMATO states that she manned stations at 0615;\*\*\*\*\* and finally (f) the ATAGO states, "1. All hands had been ordered to their stations at 0615 (watertight doors secured for battle), and strict antisubmarine alert was being enforced. Main Battery, HA (high angle), MG (machine gun), torpedo and defense section personnel were conducting drills." \*\*\*\*\*

Between 0600 and 0615 the various ships set No. One Antisubmarine Condition.\*\*\*\*\* Meanwhile dawn appeared at 0612. The weather was clear,

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- \* Commander 1ST Striking Force Dispatch 221850 October 1944 to 1ST Striking Force, Detailed Action Report SUZUYA, SHO No. 1 Operation, October 18th - 25th, 1944, WDC Document 161747.
- \*\* Detailed Action Report 1ST Striking Force, SHO Operations, October 16th - 28th, 1944, WDC Document 161641, NA 11839.
- \*\*\* Vice Admiral Matome Ugaki, IJN, (COMBATDIV 1), Personal Diary SENSOROKU, Nippon Shuppan Kyodo Kabushiki Kaisha, (Tokyo, March 15th, 1953), Volume II.
- \*\*\*\* Detailed Action Report No. 15, MYOKO, Battle off the Philippines, (Antiair Action in Mindoro Sea), October 24th, 1944, WDC Document 161647.
- \*\*\*\*\* Detailed Action Report TAKAO, Antisubmarine Action, October 23rd - 25th, 1944, WDC Document 160141, NA 11839.
- \*\*\*\*\* Detailed Action Report No. 3, YAMATO, SHO No. 1 Operation, Antiair and Surface Actions, October 17th - 28th, 1944, WDC Document 161639.
- \*\*\*\*\* Detailed Action and Battle Lessons Report ATAGO, October 23rd, 1944, WDC Document 161747.
- \*\*\*\*\* Detailed Action Report No. 15, MYOKO, Battle off the Philippines (Antiaircraft Action in Mindoro Sea), October 24th, 1944, WDC Document 161647; also Detailed Action and Battle Lessons Report ATAGO, October 23rd, 1944, WDC Document 161747.

wind from the northeast at six knots, sea state One and visibility forty kilometers\* (twenty-two miles). In addition "Occasional pieces of driftwood were sighted. Sunrise was at 0659, so that conditions for sighting a submarine periscope were poor...".\*

Why at this time he failed to launch aircraft at dawn is nowhere fully explained excepting, as discussed earlier, he did not give sufficient consideration to the danger from submarines, particularly at dawn and at dusk. It had long been the practice of the U.S. Navy to regard the dawn and dusk periods as the most dangerous times of the day.

That it may have been so regarded by the Japanese Navy is borne out by the following statement from the action report of the TAKAO:

"a. Aircraft should be employed at night to neutralize enemy submarines ahead, astern and on the flanks of the fleet. For this purpose, it is essential to improve the radar, magnetic and medium and ultra-short wave direction finding equipment of aircraft.

"b. A/S air patrols ahead and astern should be especially intensive just before dawn and at dusk. Ship-borne aircraft should also be used for such patrols."\*

In an attempt to explain the failure to launch dawn antisubmarine aircraft patrols both the former Chief of Staff Combined Fleet in a postwar article on the Battle for Leyte Gulf,\*\* and Commander FIRST Striking Force in his action report\*\*\* have endeavored to explain the omission on the ground that the aircraft had been sent to San Jose (Mindoro). This explanation is completely erroneous for as shown (a) under "Operations of Commander FIRST Striking Force, October 22nd", there were as many as forty-one, and probably as many as forty-five, reconnaissance seaplanes aboard the ships of the FIRST and SECOND Sections upon their sortie from Brunei Bay and (b) by the records of the individual ships, these planes were still on board at the time of the attack by the DACE and DARTER.

At 0633 Commander Main Body in his flagship, which was the leading ship in the left column of heavy ships in the FIRST Section was torpedoed by a submarine in Latitude 09°-30'N, Longitude 117°-18'E, and received four torpedo hits along the starboard side, forward, amidships and aft. He noted that she quickly developed an initial list of eight degrees to starboard, and

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\* Detailed Action Report TAKAO, Antisubmarine Action, October 23rd - 25th, 1944, WDC Document 160141, NA 11839.

\*\* Rear Admiral Tomiji Koyanagi, ex-IJN, "The Battle of Leyte Gulf - A Retrospection", MS Translation by Captain Toshikazu Ohmae, ex-IJN, Edited by Roger Pineau, 1952, Office of the Chief of Naval Operations (Op-291).

\*\*\* Detailed Action Report 1ST Striking Force, SHO Operations, October 16th - 28th, 1944, WDC Document 161641, NA 11839.



although her commanding officer took immediate action to counterflood the portside engine and boiler rooms, the list could not be controlled.\* (These torpedoes, part of a salvo of six, had been fired by the DARTER).\*\*

The Commanding Officer TAKAO, following in a line of bearing next astern of the ATAGO, observing the torpedo hits ahead on the ATAGO's starboard side immediately applied full left rudder.\*\*\* His ship had swung through about forty-five degrees when she received two torpedo hits at 0634 (also fired by the DARTER) which blew off her rudder and both inboard propellers, flooded three boiler rooms, as well as other spaces, disabled her steering gear and gave her a list of ten degrees to starboard, which list was corrected by immediate counterflooding of the port tanks. Her engines slowed down.\*\*\*

It is not clear why the Commanding Officer TAKAO turned to port since he knew that the torpedoes which had struck the ATAGO had come from a submarine on the TAKAO's starboard bow. Available Japanese doctrine (cruiser doctrine) on this matter merely states that "When a submarine is detected, normally an evasion formation will be formed, but if the enemy has been discovered at close range or if a torpedo is approaching, ships will take evasive action independently or attack."\*\*\*\* This doctrine gives the commanding officer the right to maneuver at will in an emergency situation. In this case, which was such a situation, the commanding officer had to act quickly. His turn away may have been effective in saving his ship from more damage, for the DARTER had fired four torpedoes at her,\*\* but would he not have been more correct had he turned toward the submarine whose location was roughly known in order to (a) endeavor to parallel the tracks of any torpedoes fired at him and (b) force the submarine to submerge? Perhaps the Commanding Officer TAKAO thought that by turning to starboard he might foul the ATAGO.

U.S. NAVAL DOCTRINE AT THE TIME STATED THAT IN CASES OF THIS KIND (I.E., A SUBMARINE SIGHTED BETWEEN BOW AND SEVENTY-FIVE DEGREES ON THE BOW AND WITHIN 6000 YARDS) A SHIP OTHER THAN A DESTROYER OR OTHER ANTISUBMARINE SHIP SHOULD "CHANGE COURSE IMMEDIATELY DIRECTLY TOWARD THE SUBMARINE AND INCREASE SPEED TO THE MAXIMUM WITH THE BOILER POWER AVAILABLE" IN ORDER TO PLACE THE SHIP IN THE BEST POSITION TO DODGE TORPEDOES OR TO RAM.\*\*\*\*\*

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- \* Detailed Action and Battle Lessons Report ATAGO October 23rd, 1944, WDC Document 161747.
  - \*\* War Patrol Report DARTER, Report of 4TH War Patrol, Serial 020, November 5th, 1944.
  - \*\*\* Detailed Action Report TAKAO, Antisubmarine Action, October 23rd - 25th, 1944, WDC Document 160141, NA 11839.
  - \*\*\*\* 1ST Striking Force Standing Order No. 5, Cruiser Doctrine, January 22nd, 1944, ATIS Document No. 39, Part X, August 12th, 1945, Page 19, (NACHI Document).
  - \*\*\*\*\* General Tactical Instructions (FTP 188), United States Navy, Office of the Chief of Naval Operations, Division of Fleet Training, 1940, Chapter V, Section 31, Paragraph 509 (Submarine in Danger Zone No. 1).

COMBATDIV ONE in the YAMATO, who was on the bridge, now perceived that evasive action of some kind was required immediately, not only to avoid the submarine area, but also to avoid fouling the ATAGO which was swinging to the right and "approaching us".\* Realizing that the situation on the ATAGO was such as perhaps to preclude immediate action by Commander Main Body, he decided to take the necessary action insofar as his own command was concerned, and therefore, at 0634 he directed his division by visual signal to make a simultaneous turn of seventy degrees to starboard to course 080°(T).\*\* COMCRUDIV FIVE with the three cruisers MYOKO, HAGURO and MAYA took similar action changing course to the right to 075°(T).\*\*\*

Since from this time onward until 1042 the FIRST and SECOND Sections operated independently, it seems wise, at least for this period, to treat both sections separately.

(1) Operations of Commander FIRST Section.

Before this turn could be completed, a submarine periscope was sighted; and he, therefore, at 0636 ordered an additional turn of 20°.\*\*\*\* This placed him ninety degrees to the right of course 010°(T) or on course 100°(T). It seems probable because of later developments, that COMCRUDIV FIVE likewise changed course to 100°(T). Also at 0636 general depth charging was commenced (even YAMATO and ATAGO fired depth charges) but in the confusion brought on by the radical maneuvers of numerous ships as well as by the effects of the torpedo explosions, the depth charging was not accurate.\*\*\*\*\*

At 0640 Commander Main Body ordered the KISHINAMI to come alongside ATAGO's portside\*\*\*\*\* and at 0645 the KISHINAMI was prepared for the maneuver. Before it could be accomplished, however, Commander Main Body and his staff were forced to enter the water and swim in order to be taken aboard the KISHINAMI.\*\*\*\*\*

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- \* Vice Admiral Matome Ugaki, IJN, (COMBATDIV 1), Personal Diary SENSOROKU, Nippon Shuppan Kyodo Kabushiki Kaisha, (Tokyo, March 15th, 1953), Volume II.
- \*\* COMBATDIV 1 Visual Signal 230634 October 1944 to 1ST Section, BATDIV 1, Detailed Action Report BATDIV 1, SHO No. 1 Operation, October 18th - 28th, 1944, WDC Document 161005, NA 11744.
- \*\*\* Detailed Action Report No. 3 HAGURO, SHO Operation, October 23rd - 26th, 1944, WDC Document 161747.
- \*\*\*\* COMBATDIV 1 Visual Signal 230636 October 1944 to 1ST Section BATDIV 1, Detailed Action Report BATDIV 1, SHO No. 1 Operation, October 18th - 28th, 1944, WDC Document 161005, NA 11744.
- \*\*\*\*\* War Patrol Report DARTER, Report of 4TH War Patrol, Serial 020, November 5th, 1944.
- \*\*\*\*\* ATAGO Visual Signal 230640 October 1944 to KISHINAMI, Detailed Action Report No. 2, DESDIV 31 (KISHINAMI), Anti-air and Surface Actions, October 24th - 26th, 1944, WDC Document 161717, NA 11801.
- \*\*\*\*\* Detailed Action Report and Battle Lessons ATAGO, October 23rd, 1944, WDC Document 161747.



Meanwhile the ships of the right flank had been maneuvering somewhat as shown on Plate XLI. At 0642 COMBATDIV ONE increased speed to twenty knots. No effort appears to have been made to establish a screen ahead of the right flank forces. In fact the plate shows that except for the FUGINAMI the three heavy cruisers (MYOKO, HAGURO and MAYA) were entirely unscreened from ahead. On the other hand the MUSASHI was screened, albeit loosely, from ahead by the AKISHIMO and HAMANAMI.

In general, the ships on the right flank moved away to the right, and the ships on the left flank moved further to the left. The above plate shows that the right flank ships, while moving away from the explosion and maneuvering to present a poor target, made good a course of about 050°(T) which was forty degrees from the course being steered at the time of attack and only fifteen degrees from the base course of 035°(T). Since the position of the Main Body at 0633 was over eleven miles from the 100 fathom curve off Palawan Island, it would appear that COMBATDIV ONE could have advantageously maneuvered on courses leading farther east and avoided approximating the base course.

In addition, the weaving pattern of the courses employed, while apparently prompted by frequent reports of submarine contacts, created an area of confused water which continued to reduce the effectiveness of the sound gear installed in the ships.

At 0649 COMBATDIV ONE decreased speed to 18 knots.

At 0650 COMDESRON TWO informed COMBATDIV ONE that the KISHINAMI had been assigned to the ATAGO and the NAGANAMI to the TAKAO.\*

At 0653 the ATAGO sank.

At 0656 the MAYA, the third ship of the right column of heavy ships in the FIRST Section, was hit by four torpedoes which struck her port-side in the following locations: Chain locker, No. 1 turret, No. 7 boiler room and the port after engine room.\*\* (These torpedoes were part of a salvo of six torpedoes fired by the DACE).\*\*\* The MAYA, as seen by COMBATDIV ONE on the nearby YAMATO, "...exploded and after the spray and smoke had disappeared practically nothing of her remained to be seen".\*\*\*\* In his report

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\* COMDESRON 2 Dispatch 230650 October 1944 to COMBATDIV 1, Detailed Action Report COMBATDIV 1, SHO No. 1 Operation, October 18th - 28th, 1944, WDC Document 161005, NA 11744.

\*\* Detailed Action Report MAYA, Battle off Philippines, October 22nd - 26th, 1944, WDC Document 161747.

\*\*\* War Patrol Report DACE, Report of 5TH War Patrol, No Serial, November 6th, 1944.

\*\*\*\* Vice Admiral Matome Ugaki, IJN, (COMBATDIV 1), Personal Diary SENSOROKU, Nippon Shuppan Kyodo Kabushiki Kaisha, (Tokyo, March 15th, 1953), Volume II.

Commander FIRST Striking Force recorded her time of sinking as 0700.\* (COMBATDIV ONE stated in his War Diary that if the "YAMATO's position had been a little more one way or another, she would inevitably have been hit by three or four torpedoes. This is really dangerous--evading the above sub by turning to starboard and moving up sighted another periscope off the port bow. Moved to starboard, moved ahead, reversed course--it is no exaggeration to say that for a time the FIRST Section was in utter confusion.")\*\*

By 0658, Commander Main Body, with his staff had been recovered from the sea and had boarded the KISHINAMI.

Immediately after coming on board the KISHINAMI Commander Main Body was advised of the further developments of the attack, i.e., that the condition of the TAKAO, which had been torpedoed shortly after the ATAGO, was in doubt and that at 0656 the MAYA had been badly hit. In fact he likely saw it sink at 0700. Meanwhile he directed (a) the ASASHIMO to carry out rescue operations\*\*\* and (b) the KISHINAMI to leave the scene to rejoin the FIRST Section.

The condition of the TAKAO presented a new situation to Commander Main Body. He immediately reestimated the situation. While exactly what his mental processes were at this time is not known, it seems probable that he visualized several principal courses of action:

- (a) to endeavor to save the TAKAO, employing own forces;
- (b) to protect her temporarily until SW Area Force salvage units arrived;
- (c) to let her shift for herself, or
- (d) to remove the personnel and sink her. He now commenced analyzing these courses of action to determine which one to select.

At this time (0700) COMBATDIV ONE received a message from the KISHINAMI informing him that Commander FIRST Striking Force was aboard and directed the YAMATO to "take over communications".\*\*\*\*

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- \* Detailed Action Report 1ST Striking Force, SHO Operations, October 16th - 28th, 1944, WDC Document 161641, NA 11839.
  - \*\* Vice Admiral Matome Ugaki, IJN, (COMBATDIV 1), Personal Diary SENSOROKU, Nippon Shuppan Kyodo Kabushiki Kaisha (Tokyo, March 15th, 1953), Volume II.
  - \*\*\* KISHINAMI (Commander Main Body) Visual Dispatch 230700 October 1944 to Commanding Officer ASASHIMO, Detailed Action Report No. 2, DESDIV 31 (KISHINAMI), Antiair and Surface Actions, October 24th - 25th, 1944, WDC Document 161717, NA 11801.
  - \*\*\*\* KISHINAMI (Commander Main Body) Visual Dispatch 230658 October 1944 to COMBATDIV 1, Detailed Action Report BATDIV 1, SHO No. 1 Operation, October 18th - 28th, 1944, WDC Document 161005, NA 11744.









At 0710 COMBATDIV ONE advised COMBATDIV THREE (Commander SECOND Section) of the presence of two submarines to the rear of the TAKAO and CRUDIV FIVE.\*

At 0712 COMBATDIV ONE received a visual dispatch from COMBATDIV THREE, "Consider it advisable to break through at high speed".\*\* Immediately thereafter, although his ships were in the process of reforming\*\*\*--presumably Y-22 Alert Cruising Disposition--COMBATDIV ONE ordered on the voice circuit "course 035, speed 24 knots."\*\*\*\* This speed had already been rung up on the YAMATO at 0707\*\*\*\*\* and the course change to 035°(T) had been made at 0711.\*\*\*\*\*

It seems well at this point to consider once again the question of speed as a defense against submarines. It is noted that COMBATDIV ONE did not order any increase in speed until 0642,\*\*\*\*\* nine minutes after the ATAGO had been hit, when he increased speed to twenty knots.\*\*\*\*\* Then at 0649 he reduced speed to eighteen knots.\*\*\*\*\* At 0700, four minutes after the MAYA had been hit, he again increased speed to twenty knots,\*\*\*\*\* but not until 0712, thirty-nine minutes after the initial attack, did he order twenty-four knots.\*\*\*\*\* In his diary he explains his actions as follows: "In order to insure safe passage for the rear units, ordered the ships, still in the process of reforming, to speed up to twenty-four knots. I realized that it was unreasonable under the specified standard of eighteen knots immediately and twenty knots on twenty minutes notice, but it could not be helped."\*\*\*

The concern of COMBATDIV ONE for the engineering crews of the force is commendable; but the fact that they were steaming under a condition which required no more than twenty knots on twenty minutes notice, does not speak well for the readiness of the force and as pointed out earlier reflects rather adversely upon Commander Main Body.

The delay in increasing speed was commented on somewhat critically by the Commanding Officer MAYA as follows: "When one ship in an alert cruising disposition has been torpedoed by an enemy submarine, it is essential for squadron and division commanders to take independent steps to increase speed and take evasive action without orders from the force

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- \* Detailed Action Report BATDIV 1, SHO No. 1 Operation, October 18th - 28th, 1944, WDC Document 161005, NA 11744, COMBATDIV 1 Visual Dispatch 230710 October 1944 to COMBATDIV 3.
  - \*\* Ibid., COMBATDIV 3 Visual Dispatch 230712 October 1944 to COMBATDIV 1.
  - \*\*\* Vice Admiral Matome Ugaki, IJN, (COMBATDIV 1), Personal Diary SENSOROKU, Nippon Shuppan Kyodo Kabushiki Kaisha (Tokyo, March 15th, 1953), Volume II.
  - \*\*\*\* Detailed Action Report BATDIV 1, SHO No. 1 Operation, October 18th - 28th, 1944, WDC Document 161005, NA 11744, COMBATDIV 1 Voice Radio Message 230712 October 1944 to Main Body.
  - \*\*\*\*\* Detailed Action Report No. 3, YAMATO, SHO No. 1 Antiair and Surface Action, October 17th - 28th, 1944, WDC Document 161639.



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commander.\*\* He based this comment on the fact that although the ATAGO had been torpedoed before the MAYA was hit, the division commander of the lead column had not acted independently to increase speed, and this had allowed the MAYA to become an easy target some twenty odd minutes later." Although this criticism is directed primarily toward COMCRUDIV FIVE who, in the MYOKO, led the column of cruisers to which the MAYA was attached, it appears to have been equally applicable to COMBATDIV ONE.

At 0715 COMBATDIV ONE directed BATDIV THREE and the NOSHIRO to "speedily dispatch No. 1 Antisubmarine Patrol Group in accordance with FIRST Striking Force SigOrd No. 189".\*\* This latter signal order (quoted in full under "Operations of Commander FIRST Striking Force, October 22nd") was issued at 1523 on the previous day and was later modified by SigOrd No. 190. These two signal orders (a) directed the organization of antisubmarine patrol groups and forward patrol groups but did not specify the time of take-off. This presumably was to be signalled later, (b) ordered a No. Three Alert for all aircraft assigned to missions. It is assumed that this was a thirty-minute standby, as such was the case in CARDIV FOUR,\*\*\* and (c) provided for five groups of three aircraft each, which groups were to be launched one after the other at suitable intervals to provide reasonable antisubmarine protection and orderly phasing into the shore base.

The composition of the above No. One Antisubmarine Patrol Group was one plane from BATDIV THREE (KONGO) and two from the NOSHIRO--a total of three. From this it seems clear that COMBATDIV ONE had planned to transfer aircraft to San Jose, one group--such as the above antisubmarine patrol group--at a time, rather than the entire Reconnaissance Unit at once as was done by Commander SECOND Section and is discussed under that heading.

Also at 0715 the MYOKO launched her Number ONE aircraft.\*\*\*\*

Also COMDESDIV THIRTY-ONE informed Commander Main Body, aboard the KISHINAMI, that the NAGANAMI would screen the TAKAO and would come under the command of the Commanding Officer, TAKAO immediately.\*\*\*\*\*

At 0739, Commander Main Body directed the CHOKAI (the last

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- \* Detailed Action Report MAYA, Battle off Philippines, October 22nd - 26th, 1944, WDC Document 161747.
- \*\* COMBATDIV 1 Visual Dispatch 230715 October 1944 to BATDIV 3, NOSHIRO Detailed Action Report BATDIV 1, SHO No. 1 Operation, October 18th - 28th, 1944, WDC Document 161005, NA 11744.
- \*\*\* CARDIV 4 Standing Order No. 20, November 27th, 1941, ATIS Document No. 39, Part X, August 12th, 1945, Page 15, (NACHI Document).
- \*\*\*\* Detailed Action Report No. 15, MYOKO, Battle off the Philippines (Antiaircraft Action in Mindoro Sea), October 24th, 1944, WDC Document 161647.
- \*\*\*\*\* OKINAMI Visual Dispatch 230730 October 1944 to Commander Main Body, Detailed Action Report BATDIV 1, SHO No. 1 Operation, October 18th - 28th, 1944, WDC Document 161005, NA 11744.



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COM FIRST SECTION  
October 23rd

remaining ship of CRUDIV FOUR) to report to COMCRUDIV FIVE for duty where it replaced the MAYA.\*

At 0740 the KONGO launched her Number Two aircraft\*\* and Commander Main Body confirmed the transfer of the NAGANAMI to the Commanding Officer TAKAO.\*\*\*

At 0755 COMDESRON TWO informed COMBATDIV ONE that all ATAGO survivors had been rescued.\*\*\*\* (Personnel rescued by KISHINAMI and ASASHIMO were: The Commanding Officer and forty-three officers; 667 petty officers and men; two civilian employees. Those lost were Chief Engineer and eighteen officers; 340 petty officers and men; one civilian employee).\*\*\*\*\*

Although there is no breakdown on casualties among staff personnel it is known that some were lost. The Chief of Staff in a postwar statement said that about one-half of the staff communication personnel were killed in the torpedoing and that this loss was of some inconvenience later.\*\*\*\*\*

At 0800 three ships of CRUDIV SEVEN, the KUMANO, CHIKUMA and TONE, launched one additional aircraft each to "carry out antisubmarine direct cover" and to proceed "to San Jose air base while patrolling along route of advance."\*\*\*\*\*

At 0803 TAKAO reported that she was unable to navigate as her steering gear was out of commission.\*\*\*\*\*

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- \* KISHINAMI (Commander Main Body) Visual Dispatch 230739 October 1944 to COMCRUDIV 5, Detailed Action Report BATDIV 1, SHO No. 1 Operation, October 18th - 28th, 1944, WDC Document 161005, NA 11744.
  - \*\* Detailed Action Report KONGO, SHO Operation, October 22nd - 28th, 1944, WDC Document 161637.
  - \*\*\* Commander 1ST Striking Force Dispatch 230740 October 1944 to Commanding Officer NAGANAMI and TAKAO, Detailed Action Report TAKAO, October 23rd - 25th, 1944, WDC Document 160141, NA 11839.
  - \*\*\*\* COMDESRON 2 Visual Dispatch 230755 October 1944 to COMBATDIV 1, Detailed Action Report BATDIV 1, SHO No. 1 Operation, October 18th - 28th, 1944, WDC Document 161005, NA 11744.
  - \*\*\*\*\* Detailed Action and Battle Lessons Report ATAGO, October 23rd, 1944, WDC Document 161747.
  - \*\*\*\*\* USSBS Interrogations of Japanese Officials, Nav No. 35, Interrogation of Rear Admiral Tomiji Koyanagi, IJN, Volume I, Page 147.
  - \*\*\*\*\* Detailed Action Report CRUDIV 7, October 23rd - 26th, 1944, WDC Document 161005, NA 11744.
  - \*\*\*\*\* TAKAO Visual Dispatch 230803 October 1944 to Commanding Officers KISHINAMI and YAMATO, Detailed Action Report TAKAO, Antisubmarine Action, October 23rd - 25th, 1944, WDC Document 160141, NA 11839.

At 0810 COMBATDIV ONE reduced speed to twenty knots.\*

At 0815 Commander Main Body asked the TAKAO if she was capable of proceeding under her own power.\*\*

At 0817 COMBATDIV ONE directed the Main Body to form No. Y-23 Alert Cruising Disposition\*\*\* (Plate XLII).

IT WILL BE OBSERVED THAT THIS CRUISING DISPOSITION HAD ALL OF THE WEAKNESSES INHERENT IN THE ORIGINAL CRUISING DISPOSITION Y-22 (DISCUSSED FULLY UNDER "OPERATIONS OF COMMANDER FIRST STRIKING FORCE, OCTOBER 22ND") WHICH WAS SO INEFFECTIVE AS TO PERMIT THE TORPEDOING OF THREE HEAVY CRUISERS BY TWO ALLIED SUBMARINES WITHOUT INTERFERENCE. IT WILL BE RECALLED THAT THE PRINCIPAL WEAKNESS IN Y-22 WAS THE LACK OF SCREEN AHEAD OF THE CRUISERS. THE SAME WEAKNESS WAS MAINTAINED IN Y-23.

At 0826 the Commanding Officer TAKAO reported that his starboard engines and steering engine were out and that he was unable to proceed under his own power at present.\*\*\*\*

At 0830 his chief of staff (who was also Chief of Staff FIRST Striking Force) advised the Chief of Staff SW Area Force that the "TAKAO has received enemy submarine torpedo attack in Latitude 09°-28'N, Longitude 117°-17'E, unable proceed. NAGANAMI and ASASHIMO in company. Request immediately, screening and towing services."\*\*\*\*\* (This Latitude and Longitude differs from the "action report" by one minute, both of Latitude and Longitude).

Meanwhile he knew that there were many submarine contacts being reported for, whether or not he received them in the KISHINAMI, he could see the maneuvering to avoid and the resulting confusion in the FIRST Section. Actually between 0708 and 0735 there were at least nine submarines or torpedo contacts reported.

He now discussed with his staff the matter of (a) when to transfer to the YAMATO and (b) if long delayed should he retain command within the KISHINAMI or temporarily transfer it to COMBATDIV ONE.

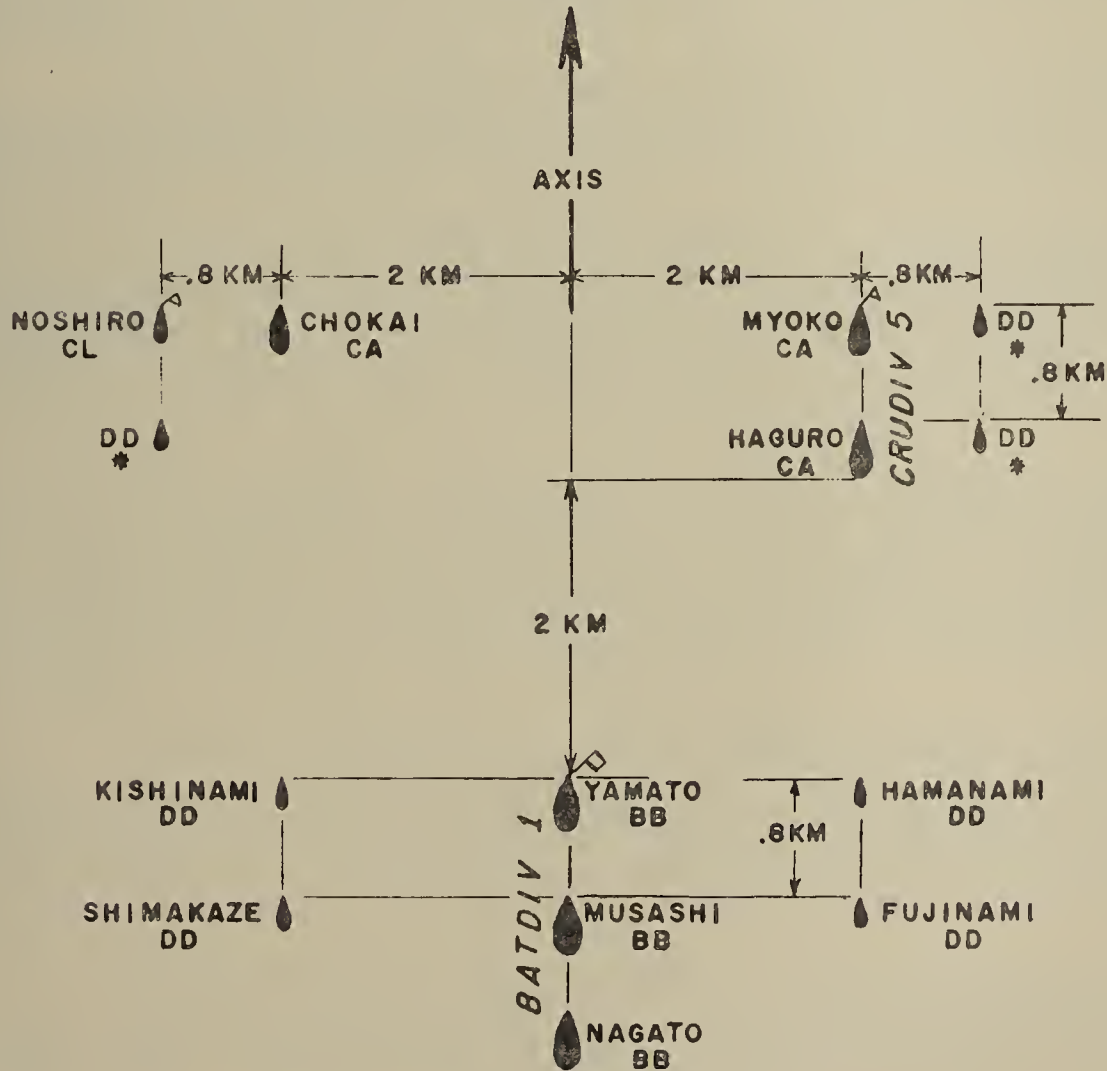
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- \* Detailed Action Report No. 2, DESDIV 31 (KISHINAMI), Anti-air and Surface Actions, October 24th - 26th, 1944, WDC Document 161717, NA 11801.
  - \*\* Ibid., KISHINAMI (Commander Main Body) Visual Dispatch 230815 October 1944 to Commanding Officer TAKAO.
  - \*\*\* YAMATO (COMBATDIV 1) Visual Dispatch 230817 October 1944 to 1ST Section, Detailed Action Report KONGO, SHO Operation, October 22nd - 28th, 1944, WDC Document 161637.
  - \*\*\*\* TAKAO Visual Dispatch 230826 October 1944 to COMBATDIV 1, Detailed Action Report BATDIV 1, SHO No. 1 Operation, October 18th - 28th, 1944, WDC Document 161005, NA 11744.
  - \*\*\*\*\* CofS 1ST Striking Force Dispatch 230830 October 1944 to CofS SW Area Force, Detailed Action Report 1ST Striking Force, SHO Operations, October 16th - 28th, 1944, WDC Document 161641, NA 11839.



# FIRST SECTION, MAIN BODY Y-23 ALERT CRUISING DISPOSITION

DETAILED ACTION REPORT NO. 3, YAMATO, SHO NO. 1  
ANTI-AIR AND SURFACE ACTIONS, OCTOBER 17TH.-28TH. 1944

BATTLE FOR LEYTE GULF  
OCTOBER 1944



NOTE: 1 KM = 1094 YDS.  
\* AKISHIMO, HAYASHIMO  
AND OKINAMI JOINED  
AFTER 1042.





He studied item (a) and noted first that (1) just from positions of the torpedoed ships there were at least two submarines present and perhaps more--COMBATDIV ONE stated later, "It is a positive fact that four submarines were present at one time",\* (2) he therefore had reason to believe that there were other submarines in the Passage, (3) since the distance from the point of attack to the northern entrance to Palawan Passage was some ninety miles he would not at present speed clear the Passage before early afternoon, (4) owing to the independent action taken by the various commanders and commanding officers the cruising disposition had become thoroughly disorganized,\* and (5) it would be sometime before COMBATDIV ONE who had assumed tactical command would be able to reorganize the disposition.

He therefore decided that it would be unwise to attempt to transfer to the YAMATO until (a) the disposition had been reformed and (b) the command had passed through the Passage.

He now studied item (b) and clearly concluded that (1) owing to the rapid sequence of events and the inadequacy of the KISHINAMI's communication system it was highly probable that he had missed vital information and (2) even if he had all vital information, he could not properly exercise command from the KISHINAMI because of her inadequate communication system.

He now decided that since he could not properly command tactically from the destroyer and thought it unwise to attempt to transfer to the YAMATO until much later, he would transfer the command to COMBATDIV ONE. Therefore, in execution of this decision, he at 0830 advised COMBATDIV ONE by visual dispatch as follows: "Flag to be transferred to the YAMATO. COMBATDIV ONE will assume force command until I transfer."\*\*

By this dispatch he expected COMBATDIV ONE to assume the functions of OTC,\*\*\* but it seems probable that that commander did not do so until later (0915) because of some delay in the transmission and receipt of this dispatch as a result of (a) the confused situation and (b) the inferior communications personnel and equipment in the KISHINAMI.\*\*\*\*

However, since COMBATDIV ONE persisted in employing his division commander title and Commander Main Body likewise persisted in employing his Main Body title these two titles will continue to be employed here.

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- \* Vice Admiral Matome Ugaki, IJN, (COMBATDIV 1), Personal Diary SENSOROKU, Nippon Shuppan Kyodo Kabushiki Kaisha (Tokyo, March 15th, 1953), Volume II.
  - \*\* KISHINAMI (Commander Main Body) Visual Dispatch 230830 October 1944 to COMBATDIV 1, Detailed Action Report BATDIV 1, SHO No. 1 Operation, October 18th - 28th, 1944, WDC Document 161005, NA 11744.
  - \*\*\* Detailed Action Report 1ST Striking Force, SHO Operations, October 16th-28th, 1944, WDC Document 161641, NA 11839.
  - \*\*\*\* HQ U.S. Army, Japan, Office of the Military History Officer letter serial MH 319.1, undated but received July 19th, 1957, to President, Naval War College.

COMBATDIV ONE now commenced estimating the situation. Since he had received no instructions from his superior which indicated that the penetration operation was to be delayed or what action was planned for the TAKAO he naturally was concerned with taking the necessary action to (a) reform the Main Body, (b) temporarily screen the TAKAO and (c) continue on through Palawan Passage.

In accordance with this estimate he clearly decided that as regards item (a) the order directing the Main Body to form Alert Cruising Disposition Y-23 was sound for he permitted this order to stand. As regards item (b) he decided that the TAKAO should be screened by two destroyers rather than one and, since the NAGANAMI was already screening the TAKAO, he at 0832 directed the Commanding Officer ASASHIMO, which was conducting rescue operations of the ATAGO personnel, also to screen the TAKAO.\* At 0838 he received word from the ASASHIMO that she had completed rescue operations of the ATAGO personnel and was now standing by the TAKAO.\*\* However, about two minutes later, he learned that the ASASHIMO had either misunderstood her orders or had failed to receive them, for at 0840 he received a visual dispatch from that destroyer reporting that she would discontinue screening the TAKAO and would rejoin the formation.\*\*\*

It seems that Commander Main Body had now selected the course of action "to save the TAKAO employing own forces" for at this same time (0840) COMBATDIV ONE appears to have received a visual dispatch from that commander directing TAKAO and NAGANAMI to proceed to Brunei Bay and if necessary to go via Ulugan Bay (west coast of Palawan Island) to effect emergency repairs.\*\*\*\* This clearly removed the NAGANAMI from the penetration operation.

While his reasons for selecting this course of action are not known, it seems likely that they were (a) the TAKAO, at least temporarily, had no power, (b) there were believed to be three - four submarines in the area-- actually there were but two, (c) at least one destroyer was required as an escort, (d) Brunei Bay was considered relatively safe, and finally (e) and perhaps most important in Japanese eyes, was the fact that Japanese building programs could not begin to match the allied building programs, and therefore their ships and particularly their heavy ships were considered to have a value which often obscured the primary objective of the operation.

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- \* YAMATO (COMBATDIV 1) Dispatch 230832 October 1944 to ASASHIMO, Detailed Action Report TAKAO, October 23rd - 25th, 1944, WDC Document 160141, NA 11839.
- \*\* ASASHIMO Visual Dispatch 230838 October 1944 to COMBATDIV 1, Detailed Action Report BATDIV 1, SHO No. 1 Operation, October 18th - 28th, 1944, WDC Document 161005, NA 11744.
- \*\*\* Ibid., ASASHIMO Visual Dispatch 230840 October 1944 to COMBATDIV 1.
- \*\*\*\* Commander 1ST Striking Force Visual Dispatch 230840 October 1944 to TAKAO and NAGANAMI, Detailed Action Report TAKAO, October 23rd - 25th, 1944, WDC Document 160141, NA 11839.



There seems to be considerable doubt as to the soundness of this decision for (1) the Main Body was committed to the penetration operation, (2) it had been recognizably weak on sortie, (3) it had lost three of its ten heavy cruisers and (4) it would now lose one of its fifteen destroyers.

Perhaps based on Japanese concepts as discussed under "Operations of CinC Combined Fleet, October 18th", this decision was sound for as stated there the naval high command was unrealistic in that it failed to realize fully its limited forces and persisted in detaching forces for duties which, when compared with the necessity for gaining immediate victory at sea, were decidedly secondary.\*

This was at variance with the principle of naval warfare, also discussed under the same heading, that WHEN A DECISIVE BATTLE AGAINST WHAT IS EXPECTED TO BE A SUPERIOR FORCE IS IMMINENT, IT IS ESSENTIAL THAT THE NATION'S MAXIMUM NAVAL POWER AND, IF POSSIBLE, HER LAND AIR POWER IN SUPPORT, BE CONCENTRATED AT THE DECISIVE TIME AND PLACE IN ORDER THAT THE MAXIMUM BLOW MAY BE DELIVERED AGAINST THE ENEMY. TO THIS END ALL NAVAL FORCES OF WHATEVER CHARACTER SHOULD BE MADE AVAILABLE TO THE COMMANDER, WHO SHOULD SO APPORTION THEM AS TO INSURE THAT EACH SHIP IS EMPLOYED TO THE BEST ADVANTAGE.\*

Based on the concept that all combatant forces should have been employed in the forthcoming action, the question arises as to how he (Commander Main Body) could have done this and still give the TAKAO the reasonable protection on which he apparently insisted. One possible solution would have been to dispatch three destroyers--as will be shown shortly he actually detached two destroyers for the trip to Brunei Bay--to aid the TAKAO with instructions to (a) commence towing immediately, (b) head for Ulugan Bay, (c) rejoin the Main Body south of Mindoro at 0500 the following morning. Since this position is 200 miles from Ulugan Bay--or eight hours at twenty-five knots--these destroyers then would have to depart the TAKAO by about 2100.

By this time the TAKAO would (a) have been well in the shoal waters inside the 100 fathom curve where submarine submerged operations would be difficult, and (b) but thirty miles from Ulugan Bay where help--among other units the NICHIEI MARU and KURAHASHI were there--was available, at least for screening, which help could easily reach the tow long before 2100 and relieve the destroyers. And if the TAKAO managed to get underway under her own power the situation would be even less difficult.

However, in the light of this decision by Commander Main Body, which decision indicated a definite attempt to save the TAKAO, COMBAT-DIV ONE now reestimated the situation and appears to have decided that since the TAKAO would have to return to Brunei Bay via Palawan Passage and might

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\* Volume II, Battle for Leyte Gulf (NavPers 92194), Naval War College 1955, Operations of CinC Combined Fleet, October 18th, Chapter IV(A).

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not succeed in getting underway, she would require additional escort--perhaps as a tow--for at 0844 he directed the Commanding Officer, ASASHIMO to continue to guard the TAKAO.\* He apparently chose the ASASHIMO because she was laden with 492 of the ATAGO'S rescued personnel.

It seems probable that the thought of screening the TAKAO against submarine dangers alerted him to the fact that although he had seen certain of his ships launching aircraft he had heard little concerning their activity. Therefore, at 0845 he queried COMBATDIV THREE and COMCRUDIV SEVEN thereon as follows: "Has the FIRST Recco Unit taken off?""\*\*

He now decided to assign the NAGANAMI and ASASHIMO to the Commanding Officer TAKAO for duty as escorts and therefore at 0849 issued dispatch instructions to this effect.\*\*\*

Meanwhile he noted that the KISHINAMI had overtaken the FIRST Section and by 0900 had taken station off the port bow of the YAMATO.\*\*\*\*

Also at this time he commenced receiving replies as follows to his 0845 dispatch with reference to the FIRST Recco Unit (a) at 0900 from COMBATDIV THREE saying, "Aircraft launched at 0700. After neutralizing subs they started on scheduled missions",\*\*\*\*\* (b) at 0900 from COMCRUDIV FIVE, "One antisubmarine plane now being launched by MYOKO",\*\*\*\*\* (c) at 0905 another from COMBATDIV THREE stating that one plane from BATDIV THREE assigned to the "Antisub patrol, FIRST Group" had not been launched and asked permission to keep it on standby.\*\*\*\*\* This message is not understood as BATDIV THREE had been directed to furnish but one aircraft to this group and it had been launched at 0700, and (d) at 0909 from COMCRUDIV SEVEN,

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- \* COMBATDIV 1 Voice Radio Message 230844 October 1944 to ASASHIMO, Detailed Action Report BATDIV 1, SHO No. 1 Operation, October 18th-28th, 1944, WDC Document 161005, NA 11744.
  - \*\* Ibid., COMBATDIV 1 Visual Dispatch 230845 October 1944 to COMBATDIV 3 and COMCRUDIV 7.
  - \*\*\* YAMATO (Commander Main Body) Dispatch 230849 October 1944 to Commanding Officers NAGANAMI, ASASHIMO, etc., Detailed Action Report TAKAO, Antisubmarine Action October 23rd - 25th, 1944, WDC Document 160141, NA 11839.
  - \*\*\*\* Detailed Action Report No. 2, DESDIV 31 (KISHINAMI), Antiair and Surface Actions, October 24th - 26th, 1944, WDC Document 161717, NA 11801.
  - \*\*\*\*\* COMBATDIV 3 Visual Dispatch 230900 October 1944 to COMBATDIV 1, Detailed Action Report BATDIV 1, SHO No. 1 Operation, October 18th-28th, 1944, WDC Document 161005, NA 11744.
  - \*\*\*\*\* Ibid., COMCRUDIV 5 Visual Dispatch 230900 October 1944 to COMBATDIV 1.
  - \*\*\*\*\* Ibid., COMCRUDIV 3 Visual Dispatch 230905 October 1944 to COMBATDIV 1.



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"This unit has launched eight planes of the FIRST Recco Unit."\* Actually at this time a total of at least eleven aircraft had been launched, ten from the SECOND Section and one from the FIRST Section. In addition four aircraft had been lost in the sinking of the ATAGO and MAYA.

It seems clear that he was surprised and concerned over the launching of so many aircraft and started a study to determine what could be done.

At 0905 since he was also acting as Commander FIRST Striking Force he knew that the CHIBURI had been directed to depart Brunei Bay immediately, to act as a screen for the TAKAO.\*\*

At 0914 he received a voice radio message from the AKISHIMO reporting that (a) she had picked up 685 men from the MAYA including the executive officer and (b) was now rejoining at twenty-four knots.\*\*\*

At 0915 apparently feeling that neither the (a) whereabouts of Commander FIRST Striking Force nor (b) the fact that he (COMBATDIV ONE) has assumed command of the force were known to the entire command, he advised all ships of these two facts as follows: "Until the Force Commander, now on KISHINAMI, transfers to YAMATO, I will temporarily take command of the FIRST Striking Force.\*\*\*\*

Meanwhile having completed his study of the aircraft situation and having clearly decided that COMBATDIV THREE's action in ordering the launching of the entire First Reconnaissance Unit was unsound he at 0935 issued dispatch instructions to the effect that (a) the antisubmarine and antiaircraft dispositions ordered by FIRST Striking Force SigOrd No. 189 were cancelled and (b) he would issue new orders later.\*\*\*\*\*

At 0938 COMBATDIV ONE sent a dispatch to Commander Main Body stating that he planned to transfer the Force Flag at about 1300.\*\*\*\*\*

At 1025 he released BATDIV ONE SigOpOrd No. 16 which organized the air patrols for the remainder of the day as follows:

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- \* COMCRUDIV 7 Visual Dispatch 230909 October 1944 to COMBATDIV 1, Detailed Action Report BATDIV 1, SHO No. 1 Operation, October 18th-28th, 1944, WDC Document 161005, NA 11744.
  - \*\* Commander 1ST Striking Force Dispatch 230905 October 1944 to CHIBURI, Detailed Action Report 1ST Striking Force, SHO Operations, October 16th - 28th, 1944, WDC Document 161641, NA 11839.
  - \*\*\* Ibid., AKISHIMO Voice Radio Message 230914 October 1944 to COMBATDIV 1.
  - \*\*\*\* COMBATDIV 1 Visual Dispatch 230915 October 1944 to All Ships, Detailed Action Report BATDIV 1, SHO No. 1 Operation, October 18th - 28th, 1944, WDC Document 161005, NA 11744.
  - \*\*\*\*\* Ibid., COMBATDIV 1 Visual Dispatch 230935 October 1944 to All Ships.
  - \*\*\*\*\* Ibid., COMBATDIV 1 Visual Dispatch 230938 October 1944 to Commander 1ST Striking Force.

"1. Air patrol dispositions today will be as follows:

"a. Antisub patrol - No. 6 disposition, 3-hr patrol periods.

"b. First group - Three CRUDIV FIVE planes, from 1030.

Second group - Two CRUDIV SEVEN planes and one DESRON TWO plane, from 1230.

"c. After completing mission, aircraft will move up to San Jose.

"d. The above aircraft will constitute the SECOND Recco Unit.

"2. SECOND Recco Unit's mission tomorrow will be as previously ordered except that aircraft will take off from land bases."\*

This dispatch points up by inclusion two deficiencies of the FIRST Striking Force SigOrd No. 189, i.e., (a) a time of take off for each patrol group and (b) the duration of each patrol period. Had this information been included in SigOrd No. 189 or had it been the subject of a timely signal to the force, the confusion of the morning in launching aircraft might have been avoided.

It is assumed that during the morning COMBATDIV ONE received the contact reports listed and discussed under "Operations of Commander FIRST Striking Force, 0000 - 1042 October 23rd". Of these contacts the only one which might have worried him was Contact G, Plate XL. Since he later changed course in that direction it would appear as if, realizing the inaccuracies of RDF fixes, he was not particularly concerned.

At 1042 the Main Body was bearing 232°(T), distant ninety-four miles from Libo Point (northern tip of Palawan Island).

## (2) Operations of Commander SECOND Section.

Upon sighting the torpedoing of the ATAGO at 0633 and of the TAKAO at 0634 the Commanding Officer HARUNA fired a flare for an emergency turn of forty-five degrees to starboard.\*\* However, as the ships were swinging to starboard Commander SECOND Section observed that many units of the FIRST Section were also swinging to starboard. In order to avoid fouling these ships, he gave two orders in rapid succession. With the first order

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\* COMBATDIV 1 Visual Dispatch 231025 October 1944 to All Ships with aircraft, Detailed Action Report BATDIV 1, SHO No. 1 Operation, October 18th - 28th, 1944, WDC Document 161005, NA 11744.

\*\* Detailed Action Report No. 3, YAHAGI, SHO No. 1 Operation, October 22nd-28th, 1944, WDC Document 161007.



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at 0637 he announced his course as 040°(T). This gave all ships a course of reference. Then immediately after this he ordered an emergency change of course by simultaneous ships turn of eighty degrees to port. This placed the SECOND Section on course 320°(T). He continued on this new course until 0641 when having moved largely to the westward of the FIRST Section he changed course also by simultaneous ships turn to 040°(T). Then at 0646 having observed the MYOKO, HAGURO and MAYA on a mean course of about 070°(T) and having observed the YAMATO also on about 070°(T) he decided to set the same course in order to maintain the commands close together primarily for communication purposes. Although this new course would pass directly over the area wherein the ATAGO and TAKAO had been torpedoed he likely felt that this was one of the safer procedures for it was highly probable that because of the numerous depth charge attacks, the submarine or submarines which had made these attacks would have been forced to seek safety by diving deeper. If this was his belief it proved to be correct for the DARTER had been forced to deep submergence.

Despite this fact there still remains some question as to the correctness of this decision. This seems so for the Japanese at this time were quite familiar with the fact that Allied submarines operated in wolf packs. In this connection the Commanding Officer, TONE stated that "it is customary for enemy submarines to make an attack with two submarines"\* and a Senior Staff Officer with the FOURTH Surface Escort Force stated "Toward the end of the war they (Allied submarines) seemed to operate as teams from two to four."\*\*

Therefore by changing course toward the TAKAO was there not a possibility that he might be heading into other submarines? In this connection (a) some few minutes later (0710) COMDESRON TEN recommended that "Believe it advisable to get out of submarine danger area by taking course flanking scheduled route,\*\*\* and (b) the Commanding Officer, TONE in his action report stated "When a ship has been attacked by an enemy submarine, ships following astern should avoid the torpedoed ships wake and passing through waters in which companion submarines lurk."\*

Today's (1957) U.S. Navy Antisubmarine Evasive Measures Doctrine is in part as follows:

"In areas where submarines are known to be concentrated or where random contacts have been made, it is poor tactics to retrace too soon the same infested water or vicinity."\*\*\*\*

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- \* Detailed Action Report TONE, SHO Operation, Battle off the Philippines, October 24th - 26th, 1944, WDC Document 161747.
  - \*\* USSBS Interrogations of Japanese Officials, Nav No. 110, Interrogation of Captain Tokuma Abe, IJN, Volume II, Page 485.
  - \*\*\* COMDESRON 10 Dispatch 220710 October 1944 to Commander 2ND Section (KONGO), Detailed Action Report No. 3, YAHAGI, SHO No. 1 Operation, October 22nd - 28th, 1944, WDC Document 161007.
  - \*\*\*\* Striking Force Operations (NWP 20) Department of the Navy, Office of the Chief of Naval Operations, May 1953, Chapter 5, Paragraph 523.



Meanwhile Commander SECOND Section studied the situation to determine what action, if any, he could take to contribute not only to the safety of the SECOND Section but of the FIRST Section as well. He noted that no aircraft had been launched. Realizing (a) the importance of aircraft against submarines and (b) the failure of Commander Main Body who commanded the FIRST Section directly, to launch aircraft he decided to take immediate action thereon. Therefore at 0649 on his own initiative he directed the First Reconnaissance Unit to "Take off as soon as ready and carry out scheduled missions after neutralizing enemy submarines."\*

While it is nowhere specifically stated as to how many aircraft were to comprise the First Reconnaissance Unit it seems likely that it included all of the aircraft assigned to patrols in FIRST Striking Force's SigOrd Nos. 189 and 190. If this was the case then Commander SECOND Section's order involved a total of at least fifteen aircraft of which nine were in the SECOND Section.

As a result of this order the KUMANO at 0656 launched one plane, and the SUZUYA, two.

About this time Commander SECOND Section observed that the MAYA which was almost dead ahead (Plate XLI) had been hit by torpedoes and had exploded and sunk. Not having observed whence came the torpedoes, he decided to turn away and therefore immediately changed course to 000°(T) by simultaneous ships turn at 0657 and to 290°(T) at 0700.

As he turned away at 0700 he noted three additional planes being launched by his ships; one by the CHIKUMA, one by the TONE and one by the KONGO. He now had launched a total of six planes. Whether he knew it or not no planes from the FIRST Section had as yet been launched and none would be launched for about fifteen minutes. This was probably due to the fact that he had issued his 0649 launching order by voice radio which order because of the confusion incident to the torpedoing, was delayed in "getting through" to the addressees.

At 0705, in continuance of his turn away to the westward he changed course by simultaneous ships turn to 245°(T) and thence followed the track as shown on Plate XLI.

As the minutes passed and no additional attacks occurred, it seems probable that he was hoping that all was well. However, at 0715 he received a visual dispatch from COMBATDIV ONE directing him to launch immediately No. 1 Antisubmarine Patrol Group in accordance with FIRST Striking Force's SigOrd No. 189.\*\* This dispatch was clearly a surprise for it will

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\* KONGO Voice Radio Message 230649 October 1944 to 1ST Reconnaissance Unit, Detailed Action Report No. 3, YAHAGI, SHO No. 1 Operation, October 22nd - 28th, 1944, WDC Document 161007.

\*\* COMBATDIV 1 Visual Dispatch 230715 October 1944 to BATDIV 3, NOSHIRO, Detailed Action Report BATDIV 1, SHO No. 1 Operation, October 18th - 28th, 1944, WDC Document 161005, NA 11744.



be recalled he had directed the First Reconnaissance Unit to depart at 0649, and he knew that some of the aircraft had already taken off. It seems likely that he noted the difference between COMBATDIV ONE's 230715 and his own 230649 for whereas the former only called for three planes his own order, as pointed out earlier, called for perhaps fifteen.

Since he had already directed the First Reconnaissance Unit to take off he now must have realized that COMBATDIV ONE had not as yet learned this. He seems to have taken no action to advise that commander of this fact; therefore it is assumed that he felt that his original order, which was a voice radio message had been delayed but would arrive shortly.

Meanwhile he continued to maneuver to confuse possible submarines and to avoid reported contacts. In so doing he succeeded in getting well to the north of the area where the FIRST Section cruisers had been torpedoed.

At 0845 he received another visual dispatch from COMBATDIV ONE, this one a query, "Has the First Recco Unit taken off?" This dispatch must have been both a relief and a puzzle; a relief because the query indicated that COMBATDIV ONE had now received his 230649; a puzzle because surely COMBATDIV ONE could see the shipboard planes flying.

He replied as follows: (a) at 0900, "aircraft launched at 0700. After neutralizing subs they started on scheduled missions"\* and (b) at 0905, saying that one plane of BATDIV THREE assigned to the "Anti-sub Patrol, First Group" had not been launched and requesting permission to keep it on standby.\*\*

Except for this he seems to have taken no further action other than to continue to maneuver as he moved to the northward.

It is assumed that at 1042 he was in the vicinity of the FIRST Section.

\* \* \*

But now to return to Commander Main Body for a battle lesson. It seems likely that some of the questionable decisions which occurred at this time within the Main Body were occasioned by the fact that the considerable confusion, misinformation and perhaps shock incident to the torpedoing of the cruisers so adversely affected some of the commanders as to reduce their ability to make logical decisions.

\* COMBATDIV 3 Visual Dispatch 230900 October 1944 to COMBATDIV 1, Detailed Action Report BATDIV 1, SHO No. 1 Operation, October 18th - 28th, 1944, WDC Document 161005, NA 11744.

\*\* Ibid., COMCRUDIV 3 Visual Dispatch 230905 October 1944 to COMBATDIV 1.

UNFORTUNATELY IT IS DIFFICULT TO DETERMINE PRIOR TO AN ACTION WHICH OFFICERS WILL MEASURE UP TO THE REQUIREMENTS OF COMMAND AND WHICH WILL BE FOUND WANTING. AND YET IT IS HERE THAT SUCCESS OR FAILURE OF AN ACTION MAY BE DETERMINED. SOUND MILITARY DECISION STATES IN THIS REGARD, "IT IS MORE ESPECIALLY DURING THE SWIFT MOVING ACTION OF THE TACTICAL ENGAGEMENT THAT MORAL CAPACITY TO COMMAND AND MENTAL ABILITY TO SOLVE MILITARY PROBLEMS EXPERIENCE THE MAXIMUM PRESSURE OF EVENTS. IT IS THEN ALSO THAT RESPONSIBILITY OF THE COMMANDER CREATES AN ADDED DEMAND FOR INTELLIGENT APPLICATION OF MENTAL POWER BECAUSE OF THE VITAL ISSUES WHICH MAY HINGE UPON HIS DECISIONS."\*

(b) Operations of Commander THIRD Section, 0000 - 1042 October 23rd.

At 0000 Commander THIRD Section with the THIRD Section was in position bearing 242°(T), distant 150 miles from Balabac Island and on course 042°(T).

Sometime in the early morning, probably at about 0315, he changed course to 055°(T), and again at 0600 to 090°(T), heading for Balabac Strait.

Since the Commanding Officer MOGAMI, in his action report states that close air cover against air and submarine attack from shore bases was provided on the 22nd and 23rd and particularly during the passage through Balabac Strait,\*\* it seems more than probable that no ship-based reconnaissance aircraft were launched. This statement is borne out by the fact that (1) in general, FIRST Striking Force aircraft were to proceed to shore bases once launched, (2) no mention is made in available records of ship-based aircraft activity on this day and (3) all aircraft were still aboard the following morning.

Sometime during the morning he probably received Commander SECOND Striking Force's dispatch 222000 in which that commander announced the schedule of movements for the SECOND Striking Force in the penetration behind the THIRD Section.

Although, from the records available to this study, it appears that this dispatch was the first definite information he had received that the SECOND Striking Force had been committed to the penetration operation, it is clear that he was fully aware of the discussions concerning the use of the SECOND Striking Force which had preceded this decision. In fact, because of the views expressed in the exchange of dispatches between various commands, there seems to have been a strong belief in the THIRD Section that the SECOND Striking Force would participate in the penetration operation

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\* Sound Military Decision, U.S. Naval War College, 1942, Page 217.

\*\* Detailed Action Report MOGAMI, Battle off the Philippines, October 18th - 25th, 1944, WDC Document 160463, NA 12653.



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through Surigao Strait. This view is supported by the Commanding Officer SHIGURE, who in a postwar interrogation in speaking of a conference of THIRD Section commanding officers prior to departure from Brunei (1500 October 22nd) said, "We knew that Shima\* and the FIFTH Fleet (SECOND Striking Force) were coming down to help us..."\*\*

Regardless of the time he received the above information, sometime during this day, and probably about this time, he issued his instructions to his force concerning the SECOND Striking Force as follows:

"The SECOND Striking Force scheduled to penetrate through Surigao Strait behind the THIRD Section according to the schedule given below. Special care will be exercised in regard to recognition of friendly ships and fixing course.

"1200 24 Oct (Point A) 9° 40'N, 120° 30'E

"2000 24 Oct (Point B) 8° 50'N, 122° 50'E

"0600 25 Oct (Point C) Entrance of Surigao Strait."\*\*\*

It is evident from this dispatch that he had more detailed information on the movements of the SECOND Striking Force than was contained in Commander SECOND Striking Force's dispatch 222000 as quoted under "Operations of Commander SECOND Striking Force, October 22nd." Whence came this information is not clear, but it seems likely that it was contained in that message. Since this dispatch is found only in the report of Commander Main Force, it seems probable that certain portions, considered unessential to that command, were omitted in the write up.

The problems in command relationships in regard to combining the THIRD Section and the SECOND Striking Force have been discussed at some length under "Operations of CinC Combined Fleet, October 22nd" wherein it is pointed out that these command relationships were largely based on the fact that (a) Commander SECOND Striking Force, who had been junior to Commander THIRD Section, and was now senior, and (b) CinC Combined Fleet desired to have Commander THIRD Section who was very experienced in night operations, in command in the Surigao Strait operation. There may, of course, have been other reasons not available to this study, but one statement which is available was made in a postwar interrogation of the Commanding Officer, SHIGURE wherein that officer stated, "... there was some discussion of joining up with him, (THIRD Section joining SECOND Striking Force) however, Shima was senior to Nishimura and therefore they couldn't cooperate. Nishimura did not want to be under the command of Shima."\*\*

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\* Vice Admiral Kiyohide Shima, IJN.

\*\* USSBS Interrogation of Japanese Officials, Nav No. 79, Interrogation of Commander Shigeru Nishino, IJN, Volume II, Page 343.

\*\*\* Commander 3RD Section Visual Dispatch (October 23rd, time unknown) to 3RD Section, (3RD Section SigOrd No. 5), Detailed Action Report SHIGURE, Battle of Leyte Gulf, October 23rd - 27th, 1944, WDC Document 161717 (Part 4), NA 11801.

Although there is no amplification of this statement does it not seem logical to say that it supports the above reasoning?

Whatever may have been the real reasons for not joining the SECOND Striking Force and the THIRD Section, the facts, as shown by Commander THIRD Section's visual dispatch above, are clear. Commander THIRD Section well knew that under Commander SECOND Striking Force's plan that commander would pass Binit Point and enter into Surigao Strait about five hours after the THIRD Section. Since (a) he could readily see by plotting, that this schedule of advance, did not require excess speed—in fact it required relatively slow speeds--; i.e., from sortie to Point A of 13.5 knots, from Point A to Point B of 18 knots, and from Point B to Point C of 16 knots, and (b) the SECOND Striking Force recently fueled was capable of much higher speeds without requiring refueling of other than the destroyers, it seems clear that he now realized that Commander SECOND Striking Force had no intentions of operating other than well separated, and therefore that he (Commander THIRD Section) was "on his own".

At 1025 Commander THIRD Section with the THIRD Section passed through the main channel, Balabac Strait\* which it will be recalled had been ordered buoyed by the ships there under the direction of Commanding Officer MAYA.\*\* After clearing the channel he changed course to 075°(T).\*\*\*

At 1042 the THIRD Section on course 075°(T) speed 18 knots was bearing 148°(T) distant 50 miles from Balabac Island.

(2) Operations of Commander Main Force, 0000 - 1042, October 23rd.

At midnight Commander Main Force with the Main Force, in Latitude 23°-48'N, Longitude 133°-42'E (about 670 miles east of the north end of Formosa), was steaming on course 245°(T), speed sixteen knots.

During the midwatch he received a dispatch (230100) from the Chief of Staff SIXTH Base Air Force in which the Chief of Staff pointed out the dependence of the Main Force on the 801st (sic) Air Group for forward and southern flank searches (except for "L" sector\*\*\*\* searches by SIXTH Base Air Force), and requested that arrangements be made accordingly.\*\*\*\*\*

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\* Detailed Action Report SHIGURE, Battle of Leyte Gulf, October 23rd - 27th, 1944, WDC Document 161717 (Part 4), NA 11801.

\*\* Commander 1ST Striking Force Dispatch 211208 October 1944 to MAYA (1ST Striking Force SigOrd No. 145), Detailed Action Report BATDIV 1, SHO No. 1 Operation, October 18th - 28th, 1944, WDC Document 161005, NA 11744.

\*\*\* Appended Chart I, SHO No. 1 Operation, Movements of 3RD Section 1ST Striking Force from 1500 October 22nd - 1700 October 27th, 1944.

\*\*\*\* According to Japanese search procedures "L" designates a patrol based at Manila, Combined Fleet OpOrd No. 82, August 1st, 1944, ATIS Document No. 39, Part VIII, June 4th, 1945 (NACHI Document).

\*\*\*\*\* Detailed Action Report ZUIHO, SHO No. 1 Operation, October 20th - 25th, 1944, WDC Document 161008.



It was not until 0255 that he received Clark Air Base Recco Report No. Two of October 22nd. This message reported an aircraft sighting at 0900 of an enemy force consisting of one light (CVL) and one special (CVE) carrier, two battleships or cruisers and some destroyers, on course 180°(T) at sixteen knots, bearing 087°(T), distant 330 miles from Manila.\* He likely noted that this report was similar to one received earlier with a time of contact of 0920, but was some fifty miles to the southwest of that earlier report. He does not appear to have given this report much consideration at this time for it does not appear on his chart of Enemy Fleet Dispositions for this date.

At 0418 he radioed his command to prepare to make full speed immediately.\*\* (While exactly what full speed was is not known, there are indications that it was eighteen knots, i.e., standard speed (twelve knots) plus an increment equal to half standard speed (six knots)).

At 0515 the Main Force manned stations,\*\*\* presumably for the dawn alert (about one hour before sunrise).

At 0530 the ZUIKAKU placed four fighters on No. Two Alert for possible service as direct air cover (CAP).\*\*\*\*

At 0533 the ISUZU spotted a submarine periscope 45° to port, distant about 2100 yards. She immediately opened fire with her port guns, at which time evasive action was taken by temporarily changing course,\*\*\*\*\* presumably to course 340°(T) which course was maintained until 0551 when the base course of 245°(T) was resumed.\*\*\*\*\*

At 0545 the ZUIKAKU commenced launching the morning search--originally scheduled for 0530--consisting of six attack and two recco planes in accordance with Commander Main Force's order for the day's air operations.

At 0546 the CHIYODA also launched planes;\*\*\*\*\* these were likely two type 97 attack planes from the ASP which was assigned to CHIYODA from 0530 to 1000.

By 0555 in Latitude 23°-14'N, Longitude 132°-00'E, eight planes of his scheduled nine-plane search were airborne and commencing their assigned

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\* Clark Air Base Dispatch 221606 October 1944 to Commanders "T" Attack Force, Main Force, War Diary DESRON 10, October 1944, WDC Document 161638, NA 11739.

\*\* Detailed Action Report ZUIHO, SHO No. 1 Operation, October 20th - 25th, 1944, WDC Document 161008.

\*\*\* Detailed Action Report ZUIKAKU, SHO No. 1 Operation, October 20th - 25th, 1944, WDC Document 161008.

\*\*\*\* Appendix 3, Detailed Action Report Main Force, SHO No. 1 Operation, October 20th - 29th, 1944, WDC Document 161006, NA 12604.

\*\*\*\*\* War Diary ISUZU, October 1944, WDC Document 161636, NA 12604.

\*\*\*\*\* Appendix, Detailed Action Report CHITOSE, SHO No. 1 Operation, October 20th - 25th, 1944, WDC Document 161008.

searches. The ninth plane scheduled to be launched by the ZUIHO was delayed until 0750.\* The search consisted of the sector 125°-252°(T) to a radius varying from 270 miles on the southeasterly leg to 375 miles on the westernmost leg with the base search line 195°(T).\*\*

At 0600 No. Three Anti-Submarine Alert was set.\*\*\* This appears to have been a relaxation of the higher state of readiness which had been assumed at the earlier alarm. From this time (i.e., the commencement of the morning air search) until 1000, all attack units were held on No. Two Alert.

At this hour the sky was half-overcast, the wind was east at fourteen knots and the surface visibility was thirty miles.\*\*\*\*

At 0602 Commander Main Force began zigzagging by the A method.\*\*\*\*\* This was a proper precaution for him to take as he was in waters where enemy submarines might be expected, particularly in view of the many alarms of the previous day.

Just prior to the coming of sunrise (0613), the force commenced assuming No. 3-A Shipboard Alert;\*\*\*\*\* ZUIHO set No. 3-A Shipboard Alert at 0618,\*\*\*\*\* while it was 0624 before ISUZU had set condition watches.\*\*\*\*\*

At 0616, and before the usual change of disposition from an anti-submarine to an anti-aircraft disposition had been made, an unidentified carrier plane was sighted in Latitude 22°-30'N, Longitude 131°-20'E.\*\*\*\*\* This caused Commander Main Force to study the situation to determine whether the security of his command would be best served by remaining in his present disposition; in other words he had to decide at this time whether the greater menace to his command was submarines or aircraft. He decided that the unidentified carrier plane presented an air danger which required maximum precautions. Therefore he directed the Main Force by visual dispatch (a) at 0629 to form No. Four Alert Cruising Disposition (the anti-aircraft disposition),\*\*\*\*\* (b) at 0631 to prepare to make maximum battle speed

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- \* Detailed Action Report ZUIHO, SHO No. 1 Operation, October 20th - 25th, 1944, WDC Document 161008.
  - \*\* Detailed Action Report No. 1, 653RD Air Group, SHO Operations, October 20th - 25th, 1944, WDC Document 161004, NA 12605; also Detailed Action Report ZUIKAKU, SHO No. 1 Operation, October 20th - 25th, 1944, WDC Document 161008.
  - \*\*\* War Diary OYODO, October 1944, WDC Document 161636, NA 11973.
  - \*\*\*\* War Diary ISUZU, October 1944, WDC Document 161636, NA 11973.
  - \*\*\*\*\* Detailed Action Report ZUIKAKU, SHO No. 1 Operation, October 20th - 25th, 1944, WDC Document 161008.
  - \*\*\*\*\* War Diary ZUIHO, October 1st - 25th, 1944, WDC Document 161636, NA 11973.
  - \*\*\*\*\* Detailed Action Report Main Force, SHO No. 1 Operation, October 20th - 29th, 1944, Appendix 2, WDC Document 161005, NA 11744.
  - \*\*\*\*\* Commander Main Force Visual Dispatch 230629 October 1944 to Main Force, War Diary ZUIHO, October 1st - 25th, 1944, WDC Document 161636, NA 11973.



immediately,\* (c) at 0634, because there was danger of an enemy air attack, to maintain strict antiaircraft alert,\*\* (d) at 0637 to enforce emergency radar dispositions, and (e) at 0641 to each group to zigzag independently.\*\*\*

After taking these precautionary measures he awaited further information from his planes as well as his ships' radars. The slowness with which he reacted to the initial contact report (0616) until he had completed his preparations (0641) seems to indicate that he did not really believe that this was a contact on an enemy plane, but had either (a) decided that despite this belief some security measures were necessary or (b) had been prevailed on by his staff to take such measures.

Whatever may have been the reason there is no doubt but that the commander's actions were inordinately delayed. This is particularly so because on the previous day he had directed that an especially strict AA alert was to be maintained from the 23rd.\*\*\*\*

WHILE WHAT JAPANESE ORDERS AND DOCTRINES PRESCRIBED IN CASES SIMILAR TO THIS ARE NOT KNOWN IT SEEMS LIKELY THAT THEY APPROXIMATED U. S. NAVAL REGULATIONS THEREON WHEREIN, UNDER INSTRUCTIONS TO THE SENIOR OFFICER PRESENT THEY PRESCRIBED:

"TO THE EXTENT WHICH THE SITUATION DEMANDS, THE SENIOR OFFICER PRESENT SHALL BE PREPARED FOR ACTION AND SHALL GUARD AGAINST SURPRISE ATTACK. WITH THE MEANS AT HIS DISPOSAL, HE SHALL PUT INTO EFFECT SUCH MEASURES AS ARE NECESSARY TO MINIMIZE THE POSSIBILITY OF THE UNDETECTED APPROACH OF HOSTILE AIR, SURFACE, OR SUB-SURFACE FORCES, AND SHALL TAKE ALL ACTION POSSIBLE TO DESTROY SUCH HOSTILE FORCES PRIOR TO THEIR REACHING ATTACK POSITION.\*\*\*\*\*

Since (a) no enemy air attack had materialized, and (b) information had been received that one of the ZUIKAKU search planes was returning because of engine trouble,\*\*\*\*\* Commander Main Force concluded that the unidentified

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\* Commander Main Force Visual Dispatch 230631 October 1944 to Main Force, War Diary ZUIHO, October 1st - 25th, 1944, WDC Document 161636, NA 11973.

\*\* Ibid., Commander Main Force Visual Dispatch 230634 October 1944 to Main Force.

\*\*\* Ibid., Commander Main Force Visual Dispatch 230641 October 1944 to Main Force.

\*\*\*\* Commander Main Force Dispatch (no time group), October 22nd, 1944 to Main Force, (Main Force SigOrd No. 13), Detailed Action Report ZUIHO, SHO No. 1 Operation, October 20th - 25th, 1944, WDC Document 161008.

\*\*\*\*\* United States Navy Regulations, 1948, Chapter 6, Paragraph 0611-3.

\*\*\*\*\* Detailed Action Report No. 1, 653RD Air Group, SHO Operations, October 20th - 25th, 1944, WDC Document 161004, NA 12605; also Detailed Action Report ZUIKAKU, SHO No. 1 Operation, October 20th - 25th, 1944, WDC Document 161008.

plane was presumably this search plane (referred to as the plane on the adjacent search line) on its return flight.\* Therefore, at 0650, he set Condition of Readiness TWO, thus lowering the condition of readiness.

At 0705, having intercepted a radio telephone communication, apparently from enemy carrier plane(s), signal strength FOUR, he directed that a strict alert be enforced.\* Meanwhile the ZUIKAKU realizing the importance of having the sector searched completely, commenced preparing another plane to replace the returning plane.

At 0727 (since the ISE sighted it at that time) Commander Main Force likely sighted a Type Two large flying boat at a distance of about thirty kilometers (sixteen miles) which appeared to have mistakenly reported the Main Force as an enemy task force.\*\* While what he thought of this contact report is nowhere stated, it seems clear that he viewed it with considerable concern for it showed that CinC Combined Fleet's instructions of the previous day, quoted in full under "Operations of CinC Combined Fleet, October 22nd", to the effect, among other items, that the flying personnel of the base air forces should be informed so that they could clearly distinguish the units of the Main Force, were not being taken seriously. This was an unhappy development for he could visualize the possibility of an air attack on his own command by friendly forces. However, he took no action thereon, presumably because he felt that since CinC Combined Fleet was alert to the situation that commander would take any action deemed necessary.

At 0740 he observed that the ZUIKAKU had launched a search plane to replace the search plane which had been reported at 0710 as returning.\*\*\*

It seems probable that some time before this he had learned that the ZUIHO's plane which was flying the westernmost search line had developed mechanical trouble\*\*\*\* for at 0747 he noted that the ZUIHO had launched an additional search plane presumably as a replacement.\*\*\*\*\*

At 0800 one of his search planes sighted a surfaced submarine in Latitude 20°-45'N, Longitude 134°-12'E and attacked it with two sixty kilogram bombs with unknown results.\*\*\*\*\* Whether he knew of this at this time,

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- \* Detailed Action Report Main Force, SHO No. 1 Operation, October 20th-29th, 1944, WDC Document 161005, NA 11744.
  - \*\* Detailed Action Report ISE, SHO No. 1 Operation, October 25th, 1944, WDC Document 161006, NA 12604.
  - \*\*\* Detailed Action Report No. 1, 653RD Air Group, SHO Operations, October 20th - 25th, 1944, WDC Document 161004, NA 12605; also Detailed Action Report ZUIKAKU, SHO No. 1 Operation, October 20th - 25th, 1944, WDC Document 161008.
  - \*\*\*\* Detailed Action Report No. 1, 653RD Air Group, SHO Operations, October 20th - 25th, 1944, WDC Document 161004, NA 12605.
  - \*\*\*\*\* Detailed Action Report ZUIHO, SHO No. 1 Operation, October 20th - 25th, 1944, WDC Document 161008.
  - \*\*\*\*\* Appendix 2, Detailed Action Report Main Force, SHO No. 1 Operation, October 20th - 29th, 1944, WDC Document 161005, NA 11744.



October 23rd

or learned of it upon the return of the plane to its carrier is not known. Since there were no Allied submarines in the area at this time, the nearest being the TUNA which was about 200 miles to the east-southeastward and enroute to its patrol station, it can only be concluded that (a) this contact was false or (b) it was on a Japanese submarine possibly the RO-41 which like the Main Force had departed Bungo Suido on October 20th. (This position was bearing 134°(T) distant 194 miles from the 0800 position of the Main Force.)

At 0802 he, by visual signal, set No. Two radar alert.\*

At 0807 ZUIHO recovered one carrier attack plane.\*\* This is thought to have been the ASP launched at 0540.

At 0830 the ZUIKAKU search plane which had returned because of engine trouble made a forced landing on ZUIHO.\*\*\* About the same time he directed the force to commence zigzagging (B Method).\*\*\*\*

At 0855 he reduced the engineering condition of readiness from (a) readiness to make maximum battle speed to (b) readiness for twenty-four knots immediately and maximum battle speed in fifteen minutes.\*\*\*\*\*

At 0900 he directed CARDIV FOUR to be prepared to make twenty-two knots immediately.\*\*\*\*\*

It will be observed that this speed was two knots slower than the speed assigned the rest of the command. This was of course due to the differences in maximum speeds within the command. That these differences were a source of considerable annoyance to him is clear for in commenting in his action report on the capabilities of his command he stated in part that (a) his force "... was thus restricted by the twenty-two knot speed of the formation including the ISE-type ships and (b) in order to make effective use of a carrier force it is necessary that the force be comprised of units capable of

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\* Commander Main Force Dispatch 230802 October 1944 to Main Force, Detailed Action Report ZUIHO, SHO No. 1 Operation, October 20th - 25th, 1944, WDC Document 161008.

\*\* War Diary ZUIHO, October 1st - 25th, 1944, WDC Document 161636, NA 11973.

\*\*\* Detailed Action Report No. 1 653RD Air Group, SHO Operation, October 20th - 25th, 1944, WDC Document 161004, NA 12605; also War Diary 653RD Air Group, October 1944, WDC Document 160295, NA 12535.

\*\*\*\* War Diary ISUZU, October 1944, WDC Document 161636, NA 11973.

\*\*\*\*\* Detailed Action Report No. 2, OYODO, SHO No. 1 Operation, October 20th - 28th, 1944, WDC Document 161007; also Detailed Action Report ZUIHO, SHO No. 1 Operation, October 20th - 25th, 1944, WDC Document 161008.

\*\*\*\*\* Commander Main Force Visual Dispatch 230900 October 1944 to Main Force, Detailed Action Report ISE, SHO No. 1 Operation, October 25th, 1944, WDC Document 161006, NA 12604.

more than twenty-four knots, at least..."\*.

At 0940 he noted that the CHIYODA and ZUIHO had launched one plane each for ASP and that between 1015 and 1030 she had recovered both of her forenoon ASP planes.\*\*

The remaining ZUIKAKU search planes also landed about this time but exactly when is not recorded. However, it is recorded that the searches were all negative.\*\*\* (Parenthetically, it seems well to insert here the fact that the ZUIHO plane which had developed engine trouble landed at Oroku (Okinawa) at 1040. Here this plane joined the ZUIKAKU search plane which had landed at Oroku on the 21st and then both of these planes returned to the ZUIKAKU later in the day.\*\*\*\* It seems likely that the reason for their landing at Oroku was to obtain some engine repairs and additional spare parts not available within the Main Force.

During the morning and probably before 1042 he likely received contact reports as follows:

(1) At 0100 an RDF fix on a submarine bearing 258°(T), distant 380 miles from his present position (Contact A, Plate XL);

(2) At 0215 a carrier undergoing air attack some 750 miles south of him (Contact B);

(3) At 0230 an RDF fix on a submarine west of Mindoro Island, bearing 250°(T), distant 230 miles from Manila (Contact C);

(4) At 0230 an RDF fix on a submarine west of Palawan Island in lower Palawan Passage (Contact D);

(5) At 0302 an RDF fix, evaluation unknown, bearing 197°(T), distant 330 miles from his present position (Contact E); and

(6) At 0532 an RDF fix on a submarine west of Palawan Island at the northeastern edge of Dangerous Ground (Contact G).

Of these contacts the 0302 RDF fix, evaluation unknown, was of more than ordinary interest. He seems, however, to have evaluated the contact as something other than an enemy carrier force for, although its position was but seventy-five miles beyond the range of the morning search, he apparently took no action to further develop the contact.

At 1042 the Main Force, on course 245°(T), speed sixteen knots and zigzagging was in the vicinity of Latitude 22°-30'N, Longitude 131°-00'E.

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\* Detailed Action Report Main Force, SHO No. 1 Operation, October 20th - 29th, 1944, WDC Document 161005, NA 11744.

\*\* Detailed Action Report ZUIKAKU, SHO No. 1 Operation, October 20th - 25th, 1944, WDC Document 161008.

\*\*\* War Diary 653RD Air Group, October 20th - 25th, 1944, WDC Document 160295, NA 12535.

\*\*\*\* Detailed Action Report No. 1 653RD Air Group, October 20th - 25th, 1944, WDC Document 161004, NA 12605.



(a) Operations of Commander Main Force Supply Force, 0000 - 1042  
October 23rd.\*

Commander Supply Force, with the FIRST Supply Group en route Koniya, Amami O Shima, as he had done on the previous day, concerned himself with the operations of his group alone and appears to have made no noteworthy decisions as Commander Supply Force during the period treated.

(1) Operations of Commander FIRST Supply Group.

At 0000 Commander FIRST Supply Group with the FIRST Supply Group, was in Latitude  $29^{\circ}-20'N$ , Longitude  $132^{\circ}-27'E$ . At this time he changed course from  $170^{\circ}(T)$  to  $245^{\circ}(T)$ .

At 0500 in Latitude  $28^{\circ}-53'N$ , Longitude  $131^{\circ}-18'E$ , he changed course to  $180^{\circ}(T)$  which course he maintained only for an hour and a half. Then at 0630 in Latitude  $28^{\circ}-36'N$ , Longitude  $131^{\circ}-18'E$ , he changed course to  $253^{\circ}(T)$ . Although he reported his speed as eleven knots, from his plotted positions he seems to have made good about twelve knots. His operations until 1042 were uneventful.

At 1042 Commander FIRST Supply Group was in Latitude  $28^{\circ}-20'N$ , Longitude  $130^{\circ}-17'E$  (bearing  $077^{\circ}(T)$ , distant fifty-two miles from Koniya) on course  $253^{\circ}(T)$ , making good about twelve knots.

(2) Operations of Commander SECOND Supply Group.

During the early part of this day Commander SECOND Supply Group continued preparations at Kure for his sortie which would occur at 1520 in the afternoon.

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\* Detailed Action Report Main Force Supply Force, October 21st - November 1st, 1944, WDC Document 161008.

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(3) Operations of Commander Advanced Expeditionary Force, 0000 - 1042 October 23rd.

On this day the eleven effective submarines available to Commander Advanced Expeditionary Force were en route to their assigned positions as shown in Plate XXVI.

Likely before 1042 he learned that at 0633 the I-41 had sighted two enemy carrier-type aircraft on a northerly course in Latitude 15°-35'N, Longitude 130°-12'E.\* These were search aircraft from TG 38.3 which had been launched at 0550 and which had reported negative results upon their return, thereby indicating that they had not sighted the submarine.\*\*

(4) Operations of Commander SW Area Force, 0000 - 1042 October 23rd.

Commander SW Area Force remained at his headquarters in Manila. He and his staff were watching the developing situation very closely for the penetration operation was now underway with all forces connected therewith rapidly concentrating in the Philippine area. He likely maintained a plot of the expected movements of the Main Force, Main Body FIRST Striking Force and the THIRD Section, as well as those of his own major surface units (i.e., SECOND Striking Force (CRUDIV TWENTY-ONE and DESRON ONE), CRUDIV SIXTEEN and DESDIV TWENTY-ONE). This was important not only for information but also because it was possible for some of the above groups to be discovered by enemy submarines with ensuing damage which unhappy event might (a) adversely affect the SHO Plan, and (b) place increased load on his already meager resources.

He was likely watching the air developments with considerable interest for he well knew that the confusion incident to the arrival of the SIXTH Base Air Force had imposed additional responsibilities on the FIFTH Base Air Force in particular, which force was assisting the SIXTH Base Air Force to get its assigned air base facilities operative.

He knew that both Commanders FIFTH and SIXTH Base Air Forces were also following the situation closely, for soon after midnight he learned that (a) Commander SIXTH Base Air Force had (1) notified the commanders most interested that he had moved his headquarters to Manila with the main strength of its flying units,\*\*\* and (2) at 0103 had placed the SECOND Attack Group in Formosa

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\* Dispatch (Originator and Date-Time-Group Unknown), received by Commander Main Force at 231130 October 1944, Detailed Action Report Main Force, SHO No. 1 Operation, October 20th - 29th, 1944, WDC Document 161005, NA 11744.

\*\* War Diary CTG 38.3, October 1944.

\*\*\* Commander 6TH Base Air Force Dispatch October 23rd, 1944 (Time Group Unknown), to CinC Combined Fleet, etc., Detailed Action Report 2ND Fighter Striking Unit, 304TH Fighter Unit (203RD Air Group), October 21st - 29th, 1944, WDC Document 160517, NA 12309.



under his (Commander SIXTH Base Air Force) direct command with orders to move to the Philippines at about 1400 and had issued general instructions for their employment during the evening and night of October 23rd - 24th,\* and (b) Commander FIFTH Base Air Force had ordered three Kamikaze Special Attack Units to move to Davao No. 1 during that day and the following day and to carry out special attacks.\*\*

At about 0515 his fears, referred to above, relative to the possible torpedoing of one of his ships, were realized, for at that time he received a dispatch from COMCRUDIV SIXTEEN stating that at 0445 the AOBA, in a position about seventy miles from the entrance to Manila Bay, had received one torpedo hit from a submarine.\*\*\* This was followed with the information (a) at about 0609 that she could no longer use her engines,\*\*\*\* and (b) at about 0625 that she was to be taken in tow by the KINU after dawn and that screening aircraft and ships were urgently requested.\*\*\*\*\*

This was of considerable concern to him for there was the possibility now that, if the enemy submarines were in strength in the AOBA area, he might lose that ship and perhaps the KINU as well. But what surface forces did he have available for this work? Realizing that prompt action was necessary, he commenced estimating the situation to determine from where he could best spare the units required. Meanwhile he seems to have issued instructions to the air groups providing air cover over CRUDIV SIXTEEN to expedite their covering operations.

By 0800 it is likely he knew that the SIXTH Base Air Force attack scheduled for this morning had aborted because of bad weather east of Manila.\*\*\*\*\* Also by this time he had received the following contacts\*\*\*\*\*

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- \* Commander 6TH Base Air Force Dispatch 230103 October 1944 to 6TH Base Air Force (6TH Base Air Force DesOpOrd No. 89), Detailed Action Report 901ST Air Group, Night Searches, October 10th - 28th, 1944, WDC Document 160551, NA 12402.
  - \*\* Commander 5TH Base Air Force Dispatch 230143 October 1944 to Commander 61ST Air Flotilla, War Diary 61ST Air Flotilla, October 1944, WDC Document 161643, NA 12260.
  - \*\*\* COMCRUDIV 16 Dispatch 230445 October 1944 to CinC Combined Fleet, Commander SW Area Force, etc., Detailed Action Report CRUDIV 16, SHO Operation, October 17th - 27th, 1944, WDC Document 161005, NA 11744.
  - \*\*\*\* Ibid., COMCRUDIV 16 Dispatch 230541 October 1944 to Commanders SW Area Force, 2ND Striking Force, etc.
  - \*\*\*\*\* Ibid., COMCRUDIV 16 Dispatch 230555 October 1944 to Commander SW Area Force, etc.
  - \*\*\*\*\* Detailed Action Report No. 2, 5TH Attack Unit (752ND Air Group), October 14th, 1944, WDC Document 160258, NA 11744.
  - \*\*\*\*\* Appended Chart IV, Enemy Fleet Dispositions on October 23rd, 1944, Detailed Action Report Main Force, SHO No. 1 Operation, October 20th - 29th, 1944, WDC Document 161005, NA 11744.

- (1) At 0100 an RDF fix on a submarine bearing 112°(T), distant 190 miles from the southern tip of Formosa (Contact A Plate XL);
- (2) At 0215 a carrier undergoing air attack 225 miles east of Tacloban (Contact B);
- (3) At 0230 an RDF fix on a submarine west of Mindoro Island, bearing 250°(T), distant 230 miles from Manila (Contact C);
- (4) At 0230 an RDF fix on a submarine in southern Palawan Passage (Contact D);
- (5) At 0302 an RDF fix, evaluation unknown, bearing 073°(T), distant 520 miles from Manila (Contact E);
- (6) At least one submarine in the vicinity of the AOBA attack (Contact F); and
- (7) At 0532 an RDF fix on a submarine 110 miles west of the northern tip of Palawan Island at the northern edge of Dangerous Ground (Contact G).

Since the major portion of these contacts were on submarines with but one report on surface forces, it is highly probable that he regretted the inability of the SIXTH Base Air Force, because of the bad weather, to make its scheduled air strikes against any Allied carriers which might be located to the eastward of Luzon, as this would have provided him with some information as to the whereabouts of the Allied carriers. On the other hand, he likely realized that the bad weather was not an unmixed blessing for the Allied attacks on the Philippines were not heavy and much regrouping had still to be done.

Meanwhile, he continued his estimate to determine what units he could best employ as antisubmarine escorts for CRUDIV SIXTEEN. He noted that he had three subchasers performing salvage operations for the oiler RYUEI MARU which had run aground on the previous day,\* apparently on Mindoro Island. He decided that he could spare two of these subchasers and therefore as Commander Philippine Force at 0945 directed (a) the Commanding Officers of SC's Nos. 21 and 46 to proceed immediately to the aid of the AOBA and to report to COMCRUDIV SIXTEEN for duty, and (b) the Commanding Officer of SC No. 18 to continue salvage operations.\*\*

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\* Japanese Naval and Merchant Losses during World War II, prepared by the Joint Army-Navy Assessment Committee, February 1947; "The Imperial Japanese Navy in World War II", Military History Section, Special Staff, GHQ, FEC, February 1952.

\*\* Commander Philippine Force Dispatch 230945 October 1944 to COMCRUDIV 16, KINU, SC's Nos. 18, 21, 46, etc. (Philippine Force DesOpOrd No. 543), Detailed Action Report CRUDIV 16, SHO Operation, October 17th - 27th, 1944, WDC Document 161005, NA 11744.



Having taken this action, he now turned to a more routine requirement. It will be recalled that (a) Commander SECOND Striking Force had been ordered to participate with CRUDIV TWENTY-ONE in the penetration operation, and (b) COMCRUDIV SIXTEEN had been assigned the title of Commander Guard Force with instructions to transport two infantry divisions from Cagayan to Leyte. He realized that this created an anomalous situation for Commander SECOND Striking Force was theoretically in command of both forces. Therefore, in order to clear up this situation, he issued at 1000 his DesOpOrd No. 687 to the effect that

"1. After 1200 October 23rd the organization of the SECOND Striking Force will be as follows:

- a. SECOND Striking Force Main Body  
Commander - Commander SECOND Striking Force  
Strength - CRUDIV TWENTY-ONE and DESRON ONE
- b. Guard Force  
Commander - COMCRUDIV SIXTEEN  
Strength - CRUDIV SIXTEEN (5 transports to be assigned on evening of 24th)

"2. The SECOND Striking Force Main Body, operating as ordered by the force commander, will penetrate through Surigao Strait into Leyte Gulf at dawn on X-day. It will destroy the enemy invasion forces present in support of the operations of the FIRST Striking Force, and at the same time will provide indirect cover for the movements of the Guard Force.

"3. The Guard Force will operate according to SW Area Force DesOpOrd No. 684 and effect the transport and disembarkation of army troops."\*

By 1000, or shortly thereafter, (a) he was aware that Commander SIXTH Base Air Force was taking the precaution of maintaining continuous CAP over the Clark complex airfields and would continue to do so until sundown,\*\* and (b) his Chief of Staff may have received a dispatch from the Chief of Staff, FIRST Striking Force stating that the TAKAO had been torpedoed and requesting assistance.\*\*\* The fact that he took no action on this request at this time (he delayed until 1323) seems to indicate that either the receipt of the dispatch was delayed or the press of circumstances or the lack of available forces prevented earlier action.

\* Commander SW Area Force Dispatch 231000 October 1944 to Commander 2ND Striking Force, COMCRUDIV 16, CinC Combined Fleet, etc. (SW Area Force DesOpOrd No. 687), War Diary DESRON 1, October 1944, WDC Document 161638, NA 11739.

\*\* CofS 6TH Base Air Force Dispatch 231000 October 1944 to Commanders Bamban, Mabalacat East and West Airfields, Detailed Action Report 2ND Fighter Unit (203RD Air Group), October 21st - 29th, 1944, WDC Document 160517, NA 12309.

\*\*\* CofS 1ST Striking Force Dispatch 230830 October 1944 to CofS SW Area Force, Detailed Action Report 1ST Striking Force, SHO Operations, October 16th - 28th, 1944, WDC Document 161641, NA 11839.

At about 1012 he received another dispatch from COMCRUDIV SIXTEEN stating that (a) the KINU had taken the AOBA in tow and was headed for Manila at a speed of 7.5 knots, (b) the enemy submarine was still in the vicinity, (c) two reconnaissance seaplanes were overhead, and (d) requesting urgent neutralization of the enemy submarine.\* Having directed the two subchasers to proceed to the scene, he appears to have taken no further action.

By 1042 it is likely that he had received three additional contact reports:

(1) At 0633 the sighting of two carrier-based planes by the submarine I-41 some 490 miles east of Lamon Bay (Contact H).

(2) At 0915 an RDF fix on an unknown force bearing 095°(T), distant 400 miles from Manila (Contact I).

(3) At 0950 inside Leyte Gulf, four BB's or cruisers, thirteen large transports, and four small transports (Contact J).

Since (a) Contact H was not unexpected as he well knew that Allied carriers were still in the area (b) contact I was perhaps also on a carrier group and (c) Contact J was far less than he expected, he likely felt that these additional contacts were not unduly alarming.

(a) Operations of Commander SECOND Striking Force, 0000 - 1042, October 23rd.

At 0000 Commander SECOND Striking Force with CRUDIV TWENTY-ONE and DESRON ONE (less DESDIV TWENTY-ONE) was 150 miles from Manila, bearing 305°(T). He was proceeding under maximum antisubmarine alert to Coron Bay en route to Surigao Strait to follow the FIRST Striking Force's THIRD Section in the penetration into Leyte Gulf.\*\* He considered the alert necessary because of submarine contacts the previous day and because he knew of the almost continuous submarine activity in the approaches to Manila.

At this time (a) COMCRUDIV SIXTEEN was en route Manila and was bearing 247°(T), distant 175 miles from his destination. (Although he had been issued orders directly on the previous day by Commander SW Area Force designating him as Commander Guard Force,\*\*\* he is being carried here because despite this order, he appears to be at least technically under command of

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\* COMCRUDIV 16 Dispatch 230942 October 1944 to Commander SW Area Force, Detailed Action Report No. 6, AOBA, Anti-Submarine Action West of Philippines, October 23rd, 1944, WDC Document 161747.

\*\* Commander 2ND Striking Force Dispatch 222000 October 1944 (Addressee Unknown), Detailed Action Report Main Force, SHO No. 1 Operation, October 20th - 29th, 1944, WDC Document 161005, NA 11744.

\*\*\* Commander SW Area Force Dispatch 221320 October 1944 to COMCRUDIV 16, Transports 6, 9, 10, 102, info CinC Combined Fleet, Commander 2ND Striking Force, etc., (SW Area Force DesOpOrd No. 684), Detailed Action Report CRUDIV 16, SHO Operation, October 17th - 27th, 1944, WDC Document 161005, NA 11744.



Commander SECOND Striking Force), (b) DESDIV TWENTY-ONE was 220 miles from Manila on a bearing 330°(T), on a course of about 165°(T), en route Manila with the ground personnel of the SIXTH Base Air Force.\* It will be recalled that on the previous day he had directed DESDIV TWENTY-ONE to reach Manila by 1500 October 23rd, to speedily refuel and to rejoin him during the morning of the 24th.\*\*

Sometime in the early hours he likely learned of the arrival of Commander SIXTH Base Air Force, with the main strength of that force, in the Manila area.

At about 0515, he received a report that the AOBA, in position 14°-00'N, 119°-27'E, had been attacked by an enemy submarine and received one torpedo hit.\*\*\* This report was followed by another at about 0611 stating that she was unable to use engines because of flooding,\*\*\*\* and a few minutes later that (a) the KINU would undertake towing her at dawn and would proceed to Manila and (b) urgent dispatch of screening aircraft and ships was requested.\*\*\*\*\*

These reports were of particular interest to him for upon plotting the position of the attack he could see (a) it was approximately forty miles, bearing 145°(T) from his 0515 position and (b) if he continued on his present course (170°(T)) he would pass within twenty miles of it. At 0600 he changed course to 190°(T),\*\*\*\*\* a course which took him past the attack scene at a distance of approximately thirty-two miles. Whether this change of course was made as a result of the report of the attack or whether it was preplanned is not known. It is known, however, that it had been his practice to change course each morning at 0600\*\*\*\*\* when at sea and therefore it seems likely that this change had been planned prior to the receipt of the dispatch.

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- \* Detailed Action Report DESDIV 21, SHO No. 1 Operation, Antiair Action South of Mindoro, October 23rd - 25th, 1944, WDC Document 161717, NA 11801.
  - \*\* Commander 2ND Striking Force Dispatch 211332 October 1944 to COMDES-DIV 21, info Commander 6TH Base Air Force, War Diary DESRON 1, October 1st - 31st, 1944, WDC Document 161638, NA 11739.
  - \*\*\* COMCRUDIV 16 Dispatch 230455 October 1944 to CinC Combined Fleet, Commander SW Area Force, Commander 2ND Striking Force, etc., Detailed Action Report CRUDIV 16, SHO Operation, October 17th - 27th, 1944, WDC Document 161005, NA 11744.
  - \*\*\*\* COMCRUDIV 16 Dispatch 230541 October 1944 to Commanders 2ND Striking Force, SW Area Force, info CinC Combined Fleet, etc., Detailed Action Report No. 6, AOBA, Anti-Submarine Action West of Philippines, October 23rd, 1944, WDC Document 161747.
  - \*\*\*\*\* COMCRUDIV 16 Dispatch 230555 October 1944 to Commander SW Area Force, info Commander 2ND Striking Force, etc., Detailed Action Report CRUDIV 16, SHO Operation, October 17th - 27th, 1944, WDC Document 161005, NA 11744.
  - \*\*\*\*\* Appended Track Chart, War Diary ABUKUMA, October 1944, WDC Document 161636, NA 11973.

Rather meager information indicates that his average speed at this time was in the neighborhood of fifteen knots. Whether he made any change is not known, but it seems likely that he did not, as he likely believed the attacking submarine would be held down long enough for him to safely pass at his present speed.

At about 1012 he probably received another dispatch from COMCRUDIV SIXTEEN stating in part that the KINU had the AOBA in tow at 7.5 knots en route Manila and that an enemy submarine was pursuing. In addition, there were two seaplanes overhead providing antisubmarine protection.\*

He was somewhat anxious about the fate of this unit because it was likely that if this force received substantial damage he would be called upon to assume the troop transport mission. This was clearly not in accordance with his desires.

It is assumed that during the day and up until 1042 he received all of the contact reports shown as received by Commander SW Area Force under "Operations of Commander SW Area Force, 0000 - 1042 October 23rd".

At 1042 the SECOND Striking Force was bearing 312°(T), distant 110 miles from Coron Bay.

(1) Operations of COMCRUDIV SIXTEEN, 0000 - 1042 October 23rd.

At midnight COMCRUDIV SIXTEEN, in the AOBA, was bearing 247°(T), 175 miles from Manila, on a base course of approximately 050°(T), speed twenty knots and zigzagging, en route to Manila. He had recently passed through Dangerous Ground uneventfully, but he realized that he was not yet safe, for he had intelligence reports of the presence of Allied submarines. Therefore, he had ordered 0530 reveille for all hands and enforcement of noise discipline.\*\*

His command was in "Alternate No. 8 Cruising Disposition" which he had specially set up for this movement. This consisted of the heavy cruiser AOBA in the van with the destroyer URANAMI bearing 105° relative (starboard quarter), distant 1.5 kilometers (1641 yards), and the light cruiser KINU bearing 255° relative (port quarter), also distant 1.5 kilometers.

Why he employed this disposition is not understood for, despite the zigzagging discussed below, the AOBA, which was by far the largest and most valuable ship in the disposition, would for the larger part of the time be in the van without any specific antisubmarine protection.

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\* COMCRUDIV 16 Dispatch 230942 October 1944 to Commander SW Area Force, Detailed Action Report No. 6 AOBA, Anti-Submarine Action West of Philippines, October 23rd, 1944, WDC Document 161747.

\*\* Detailed Action Report No. 6, AOBA, Anti-Submarine Action West of Philippines, October 23rd, 1944, WDC Document 161747.



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While it is true that the effectiveness of Japanese sonar and underwater listening devices diminished rapidly as speeds increased in excess of twelve knots (this has been discussed under "Operations of Commander FIRST Striking Force, October 22nd", where the Main Body operated without an antisubmarine screen ahead of the heavy units), it is also true that a screening ship in a protective position is a hazard to an attacking submarine. This is fully recognized in U.S. naval dispositions where every effort is made to protect the more valuable ships against submarines.

COMCRUDIV SIXTEEN employed with this disposition a "Special 'A' Method" zigzag plan, the characteristics of which are not known precisely.\* The submarine BREAM, which tracked the AOBA for about forty minutes, stated that the plan seemed to call for simultaneous turns not greater than forty-five degrees,\*\* whereas a Japanese commander, at the Naval War College, stated that the plan (as he remembered it) called for turns of thirty degrees to the right of the course, then left sixty degrees to the base course, then the base course, then left thirty degrees, then right sixty degrees to the base course.\*\*\* Both of the above commentators (i.e., the BREAM and the Japanese commander) agreed that the above changes were made every five minutes.

At 0135 he changed the base course to 075°(T), in accordance with his night orders issued the previous evening, and at 0145 resumed zig-zagging.

At 0425, on base course 075°(T), speed twenty-two knots, his flagship, in Latitude 14°-00'N, Longitude 119°-27'E\* (about ninety-six miles, bearing 247°(T) from Manila) was torpedoed, receiving one torpedo hit. This hit was made by the BREAM which had succeeded in closing to within 1520 yards of the AOBA which, at the time of firing, was bearing 340°(T) from the BREAM; at which time the URANAMI was bearing 245°(T), distant 800 yards.

As a result of this attack COMCRUDIV SIXTEEN (a) at 0445 informed the interested commands by dispatch that the AOBA, in Latitude 14°-00'N, Longitude 119°-27'E, had received one torpedo hit from an enemy submarine,\*\*\*\* and (b) at 0449 directed the KINU to prepare to tow the AOBA\*\*\*\*\* Meanwhile, both the KINU and URANAMI commenced screening the AOBA. This was a correct procedure.

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\* Detailed Action Report No. 6, AOBA, Anti-Submarine Action West of Philippines, October 23rd, 1944, WDC Document 161747.

\*\* War Patrol Report BREAM, Report of 3RD War Patrol, Serial 021-44, November 22nd, 1944.

\*\*\* Statement of Commander Kenichi Kitamura, Maritime Self Defense Force, Japan, June 11th, 1957 to Commander R.S. Belcher, Jr., USN, World War II Battle Evaluation Group, Naval War College.

\*\*\*\* Detailed Action Report CRUDIV 16, SHO Operation, October 17th - 27th, 1944, WDC Document 161005, NA 11744.

\*\*\*\*\* Detailed Action Report KINU, SHO No. 1 Operation, October 18th - 26th, 1944, WDC Document 161007.

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At 0541, having learned that the AOBA was unable to use her engines, he sent a dispatch to Commander SW Area Force and Commander SECOND Striking Force to that effect. It seems probable that he was expecting air cover from the 954th Air Group for he listed that group for information. This group, it will be recalled, had been directed to provide fleet anti-submarine patrol.\*

He now had an important decision to make. This was whether (a) relying on the antisubmarine activities of the URANAMI, to take the AOBA in tow with the KINU at dawn, or (b) request aircraft and screening ships and to continue to screen the AOBA with both the KINU and URANAMI until the above aircraft and screening ships had arrived.

Despite the fact that he had no guarantee that he would have air cover, he chose the first course of action and decided to request aircraft and screening ships as an urgent matter. (While it is not known whether or not the AOBA was equipped with two seaplanes at this time (this was her normal allowance), the evidence appears to be against it. This appears so for the AOBA, in her action report, reports planes overhead but never mentions having launched them or indicates that they were from the AOBA.)

Therefore, at 0555 he notified Commander SW Area Force to this effect.\*\*

Although, as will be shown later, he succeeded in bringing the AOBA safely to Manila, there is considerable question as to the wisdom of this decision. This is so for this new plan would (a) place the KINU in a most unfavorable position against submarines--her freedom of action would be very limited indeed, and (b) increase the danger of losing both the AOBA and KINU. Since (1) the entrance to Manila Bay was but seventy miles away and airfields were nearby, and (2) the AOBA and KINU at this time were irreplaceable, would it not have been wiser to have chosen the second course of action as it would mean a delay of but a few hours?

Students of history will recall that in World War I on September 22nd, 1914, the Royal Navy lost three light cruisers, ABOUKIR, CRESSEY and HOGUE, because after the former had been torpedoed by a submarine, the other two cruisers closed the area to rescue survivors and

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\* Commander SW Area Force Dispatch 211345 October 1944 to Commanders 5TH and 6TH Base Air Forces, 954TH and 955TH Air Groups, Commanders 1ST and 2ND Striking Forces, Main Force, Detailed Action Report BATDIV 1, SHO No. 1 Operation, October 18th - 28th, 1944, WDC Document 161005, NA 11744.

\*\* COMCRUDIV 16 Dispatch 230555 October 1944 to Commander SW Area Force, info Commanders 2ND Striking Force, 954TH Air Group, Detailed Action Report CRUDIV 16, SHO Operation, October 17th - 27th, 1944, WDC Document 161005, NA 11744.



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while so engaged—they stopped—were also torpedoed.\* Of course, there is a marked dissimilarity here in that Commander SECOND Striking Force had a screen (URANAMI) with sound gear whereas there were no screens with the British cruisers. However, the point is that the KINU stood less chance of being torpedoed, and the AOBA should have been safer, if the KINU had remained underway with full freedom of action until the escorts arrived. This is so not only because of the KINU's mobility but also because she had sound gear and depth charges.

At 0709 a submarine was reported sighted bearing 000°(T) from KINU and at 0712 AOBA opened fire with her port 4.7 inch dual purpose gun.\*\* She apparently fired one round. That this was a false contact is clear for the BREAM, the only Allied submarine in the area, was submerged to 350 feet\*\*\*

At 0719, when he directed the KINU to begin towing,\*\*\*\* there was no air cover. However, by 0750 there was a reconnaissance seaplane patrolling overhead and at 0815 the KINU commenced towing.\*\*

With the arrival of the ASP, COMCRUDIV SIXTEEN likely felt considerably relieved. However, that he still feared the submarine which had attacked him is clear for at 0942, when he advised Commander SW Area Force by dispatch and in detail of his present situation, he mentioned this concern.

In this dispatch he stated that (a) the KINU had begun towing the AOBA, speed about 7.5 knots, (b) the 0930 position was bearing 287°, distant twenty miles from Cabra Island Light, (c) he was heading for Manila hugging the north side of Lubang Island and the west coast of Luzon, (d) he was being pursued by an enemy submarine, the neutralization of which he considered urgent (actually, he was not being pursued for the BREAM continued to remain well below the surface), (e) the weather was cloudy with a slight sea swell and a wind of six mps (twelve knots), and (f) there were two friendly seaplanes overhead.\*\*\*\*\*

In connection with item (c) (i.e., that he was hugging the north side of Lubang Island), does this not indicate the possibility that had the submarine ANGLER (discussed under "Operations of CTF 71, October 21st (BLUEGILL and ANGLER)") taken her station north of Lubang Island in order to guard the SW approaches to Manila she might well have had an opportunity to attack. The sea at this time was moderate (three to five feet).

At 1042 the AOBA was bearing 240°(T), distant seventy-six miles from Manila.

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- \* Sir Julian Corbett, Naval Operations, Volume I (text) to the Battle of the Falklands, December 1944, (London, New York, Toronto), Page 175.
  - \*\* Detailed Action Report No. 6, AOBA, Anti-Submarine Action West of Philippines, October 23rd, 1944, WDC Document 161747.
  - \*\*\* War Patrol Report BREAM, Report of 3RD War Patrol, Serial 021-44, November 22nd, 1944.
  - \*\*\*\* Detailed Action Report KINU, SHO No. 1 Operation, October 18th - 26th, 1944, WDC Document 161007.
  - \*\*\*\*\* COMCRUDIV 16 Dispatch 230942 October 1944 to Commander SW Area Force (and probably others), Detailed Action Report No. 6, AOBA, Anti-Submarine Action West of Philippines, October 23rd, 1944, WDC Document 161747.



(b) Operations of Commander SIXTH Base Air Force, 0000 - 1042  
October 23rd.

At midnight Commander SIXTH Base Air Force was in his new Manila headquarters. The record does not indicate whether he shared headquarters facilities with Commander FIFTH Base Air Force or was provided with separate facilities. It is assumed that he was maintaining very close liaison with Commander FIFTH Base Air Force and his new superior, Commander SW Area Force.

Probably shortly after midnight (the time of the dispatch is not known) he notified all commands of his movement to Manila "leading the main strength of the flying units" of his command.\*

Meanwhile, he realized that with his movement to Luzon the question of the searches to be made from Formosa to cover the movements of the Main Force might be the cause of misunderstanding. This was so for he had been relieved on October 20th of the responsibilities for the E (Honshu), Q (Kyushu) and O (Okinawa) search sectors\*\* and now with his movement into Luzon he would be forced to discontinue the F (Formosa) sector searches which had been conducted by flying boats of the 901st Air Group based at Toko since these flying boats were also being moved to Luzon (Table 2). He decided that it would be wise to alert the interested commanders to the fact that, except for the searches in the Manila sector by the SIXTH Base Air Force, the Main Force "is dependent upon the 801st Air Group flying boats for forward and southern flank searches" and that arrangements should be made accordingly. He therefore at 0100 sent a dispatch to this effect.\*\*\*

This dispatch indicates, and sources available to this study corroborate the indication, that he had not been informed, or at least not kept completely informed of the land-based operations in support of the Main Force. It will be recalled that (a) these operations had been ordered by dispatch (1) initially on October 20th by Commander Combined Escort Force in his 201231,\*\*\*\* quoted in part under "Operations of Commander Main Force,

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- \* Commander 6TH Base Air Force (date-time-group unknown) October 23rd, 1944 to CinC Combined Fleet, 5TH and 6TH Base Air Forces, etc., Detailed Action Report 2ND Fighter Striking Unit, 304TH Fighter Unit (203RD Air Group), October 21st - 29th, 1944, WDC Document 160517, NA 12309.
- \*\* CinC Combined Fleet Dispatch 201044 October 1944 to all Commanders 6TH and 7TH Base Air Forces (Combined Fleet DesOpOrd 366), Detailed Action Report No. 2 Northern Attack Force, (2ND Base Air Force), October 10th - November 15th, 1944, WDC Document 161645, NA 12262.
- \*\*\* CofS 6TH Base Air Force Dispatch 230100 October 1944 to Main Force, Commander "T" Force, War Diary ZUIHO, October 1st - 25th, 1944, WDC Document 161636, NA 11793.
- \*\*\*\* Commander Combined Escort Force Dispatch 201231 October 1944 to Commandants Yokosuka, Kure and Sasebo Naval Districts, Commandant Takao Guard District, Commanders 1ST and 4TH Surface Escort Forces, Commander Submarine #13 (Combined Escort Force DesOpOrd No. 277), Detailed Action Report 901ST Air Group, Night Searches, October 10th - 28th, 1944, WDC Document 160551, NA 12402.



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October 20th", and (2) later on October 21st by Commander Western Attack Force TWO in his 211100,\* quoted in part under "Operations of Commander Main Force, October 21st", and (b) Commander SIXTH Base Air Force was not an addressee of either dispatch. This likely accounts for his lack of familiarity with the arrangements for providing air cover for the Main Force.

It seems probable that since his arrival conference he had continued his running estimate to see what action or actions additional to that already taken he could initiate which would improve the chances for success of the general offensive. While what he decided on as a result of this estimate is not known, it would appear from his actions that he came to a realization that (a) Formosa was not in great danger from Allied air attack, nor, since the Allies were clearly heavily committed in the Philippines area, was there much likelihood of his Formosa forces being given a chance to attack Allied carriers and (b) the focal point of the next few days promised to be to the eastward of the Philippines.

He therefore examined the local situation to learn whether it would be possible to bring to Luzon his Second Attack Group which was presumably in Formosa and was scheduled to remain there for the next several days.

Consequently after having determined that facilities were available, at 0103 he issued instructions (a) removing the Second Attack Group from the command of Commander Western Attack Force THREE and (b) directing (1) this group to move up to the Philippines at about 1400 (2) the 702nd Attack Unit to base at Clark and there prepare for dusk attacks (3) a unit of two-engined land bombers (which had not previously been a part of the Second Attack Group) to prepare for a dusk search from Clark (4) the flying boats of the 901st Air Group, previously based at Toko, to carry out night searches under separate orders after refueling at Cavite and finally (c) he advised that "depending upon the situation, all units at the time of advance may be ordered to carry out aerial dispersal temporarily"\*\*\* thereby indicating to all addressees the possibility of Allied assault.

By 0143, since he was nearby, he knew that Commander FIFTH Base Air Force was placing three Kamikaze units under Commander SIXTY-FIRST Air Flotilla at Davao.\*\*\*

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\* Commander Western Attack Force 2 Dispatch 211100 October 1944 to Okinawa Air Group, 4TH Escort Force (Western Attack Force 2 SigDesOrd No. 1), War Diary 25TH Air Flotilla, October 1944, WDC Document 160137, NA 12278.

\*\* Commander 6TH Base Air Force Dispatch 230103 October 1944 to 6TH Base Air Force (6TH Base Air Force DesOpOrd No. 89), Detailed Action Report 901ST Air Group, Night Searches, October 10th - 28th, 1944, WDC Document 160551, NA 12402.

\*\*\* Commander 5TH Base Air Force Dispatch 230143 October 1944 to Commander 61ST Air Flotilla, War Diary 61ST Air Flotilla, October 1944, WDC Document 161643, NA 12260.

Sometime in the early morning, possibly by 0245, he learned of a sighting of a carrier 225 miles east of Tacloban undergoing an air attack at 0215.

This report is highly interesting for not only had no night attack been scheduled but the best evidence is that no search nor attack had been made. It seems probable that this report was made in error by one of the Japanese submarines which may have been moving through this area at this time toward its assigned station (Plate XXVI).\*

At about 0515 he received a dispatch from COMCRUDIV SIXTEEN announcing that the AOBA had received one torpedo hit from an enemy submarine seventy miles west of Manila Bay.\*\*

It seems probable that by this time his searches from the Philippines had been launched. Although data on these searches is meager, it appears logical to assume, since his attack forces were to take off in the early morning, that these searches were scheduled as early as practicable. An indication of the intended coverage of these searches is the plot kept by Commander Main Force.\* This plot indicates searches were to be flown between about 037°(T) and 138°(T) to a distance of 650 miles. In view of the paucity of information on these searches, the number actually flown is unknown.

During the night certain planes, which were to attack that morning and which required servicing and bomb loading, were serviced and bomb loaded\*\*\* However, this work, as discussed on the previous day, was handicapped in a number of cases (i.e., FIFTH Attack Unit) because the maintenance personnel who had moved up aboard the aircraft and by transport plane were still scattered at different bases.

Mindful of these difficulties, and of the fact that a number of the planes were not at their correct bases (also as discussed on the previous day), and realizing that, if the morning offensive was to be launched on schedule, the forenoon could not be spent shifting planes to their proper bases with the ensuing delays and danger from enemy air attack, he seems to have approved a plan which permitted aircraft to be launched from their present bases, after which they "were to return to their assigned deployment bases."\*\*\*\*

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- \* Appended Chart IV, Enemy Fleet Dispositions on October 23rd, 1944, Detailed Action Report Main Force, SHO No. 1 Operation, October 20th-29th, 1944, WDC Document 161005, NA 11744.
  - \*\* COMCRUDIV 16 Dispatch 230445 October 1944 to CinC Combined Fleet, etc. Detailed Action Report CRUDIV 16, SHO Operation, October 17th - 27th, 1944, WDC Document 161005, NA 11744.
  - \*\*\* War Diary 252ND Attack Unit (701ST Air Group), October 14th - November 15th, 1944, WDC Document 160258, NA 12592.
  - \*\*\*\* Detailed Action Report No. 2, 102ND and 103RD Attack Units (701ST Air Group), Philippines Air Battle, October 22nd - November 15th, 1944, WDC Document 161293, NA 12505A.



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Meanwhile, since he was planning to launch his attack aircraft to attack enemy carriers east of the Philippines, he awaited contact reports from his search planes. However, as take-off time approached, except for the contact report received at 0215, he had received no contacts. Whether he attributed this to (a) the increasing bad weather to the eastward of the Philippines, (b) the fact that the search planes had not had an opportunity to advance very far along the search courses, (c) the limited number of search planes which had finally departed, or (d) the possibility that the Allied carriers had moved into areas not covered, is not known. However, it is known that (1) certain of his attack groups (i.e., 102ND and 103RD) reported having departed on course 110°(T) to attack the "enemy task force",\* and (2) this latter course was the approximate bearing of the 0215 contact above referred to. Therefore, it can be assumed that he launched part of his attack against the task force reported on that bearing.

Shortly before 0630, in accordance with this plan, the planes for the FIRST Attack Group began taking off. The first unit to depart was the THIRD Bombing Unit which launched thirty-eight carrier-type bombers.\* The total number of planes which made up the Attack Group is not known for information on the subject for this day is very sketchy. However, it will be recalled that on the evening of October 22nd, 178 planes had been counted in the fields of the Clark complex. Since the FIRST Attack Group, as shown in the SIXTH Base Air Force Tactical Organization (Table 1), was composed of eighty-four per cent of the total operational air strength (land planes) scheduled to move to Luzon on October 22nd, it is assumed that the same percentage applied to the planes presently in the Clark complex or 150 planes (.84 x 178). Owing to the difficult situation on the airfields, it seems probable that a number of these planes became, at least temporarily, non-operational. What this number was is not known, but certainly it can be safely assumed that the number of planes available was less than 150.

By 0745 all aircraft of the FIRST Attack Group had turned back because of bad weather,\*\* and presumably had returned to their assigned bases. Based on the fact that (a) the AOBA, which was about 120 miles to the west of the position at which the Attack Group turned back, had at 0430 reported the weather "fine" with two-tenths cloud coverage,\*\*\* and (b) Allied planes from TG 38.3 had searched to within 230 miles east of this position without reporting bad weather, it would appear as if the bad weather encountered by these planes was localized in the Lamon Bay area and to the southeast of Manila.

As regards the SECOND Attack Unit, at least three planes, which were to proceed and attack singly, did not turn back. Of these three, one carried out reconnaissance inside Leyte Gulf and at 0930 sighted four

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\* Detailed Action Report No. 2, 102ND and 103RD Attack Units (701ST Air Group), October 22nd - November 15th, 1944, WDC Document 161293, NA 12505A.

\*\* Detailed Action Report No. 2, 5TH Attack Unit (252ND Air Group), October 22nd - 29th, 1944, WDC Document 161004, NA 12605.

\*\*\* Detailed Action Report No. 6, AOBA, Anti-Submarine Action West of Philippines, October 23rd, 1944, WDC Document 161747.



battleships or cruisers, thirteen large transports and four small transports; another searched on a bearing of 095°(T) from Manila to a distance of 300 miles with negative results (TF 38 was over 500 miles to the eastward of Manila at this time); and the third failed to return.\*

With the return of the FIRST Attack Group to their bases, which was likely prior to 1000, Commander SIXTH Base Air Force, apparently feeling that (a) his planes, which were now grounded at his airfields, were excellent targets, (b) despite the bad weather reported, it was possible for enemy planes to attack his airfields, (c) his airfield commanders might not realize this fact and might not provide the necessary air cover, decided that simple prudence required that ample air cover should be provided, and therefore at 1000 he directed three airfield commanders in the Clark Field complex (Bamban and Mabalacat East and West) to maintain a combat air patrol over the area until sundown, with each patrol consisting of from one-fifth to one-sixth of the fighter strength available.\*\*

While this action of Commander SIXTH Base Air Force might be construed to indicate a lack of confidence in his subordinate commanders, it is not believed that this was so for no one knew the capabilities of the Allied carrier aircraft better than he since he had been battling them most unsuccessfully for the past several weeks and no one was more responsible for the safety of the planes of the SIXTH Base Air Force. THEREFORE, IF HE HAD ANY CONCERN REGARDING THEIR SAFETY, HE WOULD HAVE BEEN DERELICT HAD HE FAILED TO TAKE ACTION ACCORDINGLY. SOUND MILITARY DECISION STATES IN THIS REGARD, "DURING THE SUPERVISION OF THE ACTION PROBLEMS CALLING FOR DECISION MAY DERIVE THEIR INCENTIVE (AMONG OTHER ITEMS) BECAUSE OF A RECOGNITION BY THE COMMANDER CONCERNED OF AN INCENTIVE ORIGINATING FROM THE DEMANDS OF THE SITUATION . . . SHOULD MODIFICATION, ALTERATION OR DEPARTURE (FROM THE ASSIGNED TASK) BE IN ORDER THE COMMANDER IS RESPONSIBLE FOR RECOGNITION OF THE FACT THAT THE DEMANDS OF THE SITUATION HAVE INTRODUCED FURTHER PROBLEMS . . . SUCH RECOGNITION CONSTITUTES AN INCENTIVE TO TAKE ACTION."\*\*\*

At 1025 Commander SIXTH Base Air Force released a dispatch to major commanders.\*\*\*\* What the text of this message was is not known, but it seems likely that it was a recapitulation of the move of the SIXTH Base Air Force to Manila and the lack of results of the attack against the Allied carriers east of Lamon Bay which had aborted two and one-half hours earlier.

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- \* Detailed Action Report No. 2, 5TH Attack Unit (752ND Air Group), October 22nd - 29th, 1944, WDC Document 161004, NA 12605.
  - \*\* CofS 6TH Base Air Force Dispatch 231000 October 1944 to Commanders Bamban, Mabalacat East and West, Detailed Action Report 2ND Striking Unit, 304TH Fighter Unit (203RD Air Group), October 21st - 29th, 1944, WDC Document 160258, NA 12309.
  - \*\*\* Sound Military Decision, Naval War College, 1942, Pages 198, 199.
  - \*\*\*\* Commander 6TH Base Air Force Dispatch 231025 October 1944 to 6TH Base Air Force Battle Report Addressees, War Diary 701ST Air Group, October 1st - 31st, 1944, WDC Document 160258, NA 12592.



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Since Commander SIXTH Base Air Force and Commander FIFTH Base Air Force were nearby in Manila it seems probable that these two commanders discussed from time to time the possibilities of success of the Kamikaze Special Attack Units which the FIFTH Base Air Force was soon to employ and what the effect on the air forces would be if they were successful. It seems clear that both commanders realized if the Kamikaze attacks were unsuccessful the effect on the naval air force would not be particularly adverse but, if they were successful, the effect could be great. In this latter case Commander SIXTH Base Air Force could visualize that his own command would be drawn into this type of attack and therefore it seems clear that he prepared himself mentally, if not by planning, for this eventuality.

(c) Operations of Commander FIFTH Base Air Force, 0000 - 1042  
October 23rd.

Commander FIFTH Base Air Force was in his headquarters in Manila in close liaison with Commander SIXTH Base Air Force. The arrival of a large portion of the SIXTH Base Air Force had relieved him of some responsibility in the northern Philippines, thus permitting him more latitude as to the assignment of his few remaining planes which numbered about twenty-four operational aircraft. The arrival of this new force had, however, created many new problems in logistics and coordination which required immediate attention; to attend to these matters, it seems probable that his staff and that of Commander SIXTH Base Air Force had been in almost continuous conference since his arrival.

In addition to the above, as pointed out on the previous day, he had to decide whether to move a large part of his remaining aircraft to Davao.

At 0103, since he was nearby in Manila, he knew that Commander SIXTH Base Air Force had directed his SECOND Attack Group to (1) move to the Philippines later in the day, (2) make dusk attacks the same night, and (3) conduct night searches by flying boats.\*

About this time, realizing that, if the attacks by his Kamikaze Special Attack Units scheduled for the following day were successful, it would most likely lead to the employment of this method of attack by other Japanese air units, he studied the situation to insure that these planes were given every advantage. He concluded that, rather than operate most of his Kamikaze planes from Luzon, it would be wise to disperse them widely leaving few in the heavily hit Visayas. He therefore decided to transfer some of his planes presently located at Mabalacat as well as certain others (not specifically located) to Davao and at 0143 issued instructions to that effect as follows: "Three Kamikaze Special Attack Units are placed under the command of Commander 61st Air Flot. These units are scheduled to move

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\* Commander 6TH Base Air Force Dispatch 230103 October 1944 to 6TH Base Air Force, War Diary 701ST Air Group, October 1st - 31st, 1944, WDC Document 160151, NA 12592.

up to Davao No. 1 during today and tomorrow, and will carry out special attacks, employing Valencia and Cagayan Bases if necessary."\*

While he did not specify the number of planes involved there is sufficient evidence to show that (a) ten carrier-type fighters and one carrier-type reconnaissance plane were moved up to Davao that afternoon in response to the order (in which movement two fighters were lost)\*\* and (b) five carrier-type fighters and one carrier-type reconnaissance plane were moved up to Cagayan.\* This would indicate that the intended number was seventeen operational planes, in which case but seven operational planes remained in the Luzon Area.

At about 0515 he received a dispatch from COMCRUDIV SIXTEEN announcing that the AOBA had been torpedoed by an enemy submarine outside the entrance to Manila Bay.\*\*\* Although he was not an addressee on this dispatch, he likely received it for information because of his close proximity to Commanders SIXTH Base Air Force and SW Area Force, who were addressees. He noted that the dispatch also included as an addressee the 954th Air Group. This was to be expected as SW Area Force DesOpOrd No. 679\*\*\*\* had assigned both Commander SIXTH Base Air Force and Commander 954th Air Group responsibilities for antisubmarine protection. He took passing note of this information, but as he had no direct responsibility in the matter he took no action.

About 0530 he may have learned that a Kamikaze unit of two suicide planes with an escorting fighter had departed Cebu at 0500 to attack enemy carriers off Suluan Island.\*\*\*\*\* Since the Japanese reports thereon do not record whether the planes attacked or returned and since the escorting fighter was shot down by AA fire, it is not known what results were claimed.

Actually the authenticity of this report is somewhat in doubt for there is no report from Allied sources of Kamikaze attacks on this

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- \* War Diary 61ST Air Flotilla, October 1944, WDC Document 161643, NA 12260.
  - \*\* Davao No. 1 Airfield Dispatch 232045 October 1944 to Mabalacat Air Base, Commander 6TH Base Air Force, War Diary 61ST Air Flotilla, October 1944, WDC Document 161643, NA 12260.
  - \*\*\* COMCRUDIV 16 Dispatch 230445 October 1944 to CinC Combined Fleet, etc., Detailed Action Report CRUDIV 16, SHO Operation, October 17th - 27th, 1944, WDC Document 161005, NA 11744.
  - \*\*\*\* Commander SW Area Force Dispatch 211345 October 1944 to Major Fleet Commanders (SW Area Force DesOpOrd No. 679), Detailed Action Report BATDIV 1, SHO No. 1 Operation, October 18th - 28th, 1944, WDC Document 161005, NA 11744.
  - \*\*\*\*\* Summary Table of Special Attack (Kamikaze) Air Operations in the Philippines, October 21st - 27th, 1944, Philippine Area Naval Operations, Part II, October - December 1944, 2ND Demobilization Bureau Japanese Government, October 1947, Department of the Army, Historical Division File No. 8-5, JS-104.



morning or of any aircraft being shot down by AA fire. At 0605 one carrier type bomber was shot down by the TCAP from the CHENANGO off the southeast coast of Leyte\* but this seems to have been the only Japanese plane shot down by the Allies on this rather quiet morning.

It is likely that he knew by this time of an 0215 contact on a carrier 225 miles east of Tacloban that was undergoing air attack.\*\* The Kamikaze attack above mentioned may have been directed at this contact but the information thereon is too meager to warrant any definite opinion.

By 0800 he knew that the SIXTH Base Air Force's morning attack had taken off shortly before 0630 but had turned back at 0745 due to bad weather east of Manila.\*\*\*

By 1000 he likely learned of the 0930 contacts in Leyte Gulf of four battleships or cruisers, thirteen large transports and four small transports.\*\*\*

Also about this time he learned that Commander SIXTH Base Air Force had ordered combat air patrols over the fields in the Clark Base complex until sundown.\*\*\*\*

While what air cover he was giving his own fields is not known, it seems probable that, since (a) he was moving the larger part of his planes to Davao, (b) most of these planes were fighters, and (c) there were but few planes within his air force, he made no special preparations.

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- \* Aircraft Action Report No. 73, VF-35, October 23rd, 1944.
  - \*\* Appended Chart V, Enemy Fleet Dispositions on October 23rd, 1944, Detailed Action Report Main Force, SHO No. 1 Operation, October 20th - 29th, 1944, WDC Document 161005, NA 11744.
  - \*\*\* Detailed Action Report No. 2, 5TH Attack Unit (752ND Air Group), October 22nd - 29th, 1944, WDC Document 161004, NA 12605.
  - \*\*\*\* CofS 6TH Base Air Force Dispatch 231000 October 1944 to Commanders Bamban, Mabalacat East and West Airfields, Detailed Action Report, 2ND Fighter Striking Unit (304TH Fighter Unit) (203RD Air Group), October 21st - 29th, 1944, WDC Document 160517, NA 12309.

(B) Operations of C.G. FOURTH Air Army, 0000 - 1042 October 23rd.

C.G. FOURTH Air Army was in his Manila headquarters. Little is recorded of his operations on this date, but presumably reconnaissance commenced in the early morning as specified by C.G. SECOND Air Division's Operation Order A-207 of the previous day.\*

During the early morning he was aware of the operations of Commander FIFTH and SIXTH Base Air Forces including the basing of Kamikaze units at Davao\*\* and the decision to move the SECOND Attack Group from Formosa to bases in the Philippines.\*\*\* He likely learned at about 0515 of the torpedoing of the AOBA at 0425.\*\*\*\*

During the forenoon watch he learned that the SIXTH Base Air Force attack units had returned because of bad weather east of the Philippines.\*\*\*\*\*

He was also probably aware of the continuing efforts by Commander FIFTH Base Air Force to attack with Kamikaze units. The latest effort was launched at 0500 with unknown results.\*\*\*\*\*

At 0930 C.G. SECOND Air Division issued his order A-210\*\*\*\*\* which implemented his order A-207 of the day before.\* The provisions of this order are summarized as follows:

(1) The enemy force landing on Leyte Island appears to be the SIXTH Army commanded by General MacArthur. It is estimated that two divisions have

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- \* 2ND Air Division Operation Order A-207, October 22nd, 1944, Documents from file of Lieutenant Colonel Katsuo Sato, IJA, Staff Officer 4TH Air Army, Department of the Army Historical Division Microfilm HS-7.
  - \*\* Commander 5TH Base Air Force Dispatch 230143 October 1944 to Commander 61ST Air Flotilla, War Diary 61ST Air Flotilla, October 1944, WDC Document 161643, NA 12260.
  - \*\*\* Commander 6TH Base Air Force Dispatch 230103 October 1944 to 6TH Base Air Force (6TH Base Air Force DesOpOrd No. 89), Detailed Action Report 901ST Air Group, Night Searches, October 10th - 28th, 1944, WDC Document 160551, NA 12402.
  - \*\*\*\* COMCRUDIV 16 Dispatch 230445 October 1944 to CinC Combined Fleet, etc., Detailed Action Report CRUDIV 16, SHO Operation, October 17th-27th, 1944, WDC Document 161005, NA 11744.
  - \*\*\*\*\* Detailed Action Report No. 2, 5TH Attack Unit (752ND Air Group), October 22nd - 29th, 1944, WDC Document 161004, NA 12605.
  - \*\*\*\*\* Summary Table of Special Attack (Kamikaze) Air Operations in the Philippines, October 21st - 27th, 1944; Philippine Area Naval Operations, Part II, October - December 1944, 2ND Demobilization Bureau, Japanese Government, October 1947, Department of Army Historical Division, File No. 8-5, JS-104.
  - \*\*\*\*\* 2ND Air Division Operation Order A-210, 0930 October 23rd, 1944, Documents from file of Lieutenant Colonel Katsuo Sato, IJA, Staff Officer, 4TH Air Army, Department of Army Historical Division, Microfilm HS-7.



landed and that landing operations are still continuing. Beginning today, October 23rd, the navy has launched offensive operations with its main strength.

(2) The SECOND Air Division will launch a general attack early tomorrow morning, October 24th, and will annihilate enemy shipping in the Leyte Gulf area.

(3) Allocation of forces is given in the annex. Units will launch a general attack in accordance with SECOND Air Division Operation Order A-207 of October 22nd.

(4) The 30th Fighter Group will carry out defensive air patrols over Bacolod tonight, October 23rd.

(5) C.G. SECOND Air Division will be at the Silay command post.

Whence came C.G. SECOND Air Division intelligence concerning the strength of the Allied landing forces is not known, but it seems strange that army units in the Philippines area by this date were still estimating the landing strength as two divisions. As early as October 20th intelligence sources in Tokyo had recorded the strength correctly as four divisions\* (discussed under "Operations of CinC Combined Fleet, October 20th").

How extensive C.G. FOURTH Air Army's searches were on this morning is not known. It seems significant, however, that (a) there are no recorded contacts from army planes, (b) as mentioned earlier, the weather southeast of Manila was bad, and (c) in general, this seems to have been a day of operational inactivity for the FOURTH Air Army.

Although FOURTH Air Army sources on this day are meager and give no information of contacts, if any, made on Allied forces, it is assumed that because of the proximity of his headquarters to naval headquarters, C.G. FOURTH Air Army was informed of Japanese contact reports made by naval sources.

Therefore it can also be assumed that he had the two contact reports which would be of most interest to him, i.e.;

(a) At 0215 a carrier 225 miles east undergoing air attack (Contact B Plate XL)\*\* and

(b) At 0930, inside Leyte Gulf, four battleships or cruisers, thirteen

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\* Material for Situation Estimates, 1ST Section, Naval General Staff, October 1944, WDC Document 216764 (Microfilm).

\*\* Appended Chart IV, Enemy Fleet Dispositions on October 23rd, 1944, Detailed Action Report Main Force, SHO No. 1 Operation, October 20th - 29th, 1944, WDC Document 161005, NA 11744.

large transports, and four small transports (Contact J).\*

As his maximum effort was to be directed against shipping in Leyte Gulf he had a particularly keen interest in this contact and may well have had additional information (1) from his own aircraft whose mission it was to reconnoiter the area, and (2) from Army ground sources. Whether he had additional reports or not it seems likely that he considered this navy contact only a partial report of the Allied strength in Leyte Gulf. This seems so for (a) on the previous day eighty transports had been reported in the Gulf and on October 21st eighty transports plus fourteen to fifteen battle-ships or cruisers had been sighted in Leyte Gulf with forty additional transports, among other units, within 180 miles of the entrance, and (b) in the above summarized operation order he stated that "Landing operations are still continuing".

During the day units deployed to their previously assigned bases.\*\* These assignments were: the Fighter Force at Fabrica, Savaria and La Carlota; the Attack Force at Bacolod and Silay; the Heavy Fighter Force at Saravia; the Light Bomber Force at Lipa; the Heavy Bomber Force at the Clark Complex; and the Reconnaissance Force at Tanza. Except for Lipa and Clark all the above fields were on Negros.

It should be remembered that the FOURTH Air Army consisted of three divisions: the SECOND Air Division received the reinforcement and therefore consisted of nearly all the offensive force of the FOURTH Air Army; the FOURTH Air Division had been stripped of nearly all aircraft and was concerned with (1) airfield construction in the central and northern Philippines and (2) antisubmarine patrol; the SEVENTH Air Division was in Mindanao and Makassar (Celebes) and was carrying on reconnaissance, attack and neutralization in the Halmahera area with only a few aircraft.\*\*\*

By 1030 he likely knew that the SIXTH Base Air Force was to employ a combat air patrol over fields of the Clark Complex.\*\*\*\* This was of great

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\* Detailed Action Report No. 2, 5TH Attack Unit (752ND Air Group), SHO No. 1 Operation, October 22nd - 29th, 1944, WDC Document 161004, NA 12605.

\*\* Appended Chart, 2ND Air Division Operation Order A-207, October 23rd, 1944, Documents from file of Lieutenant Colonel Katsuo Sato, IJA, Staff Officer, 4TH Air Army, Department of the Army Historical Division Microfilm HS-7.

\*\*\* Philippine Air Operations, Phase II, 1944-1945, 1ST Demobilization Bureau Monograph, Japanese Government, October 1945, Volume 46, Part I, (Colonel Matsumae Misao, Ex-IJA), Page 40; also Draft Plan of 4TH Air Army Operations after Mid-October 1944, Documents from file of Lieutenant Colonel Katsuo Sato, Staff Officer, 4TH Air Army, Department of the Army Historical Division Microfilm HS-7.

\*\*\*\* CofS 6TH Base Air Force Dispatch 231000 to Commanders Bamban, Mabalacat East and West Airfields; Detailed Action Report 2ND Fighter Striking Unit, 304TH Fighter Unit (203RD Air Group), October 21st - 29th, 1944, WDC Document 160517, NA 12309.



assistance to him in helping to maintain air superiority over his fields as he moved large portions of his strength to the central Visayas and as reinforcements arrived in the Clark - Manila area.

There is little information in documents available to this study upon which to establish an accurate count of the number of FOURTH Air Army aircraft as of 1042 this day. It is known that this was a day for deploying forces for the offensive on the following day and that reinforcements were coming into the Philippines. The Army Section of Imperial General Headquarters recorded that the SECOND Air Division had at the end of this day 192 operational aircraft and that the "total in the Philippines" (likely total FOURTH Air Army) was 232 operational aircraft.\* This, therefore, is an increase of 135 planes over the ninety-seven at the close of October 22nd. Based on a steady flow of reinforcement aircraft it can then be estimated that at 1042 some sixty additional aircraft had arrived bringing the total of operational aircraft to 157. However, because many of these planes, even though in the Philippines did not reach their attack deployment bases until a day or so later, the operational aircraft available for attack were somewhat less than this number.

By 1042 preparations were underway to move his headquarters to Bacolod later in the day. This move, it will be recalled, had been ordered in his Operation Order A-518, October 21st and was designed to permit him to be closer to his units concentrating in the Visayas.

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\* Daily Record of the War Situation, 4TH Air Army, GHQ, FEC, Special Historical Collection, Supporting Documents to General of the Army Douglas MacArthur's Historical Report on Allied Operations in the Southwest Pacific Area, (Item 30, Footlocker 7 of 10, SWPA Series, Volume II).

CHAPTER IX, Epilogue.

Thus, at 1042, the time at which this volume ends, the situation was as follows:

(a) the Allied forces, which up to this time had considered that major elements of the Japanese Fleet would not be involved in opposition to their operations, now, from recent enemy contact reports and certain intelligence which disclosed a dimly defined pattern of Japanese naval and air movements, had reason to believe that some form of Japanese naval reaction in considerable strength was underway. To CTF 77 this reaction took the form of magnified Tokyo Express runs against Leyte; to COMTHIRDFLT it was not yet clear and he was therefore launching air searches to the westward to determine its nature. Certainly neither of these commanders visualized the true extent of the Japanese naval reaction and neither of them realized that the Japanese Combined Fleet, both naval and air, was already in, or proceeding toward, the objective area.

(b) the Japanese forces were all underway executing the penetration operation against Leyte with X-day October 25th. Although certain of these forces had been contacted by the Allies during the past several days, i.e., Main Body FIRST Striking Force, SECOND Striking Force, CRUDIV SIXTEEN, DESDIV TWENTY-ONE and certain submarines of the Advanced Expeditionary Force, it seems probable that the Japanese knew only of the contacts on the Main Body and CRUDIV SIXTEEN for in these two commands several ships (AOBA, ATAGO, MAYA and TAKAO) had been torpedoed by Allied submarines on this very morning. The Main Force moving down from the north and the THIRD Section transiting Balabac Strait had not yet been discovered. The base air forces and the FOURTH Air Army were preparing for an all-out air offensive commencing Y-day October 24th against the Allied surface forces, which included the carriers outside the Gulf and the amphibious shipping inside the Gulf. The Japanese, despite the realization that the Allies knew of two of their forces in the Manila-Palawan Passage Area, and despite the losses above mentioned, decided to continue the operation.

\* \* \*

THUS AT THIS HOUR THE JAPANESE WERE COMMITTING ALL OF THEIR AVAILABLE NAVAL AND AIR STRENGTH ASSISTED BY THE LOCAL GROUND TROOPS, AND BY THOSE TROOPS WHICH MIGHT BE MOVED THERE FROM CAGAYAN, INTO WHAT WAS EXPECTED TO BE A COORDINATED AND CONCENTRATED ASSAULT ON THE ALLIED INVASION AND CARRIER FORCES. THE ALLIES, WHO HAD NOT ANTICIPATED A REACTION OF SUCH BROAD PROPORTIONS WERE AT THIS TIME PREPARING TO COUNTER OPERATIONS OF A MORE LIMITED SCOPE, I.E., "MAGNIFIED TOKYO EXPRESS" OPERATIONS TO QUOTE CTF 77.

THE TIME OF DECISION WAS CLOSE AT HAND!



APPENDIX IORGANIZATION OF ALLIED FORCES AT1042 OCTOBER 23RDBATTLE FOR LEYTE GULFALLIED NAVAL FORCES

	Vice Admiral Kinkaid, Thomas C.
(a) TF 77 CENTRAL PHILIPPINES ATTACK FORCE	Vice Admiral Kinkaid, Thomas C.
(a) (1) TG 77.1 Flagship Group*	Captain Granum, Alfred M.
(a) TU 77.1.1 Fleet Flagship Unit	Captain Granum, Alfred M.
AGC WASATCH (FFFFF)	Captain Granum, Alfred M.
DD's AMMEN, MULLANY	
(b) TU 77.1.2 Cruiser Unit	Captain Coney, Charles E.
NASHVILLE**	Captain Coney, Charles E.
DESDIV 48 less AMMEN, MULLANY	Captain McLean, John B.
ABNER READ (F), BUSH	
(2) TG 77.2 Bombardment and Fire Support Group	Rear Admiral Oldendorf, Jesse B.
(a) TU 77.2.1 Fire Support Unit	
NORTH***	Rear Admiral Weyler, George L.
BATDIV 3 less NEW MEXICO,	
IDAHO	Rear Admiral Weyler, George L.
MISSISSIPPI (FF)	Captain Redfield, Herman J.
BATDIV 4 less COLORADO	Rear Admiral Ruddock, Theodore D., Jr.
WEST VIRGINIA (F)	Captain Wiley, Herbert V.
MARYLAND	Captain Ray, Herbert J.
DD's AULICK (F), CONY,	
SIGOURNEY	Commander Andrew, John D.
(b) TU 77.2.2 Fire Support Unit	
SOUTH****	Rear Admiral Oldendorf, Jesse B.
BATDIV 2	Rear Admiral Chandler, Theodore E.
TENNESSEE (F)	Captain Heffernan, John B.
CALIFORNIA	Captain Burnett, Henry P.
PENNSYLVANIA	Captain Martin, Charles F.

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\* War Diary WASATCH, October 23rd, 1944; also War Diary NASHVILLE, October 23rd, 1944.

\*\* General Douglas A. MacArthur (COMSOWESPAC) embarked.

\*\*\* Action Report CTU 77.2.1 (COMBATDIV 3), Bombardment of and Fire Support Mission on Leyte Island, Philippine Islands, Serial 0166, October 20th, 1944.

\*\*\*\* Action Report COMCRUDIV 4 (CTG 77.2), Bombardment and Capture of Leyte Island, October 16th - 24th, 1944, Serial 00147, November 5th, 1944.

CRUDIV 4 less INDIANAPOLIS, plus MINNEAPOLIS LOUISVILLE (FFF) PORTLAND MINNEAPOLIS	Rear Admiral Oldendorf, Jesse B. Captain Hurt, Samuel H. Captain Settle, Thomas G. W. Captain Slocum, Harry B.
CRUDIV 12 less MONTPELIER, CLEVELAND DENVER (F) COLUMBIA	Rear Admiral Hayler, Robert W. Captain Bledsoe, Albert M. Captain Curts, Maurice E. Captain Smoot, Roland N. Captain Smoot, Roland N.
DESRON 56 DESDIV 111 LEUTZE, NEWCOMB (FF), BENNION, HEYWOOD L. EDWARDS, RICHARD P. LEARY	
DESDIV 112 less ROSS, plus HALFORD ROBINSON (F), ALBERT W. GRANT, BRYANT, HALFORD	Captain Conley, Thomas F., Jr.
DESDIV X-RAY less AULICK, CONY, SIGOURNEY CLAXTON (F), THORN, WELLES	Commander Hubbard, Miles H.
(3) TG 77.3 Close Covering Group*	Rear Admiral Berkey, Russell S.
(a) (1) TU 77.3.1 Light Cruiser Group CRUDIV 15 less NASHVILLE PHOENIX (FF) BOISE DESDIV 47 less BEALE HUTCHINS (F), BACHE, DALY, KILLEN	Rear Admiral Berkey, Russell S. Rear Admiral Berkey, Russell S. Captain Duncan, Jack H. Captain Roberts, John S. Captain McManes, Kenmore M.
(2) TU 77.3.2 Heavy Cruiser Group HMAS SHROPSHIRE DD's BEALE, HMAS ARUNTA	Captain Nichols, Charles A.G., RN Captain Nichols, Charles A.G., RN
(4) TG 77.4 Escort Carrier Group	Rear Admiral Sprague, Thomas L.
(a) TU 77.4.1 Pancon Carrier Group**	Rear Admiral Sprague, Thomas L.
(1) TU 77.4.11 CARDIV 22 CVE SANGAMON (FFF) CVEG 37 (19 VF, 9 VT)	Rear Admiral Sprague, Thomas L. Captain Browder, Maurice E. Lieutenant Commander Hindman, Stanley E.

\* Action Report CTG 77.3 (COMCRUDIV 15), Leyte Occupation, Serial 0359, November 3rd, 1944.

\*\* Action Report CTU 77.4.1 (COMCARDIV 22), Leyte Occupation, October 12th - 29th, 1944, Serial 00104, November 8th, 1944.



CVE SUWANNE CVEG 60 (22 VF, 9 VT)	Captain Johnson, William D. Lieutenant Commander Feilbach, Harvey O., USNR
CVE CHENANGO CVEG 35 (18 VF, 8 VT)	Captain Van Deurs, George Lieutenant Commander Moore, Frederick R., Jr.
CVE SANTEE CVEG 26 (22 VF, 8 VT)	Captain Blick, Robert E. Lieutenant Commander Funk, Harold N.
(2) TU 77.4.12 CARDIV 28 less CVE's SARGENT BAY, RUDYERD BAY CVE SAGINAW BAY (FF) VC 78 (15 VF, 12 VT)	
CVE PETROF BAY VC 76 (18 VF, 12 VT)	Rear Admiral Henderson, George R. Captain Sutton, Frank C. Lieutenant Commander Hyde, John L., Jr. Captain Kane, Joseph L. Commander McCauley, James W.
(3) TU 77.4.13 Screen DESDIV 93 less HEERMANN, HOEL MC CORD (F), TRATHEN, HAZELWOOD CORTDIV 63 less SHELTON, DENNIS EDMONDS, RICHARD S. BULL, COOLBAUGH, EVERSOLE, RICHARD M. ROWELL	
(b) TU 77.4.2 Southern Carrier Group*	Captain Nunn, Ira H. Captain Nunn, Ira H. Commander Bewick, James V.
(1) TU 77.4.21 CARDIV 24 less CVE's ANZIO, CORREGIDOR CVE NATOMA BAY (FF) VC 81 (16 VF, 11 VT)	Rear Admiral Stump, Felix B. Captain Morehouse, Albert K. Lieutenant Commander Barnes, Robert C.
CVE MANILA BAY VC 80 (17 VF, 9 VT)	Captain Lee, Fitzhugh Lieutenant Commander Stubbs, Harry K., USNR
(2) TU 77.4.22 CARDIV 27 CVE MARCUS ISLAND (FF) VC 21 (15 VF, 10 VT)	Rear Admiral Sample, William D. Captain Greber, Charles F. Lieutenant Commander Murray, Thomas O., USNR

\* Action Report CTU 77.4.2 (COMCARDIV 24), Reoccupation of Leyte Island, October 18th - 29th, 1944, Serial 00114, November 2nd, 1944.

CVE KADASHAN BAY VC 20 (15 VF, 12 VT)	Captain Hunter, Robert N. Lieutenant Commander Dale, John R., USNR
CVE SAVO ISLAND VC 27 (17 VF, 12 VT)	Captain Ekstrom, Clarence E. Lieutenant Commander Jackson, Percival W.
CVE OMMANEY BAY VC 75 (17 VF, 11 VT)	Captain Young, Harold L. Lieutenant Smith, Allen W., Jr., USNR
(3) TU 77.4.23 Screen DESDIV 94 less JOHNSTON HAGGARD (F), FRANKS, HAILEY CORTDIV 69 less STAFFORD, SAMUEL B. ROBERTS, plus LeRAY WILSON	Captain Reynolds, Luther K.  Captain Reynolds, Luther K.  Commander Phifer, Thomas C.
(c) TU 77.4.3 Northern Carrier Group*	Rear Admiral Sprague, Clifton A. F.
(1) TU 77.4.31 CARDIV 25 CVE FANSHAW BAY VC 68 (15 VF, 10 VT)	Rear Admiral Sprague, Clifton A. F. Captain Johnson, Douglass P. Lieutenant Commander Rogers, Richard S.
CVE ST. LO VC 65 (17 VF, 9 VT)	Captain McKenna, Francis J. Lieutenant Commander Jones, Ralph M., USNR
CVE WHITE PLAINS VC 4 (17 VF, 12 VT)	Captain Sullivan, Dennis J. Lieutenant Fickenscher, Edward R., Jr.
CVE KALINAN BAY VC 3 (18 VF, 12 VT)	Captain Williamson, Thomas B. Lieutenant Commander Keighley, William H., USNR
(2) TU 77.4.32 CARDIV 26 less CVE's HOGGATT BAY, NEHENTA BAY CVE KITKUN BAY VC 5 (15 VF, 12 VT)	Rear Admiral Ofstie, Ralph A. Captain Whitney, John P. Commander Fowler, Richard L.
CVE GAMBIER BAY VC 10 (18 VF, 12 VT)	Captain Vieweg, Walter V. R. Commander Huxtable, Edward J., Jr.

\* Action Report CTU 77.4.3 (COMCARDIV 25), Leyte Operation, October 12th - 27th, 1944, Serial 00110, November 6th, 1944; also CTG 77.4 Operation Plan 2-44.



- (3) TU 77.4.33 Screen  
DESDIV 93 less MC CORD,  
TRATHEN, HAZELWOOD,  
plus JOHNSTON  
HOEL (F), HEERMANN,  
JOHNSTON  
DE's RAYMOND, DENNIS  
(F), JOHN C. BUTLER,  
SAMUEL B. ROBERTS  
Commander Thomas, William D.  
Commander Thomas, William D.  
Lieutenant Commander Hansen,  
Sigurd, USNR
- (5) TG 77.5 Minesweeping and Hydrographic  
Group\*  
Commander Loud, Wayne R.
- (a) TU 77.5.1 Minesweepers  
Commander Loud, Wayne R.
- (1) Sweep Unit ONE  
MINDIV 5  
DMS's SOUTHARD (F),  
CHANDLER, HOVEY (FF),  
LONG  
MINDIV 19 (Modified)  
DM's PREBLE, BREESE  
DMS's HAMILTON (F),  
HOWARD, PALMER  
Commander Loud, Wayne R.  
Lieutenant Brennan, John E., USNR  
Lieutenant Commander Clague,  
John, USNR  
Lieutenant Olson, Louis C., USNR
- (2) Sweep Unit TWO  
MINDIV 14  
AM's ZEAL (F), VELOCITY,  
TUMULT, TOKEN  
Lieutenant Commander Woodhouse,  
Ernest W., USNR
- (3) Sweep Unit THREE  
MINDIV 13 plus AM SENTRY  
AM's REQUISITE (F),  
PURSUIT, REVENGE, SAGE,  
SENTRY  
Lieutenant Commander Peirce,  
Herbert R., Jr., USNR
- (4) MINDIV 34 less SCUFFLE,  
SENTRY\*\*  
AM's SAUNTER, SALUTE,  
SCRIMMAGE, SCOUT\*\*\*  
Lieutenant Commander Keefer,  
James R., USNR
- (5) Sweep Unit FOUR  
YMS's 1, 81, 140 (F),  
311,\*\*\*\* 319  
Lieutenant Staehli, Ralph J., Jr.,  
USNR
- (6) Sweep Unit FIVE  
YMS's 238, 243, 286, 293,  
335, 389,\*\*\*\* 398 (F)  
Lieutenant Latta, William A., USNR

\* Action Report CTG 77.5 (COMMINRON 1), Minesweeping Operations in Surigao Straits and Leyte Gulf, Serial 0111, October 29th, 1944.

\*\* Reported October 20th from TG 79.2.

\*\*\* Reported October 20th from MINDIV 14.

\*\*\*\* Reported October 18th from TU 79.12.1.

(7) Sweep Unit SIX  
YMS's 39, 49, 52,  
340 (F), 342  
Lieutenant Schminke, Paul, USNR

(8) Sweep Unit SEVEN  
YMS's 71, 73, 176,\*  
314, 341 (F)  
Lieutenant Burns, Thomas W., USNR

(b) TU 77.5.2 Hydrographic Unit  
HMAS GASCOYNE, YMS's 316,  
393, HMAL 1074  
Commander Hunt, Robert B. S., RAN

(6) TG 77.7 Service Group  
Rear Admiral Glover, Robert O.

(a) TU 77.7.1 Fueling Unit\*\*  
AO's ASHTABULA (F), SALAMONIE,  
SARANAC, CHEPACHET, AE MAZAMA,  
SS DURHAM VICTORY\*\*\*  
Captain Beard, Jefferson D.

CORTDIV 40 less FOREMAN,  
ENGLAND, plus MANNING  
BOWERS, WHITEHURST,  
WILLMARTH, WITTER, MANNING  
Commander Thorwall, Chas. A., USNR

(b) TU 77.7.2 Task Unit Leyte\*\*\*\*  
less ARETHUSA  
IX(AO's) CARIBOU, MINK, PANDA,  
AN's TEAK, SILVERBELL,  
SATINLEAF,\*\*\*\*\* AKN INDUS (F),  
ARL ACHILLES,\*\*\*\*\* ARS CABLE,  
AO(W) SEVERN, AE MURZIM\*\*\*\*\*  
Captain Hylant, Emory P.

(b) TF 78 NORTHERN ATTACK FORCE  
Rear Admiral Barbey, Daniel E.

(1) TG 78.1 Palo Attack Group  
Rear Admiral Barbey, Daniel E.

(a) TU 78.1.1 Group Flagship\*\*\*\*\*  
(Also Flagship Unit)  
AGC BLUE RIDGE (FFF)  
Commander McDowell, Lewis R.  
Commander McDowell, Lewis R.

TU 78.1.2 Relief Group Flag-  
ship\*\*\*\*\*  
DD RUSSELL  
Lieutenant Commander Wicks, John  
E., Jr.

(b) TU 78.1.5 LSM Unit\*\*\*\*\*  
LSM's 19 (F), 21, 257  
Lieutenant McComb, Edward L., USNR

\* Reported October 18th, 1944 from TU 79.12.1.

\*\* War Diary CTU 77.7.1, October 23rd, 1944.

\*\*\* Employed as ammunition ship.

\*\*\*\* War Diary INDUS, October 1944, (enroute Leyte with TG 78.7).

\*\*\*\*\* Enroute Leyte with TG 78.8.

\*\*\*\*\* Arrived Leyte with TG 78.6 October 22nd.

\*\*\*\*\* Action Report BLUE RIDGE, Leyte Operation, Serial 00530, November 15th,  
1944.

\*\*\*\*\* War Diary LSM 21, October 1944.



- (c) TU 78.1.6 Escort and Fire Support Unit\*  
DESDIV 49 less STEVENS, MURRAY,  
HARRISON, MC KEE  
JOHN RODGERS (F) Captain Crommelin, Henry  
Captain Crommelin, Henry
- (d) TU 78.1.7 Control Unit\*\*  
PC's 598, 623 (F), 1129, SC 726 Captain Brantly, Neill D.
- (e) TU 78.1.8 LCI Support Unit\*\*\*  
LCI(R)'s 71 (F), 72, 73, 74,  
331 Lieutenant Sargent, Robert E., Jr.,  
USNR
- (f) TU 78.1.9 Demolition Unit  
LCI(D)'s 227, 228 Lieutenant, junior grade, Sibigtroth,  
Joseph C., USNR
- (g) TU 78.1.10 LCI Smoke Unit\*\*\*\*  
LCI's 28 (F), 361, 363, 364,  
429, 447, 448 Captain McGee, Homer F.
- (h) TU 78.1.11 Salvage Unit\*\*\*\*\*  
AT QUAPAW Lieutenant Commander Castle,  
Northrup H., USNR
- (i) TU 78.1.12 Army Headquarters Unit  
PCE(R)'s 848 (F), 849, 850  
SS APACHE, FP 47 Lieutenant Gunby, D. Kirk, USNR
- (j) TU 78.1.13 Beach Parties  
Beach Party No. 1 Lieutenant Zinser, Eugene J., USNR  
Beach Party No. 4 Lieutenant Walter, Raymond G., USNR  
Lieutenant Zinser, Eugene J., USNR
- (k) LST Unit (Red Beach)\*\*\*\*\*  
LST's 623, 666, 667, 668, 695,  
697, 740, 741, 744, 751, 986,  
1017, 1018 (F) Commander Linthicum, Theodoric C.
- (2) TG 78.2 San Ricardo Attack Group\*\*\*\*\* Rear Admiral Fechteler, William M.
- (a) Group Flagship  
APA FREMONT (FFF) Captain Conlan, Clarence V.
- Relief Group Flagship  
DD ANDERSON Lieutenant Commander Benson, Ralph  
H., Jr.

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- \* Action Report CTU 78.1.6, Serial 0114, November 5th, 1944.  
\*\* Action Report CTU 78.1.7, no serial, November 1st, 1944.  
\*\*\* Action Report CTU 78.1.8, Serial 160, November 22nd, 1944.  
\*\*\*\* Action Report CTU 78.1.10 Leyte Operation, Serial 0122, November 20th, 1944.  
\*\*\*\*\* Action Report QUAPAW, Philippine Operation, October 20th - 29th, 1944,  
Serial 033, October 20th, 1944.  
\*\*\*\*\* Unloaded. Awaiting formation and departure of TG 78.11.  
\*\*\*\*\* Action Report CTG 78.2 (COMPHIBGRU 8), Leyte Operation, Serial 0085,  
November 29th, 1944.

- (b) Headquarters Support Aircraft Commander Spangler, Earle S., USNR
- (c) TU 78.2.5 LSM Unit Commander Weintraub, Daniel J.  
 LSM's 18 (F), 20, 22, 23, 34,  
 138, 139, 258, 311
- (d) DD JENKINS\* Commander Gallery, Philip D.
- (e) TU 78.2.7 Control Unit Lieutenant Commander Holt, William  
J., Jr., USNR  
 PC's 1134 (F), 1119, 1120  
 SC 991
- (f) TU 78.2.8 Support Unit Commander Day, Dwight H.  
 LCI(R)'s 34, 230 (F), 337,  
 338, 340, 341  
 LCI(G)'s 64, 69 (F)
- (g) TU 78.2.9 Salvage Unit Lieutenant Wurzler, Walter R., USNR  
 ATA SONOMA
- (h) TU 78.2.10 Beach Parties\*\* Lieutenant Commander Halloran,  
Edward R., USNR  
 Beach Party No. 3 Lieutenant Commander Halloran,  
Edward R., USNR  
 Beach Party No. 8 Lieutenant Nordyke, Ted, USNR
- (i) WHITE Beach Unit  
 LST's\*\*\* 170, 397, 549, 613,  
 912, 993  
 AK JUPITER,\*\*\* ARL ACHILLES\*\*\*\*  
 XAK's THOMAS, GIANELLA, KINNEY,  
 JUDSON, FIELDS, SHORT
- (j) LCI Group 44 (Temporary) Commander Tucker, James F.  
 LCI's 683, 684, 685, 693, 977,  
 978 (F), 979, 980, 981, 982,  
 1064, 1065
- (3) TG 78.3 Panaon Attack Group\*\*\*\*\*
- (a) TU 78.3.5 Control and Support Captain Murphey, Charles D.  
 Craft\*\*\*\*\*  
 PC's 1122, 1133  
 LCI(G)'s 68, 70 (F)  
 LCI(R)'s 31 (F), 342  
 LCI (D) 29

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\* Unit of TU 78.2.6 remaining at 1042 October 23rd.  
 \*\* Action Report CTU 78.2.10, Report of Operations, Force Beachmaster, October 13th - November 16th inclusive, no serial, November 20th, 1944.  
 \*\*\* Unloaded. Awaiting formation and departure of TG 78.11.  
 \*\*\*\* Unit of TU 77.7.2.  
 \*\*\*\*\* Units Remaining at 1042 October 23rd.  
 \*\*\*\*\* Action Report CTU 78.3.5, Central Philippines--Panaon Attack Group, no serial, November 30th, 1944.



- (b) TU 78.3.6 Beach Party No. 7 Lieutenant O'Neill, Thomas F.,  
USNR
- (4) TG 78.5 Harbor Entrance Control Group\* Captain Benson, Francis W.  
PF's BISBEE (F), GALLUP  
LCI's 343, 344, 430 (F), 432
- (5) PF CARSON CITY\*\*
- (6) TG 78.7 Reinforcement Group TWO Captain Ginder, John K.B.  
Convoy Unit\*\*\*
- (a) Liberty Ships  
GENERAL FLEISCHER, CAPE ROMANO, CAPE CONSTANCE, JOHN PAGE,  
SABIK, JANSSENS, LEO MERRITT, DAVID GAILLARD, FRANK CUHEL,  
MARCUS DALY, BENJAMIN WATERHOUSE, JOHN FOSTER, VITUS BERING,  
SAMUEL BARLOW, BENJAMIN WHEELER, LOUIS WUELE, CHARLOTTE CUSHMAN,  
CASSIOPIA, CLARENCE DARROW, ESCALANTE
- (b) Service Force TU 77.7.2 less Captain Hylant, Emory P.  
AE MURZIM,\*\*\*\* AN SATINLEAF,\*\*\*\*  
IX (AO) ARETHUSA,\*\*\*\*\*  
ARL ACHILLES\*\*\*\*\*  
IX(AO)'s CARIBOU, MINK, PANDA  
AN's TEAK, SILVERBELL, AKN INDUS (F)  
ARS CABLE, AO(W) SEVERN, (YOG-15 in tow)
- (c) LST Unit Captain Seay, Erskine A.  
LST's 464, 552, 553, 554, 555,  
556, 557, 558, 559, 569, 573,  
610 (FF), 619, 658, 663, 673,  
687, 688, 694, 703, 734, 736,  
737, 746, 749, 750, 908, 919,  
990, 991, 1015, 1025, 1026  
AO SUAMICO, PG TULSA
- (d) Screen Captain Ginder, John K.B.  
DESDIV 41 less HOWORTH Captain Ginder, John K.B.  
NICHOLAS (F), O'BANNON, TAYLOR,  
HOPEWELL  
PF's SAN PEDRO, MUSKOGEE

- \* Action Report CTG 78.5, Report of Operations of the Harbor Entrance  
Control Group, October 18th - 24th, 1944, no serial, November 22nd, 1944.
- \*\* Awaiting formation and departure of TG 78.11.
- \*\*\* Action Report CTG 78.7 (COMDESRON 21), Central Philippines Operation,  
Serial 0176, November 10th, 1944.
- \*\*\*\* En route Leyte with TG 78.8.
- \*\*\*\*\* Broke down October 18th, returned Hollandia.
- \*\*\*\*\* Arrived Leyte with TG 78.6 October 22nd.

(7) TG 78.8 Reinforcement Group THREE (Convoy Unit)*	Commander Steinmetz, John L., USCG
(a) Service Ship Unit AE MURZIM, AK's HYPERION, ZAURAK (F), APC 17, AN SATINLEAF	Lieutenant Commander Kapuscinski, John S., USNR
(b) Liberty Ship Unit FLOYD B. OLSON, THOMAS NELSON, PRINCE L. CAMPBELL, JOE C.S. BLACKBURN, AMERIGO VESPUCCI, MATTHEW P. DEADY, VAN NUYS, CAPE JUDY, CAPE CUMBERLAND, SEAMAN A. KNAPP, MORRISON R. WAITE, JOHN ALDEN, ATWATER, A. BAILEY, JOHN BARTRAM, JUAN CABRILLO, CARL G. BARTH	
(c) LST Unit LST's 22, 206 (FF), 220, 454, 618, 922	
(d) Screen CORTDIV 29 less CORPUS CHRISTI, HUTCHINSON PF's EUGENE (FFF), EL PASO, VAN BUREN, ORANGE	Commander Steinmetz, John L., USCG
(c) TF 79 SOUTHERN ATTACK FORCE**	Vice Admiral Wilkinson, Theodore S.
Force Flagship AGC MT OLYMPUS (FFFF)	Captain Shultz, John H.
Commander Support Aircraft	Captain Taylor, Herbert W., Jr.
(1) TG 79.1 Attack Group ABLE	Rear Admiral Conolly, Richard L.
Group Flagship APPALACHIAN (FFF)	Captain Jeffs, Charles R.
(a) TG 79.3 Transport Group ABLE***	Captain Richardson, Clifford G.
(1) TU 79.3.1 TRANSDIV 7 APA CAVALIER (FF) AKA THUBAN	Captain Richardson, Clifford G.
(2) TU 79.3.2 TRANSDIV 30 AKA CHARA	Commander Clark, John P., USNR
(3) TU 79.3.3 TRANSDIV 38 AKA ALSHAIN	Captain Krause, Roland E.

\* Action Report CTG 78.8, Reinforcement Group 3, Central Philippine Operation, Serial 071, November 16th, 1944.

\*\* Action Report CTG 79.1 (COMPHIBGRU 3), Leyte Operation, Serial 00454, October 26th, 1944.

\*\*\* Units of TG 79.1 (45 ships on October 20th) remaining on October 23rd.



- (4) TU 79.3.4 TRANSDIV X-RAY  
APA PRESIDENT HAYES,  
AK MERCURY, LSV MONITOR  
Captain Schieke, Herman E.
- (5) TU 79.3.6 LCT Unit  
LCT's 667, 738, 739, 740, 772,  
781, 819, 820, 861, 863, 864,  
990  
Lieutenant Wassell, Meyer, USNR
- (6) TU 79.11.1 Transport Group  
ABLE Screen\*  
DESRON 48  
DESDIV 95 less STEMBEL,  
WALKER, ABBOTT  
DD's ERBEN (F), HALE  
Captain Marshall, William J.  
Captain Marshall, William J.  
Captain Marshall, William J.
- (7) BLUE-ORANGE Beach Unit\*\*  
LST's 24, 471, 472 (F), 606  
Lieutenant Talley, William O.
- (b) Tractor Group ABLE  
Captain Webb, Richard C., Jr.
- (1) TG 79.5 LST Unit  
Captain Webb, Richard C., Jr.
- (a) TU 79.5.1  
LST's 608, 609, 611  
612 (FF), 693, 738,  
739 (F), 909  
Commander Shivley, Joshua C.
- (b) TU 79.5.2  
LST's 126, 169, 205, 223,  
242, 565 (F), 605, 670,  
686, 733  
Commander Parsons, Edwin C., USNR
- (c) TU 79.5.3\*\*\*  
LST's 34, 123, 125, 207,  
213, 219, 451 (F), 461,  
478, 482, 488, 617, 1006  
Lieutenant Commander Harlan,  
James L.
- (2) TG 79.7 Control Unit\*\*\*\*  
DD STEMBEL (F)  
PC's 462, 464, 470, 563  
PCS's 1391, 1418, 1429  
SC's 631, 632, 1004  
6 LCC's  
Commander Busck, Vilhelm K.

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\* Combined Inner Screen under CTU 79.11.2 after 1630 October 21st.  
\*\* Unloaded at Yellow Beach TWO. Awaiting formation and departure of TG 78.11.  
\*\*\* Action Report CTU 79.5.3, Leyte Island, P.I., Serial 284, January 1st, 1945.  
\*\*\*\* Action Report CTG 79.3 (COMTRANSDIV 14), Amphibious Invasion Leyte, Philip-  
pine Islands, 20-23 October 1944, Serial 0169, November 8th, 1944.

- (3) TU 79.7.1 Gunboat Support Unit Commander Montgomery, Alan R.
- (a) TU 79.7.2 Rocket Unit\* Commander Montgomery, Alan R.  
 LCI(G)'s 365, 366, 407, 422,  
 439, 440, 442, 475, 558 (F),  
 559, 560, 561, 565 (FF), 567,  
 568, 580, 751, 752
- (b) TU 79.7.3 Mortar Unit\*\* Lieutenant Commander Robison, Carl  
 LCI(M)'s 1056 (F), 1057, F., USNR  
 1058, 1059, LCI(A)'s  
 975, 1055
- (c) TU 79.7.4 Salvage and Fire Lieutenant Commander Starkus,  
 Fighting Unit Charles J., Ret.  
 LCI(L) 564 (F), 676
- (2) TG 79.2 Attack Group BAKER\*\*\* Rear Admiral Royal, Forrest B.
- Group Flagship  
 AGC ROCKY MOUNT (FFF) Captain Patten, Stanley F.
- (a) TG 79.4 Transport Group BAKER Captain Morrison, George D.
- (1) TU 79.4.1 TRANSDIV 10 Captain Morrison, George D.  
 (Temporary)  
 APA's CLAY (F), ARTHUR MIDDLETON,  
 BAXTER, WILLIAM P. BIDDLE, AP  
 GEORGE F. ELLIOTT, AKA's AURIGA,\*\*\*\*  
 CAPRICORNUS, LSD RUSHMORE\*\*\*\*
- (2) TG 79.11 Commander Screen\*\*\*\*\* Captain Coward, Jesse G.  
 DESRON 54 Captain Coward, Jesse G.  
 DESDIV 107 (less WADLEIGH, Captain Coward, Jesse G.  
 NORMAN SCOTT)  
 REMEY (FF), MERTZ, MONSSEN

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- \* Action Report LCI(G) 565, Assault on Leyte, no serial, October 25th, 1944.
- \*\* Action Report CTU 79.7.3, Invasion of Philippines, Island of Leyte, Serial 051, October 23rd, 1944.
- \*\*\* Action Report CTG 79.2 (COMPHIBGRU 6), Leyte Operation, Report of, Serial 0032, November 4th, 1944.
- \*\*\*\* Remaining from TU 79.4.2 and TU 79.4.3.
- \*\*\*\*\* Although CTG 79.11 (COMDESRON 54) was nominally in command of the screen composed of DESRONS 48, 49 and 54, he, from his station in the outer screen, was too far away to effectively control the intermediate and inner screens. CTU 79.11.2 (COMDESRON 49), therefore, took control of the inner and intermediate screens and due to the requirements for gunfire support from the destroyers forming the two screens combined the two squadrons into one inner screen on October 20th, 1944. Action Report CTU 79.11.2 (COMDESRON 49), Assault on Leyte Island, Philippines, Serial 0121, October 30th, 1944; also Action Report COMDESRON 48 (CTU 79.11.1), Leyte Gulf, Philippine Islands, October 20th - 24th, 1944, Serial 080, October 30th, 1944.



DESDIV 108 MC DERMUT (F), MC GOWAN, MC NAIR, MELVIN	Commander Phillips, Richard H.
DESRON 49 DESDIV 97 less WILLIAM D. PORTER, YOUNG	Captain McLean, Ephraim R., Jr.
PICKING (F), SPROSTON, WICKES	Captain McLean, Ephraim R., Jr.
DESDIV 98 less KIMBERLY, LUCE	Captain Cooper, William G.
ISHERWOOD (F), CHARLES J. BADGER	
DESDIV 101 less HALL, PAUL HAMILTON, plus MacDONOUGH	Captain Martin, Hugh J.
HALLIGAN (F), HARADIN, TWIGGS, MacDONOUGH	
(b) TG 79.6 LST-LCI Transport Group BAKER*	Captain Rimer, Theodore W.
(1) TU 79.6.1 LST-LSM Transport Unit	Commander Ageton, Arthur A.
Unit Flagship DD LUCE (FF)	Commander Owens, Hinton A.
(a) TU 79.6.11 Assault Unit BLUE**	Lieutenant Commander Reith, George, USNR
LST's 20, 483, 486, 568, 671, 745, 918, 999, 1013, 1024	
(b) TU 79.6.12 Assault Unit ORANGE	Lieutenant Commander Drexler, Louis A., Jr.
LST's 117, 118, 277, 564, 567, 669, 672, 698, 916, 917 (F)	
(c) TU 79.6.13 Reserve Unit ONE***	Lieutenant Barber, Oliver W.
LST's 269, 270 (F), 615, 704 LSM's 134, 135	

\* Action Report COMLSTFLOT 3 (CTU 79.6.1), Assault and Occupation of Leyte, Philippine Islands, Serial 0210-44, November 7th, 1944.

\*\* Action Report CTU 79.6.11, October 20th - 24th, 1944, Serial 038-44, October 31st, 1944.

\*\*\* Action Report CTG 79.2 (COMPHIBGRU 6), Leyte Occupation, Serial 0032, November 4th, 1944.

- (d) TU 79.6.14 Reserve Unit  
TWO\*  
LSM's 24 (F), 29, 136,  
233  
Lieutenant Commander Blanche,  
John G., Jr.
- (e) TU 79.6.15 LCT Unit\*\*  
LCT's 688, 747, 821,  
822, 830, 898, 992,  
1016, 1296, 1298  
Lieutenant Franklin, Gordon P., USNR
- (2) TU 79.6.2 LCI Unit  
Captain Rimer, Theodore W.
- (a) TU 79.6.21 Mortar Unit\*\*\*  
LCI(M)'s 658, 659,  
660 (F), 754  
LCI(A)'s 775, 994  
Lieutenant Commander Hannett,  
George W., USNR
- (b) TU 79.6.22 Rocket Gunboat  
Unit\*\*  
LCI(G)'s 366, 372, 373,  
439, 440, 451, 461, 462,  
464, 465, 467, 472, 475  
Lieutenant Giliberty, Frank R., USNR
- (c) TU 79.6.23 LCI Salvage  
Unit\*\*  
LCI(L)'s (S&FF) 738 (F),  
598  
Captain Rimer, Theodore W.
- (3) TU 79.11.3 Landing Craft Screen  
\*\*\*\*  
PCE(R)'s 851, 852, 853
- (c) TG 79.19 Salvage Group less  
GRAPPLE\*\*\*\*\*  
ARS PRESERVER, ARL EGERIA,  
ATF's POTAWATOMI, CHOWANOC,  
CHICKASAW, MENOMINEE  
Commander Foss, Henry O., USNR

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- \* Action Report CTU 79.6.14 (COMLSMGRP 8), Seizure of Leyte, Serial 05,  
October 30th, 1944.
- \*\* Action Report CTG 79.2 (COMPHIBGRU 6), Leyte Operation, Serial 0032,  
November 4th, 1944.
- \*\*\* Action Report CTU 70.6.21 (COMLCI(L)GRP 17), Serial 114, November 4th, 1944.
- \*\*\*\* Units remaining October 23rd. CTU 79.11.3 (COMDESRON 54) assumed CTG 79.11  
October 20th.
- \*\*\*\*\* PRESERVER reported from TU 79.12.1 October 18th; CHOWANOC from TU 79.11.1,  
POTAWATOMI, MENOMINEE from TG 79.6 and CHICKASAW from TG 77.5 on October  
17th; EGERIA from TG 79.11.3 October 20th.



COMMANDER ALLIED NAVAL FORCES SOWESPAC

Vice Admiral Kinkaid, Thomas C.

(a) TG 70.1 Motor Torpedo Boats

Commander Bowling, Selman S.

(1) TU 70.1.3 Leyte Group

Lieutenant Commander Leeson,  
Robert, USNR

(a) MTB RON 7

MTB's 127, 128, 129, 130,  
131, 132, 134, 137, 138

Lieutenant Commander Leeson,  
Robert, USNR

(b) MTB RON 12

MTB's 146, 150, 151, 152, 190,  
191, 192, 194, 195, 196

Lieutenant Pullen, Weston C., Jr.,  
USNR

(c) MTB RON 21

MTB's 320, 321, 323, 324, 325,  
326, 327, 328, 329, 330, 331

Lieutenant Gleason, Carl T.

(d) MTB RON 33

MTB's 488, 489, 490, 491, 492,  
493, 494, 495, 496, 497

Lieutenant Preston, Arthur M.,  
USNR

(e) MTB RON 36

MTB's 522, 523, 524, 525, 526,  
U.S. Army QS 13, 1 Crash Boat

Lieutenant Commander Tappaan,  
Francis D., USNR

(2) TU 70.1.6 Advance Tender Unit  
AGP's WACHAPREAGUE, WILLOUGHBY,  
OYSTER BAY

Lieutenant Commander Holroyd,  
Walter W., USNR

(b) TF 71 Submarines, West Australia

Rear Admiral Christie, Ralph W.

(1) TG 71.1 U.S. Patrol Group

Rear Admiral Christie, Ralph W.

(a) On Patrol

ANGLER, COD, DARTER, BERGALL,  
DACE, PADDLE, ROCK, GURNARD

(b) En route Patrol

BATFISH, BREAM, GUITARRO,  
MUSKALLUNGE, CROWLER, HAKE,  
HARDHEAD, GUNNEL, BLACKFIN

(c) En route Base

RATON, BLUEGILL, HAMMERHEAD,  
LAPON, COBIA

(2) TG 71.7 British and Netherlands  
Patrol Group

Rear Admiral Christie, Ralph W.

(a) On Patrol

TANTIVY, STOIC, SIRDAR, STORM

- (b) En route Patrol  
TANTALUS
- (c) En route Base  
SPITEFUL, TELEMACHUS, ZWAARDVISCH
- (c) TF 72 Submarines, East Australia                      Captain Haines, John M.
- (1) TG 72.1 Special Mission Group                      Captain Haines, John M.  
NAUTILUS, NARWHAL, CERO
- (d) TF 73 Naval Air Forces                                      Rear Admiral Wagner, Frank D.
- (1) TG 73.1 Flag Group    Captain Evans, William A.  
CURRITUCK (FF)  
1 AVR
- (2) TG 73.2 Strike and Rescue Group\*                      Captain Oliver, Richard M.
- (a) TU 73.2.1 Rescue Unit                                      Commander Fleming, Morton K., Jr.  
ORCA  
VPB 11 (8 PBY)  
1 AVR
- (b) TU 73.2.2 Strike Unit                                      Captain Oliver, Richard M.  
TANGIER  
VPB 29 (8 PBY)  
2 AVR's
- (3) TG 73.3 Manus Group\*\*                                      Captain Lambrecht, John O.  
HEDRON 10  
Patrol Planes Present Manus  
Carrier Replacement Pool  
Patrol Plane Replacement Squadrons
- (4) TG 73.4 Search and Support Group                      Captain Jones, Carroll B.  
Patrol Planes Present Woendi
- (a) TU 73.4.1\*\*\*    Lieutenant Norcott, John M., USNR  
HERON  
VPB 52 Detachment (4 PBY)
- (b) TU 73.4.2\*\*\*\*    Lieutenant Commander Robinson,  
VPB 146 (15 PV)    Jesse P., Jr.
- (c) TU 73.4.3\*\*\*\*    Commander Compton, James R.  
VPB 101 (12 PB4Y)

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\* Based at Morotai.

\*\* 15 VSB (VS 61) employed for offshore patrol not included.

\*\*\* Based at Hollandia.

\*\*\*\* Operating from Morotai.



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| (d) TU 73.4.4*<br>VPB 115 (12 PB4Y)  | Commander Compton, James R.  |
| (5) TG 73.7 Advanced Group   | Commander Renard, Jack   |
| (a) TU 73.7.1<br>HALF MOON<br>SAN CARLOS<br>VPB 33 (15 PBY)**<br><br>VPB 34 (12 PBY)**<br><br>1 AVR  | Commander Bandy, Jack I.<br>Commander Bandy, Jack I.<br>Lieutenant Commander Mills, DeLong<br>Lieutenant Commander Anderson,<br>Fernald P.<br>Lieutenant Commander Utgoff, Vadym<br>V. |
| (b) TU 73.7.2***<br>VPB 130 (15 PV)  | Lieutenant Commander Dodds, Charles<br>R.  |
| (6) TG 70.2 Anti-Submarine Group*****  | Rear Admiral Wagner, Frank D.  |
| (a) TU 70.2.1 Hunter-Killer Unit<br>SAN PABLO<br>VP 11 Detachment (4 PBY)<br>CORTDIV 33 less MACHIAS<br>ALLENTOWN (F)<br>CHARLOTTESVILLE<br>SANDUSKY | Commander Pickering, Samuel M.<br><br><br><br><br>Commander Ryssy, John W., USCG   |

ALLIED AIR FORCES SOWESPAC\*\*\*\*\*

- |                         |  |
|-------------------------|--|
| (a) Far East Air Forces | Lieutenant General Kenney, George<br>C., (AC) USA<br>Lieutenant General Kenney, George<br>C., (AC) USA |
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\* Operating from Morotai.  
 \*\* Commenced movement to Leyte October 23rd.  
 \*\*\* Operating from Manus.  
 \*\*\*\* Operating from Morotai throughout October 1944.  
 \*\*\*\*\* Data regarding the organization, disposition and strength of Allied Air Forces, SOWESPAC was obtained from the following sources and estimated as of October 23rd.

- (1) Air Evaluation Board, Leyte Campaign, June 1945.
- (2) Allied Air Forces SOWESPAC Operations Report No. 23, October 14th - 25th, 1944.
- (3) Letter from Director, Historical Division, USAF Air University Library to President, Naval War College, February 25th, 1953.
- (4) Letter from Research Studies Institute, USAF Air University to President, Naval War College, November 3rd, 1952.
- (5) THIRTEENTH USAAF Letter of Instructions No. 2, October 6th, 1944.
- (6) Allied Air Forces, SOWESPAC Operations Instruction No. 71, September 24th, 1944.
- (7) War Diary Commander Aircraft Northern Solomons (CTG 70.9), October 17th, 1944.

- (1) FIFTH Air Force (Assault Force) Lieutenant General Whitehead,  
Ennis C., (AC), USA  
Brigadier General Wurtsmith, Paul  
E., (AC) USA
- (a) FIFTH Fighter Command  
8th Fighter Group (52 P38)  
35th Fighter Group (65 P-47)  
49th Fighter Group (69 P-38)  
58th Fighter Group (73 P-47)  
348th Fighter Group (104 P-47)  
475th Fighter Group (68 P-38)  
418th Night Fighter Squadron (11 P-61)  
421st Night Fighter Squadron (12 P-61)  
547th Night Fighter Squadron (12 P-61)
- (b) FIFTH Bomber Command Brigadier General Crabb, Jarred V.,  
(AC) USA  
3rd, 312th, 417th Light Bomb  
Groups (210 A-20)  
38th, 345th Medium Bomb Groups (113 B-25)  
22nd, 43rd, 90th, 380th Heavy Bomb Groups (164 B-24)
- (c) FIFTY-FOURTH Troop Carrier Wing Brigadier General Carter, Warren  
R., (AC) USA  
317th, 374th, 375th, 433rd  
Troop Carrier Groups (271 C-47)
- (d) NINETY-FIRST Photographic Colonel Sams, William C., (AC), USA  
Reconnaissance Wing  
6th Photographic Group (61 F-5, F-7)  
71st Reconnaissance Group (16 B-25, 43 P-40, 12 L-5)
- (2) THIRTEENTH Air Force (Supporting Force) Major General Streett, St. Clair,  
(AC) USA
- (a) THIRTEENTH Fighter Command Brigadier General Barnes, Earle W.,  
(AC) USA  
18th, 347th Fighter Groups  
(121 P-38)  
419th Night Fighter Squadron  
(11 P-51)
- (b) THIRTEENTH Bomber Command Brigadier General Matheny, William  
A., (AC) USA  
42nd Medium Bomb Group (83 B-25)  
5th, 307th Heavy Bomb Groups (78 B-24)  
868th Heavy Bomb Squadron (11 LAB-24)
- (c) Troop Carrier Group Colonel Sands, Harry J., Jr., (AC)  
USA  
403rd Troop Carrier Group  
(48 C-47)



CONFIDENTIAL

(b) TG 70.9 Aircraft Northern Solomons

Major General Mitchell, Ralph J.,  
USMC

(1) FIRST Marine Aircraft Wing

Major General Mitchell, Ralph J.,  
USMC

(a) Air Group 12

VMF 115, 211, 218, 313  
(62 F4U, 19 FG)  
VMSB 142, 243 (41 SBD)

Colonel Willis, William A., USMC

(b) Air Group 14

VMF 212, 222, 223 (63 F4U)  
VMSB 244 (21 SBD)  
VMO 251 (21 F4U)

Colonel Hopkins, Zebulon C., USMC

(c) Air Group 24

VMSB 133, 236, 241, 341 (87 SBD)

Colonel Meyer, Lyle H., USMCR

(d) Air Group 61

VMB 413, 423, 433, 443 (46 PBJ)

Colonel Smith, Perry K., USMC

(e) Air Group 25

VMR 152, 153 (32 R4D)

Colonel Koonce, Allen C., USMC

(2) 79th RAAF Fighter Squadron (14 Spitfire)

(3) Royal New Zealand Air Units

3rd Squadron, RNZAF (17 PV)  
17th, 22nd Squadrons, RNZAF (36 F4U)

(4) 17th Photographic Squadron

(5 F5A, 1 RA-24B)

Captain Bartman, Walter M., (AC)  
USA

(5) Attached Naval Squadrons

VPB 148 (9 PV)

VPB 130 (14 PV)

VPB 44 (15 PBY)

VPB 52 (11 PBY)

VS 61 (15 SBD, 1 J2F)

Lieutenant Commander Jakeman, Lloyd  
F.

Lieutenant Commander Dodds, Charles  
R.

Lieutenant Commander Bogard, Gerald  
S.

Lieutenant Commander Isner, Rennix  
Jr., USNR

Lieutenant McGowan, William I.

(c) Royal Australian Air Force Command

378 VF, 96 VB(L), 36 VB(M), 12 VB(H),  
42 VPB(MS)

Air Vice Marshal Bostook, W.D., RAAF

CINCPAC - CINCPA

(a) Western Pacific Task Forces

(1) THIRD Fleet

(a) TF 38 Fast Carrier Force

(1) TG 38.1

(a) TU 38.1.1 Carrier Unit

CARDIV 5 less BATAAN,  
plus HANCOCK, COWPENS  
WASP (FFF)

CVG 14 (49 VF, 22 VB,  
18 VT)

HORNET

CVG 11 (50 VF, 22 VB,  
18 VT)

HANCOCK

CVG 7 (42 VF, 23 VB,  
18 VT)

MONTEREY

CVLG 28 (24 VF, 9 VT)

COWPENS

CVLG 22 (22 VF, 9 VT)

(b) TU 38.1.2 Support Unit

CRUDIV 5  
CHESTER (FF)

PENSACOLA

SALT LAKE CITY

CRUDIV 11 less SAN JUAN,  
FLINT, RENO, TUCSON

SAN DIEGO (F)

OAKLAND

(c) TU 38.1.3 Screen Unit

DESDIV 7 plus CASSIN,  
DOWNES

DUNLAP (F), FANNING, CASE,  
CUMMINGS, CASSIN, DOWNES

DESDIV 23 less LANSLOWNE,  
LARDNER

MC CALLA (F), WOODWORTH,  
FARENHOLT

DESDIV 91 less CHARRETTE,  
BELL, BURNS plus BROWN

GRAYSON

IZARD (FF), CONNER,  
BROWN, GRAYSON

Admiral Nimitz, Chester W.

Admiral Halsey, William F., Jr.

Admiral Halsey, William F., Jr.

Vice Admiral Mitscher, Marc A.

Vice Admiral McCain, John S.

Vice Admiral McCain, John S.  
Captain Weller, Oscar A.

Commander Blicht, John D.  
Captain Doyle, Austin K.  
Lieutenant Commander Smith, Lloyd  
A.  
Captain Dickey, Fred C.

Commander Lamade, John D.  
Captain Ingersoll, Stuart H.  
Lieutenant Commander Mehle, Roger  
W.  
Captain Taylor, Herbert W., Jr.  
Lieutenant Commander Jenkins,  
Thomas H., USNR

Rear Admiral Smith, Allan E.  
Rear Admiral Smith, Allan E.  
Captain Hartley, Henry  
Captain Mullinnix, Allen P.  
Captain Busbey, Leroy W., Jr.

Captain Mullan, William E.A.  
Captain Mullan, William E.A.  
Captain Reed, Kendall S.

Captain Espe, Carl F.

Captain Smith, Harold P.

Captain Burford, William P.

Captain Espe, Carl F.



(2) TG 38.2

(a) TU 38.2.1 Carrier Unit  
 CARDIV 4 less BUNKER HILL  
 INTREPID (FFF)  
 CVG 18 (48 VF, 23 VB,  
 19 VT)  
 CABOT  
 CVLG 29 (22 VF,  
 9 VT)  
 INDEPENDENCE  
 CVLGN 41 (15 VF(N),  
 7 VT(N))

Rear Admiral Bogan, Gerald F.

Rear Admiral Bogan, Gerald F.  
 Rear Admiral Bogan, Gerald F.  
 Captain Bolger, Joseph F.

Commander Coleman, Wilson M.  
 Captain Michael, Stanley J.  
 Lieutenant Commander Eder,  
 Willard E.  
 Captain Ewen, Edward C.

Commander Caldwell, Turner F., Jr.

(b) TU 38.2.2 Support Unit  
 BATDIV 7  
 IOWA (FF)  
 NEW JERSEY (FFFFF)\*  
 CRUDIV 14 less VICKSBURG,  
 HOUSTON, plus BILOXI  
 VINCENNES (F)  
 MIAMI  
 BILOXI

Rear Admiral Badger, Oscar C.  
 Rear Admiral Badger, Oscar C.  
 Captain McCann, Allan R.  
 Captain Holden, Carl F.

Rear Admiral Whiting, Francis E. M.  
 Captain Brown, Allen D.  
 Captain Crawford, John G.  
 Captain McGurl, Daniel M.

(c) TU 38.2.3 Screen Unit  
 DESRON 52  
 DESDIV 103 less STEPHEN  
 POTTER  
 THE SULLIVANS, MILLER,  
 TINGEY (FF), OWEN  
 DESDIV 104  
 HICKOX (F), HUNT,  
 LEWIS HANCOCK, MARSHALL  
 DESRON 53  
 DESDIV 105 less BENHAM  
 HALSEY POWELL (F),  
 CUSHING, COLAHAN,  
 UHLMANN  
 DESDIV 106  
 YARNALL (F), TWINING,  
 STOCKHAM, WEDDERBURN

Captain Womble, John P., Jr.  
 Captain Womble, John P., Jr.

Captain Womble, John P., Jr.

Captain Kenny, William T.

Captain Jarrett, Harry B.  
 Captain Jarrett, Harry B.

Captain Tompkins, Benjamin F.

\* Admiral William F. Halsey, Jr., (COM3RDFLT) embarked.

## (3) TG 38.3

- |                             |                                     |
|-----------------------------|-------------------------------------|
|                             | Rear Admiral Sherman, Frederick C.  |
| (a) TU 38.3.1 Carrier Unit  | Rear Admiral Sherman, Frederick C.  |
| CARDIV 1 less ENTERPRISE,   |                                     |
| COWPENS, plus LEXINGTON,    |                                     |
| PRINCETON, LANGLEY          | Rear Admiral Sherman, Frederick C.  |
| ESSEX (FFF)                 | Captain Weiber, Carlos W.           |
| CVG 15 (54 VF, 25 VB,       |                                     |
| 18 VT)                      | Commander McCampbell, David         |
| LEXINGTON (FFFF)*           | Captain Litch, Ernest W.            |
| CVG 19 (36 VF, 30 VB,       |                                     |
| 18 VT)                      | Commander Winters, Theodore H., Jr. |
| PRINCETON                   | Captain Buracker, William H.        |
| CVLG 27 (23 VF, 9 VT)       | Lieutenant Commander Bardshar,      |
|                             | Frederic A.                         |
| LANGLEY                     | Captain Wegforth, John F.           |
| CVLG 44 (23 VF, 9 VT)       | Commander Wordell, Malcolm T.       |
|                             |                                     |
| (b) TU 38.3.2 Heavy Support |                                     |
| Unit                        | Rear Admiral Hanson, Edward W.      |
| BATDIV 8 less INDIANA       | Rear Admiral Davis, Glenn B.        |
| MASSACHUSETTS (F)           | Captain Warlick, William W.         |
| BATDIV 9 less ALABAMA       | Rear Admiral Hanson, Edward W.      |
| SOUTH DAKOTA (FF)           | Captain Riggs, Ralph S.             |
|                             |                                     |
| (c) TU 38.3.3 Light Support |                                     |
| Unit                        | Rear Admiral DuBose, Laurence T.    |
| CRUDIV 13 less BILOXI       | Rear Admiral DuBose, Laurence T.    |
| SANTE FE (FF)               | Captain Wright, Jerauld             |
| BIRMINGHAM                  | Captain Inglis, Thomas B.           |
| MOBILE                      | Captain Miller, Christopher C.      |
| RENO                        | Captain Alexander, Ralph C.         |
|                             |                                     |
| (d) TU 38.3.4 Screen Unit   |                                     |
| DESDIV 99                   | Captain Wilkinson, Edwin R.         |
| CLARENCE K. BRONSON (FF),   | Captain Wilkinson, Edwin R.         |
| COTTEN, DORTCH, GATLING,    |                                     |
| HEALY                       |                                     |
| DESRON 55                   | Captain Jarrell, Albert E.          |
| DESDIV 109                  | Captain Jarrell, Albert E.          |
| PORTERFIELD (FF),           |                                     |
| CALLAGHAN, CASSIN YOUNG,    |                                     |
| IRWIN, PRESTON              |                                     |
| DESDIV 110 less             |                                     |
| PRITCHETT                   | Commander Edsall, Warren R.         |
| LAWS (F), LONGSHAW,         |                                     |
| MORRISON                    |                                     |

\* Vice Admiral Marc A. Mitscher (CTF 38) embarked.



(4) TG 38.4*	Rear Admiral Davison, Ralph E.
(a) TU 38.4.1 Carrier Unit	Rear Admiral Davison, Ralph E.
CARDIV 2 less HANCOCK	Rear Admiral Davison, Ralph E.
FRANKLIN (FFF)	Captain Shoemaker, James M.
CVG 13 (34 VF, 27 VB,	
18 VT)	Commander Kibbe, Richard L.
SAN JACINTO	Captain Martin, Harold M.
CVLG 51 (22 VF, 9 VT)	Commander Moore, Charles L., Jr.
(1) TU 38.4.11	Rear Admiral Sallada, Harold B.
ENTERPRISE (F)	Captain Glover, Cato D.
CVG 20 (30 VF, 17	
VB, 18 VT)	Commander Smith, Daniel F., Jr.
BELLEAU WOOD	Captain Perry, John
CVLG 21 ( 23 VF,	
9 VT)	Commander Casey, Vincent F.
(b) TU 38.4.2 Light Support	
Unit	Rear Admiral Joy, Charles T.
CRUDIV 6 less MINNEAPOLIS,	
SAN FRANCISCO	Rear Admiral Joy, Charles T.
WICHITA (F)	Captain Spencer, Douglas A.
NEW ORLEANS	Captain Hurff, Jack E.
(c) TU 38.4.3 Screen Unit	
DESRON 6	Captain Long, Victor D.
DESDIV 11 less CRAVEN	Captain Long, Victor D.
MAURY (FF), GRIDLEY,	Captain Long, Victor D.
HELM, MC CALL	
DESDIV 12	Captain Poehlmann, Karl F.
MUGFORD (F), RALPH TALBOT,	
PATTERSON, BAGLEY	
DESDIV 24 less GRAYSON	Captain Greenacre, Alvord J.
WILKES, NICHOLSON,	
SWANSON (F)	
DESDIV 100	Captain Miller, Wallace J.
COGSWELL (F), CAPERTON,	
INGERSOLL, KNAPP	
(d) TU 38.4.4 Heavy Support	
Unit	Vice Admiral Lee, Willis A.
	(COMBATPAC)
BATDIV 6 less NORTH	
CAROLINA, plus ALABAMA	Vice Admiral Lee, Willis A.
	(COMBATPAC)
WASHINGTON (FFFF)	Captain Cooley, Thomas R.
ALABAMA	Captain Murphy, Vincent R.

\* Action Report CTU 38.4.2 (COMCRUDIV 6), Operations with TG 38.4 for the periods October 21st - 31st, 1944, Serial 0065, November 6th, 1944.

- (5) TF 34 Heavy Surface Striking Force\*
- (a) TG 34.1 Battle Line
- (1) TU 34.1.1  
BATDIV 7  
IOWA (F)  
NEW JERSEY (FFFF)\*\*
- (2) TU 34.1.2  
BATDIV 8  
MASSACHUSETTS (F)  
WASHINGTON (FFFF)\*\*\*
- (3) TU 34.1.3  
BATDIV 9  
SOUTH DAKOTA (F)  
ALABAMA
- (b) TG 34.2 Right Flank
- (1) TU 34.2.1
- (2) TU 34.2.2  
CRUDIV 14 less  
VICKSBURG, HOUSTON,  
plus BILOXI  
VINCENNES (FF)  
MIAMI  
BILOXI
- (3) TU 34.2.3  
DESDIV 99  
CLARENCE L. BRONSON (F),  
COTTEN, DORTCH, GATLING,  
HEALY
- (4) TU 34.2.4  
DESDIV 104 less  
MARSHALL  
HICKOX (F), HUNT,  
LEWIS HANCOCK

Vice Admiral Lee, Willis A., Jr.

Vice Admiral Lee, Willis A., Jr.

Rear Admiral Badger, Oscar C.  
Rear Admiral Badger, Oscar C.  
Captain McCann, Allan R.  
Captain Holden, Carl F.Rear Admiral Davis, Glenn B.  
Rear Admiral Davis, Glenn B.  
Captain Warlick, William W.  
Captain Cooley, Thomas R.Rear Admiral Hanson, Edward W.  
Rear Admiral Hanson, Edward W.  
Captain Riggs, Ralph S.  
Captain Murphy, Vincent R.

Rear Admiral Whiting, Francis E. M.

Rear Admiral Whiting, Francis E. M.

Rear Admiral Whiting, Francis E. M.  
Captain Brown, Allen D.  
Captain Crawford, John G.  
Captain McGurl, Daniel M.Captain Wilkinson, Edwin R.  
Captain Wilkinson, Edwin R.

Captain Kenny, William T.

Captain Kenny, William T.

\* Since TF 34 and TG 34.5 were made effective October 25th, the tentative task organization for these groups as issued by Commander Battleships Pacific Fleet in COMBATPAC Operation Order No. 13-44, Addendum No. 1, Serial 00080, October 16th, 1944, is included herewith. The actual organization made effective October 25th differed somewhat from the above organization.

\*\* Admiral William F. Halsey, Jr., (COM3RDFLT) embarked.

\*\*\* Vice Admiral Willis A. Lee (COMBATPAC & CTF 34) embarked.



- (c) TG 34.3 Center
- (d) TG 34.4 Left Flank Rear Admiral Smith, Allan E.
- (1) TU 34.4.1 Rear Admiral Smith, Allan E.  
 CRUDIV 5 Rear Admiral Smith, Allan E.  
 CHESTER (FF) Captain Hartley, Henry  
 PENSACOLA Captain Mullinix, Allen P.  
 SALT LAKE CITY Captain Busbey, Leroy W., Jr.
- (2) TU 34.4.2
- (3) TU 34.4.3 Captain Espe, Carl F.  
 DESDIV 91 less CHARRETTE,  
 BURNS, BELL, plus PRESTON  
 UHLMANN Captain Espe, Carl F.  
 IZARD (F), CONNER,  
 PRESTON, UHLMANN
- (e) TG 34.9 Supporting Carrier Group
- (1) TU 34.9.1 Carrier Unit ONE  
 1 CVL  
 PATTERSON, BAGLEY Commander Shea, William H., Jr.
- (2) TU 34.9.2 Carrier Unit TWO  
 1 CVL  
 DESDIV 12 less PATTERSON, BAGLEY  
 MUGFORD (F), Captain Poehlmann, Karl F.  
 RALPH TALBOT
- (6) TG 34.5 Special Group\* Rear Admiral Badger, Oscar C.
- (a) TU 34.1.1 Rear Admiral Badger, Oscar C.  
 BATDIV 7 Rear Admiral Badger, Oscar C.  
 IOWA (FF) Captain McCann, Allan R.  
 NEW JERSEY (FFFFF)\*\* Captain Holden, Carl F.

\* Since TF 34 and TG 34.5 were made effective October 25th, the tentative task organization for these groups as issued by Commander Battleships Pacific Fleet in COMBATPAC Operation Order No. 13-44, Addendum No. 1, Serial 00080, October 16th, 1944, is included herewith. The actual organization made effective October 25th differed somewhat from the above organization.

\*\* Admiral William F. Halsey, Jr., (COM3RDFLT) embarked.

- (b) TU 34.2.2  
 CRUDIV 14 less VICKSBURG,  
 HOUSTON, plus BILOXI  
 VINCENNES (F)  
 MIAMI  
 BILOXI  
 Rear Admiral Whiting, Francis E.M.  
 Rear Admiral Whiting, Francis E.M.  
 Captain Brown, Allen D.  
 Captain Crawford, John G.  
 Captain McGurl, Daniel M.
- (c) TU 34.2.3  
 DESDIV 99  
 CLARENCE K. BRONSON (F),  
 COTTEN, DORTCH, GATLING,  
 HEALY  
 Captain Wilkinson, Edwin R.  
 Captain Wilkinson, Edwin R.
- (d) TU 34.9.2 Carrier Unit TWO  
 1 CVL  
 DESDIV 12 less PATTERSON,  
 BAGLEY  
 MUGFORD (F), RALPH TALBOT  
 Captain Poehlmann, Karl F.
- (b) TG 30.3  
 Rear Admiral Wiltse, Lloyd J.
- (1) TU 30.3.1 Towing Unit  
 BOSTON (FF)  
 HOUSTON (CURRENT-ZUNI towing)\*  
 CANBERRA (ATR 50-WATCH HILL  
 towing)\*  
 DESDIV 92 less BRADFORD, BROWN,  
 plus BURNS, BELL, CHARRETTE  
 BOYD (F), COWELL, BURNS,  
 BELL, CHARRETTE  
 DMS TREVER  
 Rear Admiral Wiltse, Lloyd J.  
 Captain Herrmann, Ernest E.  
 Captain Behrens, William W.  
 Captain Early, Alexander R.  
 Captain Sweetser, Willard M.
- (2) TG 30.7 Hunter-Killer Group  
 CVE HOGGATT BAY (FF)  
 DE's BEBAS (F), SEID,  
 STEELE, SAMUEL S. MILES  
 Captain Saunders, William V.  
 Captain Saunders, William V.
- (c) TG 30.5 Air Search and Reconnaissance  
 Commodore Ketcham, Dixwell
- (1) TU 30.5.1 Seaplane Squadrons  
 and Tenders Kossol Passage  
 CHANDELEUR (F), POCOMOKE,  
 MAKINAC, YAKUTAT  
 VPB 16 (13 PBM)  
 VPB 202 (13 PBM)  
 VPB 216 (14 PBM)  
 VHL Detachment (5 PBM)  
 Captain Goodney, Willard K.  
 Lieutenant Commander Scarpino,  
 William J.  
 Commander Leeman, Robert W.  
 Commander Cook, Harry E., Jr.

\* COMCRUDIV 10 Report of Salvage of USS CANBERRA and USS HOUSTON, Serial 0032, November 30th, 1944.



- (2) TU 30.5.2 Seaplane Squadrons  
and Tenders, Saipan  
KENNETH WHITING (F),  
COOS BAY, SHELIKOF  
VPB 4 (16 PB2Y)  
  
VPB 18 (12 PBM)  
  
VH 1 Detachment (5 PBM)  
  
Commander Lyons, Raymond R.  
  
Lieutenant Commander Curtis,  
Frederick L.  
Lieutenant Commander Brower,  
Charles M., USNR
- (3) TU 30.5.3 Land Plane Search  
Group Tinian  
VPB 102 (15 PB4Y)  
  
VPB 116 (15 PB4Y)  
VPB 117 (15 PB4Y)  
VPB 150 (16 PV)  
VPB 151 (15 PV)  
  
Commander Rigsbee, Everett O., Jr.  
Lieutenant Commander Pearson,  
Gerald R., USNR  
Commander Gumz, Donald G.  
Commander Rigsbee, Everett O., Jr.  
Commander Riddell, Robert S.  
Commander Masterton, Paul
- (4) TU 30.5.4 Seaplane and Tender  
Detachment Ulithi  
HAMLIN (F)  
CASCO  
ONSLOW  
VPB 17 (13 PBM)  
  
Captain McLean, Gordon A.  
  
Lieutenant Commander Kuehner,  
Kenneth A., USNR
- (d) TG 30.8 Fleet Oiler and Transport  
Carrier Group  
7 CVE, 6 DD, 15 DE, 24 AO  
  
Captain Acuff, Jasper T.
- (2) TF 59 Shore-Based Aircraft, Forward  
Area, Central Pacific  
  
Major General Hale, Willis H., (AC)  
USA  
Brigadier General Cushman, Thomas  
J., USMC
- (a) TG 59.1 Marianas Air Defense  
Command
- (1) Army  
318th Fighter Group (82 VF)  
Detachment 6th Night Fighter Squadron (6 VF(N))  
Detachment 28th Photographic Reconnaissance Squadron (4 F5B)
- (2) Marine  
VMF 216, 217, 225, 321 (82 VF)  
VMF(N) 534, (14 VF(N))  
VMTB 131, 242 (40 VTB)  
VMO 1, 2, (20 VO)
- (b) TG 59.2 Bomber Command  
  
Brigadier General Landon, Truman  
H., (AC)USA  
  
Army  
30th, 494th Bomber Groups (109 VBH)

- (c) TG 59.5 Transport Air Group . Colonel McQuade, Thomas J., USMC  
Marine  
 VMR 253 (16 VR)
- (d) TG 59.6 Garrison Force Western Major General Moore, James T., USMC  
 Carolines
- (1) TU 59.6.2 Air Defense Command Colonel Bailey, Caleb T., USMC  
 Palaus
- (a) Army  
 Detachment 28th Photographic Reconnaissance Squadron (3 F5B)
- (b) Marine  
 VMF 114, 122 (42 VF)  
 VMF(N) 541 (13 VF(N))  
 VMTB 134 (24 VTB)
- (b) TF 17 Submarine Force, Pacific Fleet Vice Admiral Lockwood, Charles A.  
 Jr.
- (1) TG 17.1 Empire Patrol Group
- (a) On Patrol, Single Submarines  
 BURRFISH, STERLET, SAURY, SEA DOG,  
 TAMBOR, GREENLING, APOGON, SNOOK,  
 SEA FOX, BILLFISH, SEAL, GABILAN
- (b) On Patrol, Coordinated Attack Groups
- (1) TG 17.11 Commander Blakely, Edward N.  
 SHARK (F), SEADRAGON, BLACKFISH
- (2) TG 17.14 Commander Lee, John E.  
 CROAKER (F), PERCH
- (3) TG 17.15 Commander Banister, Alan B.  
 SAWFISH (F), ICEFISH, DRUM
- (4) TG 17.17 Commander Wogan, Thomas L.  
 BESUGO (F), RONQUIL
- (5) TG 17.19 Commander Coye, John S., Jr.  
 SILVERSIDES (F), TRIGGER,  
 SALMON, TANG
- (c) En route Patrol
- (1) Single Submarines  
 KINGFISH, PILOTFISH, SARGO,  
 POGY, SKIPJACK, SCAMP



(2) Coordinate Attack Group

(a) TG 17.12 Commander Roach, John P.  
HADDOCK (F), HALIBUT, TUNA

(b) TG 17.16 Commander Clarey, Bernard A.  
PINTADO (F), ATULE, JALLAO

(d) En route Base  
ASPRO, SNAPPER, TILEFISH, SEAHORSE,  
SEA DEVIL, WHALE, PARCHE, SAILFISH,  
BONEFISH, BARBEL, SKATE

(2) TG 17.2 Mandate Patrol Group

(a) On Patrol  
PERMIT

CHINA-BURMA-INDIA THEATER\*

General Stilwell, Joseph W., USA

(a) FOURTEENTH Air Force

Major General Chennault, Claire L., (AC) USA

308th Heavy Bomb Group (26 B-24, 20 LAB-24)

341st Medium Bomb Group (23 B-25)

51st Fighter Group (55 P-40, 19 P-51)

23rd Fighter Group (47 P-40, 25 P-51)

(b) TWENTIETH Bomber Command

Major General LeMay, Curtis E., (AC) USA

FIFTY-EIGHTH Bomb Wing\*\*

40th Bomb Group (35 B-29)

Colonel Blanchard, William H., (AC) USA

444th Bomb Group (35 B-29)

Colonel Harvey, Alva L., (AC) USA

462nd Bomb Group (34 B-29)

Colonel Kalberer, Alfred F., (AC) USA

468th Bomb Group (36 B-29)

Colonel Faulkner, Ted S., (AC) USA

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\* Data regarding the organization, disposition and strength of China-based Allied Air Forces supporting the Leyte campaign was obtained from the following sources:

(1) Letters from the Director, Library Division, USAF Air University to President, Naval War College, November 8th, 1950 and February 23rd, 1951.

(2) Letter from the Research Studies Institute, USAF Air University to President, Naval War College, November 3rd, 1952.

(3) TWENTIETH Bomber Command Tactical Missions Reports Nos. 1, 10, 12, October 14th, 16th, 17th, 1944.

\*\* Headquarters discontinued October 12th, 1944.

APPENDIX IIORGANIZATION OF COMBINED FLEET1042 OCTOBER 23RDBATTLE FOR LEYTE GULFCOMMANDER IN CHIEF COMBINED FLEET

Admiral Toyoda, Soemu

## (a) Main Force

Vice Admiral Ozawa, Jisaburo

## CARDIV 3

CV ZUIKAKU (FFF)

CVL ZUIHO

CVL CHITOSE

CVL CHIYODA

Air Group 601, elements of  
653, elements of

Vice Admiral Ozawa, Jisaburo

Rear Admiral Kaizuka, Takeo\*

Captain Sugiura, Kuro

Captain Kishi, Yoshiyuki

Captain Jo, Eiichiro

## CARDIV 4

BB/XCV HYUGA (F)

BB/XCV ISE

XCV JUNYO\*\*

CVL RYUHO\*\*

Air Group 634\*\*\*

Rear Admiral Matsuda, Chiaki

Rear Admiral Nomura, Tomekichi\*

Rear Admiral Nakase, Noboru\*

Captain Shibuya, Harumi

Captain Matsuura, Yoshi

## DESRON 10, elements of

DESDIV 41 less FUYUZUKI

DD SHIMOTSUKI

DESDIV 61 less SUZUTSUKI

DD's HATSUZUKI (F), AKITSUKI,  
WAKATSUKI

Captain Amano, Shigetaka

Captain Wakita, Kiichiro

Captain Amano, Shigetaka

## CORTRON 31, elements of

CL OYODO (FF)

CL ISUZU

DESDIV 43, elements of

MAKI, KIRI, KUWA

Rear Admiral Edo, Heitaro

Captain Mudaguchi, Kakuro

Captain Matsuda, Gengo

## DESRON 11

CL TAMA (F)

DD's SUGI, MOMI,\*\* KAYA,\*\*

KASHI,\*\* HINOKI (F)\*\*

Rear Admiral Takama, Tamotsu

Captain Yamamoto, Iwata

931st Air Group, elements of

\* Promoted to Rear Admiral October 15th, 1944.

\*\* Did not sortie with Main Force.

\*\*\* It seems probable that no elements of Air Group 634 were embarked in CARDIV's 3 or 4 since all of them had been transferred to the 6TH Base Air Force.



Supply Force, Main Force\*  
 XAO JINEI MARU  
 XAO TAKANE MARU  
 DD AKIKAZE  
 Escort Vessels 22, 29, 31, 33, 43, 132

(b) FIRST Striking Force

Vice Admiral Kurita, Takeo

FIRST Section

Vice Admiral Kurita, Takeo

BATDIV 1

BB YAMATO (FFF)\*\*\*  
 BB MUSASHI  
 BB NAGATO

Vice Admiral Ugaki, Matome  
 Rear Admiral Morishita, Nobuei\*\*  
 Rear Admiral Inokuchi, Toshihei\*\*  
 Rear Admiral Kobe, Yuji\*\*

CRUDIV 4

CA ATAGO (FFF)\*\*\*\*  
 CA TAKAO\*\*\*\*\*  
 CA CHOKAI\*\*\*\*\*  
 CA MAYA\*\*\*\*\*

Vice Admiral Kurita, Takeo  
 Rear Admiral Araki, Tsuto\*\*  
 Captain Onoda, Sutejiro  
 Captain Tanaka, Jyo  
 Captain Oe, Ranji

CRUDIV 5 less MOGAMI

CA MYOKO (F)  
 CA HAGURO

Vice Admiral Hashimoto, Shintaro  
 Rear Admiral Ishihara, Itsu\*\*  
 Captain Sugiura, Kajyu

DESRON 2 less SHIGURE, KIYOSHIMO

CL NOSHIRO (F)  
 DD SHIMAKAZE

Rear Admiral Hayakawa, Mikio  
 Captain Kajiwara, Sueyoshi

DESDIV 2 less KYOSHIMO

DD's HAYASHIMO, AKISHIMO

Captain Shiraishi, Nogoyoshi

DESDIV 31

DD's KISHINAMI, NAGANAMI,\*\*\*\*\*  
 OKINAMI, ASASHIMO\*\*\*\*\*

Captain Fukuoka, Tokujiro

DESDIV 32

DD's HAMANAMI, FUJINAMI

Captain Oshima, Ichitaro

SECOND Section

Vice Admiral Suzuki, Yoshio

BATDIV 3

BB KONGO (FF)  
 BB HARUNA

Vice Admiral Suzuki, Yoshio  
 Rear Admiral Shimazaki, Toshio\*\*  
 Rear Admiral Shigenaga, Kazue\*\*

---

\* Did not sortie with Main Force.  
 \*\* Promoted to Rear Admiral October 15th, 1944.  
 \*\*\* Became Force Flagship after sinking of ATAGO.  
 \*\*\*\* Sunk 230653, October 1944.  
 \*\*\*\*\* Damaged and dropped out 230634, October 1944.  
 \*\*\*\*\* Assigned to CRUDIV 5 by 1ST Striking Force Dispatch 230739.  
 \*\*\*\*\* Sunk 230700, October 1944.  
 \*\*\*\*\* Screen for TAKAO, 1ST Striking Force Dispatch 231035, October 1944.

CRUDIV 7	Vice Admiral Shiraishi, Kazutaka
CA KUMANO (F)	Captain Hitomi, Soichiro
CA SUZUYA	Captain Teraoka, Masao
CA TONE	Captain Mayuzumi, Haruo
CA CHIKUMA	Captain Norimitsu, Saiji

DESRON 10 less DESDIV's 4, 41, 61, plus NOWAKI, KIYOSHIMO	Rear Admiral Kimura, Susumu
CL YAHAGI	Captain Yoshimura, Mataka
DD's NOWAKI, KIYOSHIMO	

DESDIV 17	Captain Tanii, Tamotsu
DD's URAKAZE (F), HAMAKAZE, YUKIKAZE, ISOKAZE	

THIRD Section

BATDIV 2	Vice Admiral Nishimura, Shoji
BB YAMASHIRO (FF)	Vice Admiral Nishimura, Shoji
BB FUSO	Rear Admiral Shinoda, Katsukiyo*
	Rear Admiral Ban, Masami*

CA MOGAMI	Captain Toma, Ryo
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DESDIV 4 less NOWAKI, plus SHIGURE	Captain Takahashi, Kameshiro
DD's MICHISHIO (F), ASAGUMO, YAMAGUMO, SHIGURE	

Service Force

FIRST Supply Force

YUHO MARU  
HAKKO MARU  
ITSUKUSHIMA MARU  
MANEI MARU  
NIPPO MARU  
OMUROSAN MARU  
CHIBURI\*\*  
YURISHIMA  
Escort No. 19

SECOND Supply Force

NICHIEI MARU  
RYOEI MARU  
KURAHASHI  
MIYAKE  
MANJU

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\* Promoted to Rear Admiral October 15th, 1944.

\*\* Escort for TAKAO, Commander 1ST Striking Force Dispatch 230905, October 1944.



CONFIDENTIAL

(c) Advanced Expeditionary Force	Vice Admiral Miwa, Shigeyoshi
FIRST Submarine Force	Vice Admiral Miwa, Shigeyoshi
A Submarine Division	
I-26, I-45, I-53, I-54, I-56	
B Submarine Division	
I-38, I-41, I-46, RO-41, RO-43, RO -46	
C Submarine Division	
RO-109, RO-112	
XAS TSUKUSHI MARU	
(d) Southwest Area Force	Vice Admiral Mikawa, Gunichi
(1) SECOND Striking Force	Vice Admiral Shima, Kiyohide
CRUDIV 21	Vice Admiral Shima, Kiyohide
CA NACHI (FFF)	Captain Kanooka, Empei
CA ASHIGARA	Captain Miura, Hayao
DESRON 1	Rear Admiral Kimura, Masatomi
CL ABUKUMA (FF)	Captain Hanada, Takuo
DESDIV 7	Commander Iwagami, Jiichi
DD's AKEBONO (F), USHIO	
DESDIV 18	Captain Inoue, Yoshio
DD's KASUMI, SHIRANUHI (F)	
DESDIV 21	Commander Ishii, Hisashi
DD's WAKABA (F), HATSUSHIMO,	
HATSUHARU	
CRUDIV 16 less KITAGAMI*	Vice Admiral Sakonju, Naomasa
CA AOBA**	Captain Yamazumi, Chusaburo
CL KINU	Captain Kawasaki, Harumi
DD URANAMI	
(2) SIXTH Base Air Force	Vice Admiral Fukudome, Shigeru
(a) Western Attack Force ZERO	Vice Admiral Fukudome, Shigeru
(b) Western Attack Force ONE	Vice Admiral Yamada, Sadayoshi
(c) Western Attack Force TWO	Rear Admiral Kikuchi, Tomozo
(d) Western Attack Force THREE	Rear Admiral Joshima, Takatsugu
(e) Western Attack Force FOUR	Major General Yamamoto, Kenji

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\* Assigned to counterlanding operations.

\*\* Torpedoed 230425 October 1944 and did not sortie with remaining ships.

(3) Philippine Force	Vice Admiral Mikawa, Gunichi
31st Special Base Force (Manila)	Rear Admiral Arima, Kaoru
32nd Special Base Force (Davao)	Rear Admiral Doi, Naoharu
33rd Special Base Force (Cebu)	Rear Admiral Harada, Kaku
954th Air Group	Commander Nakagome, Yoshimasa
955th Air Group	Commander Imagawa, Fukuo
Attached Forces 3rd Southern Expeditionary Fleet	
(4) THIRD Base Air Force	Vice Admiral Mikawa, Gunichi
28th Air Flotilla	Rear Admiral Kogure, Gunji
381st Air Group	Captain Nakajima, Daizo
(5) FIFTH Base Air Force	Vice Admiral Onishi, Takijiro
23rd Air Flotilla (North of Australia Air Base Unit)	Rear Admiral Furukawa, Tamotsu
26th Air Flotilla (Philippine Air Base Unit)*	
61st Air Flotilla (West Caroline Air Base Unit)	Vice Admiral Ueno, Keizo
153rd Air Group	Captain Takahashi, Nobukichi
201st Air Group	Captain Yamamoto, Sakae
761st Air Group	Captain Maeda, Kosei
1021st Air Group	Captain Keito, Keiroku
331st Air Group	Captain Shimoda, Hisao
(e) Anti-Submarine Patrol Force	
CORTRON 31, elements of	
DESDIV 30 less AKIKAZE UZUKI, YUZUKI	
DESDIV 43, elements of MOMO, TAKE, UME	
933rd Air Group	Captain Mita, Kunio
(f) "T" Attack Force	Captain Kuno, Shuzo
752nd Air Group, elements of	
762nd Air Group	
801st Air Group, elements of	
7th Heavy Bomber Regiment (Army)	
98th Heavy Bomber Regiment (Army)	

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\* Commanded temporarily by a Senior Officer after death of Rear Admiral Arima Masafumi, October 15th.



APPENDIX IIIAIR AND SURFACE OPERATIONSAREAS OF RESPONSIBILITY

## (1) Areas of Responsibility for Air Operations. (Plate XLIII)

The areas of responsibility for air operations during the early phases of the Leyte operation stem, for the most part, from the assigned tasks of the various forces concerned rather than from any well-defined geographical boundaries.

In general, areas of air responsibility were as follows:\*

(a) CAAF, SOWESPAC

Exclusive of searches, and until land-based bombers were established on Morotai; the Sulu Archipelago, and the Mindanao area south of Latitude 08° - 45'N.

(b) COMTHIRDFLT

The Philippine Island area, exclusive of Mindanao and the Sulu Archipelago.

(c) CANF, SOWESPAC

The Leyte-Samar area, in coordination with the THIRD Fleet.

Areas of responsibility for air operations, and the coordination arrangements between the various air forces, are discussed in more detail below:

CAAF SOWESPAC\*\*

The area responsibility for CAAF SOWESPAC was two-fold. First, he had a responsibility for long-range search and reconnaissance in accordance with current plans. Secondly, he had an attack and neutralization responsibility.

## (1) Long-Range Search and Reconnaissance.

CAAF SOWESPAC's area of long-range search and reconnaissance, flown by Navy PB4Y's from Owi, under the operational control of C.G. FIFTH

\* CANF SOWESPAC Operation Plan No. 13-44, Serial 00022A, September 26th, 1944, Appendix 6 to Annex C.

\*\* CAAF SOWESPAC Operations Instructions No. 71, September 24th, 1944; CAAF SOWESPAC Operations Instructions (Revised) No. 71/1 October 4th, 1944.

Air Force, was established by Search Plan Easy. This area was extended upon commencing Search Plan Fox (Plate XIV), from Morotai on October 19th. Thus, the extent of his search and reconnaissance responsibility was defined by the limits of these two search plans. In addition, Biak-based XB-24's conducted night searches over the Sulu Sea and Morotai-based PBV's made night searches and attacks along the northeastern shores of Borneo as far north as Sandakan.

(2) Attack and Neutralization.

In regard to neutralization and attack CAAF SOWESPAC was assigned the following tasks: (2) neutralize hostile air forces and destroy enemy shipping in the Mindanao area south of Latitude 08° - 45'N, commencing on D-10; (b) when heavy bombers were established on Morotai extend neutralization to the Visayas, exclusive of Leyte and Samar, and upon departure of the escort carriers (TG 77.4) extend the Visayas area of neutralization to include Leyte and Samar; (c) destroy enemy shipping and neutralize hostile air forces in the Celebes Sea, the Sulu Archipelago and northeastern Borneo areas; (d) initiate strikes against the Brunei area of Borneo at the earliest practicable date; (e) upon the establishment of fighter aircraft on Leyte relieve the carrier-based air forces of responsibility for local protection and close air support of ground forces in the objective area.

COMTHIRDFLT

COMTHIRDFLT's area of responsibility for air and surface operations in support of KING II was as follows:\*

(1) Air Operations.

(a) Search and Reconnaissance:

(1) Conduct long-range daylight searches from Kossol Passage as indicated in Annex A of this Appendix, employing aircraft from TG 30.5. In addition, conduct periodic carrier-based air searches as deemed necessary.

(b) Air Attack:

(1) Conduct maximum offensive strikes, employing land-based aircraft of TF 59, against targets in the Volcano and Bonin Islands, D-12, D-11 and D-10 days to prevent enemy air observation of THIRD Fleet units at Ulithi.

(2) Conduct carrier air strikes against (a) Okinawa on D-10 day, (b) Formosa on D-8, D-7 and D-6 days, and (c) Philippines except Mindanao and the Sulu Archipelago commencing D-4 day.

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\* COMTHIRDFLT Operation Order No. 21-44; COMTHIRDFLT Dispatch 031600 October 1944 to CTF's 38, 57, 59 and CTG's 30.5 and 30.8.









## (2) Surface Operations. (Plate XLIII)

THIRDFLT surface units operating in the Visayas area remain at all times north of Latitude  $11^{\circ} - 00'N$  while west of Longitude  $130^{\circ} - 00'E$ .

COMSEVENTHFLT\*

The escort carriers (TG 77.4) of the SEVENTH Fleet were to provide direct air support to the preliminary landings on Suluan, Dinagat and Homonhon Islands commencing on D-3, and the main landings at Leyte on D-day. In the latter landings, they were to be assisted by the carrier aircraft of the THIRD Fleet, under the coordination control of COMSEVENTHFLT. Subsequent to D-day, THIRD Fleet carrier strikes were to be made as requested and coordinated by COMSEVENTHFLT or COMSOWESPAC.

The notice of withdrawal of THIRD Fleet support to KING II after October 15th, in order to seek an engagement to the north with the Japanese Fleet, prompted COMSEVENTHFLT to modify the scheduled air strikes by COMTHIRDFLT against the Visayas by giving responsibility for these strikes to CTG 77.4 on D-3, D-2 and D-1, not to interfere with close air support of the landings.\*\* Thus, the air responsibility of CTG 77.4 was extended from the Leyte-Samar area to the other islands of the Visayas during this period, and later as required by the tactical situation.

COMSEVENTHFLT exercised, through his Commander Support Aircraft, direct operational control of all aircraft in the objective area (Leyte-Samar area) from the time of the arrival of his escort carriers off Leyte (October 17th) until he was relieved of this function by CAAF SOWESPAC (October 27th) when the FORTY-NINTH Fighter Group was landed at Tacloban airstrip. All air target assignments were made by COMSOWESPAC or COMSEVENTHFLT. Air operations by land and carrier-based aircraft were coordinated by COMSOWESPAC.

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\* CANF SOWESPAC Operation Plan No. 13-44, Serial 00022A, September 26th, 1944, Appendix 6 to Annex G.

\*\* CTF 77 Dispatch 150542 October 1944, to COMSOWESPAC, CINCPAC, etc.

APPENDIX IV  
J A P A N E S E A I R C R A F T\*

U.S. Code

Name

Japanese Designation or Name

Type

NAVY:

Carrier-Type Fighter  
 Carrier-Type Fighter  
 Interceptor Fighter  
 Interceptor Fighter  
 Seaplane Fighter  
 Carrier-Type Attack  
 Carrier-Type Attack  
 Carrier-Type Attack  
 Carrier-Type Bomber  
 Carrier-Type Reconnaissance  
 Carrier-Type Reconnaissance  
 Land Reconnaissance (and night VF)  
 Land Attack  
 Two Engine Land Bomber  
 Two Engine Land Bomber  
 Observation Seaplane  
 Reconnaissance Seaplane  
 Reconnaissance Seaplane  
 Reconnaissance Seaplane  
 Patrol Seaplane  
 Patrol Seaplane (and transport)

Type O carrier-based fighter  
 Reppu  
 Raiden  
 Shiden  
 Kyofu  
 Type 97 carrier-based attack  
 Tenzan  
 Ryusei  
 Type 99 carrier-based bomber  
 Suisei  
 Saiun  
 Gekko  
 Type 1 land attack  
 Ginga  
 Type 96  
 Type O observation seaplane  
 Shiun  
 Zuiun  
 Type O reconnaissance seaplane  
 Type 2 flying boat  
 Type 97 flying boat

Zeke  
 Sam  
 Jack  
 George  
 Rex  
 Kate  
 Jill  
 Grace  
 Val  
 Judy  
 Myrt  
 Irving  
 Betty  
 Frances  
 Nell  
 Pete  
 Norm  
 Paul  
 Jake  
 Emily  
 Mavis

ARMY:

Fighter  
 Fighter  
 Fighter  
 Fighter  
 Heavy Fighter  
 Reconnaissance  
 Land Reconnaissance  
 Light Bomber  
 Heavy Bomber  
 Heavy Bomber  
 Heavy Bomber

Type 1 fighter  
 Type 2 fighter  
 Type 3 fighter  
 Ki 84  
 Type 2 heavy fighter  
 Type 99 Military recco or assault  
 Type 100 Hq. recco  
 Type 99 light bomber  
 Type 97 heavy bomber  
 Type 100 heavy bomber  
 Ki 67

Oscar  
 Tojo  
 Tony  
 Frank  
 Nick  
 Sonia  
 Dinah  
 Lily  
 Sally  
 Helen  
 Peggy\*\*

\* Enclosure to CINCPAC/CINCPAC "Weekly Intelligence", Vol. 1, No. 19, November 17th, 1944.

\*\* CINCPAC/CINCPAC "Weekly Intelligence", Vol. 1, No. 14, October 13th, 1944.



## APPENDIX V

CERTAIN ABBREVIATIONS USED IN THIS WORK

A-20	Fighter-Bomber (Havoc)	CL	Light Cruiser
AE	Ammunition Ship	CLAA	Antiaircraft Cruiser (Light)
AGC	Amphibious Force Flagship	CM	Mine Layer
AGP	Motor Torpedo Boat Tender	CORTDIV	Destroyer Escort Division
AK	Cargo Ship	CORTRON	Destroyer Escort Squadron
AKA	Attack Cargo Vessel	CSA	Commander Support Aircraft
AM	Minesweeper	CV	Aircraft Carrier
AN	Net Layer	CVE	Escort Aircraft Carrier
AO	Oiler	CVEG	Air Group Assigned to an Escort Aircraft Carrier
AO(W)	Distilling Ship	CVG	Air Group Assigned to an Aircraft Carrier
AP	Transport	CVL	Light Aircraft Carrier
APA	Attack Transport	CVLG	Air Group Assigned to a Light Aircraft Carrier
APD	High Speed Transport	CVLGN	Air Group Assigned to a Light Aircraft Carrier
APH	Transport for Wounded Evacuation	D-day	(Specializing in night operations)
ARL	Repair Ship, Landing Craft		The term used to designate the unnamed day on
ARS	Salvage Ship		which an operation commences, or is to commence
ASP	Antisubmarine Patrol		(Allied)
AT	Ocean Going Tug	DesOpOrd	Dispatch Operations Order
ATO	Old Tug	DM	Light Mine Layer
AV	Aircraft Tender	DMS	Fast Minesweeper
AVP	Small Seaplane Tender	ex-IJA	Was Imperial Japanese Army prior to September 1945
AVR	Aircraft Rescue Vessel	ex-IJN	Was Imperial Japanese Navy prior to September 1945
B-24	Heavy Bomber (Liberator)	F4U	Carrier Based Fighter (Corsair)
B-25	Medium Bomber (Mitchell)	F-5	Army Reconnaissance (Photographic) (P-38 Lightning)
B-29	Heavy Bomber (Superfortress)	F-7	Army Reconnaissance (Photographic)
BATDIV	Battleship Division	FEC	Far Eastern Command
BB	Battleship	FG	Fighter (Corsair)
BB/XCV	Hermaphrodite Battleship	FWDAREA	Forward Area
BOGEY	Unidentified Aircraft	GHQ	General Headquarters
C-47	Transport (Skytrain)	HEDRON	Headquarter Squadron
CA	Heavy Cruiser	HMAS	His Majesty's Australian Ship
CAP	Combat Air Patrol	HS	Historical Section
CARDIV	Carrier Division	J2F	Utility Transport
CD	Coast Defense Ship (Escort)	JS	Japanese Study

L-5	Liaison Aircraft (Sentinel)	PG	Gun Boat
LCC	Landing Craft, Control	PV	Patrol Bomber (Ventura)
LCI	Infantry Landing Craft	R4D	Transport (C-47) (Skytrain)
LCI(A)	Infantry Landing Craft (Ammunition)	RDF	Radio Direction Finder
LCI(D)	Infantry Landing Craft (Demolition)	RNZAF	Royal New Zealand Air Force
LCI(G)	Infantry Landing Craft (Gunboat)	SBD	Carrier Based Dive Bomber (Dauntless)
LCI(L)	Infantry Landing Craft (Large)	SC	Submarine Chaser
LCI(M)	Infantry Landing Craft (Mortar)	SigDesOpOrd	Signal Dispatch Operations Order
LCI(R)	Infantry Landing Craft (Rocket)	SigOrd	Signal Order
LCPR	Landing Craft (Personnel)(with ramp)	SOA	Speed of Advance
LCT	Landing Craft (Tank)	So. Ex.	Southern Expeditionary
LSD	Landing Ship (Dock)	SNASP	Antisnooper Patrol
LSM	Landing Ship (Medium)	SS	Submarine
LST	Landing Ship (Tank)	TCAP	Target Air Patrol
LSV	Landing Ship (Vehicle)	UDT	Underwater Demolition Team
MTB	Motor Torpedo Boat	VB	Carrier Bomber Squadron
MTBRON	Motor Torpedo Boat Squadron	VB(H)	Bomber Squadron (Heavy) Land
NA	National Archives	VB(L)	Bomber Squadron (Light) Land
NAVGRP	Naval Group	VB(M)	Bomber Squadron (Medium) Land
OBB	Old Battleship	VB(MS)	Bomber Squadron (Medium Seaplane)
OTC	Officer in Tactical Command	VC	Composite Aircraft Squadron (various missions)
P-38	Fighter (Lightning)	VF	Fighter Squadron (Carrier)
P-40	Fighter (Warhawk)	VMB	Marine Bomber Squadron
P-47	Fighter (Thunderbolt)	VMF	Marine Fighter Squadron (Land or Carrier Based)
P-61	Fighter (Aircobra)	VMO	Marine Observation Squadron
PAC	Pacific	VMR	Marine Transport Squadron
PEM	Patrol Bomber (Mariner)	VMSB	Marine Scout Bomber Squadron
PBY	Patrol Bomber (Catalina)	VMTB	Marine Torpedo Bomber Squadron
PBJ	Patrol Bomber (Mitchell)	VPB	Patrol Bomber Squadron (Land or Sea)
PC	Submarine Chaser	VR	Transport Squadron
PCE(R)	Patrol Vessel Escort (Rescue)	VT	Torpedo Squadron (Carrier)
PCS	Patrol Vessel (Submarine Chaser)	VTB	Torpedo Bomber Squadron
PF	Frigate	WDC	Washington Document Center
		YMS	Motor Minesweeper



APPENDIX VIAllied Communications Arrangements, CINCPAC,  
COMSOWESPAC, COMTHIRDFLT, and COMSEVENTHFLT.(Plates XLIV A and B)

Communications between the various naval forces involved in the Leyte operation derived basically from USF 70A. From this basic publication, CANF SOWESPAC evolved his Communication Plan No. 3-44, which went into effect September 1st, 1944. Communications for Pacific Ocean Area units and commands were based on CENTCOM TWO (Central Pacific Area Communication Plan and Doctrine), published by CINCPAC April 15th, 1944. Both of these communication plans remained in effect for the duration of the Leyte Operation.

Arrangements for joint communications between the various Allied Army, Navy and Air Forces involved were made at Hollandia during the pre-invasion conferences, and were included in Annex FIVE to GHQ SOWESPAC Operations Instructions No. 70, September 21st, 1944; HQ, SIXTH Army Field Order 25, September 23rd, 1944, and other applicable instructions and orders as necessary for joint action.

The communications net in existence at the time of the Leyte operation is indicated by Plates XLIV A and B. This network linked the commanders and forces of POA and SOWESPAC, and also COM-NAVGRPCHINA. The various circuits are described and discussed under the following categories:

(1) POA Communications

- (a) High Command Ship-Shore Circuit (4295 kcs series),  
Circuit #1.

This circuit provided direct and rapid communication between COMTHIRDFLT and CINCPAC. It was guarded by CINCPAC during periods of fleet operations and was used for communications of a highlevel nature between his headquarters and his fleet commanders. It was also used by COMTHIRDFLT as a command channel to communicate with his task force and task group commanders. In addition, this circuit was guarded by CTF 77 and provided that commander with a quick and ready means of keeping himself advised of COMTHIRDFLT's plans and operations. This channel corresponded to the SOWESPAC Task Force Commanders Circuit.

- (b) NPM "PETER" Fox (Submarine Fox Broadcast), 4515 kcs,  
Circuit #2.

All submarines, submarine commanders and bases under the operations control of CTF 17 (COMSUBPAC) intercepted this circuit, which served as a command channel for CTF 17.

(c) NPM "HOW" Fox (Honolulu), 4115 kcs series, Circuit #3.

The "HOW" Fox was broadcast from Radio Honolulu (NPM) and was intercepted by all ships (except those submarines intercepting the Submarine Fox) and all flag officers of the THIRD Fleet. CTF 77 also kept a listening watch on this channel. It was a scheduled primary broadcast for transmitting information of a general nature to all ships, or of particular concern to an individual ship.

(2) SOWESPAC Communications

(a) Task Force Commanders Circuit (4135 kcs series), Circuit #4.

The SOWESPAC Task Force Commanders Circuit was similar to the POA High Command Circuit, in that it performed in SOWESPAC the same function that the High Command Circuit did in POA. It was guarded by SEVENTH Fleet task force commanders, and all task group commanders of TF 77. In addition, it was guarded by Radios Biak, Manus and Hollandia (the control station). C.G. FIFTH Air Force also guarded this circuit. It was used for operational traffic only; the doctrine called for traffic from ships at sea to be handled before that from tenders and shore stations.

(b) "BAKERS" Fox (TF 71 Submarines), 4370 kcs, Circuit #5.

The "BAKERS" Fox (Perth) was the primary circuit by which CTF 71 exercised operational control over his submarines. It was also used as a secondary broadcast for specially designated units of the SEVENTH Fleet operating off the west coast of Australia, in lieu of the "BELLS" Broadcast.

(c) "BELLS" Fox (Belconnen), Circuit #6.

The "BELLS" Fox was the primary SEVENTH Fleet broadcast for operational traffic. It was intercepted by all ships SOWESPAC, and by Radios Hollandia and Manus. Radio Hollandia was the guard station for Biak (C.G. FIFTH Air Force) and addressed traffic to that base. This broadcast was also intercepted by all task force, base and independent unit commanders of THIRD Fleet forces operating in support of COMSOWESPAC operations.

(d) MANUS Fox, Circuit #7.

The MANUS Fox was the secondary SEVENTH Fleet broadcast. It was used for passing operational and administrative traffic to task force commanders, naval bases and other specifically designated units. All general messages, including basegrams, were broadcast on this circuit. They were intercepted by all task force commanders and by the radio stations at Hollandia and Biak (guard station for









CIRCUIT NUMBER	CIRCUIT CHART POA-SOWESPAC COMMUNICATIONS BATTLE FOR LEYTE GULF OCTOBER 1944	COSWESPAC	CTF 77	ALL TFC's 7th FLEET	ALL TGC's OF TF 77	TF 71 SUBMARINES	CANF SOWESPAC	CANF SOWESPAC	CG, 5th AIR FORCE	CINCPAC	COMTHIRDFLT	ALL TFC's 3rd FLEET	ALL TGC's 3rd FLEET	TF 17 SUBMARINES	COMNAVGRPCCHINA	HONOLULU (VHC)	MANUS (NPM)	HOLLANDIA (NAP)	SAIPAN	GUAM	MOROTAI	PELELIU	DARWIN
1	HIGH COMMAND CIRCUIT (3rd FLT)	G																					
2	"PETER" FOX (TF 17)																						
3	"HOW" FOX (3rd FLT PRIMARY)																						
4	TASK FORCE COMDRS CIR. (7th FLT)																						
5	"BAKERS" FOX (TF 71)																						
6	"BELLS" FOX (7th FLT PRIMARY)																						
7	MANUS FOX (7th FLT SECONDARY)																						
8	BELCONNEN-HONOLULU*																						
9	AIR OP. INTELL. CIRCUIT																						
10	SHIP-SHORE (NERK)																						
11	COMNAVGRPCCHINA-CINCPAC																						
12	MANUS-HONOLULU (DUPLEX)																						
--	SERVICE 68																						
--	H/F WARNING CIRCUIT**																						

\* DUPLEX WHEN REQUIRED (i.e., RECEIVE ON ONE FREQUENCY AND TRANSMIT ON DIFFERENT FREQUENCY).

\*\* ALL MAJOR WAR VESSELS, ANTI-SUBMARINE PLANES AND FIGHTER CONTROL CENTERS (3000 KCS. 3rd AND 7th FLEETS).

G-GUARD-CONTINUOUS RECEIVER WATCH WITH TRANSMITTER READY FOR IMMEDIATE USE.

I-INTERCEPT-CONTINUOUS RECEIVER WATCH, MAINTAINING COMPLETE LOG.





Noemfoor and Sansapor). THIRD Fleet task force commanders also intercepted this broadcast.

(3) Commen CINCPAA-COMSOEWESPAC Channels

(a) Belconnen-Honolulu, Circuit #8.

This circuit provided for direct communication between Belconnen and Honolulu, and was duplex when required. It was linked to the Headquarters of COMSOEWESPAC, CANF SOWESPAC and CAAF SOWESPAC at Hollandia from Belconnen by circuit Service #68.

(b) Manus-Honolulu Circuit (Duplex) Circuit #12.

The Manus-Honolulu circuit provided a direct communication link for point-to-point radio traffic between Manus (NTF) and Honolulu (NPM). It was a duplex (transmit and receive at same time) circuit, employing six different frequencies (three for transmitting and three for receiving).

(c) Allied Operational Intelligence Circuit (4385 kcs series), Circuit #9.

The Allied Operational Intelligence Circuit, with terminal stations at Guam, Saipan, Peleliu, Biak, Morotai, Darwin, and Manus, was established for the purpose of retransmitting contact and strike reports from aircraft operating from the various CENTPAC and SOWESPAC bases, and for broadcasting other information such as air warnings. In addition, submarines or surface craft making important contacts with enemy fleet units were permitted to transmit contacts on this circuit. This was an intelligence information circuit between POA and SOWESPAC forces, and was intercepted by all force, group and unit commanders of the THIRD and SEVENTH Fleets, in lieu of shore-based aircraft reconnaissance frequencies. Radio Manus, the control station, repeated back all transmissions received over this circuit.

(d) Task Force Commanders Circuits (Circuits #1 and #4).

The SOWESPAC Task Force Commanders Circuit (Circuit #4) corresponded to the High Command Circuit for the THIRD Fleet units (Circuit #1). In the case of the SEVENTH Fleet, Radio Hollandia was the control station for the Task Force Commanders Circuit, whereas the THIRD Fleet Task Force Commanders Circuit (High Command Circuit) was controlled by Radio Honolulu. THIRD Fleet task force, group and independent unit commanders of forces operating in support of KING II guarded the SOWESPAC Task Force Commanders Circuit, and CTF 77 guarded the POA High Command Circuit (THIRD Fleet Task Force Commanders Circuit).

(e) Fox Broadcasts.

CTF 77 and Radio Manus intercepted the "HOW" Fox

broadcast (THIRD Fleet primary) from Radio Honolulu. All THIRD Fleet task force, group and independent unit commanders intercepted the "BELLS" broadcast (SEVENTH Fleet primary) from Radio Belconnen, Australia. In addition, THIRD Fleet task force commanders intercepted the Manus Fox (SEVENTH Fleet secondary).

(f) POA-SOWESPAC Primary Ship-Shore Circuit (4235 kcs series), Circuit #10.

All vessels of the THIRD and SEVENTH Fleets, including submarines, used this circuit to communicate with shore stations in the Central Pacific and Southwest Pacific Areas. This frequency was guarded by Radios Honolulu, Manus, Hollandia, Canberra, and Perth. Although not required by the communication plans of COMTHIRDFLT and COMSEVENTHFLT, it was the usual practice for most task force and task group commanders to monitor this circuit so as to obtain early information, especially in regard to contact reports transmitted by POA or SOWESPAC submarines, and thereby eliminate the delay incident to relaying such essential information via shore radio stations.

(4) COMNAVGRPCHINA-CINCPOA (5440 kcs), Circuit #11.

This communication channel was established when the air searches by the FOURTEENTH Air Force over the South China Sea were commenced on October 16th, 1944. All important contacts were relayed by COMNAVGRPCHINA direct to CINCPOA on this circuit. CINCPOA in turn evaluated the contacts and rebroadcast them over Radio Honolulu to appropriate commanders.

(5) Army Communications. (Plate XLV)

While afloat and until the C.G. SIXTH Army assumed command ashore, the landing forces were under command of CTF 77, who was aboard the WASATCH. Also aboard this command ship were the C.G. SIXTH Army, and a small group of his operating staff, including the Signal Officer. Space aboard the WASATCH was provided for a small SIXTH Army Message Center. Essential army communications required while afloat was through navy channels.\*

Army radio circuits included three point-to-point circuits to Hollandia: one with the TENTH and FOURTEENTH Corps; one with Advance GHQ, CAAF SOWESPAC and CANF SOWESPAC; one to the WASATCH and PCE(R) 850 (Alternate Communication Vessel).

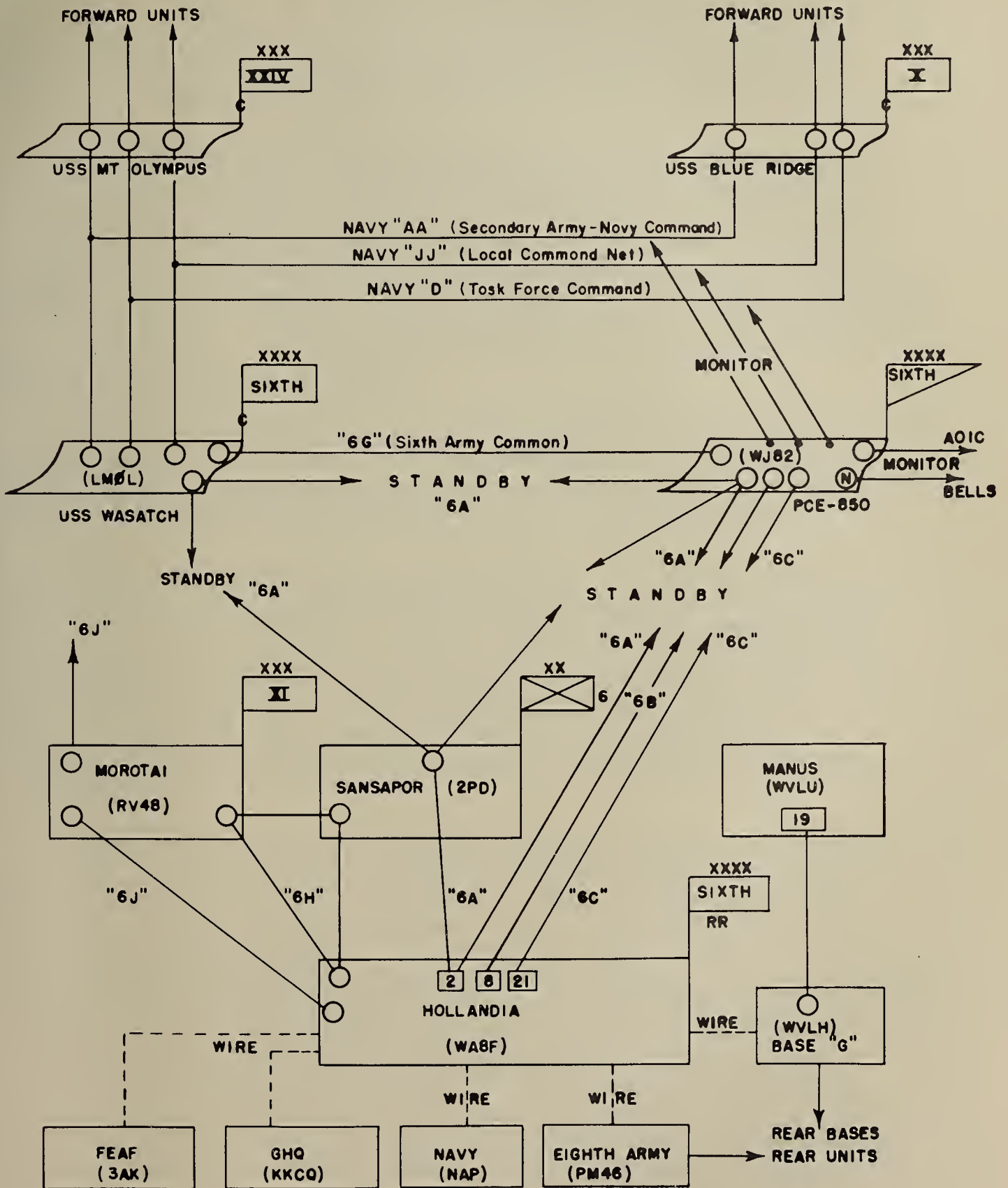
(6) Conclusions

Communications during the Leyte operation were, on the whole,

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\* SIXTH United States Army, Report of the Leyte Operations, October 17th - December 25th, 1944.





RADIO CIRCUITS: SIXTH ARMY AFLOAT  
D-5 TO D DAY

BATTLE FOR LEYTE GULF  
OCTOBER 1944





CONFIDENTIAL

satisfactory. However, an unprecedented volume of urgent and operational priority traffic caused considerable delay in transmissions during critical periods, and in the case of the SEVENTH Fleet, forced the issuance of an order prohibiting administrative radio traffic and requiring such traffic to be sent via air mail.\*

Considerable difficulty was experienced in the reception of major THIRD Fleet broadcasts in the west and southwest Pacific areas due to atmospheric conditions and to the long distances involved. This resulted in serious jamming of visual and TBS channels between fleet units in the exchange of information received. Later activation, in November 1944, of fleet rebroadcasts from Radio Guam (NPN) eliminated these difficulties. In view of the vital importance of these broadcasts to fleet operations, a higher priority should have been given to the activation of Radio Guam (NPN).\*\*

Although considerable enemy interference was encountered on ship-shore frequencies, it did not block transmissions on this circuit. Nevertheless, there were instances where enemy jamming required that traffic be sent blind and acknowledged for on Fox schedules.\*

Normal ship-shore circuits were heavily loaded with traffic from various sources. The 4295 kcs series and an additional spot frequency provided the primary outlets for COMTHIRDFLT traffic to Honolulu and Manus. Joint use of the 4295 series by COMTHIRDFLT and COMSEVENTHFLT was unsatisfactory, in view of the resulting heavy traffic load. All traffic originated by ships in company had to be relayed via the flagship. A need was found for additional spot frequencies or series to be assigned for ship-shore traffic and to be guarded by specified shore stations.\*\*

An analysis of dispatches sent and received during the period October 17th - 23rd shows that urgent dispatches required an average of from one-half to one hour for delivery to the action addressee, provided they were not unduly long and that they did not have to be relayed through an intermediate radio station. In the latter case, an urgent dispatch required about three hours for delivery. An operational priority dispatch required about four to six hours for delivery, depending on the method of transmission employed and traffic conditions at the time. It must be emphasized that the above time intervals are only averages and that no absolute rule for determining time requirements could be established, due to the fact that the speed of radio communications varied according to (a) traffic conditions (usually heavy during critical periods), (b) method of transmission employed, (c) atmospheric conditions, (d) effectiveness of enemy radio interference, and (e) propriety of radio precedence assigned by officers originating dispatches.

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\* COMINCH Publication P-008, "Amphibious Operations - Invasion of the Philippines", April 30th, 1945.

\*\* Report of the Operations of Western Pacific Task Forces and THIRD Fleet, COMTHIRDFLT Serial 0085, January 25th, 1945.



In order to offset the factor of delay in receiving information through relay circuits and the chain of command, a prudent and alert commander usually intercepted as many frequencies as he deemed important (within the limitations of his equipment and personnel) in addition to those required by the communication plan. For instance, CTF 78 guarded seven circuits not required by the operation plan.\* Also, COMTHIRDFLT, through the prior installation of an additional ten transmitters and forty-two receivers of various types in the flag communications room of his flagship, NEW JERSEY, was able to guard a number of frequencies in addition to those required by the communication plan, including, among others: (a) primary ship-shore circuit (two harmonics), (b) SOWESPAC reconnaissance frequency, (c) NPM "PETER" Fox (TF 17 submarines), and (d) miscellaneous weather and enemy radio frequencies. All traffic intercepted, regardless of addressee, was decoded to the capacity of available facilities. In this manner, a considerable amount of important information which otherwise would not have been received was available for strategic and tactical planning. Particularly important was the information obtained on submarine and ship-shore circuits concerning movements, sightings and weather, which was not ordinarily passed along in its entirety in evaluated summaries.\*\*

Communication experience during the Leyte operation demonstrated the need for the following additional frequencies in future operations: (a) an OTC Fox circuit, (b) a 200 kcs band connecting task force and task group commanders in the objective area, (c) a common THIRD-SEVENTH Fleet command channel to provide direct communication between fleet, task force and task group commanders of the THIRD and SEVENTH Fleets, and (d) a circuit network and broadcast facilities for the collection and dissemination of accurate weather information. Practically all weather data received in the West Pacific was at least twelve hours old, except that received from own forces; in some cases weather reports were transmitted on already heavily loaded operational circuits.\*

CENTCOM TWO did not provide adequately for a task fleet frequency plan. This was considered desirable, since a task fleet might consist of several task forces, and task groups of task forces, operating tactically under one OTC, as was the case in the THIRD Fleet. For example, on several occasions during THIRD Fleet operations, the tactical fleet consisted of TG 34.5, TGs 38.1, 38.2, 38.3 and 38.4 and various task groups and units of TF 30. Commander THIRD Fleet did not actually have any task force commander's circuit similar to the SEVENTH Fleet Task Force Commander's Circuit, but instead employed the POA High Command Ship-Shore Channel, not only to communicate with CINCPAA but also as a THIRD Fleet task force and task group commanders' circuit, creating a volume of traffic in excess of the capacity of this circuit.\*\*

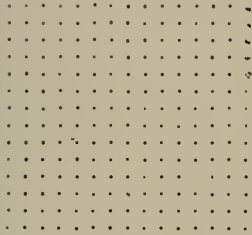
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\* COMINCH Publication P-008, "Amphibious Operations - Invasion of the Philippines", April 30th, 1945.

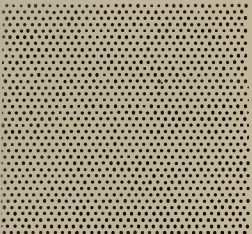
\*\* Report of the Operations of Western Pacific Task Forces and the THIRD Fleet, COMTHIRDFLT Serial 0085, January 25th, 1945.



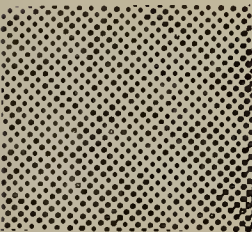
## LEGEND



REPORTED SCATTERED SHOWERS AND  
VARIABLE CONDITIONS.



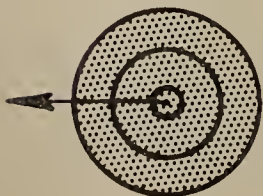
LINE OF SQUALLS OR INDIVIDUALLY  
REPORTED SQUALLY AND/OR SHOWERY  
PRECIPITATION AREAS.



FOG, MIST OR HAZE



APPROXIMATE POSITION OF THE INTER-  
TROPICAL FRONT.

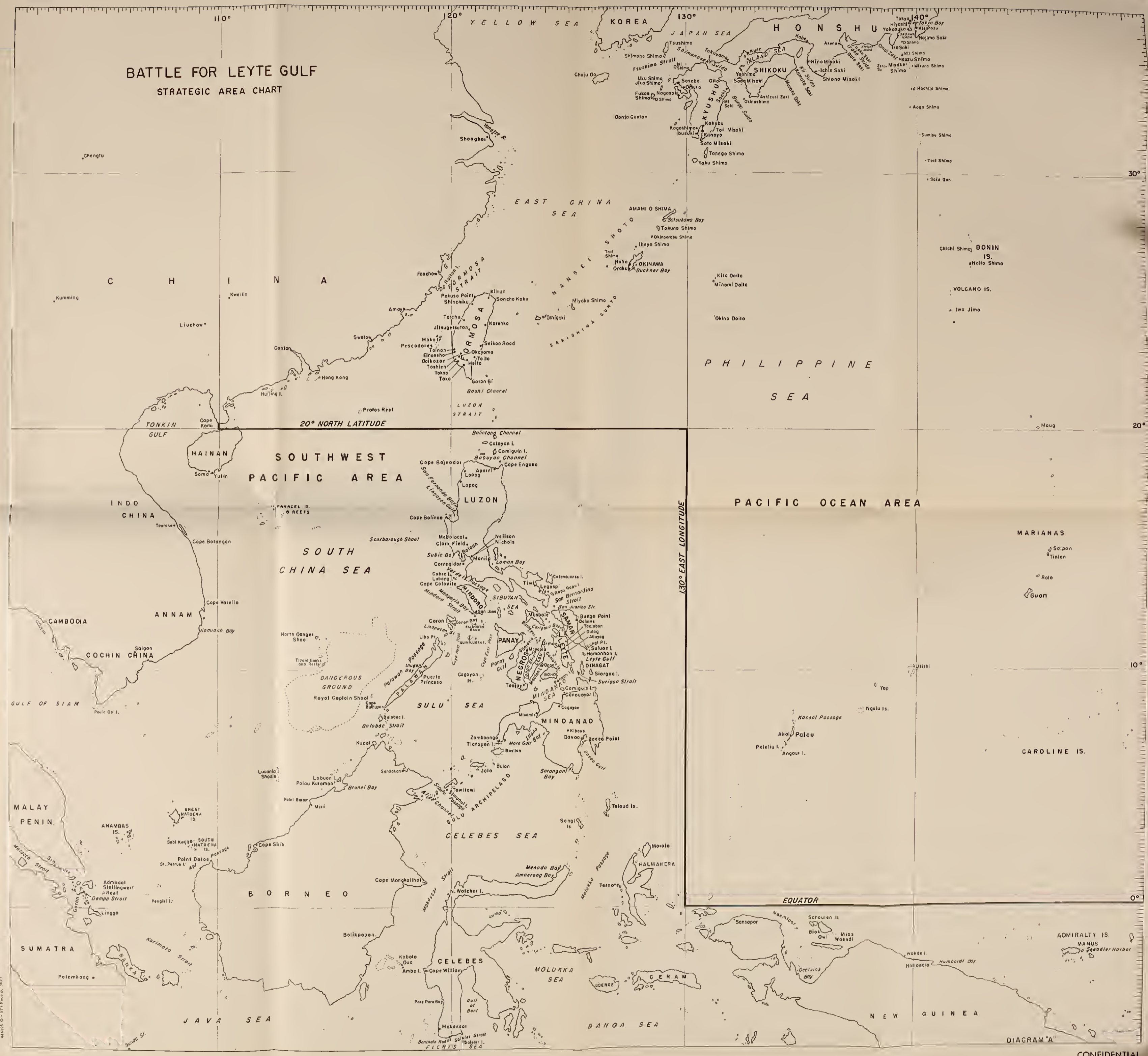


APPROXIMATE CENTER OF TROPICAL STORM  
AND DIRECTION OF MOVEMENT.

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# BATTLE FOR LEYTE GULF STRATEGIC AREA CHART



# BATTLE FOR LEYTE GULF STRATEGIC AREA CHART







SOUTHWEST  
PACIFIC AREA

PACIFIC OCEAN AREA

LONGITUDE  
150° EAST (OE)



SOUTH  
CHINA SEA

SULU SEA

CELEBES SEA

MOLUKKA SEA

JAVA SEA

BANDA SEA

EQUATOR





130° EAST LONGITUDE

10°

0°

CONFIDENTIAL





Events Depicted on Diagram "B"October 20th, 19440000 - 2400

1. 0043 CTG 30.7 (Hunter-Killer Group) reported to CTG 30.3 for duty.
2. 0124 FOURTEENTH Air Force search plane contacted five large unidentified ships in Latitude 18°-42'N, Longitude 113°-15'E (Plate III, Contact 3).
3. 0338 HAMMERHEAD in Latitude 04°-52'N, Longitude 113°-24'E, sank AK UGO MARU and at 0437, in the same vicinity, sank AK OYO MARU.
4. 0559 TG's 38.1 and 38.4 arrived on station and commenced launching air strikes against northern Mindanao and western Visayas (246 sorties). Recovered at 1620.
5. 0645 TU 77.4.14 joined TU 77.4.2.
6. 0705 TU 77.4.34 joined TU 77.4.3.
7. 0746 ESSEX launched seven VF, seven VB to search sector 270°-340°(T) to 300 miles. Recovered at 1215. Made no contacts.
8. 0800 Commander SECOND Striking Force with CRUDIV TWENTY-ONE and DESRON ONE arrived Mako. Commenced fueling at 1000.
9. 0813 CofS Combined Fleet issued over-all plan for SHO ONE operation including change in X-day to October 25th.
10. 0815 Japanese search plane contacted six CVE, four BB bearing 090°(T), distant eighty-five miles from northern Dinagat Island (Plate XXII, Contact C).
11. 0815 FOURTH Air Army search plane contacted two CV, six CA/CL bearing 078°(T), distant 243 miles from Saravia (Plate XXII, Contact D).
12. 0832 Japanese carrier type fighters carrying bombs attacked TU 77.4.1 causing slight damage to SANGAMON.
13. 0915 CABOT, STEPHEN POTTER, MILLER, THE SULLIVANS rejoined TG 38.2.
14. 0930 AKISHIMO and HAYASHIMO arrived Brunei Bay and anchored.
15. 0940 Allied search planes contacted two DD in Latitude 03°-15'N, Longitude 118°-10'E (Plate III, Contact 5).
16. 1006 CofS Combined Fleet Hdqtrs suggested to Commander FIRST Striking Force that he break into the enemy anchorage in two groups.

17. 1145 CinC Combined Fleet arrived hdqtrs Hiyoshi from Omura and announced his return to Combined Fleet.
18. 1145 Allied search planes contacted one DD, one AK, one AO in Balabac Strait (Plate III, Contact 6).
19. 1150 ASAGUMO and YAMAGUMO departed Brunei Bay to reinforce surface escort of Brunei Fueling Group.
20. 1200 FIRST Striking Force with CRUDIV SIXTEEN arrived Brunei Bay to refuel. (No oilers present).
21. 1200 TG's 38.2 and 38.3 rendezvoused at Point READY to operate in covering capacity for Leyte landings.
22. 1240 FIFTH Base Air Force search plane contacted two CV and five other ships, thirty-five miles east of southern Samar (Plate XXII, Contact E).
23. 1245 CTG 38.2 reported to CTF 38 that FITERON EIGHT in BUNKER HILL was practically 100 per cent suffering from combat fatigue.
24. 1330 Japanese search plane contacted four CVE, two BB, two cruisers and six DD bearing 080°(T), distant eighty miles from Tacloban (Plate XXII, Contact F).
25. 1331 ESSEX launched seven VF, seven VB to search sector 270°-340°(T) to 300 miles. Recovered at 1755. Made no contacts.
26. 1435 Allied search plane contacted two DD west of Palawan Island (Plate III, Contact 7).
27. 1541 BLUEGILL in vicinity Cape Calavite fired four torpedoes at a small convoy. Made no hits.
28. 1730 TG's 38.2 and 38.3 headed on course 210°(T), speed seventeen knots toward Latitude 13°-30'N, Longitude 125°-30'E, to arrive by dawn October 21st.
29. 1735 Commander MAIN Force with MAIN Force sortied Bungo Suido undetected by Allied submarines.
30. 1745 Japanese shore based plane sighted enemy submarine bearing 170°(T), distant eight miles from the ZUIKAKU.
31. 1759 ZUIKAKU detected a submarine bearing 130°(T). (No distance given.)
32. 1802 CinC Combined Fleet took direct command of FIRST Striking Force.



33. Sunset The Senior Staff Officer SIXTH Base Air Force arrived Manila to make detailed arrangements for deployment of that command to Philippines and conferred at headquarters FIFTH Base Air Force.
34. 1830 CHITOSE reported radar contact on a submarine bearing 110°(T). (No distance given.)
35. 1915 TG's 38.1 and 38.4 set course 035°(T), speed twenty knots toward their October 21st fueling rendezvous with TG 30.8 at Point MICK.
36. 2000 Vice Admiral Takijiro Onishi, IJN relieved Vice Admiral Kimpei Teraoka, IJN as Commander FIFTH Base Air Force.
37. 2138 CinC Combined Fleet learned from Imperial General Headquarters (Navy Section) that the enemy had landed at two points on Leyte and had occupied Panaon Island, northern tip of Dinagat Island and Homonhon Island.
38. 2150 One radar equipped night flying boat departed Garan Bi to search sector as ordered. A second radar equipped flying boat departed at 2240.
39. 2236 STERLET in vicinity of Tokuna Shima attacked a small ship with three torpedoes. Made no hits.
40. 2325 Japanese contacted by RDF a task force of twenty ships 220 miles east of Lamon Bay (Plate XXIX, Contact A).
41. 2347 Commander FIFTH Base Air Force issued dispatch orders officially forming the Kamikaze Special Attack Corps.
42. During the day CTG 77.4 provided air cover and support for D-day landings on Leyte.
43. During the day One additional submarine (RO-41) departed Inland Sea for operating area east of the Philippines. (Total of ten submarines en route battle area.)
44. During the day Japanese contacted six CV (two small) and six CA/CL bearing 083°(T), distant 227 miles from Saravia (Plate XXII, Contact J).
45. During the day Japanese contacted two groups of ships east of Dolores, Samar. (No composition given.) (Plate XXII, Contact I).
46. During the day Commander SW Area Force in Manila held operational conference with his staff, Commander FIFTH Base Air Force and representative of SIXTH Base Air Force. (Conference ended about 0130, October 21st.)

Events Within Leyte Gulf

(Not Depicted on Diagram "B")

1. 0040 CTF 78 in BLUE RIDGE entered Leyte Gulf and proceeded toward northern beaches.
2. 0425 CTF 77 in WASATCH entered Leyte Gulf, relieved CTG 77.2 as OTC and assumed control of all naval operations in the objective area.
3. 0430 CTF 79 in MOUNT OLYMPUS entered Leyte Gulf and proceeded toward southern beaches.
4. 0600 Bombardment and Fire Support Unit SOUTH commenced scheduled bombardment of southern beaches.
5. Dawn FOURTH Air Army launched an attack of twenty fighter planes against Allied shipping in Leyte Gulf.
6. 0607 Japanese carrier type fighter plane scored direct bomb hit on PRESERVER (ARS) off western Homonhon.
7. 0655 COMSOWESPAC and CAAF SOWESPAC in NASHVILLE entered Leyte Gulf behind the amphibious assault forces and proceeded to northern beaches, arriving at 0950.
8. 0700 Commander Fire Support Unit NORTH commenced scheduled bombardment of northern beaches.
9. 0930 Landing force landed unopposed on Panaon.
10. 1000 First assault wave of Allied landing craft reached northern and southern beaches as planned.
11. 1247 COMSOWESPAC with special observing party went ashore to observe operations and broadcast his return by radio. Returned aboard NASHVILLE at 1600.
12. 1419 COMSOWESPAC announced that as of noon his Advance Headquarters had been established at Leyte and that his General Headquarters and Rear Echelon Headquarters remained at Hollandia and Brisbane respectively.
13. 1430 C.G. FIRST CAVALRY Division and C.G. TWENTY-FOURTH Infantry Division assumed command of their divisions ashore, at WHITE beach and RED beach respectively.
14. 1600 C.G. FOURTH Air Army received an army report of five to six BB and over twenty DD and transports off Dulag and Tacloban exchanging fire with shore batteries.

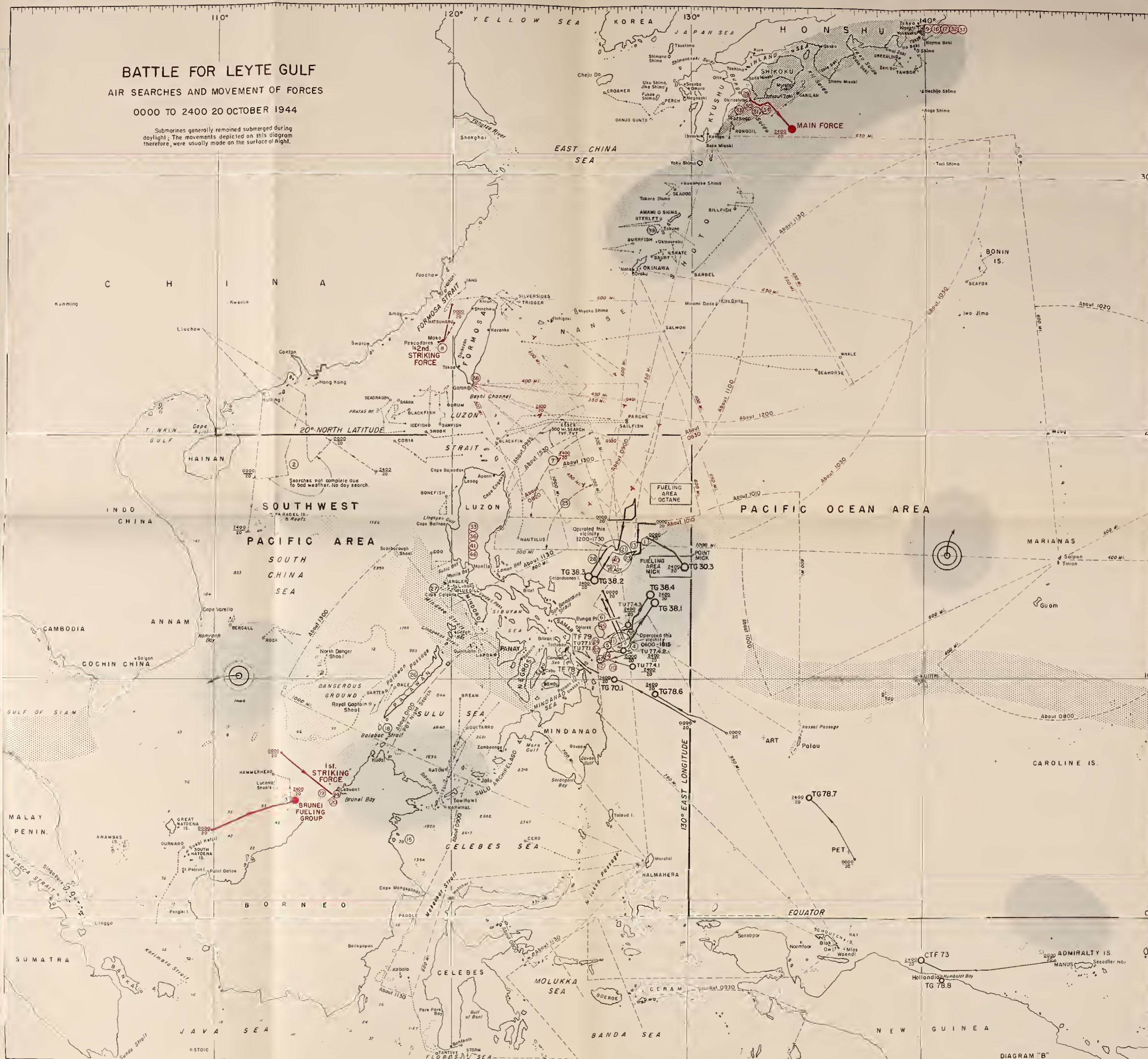


# BATTLE FOR LEYTE GULF

## AIR SEARCHES AND MOVEMENT OF FORCES

0000 TO 2400 20 OCTOBER 1944

Submarines generally remained submerged during daylight. The movements depicted on this diagram therefore, were usually made on the surface of night.



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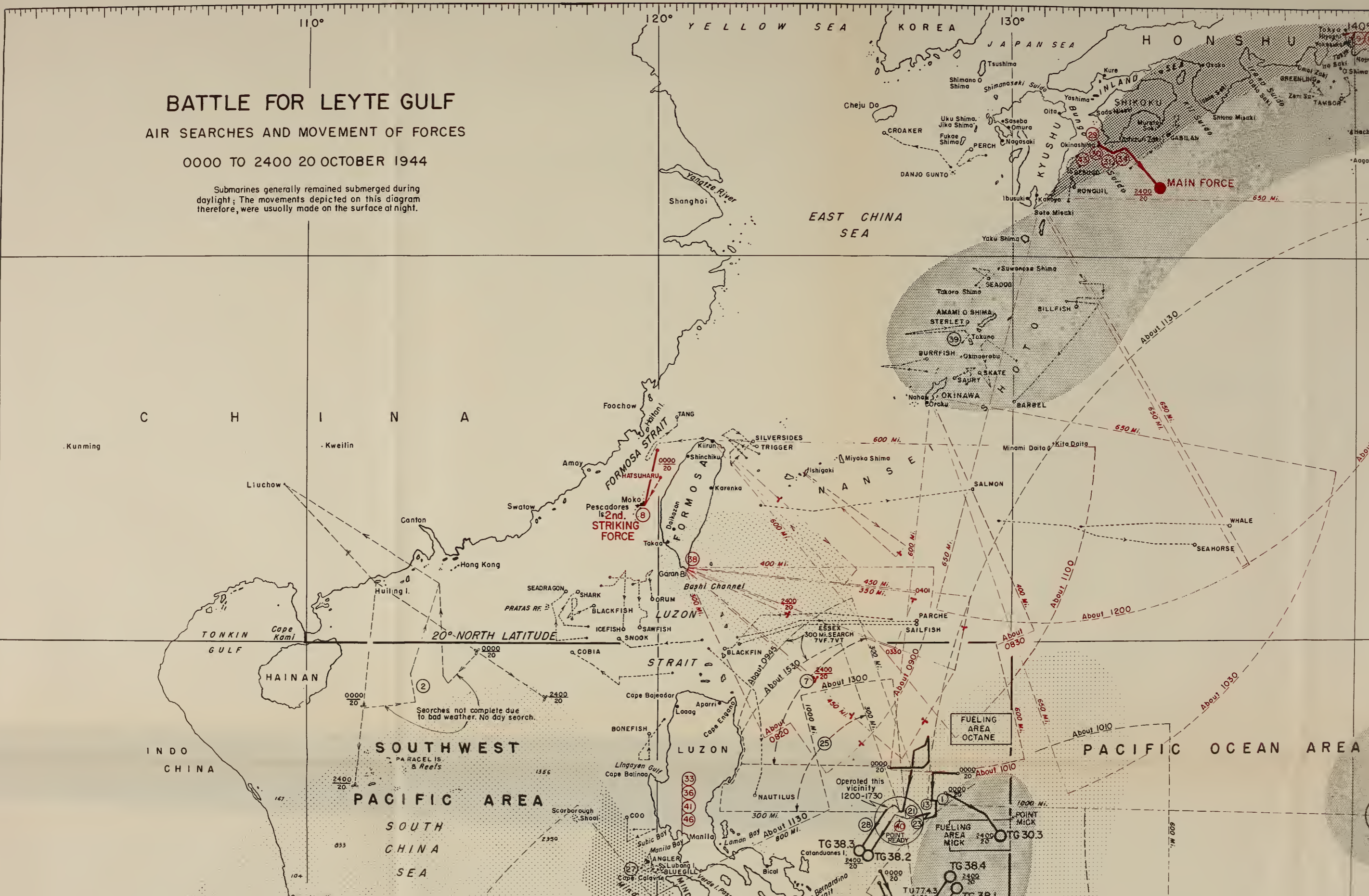


# BATTLE FOR LEYTE GULF

## AIR SEARCHES AND MOVEMENT OF FORCES

0000 TO 2400 20 OCTOBER 1944

Submarines generally remained submerged during daylight; The movements depicted on this diagram therefore, were usually made on the surface at night.





**LEYTE GULF  
 MOVEMENT OF FORCES  
 OCTOBER 1944**

...ined submerged during  
 ...cted on this diagram  
 ...n the surface at night.



N A

Kweilin

Canton

Huiling I.

20° NORTH LATITUDE

SOUTHWEST PACIFIC AREA

SOUTH CHINA SEA

033

120° YELLOW SEA 130° KOREA 140° JAPAN SEA HONSHU

EAST CHINA SEA

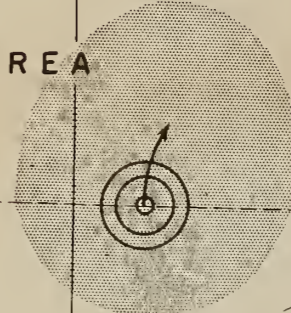
PACIFIC OCEAN AREA

MARIANAS

Saipan Tinian

30°

20°







SOUTH WEST  
PACIFIC AREA

PACIFIC OCEAN AREA

SOUTH  
CHINA  
SEA

LUZON

MANILA

Subic Bay

FUELING  
AREA  
OCTANE

FUELING  
AREA  
MICK

CAMBODIA

ANNAM

COCHIN CHINA

GULF OF SIAM

MALAY  
PENIN.

SUMATRA

BORNEO

CELEBES

MOLUKKA  
SEA

BANDA  
SEA

EQUATOR

NEW  
GUINEA

Isth  
STRICKING  
FORGE

BRUNEI  
FUELING  
GROUP

DANGEROUS  
GROUND

MINDANAO

CELEBES  
SEA

CELEBES

MOLUKKA  
SEA

BANDA  
SEA

EQUATOR

NEW  
GUINEA

SEARCHES NOT COMPLETE DUE TO BAD WEATHER. NO DAY SEARCH.

Operated this vicinity 1200-1730

Operated this vicinity 0600-1015









15. 1600 Japanese contacted twenty warships, seventy large ships, eighty smaller craft and transports inside Leyte Gulf (Plate XXII, Contact G).
16. 1602 HONOLULU torpedoed by one of two Japanese carrier type attack planes causing serious damage. Planes appear to have taken off from Nichols Field.
17. 1640 Japanese contacted five BB, ten ODD (cruisers) and twenty transports in Leyte Gulf near Homonhon (Plate XXII, Contact H).
18. 1750 C.G. NINETY-SIXTH Infantry Division assumed command of his division ashore.
19. 1800 CTG 78.3 (Panaon Attack Group) having completed unloading, departed Panaon area in preparation for departing Leyte Gulf.
20. 2112 TF 78 transports which had completed unloading, commenced departing San Pedro Bay.
21. During the day Japanese contacted six CA/CL, ten transports and twenty small craft in Leyte Gulf (Plate XXII, Contact K).

Events Depicted on Diagram "C"October 21st, 19440000 - 2400

1. 0012 Japanese contacted by RDF one task group about 200 miles north-east of Samar (Plate XXIX, Contact B).
2. 0013 Commander SIXTH Base Air Force, at Takao, advised his command that (a) flying units were to move up to the Philippines on the 22nd, (b) night attacks were to be launched from Formosa on the same day, and (c) the general offensive was tentatively scheduled for October 23rd.
3. 0240 FOURTEENTH Air Force search plane contacted one CV, one BB, two CL and three DD in Latitude  $17^{\circ}-40'N$ , Longitude  $116^{\circ}-10'E$  (Plate XXVII, Contact 4).
4. 0305 Commander FIRST Striking Force received report that his force had probably been sighted by enemy patrol planes.
5. 0600 TG's 38.2 and 38.3 arrived at dawn launching position and commenced launching strikes against Cebu, Masbate, Negros, Panay, Luzon, Mindoro and Coron Bay (Total 356 sorties).
6. 0600 CABOT launched seven VF, seven VT to search sector  $310^{\circ}-020^{\circ}(T)$  to 300 miles. Recovered at 1257. (Shot down two enemy planes).
7. 0625 TG's 38.1 and 38.4 effected rendezvous with fueling and replacement group and commenced replenishment. Completed operations at 1400.
8. 0700 ZUIKAKU and ZUIHO launched nine carrier attack planes to search sector  $104^{\circ}-230^{\circ}(T)$  to a varying distance from 280 to 370 miles. (Sighted friendly submarines).
9. 0730 SALMON effected rendezvous with BARBEL in Latitude  $24^{\circ}-00'N$ , Longitude  $130^{\circ}-00'E$ , to transfer an officer for medical treatment.
10. 0818 FIFTH Base Air Force plane contacted six transports and six DD, bearing  $110^{\circ}(T)$ , distant 170 miles from Surigao (Plate XXIX, Contact C).
11. 0820 Commander SW Area Force, at Manila, learned from Commander 901st Air Group that results of night searches from Garan Bi were negative.
12. 0830 FIFTH Base Air Force plane contacted sixteen transports and two CVE, bearing  $090^{\circ}(T)$ , distant 140 miles from Surigao (Plate XXIX, Contact D).
13. 0840 FIFTH Base Air Force plane contacted eighteen transports east of Surigao (Plate XXIX, Contact E).



14. 0840 FIFTH Base Air Force plane contacted two CV, four CVE and twenty other ships, bearing 070°(T) distant 105 miles from Surigao (Plate XXIX, Contact F).
15. 0920 Japanese search plane contacted surface ships, bearing 091°(T), distant 420 miles from Manila (Plate XXIX, Contact G).
16. 0920 Japanese contacted a task force estimated to be in San Bernardino Strait (Plate XXIX, Contact H).
17. 0935 Commander FIFTH Base Air Force received report of one BB and twenty-four other ships, bearing 350°(T), distant 160 miles from Suluan Island (Plate XXIX, Contact I).
18. 1040 Commander FIFTH Base Air Force received report from lookout that a large force had been sighted, bearing 070°(T), distant fifty-four miles from Catanduanes Island. Amplified at 1330 to four CV, five BB and twenty-two others (Plate XXIX, Contact J).
19. 1115 THIRTEENTH Air Force search plane contacted one BB, three CL, three DD and six unidentified ships in Latitude 03°-30'N, Longitude 118°-40'E (Plate XXVII, Contact 6).
20. 1120 Brunei Fueling Group entered Brunei Bay to refuel the FIRST Striking Force. Completed operations at 0500 October 22nd.
21. Fore-noon SIXTH Base Air Force senior staff officer, at Manila, held consultations with FOURTH Air Army relative to deployment bases.
22. Fore-noon Allied search planes contacted five DD in convoy in northern Palawan Passage (Plate XXVII, Contact 5).
23. 1200 DESDIV TWENTY-ONE (WAKABA, HATSUSHIMO, HATSUHARU) departed Mako for Takao.
24. 1200 PRINCETON launched a photographic and anti-snooper flight of six VF and VT to photograph southeast end of Luzon and patrol area between task group and Luzon. Recovered at 1500. Made no contacts.
25. 1244 CABOT launched seven VF, seven VT to search sector 310°-020°(T) to 300 miles. Recovered at 1814. Made no contacts.
26. 1300 Allied coastal lookout sighted two YUBARI CL in Verde Island Passage (Plate XXXIII, Contact 4).
27. 1330 FIFTH Base Air Force plane contacted four CVE, two BB, two CA/CL and six DD east of Samar (Plate XXIX, Contact K).
28. 1400 TG's 38.1 and 38.4 completed fueling and headed west to rendezvous at 0600, October 22nd with TG 38.2 in the vicinity Point Ready.

29. 1400 Japanese contacted by RDF, a task group about 200 miles east of Lamon Bay (Plate XXIX, Contact L).
30. 1412 Commander Main Force directed air search of Latitude 28°-55'N, Longitude 133°-45'E, until sunset for a reported submarine. Recovered at 1700. Made no contacts.
31. 1430 Coordinated Attack Group (HADDOCK, HALIBUT, TUNA) departed Saipan for patrol in the Luzon Strait area.
32. 1500 Japanese search and attack group of six carrier-type planes took off from Nichols Field to attack carriers off Catanduanes Island (Contact J). Failed to make contact and landed at Bulan at 2020.
33. 1500 COMNAVGRPCHINA reported many contacts on merchant shipping as recently as 1300 on this day along the Tourane-Hong Kong route (Plate XXVII, Contact 7).
34. 1530 FOURTEENTH Air Force search plane sighted one CV, three CA and four DD in Latitude 23°-10'N, Longitude 117°-50'E (Plate XXVII, Contact 8).
35. 1600 Commander SECOND Striking Force in the NACHI with CRUDIV TWENTY-ONE and DESRON ONE (less DESDIV TWENTY-ONE) sortied Mako and proceeded south.
36. 1625 The first Kamikaze attack unit consisting of two VFB, escorted by one VF, took off from Cebu with orders to crash enemy group of six carriers (Contact F). Results never learned.
37. 1700 Commander FIRST Striking Force, at conference with all unit commanders, destroyer commanders and staff officers in the flagship ATAGO, issued written order for the penetration operation.
38. 1710 COMCRUDIV SIXTEEN, in AOBA, with KINU and URANAMI, departed Brunei Bay en route Manila to carry out first movement of troop reinforcements.
39. 1712 BARBEL, in Latitude 22°-46'N, Longitude 132°-21'E, sighted a Japanese submarine (Plate XXVII, Contact 9). Contact time passed as 1807.
40. Late Afternoon COMDESDIV TWENTY-ONE, with DESDIV TWENTY-ONE, arrived at Takao.
41. During Day-light CTG 77.4 launched aircraft from three carrier units to provide air cover and support over the objective area (360 sorties in direct support, 132 TCAP and forty-four planes against Cebu).



October 21st

42. 1822 TG's 38.2 and 38.3 completed flight operations and (a) TG 38.2 headed for Point READY to rendezvous with TG's 38.1 and 38.4, (b) TG 38.3 headed for Area MICK to rendezvous with fueling group.
43. 2116 Japanese contacted by RDF a class "D" fix on a task force, bearing 087°(T), distant 600 miles from Manila (Plate XXXVI, Contact A).
44. During the day Commander FIRST Striking Force received RDF fixes on two enemy submarines in south Palawan Passage (Plate XXIX, Contacts N and O).
45. During the day One additional submarine (RO-46) departed the Inland Sea for the operating area east of the Philippines (Total eleven submarines en route battle area).
46. Late in day CinC Combined Fleet received Imperial Rescript forwarded by the Chief of Naval General Staff.
47. 2202 One radar equipped night flying boat departed Garan Bi to search sectors as ordered. A second plane departed at 2225.
48. 2315 SEADRAGON, in Latitude 21°-47'N, Longitude 118°-14'E, made radar contact on a Japanese surface force (SECOND Striking Force) (Plate XXXIII, Contact 5). (Reported later as 2335 contact on one CV, four unidentified).

NOTE: Search planes of the Central Pacific and Southwest Pacific carried out prescribed searches with essentially negative results except for minor contacts.

\* \* \* \* \*

Events within Leyte Gulf

(Not Depicted on Diagram "C")

1. 0203 CTG 78.3, with eighteen transports and five DD, departed Leyte Gulf for Hollandia and Kossol Passage.
2. 0606 Japanese carrier-type bomber, which had been hit by anti-aircraft gunfire, crashed into the superstructure of the AUSTRALIA causing serious damage.
3. 0642 WEST VIRGINIA, en route to fire support station, grounded, slightly damaging three of her four propellers and reducing her sustained speed to sixteen knots.
4. 0800 CTG 70.1 (Motor Torpedo Boats), in OYSTER BAY, entered Leyte Gulf, reported to CTF 77 for duty, and anchored off Dio Island at 1200.

5. 0948 COMSOWESPAC went ashore at northern beachhead with members of his staff, CAAF SOWESPAC and the President of the Philippines. Returned aboard NASHVILLE at 1303.
6. 1148 CTF 79 became gravely concerned that his supply of bombardment ammunition might become exhausted and so advised CTF 77.
7. 1300 C.G. SEVENTH Division assumed command ashore, the last of the four division commanders to do so.
8. 1426 COMSEVENTHFLT requested that Coron Bay be kept under surveillance for enemy shipping which was to be reported and attacked.
9. 1430 Damaged cruisers HONOLULU and AUSTRALIA, with escorts, commenced retiring from the objective area.
10. 1541 CTF 77 issued instructions placing Harbor Defense Plan ONE into effect immediately.
11. 1557 CTF 77 issued replenishment schedule.
12. 1600 C.G. TENTH Corps, U.S. Army, assumed command ashore.
13. During the day Minesweepers of TG 77.5 reported having swept in Area SWEEP (Main ship channel) a total to date of 279 mines. (Actually swept 285 mines.)
14. During the day Enemy air attacks penetrating Leyte Gulf consisted of seventeen army planes, of which four were shot down by AA fire, and one was destroyed on crashing into the AUSTRALIA.
15. During the day TG 77.4 provided air cover and support for D+1 Day operations, and TCAP over objective area; claimed destruction of five enemy planes. (Japanese records indicate six planes lost.)
16. During the day Japanese commanders received reports of fourteen to fifteen BB and cruisers, and eighty transports in Leyte Gulf (Plate XXIX, Contact M).
17. 1800 TU 78.2.4, consisting of seventeen unloaded LST and two AKA, escorted by four DD, departed San Pedro Bay for Hollandia.
18. 1930 TU 79.14.1, consisting of fourteen transports, two LSD, and ten escorts, departed Leyte Gulf for Hollandia.
19. 1959 TENNESSEE and WAR HAWK collided in Leyte Gulf with slight damage to both.
20. 2350 CTG 78.6 (Reinforcement Group ONE) entered Leyte Gulf.
21. During night In accordance with Harbor Defense Plan ONE, Allied units took up defensive stations.



# BATTLE FOR LEYTE GULF

## AIR SEARCHES AND MOVEMENT OF FORCES

0000 TO 2400 21 OCTOBER 1944

Submarines generally remained submerged during daylight. The movements depicted on this diagram therefore, were usually made on the surface at night.

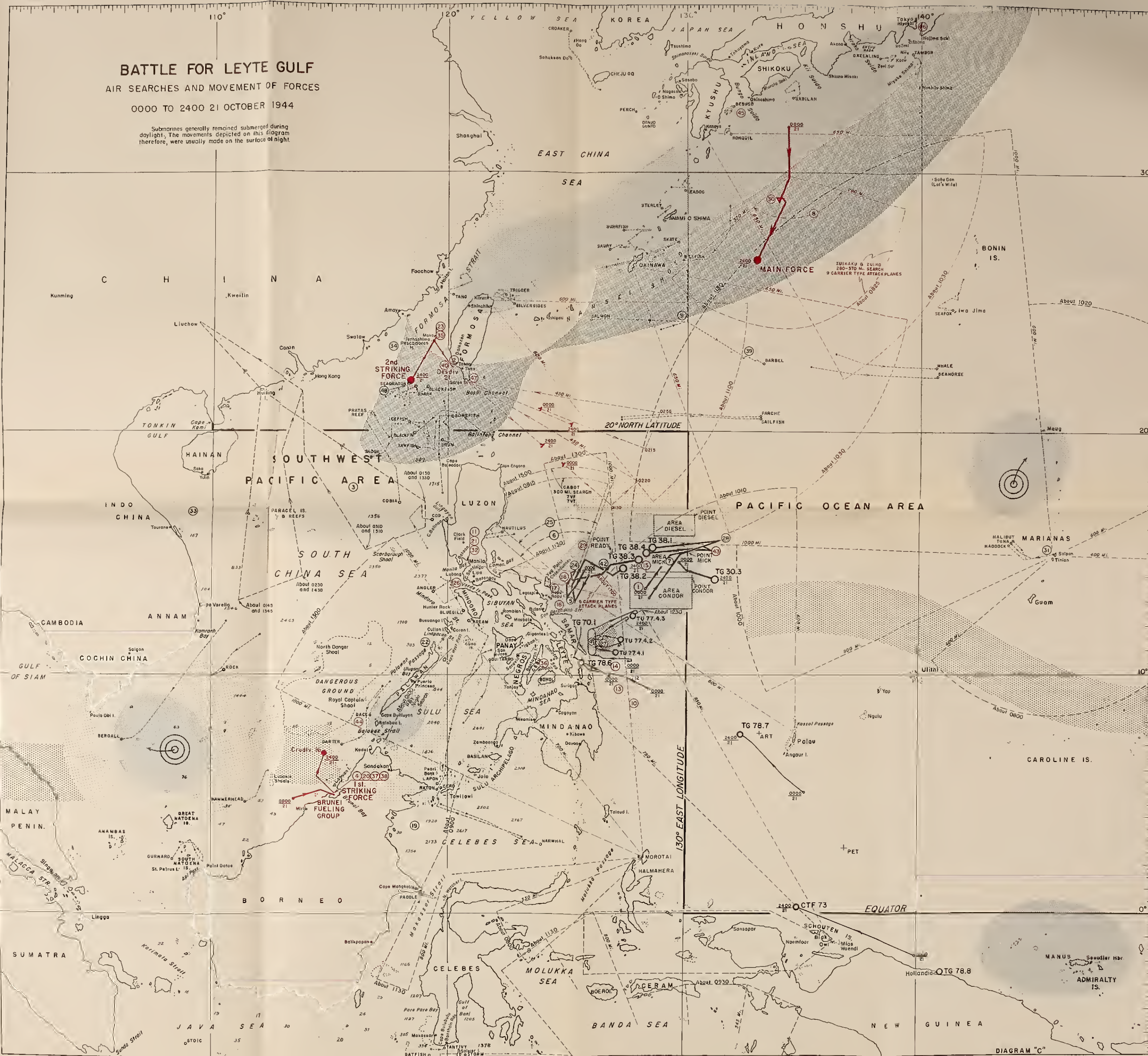


DIAGRAM "C"

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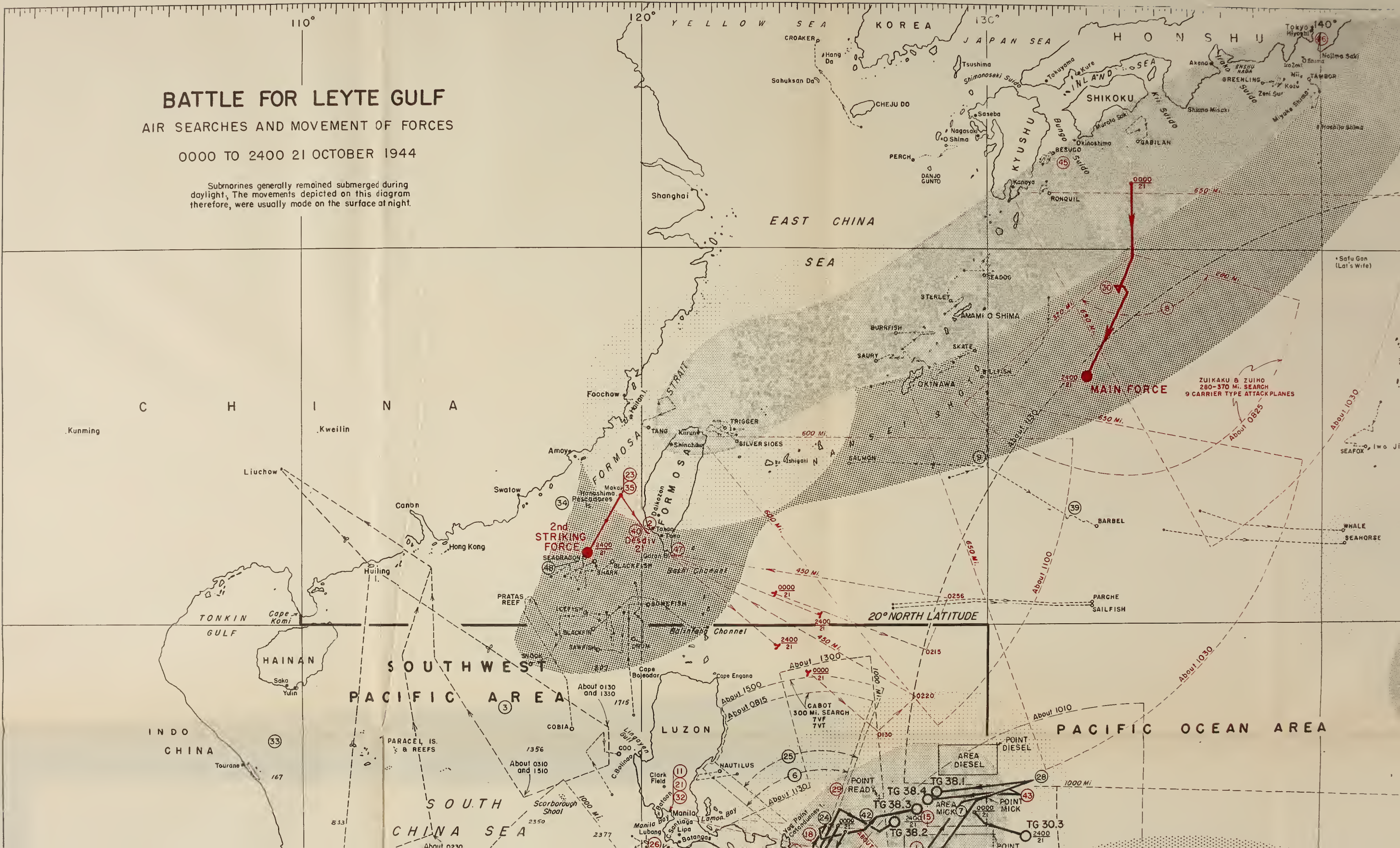


# BATTLE FOR LEYTE GULF

## AIR SEARCHES AND MOVEMENT OF FORCES

### 0000 TO 2400 21 OCTOBER 1944

Submarines generally remained submerged during daylight. The movements depicted on this diagram therefore, were usually made on the surface at night.

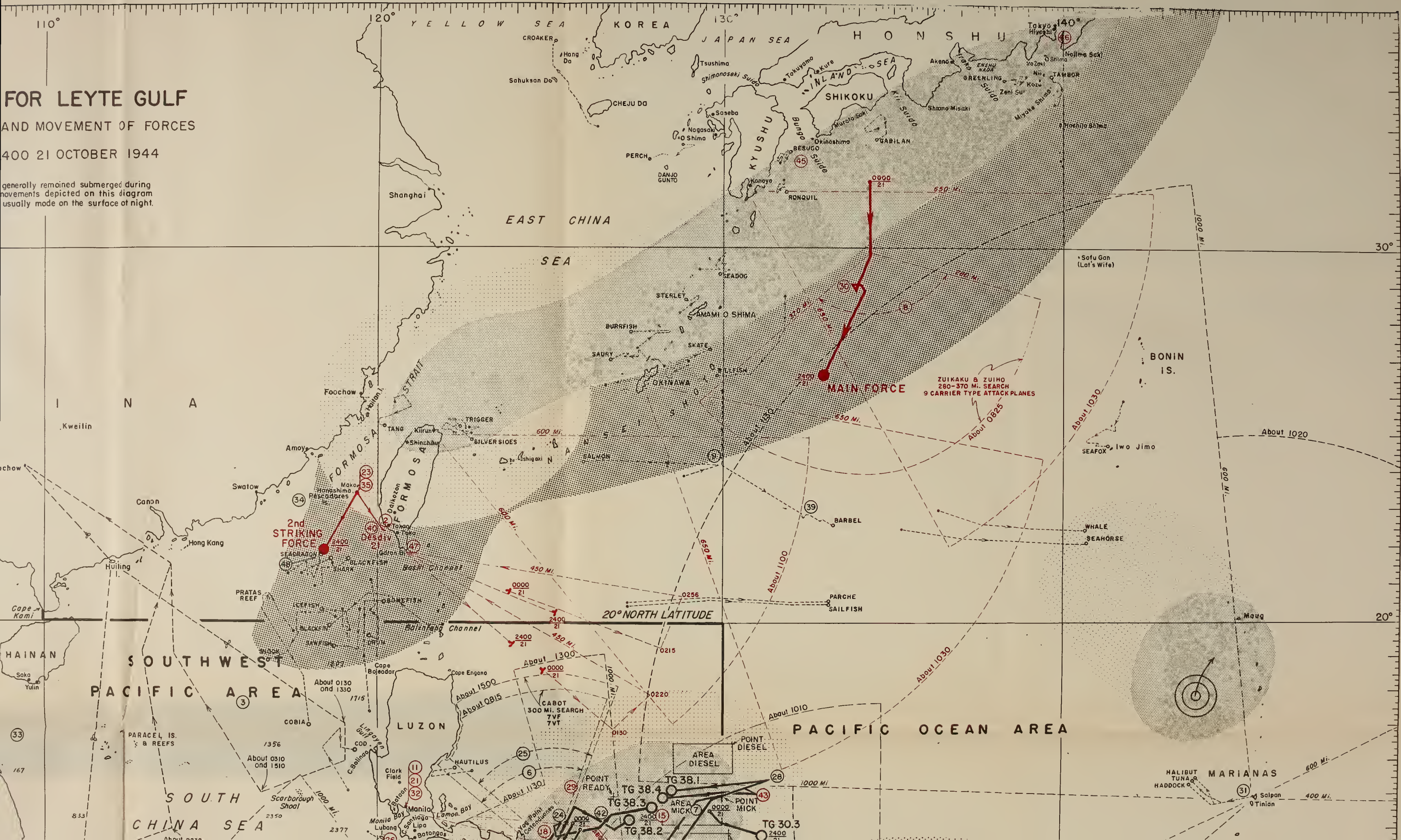




# FOR LEYTE GULF AND MOVEMENT OF FORCES

400 21 OCTOBER 1944

generally remained submerged during movements depicted on this diagram usually made on the surface at night.















Events Depicted on Diagram "D"October 22nd, 19440000 - 2400

1. 0010 Japanese contacted an enemy submarine in the Sibuyan Sea (Plate XXXVI, Contact B).
2. 0035 SEADRAGON in Latitude 21°-47'N, Longitude 118°-36'E, fired four torpedoes at an enemy force claiming two timed hits in a JUNYO class carrier. Made no hits.
3. 0200 DARTER in Latitude 07°-31'N, Longitude 115°-22'E, contacted three large unidentified ships (CRUDIV SIXTEEN) (Plate XXXIII, Contact 6).
4. 0500 MAIN Force FIRST Supply Group sortied from Bungo Suido undetected en route Koniya, Amami O Shima.
5. 0500 Ships of the FIRST Striking Force completed fueling from tankers in Brunei Bay and made preparations for getting underway.
6. 0530 CHITOSE and ZUIKAKU launched eight carrier attack planes to search sector 109°-212°(T) to varying distance of 300 to 375 miles. Made no contacts.
7. 0545 TG 38.3 rendezvoused with the replenishment group in Area MICK. Commenced fueling operations at 0628, completed at 1135.
8. 0610 HANCOCK launched seven VF, seven VB to search sector 290°-360°(T) to 300 miles. Recovered at 1110. Made no contacts.
9. 0630 SHARK in Latitude 20°-30'N, Longitude 117°-50'E, contacted four large ships and three additional ships (Plate XXXIII, Contact 7).
10. 0637 Japanese search plane contacted three CV, two BB and ten other ships in Latitude 25°-30'N, or Latitude 10°-30'N, Longitude 133°-30'E (Plate XXXVI, Contact C).
11. 0644 CTU 77.4.14 reported to CTU 77.4.1 for duty.
12. 0700 COMDESDIV TWENTY-ONE with DESDIV TWENTY-ONE sortied from Takao en route Manila.
13. 0725 CTU 77.4.24 reported to CTU 77.4.2 for duty. TG 77.4 assembled at full strength for first time.
14. 0726 SEA DOG in Latitude 29°-20'N, Longitude 129°-45'E, fired six torpedoes at a large convoy with numerous escorts. Claimed two hits in a cargo ship (Plate XXXIII, Contact 8). Sank two ships.

15. 0745 Units of the FIRST Section commenced getting underway and later at 0820 units of the SECOND Section commenced getting underway forming the MAIN Body (FIRST Striking Force) en route Leyte via Mindoro and San Bernardino Straits.
16. 0747 COMTHIRDFLT received dispatch from CINCPAC advising that the limitations on operations imposed by necessity of covering SOWESPAC operations had to be accepted and forbade movement of THIRDFLT units into central Philippine waters.
17. 0755 Commander MAIN Force ordered a plane to the vicinity of Latitude 25°-20'N, Longitude 132°-40'E, from 0800 until 1400 to neutralize an enemy submarine.
18. 0800 DARTER in Latitude 09°-23'N, Longitude 115°-20'E, lost contact on three ships, one dimly seen, probably a battleship (Plate XXXIII, Contact 9).
19. 0810 Japanese planes of the SECOND Air Division contacted five CV and seven other ships, bearing 090°(T), distant eighty-six miles from Tacloban (Plate XXXVI, Contact D).
20. 0810 Japanese planes of the SECOND Air Division contacted three CV and five other ships, bearing 090°(T), distant 216 miles from Saravia (Plate XXXVI, Contact E).
21. 0850 Commander MAIN Force received from the HYUGA, a report that she had intercepted enemy radio and telephone traffic, signal strength three or four.
22. 0912 Coordinated Attack Group (PINTADO, ATULE and JALLAO) departed Saipan for patrol in Luzon Strait area.
23. 0920 FIFTH Base Air Force search plane contacted two CV, two BB and several other ships, bearing 087°(T), distant 330 miles from Manila. Amplified at 1636 to one CVL, one CVE, two BB or CA/CL and some DD (Plate XXXVI, Contact G).
24. 0930 ICEFISH in Latitude 19°-44'N, Longitude 118°-11'E, contacted two CA and three DD (SECOND Striking Force) (Plate XXXIII, Contact 10).
25. 1011 Japanese contacted by RDF a ship of unknown type, bearing 093°(T), distant 750 miles from Manila (Plate XXXVI, Contact H).
26. 1101 Commander MAIN Force commenced fueling at sea. Discontinued at 1930.
27. 1105 ZUIKAKU launched four planes to search sector 165°-230°(T), to varying distances of 340 and 380 miles. Made no contacts.



28. 1135 CTG 38.3 completed fueling operations, released replenishment group and set course toward Point READY. Later at 1635 received orders to rendezvous at Point CONDOR with TG's 38.1 and 38.4 at 0600, October 23rd.
29. 1150 COMTHIRDFLT authorized CTG 38.2 to cancel afternoon search due to bad weather and directed this group to proceed to Point MICK for fueling, arriving at 0700, October 23rd.
30. During fore-noon Commander SECOND Striking Force launched one (perhaps two) seaplanes to proceed Manila with orders to radio him any pertinent information concerning planned operations of the FIRST Striking Force.
31. 1200 COD off the west coast of Luzon reported that over twenty enemy planes had passed Lingayen Gulf heading south.
32. 1230 Allied search plane from Tinian sighted two DD in Latitude  $26^{\circ}-30'N$ , Longitude  $138^{\circ}-28'E$ .
33. 1240 CTG 77.4 launched afternoon strikes against Lahug, Opon airfields and Cebu harbor (thirty-two VF, twelve VT). Recovered at 1641.
34. 1330 Commander SIXTH Base Air Force departed Takao for Manila. Arrived Manila about 1700 and reported to Commander SW Area Force for duty.
35. 1400 Morotai based plane contacted nine large merchant ships escorted by five DD in Latitude  $11^{\circ}-47'N$ , Longitude  $116^{\circ}-20'E$  (Plate XXXIII, Contact 11).
36. 1457 HANCOCK from TG 38.2 reported to CTG 38.1 for duty.
37. 1500 Commander THIRD Section with the THIRD Section sortied from Brunei Bay en route Tacloban anchorage via Balabac and Surigao Straits.
38. 1508 ROWELL in Latitude  $09^{\circ}-56'N$ , Longitude  $126^{\circ}-37'E$ , visually sighted a submarine (false contact).
39. 1630 DACE in Dangerous Ground, having set course for Fremantle, requested extension of patrol to work a reported convoy. Extension granted at 1943.
40. 1641 COMNAVGRPCHINA advised that FOURTEENTH Air Force day search planes had turned back due to weather and expected the night search would likewise be cancelled.
41. 1700 Japanese submarine I-54 contacted a group of ships 450 miles east of San Bernardino Strait (Plate XXXVI, Contact I).

- 42. 1718 Japanese contacted by RDF an enemy submarine in Dangerous Ground (likely DACE) (Plate XXXVI, Contact J).
- 43. 1745 DRUM in Latitude 19°-33'N, Longitude 118°-52'E, contacted three ASASHIO class DD (DESDIV TWENTY-ONE) (Plate XXXIII, Contact 12).
- 44. 1956 Wolfpack commander in the BESUGO altered patrol stations of his submarines guarding Bungo Suido to include the eastern approaches.
- 45. During the day FOURTH Air Army received sixty-one planes.
- 46. During the day TG 77.4 provided air cover and support for D+1 day operations.

\* \* \* \* \*

Events Within Leyte Gulf

(Not Depicted on Diagram "D")

- 1. 0705 CHENANGO target CAP destroyed enemy carrier type attack plane in vicinity of northern Dinagat. (The only enemy aircraft intercepted by TCAP on this day.)
- 2. 0756 Reinforcement Group ONE commenced arriving in San Pedro Bay and immediately began unloading.
- 3. 0907 Japanese FOURTH Air Army plane contacted eighty transports within Leyte Gulf (Plate XXXVI, Contact F).
- 4. 1010 CTG 79.2 departed his flagship to make an inspection of beaches discovering that congested conditions of the previous day were little improved.
- 5. 1038 COMSOWESPAC with members of his staff went ashore to inspect conditions and with CAAF SOWESPAC inspected Dulag airfield. Returned aboard flagship at 1355.
- 6. 1100 SAN CARLOS with CTG 73.7 embarked, was detached from TG 77.2 and commenced operating independently.
- 7. 1425 CTG 79.2 departed his flagship to report to CTF 79 in MOUNT OLYMPUS. Returned to his flagship at 1710.
- 8. 1713 CTG 78.6 in CRESENT CITY with a total of seven transports, three cargo ships, escorted by three DD, departed San Pedro Bay for Kossol Roads and Hollandia.



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9. 1800 CTG 78.10 with convoy of sixteen unloaded LST's escorted by one DD and one PF departed the Northern Transport Area for return to Hollandia.
10. 1800 CTU 79.14.2 with convoy of unloaded ships consisting of six transports, two cargo ships, two LSD's, one LSV escorted by two DD's and four APD's departed San Pedro Bay for return to Hollandia.
11. 1852 CTF 77 directed landing of the 381st RCT in the area of the NINETY-SIXTH Division where it was to remain in army reserve.

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# BATTLE FOR LEYTE GULF

## AIR SEARCHES AND MOVEMENT OF FORCES

### 0000 TO 2400 22 OCTOBER 1944

Submarines generally remained submerged during daylight. The movements depicted on this diagram therefore, were usually made on the surface at night.

Although weather in the vicinity of the Main Force is best depicted by the reduced visibility code as shown, it should be noted that there was considerable variation in the visibility during the day and of one time (1200) it was twenty-seven miles.

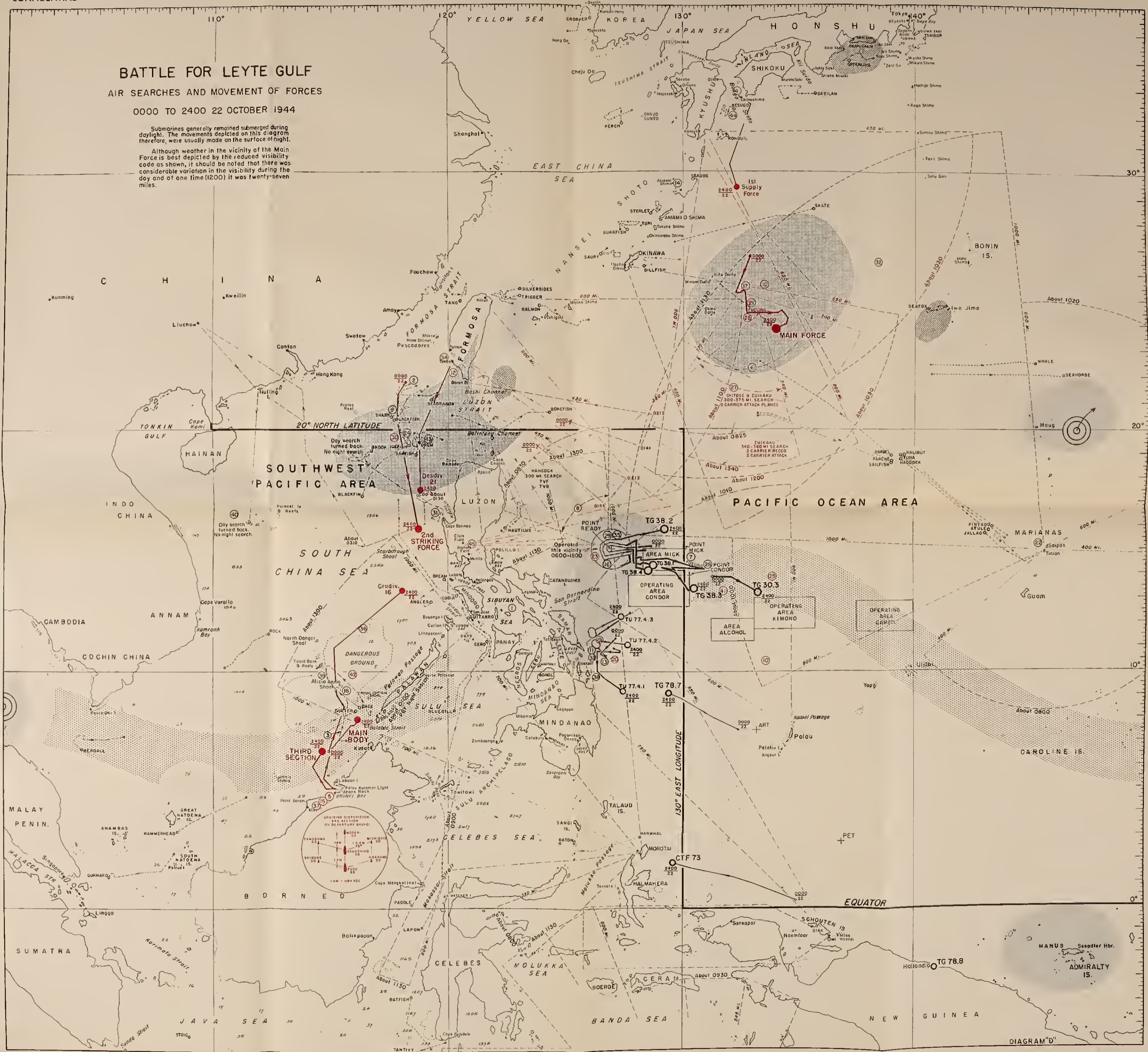


DIAGRAM "D"

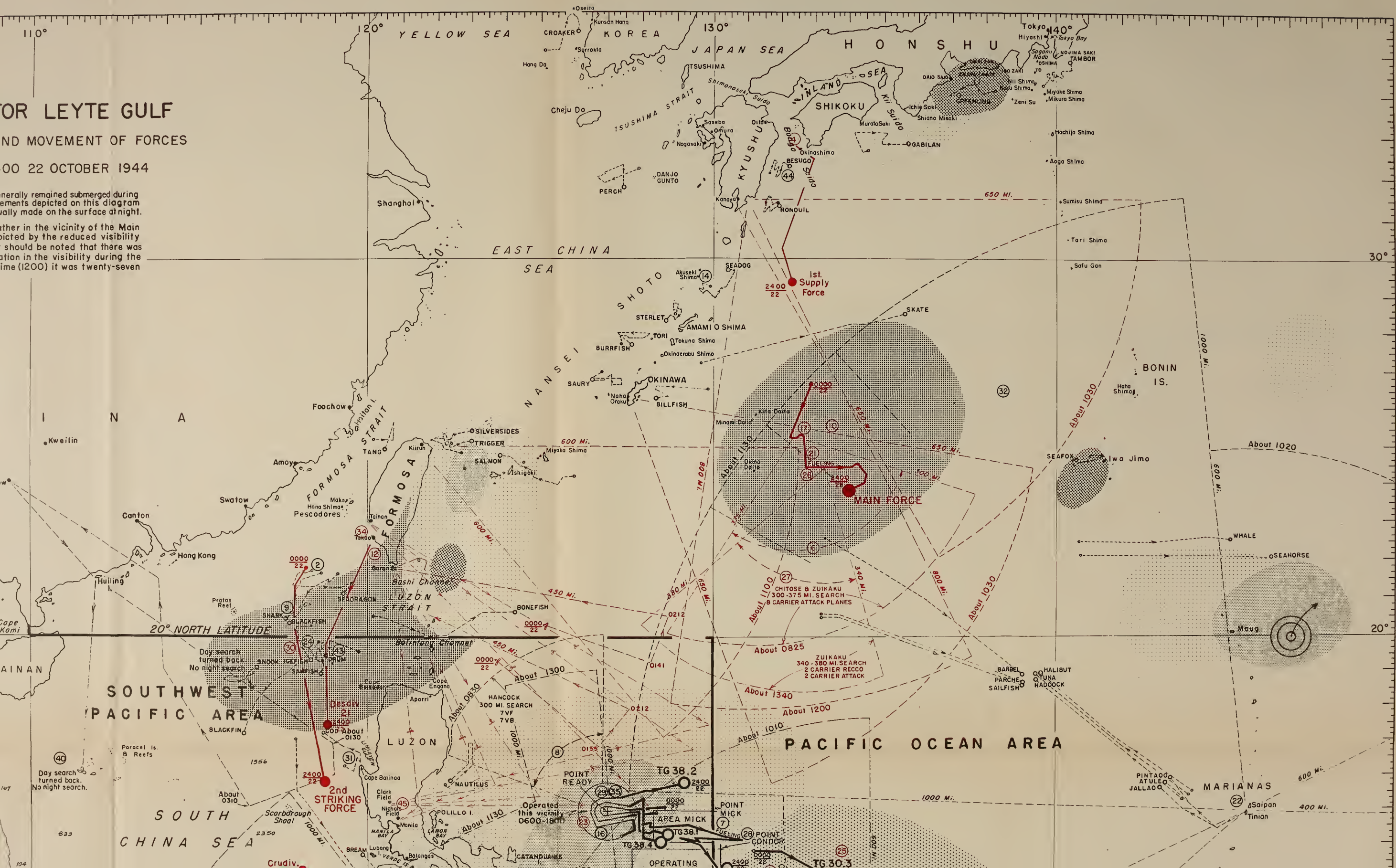






**FOR LEYTE GULF**  
**AND MOVEMENT OF FORCES**  
**00 22 OCTOBER 1944**

Generally remained submerged during movements depicted on this diagram usually made on the surface at night. Weather in the vicinity of the Main Force should be noted that there was a reduction in the visibility during the time (1200) it was twenty-seven

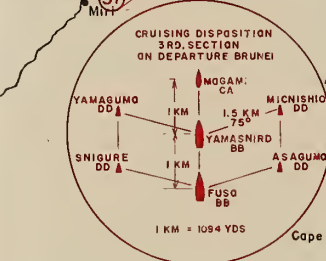






Day search turned back. No night search.

2400 22  
2400 22  
2400 22  
2400 22



TG 78.









Events Depicted on Diagram "E"October 23rd, 19440000 - 1042

1. 0100 RDF Fix on Allied submarine 112°(T), distant 190 miles from southern tip of Formosa (Plate XL, Contact A).
2. 0103 Commander SIXTH Base Air Force issued instructions directing the SECOND Attack Group to move up to the Philippines and orders to the 702nd Attack Unit and 901st Air Group for their prospective operations, indicating to all addressees the possibility of an Allied assault.
3. 0116 DARTER made radar contact on MAIN Body, FIRST Striking Force, at 30,000 yards; made initial contact report as of 0200 on three probable BB Latitude 08°-28'N, Longitude 116°-30'E (Plate XXXIX, Contact 4).
4. 0215 Allied carrier undergoing air attack about 225 miles east of Tacloban (Plate XL, Contact B).
5. 0230 RDF Fix on Allied submarine west of Mindoro Island (Plate XL, Contact C).
6. 0230 RDF Fix on Allied submarine west of lower Palawan Island in Palawan Passage (Plate XL, Contact D).
7. 0252 COMTHIRDFLT issued dispatch orders to CTF 38 to take TG 38.3 westward to an area about ninety miles east of Polillo Island, to make afternoon searches of the Sibuyan Sea, and to launch an early morning search on October 24th of Philippine waters and advised that TG 38.2 would join him upon completion of fueling.
8. 0300 DARTER amplified initial contact report to at least nine ships. (Plate XXXIX, Contact 5).
9. 0302 RDF Fix, evaluation unknown, bearing 073°(T) distant 520 miles from Manila (Plate XL, Contact E), contact about eighty miles north of TG 38.2.
10. 0424 BREAM made one torpedo hit in AOBA in Latitude 14°-05'N, Longitude 119°-40'E, disabling her.
11. 0425 AOBA reports being torpedoed by BREAM in Latitude 14°-00'N, Longitude 119°-27'E (Plate XL, Contact F).
12. 0514 CTG 77.4 launched TCAP (16 VF) later (1215 this day) reduced to twelve VF (four from each Task Unit).

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13. 0525 DARTER in second amplifying report gave enemy composition as a minimum of eleven ships on course 039°(T), speed 15 knots (Plate XXXIX, Contact 6).
14. 0530 CTG 77.4 launched first of the day's direct support missions which were conducted according to plan.
15. 0532 RDF Fix on Allied submarine west of Palawan Island (Plate XL, Contact G).
16. 0555 ESSEX (Flagship CTG 38.3) launched seven VF and seven VB to search sector 280°-350°(T) to 300 miles.
17. 0555 COM MAIN Force launched a nine-plane search of sector 125°-252°(T) to a radius varying from 270 miles on the southeasterly leg to 375 miles on the westernmost leg, base search line 195°(T).
18. Prior 0600 TANG off northwest coast of Formosa attacked a convoy and sank three 1900-ton cargo ships (TOUN MARU, WAKATAKE MARU and TATSUJU MARU) in Latitude 24°-57'N, Longitude 120°-25'E.
19. 0600 TG 38.2 rendezvoused with the fueling group and at 0615 commenced fueling on course 270°(T), speed 10 knots.
20. 0632 DARTER made four torpedo hits on ATAGO of the MAIN Body which sank at 0653 in Latitude 09°-30'N, Longitude 117°-18'E.
21. 0633 DARTER made two torpedo hits on the TAKAO disabling her.
22. 0633 Submarine I-41 sighted two Allied carrier type aircraft in Latitude 15°-35'N, Longitude 130°-12'E (Plate XL, Contact H).
23. 0649 Commander SECOND Section (COMBATDIV THREE) ordered the launching of First Reconnaissance Unit to carry out scheduled missions after neutralizing enemy submarines.
24. 0656 DACE made four torpedo hits in the MAYA which sank at 0700.
25. 0658 Commander FIRST Striking Force (COM MAIN Body) along with about 200 survivors, recovered by KISHINAMI.
26. 0658 YAMATO directed to "Take over communications".
27. 0700 TG 78.8 sortied Humboldt Bay for Leyte Gulf.
28. 0745 Attack aircraft of SIXTH Base Air Force (First Attack Group), aborted on account of weather and returned to bases.
29. 0745 CTG 77.4 launched second flight of direct Support Group aircraft and fighters from PETROF BAY, SANTEE and SUWANEE to conduct sweeps against northern Mindanaon airfields.



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30. 0758 COMBATPAC in WASHINGTON with ALABAMA and DESDIV 100 reported for duty with CTG 38.4.
31. 0803 TAKAO reported unable to proceed under own power or navigate at present.
32. 0817 COMBATDIV ONE directed MAIN Body form No. Y-23 Alert Cruising Disposition (Plate XLII).
33. 0859 COMTHIRDFLT directed TG 38.4 to proceed immediately to arrive vicinity Latitude 11°-30'N, Longitude 126°-30'E by 0600 October 24th and to launch a reinforced search to westward at dawn.
34. 0903 COMTHIRDFLT directed TG 38.2 to proceed vicinity Latitude 13°-00'N, Longitude 125°-00'E to arrive 0600 October 24th and to launch a reinforced search to the westward at dawn to include Coron Bay.
35. 0912 CTG 77.4 fighter sweeps, consisting of 24 VF, struck the Del Monte airfield complex.
36. 0915 RDF Fix on an Allied surface target 200 miles east of Catanduanes Island (Plate XL, Contact I).
37. 0915 COMBATDIV ONE assumed command of Main Body, FIRST Striking Force.
38. 0935 COMTHIRDFLT directed CTG 38.2 to proceed to vicinity Latitude 13°-00'N, Longitude 125°-00'E (the eastern entrance to San Bernardino Strait) to arrive 0600 October 24th.
39. 1021 COMTHIRDFLT issued instructions to CTG 38.1 for accomplishment upon arrival Ulithi.
40. 1021 CTF 17 informed COMTHIRDFLT of the rescued airmen being returned by the BONEFISH and that they would arrive SAIPAN on October 27th.
41. 1026 COMBATDIV ONE informed commanders concerned of present status of MAIN Body, FIRST Striking Force and that he (COMBATDIV ONE), temporarily in command, intended to continue operations as scheduled.
42. 1042 CTG 38.1 was bearing 293°(T), distant 550 miles from Ulithi, his destination.
43. 1042 CTG 38.2 was about 255 miles bearing 063°(T) from his 0600 October 24th position.
44. 1042 CTG 38.3 on course 275°(T), speed 23 knots, was about 420 miles east of Polillo Island and was heading for his position about ninety miles east of that island.

45. 1042 CTG 38.4 continued to top off his destroyers on an easterly heading; was bearing 072°(T) distant 295 miles from his 0600 October 24th position (Latitude 10°-30'N, Longitude 126°-30'E), bearing 050°(T) from southeast Samar.
46. 1042 MAIN Body in Y-23 Alert Cruising Disposition, with Commander FIRST Striking Force in the KISHINAMI was bearing 232°(T), distant ninety-four miles from Libo Point (northern tip of Palawan Island).
47. 1042 TG 77.4 provided air cover and support for D+3 day operations.
48. During Fore-noon C.G. FIFTH Air Force, headquarters at Biak, learned that sometime between midnight and 0200 (this day) two B-24's from Biak staging through Morotai, bombed Malabato Airfield, and forty-four B-24's from Biak departed to strike enemy headquarters near Cotobato in southwest Mindanao.

\* \* \* \* \*

(Not Depicted on Diagram "E")

1. 0605 TCAP fighter from CHENANGO shot down a single engine carrier attack plane off the southeast coast of Leyte.
2. 0744 WACHAPREAGUE accompanied by fifteen MTB's departed San Pedro Bay for Liloan Bay to establish advance base.
3. 0755 CTF 77 received intelligence from CINCPAC stating that Commander SECOND Striking Force had requested an oiler to Coron Bay to refuel his command.
4. 0800 TU 77.7.1 (Replenishment Group) entered Leyte Gulf and anchored in designated area off Liberanan Head.
5. 0839 CTF 79 was transported from the MOUNT OLYMPUS to the WASATCH via the SPROSTON.
6. 0927 CTG 79.2 received word that the 381st RCT had completed its landing on BLUE Beach ONE.
7. 0930 SECOND Attack Unit search plane sighted four Allied battleships or cruisers, thirteen large and four small transports inside Leyte Gulf (Plate XL, Contact J).
8. 1000 LCI(G)'s 64 and 69 with representatives of the FIRST Cavalry Division began reconnoitering San Juanico Strait.
9. 1042 CTF 77 issued his warning dispatch requesting air strikes to disrupt enemy preparations.

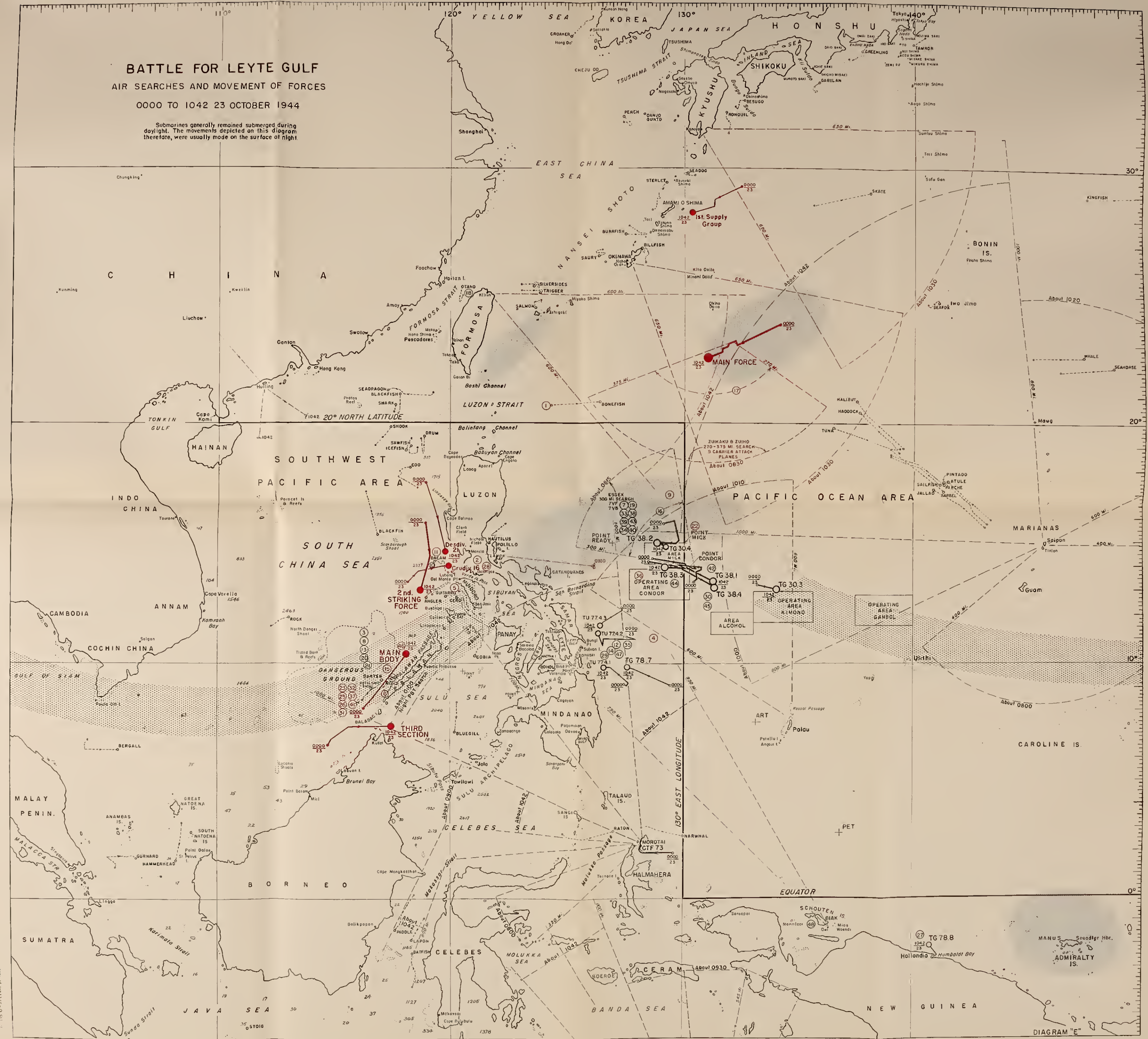


# BATTLE FOR LEYTE GULF

## AIR SEARCHES AND MOVEMENT OF FORCES

0000 TO 1042 23 OCTOBER 1944

Submarines generally remained submerged during daylight. The movements depicted on this diagram therefore, were usually made on the surface at night.















SOUTHWEST  
PACIFIC AREA

PACIFIC OCEAN AREA

SOUTH  
CHINA SEA

2nd.  
STRIKING  
FORCE

MAIN  
BODY

THIRD  
SECTION

DANGEROUS  
GROUND

OPERATING  
AREA  
CONDOR

AREA  
ALCOHOL

OPERATING  
AREA  
KIMONO

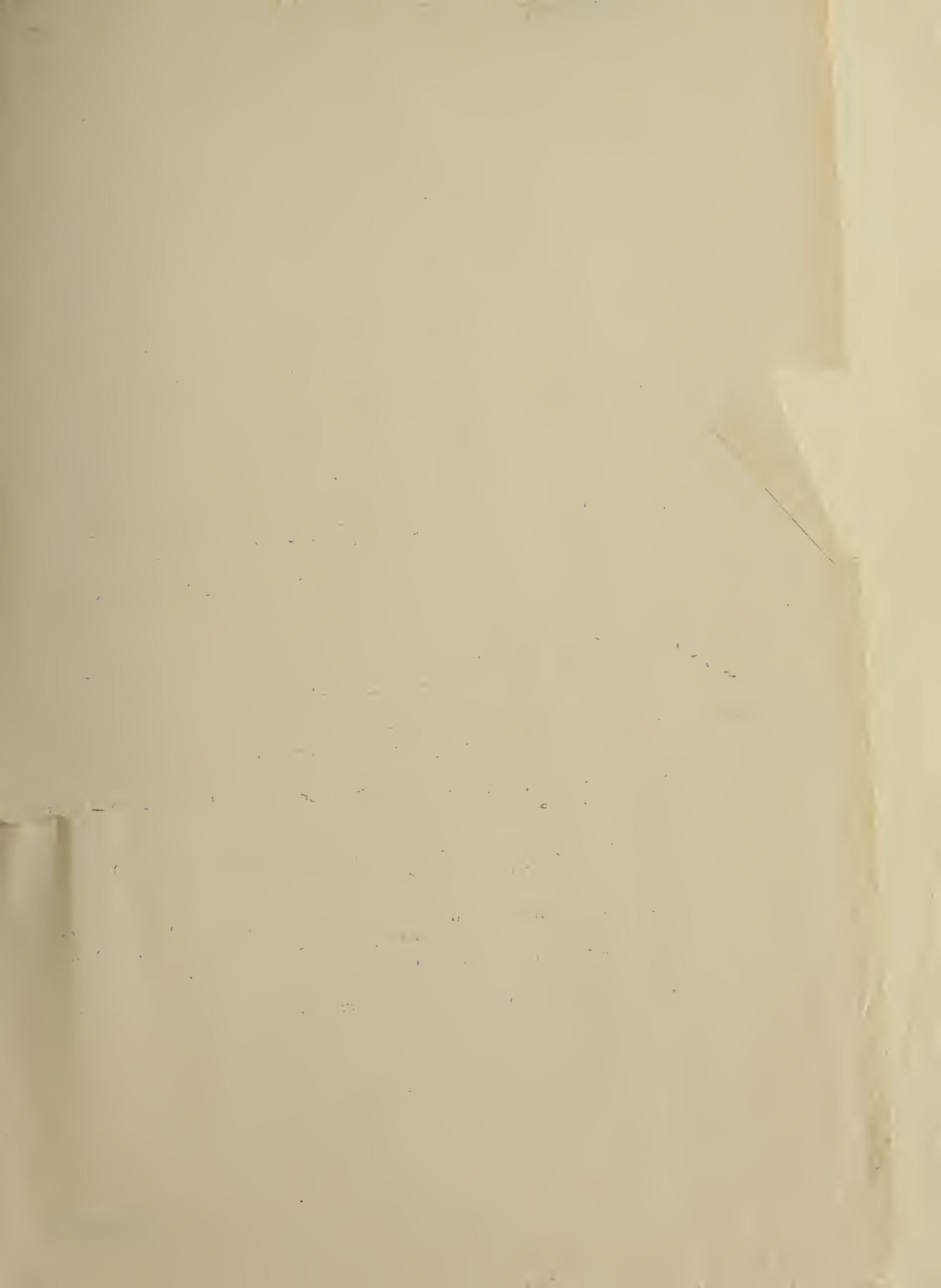
OPERATING  
AREA  
GAMBOL











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