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COMBAT NARRATIVES

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# The Assault on Kwajalein and Majuro (Part One)



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Office of Naval Intelligence  
U. S. Navy

*COMBAT NARRATIVES*

The Assault on  
Kwajalein and Majuro  
(Part One)



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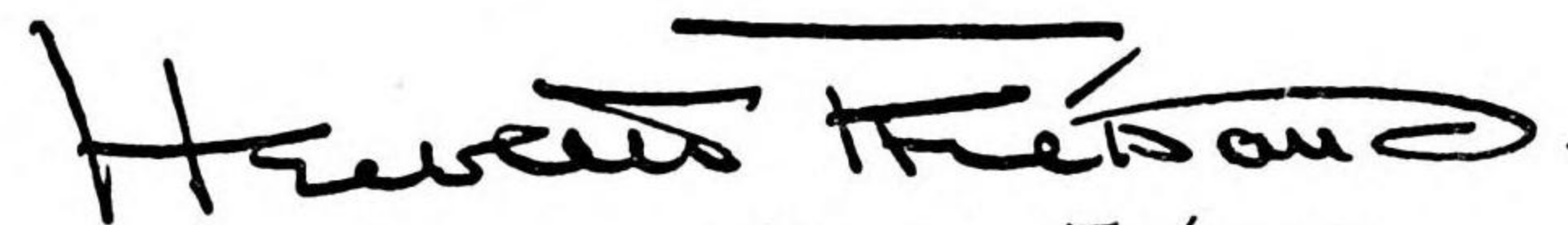
1 March 1945.

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HEWLETT THÉBAUD,  
REAR ADMIRAL, U. S. N.,  
*Director of Naval Intelligence.*

## Foreword

1 March 1945.

Combat Narratives have been prepared by the Publications Branch of the Office of Naval Intelligence for the information of the officers of the United States Navy.

The data on which these studies are based are those official documents which are suitable for a *confidential* publication. This material has been collated and presented in chronological order.

In perusing these narratives, the reader should bear in mind that while they recount in considerable detail the engagements in which our forces participated, certain underlying aspects of these operations must be kept in a secret category until after the end of the war.

It should be remembered also that the observations of men in battle are sometimes at variance. As a result, the reports of commanding officers may differ although they participated in the same action and shared a common purpose. In general, Combat Narratives represent a reasoned interpretation of these discrepancies. In those instances where views cannot be reconciled, extracts from the conflicting evidence are reprinted.

Thus, an effort has been made to provide accurate and, within the above-mentioned limitations, complete narratives with charts covering raids, combats, joint operations, and battles in which our Fleets have engaged in the current war. It is hoped that these narratives will afford a clear view of what has occurred, and form a basis for a broader understanding which will result in ever more successful operations.



E. J. KING,  
FLEET ADMIRAL, U. S. N.,  
*Commander in Chief, U. S. Fleet, and Chief of Naval Operations.*

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# The Assault on Kwajalein and Majuro

## Part One

### PREPARATIONS

#### THE MARSHALL ISLANDS

**B**Y THE end of November 1943 American forces had completed their occupation of the Gilbert Islands, which the Japanese had seized from the British shortly after the outbreak of war in the Pacific. The immediate effect of this operation was to shorten our southwest Pacific supply lines by hundreds of miles and, even more important, to place us in a position to threaten the remaining enemy bases in the Central Pacific.

To the northwest of the Gilberts lie the Marshall Islands, which had been under Japanese mandate for almost 25 years.<sup>1</sup> A chart of the Pacific makes

<sup>1</sup> These islands, possession of which was essential to our subsequent assault on the Philippines, came under the control of Japan in 1919, when the Council of Four at the Paris peace conference agreed to a Japanese mandate over all German-owned Pacific islands north of the equator. This mandate, as confirmed by the League of Nations, pledged the Japanese to refrain from the construction of fortifications and bases, to govern the islands in the interests of the natives, and to allow general supervision by the League's Mandates Commission. During the next 20 years all these provisions were violated.

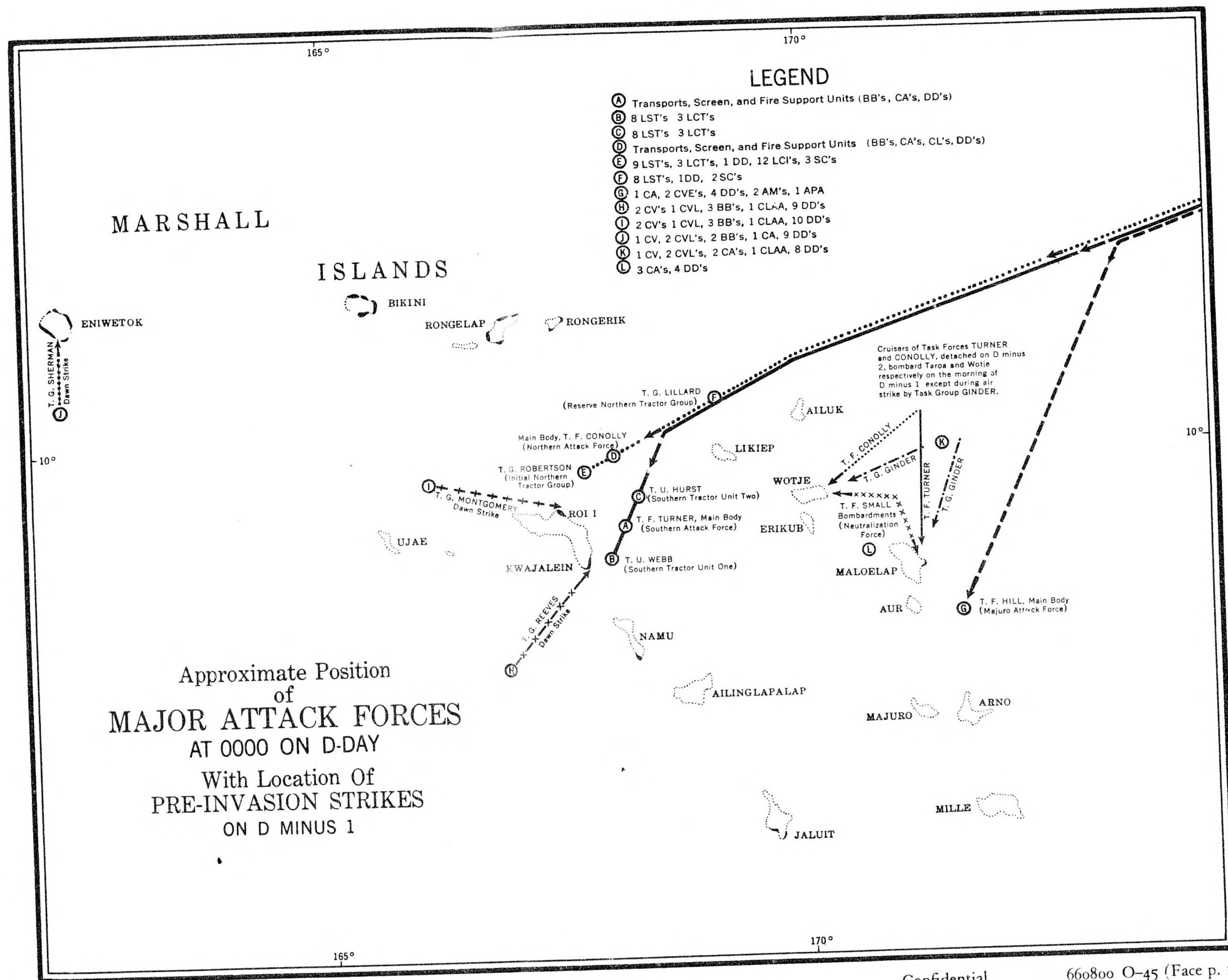
Some of the terms of the mandate were confirmed and expanded at the Washington Disarmament Conference of 1922. Among the results of this conference were an agreement to maintain the status quo regarding fortifications and bases on Pacific islands until at least 1936, and a Japanese-American treaty whereby the United States was granted certain rights in the islands, including the same rights of supervision as accrued to League members.

From the inception of the mandate, missionaries and traders had reported that Japanese construction works on the mandated islands appeared to have a belligerent cast. The cruiser *Milwaukee* visited Eniwetok in 1923, but no real effort was made to open the islands until 1929, when the American Government asked the Japanese to allow destroyers of our Pacific fleet to visit Kwajalein, Wotje and other points in the Marshalls, pointing out that Japanese vessels had been permitted to call at Aleutian ports. The request was refused, on the disingenuous grounds that the harbors were dangerous and pilots were not available.

Three years later, in 1932, the Japanese representative at the League of Nations was called upon for an explanation of the extensive harbor development projects and other construction works being carried out in the Marshalls. He insisted that any public works were undertaken for economic reasons only. Four more years passed, and the American Government once again requested permission for a destroyer to visit the Marshalls. This time the Japanese did not even reply. In 1938 the Japanese, having resigned from the League, ceased reporting to the Mandates Commission. In 1939 the last link between the fortified islands and the western world was cut when the Japanese forbade natives to travel to Kusaie Island in the Carolines, where American missionaries were still in residence.

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it abundantly clear why the Japanese, contemptuous of the obligations they had assumed at the Paris peace conference of 1919, proceeded so vigorously with the fortification of these islands. In a military sense, they played a role for Japan similar to that which the Hawaiian group play for the United States. Their position as a keystone of Japan's outer defense perimeter made it evident that they would be strongly defended against any attack. By the same token their strategic value made their capture essential to our northward and westward drive toward the enemy's homeland. The Marshalls could not safely be bypassed; their military facilities, especially airfields, were too strong to leave in our rear. In addition, some of the larger atolls provided excellent fleet anchorages and sites for bases which we could use to considerable advantage in our subsequent operations against the Carolines and Marianas.<sup>2</sup>

West of the Marshalls are the Carolines and Marianas, which also had been strongly fortified by the enemy. The Marshall Islands, lying between 04° 30' and 14° 45' N. and between 160° 50' and 172° 10' E., constitute in fact an eastward extension of the Caroline Group, which in turn stretches westward almost to the Philippines. The Marshalls stand approximately midway between Hawaii and New Guinea on the great circle route, and on a line between Wake Island to the north-northwest and the Gilbert Islands to the south-southeast.

Consisting of 34 low-lying atolls and single islands, the Marshalls run roughly in two parallel columns from north-northwest to south-southeast. The eastern row, or Radak chain, comprises 14 atolls and two islands, and since it faced the direction from which an attack might be expected was obviously the more heavily fortified. The western, or Ralik chain, has 15 atolls and 3 islands, with natural fleet facilities somewhat better than in the Radak group.<sup>3</sup> The two chains lie approximately 130 miles apart, the average distance between each atoll in a single chain being about 50 miles. The greatest distance—165 miles—separates Eniwetok and Bikini, whereas Knox is only 2 miles from Mille. From Ujelang, near the northwest corner of the archipelago, it is nearly 700 statute miles to the northeastern atoll of Pokaku, whence it is approximately the same distance to Mille in the south-

<sup>2</sup> This Narrative will carry the Marshall Islands operation through the capture of Majuro and up to the arrival of the assault troops at Kwajalein. A subsequent volume will cover the capture of Kwajalein.

<sup>3</sup> Two of the northern atolls of the Ralik chain, Eniwetok and Ujelang, are somewhat out of line to the westward, and are sufficiently isolated from the others so that the Japanese administered them from Ponape in the eastern Carolines.

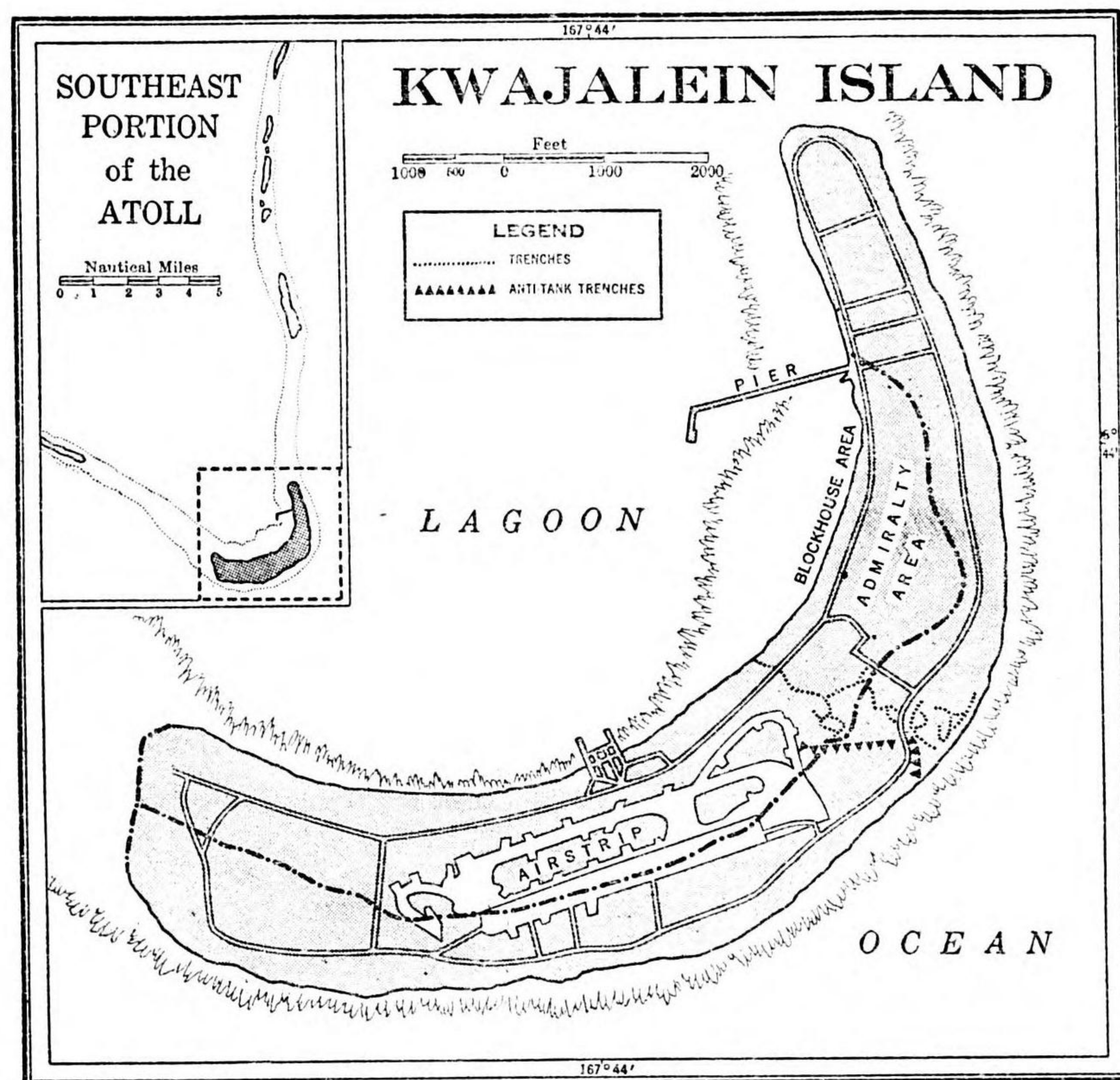
east. The distance from Mille to the southwestern atoll of Ebon is about 275 miles, with another 700-mile jump to Ujelang. The total land-sea area occupied by the group is roughly 375,000 square miles.

Like the Gilberts, the Marshall atolls and islands are formed of coral built up from submerged mountain peaks. There are no volcanic islands such as are found in other parts of Micronesia. No stone other than coral is indigenous to the archipelago, and no deposits other than phosphate and guano have been discovered. Lagoons throughout the area are generally shallow, averaging 20 fathoms in depth, with flat sandy bottoms except where cones of live coral, called "coral heads," project to the surface. Normal rise and fall of tides throughout the Marshalls is about 7 feet. Currents varying from half a knot to 1½ knots set westward in the northern part and eastward in the south. Normally surf breaks over the outer reefs of Marshall atolls and does not reach the beaches themselves. In stormy weather, however, it often breaks over the lower and narrower land masses, and occasional tidal waves accompanying typhoons have inundated entire islands.

The climate is of the tropical marine type. The temperature is remarkably uniform, the monthly average never deviating more than one degree from the annual mean of 81° Fahrenheit. Humidity is extreme and shows little seasonal variation. Heavy precipitation characterizes the whole group, but the amount and monthly distribution differ considerably from atoll to atoll. In general, rainfall in the southern part is distributed fairly evenly throughout the year, while the northern atolls and islands get very little rain during the winter when the trade winds are often accompanied by extensive periods of fine weather. During an average day the wind is strongest at about 0600 and most moderate in the early evening.

The position and natural strategic advantages of six of the islands—three in each chain—dictated their choice as foci for the enemy's defensive efforts. In the Radak chain, where an attack could more logically be expected to fall, his preparations were centered on the atolls of Wotje, Maloelap, and Mille. Key positions in the Ralik chain, less heavily fortified than their Radak counterparts, were Eniwetok, Kwajalein, and Jaluit. Intelligence reports indicated that especially heavy fortifications and armaments, as well as excellent airfields, were under construction and constant improvement at Wotje and at Taroa Island in Maloelap. The Ralik chain, on the other hand, apparently was regarded more as a secondary line of defense, and although its fortifications and air bases were by no means negligible, they

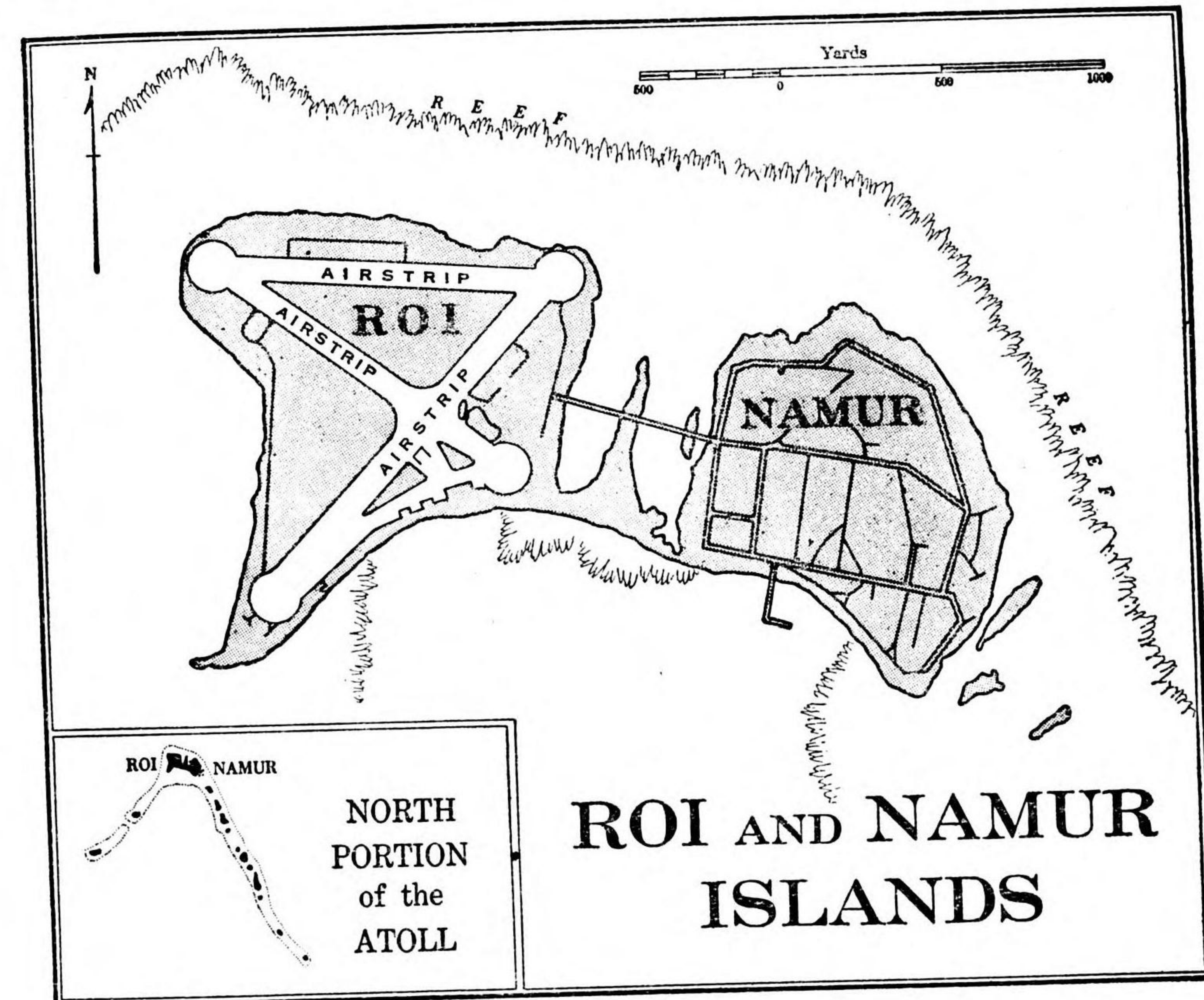
were less highly developed. The quantity of available planes according to our estimates appeared greater at the Radak bases, although accurate figures were not available. Apparently the enemy's intention was to fly these in from the Radak atolls to Kwajalein and Eniwetok should the latter be threatened.



Kwajalein atoll, which became the objective of our main attack, is centrally located in the western Marshalls and is largest of that group. About 66 miles long, it surrounds a lagoon of almost 700 square miles with mooring ground sufficient for all the navies of the world. Although the rim contains more than 80 islands (and hummocks which pass for islands), only three areas could be said to possess any military value. At the southern end, the main Japanese installations were located on the islands of Kwajalein and Ebeye (see chart, p. 6); on the western side of the atoll the only island of military importance was Ebadon; and to the north, 44 miles

distant from Kwajalein Island proper,<sup>4</sup> lay the twin isles of Roi and Namur. These latter two are joined by a spit of land, over which runs a causeway.

Kwajalein Island is crescent-shaped, approximately 2½ miles long by 1,000 to 2,500 feet wide. The most convenient approach to the lagoon is Gea Pass which, at the time of our attack, had been buoyed and dragged to a depth of 49 feet. A safe lagoon anchorage, consisting of 196 berths



with a depth in excess of 49 feet and with a coral and sand bottom, was available.

The islands of Roi and Namur are smaller, Roi being 1,250 yards by 1,170 yards, and Namur 890 by 800 yards. Two channels, one 13 fathoms deep, gave approach to the mooring grounds inside the lagoon. Approximately 95 berths were available at that time, with depths of from 15 to 24 fathoms. Coral heads throughout the area were buoyed.

The population of Kwajalein Atoll in 1939, when the last available census was taken, was 1,079, mostly Micronesians. Since then the Japanese had

<sup>4</sup> Throughout this narrative, the word "Kwajalein" will be used for Kwajalein Atoll. When Kwajalein Island is meant, it will be so designated.



undoubtedly moved many of the inhabitants to other Marshall atolls. Most of the natives at that time lived in villages on the islands of Kwajalein, Roi, Ebadon, and Nell.

Passages through the reef—highly important to an invading force—numbered more than two dozen. In addition to Gea Pass, five other entrances were believed to be safe for our larger ships. These were:

(a) South Pass, between Ennylabegan and Enubuj Islands. The depth of this pass was only  $3\frac{1}{4}$  fathoms.

(b) Bigej Channel, between Bigej and Gugegwe Islands, with a depth of 5 fathoms.

(c) North Pass, between Ennuebing and Mellu Islands, also 5 fathoms deep.

(d) Eru Pass, between Eru and Gegibu Islands, with a 9-fathom depth. Because of the prevailing east and northeast winds, this pass was especially suitable for egress from the lagoon.

(e) Onemak Pass, between Onemak and Illiginni Islands. This entrance had a depth of 20 fathoms, and was moderately free of coral heads.

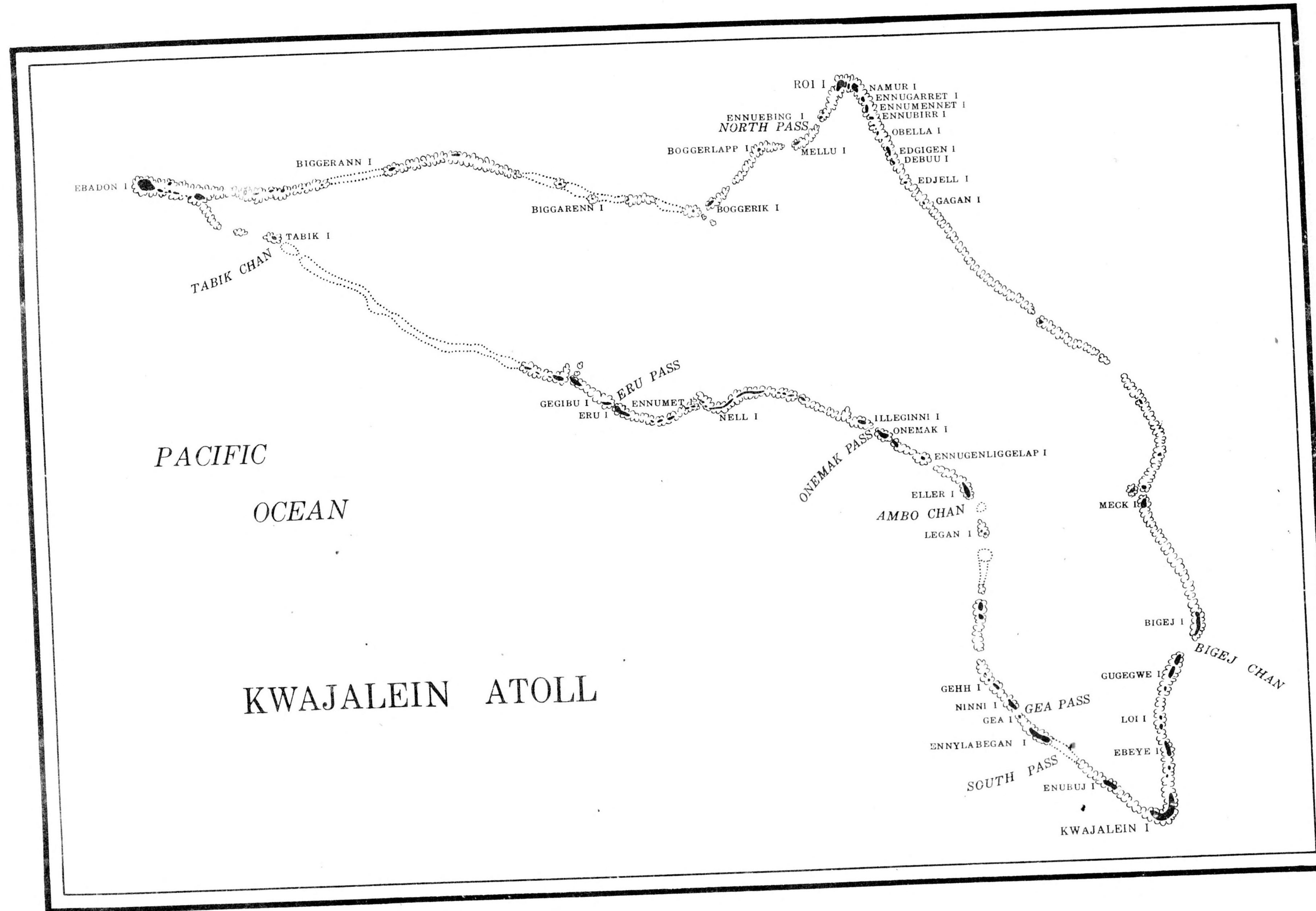
The atoll has many other entrances suitable for light craft. On both sides of the western salient, particularly, are many long stretches where the reef is sunken, and depths of 2 to 6 fathoms can be found.

The problem of anchorages inside the lagoon was more troublesome, since the better holding grounds were not necessarily located near the larger islands. The most convenient anchorage was just off Kwajalein Island, in 7 to 15 fathoms. About a quarter of the way up the lagoon, off Meck Island, was another fair anchorage, although the sudden shoaling made this somewhat dangerous. South of Roi, vessels could anchor in more than 5 fathoms, but when the wind hauled around to south of east this area was not wholly safe. Outside the lagoon ships could anchor off Eru Island in 7 fathoms of water, or off Onemak in 5 fathoms.

#### THE PLAN

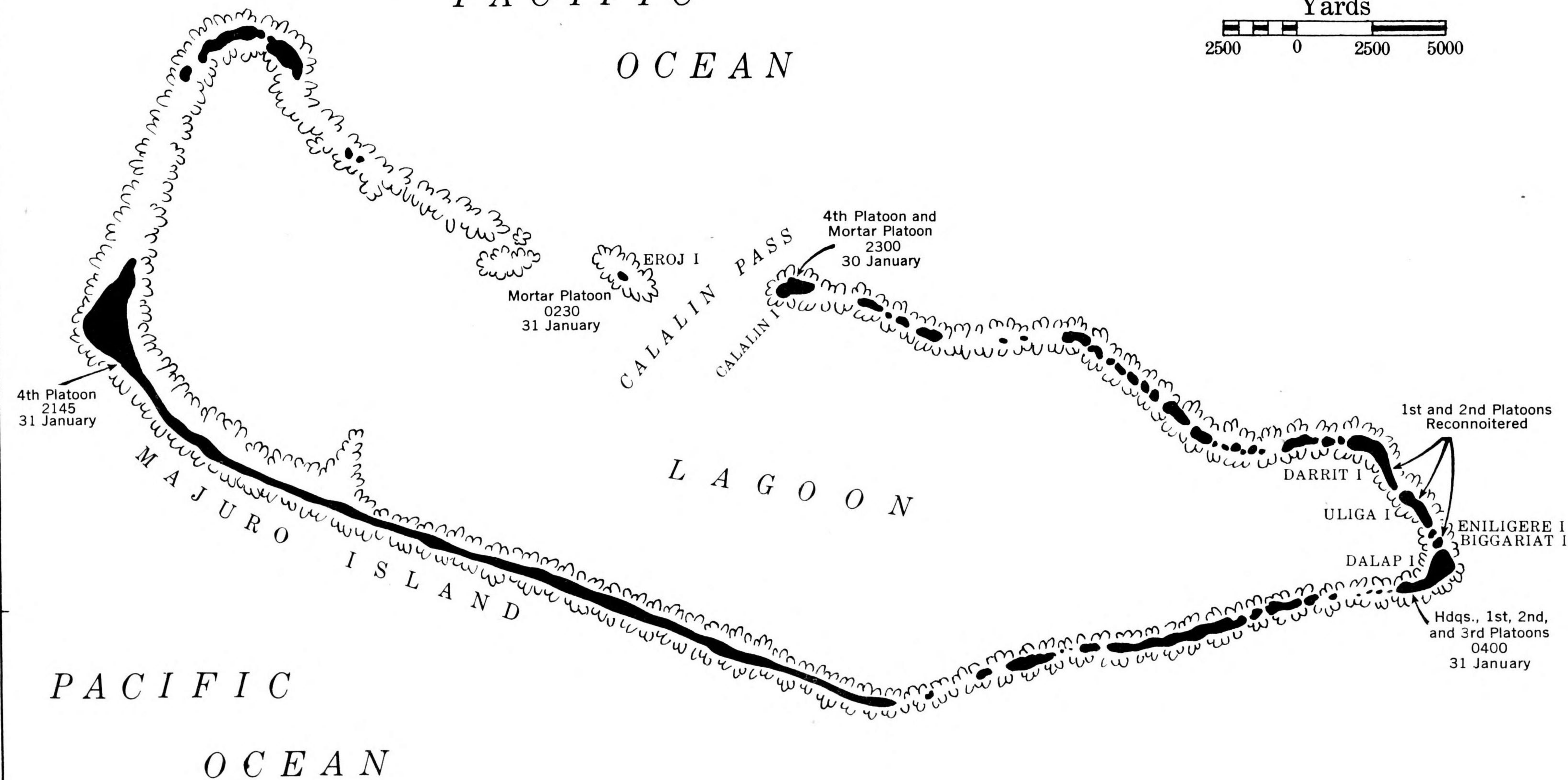
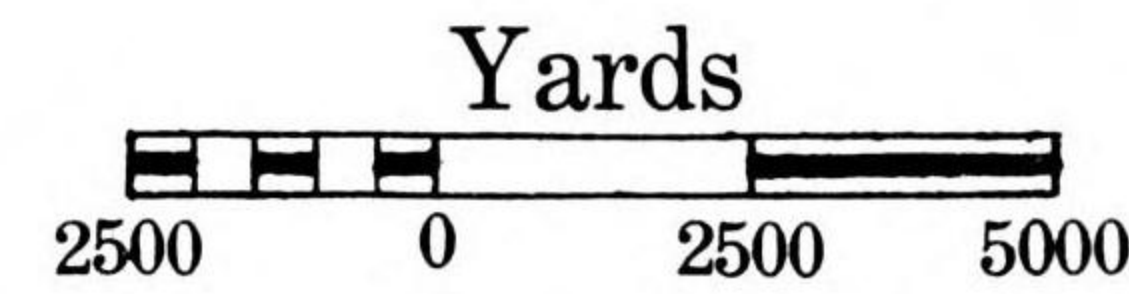
##### *Genesis of the Plan*

Planning for the Marshalls operation began before mid-October 1943. As first set forth, our intention was "to capture, occupy, and develop bases at Wotje, Maloelap, and Kwajalein, and vigorously deny Mille and Jaluit in order to control the Marshalls." It was proposed to assault Wotje and



# MAJURO ATOLL

PACIFIC  
OCEAN



PACIFIC  
OCEAN

Maloelap on 1 January 1944. The forces destined for Kwajalein would remain east of these two atolls until their capture, or at least until success was assured, when they would proceed to their attack. It was hoped this could be done on D plus 1 day.

Our experience in the Gilberts in the latter part of November led to a reconsideration of this plan. Difficulties in that operation indicated that an assault upon three strongly defended atolls was an undertaking of considerable magnitude. After further reconnaissance and study the Commanding General, Fifth Amphibious Corps, advised CINCPAC on 6 December that the forces available were insufficient for the capture of all these objectives.

Accordingly the scope of the projected operation was reduced. On 14 December CINCPAC directed the preparation of plans for the initial capture of Kwajalein Atoll, and of alternate plans for the capture of Wotje and Maloelap. D-day was now advanced to 17 January, and soon, because of the necessity of revising lower echelon plans, to 31 January.

The next development was a CINCPAC directive on 17 December designating the 7th Army Division as the landing force for Kwajalein Island in the southern part of the Atoll, and the 4th Marine Division for the assault on Roi and Namur in the northern part. The same directive introduced a new element by providing that an undefended atoll, not yet identified, was to be occupied by one battalion. Although plans for the capture of Kwajalein were thus maturing, Wotje and Maloelap were retained as alternatives and work continued on plans for their capture.

The decision between the alternative plans was indicated by a CINCPAC Joint Staff Study issued 20 December, which committed us to the capture of Kwajalein. Wotje and Maloelap were to be neutralized by bombing, by carrier attacks, and by surface bombardment, while the effectiveness of enemy air bases on other atolls was to be reduced by our air attacks. A directive of the 23rd named Majuro as the undefended atoll which was to be occupied, and assigned the 1st Marine Defense Battalion for that task. Although the capture of Eniwetok was not prescribed in any major directive, plans were drawn up for a landing on that atoll in case the capture of Kwajalein should prove sufficiently rapid to justify a further move to the west. This was the final decision as to objectives, and it remained only to develop the plan and apply it through the lower echelons.

It was believed that this attack on Kwajalein would achieve speedier success with fewer casualties than would an assault on Wotje and Maloelap,

providing we were able simultaneously to interdict the air facilities at the latter two atolls. The attack would have a far greater chance of achieving tactical surprise. Possession of Kwajalein and Eniwetok would isolate the Radak garrisons, which thereafter could be taken at leisure or disregarded. Finally, the seizure of the Ralik atolls would give us the best fleet anchorages in the Marshalls and would place our advance air bases just so much nearer to the enemy's inner defense ring.

#### *Command and Organization*

Supreme command for the operation, under CINCPAC, was vested in COMCENPAC, Vice Admiral Raymond F. Spruance. The Joint Expeditionary Force was commanded by Rear Admiral Richmond K. Turner, Commander Fifth Amphibious Force. Under him, the Expeditionary Troops (Assault and Garrison Forces) were commanded by Maj. Gen. Holland M. Smith, USMC, Commanding General, V Amphibious Corps. The Joint Expeditionary Force was broken into several subordinate forces corresponding to the objectives to be captured.

The Expeditionary Force was protected by a fast carrier force assigned to Rear Admiral Marc A. Mitscher. This also was subdivided into appropriate forces. A neutralization force was commanded by Rear Admiral Ernest G. Small. Defense forces and land-based air were under Rear Admiral John H. Hoover.

The organization in brief,<sup>5</sup> then, was as follows:

Fifth Fleet: Vice Admiral Raymond A. Spruance:

Joint Expeditionary Force: Rear Admiral Richmond K. Turner:

Expeditionary Troops: Maj. Gen. Holland M. Smith, USMC.

Support Aircraft: Capt. Harold B. Sallada.

Southern Attack Force (Kwajalein): Rear Admiral Richmond K. Turner.  
(1 AGC, 4 OBB, 3 CVE, 3 CA, 22 DD, 3 AM, 2 DMS, 11 APA, 1 AP, 2 APD, 3 AKA, 3 LSD, 18 LST, 12 LCI(L), 6 LCT, 5 SC, 4 YMS, 3 AT).

Southern Landing Force: Maj. Gen. Charles H. Corlett, USA.

7th Army Division plus assigned units: 21,768 officers and men.

Garrison and Advance Base Force: 3rd and 4th Army Defense battalions, 13,326 officers and men.

Advance Transport Unit: Capt. John B. McGovern.

Southern Transport Group: Capt. Herbert B. Knowles.

Fire Support Group: Rear Admiral Robert C. Giffen.

Carrier Support Group: Rear Admiral Ralph E. Davison.

<sup>5</sup> For complete task force organization see Appendix A.

Northern Attack Force (Roi-Namur): Rear Admiral Richard L. Conolly.  
(1 AGC, 3 OBB, 3 CVE, 3 CL, 2 CA, 19 DD, 3 AM, 4 DMS, 11 APA, 1 AP, 1 APD, 3 AKA, 2 LSD, 17 LST, 12 LCI(L), 6 LCT, 5 SC, 4 YMS, 3 AT).

Northern Landing Force: Maj. Gen. Harry M. Schmidt, USMC.

4th Marine Division plus assigned units, 20,778 officers and men.

Roi Garrison Force: elements of 15th Marine Defense Battalion, 10,885 officers and men.

Initial Tractor Group: Capt. Armand J. Robertson.

Northern Transport Group: Capt. Pat Buchanan.

Northern Support Group: Rear Admiral Jesse B. Oldendorf.

Northern Carrier Group: Rear Admiral Van H. Ragsdale.

Attack Reserve Group: Capt. Donald W. Loomis.

Reserve Landing Force: Brig. Gen. Thomas E. Watson, USMC.

22nd Marine Regiment (Reinforced) plus assigned units.

106th Infantry Regiment (Reinforced) less 2nd Battalion plus assigned units.

Total 9,325 officers and men.

Majuro Attack Group: Rear Admiral Harry W. Hill.

Majuro Landing Force: Lt. Col. Frederick H. Sheldon, USA.

2nd Battalion 106th Infantry.

5th Amphibious Corps Reconnaissance Company.

Total 1,595 officers and men.

Majuro Garrison Force: elements of 1st Marine Defense Battalion, 7,165 men.

Fast Carrier Force: Rear Admiral Marc A. Mitscher.

(6 CV, 6 CVL, 8 BB, 3 CA, 3 CLAA, 36 DD).

Neutralization Force: Rear Admiral Ernest G. Small.

(3 CA, 4 DD, 2 DM).

Defense Forces and Land-based Air: Rear Admiral John H. Hoover.

#### *Basic Assumptions*

Our planning of the operation assumed that we had sufficient air and surface strength to defeat the main Japanese fleet should it join battle, and to prevent enemy aircraft and submarines from halting our operations. It was also believed that our Marine and Army contingents, with the air and naval gunnery support available, could capture a limited number of bases in the face of any probable defense, and that these objectives could quickly be garrisoned and organized for independent defense against anything but a major counterattack. Subsequent construction or rehabilitation of airfields and the establishment of land-based air forces would, it was assumed, enable us in a fairly short time to neutralize any of the surrounding islands still held by the enemy.

The first essential was to guard against any attempt at naval interference by the enemy. To insure this, the main combatant strength of our Pacific Fleet—fast carriers, battleships, cruisers, and destroyers—was to be interposed as a “carrier shield force.”<sup>6</sup> It was also fully anticipated that the great concentration of transports and supporting vessels, partially immobilized at the points of assault, would present an extremely attractive target for enemy air attack. Obviously the earliest possible neutralization of numerous air and naval bases in the area was essential to the success of the operation. In this connection it was assumed:

(1) That enemy land-based aircraft from Ponape, Eniwetok, Wake, Roi, Kwajalein, Wotje, Taroa, Mille, Kusaie, and Nauru, and enemy seaplanes from Jaluit and possibly other atolls, might attack our invasion forces.

(2) That our own land-based aircraft (Task Force Hoover)<sup>7</sup> would be able to inhibit enemy operations from Mille and Jaluit, and reduce to minor proportions any from Nauru and Kusaie.

(3) That our carrier-based aircraft and surface vessels would so restrict attacks from any bases except Ponape that they would be ineffective.

#### *Development of Bases in the Gilberts*

To enable our land-based aircraft to carry out their tasks, it was necessary to speed up the development of our advanced bases throughout the entire Central Pacific. On 1 January our total air strength operating from the new bases in the Gilbert Islands—Tarawa, Makin, and Apamama—was 125 aircraft of all types. By the end of the month this number had been increased to 365. These planes were organized into three groups:

1. An Army bombing group consisting of 137 B-24's, B-25's, and A-24's.
2. A fighter group of 130 P-39's, P-40's, and F6F's.
3. A search and patrol group composed of 98 PB4Y's, PBM's, PB4Y's, and PV's.

The groups were subdivided; some planes of each type being stationed on each of the islands.

During the month of January several projects at Tarawa were completed or neared completion. These included the construction of the Mullinix Field fighter strip, a hospital and a dispensary. Several defensive gun batteries were added, aviation gasoline tanks were installed, and additional navigational buoys and moorings were placed. By the end of the month

<sup>6</sup> This was the famous Task Force 58, under the command of Rear Admiral Marc A. Mitscher.

<sup>7</sup> “Defense Forces and Land-based Air.”

152 planes, including 62 medium and 36 heavy bombers, were in operation on the atoll.

On Makin the projects were even more extensive. The main runway was extended to 7,000 feet and the taxiways to 25,000 feet, while additional hard stands, aviation gasoline storage tanks, hospital facilities, and tanker moorage and fill lines were completed. Because the foundation of the Makin airfield was sand instead of coral, no heavy bombers were based there during the month, although some were staged through. Smaller bombers and fighters at Makin, however, were within range of Mille and Jaluit, and made repeated attacks on these bases.

The development of Apamama was on a slightly smaller scale. Work on the 8,000-foot runway was continued, and by the end of the month 112 planes—including most of the search planes of Task Force Hoover—were based there. In addition, gasoline storage facilities were completed and additional buoys, moorings, and tanker fill lines installed.

#### *Preliminary Air Operations*

These developments made possible the successful execution of a number of preliminary tasks specifically assigned to Task Force Hoover by COM-CENPAC (Vice Admiral Raymond A. Spruance):

1. Initiate, beginning on D minus 15 day, an intensive bombing of all defended islands in the Marshalls.
2. Deny to the enemy, beginning on D minus 2 day, the use of air bases at Mille and Jaluit and thereafter maintain the neutralization of these bases.
3. Destroy enemy aircraft and air facilities on Roi, Wotje, and Taroa Islands (and on Kwajalein Island if facilities there were operational) up to and through D minus 3 day.
4. Conduct mining operations at Jaluit, Mille, Maloelap, and Wotje, furnishing air support at Kwajalein on D-day if requested.
5. Assist other forces engaged in neutralizing airfields at Wotje and Taroa from D minus 2 day on.
6. Deny to any enemy aircraft which could interfere substantially with the Kwajalein operation the use of bases at Kusaie and Nauru.
7. Carry out photographic reconnaissance of the Marshall atolls, as directed by CINCPAC (Admiral Chester W. Nimitz).
8. Make a close air reconnaissance of Majuro Atoll between D minus 5 and D minus 2 days, reporting observations to the commander of the Majuro attack force.

9. Make daily searches from D minus 7 day through D-day, search aircraft to be on their outer limits at sundown.
10. Attack enemy ships and shipping.
11. Defend our bases in the Gilbert and Ellice Islands.
12. Protect our shipping in the Gilbert-Ellice-Southern Marshalls area.
13. Provide air transportation.

In accordance with these instructions, our offensive operations during January included numerous strikes at enemy bases throughout the Central Pacific. Almost daily attacks on Mille by light bombers and fighters, with occasional sorties by medium and heavy bombers, kept the airfield on that atoll inoperative during the latter part of the month. The seaplane base at Jaluit was hit with 154 tons of bombs and effectively neutralized. On the other hand, we made only a few attacks on Kusaie and Nauru, since intelligence estimates indicated that these bases were little used.

Bases at Wotje and Maloelap underwent several attacks which were carried out against heavy opposition, including interception by as many as 35 enemy planes at one time. Enemy fighters frequently followed our bombers out to sea and attacked them. This practice was effectively stopped on 26 January when U. S. aircraft led interceptors from Maloelap into a trap where 12 P-40's downed six of them. Because of the loss of several B-24's in daylight attacks during the early part of the month, however, later heavy-bomber strikes were usually carried out at night. In addition to the B-24 attacks, 126 medium-bomber sorties, many at low levels, were made against these bases. Both atolls were still operational, however, until the carrier attacks at the month's end.

Primary attention during these preliminary poundings centered on Kwajalein. This atoll was subjected to the hardest attacks of all by B-24's and PB4Y's, but unfortunately it was beyond the range of medium and light bombers. Roi airfield, like the installations on Taroa and Wotje, was operational until the carrier planes struck.

Because of the urgent need for neutralizing enemy shore bases in the Marshalls, operations against Japanese shipping were limited in general to attacks of opportunity by search planes. Three particularly successful anti-shipping strikes during the month were planned in advance, however. The first took place on 11 January, and was directed against vessels in the lagoon at Kwajalein. Complete surprise was achieved by the 10 PB4Y's which made their runs at high speed and at very low altitudes. Fourteen 500-pound bomb hits on shipping were claimed, and additional hits were scored

on shore installations. CINCPAC estimated that two freighters were sunk and several others severely damaged. The planes obtained excellent photographs, and all returned safely.

On 11 and 13 January two more strikes were made on shipping at Maloelap and Wotje by B-25G's equipped with 75-mm. cannon. Both attacks were carried out at dusk from masthead height,<sup>8</sup> nine planes taking part on each occasion. The planes flew in line abreast, first strafing shipping with their .50-caliber machine guns and 75-mm.'s, and then dropping their bombs. The attackers claimed 12 freighters and smaller craft sunk or damaged, and one destroyer damaged so badly that it was beached by its crew. All aircraft returned safely.

In all, planes of Task Force Hoover sank an estimated 16 enemy ships and damaged 30 more during the month. Most of these vessels were rather small; but of the ships reported sunk one was a merchantman of some 7,000 tons and four others were freighters of 4,000 tons. It was estimated that about half the ships sighted by search planes were attacked, and about a quarter of those attacked were sunk.

Meanwhile PB4Y's and PB4Y's carried out a number of minelaying flights over channels and anchorages in the lagoons at Wotje, Maloelap, Mille, and Jaluit. Photographic planes obtained excellent coverage of all important enemy bases, sometimes flying at low levels in the face of strong anti-aircraft fire and enemy interception.

The Japanese, for their part, were not idle. During the first 3 weeks of the month they attacked our Gilbert Island bases almost nightly, usually at dusk or during moonlight. In general the raids were light and the bombing poor; but on three nights—2, 11, and 15 January—the attacks were on a heavier scale. It was estimated that the enemy on these nights flew a total of 65 sorties, during which 203 bombs were dropped. On Tarawa a machine shop was destroyed, five persons were killed, and eight planes were damaged. On Makin the damage was negligible, while on Apamama one of our PB4Y's was destroyed and two others damaged.

#### TRAINING AND REHEARSALS

Training, which went on concurrently with the planning, was under supervision of the V Amphibious Corps. The 4th Marine Division and the 22nd Marines (reinforced) had already been assigned to the Corps when

<sup>8</sup> The attacks were made at such low levels that one of the aircraft caught up a Japanese flag which remained plastered to the wing until the plane returned to base.

planning for the operation began. The 7th Army Division and the 106th Infantry did not come under its control till 11th December, and the 1st and 14th Defense Battalions till the 15th. However, the 7th Division and the 1st Defense Battalion coordinated their training with the Corps for some time before their assignment. Training was complicated by the separation of the principal units. The 4th Marine Division was in California, while the other units were in Hawaii.

The 4th Marine Division began amphibious training in the San Diego area on 14 November. Ships assigned to the Northern Attack Force held rehearsals in the same area, maintaining close liaison with the Marine division. Plans and amphibious training were handled as joint problems, and all action taken in matters affecting both groups had the concurrence of Admiral Conolly and the Marine commander. Each regimental combat team was given a 2-weeks period of actual ship-to-shore training from transports. One of these rehearsal landings was held on the Aliso Canyon beaches off Camp Pendleton, Calif., during December. Admiral Conolly hoisted his flag on the *Appalachian* on 1 December, and on the 13th of the same month closed his temporary headquarters at Camp Pendleton. Since the flagship was only 40 miles from the camp, and since direct telephone and teletype communication was maintained, the close liaison with the Fourth Marine Division continued. Administrative matters were handled through the Commander, Amphibious Training Command, Pacific Fleet, who provided all facilities for training and made supply and repair arrangements.

A dress rehearsal was held at San Clemente Island on 2 and 3 January, simulating as closely as possible the actual attack. Most of the combatant vessels assigned as fire support ships bombarded the island during this rehearsal; carriers assigned to the Northern Attack Force also carried out their air support assignments.

During the training period aircraft from ComFAirWestCoast replacement groups were used in combat team and division landing rehearsals both at Aliso Canyon and San Clemente. Communications closely approximated those used during the actual operation, and the air liaison parties of the Jasco (Joint Assault Signal and Communication Operations) attached to the Marine division underwent continuous training by ComPhibPac representatives and field work with the Marines. The Division Air Liaison Party was expanded in both materiel and personnel, and was trained to

function as a shore-based air support control party.<sup>9</sup> Destroyers assigned as fighter-director ships conducted tests of their communications equipment, and additional operating personnel were procured from Pearl Harbor by dispatch.

The 7th Infantry Division (reinforced) and the 22nd Marines (reinforced) held their final training exercises in the Hawaiian area. Landings were rehearsed at Kahoolawe Island and actually made at Maalaea Bay on Maui. Regimental Combat Team 106 did not participate in these exercises because of a dearth of shipping, but Battalion Landing Team 2-106, which had been designated to capture and occupy Majuro Atoll, held a landing exercise on Oahu on 14 January.

Islands on which these exercises were held were laid out to resemble the size and terrain of the objectives. After the rehearsals had ended, all forces returned to port for necessary repairs and rest before the final sortie.

When it became clear what shipping would be available for the operation, plans were prepared for the assignment of subordinate units to vessels. These were governed by certain considerations. First, troops had to be embarked according to the proposed tactical plan so as to have assault, defense, and garrison forces arrive at the target area on schedule. Secondly, supplies had to be loaded according to the scheme of maneuver. Third, there had to be assurance that excess equipment was not carried, as had been the case in previous amphibious operations. This last was accomplished by a thorough screening of the equipment lists of all units.

Loading plans were appreciably complicated by last-minute decisions to carry additional supplies and by the fact that some stores arrived at the loading points only a short time before departure. Most of these incidents were caused by units being attached to the corps too late to make complete plans. Nevertheless, these difficulties did not prevent our vessels from sailing in accordance with the following schedule:

6 January: Departure of Northern Tractor Groups<sup>10</sup> One and Two from San Diego for Kauai, T. H.

13 January: Departure of Northern Attack Force from San Diego for Lahaina Roads.

19 January: Departure of Southern Tractor Groups One and Two from

<sup>9</sup> This arrangement was made so that the Commander Support Aircraft would have sufficient shore-based communication facilities to tide him over until an Acorn (an air base organization, composed principally of construction battalion personnel) communications could be established.

<sup>10</sup> Tractor groups were constituted largely of large landing craft carrying men and equipment.

Pearl Harbor for Kwajalein; departure of Northern Tractor Groups One and Two from Kauai for Roi.

21 January: Departure of Majuro Defense Group from Pearl Harbor for Majuro.

22 January: Departure of Southern Attack Force from Pearl Harbor and Honolulu for Kwajalein; departure of Northern Attack Force from Laihaina Roads for Roi.

23 January: Departure of Attack Force Reserve and Majuro Attack Group in company from Pearl Harbor and Honolulu for Kwajalein and Majuro.

25 January: Departure of Majuro Garrison Group from Pearl Harbor for Majuro.

28 January: Departure of Southern and Northern Garrison Groups from Pearl Harbor for Kwajalein.

5 February: Departure of Northern Garrison Group Two from Makin for Roi.

This schedule reflected the final decision which set D-day for 31 January.

### THE TASK FORCES DEPART

#### *Task Force Turner*

Task Force Turner, the Southern Attack Force, assembled for the most part in the Hawaiian area. It was a vast armada comprising many task groups and containing every type of ship needed for the projected assault. Among the larger craft included in the force were 12 transports, 4 battleships, 3 heavy cruisers, 3 escort carriers, 2 high-speed transports, 22 destroyers, 18 LST's, 3 attack cargo vessels, and 3 LSD's.<sup>11</sup>

The slower Tractor Groups, carrying the amphibious tractors, LVT's and LVT(A)'s, departing from Pearl Harbor on 19 January, were followed by the bulk of the Force on the 22nd. The united force rendezvoused and fueled from tankers on the 26th, while planes from battleships and cruisers conducted antisubmarine patrol. Maneuvering was conducted daily, with all vessels reversing course as necessary to hold to the prescribed schedules of advance. The direct line from Pearl Harbor to the northward of the Marshalls was followed; and when well past Wotje and northeast of Kwajalein, the force turned about to the south-southwest, passed to the eastward of Kwajalein, and approached from the south. Combat air patrol was maintained for the last 3 days before D-day by planes from the CVE's.

<sup>11</sup>This was the greatest number of LSD's yet put into action.

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The tasks facing Admiral Turner (and, under him, Maj. Gen. Corlett who commanded the ground forces), were many:

(a) Before dawn of D-day, to capture the small and apparently lightly-defended islands of Gea and Ninni on either side of Gea Pass. Thereafter to sweep the pass and the anchorage area immediately inside for mines and obstructions so that ships of all sizes could enter and anchor.

(b) Early on the same day, to seize Enebuuj and Ennylabegan Islands, 2 and 7 miles respectively northwest of Kwajalein Island. Thereafter, to mount on Enebuuj 105-mm. and 155-mm. batteries of the Seventh Division Artillery, which could readily lay barrage or area fire anywhere on Kwajalein Island.

(c) On D plus 1 day, to take Kwajalein Island by assault, the attacks to begin at the southwestern part of the island.

(d) On subsequent days, to capture the several islands lying to the north and northeast along the reef from Kwajalein Island. Some of these were believed to be defended.

(e) To coordinate these tasks and phases with those to be undertaken at Roi and Namur by the Northern Assault Force and the Fourth Marine Division.

It was anticipated that while fighting was still in progress on Kwajalein Island, the occupation of the chain of smaller islands extending north along the eastern reef of the atoll was to be started. The enemy had organized Ebeye, Gugegwe, and Bigej Islands for defense with varying numbers of troops, while the intervening smaller islands supported occasional armed parties. Ebeye was the first of these objectives, after preliminary preparation by aerial, naval, and artillery bombardments similar to those employed at the main assault points. Promptly upon completion of the capture of the atoll, the assault troops were to be evacuated and relieved by a Defense and Garrison Force.

At 1700 on D minus 2 day a Maloelap Bombardment Group, composed of three cruisers and five destroyers under Rear Admiral Robert C. Giffen, was detached temporarily from the Task Force Turner to bombard the island of Taroa in Maloelap Atoll on 30 January. These ships arrived off the island in the early dawn, launched planes for preliminary spotting, and carried out the bombardment until mid-morning. They then proceeded to Kwajalein and took stations for the scheduled D-day bombardment.

#### *Task Force Conolly*

The Northern Attack Force, under the command of Rear Admiral Rich-

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ard L. Conolly, was almost equal in power to the southern group. Among the heavier ships, it included 3 battleships, 3 escort carriers, 2 heavy cruisers, 3 light cruisers, 19 destroyers, 17 LST's, 12 transports, 1 high-speed transport, 3 cargo ships, and 2 LSD's.

On 6 January the LST's of this force, with most of the amphibious tractors and the division artillery personnel embarked, departed San Diego with escorts for the island of Maui, where they staged. At this time the broad outline of the assault plan was known; the actual operation orders, however, had not yet been received, and this group thus sailed without any detailed knowledge of its role in the attack.<sup>12</sup> The main body of the task force, including the transports with combat teams and their equipment embarked, fire support ships, and escort carriers, departed San Diego on 13 January.<sup>13</sup> The task force commander and transport commander, in the *Appalachian* and *Dupage* respectively, staged at Pearl Harbor. Other units of the force staged at Lahaina Roads.

Plans called for them to proceed directly from Hawaii to Kwajalein. On the 26th they headed into the wind while the cruisers, destroyers, and smaller craft refueled from two tankers. On D minus 1 day, four cruisers and six destroyers under Rear Admiral Jesse B. Oldendorf were detached to operate north of Kwajalein and give bombardment support to the landing operation. The main attack detachment then dropped astern and passed the atoll to the north, later reversing course to approach Roi and Namur from the west. The initial attack group, comprising six transports and suitable escort, cut the corner and proceeded directly, and early on the morning of D-day made contact with the initial tractor group which, being considerably slower, had steamed from Hawaii independently.

#### *Task Force Mitscher*

Task Force Mitscher, which included 12 carriers, 8 battleships, 6 cruisers, and 36 destroyers, comprised four task groups. The carrier strength of three of these (Task Group Reeves, Task Group Montgomery, and Task Group Ginder) assembled in the Hawaiian area, and departed between

<sup>12</sup> The final operation orders were later sent by officer messenger to Maui, where they were delivered to the ships concerned. The officers who carried the orders thoroughly instructed personnel of the LST's and accompanying units in pertinent phases of the plan. However, according to Admiral Conolly, "late receipt of the orders of higher authority did result in the orders of all the lower echelons of command being prepared under pressure and without sufficient time for the careful study and preparation which was required." Other task forces experienced similar difficulties.

<sup>13</sup> This force spent about 30 hours in the Hawaiian area fueling, provisioning, and embarking a few additional units.

16 and 19 January; the fourth, Task Group Sherman, was organized at Funafuti, and sailed on the 23rd. The mission of the force generally was to obtain and maintain control of the air in the Marshalls and provide air support for the assault and capture of Kwajalein. The vessels were to destroy enemy aircraft and installations at Kwajalein and Ebeye Islands on 29 January, and at Eniwetok on 30 and 31 January and 2 and 6 February. The plan also called for them to provide air support for the Southern Attack Force (Task Force Turner) on 4 and 5 February, as requested by Admiral Turner. Since the enemy had five principal air bases—Roi, Kwajalein Island, Wotje, Taroa, and Eniwetok—from which to contest the operation, it was decided to carry out the attack on all these bases as nearly simultaneously as possible. The isolated position of Eniwetok, and the uncertainty as to what part of the available troops would be needed to reduce Kwajalein, seemed to justify delaying the attack at that point for one day. The vast congregation of ships was also a factor in making this strategy preferable to that used in the Gilberts, where our carriers had attacked some of the enemy bases and assumed a defensive role with regard to others.

Among the airfields which might affect the situation, Ponape, as far as was known at the time, was little used and comparatively inactive. Eniwetok was not highly developed, but was quite important as a staging point between Truk, the Marshalls, and Wake. A second possible staging point to Wake was through Marcus and Chichi Jima. Wake itself had not been active for several months, but it was within medium-bomber striking distance of Kwajalein and the amphibious force approach routes, and had to be watched. Roi, Taroa, and Wotje were all active, and the first two were the most important fields in the Marshalls. The air base on Kwajalein Island had never been completed, but could be used for emergency landings. Mille and Nauru were usable by planes; but neither had been active for some weeks, the former because of repeated bombings and the latter because its geographical position made it difficult to supply and support. The field at Kusaie had not been completed, and the Jaluit seaplane base, although usable, had recently been inactive.

#### THE APPROACH

Departure of the various task forces and groups from their respective staging points was accomplished generally on schedule. Such minor deviations as occurred were so unimportant as to have no effect on the operation plans.



For the force as a whole, passage to the assault areas was uneventful. The CVE's of the northern carrier group, however, suffered a series of unfortunate incidents. The first happened to the *Sangamon* on 25 January.

During the day, the *Sangamon* had been conducting routine patrols. At 1651 an F6F, while landing, crashed through barriers No. 2 and No. 3 and into a group of planes parked forward. Fire broke out immediately. As a result of the crash, one SBD was knocked over the side and three F6F's were damaged beyond repair and had to be jettisoned. The fire was soon brought under control with minor damage to the flight deck. Seven men died, nine were seriously burned or injured, and many more sustained minor injuries. The multiple collision sent 15 men overboard; of these, 13 were picked up by accompanying destroyers, and 2 were listed as missing.

A second stroke of bad luck befell the same carrier later that day. At 1816 a TBM crashed through No. 1 barrier—the other two being still out of commission—and ploughed into parked planes. Three SBD's and one TBM were damaged beyond ship repair facilities, and three more SBD's were damaged to a lesser extent. Luckily the second accident caused no serious personnel injuries.

The third mishap took place the following day. At 1553 that afternoon the *Suwannee* turned right to take station for recovery of a group of planes on antisubmarine patrol. At the same time the *Sangamon* made a turn to the left in accordance with the zigzag plan, and they collided. At the beginning of the turns the vessels were approximately 1,800 yards apart. Both were backing full at the moment of collision, and fortunately the damage was minor. Aboard the *Suwannee*, the more seriously hurt of the two vessels, the first 20 feet of the flight deck were buckled inboard for 4 feet, carrying away the port catwalk aft to 40-mm. platform No. 2 and piercing the hull down to the main deck. Both ships were able to continue operations without interruption.

At 2000 on the 30th the *Sangamon*, *Suwannee*, and *Chenango*, escorted by the destroyers *Farragut*, *Monaghan*, and *Dale*, were detached to operate north of Kwajalein and render air support for the landings according to plan. At 2100 the main northern attack detachment<sup>14</sup> dropped astern and passed north of and beyond the atoll, then reversed course to approach the Roi-Namur area from the west. The initial attack group,<sup>15</sup> cutting the

<sup>14</sup> *Dupage*, *Wayne*, *Elmore*, *Doyen*, *Aquarius*, *Bolivar*, *Sheridan*, *Calvert*, *LaSalle*, *Alcyone*, and *Gunston Hall*, with screen.

<sup>15</sup> *Callaway*, *Sumter*, *Warren*, *Biddle*, *Almaack*, and *Epping Forest*, with escort.

corner, proceeded more directly, and at 0330 on D-day made contact near the beaches with the initial tractor group which, being slower, had proceeded from Hawaii independently.

Carrier support planes for the southern force also encountered minor difficulties. Since the line of advance was generally downwind, this group left the formation each day to conduct flight training exercises, practicing machine gun firing on a towed sleeve, radar tracking and calibration, hunter-killer tactics, simulated air attacks on vessels of the southern force, aerial free gunnery, and strafing and glide bombing on towed sleds. The frequency of these operations, together with the basic downwind course and the limited speed of the CVE's, often made it impossible to maintain visual contact with the main body. In several instances, in fact, return to the formation could not be effected until late at night or early in the morning.

During the last 3 days of the passage these planes maintained combat air and antisubmarine patrols during daylight. In the late afternoon of the 30th, three torpedo bombers from the *Manila Bay*, at that time on antisubmarine patrol, were directed to cooperate with the force destroyers in a hunter-killer operation on a submarine contact about 20 miles from the center of the task force. The submarine (if it was such) was not found. Unfortunately one pilot became confused as to his position, and although released by the controlling destroyer, remained on station too long. While making his landing approach to the carrier, he apparently ran out of fuel, and in attempting a water landing spun into the sea. Immediately following the crash the plane's depth bombs exploded. The pilot was rescued by the *Caldwell*, but the two crew members were never recovered. One *Corregidor* pilot on antisubmarine patrol became lost, and finally landed on the *Belleau Wood* some 100 miles distant.

## STRIKES AND BOMBARDMENTS

The four carrier task groups under the over-all command of Rear Admiral Marc A. Mitscher began their attacks at dawn on D minus 2 day. Three of these groups, approaching from the southward and westward, struck at the airfields on Roi, Kwajalein Island, and Taroa. The fourth group, which approached from the east-northeast, hit Wotje. This route was chosen to furnish additional air cover for the transports and LST groups which were to occupy Kwajalein.

To prevent the enemy from using his fields at Roi, Wotje and Taroa after the D minus 2 day carrier strikes, an intermittent bombardment was instituted by surface ships.

By 0500 29 January (D minus 2 day), the four task groups comprising the carrier force were in position to begin their initial attacks. Task Group Reeves, with three carriers, three battleships, one cruiser and nine destroyers, was approximately 100 miles southwest of Taroa. Task Group Ginder, with three carriers, three cruisers, and eight destroyers, was operating 50 to 100 miles northeast of Wotje. The other two groups—Task Groups Montgomery and Sherman—were within striking distance of Kwajalein Island to the south. All told, Task Force Mitscher had more than 700 planes ready to hit the enemy's four major bases; opposition forces were believed to number no more than 160 aircraft. Our entire task force was concentrated in an area having a diameter of 300 miles, and could therefore be quickly combined in the event of interception by Japanese ships.

The primary mission of these groups was to gain control of the air over and near the assault targets and to neutralize enemy airfields at Taroa, Wotje, Roi, Kwajalein Island, and Eniwetok. This they successfully accomplished, shooting down 27 enemy planes, destroying 128 on the ground and water, and demolishing runways and air installations so thoroughly that not a single airborne enemy plane was seen after the first day's action. In addition, planes and ships of the task force sank a large oiler, seven cargo vessels (two of which may have been escort craft), one escort ship, and several smaller vessels.

The operations of the several task groups will now be considered individually.

#### TASK GROUP REEVES (MITSCHER-ONE)

Task Group Reeves, Rear Admiral John W. Reeves, Jr.

Two aircraft carriers:

*Yorktown* (FF) (Air Group 5), Capt. Joseph J. Clark.  
*Enterprise* (F) (Air Group 10), Capt. Matthias B. Gardner.

One small aircraft carrier:

*Belleau Wood* (Air Group 24), Capt. Alfred M. Pride.

Three battleships, Rear Admiral Willis A. Lee, Jr.:

*Washington* (F), Capt. James E. Maher.  
*Massachusetts*, Capt. Theodore D. Ruddock, Jr.  
*Indiana* (ComBatDiv 8, Rear Admiral Glenn B. Davis), Capt. James M. Steele.

One light cruiser (AA):

*Oakland* (F, CL and DD's), Capt. William A. Phillips.

Nine destroyers:

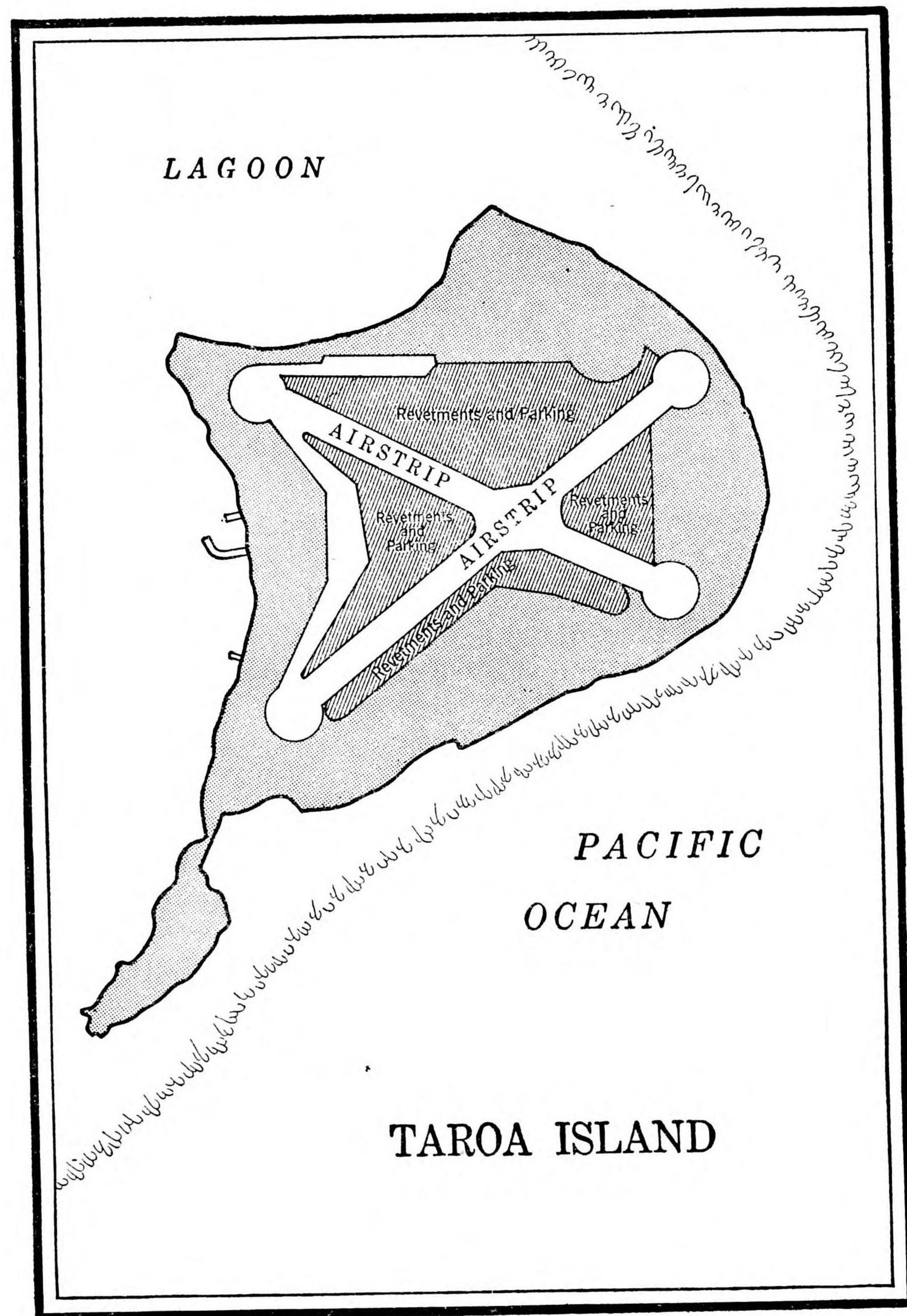
*Clarence K. Bronson* (ComDesRon 50, Capt. Sherman R. Clark), Lt. Comdr. Joseph C. McGoughran.  
*Cotten*, Comdr. Frank T. Sloat.  
*Dortch*, Comdr. Robert C. Young.  
*Gatling*, Comdr. Alvin F. Richardson.  
*Healy*, Comdr. John C. Atkeson.  
*Cogswell*, Comdr. Harold T. Deutermann.  
*Caperton*, Comdr. Wallace J. Miller.  
*Knapp*, Comdr. Frank Virden.  
*Ingersoll*, Comdr. Alexander C. Veasey.

#### Taroa, 29 January

This group, carrying the task force commander, topped off its destroyers in the vicinity of latitude 04° N., longitude 167° 45' E., on 28 January. The formation then proceeded north through the Ralik chain, arriving at the initial launching point for its attack on Taroa (latitude 07° 27' N., longitude 170° 23' E.) shortly before 0530 on the 29th, without having been discovered by the enemy. At this time flying weather was miserable; the sky was almost completely overcast, and squalls covered the sea. However, since the quick success of the entire operation depended heavily upon simultaneous strikes on all target airfields, the launchings were carried through as scheduled.

Sorties from all three carriers began almost concurrently. The initial strike, comprising 31 fighters and 1 torpedo plane, took off from the *Enterprise*. Aboard the *Yorktown*, 12 torpedo bombers were launched beginning at 0530. This vessel's prearranged launching course was at that time 30° out of the wind, which was blowing with a force of 10 knots. Efforts were made to counteract this, but her first planes were launched directly into the midst of fighters taking off from the *Enterprise*. Hardly had the first three TBF's left the *Yorktown's* deck when the *Enterprise* cut across the *Yorktown's* bow and launching was interrupted for several minutes. After the next group of four was launched, the ships ran into a heavy rain squall, and further launching had to be postponed until it cleared. At 0535 the squall lifted; by this time, however, the engines of the idling planes were badly loaded up, and after one successful launching a plane crashed off the *Yorktown's* starboard bow. Its crew was rescued by the *Gatling*, but the remainder of the flight was canceled.

The two breaks in the launching interval made it extremely difficult to rendezvous under unfavorable weather conditions. Three *Yorktown*



planes proceeded to the rendezvous sector after getting clear of the *Enterprise* group, but could find no other torpedo aircraft. Fighters from the *Belleau Wood*, tailing each other around the area, did not yield the lead to the VT flight leader, and the entire formation drifted 30 miles to the west of the task group, leaving a rainstorm in between. The three torpedo planes then departed for the target. After proceeding about 20 miles they overheard radio instructions ordering another member of the group to rendezvous over the base, so they returned and picked up three of their fellows. The six VT's finally took departure at 0700, together with VB's, VF's, and VT's which had been launched at 0630 for a second strike.

The VT's, arriving over Taroa shortly before 0800, made glide attacks from 11,000 feet. Four of them dropped their bombs in the aircraft dispersal areas, probably damaging three Bettys and one single-engine plane on the ground. All encountered intense and accurate antiaircraft fire, but escaped damage. Planes of the accompanying second strike—four F6F's and twenty SBD's—carried out their attack simultaneously. The bombers hit the aircraft repair shop and torpedo workshop area heavily, while the fighters, after covering the bomber attack, strafed aircraft on the field and small vessels in the lagoon. A building believed to be a torpedo workshop was destroyed, and repair shops and unidentified buildings were damaged. One large ammunition magazine was set afire and later exploded, the smoke rising to 5,000 feet. An enemy fighter was thoroughly strafed, as were three or four small vessels, one of which caught fire. Two schooners were also strafed, and one set afire.

The next *Yorktown* strike—nine F6F's and six TBF's—was launched at 0730, but found the target covered with clouds and had to delay its attack until openings could be located. They dropped most of their bombs in aircraft parking areas, destroying one single-engine plane and probably destroying three Bettys. An explosion and fire broke out among buildings south of the runways. The fighters, finding no enemy aircraft airborne, strafed grounded planes, setting fire to two Bettys and thoroughly peppering eight more Bettys and one fighter. One of our TBF's was hit by anti-aircraft fire, and plunged in flames into the water south of the island.

Meanwhile planes from the *Enterprise* were running into opposition. That vessel's first wave, as it arrived over Taroa, met seven enemy interceptors, both Zekes and Hamps. They shot down four and probably destroyed two more. Five Bettys and 12 to 15 fighters were demolished on the ground, and airfield facilities were thoroughly strafed. Eighteen bombers from the

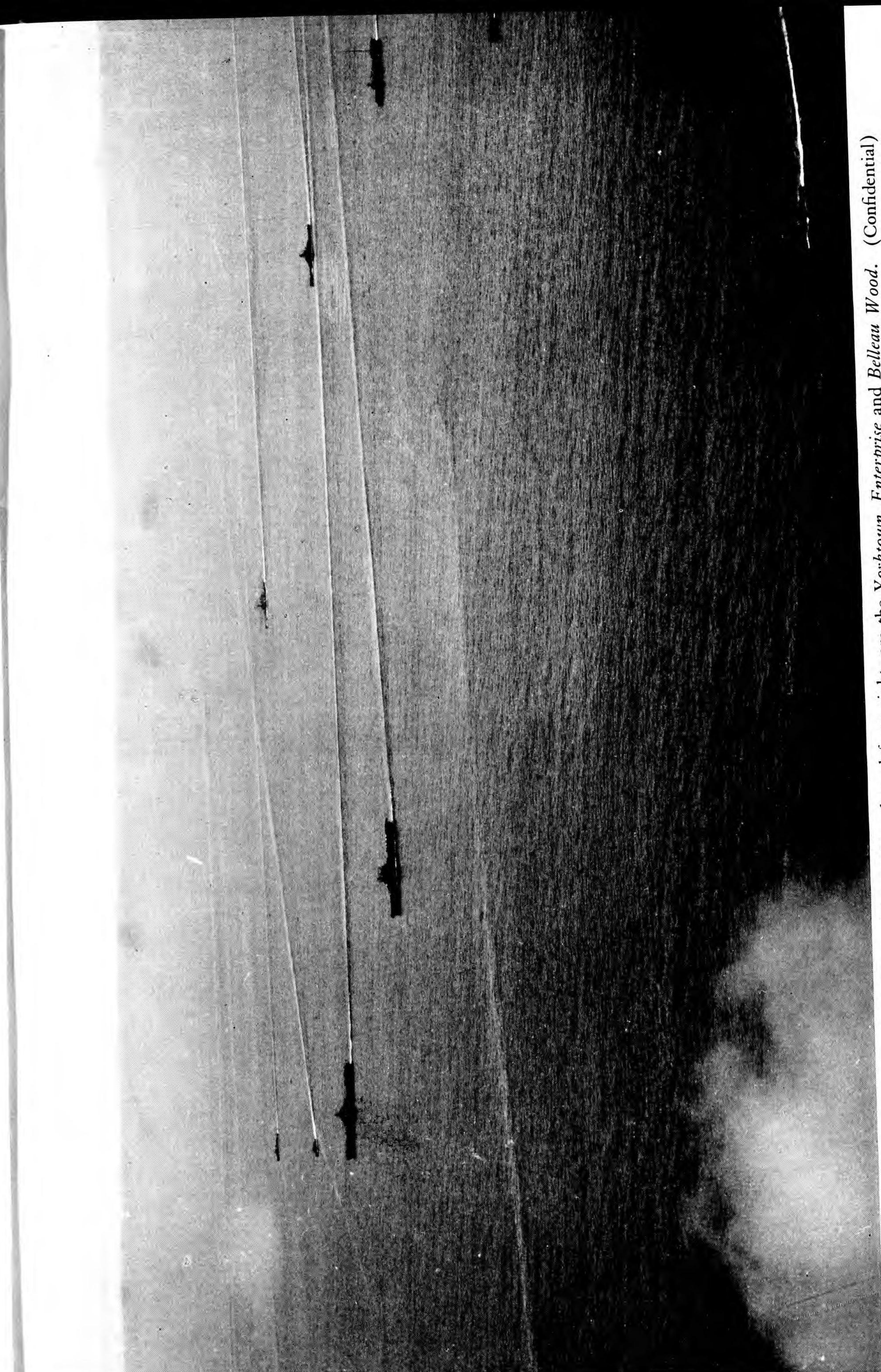
same carrier dropped 6½ tons of high explosive on Japanese buildings, torpedo storage facilities, ammunition dumps, runways and dispersal areas. Thirteen torpedo bombers dropped 10 tons on the airfield area, damaging at least two grounded enemy aircraft. Four *Enterprise* fighters were lost—one in combat, one because of the pre-dawn operational hazards, and two which did not return and were never accounted for. Seven bombers suffered minor damage from anti-aircraft fire.

The *Belleau Wood*, in addition to launching antisubmarine and combat air patrols to cover the task group, sent four TBF's to attack Taroa. Each was loaded with one 500-pound and ten 100-pound general purpose bombs. These planes, which took off at 0730, proceeded into the target area with the *Yorktown* group, making their approach from the lagoon side and diving in a northwest-southeast direction across the island. They released their bombs at altitudes varying from 1,800 to 2,500 feet; most hit the airfield, although a few carried on out into the water on the seaward side.

Later attacks on D minus 2 day were carried out by *Yorktown* planes. A combat air patrol consisting of 12 F6F's, launched at 0830, destroyed three single-engine planes and one Betty on the ground, and thoroughly strafed 16 other aircraft. At 1107 11 more TBF's took off to attack Taroa. This group was accompanied by fighter cover from the *Enterprise*. The special target assigned was a fuel dump, which had been observed by a previous flight, on nearby Reuter Island. The aircraft released most of their bombs in this area, and obtained thorough coverage, but unfortunately no fires resulted. One stick of bombs was also laid across a radio station on a small island about 5 miles northwest of Taroa, resulting in probable damage. Another stick was laid near the Taroa runway intersection, setting fire to one single-engine plane.

Minor operations during the day included four depth bomb attacks by antisubmarine patrol SBD's on a small vessel in Maloelap lagoon and on one of the islands of the atoll. During the afternoon, eight F6F's flying combat air patrol destroyed five enemy VF's in revetments near the runway, while another of our fighters intercepted and shot down a Kate which had just taken off from Wotje.

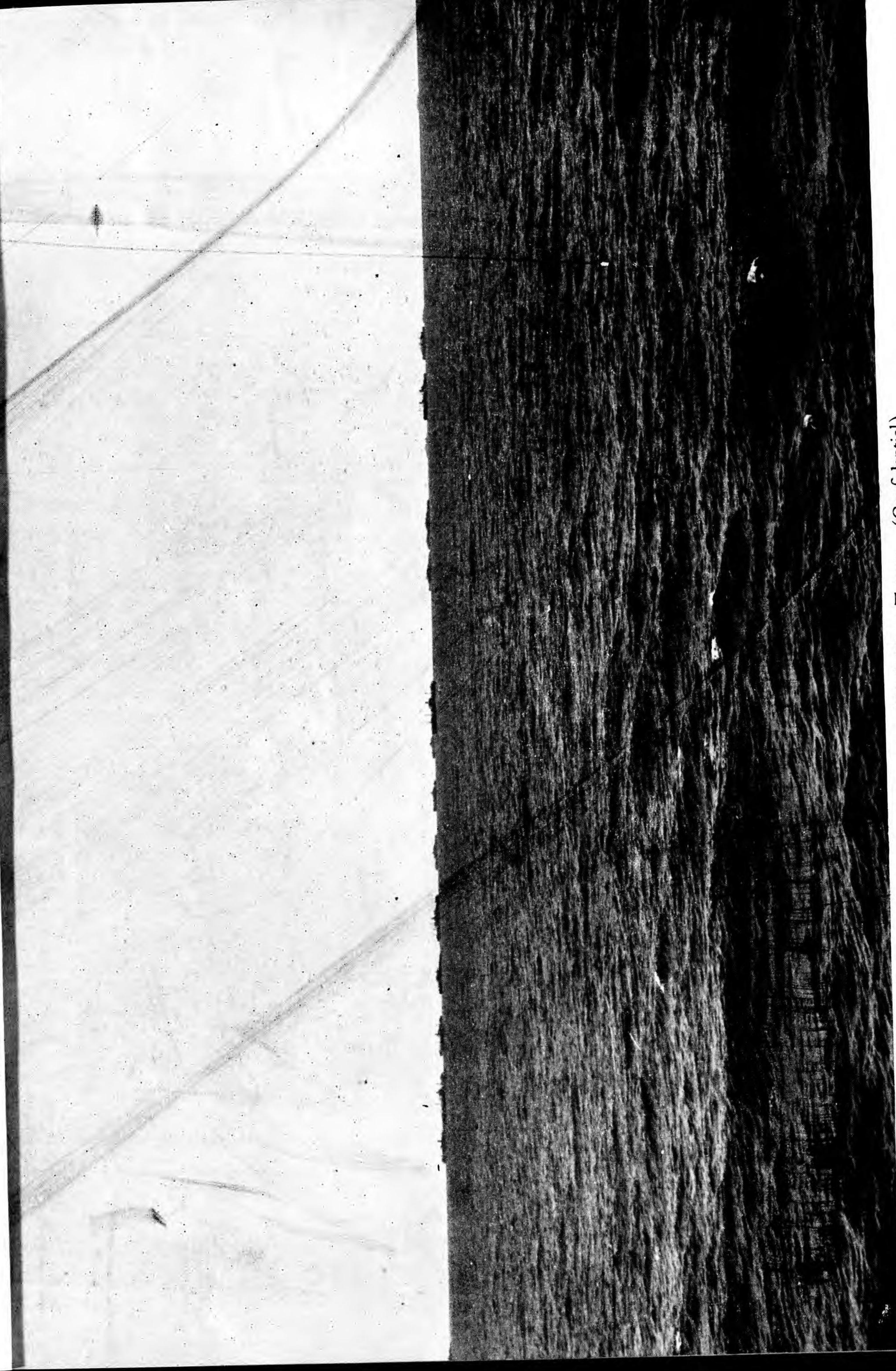
At about 1750, approximately in latitude 08°03' N., longitude 170°26' E., lookouts on the *Enterprise* sighted nine planes, flying very low, coming in over the horizon from 120° R. Radar had not picked them up, presumably because of their low altitude which was estimated at about 100 feet. Two



Task Group Reeves approaching Taroa. The carriers, from left to right, are the *Yorktown*, *Enterprise* and *Belleau Wood*. (Confidential)



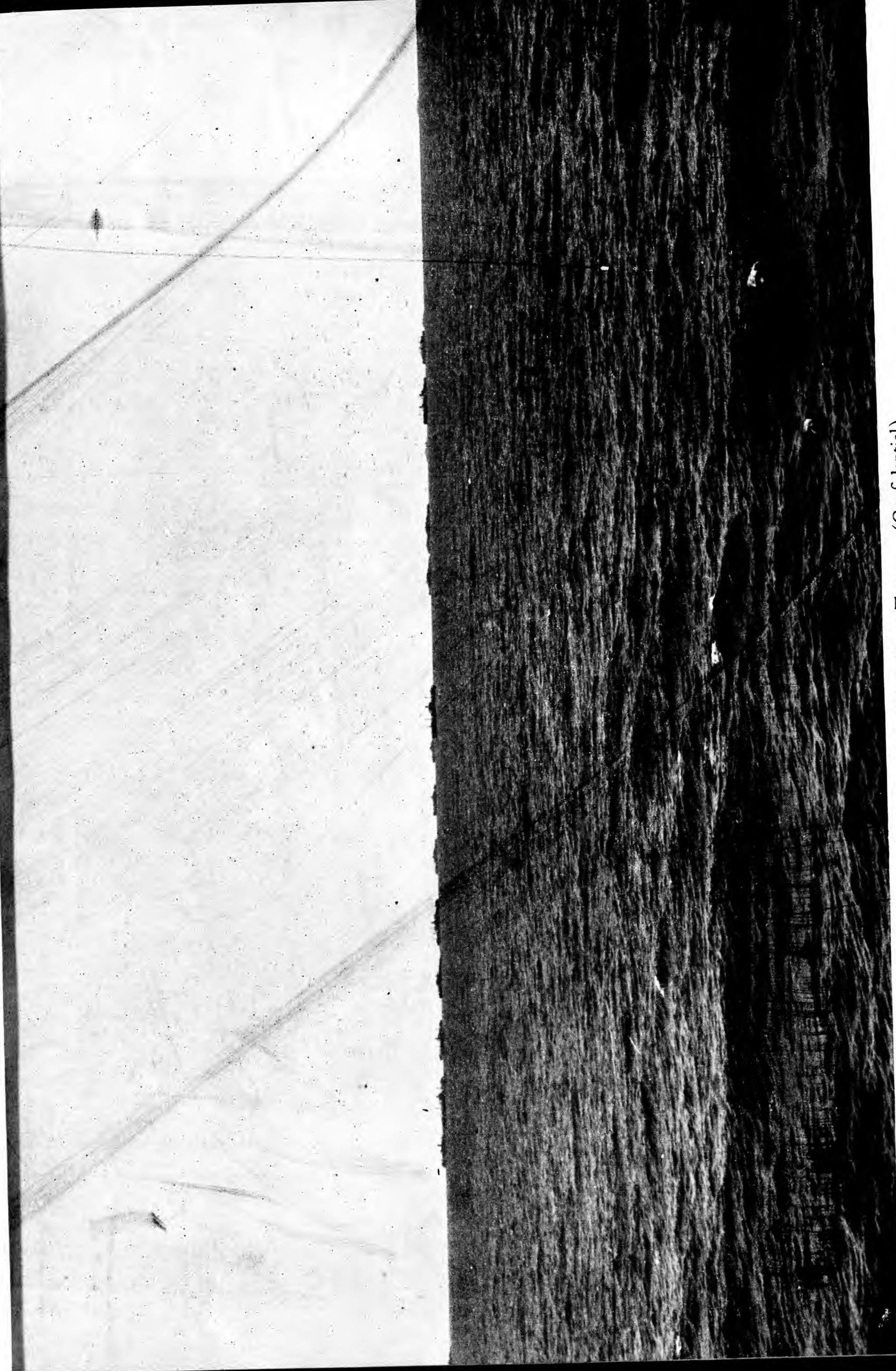
A small part of Task Force Turner en route to Kwajalein. ASP plane in foreground. (Confidential)



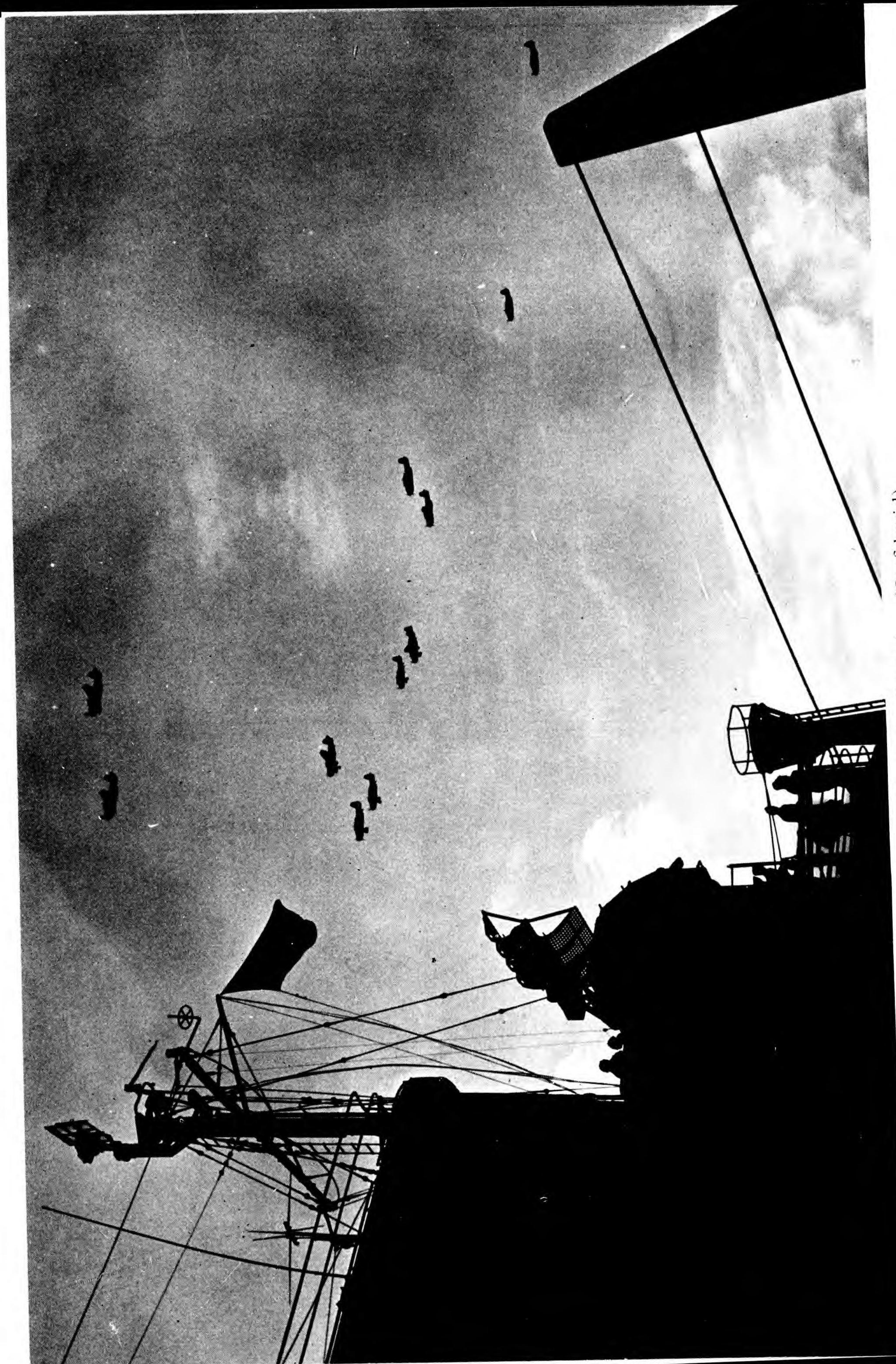
Transports and cargo vessels of Task Force Turner. (Confidential)



A small part of Task Force Turner en route to Kwajalein. ASP plane in foreground. (Confidential)



Transports and cargo vessels of Task Force Turner. (Confidential)



TBF's returning to the Enterprise. (Confidential)

minutes later a TBS message from the *Belleau Wood* reported sighting 10 aircraft, bearing  $330^{\circ}$  T., "on the horizon."<sup>16</sup>

The task group went to General Quarters. The gunnery officer in Sky Forward on the *Enterprise* passed the word that the planes looked like Bettys, and both directors were ordered to get on. At the same time the gunnery liaison officer in the *Enterprise* Combat Information Center (CIC) spotted 10 planes "which looked like Bettys" on the starboard beam, and the combat air patrol was vectored out toward them from 1,000 feet over base.

Shortly thereafter, *Enterprise* lookouts identified the planes as B-25's but not before two rounds had been fired from the after director. Cease firing was ordered immediately; but unfortunately other ships of the formation saw the splashes and opened fire. Word was immediately broadcast over TBS "do not fire, planes are friendly," and similar information was sent out over VHF to the combat air patrol. The word, however, was received too late; not until the leading pilot had fired several bursts at the nearest B-25 did he recognize the planes as friendly, and order his wing men to cease fire. The bomber began to smoke, and glided into the water about 6 miles ahead of the task group. Two destroyers were sent to the scene, and picked up all the personnel except the navigator, who went down with the plane.

The copilot of the plane said his formation had sighted the task group some time before it opened fire, and that immediately upon making contact the planes turned to the right. He added that they turned right a second time just before the *Enterprise* opened fire. At least three of the planes, he said, had their IFF turned on, adding that he personally was flashing the recognition signal with an Aldis lamp when fire was opened. Surface observers agreed that the planes did turn right from a closing course to one paralleling the task group. When abeam, or slightly forward of abeam, however, the planes turned toward the group, crossing its course at an angle of about  $30^{\circ}$ , and passed ahead and off to port.

*Kwajalein, 30 January*

Upon completion of the Taroa strikes, the task group steamed southwest toward Kwajalein, where Kwajalein Island and neighboring islets were to be its objectives for the remainder of the operation.<sup>17</sup> The night passed

<sup>16</sup> Personnel in the *Enterprise* CIC stated that the *Belleau Wood's* transmission was somewhat garbled; all thought they heard the word "Bettys."

<sup>17</sup> Task Group Sherman had already hit these targets. See p. 45.

uneventfully, without contacts or alerts. The group's carriers had scheduled a pre-dawn launching for 0630 on the 30th to cover the surface force bombardment which was to neutralize the Kwajalein Island airfield; frequent rain squalls over the area, however, forced a postponement. The first *Enterprise* strike was launched at 0735; a *Yorktown* combat air patrol was airborne at 0809; the *Belleau Wood* strike took off at 1330.

The surface bombardment, however, proceeded on schedule, and proved highly effective. The bombardment group, composed of the *Washington* (CTU), *Indiana*, *Massachusetts*, *Cogswell*, *Caperton*, *Ingersoll*, and *Knapp*, departed from the remainder of the task group at 0715 in latitude  $08^{\circ}$  N., longitude  $167^{\circ}30'$  E., and steamed on course  $025^{\circ}$  T. at 25 knots. The heavy ships were in column, with the *Washington* in the van and the *Massachusetts* bringing up the rear. Destroyers screened ahead in the following formation: *Cogswell*, station No. 1, 3,500 yards,  $025^{\circ}$ ; *Ingersoll*, station No. 2, 3,500 yards,  $335^{\circ}$ ; *Knapp*, station No. 3, 4,000 yards,  $065^{\circ}$ ; *Caperton*, station No. 4, 4,000 yards,  $295^{\circ}$ . Battleships were to be prepared to open fire on Kwajalein Island at maximum range during the approach, using high capacity projectiles and service charges, salvos to be controlled by CTU over TBS. The primary mission of the destroyers was to screen the capital ships; simultaneously they were to work over the smaller islands of the atoll and take under fire selected targets of opportunity. The bombardment itself was to be divided into two phases of 1 and 3 hours duration respectively. The early morning phase was expected to knock out any enemy air activity which might have survived the previous air strikes. During the second, and longer, phase, defensive installations such as pill-boxes, ammunition dumps, and gun emplacements were to be destroyed.

After several changes of course and speed, the *Washington's* radar picked up Kwajalein Island at 0907, at a range of 42,500 yards. Continuing heavy squalls had decreased visibility, however, and a suitable visual point of aim could not be determined for some time. Battleships launched one spotting plane each at 0910. At 0936, the destroyers on signal formed special screen No. 1 for the approach, taking station as follows: *Ingersoll* 4,000 yards,  $000^{\circ}$ ; *Caperton* 2,000 yards,  $000^{\circ}$ ; *Cogswell* 3,000 yards,  $030^{\circ}$ ; *Knapp* 3,000 yards,  $060^{\circ}$ .

The first shots of the bombardment were fired by the battleships. On orders from CTU, they opened at 0956 with their main batteries on Kwajalein Island. The initial salvos fell short. One minute later the *Massachusetts* fired a second salvo, which apparently struck home. Shortly after

1000, shore batteries on the north tip of Kwajalein Island began firing at the bombardment group. The first salvos passed over the *Massachusetts* and *Indiana*, and several others straddled the ships in range but were off in deflection. The battleships quickly silenced the battery, and thereafter met no enemy counter-fire. At the same time our ships sighted several enemy patrol craft in the lagoon near the battery. Although B-hour had been postponed from 1000 until 1015, the *Washington* and *Indiana* immediately opened on these vessels with their 5-inch batteries, sinking one and scoring hits on two others.

At 1016 the *Washington*, as guide, arrived at the open-fire position, and her secondary battery switched from the enemy ships to Ebeye Island, her scheduled initial target. Despite rather poor coverage at first, she straddled several of the beach defenses and started a fire in the hangar area. The *Massachusetts* and the *Indiana* followed suit, opening with their main batteries on defensive installations in the north and central sectors of Kwajalein Island. At 1027 the *Washington*, continuing up the eastern side of the atoll, shifted to Gugegwe with her 5-inchers, and worked over that island for 11 minutes. As before, enfilading fire was not possible because of the angle of the shoreline, yet it was necessary to fire on this leg of the course to obtain air spots. After the bombardment of Gugegwe had begun, the *Washington* sighted a tanker in the lagoon behind the island, and opened on it with two port mounts for four salvos before it was lost to sight. No results were visible, and fire was shifted back to Gugegwe.

The destroyers opened after the battleships. The *Ingersoll*, in the van, began bombarding Gugegwe at 1020 while she was screening the *Washington*. Nine minutes later she shifted her fire to Bigej, ceasing at 1033 when the *Washington* fouled the range. At 1055 the destroyer resumed fire on Gugegwe, ceasing at 1105 when her range was again fouled. The *Caperton*, 2,000 yards behind the *Ingersoll*, expended 100 rounds on two small unnamed islets between Ebeye and Kwajalein Island. The *Cogswell* left the formation at 1037 and proceeded separately to bombard the southern portion of Gugegwe. She took the target under fire at 1041 at 9,000 yards and covered her sector fairly well until 1056, when she shifted fire to one of the islets the *Ingersoll* had hit. At 1114 she had to withdraw to resume her screening station on the *Washington*. The *Knapp*, after a brief period of fire at targets of opportunity north of Kwajalein Island, began firing at one of the unnamed islets at 1101 and ceased at 1105, whereupon she maneuvered eastward to resume her station screening the battleships.



The second phase of the surface bombardment, during which the battleships operated independently, opened promptly at 1200, when the *Indiana's* main battery began firing at Gugegwe. Shortly after 1210 the *Massachusetts* opened on Ebeye, while the *Washington* commenced firing on the western end of Kwajalein Island at 1226. Because of delays during the inter-phase bombing, the *Washington* made her run to the south at a speed of 20 rather than 12 knots as planned, and decreased her salvo interval to 1 minute.

Between 1200 and 1230 the *Indiana* fired 81 rounds of 16-inch, although she was scheduled to fire only 63 rounds. The two extra salvos were fired because the hitting gun range had been established, and effective coverage of good targets appeared likely. At 1300 the *Indiana* resumed fire on the center and west of Kwajalein Island. The latter part of this phase comprised an indirect enfilade fire on the extreme western end of the island. Spotting was difficult since the entire area was ablaze and covered with smoke. Because of the extra rounds she had expended on Gugegwe, the *Indiana* decided to reduce the number fired at Kwajalein Island. Most salvos, however, landed in the assigned areas. Between 1402 and 1420 her port battery fired almost 600 rounds of 5-inch antiaircraft common into Ebeye, starting a large blaze. At 1424 she opened on the center and west of Kwajalein Island, continuing until 1448 at which time all fire ceased.

The *Massachusetts*, between 1210 and 1234, fired 23 salvos on Ebeye. At 1241 she shifted to Kwajalein Island, scoring hits in the middle of the airstrip, and ceased main battery fire at 1341 after 34 more salvos. At 1425 she opened with her secondary battery, and ceased at 1458. She then recovered her spotting aircraft and proceeded to the rendezvous.

The *Washington* ceased main battery fire at 1250, after expending 66 rounds and starting fires in her assigned areas on Kwajalein Island. From 1240 to 1250 her port 5-inch battery also fired on beach defenses on the southwestern shore of Kwajalein Island and on inland shore batteries, starting one large fire. At 1251, after a reversal of course, her starboard 5-inch mounts opened on the beach defenses at the island's western tip. Again the coverage was effective, and fires and explosions occurred until the end of this phase at 1317. The main battery director picked up Ebeye immediately after ceasing fire on Kwajalein Island. Fire was opened at 1256, and a quick run was made with almost perfect conditions of enfilade. After a period of concentration on the seaplane apron and adjacent areas, fire was shifted to the southern portion of the island, which had not been

previously covered. A total of 36 rounds was fired during this phase, 32 of them detonating in the assigned area. Hangars and shops were set afire, and an antiaircraft battery on the north end of the island was silenced.

Following a spotter's report that a heavy gun emplacement was located on the southeastern tip of E nubuj, the *Washington* began main battery fire on that point at 1320. Considerable difficulty was experienced during this firing because a definite point of aim was lacking and the target was extremely narrow. At 1327 the secondary battery opened for 4 minutes on an LST-type vessel anchored north of the western tip of Kwajalein Island. The second salvo hit, starting a small fire and buckling the craft amidships. Main battery fire was shifted from the southern tip to the central section of E nubuj at 1330. Again the narrow profile of the island presented difficulties, but the radio station and adjoining structures were seriously damaged, one large tower being toppled and several buildings left in flames. Fire on E nubuj was interrupted at 1351 to engage active batteries on Kwajalein Island. After silencing these with 5-inch and 16-inch shells, the *Washington* divided her fire, bombarding E nubuj with the forward turrets while turret No. 3 and the 5-inch battery covered the western beach areas on Kwajalein Island until 1407.

When the ship had completed her run to the northwest and started south again, her secondary battery took the northern half of E nubuj under fire. After six 5-gun salvos, the air spotter reported that no further suitable targets could be discerned in that area, and at 1425 the port mounts opened on targets in the center of the island. This fire continued for 3 minutes, causing many blazes and explosions. At the same time the *Washington* ceased 16-inch fire on E nubuj and trained her main battery once again on the western end of Kwajalein Island, expending the remaining 14 rounds with gratifying effects. The secondary battery, after completing its fire on E nubuj, shifted to the western end of Kwajalein Island; after four minutes of firing, the two port mounts switched their point of aim to undamaged buildings on the lagoon shore. Cease fire was ordered when the target became obscured. The *Washington's* bombardment ended with the firing of two 5-inch remnant salvos which landed among buildings on E nubuj.

During the second bombardment phase, as in the first, the destroyers carried out their primary purpose of screening the heavy ships. They also effectively worked over several smaller islets and peppered the major objectives during the battleship lulls. Four minutes after the first phase ended, the *Ingersoll* closed the atoll to take under fire a small tug maneuvering

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inshore north of Kwajalein Island. She opened fire at 1128, straddling the vessel several times and scoring one possible hit. On signal from the OTC at 1135 she ceased firing and rejoined the screen.

Actual destroyer bombardment during the second phase was initiated by the *Knapp*. At 1238, while on a southerly course, she began firing at buildings and other targets of opportunity on one of the small unnamed islands to starboard, ceasing 20 minutes later. On her northern leg, she fired for 13 minutes at targets on Loi. Thereafter, until 1503, she cruised up and down her assigned sector, bombarding shore installations and surface craft in the lagoon, expending a total of 482 rounds from her main battery.

The *Cogswell*, screening the *Washington*, opened fire at 1326 on Kwajalein Island, at an average range of 11,000 yards. Fire was interrupted at 1331 when she was blanked by the *Washington*. From 1334 until 1348 she fired on E nubuj; between 1358 and 1435 her fire was confined to Ennylabegan, except at 1430 when she sank a small trawler leaving Gea Pass with three 2-gun salvos at a range of 10,500 yards. After a few more minutes of fire on E nubuj, the *Cogswell* came under the fire of shore batteries on the southwestern tip of Kwajalein Island. These guns, which appeared to be of about 3-inch caliber, fired only a few rounds, all of which landed some 200 yards short. At 1447 the *Cogswell* ceased fire and proceeded to the rendezvous point with the *Washington*.

The *Caperton's* second phase fire began at 1335 and lasted throughout the run northward, until 1410. Her first target of opportunity was the radar tower on the north tip of Kwajalein Island, which she shelled heavily. During this bombardment, an enemy craft resembling a PC moved out into the lagoon from behind Kwajalein Island, and was taken under fire. Numerous straddles stopped the vessel in the water, and caused it to reverse course; thereupon a direct hit above the waterline drove it onto the reef, where it stuck fast, emitting black smoke. Fire was then shifted to a larger craft, possibly a net tender, which maneuvered radically in the lagoon while under fire. The *Caperton* scored hits on this vessel, which also ran on the reef. After firing a few more salvos at Ebeye and neighboring islets, the *Caperton* ended her bombardment at 1459 and rejoined the battleships.

Orders from the OTC to screen the *Washington* caused the *Ingersoll* to arrive at her initial patrol point about 15 minutes late. She patrolled along her track to the south and southeast of Kwajalein Island until 1413, when she opened fire on relatively undamaged target areas at the east end of the island. She ceased firing 8 minutes later, and at 1438 began a 7-minute

bombardment of the center beach areas, starting a fire. On signal from the OTC, the destroyer ceased bombardment operations at 1457 and proceeded to the rendezvous 10 miles south of the western tip of Kwajalein Island.

Air attacks on the 30th were, in general, coordinated with the surface bombardment. Planes from all three carriers struck at grounded aircraft on Ebeye and Kwajalein Islands, and at artillery and antiaircraft positions, blockhouses, pillboxes, command posts and other defensive installations on these and nearby islets. As a result of the reconnaissance these sorties provided, later targets assigned included small ships, picket boats, sampans, and barges in the lagoon.

During the day's operations, the *Yorktown* launched five strike groups, two combat air patrols, and two antisubmarine patrols. Showers and squalls, accompanied by high scattered clouds and low broken clouds, persisted throughout the day. Visibility was generally good, although during showers it was reduced to less than one mile. Surface winds averaged 15 knots from the northeast.

The first *Yorktown* attack group, consisting of 12 F6F's, took off at 0850 and made 60 strafing runs on Kwajalein and Ebeye Islands. The second *Yorktown* strike, made up of 10 TBF's, sortied at 1003. This group coordinated its attack with the battleship and cruiser bombardment, bombing installations at the western tip of Kwajalein Island and making three photographic runs during the strike. At 1335 9 F6F's and 12 SBD's were launched to hit the same targets and to bomb ammunition dumps and oil storage facilities on Ebeye. The 15 SBD's which made up the final *Yorktown* bombing strike took off at 1445. Targets were command posts, guns, buildings, and defense positions on the northeast tip of Kwajalein Island. The last flight of the day left the *Yorktown's* deck at 1555; its 12 F6F's strafed guns on Kwajalein Island and ships in the lagoon. The *Yorktown* planes encountered moderate but inaccurate antiaircraft fire from medium and heavy guns during their early strikes but only sporadic automatic weapon fire thereafter. Two of their number were damaged, but all returned safely.

Similar missions were carried out by the *Enterprise* and the *Belleau Wood*. The former began her strikes at 0730. During the day 16 VF, 16 VT, and 31 VB sorties strafed barges and ground targets and bombed defensive installations on both Kwajalein and Ebeye Islands. In addition she flew two combat air patrols, six antisubmarine patrols, and one photo-

graphic mission. Four antisubmarine patrol planes dropped bombs on designated targets at the end of their runs. A *Belleau Wood* strike composed of eight TBF's took off at 1330 and joined a *Yorktown* group to bomb anti-aircraft positions, pillboxes, and defense works on Kwajalein Island. One plane never came out of its glide. Throughout the day the *Belleau Wood* also flew combat air patrols for the task group.

Damage to the enemy from these strikes was extensive. Three float planes at the seaplane base on Ebeye were destroyed by strafing. Two small vessels or sampans were sunk, and ten strafed until they lost headway. One landing barge was sunk, and its entire personnel of 30 or 40 believed killed. Two ammunition buildings on Bigej exploded, and two fuel dumps on Ebeye went up in flames. The radio station on Enebuuj was damaged. Kwajalein Island was heavily blanketed, resulting in the destruction of a command post, a dual-purpose gun position, barrier wall, and radio direction finder.

#### TASK GROUP MONTGOMERY (MITSCHER-TWO)

Task Group Montgomery, Rear Admiral Alfred E. Montgomery.

Two aircraft carriers:

*Essex* (F, Air Group 9), Capt. Ralph A. Ofstie.  
*Intrepid* (Air Group 8), Capt. Thomas L. Sprague.

One small aircraft carrier:

*Cabot* (Air Group 31), Capt. Malcolm F. Schoeffel.

Three battleships, Rear Admiral Edward W. Hanson:

*South Dakota* (F), Capt. Allan E. Smith.  
*Alabama*, Capt. Fred D. Kirtland.  
*North Carolina*, Capt. Frank P. Thomas.

One light cruiser (AA):

*San Diego* (F, CL and DD's) (ComScreen Rear Admiral Lloyd J. Wiltse),  
Capt. Lester J. Hudson.

Ten destroyers:

*Owen* (F, ComDesRon 52, Capt. George R. Cooper), Comdr. Robert W. Wood.  
*Stembel*, Comdr. William L. Tagg.  
*The Sullivans*, Comdr. Kenneth M. Gentry.  
*Stephen Potter*, Comdr. Charles H. Crichton, Jr.  
*Hickox*, Comdr. Willard M. Sweetser.  
*Hunt* (F, ComDesDiv 104, Comdr. Harman B. Bell, Jr.), Comdr. Halford A. Knoertzer.  
*Lewis Hancock*, Comdr. Charles H. Lyman, III.  
*Lang*, Comdr. Harold Payson, Jr.

*Sterett* (F, ComDesDiv 15, Capt. Charles J. Stuart), Lt. Comdr. Francis J. Blouin.

*Stack*, Lt. Comdr. Philip K. Sherman.

Task Group Montgomery, less its battleships and their destroyer screen,<sup>18</sup> departed Pearl Harbor on 16 January; it joined the remainder of the group, which came from the South Pacific, on 25 January at a fueling point about 308 miles northwest of Nanomea. Here the group fueled from the oilers *Kaskaskia*, *Platte*, and *Sabine* (which, with their escorting DE's, were detached on 26 January) and proceeded to the northwest toward the initial launching point. Primary missions of the group were to maintain control of the air in the northern sectors of the atoll, to destroy defense installations in the Roi-Namur area, to provide photographic reconnaissance of beaches and defenses for the northern attack force in advance of the landings, and to furnish direct air support for the assault and landing operations of the 4th Marines.

On D minus 4 day at 0900, Task Group Montgomery rendezvoused with ComCenPacFor in the *Indianapolis* and steamed toward the atoll. No enemy forces were encountered, and no suspicious contacts made. Before dawn on the 29th (D minus 2 day), the carriers reached their launching point at 08° N., 165° 55' E.

#### Roi-Namur, 29 January

The first air strike by this group was flown off the flagship at 0537. The carrier headed into northeasterly surface winds with a velocity of 8 to 12 knots, while 19 F6F-3's and 6 TBF-1's became airborne. Rendezvous was quickly effected, and the formation departed for the target at 0615, reaching its objective 35 minutes later. The enemy was apparently taken by surprise. Our aircraft made their approach at about 1,000 feet, the torpedo planes leading the fighters. When still 30 miles from the islands, the fighters began to climb, reaching an altitude of 6,000 feet—the base of the overcast—coincident with their arrival over the objective.

At this time 10 to 15 enemy fighters were observed to be airborne. Nine immediately attacked, and seven were promptly shot down; the other two were probably destroyed, although they were not seen to crash. Thereupon our fighters began strafing, making their initial runs from the northeast in a high-speed 45° dive. Fire was concentrated first on enemy fighter planes parked in the revetments, each pilot being assigned a single revet-

<sup>18</sup> *South Dakota*, *Alabama*, *North Carolina*, *Lang*, *Sterett*, and *Stack*.

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ment. Meanwhile our torpedo planes dropped 72 100-pound fragmentation clusters on parked planes, about 60 percent of the bombs falling in the target area. Three fires were started, even though the bombs were not incendiary. One of our fighters was shot down by the intense antiaircraft fire. The pilot parachuted successfully and was seen to reach a life raft which had been dropped to him. He was last observed, however, at about 1400 some 5 miles northwest of Boggerlapp, despite the fact that anticipated winds and currents should have driven him ashore. Later searches by battleship seaplanes and other aircraft were unavailing.

The *Cabot* launched the second of the group's strikes at 0544, sending out a combat air patrol of 12 F6F-3's in conjunction with the *Essex* strike. Three of these missed the pre-dawn rendezvous and joined up with the *Essex* attack group. One division of four planes met about a dozen Zekes over the target just before sunrise and joined a confused dogfight, in the course of which five of the enemy were definitely shot down and three more probably destroyed. One *Cabot* fighter which was hit made a forced landing on the return trip; the pilot was rescued uninjured.

At 0630 the *Intrepid* launched her first strike of the day, sending out 10 F6F-3's and 21 SBD dive bombers armed with one 500-pound and two 250-pound bombs each. At 0750 they hit at antiaircraft positions on Roi, making a high-speed approach at 200 knots from an altitude of 15,000 feet to 11,500 feet 10 miles from the target. Over the objective they dived downwind at a 70° angle, releasing their bombs in salvo at about 1,500 feet. The northwest corner of Roi, where the principal antiaircraft concentration was located, and other emplacement areas were smothered by an intensive bomb concentration. A series of explosions and a number of fires followed the attack, and the whole area became enveloped in dense smoke. The accompanying fighters, meeting no enemy fighter opposition, strafed gun and antiaircraft positions.

The aerial pounding of the Roi-Namur area continued throughout the remainder of the day with little interception and lessening antiaircraft opposition. The *Intrepid's* fighters and bombers made an impressive contribution. From 0800 to 1030, 12 of her F6F-3's, while acting as combat air patrol over the target area, shot down six Bettys and one Topsy. One of our fighters made a forced water landing off Roi after being hit by antiaircraft fire. The pilot was seen swimming but was not recovered. At 0815 17 TBF's, each loaded with a 2,000-pound bomb, effectively covered the runways on Roi. Accompanying F6F's strafed the area, destroying two

Bettys, two Zekes, and one Val on the ground. They also strafed and sank a small ship in the lagoon.

One F6F, returning from the target, ran short of fuel at 1000. Since the carriers were still in the take-off position, the F6F had to land in the water; fortunately the pilot was saved by the *Hickox*. From 1200 to 1345 two TBF's, two SBD's, and one F6F-3 from the *Intrepid*, escorted by nine F6F-3's, made vertical, high, and low oblique photographs of the entire north end of the atoll. One of the TBF's, damaged by antiaircraft fire, went out of control while landing and fell over the port side of the flight deck. The *Stack* saved all crew members except the pilot, who was apparently unable to extricate himself from the plane before it sank. Fourteen *Intrepid* TBF's, loaded with four 500-pound general purpose bombs each and escorted by eight F6F-3's, bombed buildings and installations on Roi at 1315. The escorting aircraft strafed planes on the ground and airfield facilities, destroying two unidentified planes and damaging others. At 1515 23 SBD-5's, escorted by 8 F6F-3's, bombed antiaircraft positions and ammunition stowage areas and buildings on Roi and Namur. The fighters destroyed a Betty and a Zeke on the ground, strafed a cargo vessel in the lagoon, and set fire to fuel trucks. Between 1630 and 1830, 12 *Intrepid* F6F-3's acted as combat air patrol over the northern islands, strafing Roi and a cargo vessel in the lagoon, and destroying a Betty.

The remainder of the *Essex's* flights during D minus 2 day followed the same general pattern as those from the *Intrepid*. At 0630 she launched 11 torpedo bombers with a 7-plane fighter cover. These bombers approached the airfield on Roi from the southwest at 10,000 feet. When about 15 miles south of the target, they began a shallow diving approach to the initial attack point—2 to 3 miles east of the objective at 7,000 feet. All attacks were made at about 300 knots, at a diving angle of 45°, with release beginning at 3,000 feet for fragmentation clusters and 2,000 feet for general purpose bombs. Results were partially obscured by smoke and dust; however, many planes scattered about the field burned furiously. Although few suitable targets could be found for the 100-pound bombs, one or two hits were observed on the roof of the large hangar. The accompanying fighters made successive strafing attacks on planes on the ground, concentrating on the northern half of Roi, which was relatively unobscured by smoke. They hit and set afire six Bettys and two single-engine planes and strafed several others. Only one airborne enemy fighter was sighted, and was shot down flaming into the sea.

The next *Essex* strike, composed of 8 fighters and 28 bombers, took off at 0720. Its primary targets were gun emplacements, a radio station, an oil reservoir, and the causeway between Roi and Namur. One plane had engine trouble and returned to the carrier, and three 250-pound bombs failed to release. All other bombs, however, hit in the target areas, demolishing the radio building, setting the reservoir on fire, and inflicting considerable damage on the gun positions. The fighters burned a grounded Betty and strafed anti-aircraft positions and two vessels in the lagoon.

Thereafter, throughout the remainder of D minus 2 day, the *Essex* planes continued to smash at the two northern islands. A total of 28 fighter sorties, 28 bomber sorties, and 11 torpedo plane sorties added to the damage already wrought on enemy installations, carried out photographic reconnaissance, and made antisnooper patrols and message drops. Control of the air was assured after the first flights, largely because of the heavy destruction of Japanese planes on the ground, and the airfield was rendered and maintained inoperative. Fighters from the *Cabot* spent the rest of the day flying combat air patrol over the target but met no opposition; her torpedo planes flew antisubmarine patrol without incident.

Meanwhile Task Group Montgomery's special bombardment unit was making ready for its surface attack on the same islands. At 0930 on the 29th this group, consisting of the *North Carolina*, *Sterett*, and *Lang*, was detached under orders to carry out an intermittent shelling during the night of D minus 2 and on D minus 1 day. Assigned missions were to keep the Roi airfield inoperative, destroy coastal defense guns and personnel, and demolish structures and stores. Destroyers screened 45° on either bow of the battleship, the *Sterett* at 3,045 yards and the *Lang* at 3,315 yards. Approach was made from the southwest at 18 knots.

At 1537, while proceeding to station, the unit made radar contact on two groups of bogies 105 miles to the north. At 1635, in latitude 09° 46' N., longitude 166° 56' E., it sighted a Betty. The *North Carolina* took it under fire at extreme ranges with her 5-inch anti-aircraft battery, whereupon it immediately withdrew. Upon request, Admiral Montgomery supplied a fighter cover of four planes from the *Intrepid*, which arrived over the unit at 1715 and remained until 1800.

Upon arrival off the western coast of Roi, the vessels began tracking. Just before reaching the open-fire position, however, they sighted an enemy supply ship, tentatively identified as belonging to the 5,600-ton *Syoei Maru* class, in the lagoon about 2,000 yards south of the southwest tip of Roi, and

apparently at anchor. The *North Carolina* took this vessel under fire at a range of 23,500 yards and continued to fire intermittently from 1819 to 1846. Both the main and secondary batteries scored repeated hits; fire was discontinued only when the Maru was seen to be ablaze from bow to stern and sinking. The screening destroyers and a spotting pilot reported that the battleship also scored hits on an enemy tanker near the supply ship, but the *North Carolina* was apparently unaware that she had done so.<sup>19</sup>

At 1832 the battleship began her bombardment of Roi at a range of 19,700 yards and at 1836 opened on the same target with her secondary battery. The *Sterett* opened at 1845, her target the center of Roi airfield. The battleship made a total of six firing approaches on the islands, at an average range of 15,000 yards. The first, fourth, and fifth were made from the west to take advantage of the setting sun. The second, third, and sixth were from the east, the second and third to prevent silhouetting of the vessel by the new moon which set at 2323. All retirements were made to the north, protected by a constant destroyer antisubmarine screen. During darkness fire was controlled entirely by radar, the Mark 8 sets turning in an excellent performance. Since flashes from projectile bursts could easily be seen, optical spotting was possible. An estimated 95 percent of the 796 shells fired by the battleship scored hits. The *Sterett*, although her main mission was screening, fired 112 rounds of 5-inch 38 caliber, with a high percentage of hits. She did not fire on run No. 3, because of the extreme range, nor on run No. 4, because the *Lang* fouled the range. The latter destroyer did not open until 0008 on the 30th, when the unit began its third run. During this and the fourth approach, she expended a total of 53 rounds.

#### *Roi-Namur, 30 January*

During the night, both friendly and enemy aircraft were picked up in the area north of the atoll. From their tracks, the Japanese planes appeared to be coming from other islands in the group, looking for a place to land. Eventually they all headed out to the northwest toward Eniwetok. Shortly after 0630 the special unit ceased its bombardment, having started large fires and caused several blasts, and headed northwest. At 0939 it rejoined the other vessels of the bombardment group in latitude 09° 37' N., longitude 166° 51' E.

The group which was to undertake the main bombardment formed at

<sup>19</sup> Her action report reads: "... no tanker was seen, so that either the report was false or the tanker was sunk."

1030. By 1050 the battleships were in column in natural order—*South Dakota*, *Alabama*, and *North Carolina*—followed by the *Indianapolis*. Distance between capital ships was 1,200 yards; course of the group was 060° T. and speed 18 knots. The battle line was screened ahead by the *Stack* on the port bow, the *Sterett* directly ahead, and the *Lang* on the starboard bow on circle four at 45° intervals. The *Hickox* and *Hunt* followed in order at an interval of 1,000 yards, the *Hickox* as guide in position 135° R., 2,800 yards from the *Indianapolis*.

At 1057, as the group approached the northern islands the battleships launched planes. Five minutes later, with Roi bearing 090°, 20,000 yards distant, the *South Dakota* was ordered to fire her initial salvo. The other ships were instructed to open fire when on previously designated bearings. The flagship opened at 1102 with two main battery salvos<sup>20</sup>, but because of a communications failure could not receive any air spots. By 1116, however, when phase No. 1 of the bombardment proper began, contact had been restored.

Up until noon or shortly thereafter, when the first phase ended so as to allow carrier planes to carry out a scheduled bombing of the target, the *South Dakota* pitted the runways thoroughly and may have been instrumental in causing a large explosion just as the bombardment ended. Her first four main battery salvos landed short in the water, but the fifth, corrected by air spots, straddled the causeway. Thereafter she hit steadily. All told, she expended 95 rounds in 30 main battery salvos, while her secondary battery fired 597 rounds of antiaircraft common.

Next ship to open was the second battleship, the *Alabama*. During the first phase her coverage was good, causing several fires and explosions, helping to demolish the runway, and hitting at least one blockhouse. She expended 108 rounds from her main battery and 600 secondary battery projectiles. This vessel reported that the northeast wind, which varied between 19 and 23 knots, was quite helpful in aiding spots by dissipating smoke and dust over the target.

At 1109 the *North Carolina* in turn opened phase No. 1, covering the target area from the first, demolishing planes on one of the runways, and scoring one direct hit on a revetted building and another on a gun position. Her secondary battery covered the islands well with 647 rounds.

<sup>20</sup> A casualty to the hydraulic train motor in turret No. 3 on D minus 4 day had resulted in the complete decommissioning of that turret. All its H. C. ammunition was transferred to turrets Nos. 1 and 2.

The *Hickox*,<sup>21</sup> opening at 1116, was the first of the destroyers to fire, putting 128 rounds of 5-inch antiaircraft common on Ennuebing and 36 rounds on targets of opportunity at Roi and Namur. The *Hunt*, bringing up the rear, opened at 1119 and fired 101 rounds at Mellu and 65 rounds at various targets, including pillboxes and the airfield edge, on Roi. The *Lang*, assigned targets of opportunity on Roi and Namur, opened at 1120 on Roi. Various installations, including gun emplacements, blockhouses, and a radio tower were hit. One building in the hangar area was demolished. From 1149 until the end of the first phase, the *Lang* covered similar targets on Namur. Next came the *Sterett*, which fired 64 rounds, at least 50 percent of which landed on the beach line in areas of indicated gun positions. The *Stack*, last destroyer to fire, opened at 1125, covered gun emplacements and hangars on Roi, and hit a building on Namur.

During the night of the 29th-30th, the carriers of the group, with their screen, proceeded on northerly courses to the north and east of Ujae Atoll. The hours of darkness passed uneventfully, except that shortly after 0300 an unidentified plane was picked up by radar, and the group took antiaircraft cruising disposition. The plane passed clear astern.

The first flights of the day repeated the pattern of the bombing on D minus 2 day. Nineteen fighters and 11 torpedo bombers from the *Essex*, and 17 bombers and 20 fighters from the *Intrepid* hit Roi and Namur with bombing and strafing from dawn until shortly before phase No. 1 of the battleship-destroyer bombardment. During these attacks the *Intrepid* bombers scored 11 direct hits on military installations with 1,000-pound bombs, while her fighters strafed grounded aircraft and airfield facilities, destroying two Zekes, one Nell, and one unidentified plane. *Essex* bombers started a large fire in a fuel dump; her fighters shot down a Kate and thoroughly strafed the airfield area and installations on both Roi and Namur. *Cabot* planes flew combat air patrol and antisubmarine patrol throughout the day.

At 1037 the flagship launched 8 fighters and 17 bombers for the first interbombardment strike. Approach was made to the target at 10,000 feet, the fighters in normal escort formation. They reached the objective at approximately 1145 and circled until 1210, when they were directed to attack. The bombers came in from the northeast, 16 of them (the 17th was a photographic plane) carrying a 1,000-pound general purpose bomb

<sup>21</sup> At 1107 the *Hickox* had fired three salvos at Boggerlap through an error in identification.

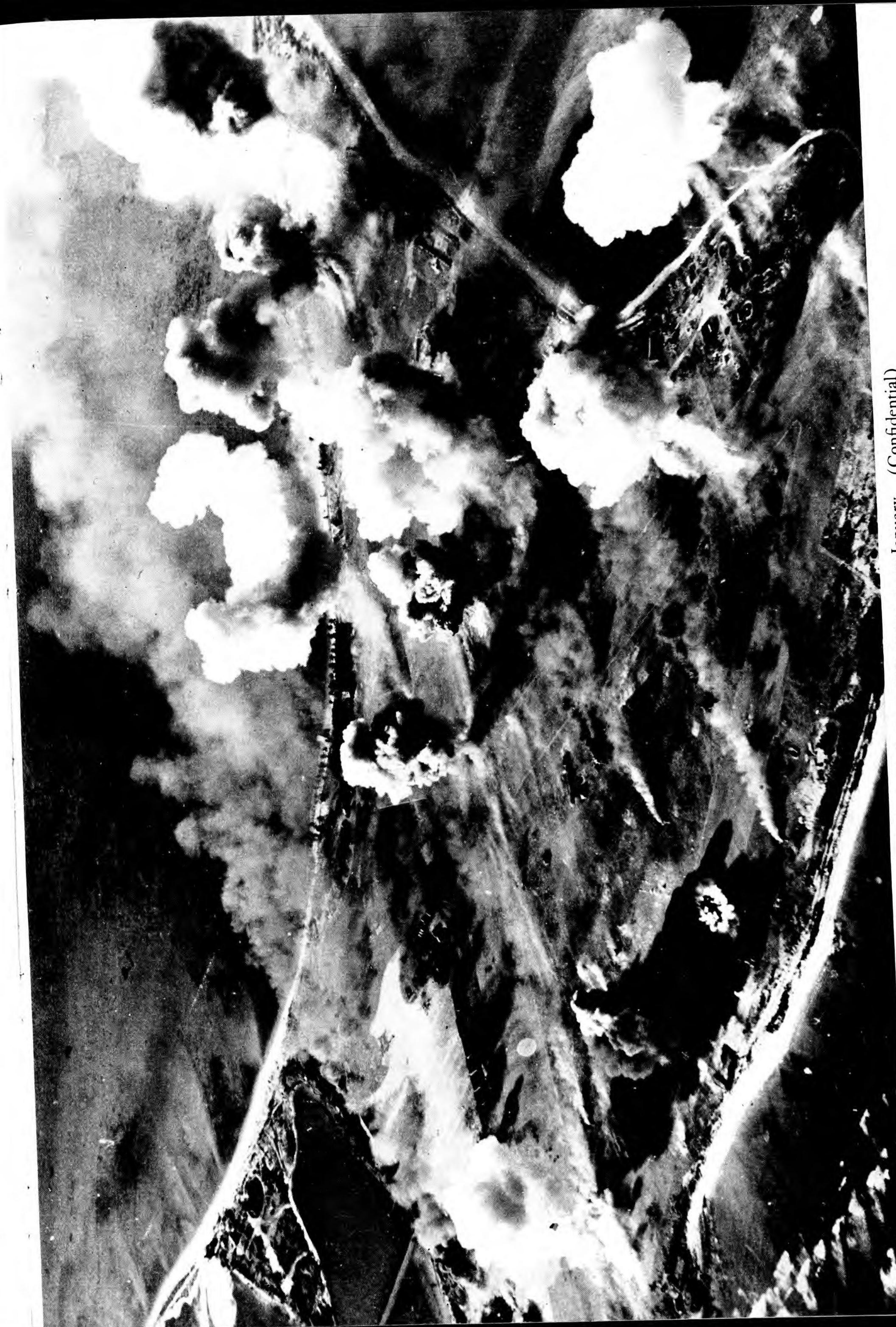
each. Several buildings were hit. One concrete structure on Namur took a direct hit, and near hits were scored on radio direction finder towers, supply buildings, and barracks. On Roi they struck revetments and gun positions and made near hits on a blockhouse on the western coast.

Eight TBF's from the *Intrepid* loaded with 12 100-pound general purpose bombs each, escorted by eight fighters, bombed revetments and buildings on Roi and buildings on Namur, beginning at 1210. All bombs hit in the target area; the fighters strafed installations and planes, destroying three Zekes on the ground.

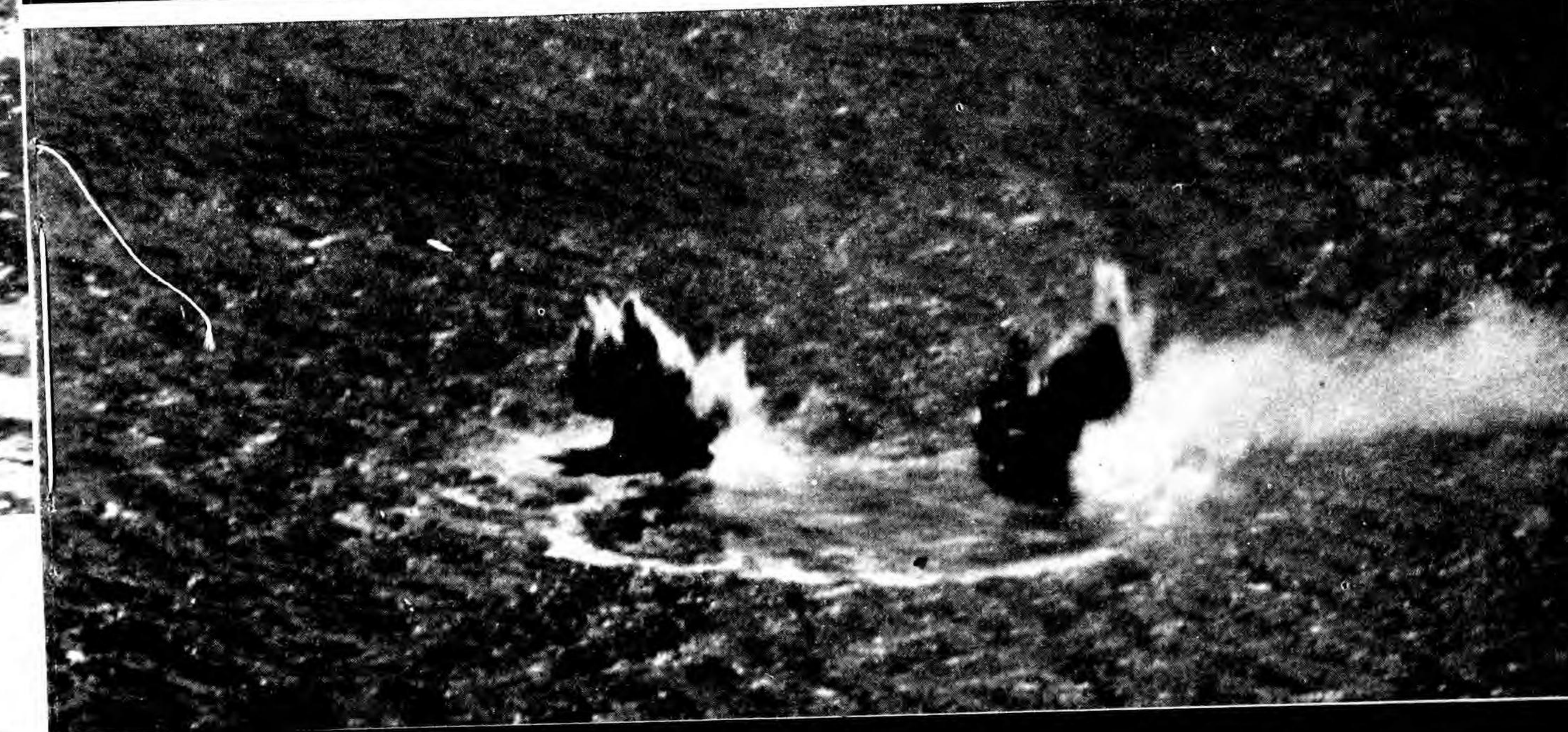
Following the aerial strike, the bombardment group returned to the attack. The *South Dakota* again led the battleship firing, her secondary battery opening on radio installations on an unnamed islet just southeast of Namur at 1224. This battery shifted to targets of opportunity on Namur at 1241. Meanwhile, at 1238, her main battery commenced firing, using direct fire on a large building still standing on Namur. After two minutes she shifted to other targets of opportunity; at 1251 an ammunition dump on the island blew up with such violence that smoke and debris rose 3,000 feet into the air. Both main and secondary batteries pounded targets chosen after a careful study of aerial photographs had been made and definite defensive positions selected. At 1440 "cease firing" was ordered; the bombardment group soon thereafter hauled out to the northwest to recover aircraft. Phase No. 2 was resumed, however, at 1558, and the vessels continued to fire on the same islands until 1620. Midway during this period the *South Dakota's* main battery Spot Two noticed a medium-caliber Japanese field piece futilely firing on the formation. He was given control of the battery and succeeded in knocking out the gun with four salvos. Thereafter the battleship bombarded several blockhouses and thoroughly enfiladed the beaches and runways. She had expended 270 main battery rounds and 961 secondary battery rounds during the second phase.

The *Alabama*, still the second battleship in line, opened with her main battery at 1243 on an uncharted blockhouse. During the next 10 minutes she fired 30 rounds of high capacity at this target, scoring at least two hits and one very near hit. Several other salvos fell very close; yet the blockhouse suffered no apparent damage except to a small observation tower on its top. Between 1304 and 1310 the *Alabama* fired 21 rounds of high capacity at a blockhouse somewhat to the east. One shot landed directly on the roof, and several others were so close they could have been hits. The only damage observed, however, was the blowing away of dirt reinforcements.

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Roi under attack by Task Group Montgomery, 29 January. (Confidential)



Attack on Japanese net layer by aircraft from *Bunker Hill* off Eniwetok, 30 January.  
(Confidential)





Enterprise TBF's attacking Tarao, 29 January. (Confidential)

After covering the beaches by enfilade, the *Alabama* at 1329 opened on yet another blockhouse, this time using armor piercing shells. Of the 15 rounds fired, several were reported by air spot to be very close; shipboard observers saw what appeared to be one or two direct hits, accompanied by bursts of flame through the blockhouse slits. The structure still stood, however, although any gun position inside was probably rendered useless. Thereafter until 1424, the battleship pounded runways and gun emplacements and continued to reduce blockhouses. Shortly after 1400 she returned to the second blockhouse which had come under her guns and fired 15 rounds of armor piercing, scoring at least two direct hits on top, another on the base, and a fourth on the foundation. The base was badly shot away, and the whole structure appeared to be cracked. On the next run past, explosions were noted in the interior. The *Alabama* expended during this phase 226 rounds from her main battery and 962 from her secondary battery, which swept Ennumennet and other islets as well as the two main northern islands.

The *North Carolina* opened her second phase with four main battery salvos at 1244. After covering various installations on the northern islands, she fired 15 rounds between 1353 and 1410 on one of the blockhouses the *Alabama* had bombarded, scoring one direct hit. Other targets included gun positions and defense works. Her secondary battery meanwhile swept pillboxes, hangars, runways, revetments, grounded planes, buildings and trenches with more than a thousand rounds.

The first destroyer to fire during this second phase was the *Hickox*, which opened at 1234. Alternating as van and rear destroyer on the inshore side of the formation, she fired 15 rounds at Ennumennet, 167 rounds at Ennugarret, 84 rounds at Mellu, and 60 rounds at targets of opportunity on Roi. The *Sterett*, in position No. 4 on the inboard quarter of the battleship during the second phase, opened a minute after the *Hickox*, and fired a few rounds at Ennumennet and Ennugarret before shifting her point of aim to Namur. One of her shells caused a large explosion, followed by dense white smoke, near the shoreline of the latter island. After shifting from Namur to Roi, the *Sterett* at 1342 took station screening 4,000 yards ahead of the heavy units and opened again on Roi. At 1543 she threw her final salvos at Ennumennet before retiring.

The *Lang* opened at 1238 on Ennugarret, ceasing at 1246. Moving up the shoreline, she resumed fire at 1254 on Namur, shooting into the barracks area, and shifted to Roi at 1257. Targets covered were coast defense guns

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on the northwest corner of the island, gun emplacements on the north coast beyond, buildings, and a radar antenna. She ceased fire for the day at 1420. The *Stack*, opening at 1245 on gun positions on Namur, also covered oil tanks, ammunition dumps, and buildings on that island and blasted gun positions on Roi. The *Hunt*, screening 4,000 yards on the starboard bow of the *Indianapolis*, opened at 1304 on pillboxes on the northern shore of Roi. At 1325 she changed stations with the *Stack* and assumed antisubmarine station No. 1. Thereafter she peppered successively Ennuebing, Mellu, Roi, Ennumennet, Ennugarret, and Namur, completing her shore bombardment at 1617.

#### TASK GROUP SHERMAN (MITSCHER-THREE)

Task Group Sherman, Rear Admiral Frederick C. Sherman.

One aircraft carrier:

*Bunker Hill* (F, Air Group 17), Capt. John J. Ballentine.

Two small aircraft carriers:

*Monterey* (Air Group 30), Capt. Lester T. Hundt.

*Cowpens* (Air Group 25), Capt. Robert P. McConnell.

Two battleships, Rear Admiral Olaf M. Hustvedt:

*Iowa* (F), Capt. John L. McCrea.

*New Jersey*, Capt. Carl F. Holden.

One heavy cruiser:

*Wichita*, Capt. John J. Mahoney.

Nine destroyers:

*Izard* (F, ComDesRon 46, Capt. Carl F. Espe), Comdr. Earl K. Van Swearingen.

*Charrette*, Comdr. Eugene S. Karpe.

*Conner*, Comdr. William E. Kaitner.

*Bell*, Comdr. Lynn C. Petross.

*Burns*, Comdr. Donald T. Eller.

*Bradford* (F, ComDesDiv 92, Comdr. Harry F. Miller), Comdr. Robert L. Morris.

*Brown*, Comdr. Thomas H. Copeman.

*Cowell*, Comdr. Charles W. Parker.

*Wilson*, Lt. Comdr. Charles K. Duncan.

The mission of this task group was to deliver carrier strikes on Kwajalein and Ebeye Islands on 29 January for the purpose of destroying planes and aircraft facilities. Upon completion of this attack, it was to deny to the enemy the use of Eniwetok as an air base, and particularly as an aircraft staging point, by continuing air strikes on 30 and 31 January and 1 and 2 February. On 3 February it was to retire for fuel, and on the following two

days it was to furnish air support to the Southern Attack Force. On 6 February it was to return to Eniwetok, and by repeated air strikes continue to deny this air base to the Japanese.

All units of the group with the exception of the *Wichita* and *Cowpens* sortied from Funafuti on 23 January, en route to a rendezvous and fueling point at latitude 03° S., longitude 172° E., 270 miles bearing 194° T. from Tarawa. Passage to the fueling point was uneventful, and upon arrival on the morning of 25 January the group was completed. After forming up, it fueled from the *Lackawanna* and the *Platte*, finishing before dark that same day. The group remained in the vicinity of the fueling point during the night and topped off the destroyers the next afternoon, whereupon the oilers and their escort, the DE's *Tisdale* and *Emery*, were released. The group then proceeded toward its initial launching point southwest of Kwajalein.

#### Kwajalein, 29 January

At 0038 on the 29th, while the group was in latitude 06° 30' N., longitude 165° 45' E., 175 miles from Kwajalein on a bearing of 219° T., it made contact with a single unidentified plane. This bogey, however, passed 50 miles astern of the formation at 10,000 feet on course 180° T., apparently heading for Nauru Island.

Launchings for the first strikes on Kwajalein and Ebeye Islands began at 0440, from position latitude 07° 45' N., longitude 166° 20' E., 105 miles southwest of Kwajalein Island. A group of 14 torpedo planes and one fighter plane took off from the flagship to hit the airstrip on the island. The planes arrived over the target at 0545, more than an hour before sunrise, so that the damage they inflicted was difficult to estimate immediately. The enemy was on the alert, and his anti-aircraft fire was continuous and intense. Some indication of the success of the mission, however, was given by the fires which sprang up in airfield installations.

At 0525 the flagship launched a fighter strike of 20 planes to act as patrol over the island and destroy enemy planes in the air and on the ground. Meanwhile the *Monterey* had launched a strike of seven torpedo planes; this group also hit the airfield and buildings on Kwajalein in darkness, starting further fires.

The next strike from the flagship, consisting of 29 bombers, 10 fighters, and an antisubmarine patrol, took off at 0630 to continue the pounding of Kwajalein Island and to hit at the seaplane base and planes at Ebeye. One fighter of this group was shot down by anti-aircraft, and its pilot lost. Al-

most simultaneously a flight of nine torpedo planes escorted by four fighter planes took off from the *Cowpens* to bomb planes and aircraft facilities on Kwajalein Island. The airfield and its appurtenances were by this time quite heavily damaged. No air opposition had developed; antiaircraft fire, however, remained intense.

During the remainder of the day the carriers continued their strikes against the battered targets. The flagship launched a total of 73 fighter sorties, 49 bomber sorties, and 39 torpedo bomber sorties. Her combat losses to antiaircraft, in addition to the fighters already mentioned, were two torpedo planes with four personnel. One bomber with one man was lost operationally. The *Cowpens*, after her one bombing strike, continued to launch fighters for combat air patrol and antisubmarine patrol. Her fighters also strafed Kwajalein Island and grounded planes on the airfield. *Monterey* fighters were especially active. They strafed Rufes on the water at Ebeye and what appeared to be a group of 150-foot landing barges underway off Kwajalein Island. Other targets for their guns included gun emplacements near the airfield, a cargo vessel in the lagoon, and a pier and buildings on Ebeye. Her torpedo bombers continued to pound the airfield.

During the afternoon the task group proceeded on course 290° T. toward the prescribed launching position for the coming strikes on Eniwetok. One evasive course change was made at 2245 to avoid an enemy air radar contact, but no daylight opposition developed. The destroyers *Bradford*, *Cowell*, *Brown*, and *Bell* were designated, with the heavy ships, as a bombardment group in case surface shelling were ordered. Their services, however, were not needed.

#### *The Burns Sinks Enemy Convoy, 30 January*

One event during the afternoon, nevertheless, was to have important repercussions. At 1330, when the *Bunker Hill's* third striking group returned aboard, the squadron commander reported that a TBF had been hit by antiaircraft fire and had been forced to land in the water. The crew of three had been observed to get clear in their rubber boat, and another TBF had been left to circle the scene. As sea conditions were too rough to permit the use of battleship float planes for the rescue, the task group commander at 1351 ordered the *Burns* detached to proceed at 27 knots, pick up the men before dark, and rejoin the next morning at position latitude 10°20' N., longitude 163°15' E.<sup>22</sup> Distance to the reported location of the

<sup>22</sup> See chart facing p. 48.

raft was estimated at 96 miles. Two torpedo planes and four fighter planes were launched to assist the *Burns* in finding the raft and to provide fighter cover.

The *Burns* immediately set out on course 066° T., toward point 08°21' N., 167°49' E. At 1556, guided by the directing aircraft, she changed course and proceeded to latitude 08°28' N., longitude 167°23' E., where she recovered the airmen at 1640.

Because of the critical injuries of one of the fliers, the commanding officer of the *Burns* decided to transfer him to the first heavy ship he met while returning to rejoin. At 1751 the *Burns* sighted Task Group Montgomery, transferred the wounded man to the *South Dakota*, and proceeded on course 295° T. at 25 knots to pass 15 miles south of Ujae Atoll. At 2236, with Ujae Island bearing 063° T., distance 20 miles, course was changed to 304° T.

While proceeding on this course at 0025 on D minus 1 day, the *Burns'* SG radar picked up a pip bearing 052° T. at 20,800 yards. At first only one pip was visible. Inasmuch as the *Burns* had previously tracked several cloud echoes, and as early ranges were erratic, the target was at first believed to be a rain cloud. This impression was heightened by the fact that the pip moved in wind direction at about wind speed. Furthermore Task Group Montgomery was in that general area, and the possibility that one of its ships was the target also had to be considered.

Nevertheless at 0030 the *Burns* changed course to 065° T., to investigate the target which now bore 061° T., at a range of 21,500 yards. At 0042 she went to General Quarters. At this time the pip appeared to divide into two parts on a line of bearing of 135° T. At 0044 she changed course to 315° T. to proceed northwest of the target, turn right, and fire to port; by this maneuver she hoped to blanket return fire from the most distant ship and get the full benefit of any "overs." Combat Information Center and Plot had determined the target's course and speed to be 220° T. at seven knots. The *Burns* changed speed to 20 knots at 0047, and at 0103 began her firing approach. At 0107 she changed course again to 210° T., loaded the main battery, and called the unknown vessels on TBS, reporting her bearing, and warning that she was about to open fire. At this time the wind was blowing from the east-northeast at 15 knots, carrying occasional heavy rain clouds and showers, and accompanied by a moderate sea. There was no moon, and the sky was overcast. Visibility was approximately 1,000 yards.

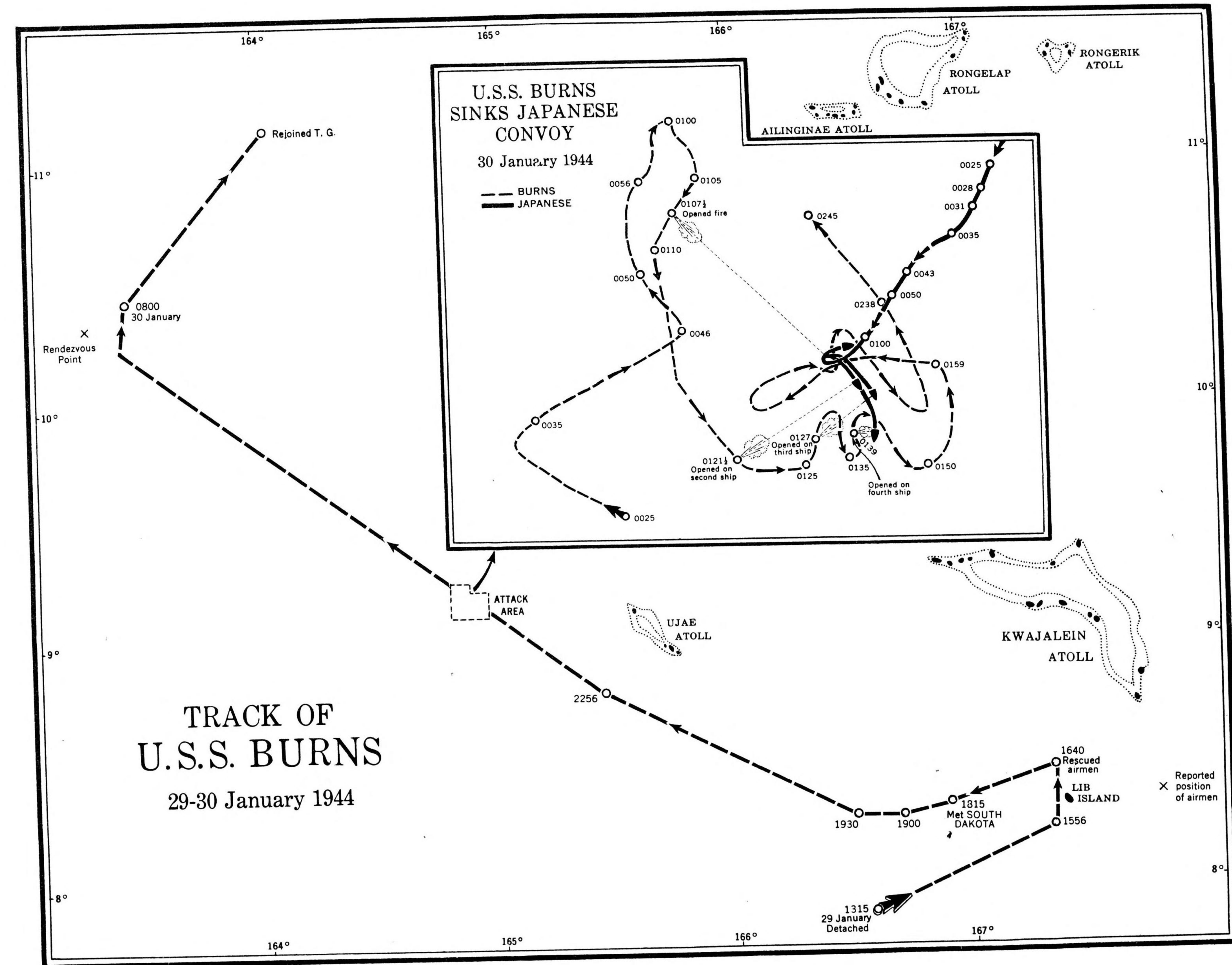
The *Burns* opened fire with her main battery at 0107½ at a range of 9,000 yards, using full radar control and artificial horizon. At 0108, when the target seemed to stop or change course, she checked fire and increased speed to 25 knots. At 0109 she resumed fire, changing course to 200° T. A minute later course was again changed to 180° T., and at 0111½, after checking for 30 seconds, she resumed fire and changed course to 170° T. At 0113 she observed light machine-gun fire and other flashes on the target. The *Burns* checked fire again at 0114, and at 0117 changed course to 150° T. to close the enemy. A minute and a half later she resumed fire, and soon the target was observed to be burning, 6,000 yards distant.

The destroyer checked fire, shifting to a second target, and at 0121½ resumed fire at 6,000 yards range. At 0124, after checking fire again, the *Burns* was able to see this target burning at a range of 4,900 yards. Thereupon she shifted to still another target, and changed course to 030° T. At 0129 she opened on this vessel and the burning ships with her 40-mm. and 20-mm. batteries, and at 0130 resumed fire with her main battery. A minute later the third target was also blazing, so the *Burns* checked fire and changed speed to 20 knots. At 0136 she turned her searchlight on the radar bearing but saw nothing.

Three minutes later the *Burns* picked up a fourth target, increased speed to 25 knots, and opened fire. The enemy ship exploded and sank almost immediately. At 0141 the destroyer ceased firing. Three fires were burning at this time, and return gunfire had long since ceased. The blazing ships appeared to be, so far as could be determined under the limited visibility conditions, a medium-sized tanker, a medium-sized cargo vessel, and a smaller vessel of uncertain type, possibly an escort. Our destroyer turned on her searchlight and searched the area for more targets but found none.

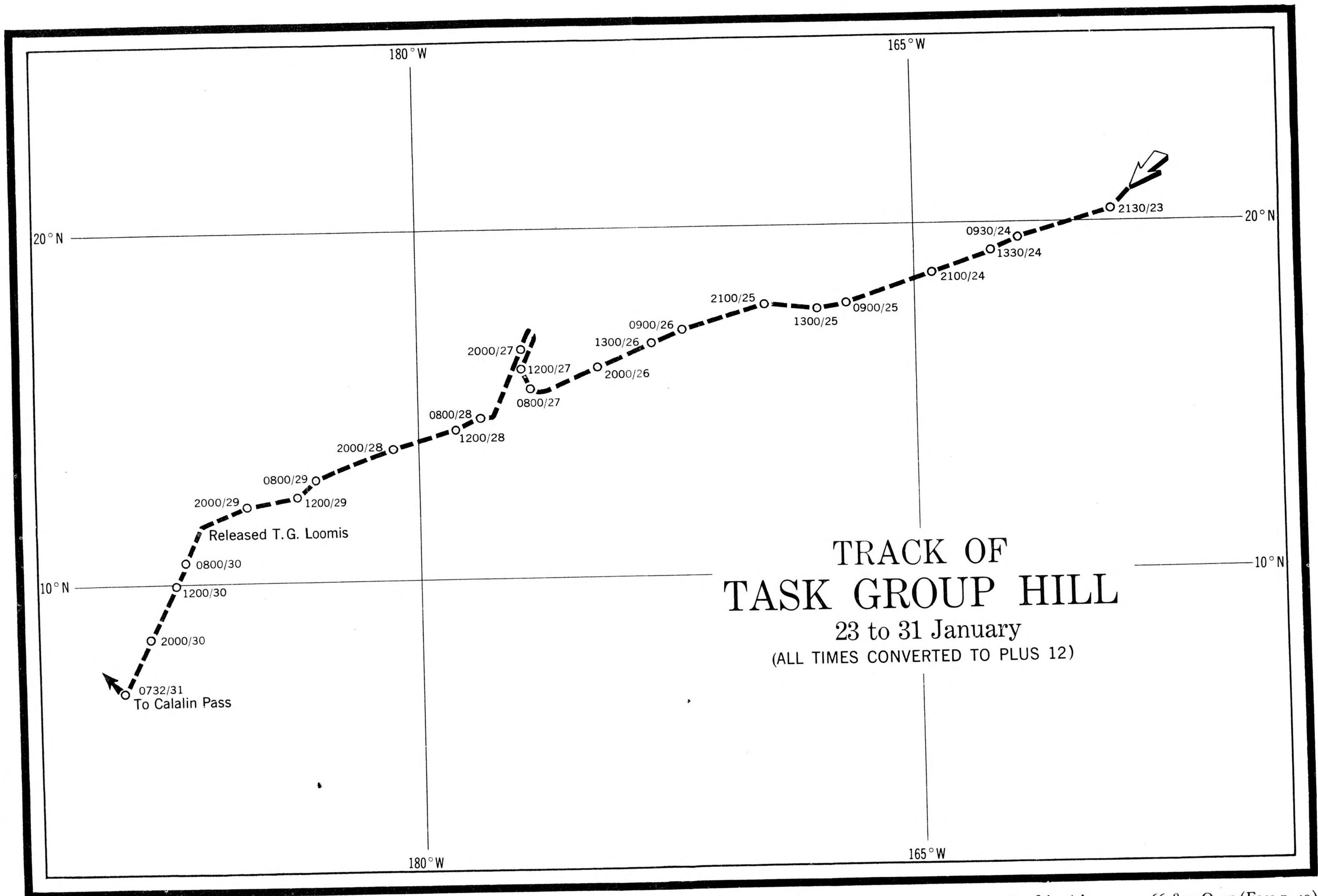
At 0143, just as one burning ship sank, the *Burns* made contact on 220° T. with Task Group Montgomery, now distant 10 miles and closing. Six minutes later she made TBS contact with the group, informed the task group commander of the situation, and declined offers of assistance. Two blazing ships were still visible, and two lifeboats could be seen in the water. At 0159 the *Burns* changed course to 280° T. and speed to 30 knots, while her searchlight swept the area. Oil and wreckage covered the water, but no further targets were in sight. At 0210, after circling in the area, the destroyer saw the cargo vessel, which had burned to the water's edge, turn over and sink. The tanker, her stern under water, was blazing from end to end.

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660800 O-45 (Face p. 49)

At 0223 the *Burns*, satisfied that the convoy was completely destroyed, departed at 25 knots for her rendezvous point. At 0236 she secured from General Quarters. At 1112, without further incident, she rejoined Task Group Sherman.

The task group meanwhile had passed an uneasy night, making radar contacts on no less than five suspicious groups of planes. The closest of these were a small formation, flying at 3,000 feet on a westerly course, which passed 9 miles to the north at 0140, and another small group which passed about 6 miles to the south at 0340, flying east at 7,000 feet. The three contacts heading west were presumed to be enemy aircraft escaping from bases at Taroa, Wotje, or Roi; if this were the case, they were probably among the Bettys later destroyed by Task Group Sherman on Engebi Island.

*Eniwetok, 30 January*

At 0450 on 30 January the group launched its first attack on Eniwetok from position latitude 10° 10' N., longitude 163° 30' E., approximately 103 miles southeast of the atoll. Twelve torpedo planes and one fighter plane from the *Bunker Hill* hit in darkness at installations on Engebi. The second assault group—torpedo planes from the *Monterey*—did not take off until more than an hour's interval had elapsed. Launched at 0545, they arrived over the target at 0645, shortly before dawn, and opened their attack by making a surprise drop on an estimated 15 parked Bettys. Thereupon they hit the runways, causing many fires and explosions and starting one particularly large blaze in the excavation area south of the runway. First launch from the *Cowpens* came at 0655, when a combat air patrol of four Hellcats took off.

Meanwhile the *Bunker Hill*, at 0549, had launched a fighter group of 23 fighter planes which was to take station over Eniwetok and destroy any enemy planes which might attempt to intercept. The *Monterey* also launched a fighter sweep at 1045. This group verified the score of the previous strikes as 17 medium bombers destroyed on the field, four float planes demolished off Parry Island, and one medium-sized cargo vessel beached and burning. These fighters strafed and set afire three more medium-sized merchant ships and one small cargo vessel and strafed installations on Parry Island, setting fires in building areas.

Although the atoll was thoroughly neutralized before noon, planes from all three carriers continued their battering until 1908, when they pulled out to the north. This course was maintained until midnight, when it was

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changed to the west and later to the south to get in position for the D-day attacks against the same atoll.

#### TASK GROUP GINDER (MITSCHER-FOUR)

Task Group Ginder, Rear Admiral Samuel P. Ginder.

One aircraft carrier:

*Saratoga* (F, Air Group 12), Capt. John H. Cassady.

Two small aircraft carriers:

*Princeton* (Air Group 23), Capt. George R. Henderson.

*Langley* (Air Group 32), Capt. Wallace M. Dillon.

Two heavy cruisers (Commander Support Unit, Rear Admiral Hewlett Thébaud):

*Boston* (F), Capt. John H. Carson.

*Baltimore*, Capt. Walter C. Calhoun.

One light cruiser (AA):

*San Juan*, Capt. Guy W. Clark.

Eight destroyers (Commander Screen, Capt. John M. Higgins.):

*Maury* (F), Lt. Comdr. Joseph W. Koenig.

*Craven*, Lt. Comdr. Raymond L. Fulton.

*Gridley*, Comdr. Jesse H. Motes, Jr.

*McCall*, Comdr. Edward L. Foster.

*Dunlap* (F, ComDesDiv 12, Capt. Harold P. Smith), Comdr. Clifton Iverson.

*Fanning*, Comdr. Ranald H. MacKinnon.

*Case*, Comdr. Charles M. Howe, III.

*Cummings*, Comdr. Paul D. Williams.

Task Group Ginder, with its train, sortied from Pearl Harbor on 19 January, and for the next six days proceeded in a general southwesterly direction on various courses and speeds toward the Marshall Islands, engaging in tactical maneuvers and exercises. On 26 January, in approximate position latitude  $13^{\circ}10'$  N., longitude  $177^{\circ}30'$  W., the group fueled from the oilers *Tappahannock* and *Neches*, and the following day those vessels with their escort, the destroyer escort *Martin*, were detached. The group then proceeded on various courses and speeds, maintaining antisubmarine and combat air patrols, until 0400 on D minus 2 day, when it arrived at the initial launching position in latitude  $10^{\circ}$  N., longitude  $171^{\circ}30'$  E., 54 miles bearing  $072^{\circ}$  T. from Wotje.

#### Wotje, 29 January

The first strike, composed of 48 fighter planes and 12 torpedo planes from all three carriers, together with 20 bombers from the *Saratoga*, arrived over the target at 0720 in squally overcast weather. Antiaircraft fire was late and inaccurate. *Saratoga* pilots saw no enemy planes either in the air

or grounded. Air crews from the *Princeton* and *Langley*, however, reported an Emily on the seaplane ramp and some five planes north of the runway intersection.

This and succeeding strikes throughout the day thoroughly covered runways, hangars, air facilities, antiaircraft positions, and radio and radar stations. The bombers holed the airstrips badly, and, although they were unable to lay any bombs directly on the antiaircraft positions, may have damaged several on the east coast by near hits. The radar and radio stations were possibly still usable by the end of the day; pilots reported, however, that most of the island was a shambles, that many buildings on the lagoon shore were destroyed, and that cruiser fire from Task Group Small<sup>23</sup> was effectively hitting the runways when the planes retired.

Our fighters strafed all heavy and medium antiaircraft positions continuously and were able to silence all significant opposition with the exception of one heavy battery on the northeast corner of the island. This position continued to fire even when under both bomber and fighter attack, and its rate did not slacken until late in the day. The fighters also destroyed several small enemy ships in the lagoon and blew up a barge which apparently carried gasoline. One small cargo vessel was sighted near shore. Fighter plane strafing set it afire, and it was promptly beached.

We lost only one plane. Toward mid-morning a *Saratoga* TBM was hit by antiaircraft fire and crashed into the lagoon. The pilot and crew were not recovered. Several other planes from all three carriers suffered minor damage from antiaircraft fire, and a *Saratoga* TBM returned aboard with its elevators badly damaged and two men slightly injured. The only enemy plane encountered was a Hamp which was sighted early in the afternoon about 25 miles from the task group flying on an intercept course about 300 feet over the water. Fighters from the *Saratoga* made a high stern attack, and the enemy crashed and burned.

#### Taroa and Wotje, 30 January

The group moved north and west during the night toward an rendezvous at  $09^{\circ}50'$  N.,  $171^{\circ}25'$  E. Launching on the 30th began at 0545, and although surprise could hardly be expected over Wotje, none of our planes was lost to enemy action. During the day *Saratoga* aircraft made five strikes against Taroa, while *Princeton* and *Langley* planes made two attacks on Wotje and three on Taroa. Both small carriers, after their early

<sup>23</sup> See p. 53.

strikes at Wotje, reported that the runways were severely pitted and that no attempts had been made to repair them. What anti-aircraft fire existed was very light, save for a troublesome gun position at the northeast corner.

*Saratoga* aircraft, joined by planes from the *Princeton* and *Langley* in the mid-day strikes, continued the destruction of the airfield and installations at Taroa. Buildings on the lagoon shore, with the exception of the radio station and revetted torpedo sheds, were almost completely destroyed. Save for a few square concrete storage buildings, structures all over the island which were not demolished received at least severe damage. The airfield runways appeared well pitted, although some sections at the northeast and southeast ends seemed to be serviceable for fighters. About 6 medium bombers and 14 smaller planes were destroyed on the field. The latter, most of which appeared to have been damaged by Task Group Reeves, were thoroughly strafed and burned. No other aircraft were seen near the island.

Fighters from the *Langley* strafed and set fire to two 300-ton inter-island ships in the lagoon and one schooner near one of the smaller islands. Although a few planes suffered minor damage from small-caliber anti-aircraft fire, such opposition was generally negligible. Several bombs were dropped on a suspected gasoline storage area on Reuter Island, but no fire or other evidence of damage was observed.

#### TASK FORCE SMALL

Task Force Small, Rear Admiral Ernest G. Small.

Three heavy cruisers:

*Chester* (F), Capt. Francis T. Spellman.

*Salt Lake City* (TF), <sup>24</sup>Capt. Leroy W. Busbey, Jr.

*Pensacola*, Capt. Randal E. Dees.

Four destroyers, Capt. John T. Bottom, Jr.:

*Hale*, Comdr. Karl F. Poehlmann.

*Walker*, Lt. Comdr. Harry E. Townsend.

*Erben*, Lt. Comdr. Morgan Slayton.

*Abbot*, Comdr. Marshall E. Dornin.

Two light mine layers:

*Preble*, Lt. Comdr. Frederic S. Steinke.

*Ramsay*, Lt. Comdr. Robert H. Holmes.

Task Force Small (the neutralization group), minus its DM's, left Funafuti early in the morning of 23 January. At that time Admiral Small was in the *Chester*, the newest of the three cruisers. On getting underway, how-

<sup>24</sup> Flagship from 24 January-1 February.

ever, the *Chester* suffered a casualty to one of her main air pumps, which necessitated shutting down one engine and reducing the ship's maximum speed to 20 knots. The ship's force tried unsuccessfully to make repairs, and on 24 January Admiral Small, with his staff, transferred his flag at sea to the *Salt Lake City*. The *Chester* returned to Funafuti for repairs.<sup>25</sup>

On the 25th Task Group Small, minus the *Chester*, fueled with Task Group Reeves, and proceeded in company with that group, but not as a part of it, until 1050 on 29 January, when it was detached in latitude 08° 33' N., longitude 170° 33' E., to carry out its bombardment mission. At this time Task Group Small had no combat air patrol cover. Overcast skies and frequent rain squalls, however, protected the formation effectively until 1140 when a combat air patrol reported in from Task Group Reeves.

#### Wotje, 29 January

At 1200 the task group split up into special bombardment units. Task Group Small-Two, comprising the *Salt Lake City*, *Abbot*, and *Walker*, left the rest of the formation and proceeded toward Wotje to carry out a preliminary bombardment of that island. Passage was uneventful. The subgroup sighted Erikub Atoll at 1307 and Wotje at 1347; both had been picked up by SG radar prior to sighting.

The tactical situation for the bombardment presented few difficulties. The *Salt Lake City* was free to choose firing courses and speeds which would keep her outside the estimated range of enemy batteries. She launched her spotting plane at 1359, and her antisubmarine patrol plane at 1406. She thereupon proceeded at 20 knots to her open fire position, 18,000 yards bearing 192° T. from the intersection of the Wotje runways. At this time the wind blew at 10 knots from 050° T., visibility toward the target was fair with occasional haze, the sky was 75 percent covered with clouds, and rain squalls were visible from northeast to southwest and beyond the island. At 1416 the south radio towers came into view, and at 1424 the cruiser slowed to 15 knots and turned toward the firing course of 092° T.

At 1431 the flagship spotted a small two-masted ship bearing 000° T., 14,000 yards distant off the tip of Wotje. At 1433, without taking this vessel under fire, the cruiser opened her bombardment of the airfield.

<sup>25</sup> The cruiser arrived at Funafuti on 25 January and immediately went alongside the *Vestal*. Repairs were completed, and the *Chester* got underway the following day. On 28 January she arrived at Tarawa, Gilbert Islands, fueled, and joined the *Preble* and *Ramsay*. These vessels joined Task Group Small on the 30th. Because of this casualty, the *Chester* did not participate in the D minus 2 day bombardments but was active in all subsequent shellings. On D plus 1 day Admiral Small shifted his flag from the *Salt Lake City* back to the *Chester*.

Almost immediately a lone enemy plane took off from the lagoon. The *Salt Lake City* vectored out a combat air patrol, which shot down the plane, identified as a Kate.

Five minutes after the cruiser opened fire, enemy 5-inch guns answered. Their salvos were all short, none of them nearer than 5,000 or 6,000 yards, and splashes were small. By 1441 lookouts reported four fires on the island. The cruiser then shifted her point of aim to coastal defense guns and at 1451 scored a direct hit on an artillery emplacement.

During the early part of the afternoon she thoroughly covered the runways and dispersal areas. Several fires were started; one large explosion, erupting black smoke, was observed in the north service area; and the crane dock in the central service area was hit and damaged.

Dive bombers and fighters from Task Group Ginder bombed and strafed the island during the bombardment. Shortly after the cruiser's 33rd salvo, at 1513, the carrier planes were observed to bomb the island, scoring hits all along the shoreline. Fighters later strafed the airstrip. At 1535, on the 42nd salvo, the *Salt Lake City* scored a hit on an oil tank in the seaplane hangar area. At 1559 another large explosion, believed to be in an ammunition dump in the middle of the island, rocked the enemy positions. At 1613, after the 70th salvo, the cruiser ceased fire and retired. She had expended 350 rounds of 8-inch high-capacity ammunition.

At that time the field was believed to be unusable, and heavy damage was considered to have been done to stores, personnel, and installations. The bombing attacks by Task Group Ginder were especially effective, particularly since the cruiser gunfire forced the anti-aircraft gun crews to take cover. The *Salt Lake City's* high capacity projectiles, even at medium ranges of 15,000 to 18,000 yards, caused surprising damage to the concrete runways. Air Spot reported that these shells, with 100 percent steel nose plugs, made large holes which rapidly filled with water.

The *Abbot* and the *Walker* did not join in this phase of the bombardment but confined their efforts to screening the heavy cruiser. At 1825, however, the *Abbot* was released from the sub-group to conduct an independent bombardment of Wotje. Between 2115 on the 29th and 0313 on the 30th she expended 400 rounds of 5-inch anti-aircraft common and 50 starshells; all salvos detonated on the island, but no definite results were noted.

The *Abbot's* bombardment did not go off exactly as scheduled, however. Upon detachment she set out at 22 knots on course 265° T., zigzagging as she went. She had planned to head for a point about 10,000 yards bearing

180° T. from Ene Cherutakku Island, then turn north and head directly for the island. Upon reaching a point 5,000 yards due south of the island, she was to turn to 090° T., the firing course.

At 2003 her SC radar made contact with a lone bogey, 32 miles away on bearing 245° T. This contact, however, faded to the north after approaching to about 18 miles. A second bogey was picked up at 2008, 9 miles away and opening on bearing 340° T. This contact was plotted as a small island very close to Wotje. At 2025 the destroyer passed through a point 10,000 yards south of Ene Cherutakku; since bombardment was not scheduled to begin until 2100, however, her commander decided not to turn north at that time but to delay a few minutes and get a good fix.

After several course changes, the *Abbot* turned to 090° T., the firing course for the first group of targets, which included the radio station and surrounding tanks on the southern tip of Wotje. At 2115 she commenced firing on the radio station at a range of 12,000 yards. In five minutes she had expended 14 rounds; almost immediately, at 2121, an enemy shore battery opened fire.

The destroyer thereupon increased speed to 20 knots, turned to starboard to 160° T., and when about 1,000 yards south of the 12,000 yard line turned to port with standard rudder to course 270° T., the firing course for the second leg. The moon soon rose with unexpected brilliance, and it was possible to check radar positions with bearings and tangents.

At 2131 the *Abbot* began firing on her second leg, and after expending 12 rounds shifted to the south service apron, hangars, and workshop area. She ceased firing at 2200, and a minute later increased speed to 20 knots and continued on a southerly course until 2206 when she shifted to 330° T. At 2216 she changed again to 064° T., at 2224 to 244° T., and at 2232 recommenced firing. A minute later the SC radar operator reported a surface target bearing 250° T., distance 8,500 yards. The *Abbot* immediately ceased firing after a total expenditure of five rounds in one salvo and changed course to 150° T. to unmask the after battery. At 2237 she commenced firing, at a range of about 5,200 yards. After eight salvos lookouts reported flashing lights on the target, and fire was checked. By 2241 the FD radar lost the target, and the pip disappeared from the screen. After a momentary reappearance, the pip disappeared for good and all, and lookouts reported that the flashes were the *Abbot's* own projectiles detonating on the surface of the water.

The *Abbot* thereupon ceased firing. In view of the fact that further



shore bombardment was not possible until her SG radar, which had gone out, was again operative, and since she would be unable to detect any torpedo craft approaching from the island under the cover of rain squalls (which were consistently being reported as contacts), the destroyer retired to the east.

Until 2357, when the SG radar was back in operation, the *Abbot* played hide-and-seek and fired a few main battery rounds at a variety of contacts, most of which were sea returns or squalls. She then cruised up and down the island, firing at aircraft installations, until 0313 when she changed course to 168° T., increased speed to 17 knots, and headed for her rendezvous with the task group. Many small explosions continued to occur on Wotje, and numerous doubtful bogeys appeared on the screen, until she finally rejoined at 0700 on the 30th.

#### *Taroa, 29 January*

The other section of the bombardment group had not been inactive during the 29th. The *Pensacola*, screened by the *Erben* and *Hale*, hit heavily at Taroa Island during the afternoon. Weather for this strike was generally cloudy, visibility good, sea calm, and wind mild. The group approached Maloelap Atoll from the east, passing it to the north. At 1455, after doubling back, the *Pensacola* opened fire to starboard, her first target being the northeast-southwest runway. Turrets Nos. 1 and 2 fired six salvos each alternately, and almost immediately enemy gun flashes were observed on the northern shore of the island. These opposing batteries appeared to be heavy antiaircraft weapons located a short distance west of reported coastal defense positions. Fortunately they were inaccurate; the nearest fall of shot was 1,800 yards off the cruiser's starboard bow.

At 1504, after expending 30 rounds, the cruiser swung to 158° T., changed speed to 15 knots, and began firing on her second target—the northern coastal defense positions. Turrets Nos. 1, 2, 3, and 4 fired three salvos each consecutively, and enemy artillery opened again with a three-gun salvo. The projectiles splashed in the water 300 yards short of the *Pensacola's* starboard beam. Further Japanese gunfire splashes were seen later, but a rain squall blanketed the island, and spoiled their aim, as well as our own.

At 1513, after expending 30 rounds on the second target, the cruiser opened on the south service area. Heavy columns of smoke were observed rising from the target, and once again the enemy opened with coastal defense guns. Six minutes later she opened on her fourth target in the same

area, and the defense batteries continued their opposition. Fortunately the Japanese salvos were 1,200 yards short on the starboard bow.

At 1527 the *Pensacola* opened fire on her fifth target, the north service area, and 8 minutes later ceased firing and ended her southerly run, after the expenditure of 40 main battery rounds. She then swung to 009° T. and began phase No. 2 of the bombardment, this time on a northerly run. Her spotting plane reported undergoing heavy and accurate antiaircraft fire, but the cruiser bombarded without incident until 1609, when an explosives or combustibles storage building exploded violently.<sup>26</sup> At 1612 heavy-caliber enemy guns opened at planes passing between the island and the cruiser, and some of their shells fell 3,000 yards short of the *Pensacola*. At 1619, however, the cruiser ended her bombardment and pulled away to the north at 20 knots. A farewell enemy salvo fell 300 yards off her port quarter.

During the entire bombardment the screening destroyers maintained stations at least 3,500 yards ahead and on the disengaged bow. They made no sound contacts, and since no orders were received to begin counter-battery fire, they expended no ammunition.

The *Hale*, however, undertook an independent bombardment of Taroa after dark. Approaching the blacked-out island before midnight, she fired 435 rounds of 5-inch antiaircraft common and 35 starshells at enemy installations. Results were not observed, except that detonations indicated hits. Shore batteries fired a total of eight or ten rounds during the night, but their aim was inaccurate and only two splashes were observed, both of them halfway between the destroyer and the beach. Direct illumination was obtained several times by starshells, which burst at tree-top level and burned on the ground, lighting up most of the island.

At 1100 on the 30th the task group rendezvoused with the *Chester*, *Preble*, and *Ramsay* west of Kaven Island, Maloelap Atoll. At 1130 a message was intercepted from ComCruDiv 6 indicating that three enemy cargo vessels were escaping to the westward from Maloelap Lagoon. The *Erben* and *Walker* were detached to investigate and destroy these vessels. At 1220 they joined up, and at 1255 sighted the island. When they arrived 4 miles west of the island, at 1317, they began their search on southeasterly courses 6 miles from the island's western shore, the *Walker* 8,000 yards on the starboard beam of the *Erben*.

At 1338 the *Erben* began firing at a small schooner which appeared to be

<sup>26</sup> This was probably the result of one of the current dive-bombing attacks.

beached. After she had expended 50 rounds without success, the *Walker* was detached by ComDesRon 48 to sink the vessel and thence search to the west. At 1415, with Bigen Island of Aur Atoll bearing  $082^{\circ}$  T. 5 miles distant, the *Walker* changed course to  $325^{\circ}$  T. to finish off the schooner. At 1441 she slowed to 25 knots and 2 minutes later commenced firing at a range of 8,500 yards. The third salvo blew off the schooner's stern, and at 1449 the *Walker* ceased firing, having expended 55 rounds. The schooner by this time had rolled over on its side, and was obviously wrecked. The *Walker* continued her search until 1715, when she retired toward Wotje for the scheduled night bombardment.

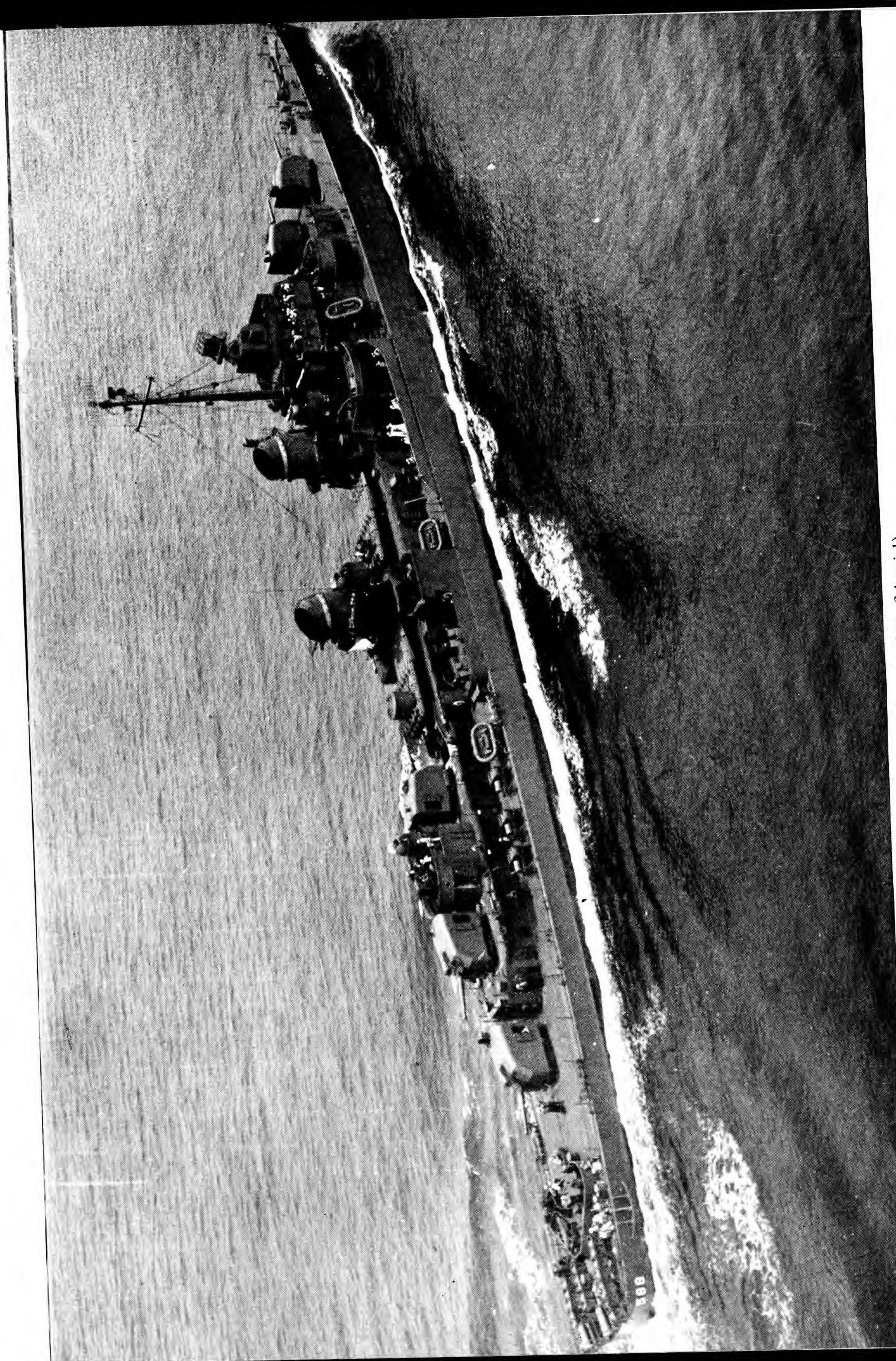
The *Erben* made contact with planes from Task Group Ginder, which reported that they had carried out a thorough search without results. At 1343 she met the *San Francisco*, accompanied by one destroyer, passing between Aur and Maloelap. After a continued search to the west, the *Erben* passed between Aur and Maloelap on an easterly course, searched to the southeastward of Aur, returned on the west side of that atoll, and arrived off the southwest entrance of Maloelap lagoon at dusk. She then proceeded to carry out her night orders, which called for a bombardment of Taroa.

#### *Taroa, 30 January*

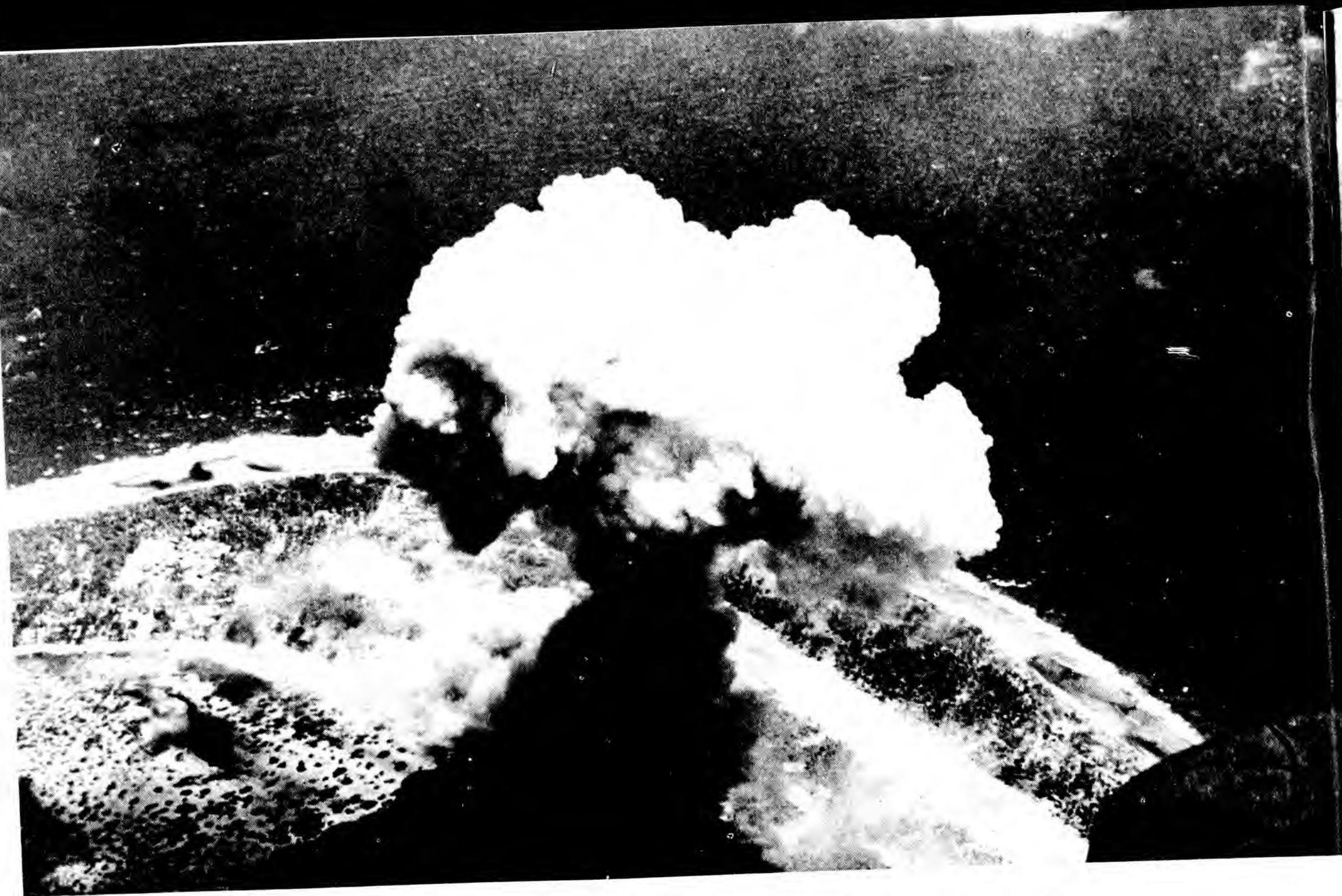
Meanwhile Task Unit Small-One, comprising the *Salt Lake City*, *Hale*, *Preble*, and *Chester* (which had finally rejoined) proceeded to the firing position off Taroa Island for their afternoon bombardment. En route they made contact with the *Minneapolis*, *New Orleans*, and their screening destroyers which had just completed a 6-hour bombardment of that island. At 1313 the *Chester* took the guide position for firing. The islands of Maloelap were consistently on the flagship's SG radar screen, and as the vessels approached they could see a beached enemy transport or cargo ship on the reef and two burning enemy vessels. Heavy clouds of smoke rose over the island from the dive-bombing attack then in progress.

The flagship directed her combat air patrol, from the *Saratoga*, to observe her fire, as weather would not permit launching the cruiser spotting planes. At 1406, with the formation's speed 15 knots, course  $110^{\circ}$  T., target bearing  $183^{\circ}$  T. at 18,400 yards, the *Chester* opened fire, followed a minute later by the *Salt Lake City*. At that time the *Salt Lake City* was 1,000 yards astern of the guide, and the *Preble* and *Hale* were acting as antisubmarine screen on the *Salt Lake City's* port bow.

During the day the *Chester* fired 201 rounds of 8-inch, at general ranges



The destroyer *Burns*. (Confidential)

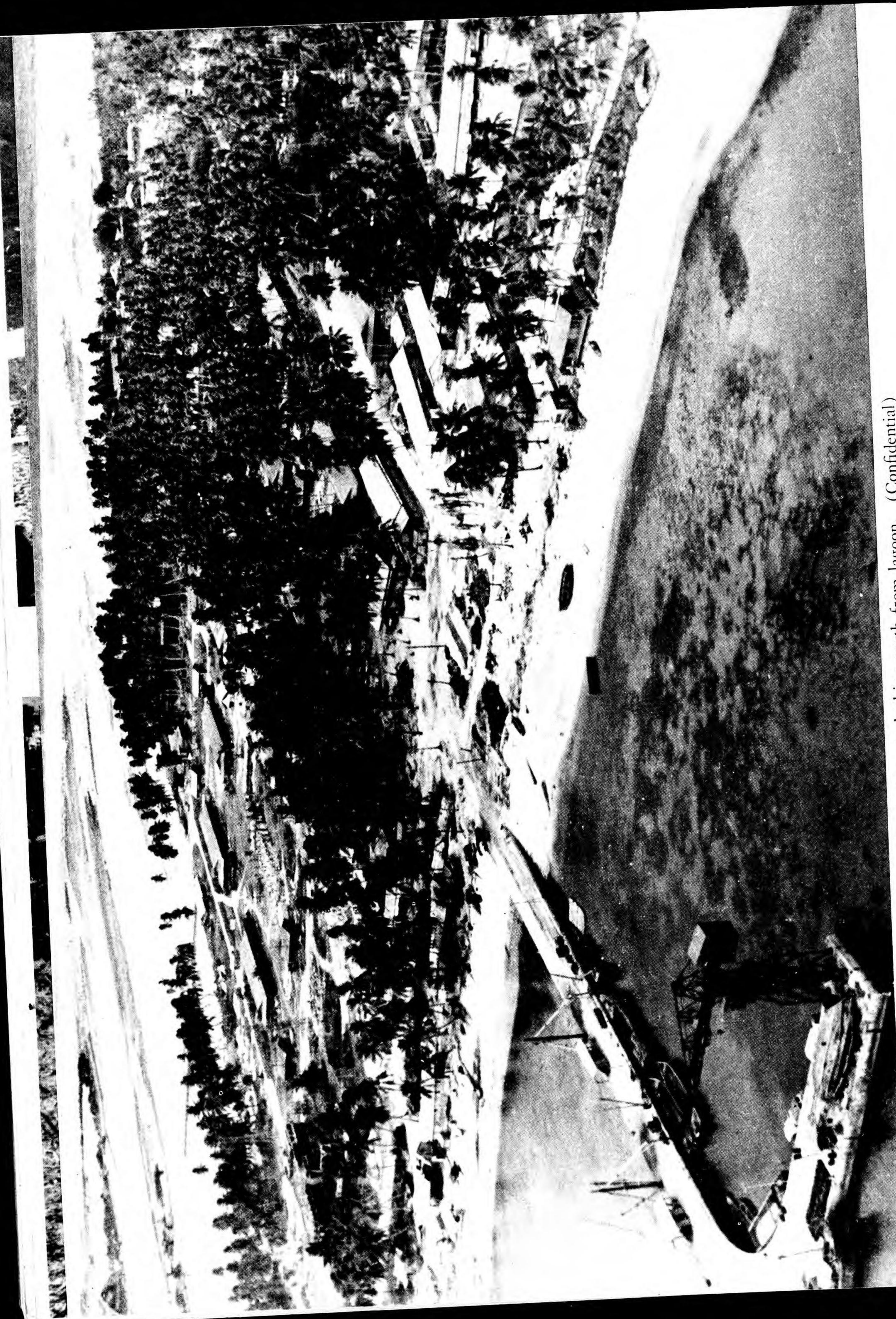


Explosion of ammunition dump on Kwajalein Island during bombardment of 30 January. (Below) Devastation caused by the blast. (Confidential)



Roi under bombardment by *South Dakota* on 30 January. (Below) Namur during same bombardment. Connecting causeway may be seen in both pictures. (Confidential)





Namur on 30 January, looking north from lagoon. (Confidential)

of from 12,000 to 15,000 yards and at speeds of approximately 15 knots. The weather was clear, with good visibility and moderate northeasterly winds. No enemy opposition was encountered except for inaccurate antiaircraft fire directed against her spotting plane. Her main targets were the runways, although she also took under fire coastal defense batteries and special service areas in enfilade.

The *Salt Lake City's* first target was the western service apron area. As she worked over her assigned targets, several large explosions were noted, one of them probably caused by the *Chester's* guns. During the simultaneous air attack by Task Group Ginder, which began at 1450, bombs were observed to hit the island in a sweeping pattern running from north to south. This cruiser's fire was based on five-gun salvos, one two-gun and one three-gun turret firing in salvo, alternating pairs on successive target areas. Although the *Salt Lake City's* observation planes were not launched, fighter pilots of the combat air patrol volunteered information concerning general fall of shot and spotted with great enthusiasm.

#### *Wotje, 30 January*

The *Pensacola* group followed the same general procedure for its bombardment of Wotje on 30 January which it had used during its shelling of Taroa the preceding day. Conditions governing the courses and targets for the bombardment were similar to the earlier operation, as were anti-submarine measures and screening.

The group rendezvoused at 0700, the *Abbot*, *Walker*, and *Ramsay* screening the cruiser, and immediately set out for the target area. Wind at this time was from the northeast, with a velocity of 18 knots. Slight swells, also from the northeast, were experienced, and visibility was unlimited with slight cloud cover.

At 1334, shortly after the target was first sighted, the *Abbot* reported planes taking off from Wotje. Combat Air Patrol, scheduled to be provided by Task Group Ginder, had not yet arrived, so the bombardment group continued on course, informing the air group and Task Group Small of the reported aircraft and the absence of the patrol.

At 1325 the *Pensacola* began launching two planes, and upon completion of this maneuver resumed her approach toward the south side of the island. At 1359 the cruiser opened fire by single turrets, with spots for each salvo. The combat air patrol reported on station at 1430 as the *Pensacola* continued her deliberate fire.

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The cruiser made three countermarches while bombarding the island, and in general the result of her fire appeared excellent. At 1507 one of her salvos landed near the northeast tip of Wotje and caused a terrific explosion. Observers reported three or four planes thrown into the air, and at first believed that the *Pensacola's* own spotting planes had been caught in the detonation. Smoke from this explosion rose to a height of 2,500 feet, and the fires it left were still burning when the group left the area. Further salvos caused continued explosions, though of a minor character, as fires worked northward along the lagoon shore of the island. By 1619 the spotting planes reported so much smoke over the target that their view of the island was obliterated.

#### TASK GROUP GIFFEN

Taroa Island Bombardment Group, Rear Admiral Robert C. Giffen.

Three heavy cruisers:

*Minneapolis* (F), Capt. Richard W. Bates.

*New Orleans*, Capt. Samuel R. Shumaker.

*San Francisco*, Capt. Harvey E. Overesch.

Four destroyers, Capt. Bernard L. Austin:

*Bailey* (F), Comdr. Malcolm T. Munger.

*Frazier*, Comdr. Elliott M. Brown.

*Meade*, Comdr. John Munholland.

*Hall* (ComDesRon 51, Capt. Hugh J. Martin), Comdr. John F. Delaney.

Taroa, 30 January

At 1700 on the 29th, the Taroa Island Bombardment Group, a unit of Task Group Giffen, was detached to proceed toward its objective. This group was composed of the *Minneapolis* (F), *New Orleans*, *San Francisco*, *Bailey*, *Frazier*, *Hall*, and *Meade*. As it left the main body, in position latitude 11°49' N., longitude 173°20' E., it formed cruising disposition 5LS-1, course and axis 210° T., circle spacing 1,000 yards, speed 16 knots.

The flagship's SG radar first picked up Maloelap Atoll as she came in from the north at a range of 46,000 yards, and by 0630 on the 30th Taroa was visible 19,000 yards distant on a bearing of 160° T. Visibility, despite light haze, was good. Wind was 12 to 14 knots from the east, with little sea. The vessels had taken their bombardment stations at 0615 as follows: *Minneapolis*, *San Francisco*, and *New Orleans* in column in that order; *Bailey* and *Frazier* screening ahead, the former at 2,500 yards 25° on the starboard bow of the flagship, the latter at 5,000 yards 20° on the port bow; and *Hall* and *Meade* in column astern of the cruisers. In accordance with the schedule of fires, the *Frazier* was designated destroyer No. 1, the *Bailey*

destroyer No. 3, the *Hall* destroyer No. 5, and the *Meade* destroyer No. 6. The *Meade* was also assigned additional coast defense and anti-aircraft gun targets in later phases of the bombardment, so her ammunition allowance was increased for that purpose.

The attacks on Taroa and Wotje by Task Group Reeves<sup>27</sup> and Task Group Small<sup>28</sup> had been carried out as scheduled on the 29th. Results of these strikes, combined with the fact that the air search radars of Admiral Giffen's group picked up no bogies, indicated that our forces had achieved local air control and as a result each cruiser launched one plane for spotting at 0640 and secured all others.

At this time the group course was 130°, speed 20 knots. At 0645, when range to the coast defense batteries on the northeast shore was 16,000 yards, the *Minneapolis* and *San Francisco* opened a pre-bombardment shelling with their main batteries, the flagship shifting fire 5 minutes later to gun positions on the southeast coast. At 0652 zero hour for the first phase of the bombardment was set by signal for 0659, and at 0700 the group changed course to 140° and speed to 15 knots. At this time three small merchant ships were sighted inside the lagoon north of Taroa, but were not taken under fire immediately, since the neutralization of the airfield was the primary task.

At 0702, when range to the beach was 9,200 yards, shore batteries on the northeast coast opened on the column. The first salvo landed 150 yards over, off the port bow of the flagship. Almost immediately other shore batteries on Taroa's eastern bulge took the other cruisers under fire.<sup>29</sup> The enemy salvos were accurate and well distributed, and numerous splashes fell close aboard each cruiser. The flagship, in fact, was straddled on the third salvo at 0703. Our scheduled fire on runways and installations continued, however, with excellent results reported by the spotting planes.<sup>30</sup>

The enemy began rapid fire at 0705. Our group immediately changed course to 110° and speed to 20 knots to open the range and confuse the Japanese fire control. At 0712, when range to the nearest opposing batteries was about 12,000 yards, the Japanese shells began to fall short, and our course was changed to 172°. A few moments later speed was reduced to 15 knots. A further course change at 0723 put the vessels on course 205°,

<sup>27</sup> See p. 23.

<sup>28</sup> See p. 56.

<sup>29</sup> Neither target nor intelligence charts had indicated the presence of these guns. They were later determined to be 5-inch coast defense mounts.

<sup>30</sup> One salvo from the *Hall* exploded an ammunition dump, silencing a defense battery located nearby.

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and at this moment planes of Task Group Ginder<sup>31</sup> were observed approaching the island. Accordingly, at 0726, 7 minutes before the scheduled completion of the first phase, the flagship ordered "cease fire."

The first air strike by Task Group Ginder began at 0727. Three minutes later the *New Orleans*, screened by the *Meade*, was ordered to destroy the ships previously observed in the lagoon. The two warships proceeded to the north in compliance. At 0800, when they were about 9,000 yards from the beach, a shore battery opened on the cruiser, apparently taking her foremast as point of aim. Several shots landed within 50 yards, and the *New Orleans* immediately opened counter-battery fire with some apparent success. Speed was increased radically, and both vessels made a 20° right turn away from the enemy. This maneuver, however, had but slight effect on the accuracy of the shore fire. When the vessels had reached 25 knots, they made a radical left turn normal to the line of sight, and the Japanese shells began to fall astern.

The spotting plane at this point reported that the three enemy freighters were anchored close in to the lagoon shore. Throughout the mission the *Meade* never sighted these vessels, but after both ships had given several of the islands a light working-over, the *New Orleans* opened at 0851, using indirect fire with plane spots. She soon scored an 8-inch hit amidships on a 2,000-ton freighter.<sup>32</sup> The cruiser thereupon ceased 8-inch fire to avoid over-expenditure of allowance, and opened with her 5-inch battery. She made one hit on the stern of another freighter, estimated at 800 tons, but this vessel and a third, apparently undamaged, proceeded out of range and escaped to the west.

Meanwhile the second phase of the bombardment proper had begun on schedule at 0731. Firing units for this phase were composed of one cruiser and one destroyer, opening in the following order: *Minneapolis* and *Frazier*, *San Francisco* and *Bailey*, *New Orleans* and *Meade*. The *Hall* was given antisubmarine duty with the *Minneapolis* until late in the morning, when she joined the *New Orleans*. All firing times were adjusted to avoid conflict with the continuing air strikes.

The *Minneapolis* and *Frazier* began the first run at 0750 on an opening range of about 12,000 yards. The cruiser's main battery concentrated on the Taroa runways, while her 5-inch guns took air facilities, coastal guns, revet-

<sup>31</sup> See p. 51.

<sup>32</sup> This ship burned the rest of the morning and was later reported by planes from Task Group Ginder as sunk.

ments, and hangars under fire. She then gradually closed the range to 9,600 yards and at 0830 completed her run. Opposing fire from coastal batteries was ineffective. The fire of our own vessels, however, was reported by the air spotter to be accurate and well placed, but the heavy damage the runways had suffered in the air strikes made assessment of the results difficult. The only casualty suffered by our force was the loss of one man overboard from the cruiser.

At 0814 the second group, the *San Francisco* and *Bailey*, began its approach for the second phase bombardment. The first run, on course 048°, was interrupted by an order to "move in" from the 12,000 yard line. The second run, on course 228°, was interrupted by an air strike, during which both vessels moved out. Run No. 3, however, was completed without interruption on course 048°, range abeam from the *San Francisco* being 6,500 yards to the intersection of the runways. This plan permitted firing directly down the runway in enfilade three times, once on each pass. When the runway was end-on, or nearly so, rapid fire was used down the strip, utilizing the pattern in range to achieve coverage. Many large bursts and explosions were noted in the target area, and most salvos seemed effective. At 1005 the cruiser ceased fire, and both ships set out to rejoin the *Minneapolis*.

The third group, the *New Orleans* and *Meade*, following their antishipping strike, began their phase two runs shortly after 1030. At 1045 the cruiser opened on the island, and 4 minutes later the destroyer followed suit. Range during the first run was about 10,000 yards. Fire was directed principally at the hangars and service apron. At 1100, when an air strike began, both ships ceased fire and stood to the north, returning a half hour later when the strike was completed. The *Meade*, at 1146, was granted permission to proceed independently and close the island to a more effective range. When about 8,000 yards from the target she opened on the hangar area north of the intersection, starting at least one large fire just north of the nearest hangar. At 1200 the two ships ceased all fire and withdrew to rejoin the formation in retirement.

The *Hall*, freed of her screening duties, opened on Taroa at 1128 at a range of 7,800 yards. For 11 minutes she conducted a deliberate bombardment of the area north of the runway intersection, firing 100 main battery rounds. She started one fairly large gasoline fire and a few smaller blazes before rejoining the other ships.

At noon, after all ships had completed phase No. 2, the *San Francisco* and *Frazier* were ordered to proceed westward, passing south of Maloelap and

north of Aur, to locate and destroy the cargo vessels which were believed to have escaped from the lagoon. The remainder of the group was to proceed north of Maloelap and head toward a 1900 rendezvous with the *San Francisco* at a point 21 miles west of Kaven Island.

The enemy's most probable course of action appeared to be to separate and proceed at high speed west to Kwajalein, or possibly to Ailinglapalap or Jaluit. Should they remain near Maloelap, or attempt to proceed to Wotje, Task Group Small or Task Group Giffen would probably make contact with them. The *San Francisco* therefore decided to concentrate on a sector from northwest to south, using time of departure from the center of the lagoon as 1100 and estimated speed 12 knots.

From a 1230 position in latitude  $08^{\circ}42.5' N.$ , longitude  $171^{\circ}27.5' E.$ , the cruiser, with the *Frazier* screening 1,000 yards ahead, took course  $222^{\circ} T.$ , at a speed of 25 knots. Two planes, armed with two 100-pound bombs each, were prepared for search. Surface visibility at the time was excellent; for search purposes, however, it was assumed to be 25,000 yards because of the small size of the quarry. For aircraft, visibility was assumed to be 30,000 yards.

At 1325 the two hunters met the *Walker* and *Erben* of Task Group Small in the pass between Maloelap and Aur. Information received from these destroyers indicated that they had come down the west coast of Maloelap at 25 knots and had not sighted any shipping. For this reason, the search was concentrated on the northern sector. At 1340 the cruiser launched her two planes and began to zigzag at 21 knots on course  $270^{\circ} T.$ <sup>33</sup> The 1330 position of the *San Francisco* was used by the planes as origin point for their search. Plane No. 1 was ordered to make good track 285 for 60 miles, 180 for 25 miles, then 075 to intercept at about 1500. It actually rejoined at 1510 and was once again sent out to repeat the same track from the ship's 1530 position, to rejoin at 1700. It returned at 1720 without having made contact.

Plane No. 2 was ordered to round Aur to the west, then to fly track 210 for 50 miles, 310 for 30 miles, and 090 to intercept about 1500. It was also intended that this plane repeat the search from the cruiser's 1530 position. It became lost on its first run, however, and contacted the other cruisers of the bombardment group northeast of Maloelap at 1530.

Because of this plane's failure to home, the *San Francisco* proceeded in a

<sup>33</sup> The reduction in speed was made to permit the *Frazier* to use to the fullest advantage her super-sonic equipment.

westerly direction until 1800 instead of changing course to  $048^{\circ} T.$  at 1700, as planned. This resulted in a slight extension of the surface search to the west, failure to cover the southern sector, and a belated rendezvous with the main body of the bombardment group. The freighters were never sighted.

At 1950 the *San Francisco* rejoined, taking station 1120 in disposition 5 LS-1, course and axis  $266^{\circ} T.$ , speed 14 knots. The *Frazier* joined the screen, and the united group steamed toward Kwajalein for the D-day bombardments.

#### TASK GROUP OLDENDORF

Special Wotje Bombardment Group, Rear Admiral Jesse B. Oldendorf.

Two heavy cruisers:

*Louisville* (GF), Capt. Samuel H. Hurt.

*Santa Fe* (F, Rear Admiral Laurance T. DuBose), Capt. Jerauld Wright.

Two light cruisers:

*Mobile*, Capt. C. Julian Wheeler.

*Biloxi*, Capt. Daniel M. McGurl.

Six destroyers:

*Morris* (F, Capt. Edward A. Solomons), Comdr. Gordon L. Caswell.

*Anderson*, Comdr. John G. Tennant, III,<sup>34</sup> Lieut. George E. Alexander.

*Mustin* (F, Comdr. Thomas H. Tonseth), Comdr. Monroe M. Riker.

*Russell*, Lt. Comdr. Lewis R. Miller.

*Hughes*, Lt. Comdr. Ellis B. Rittenhouse.

*Fletcher*, Comdr. Robert D. McGinnis.

At 1200 on 29 January, in position some 200 miles northeast of Wotje, the special cruiser and destroyer task group noted above was detached from Task Force Conolly with orders to carry out a dawn bombardment of Wotje Island. Admiral Oldendorf in the *Louisville* was designated officer in tactical command of this group. It was assumed at the time that no substantial enemy surface forces would be found in the area, that enemy submarines would be present, that enemy air attacks were probable, and that Japanese shore batteries would oppose the bombardment group.

#### Wotje, 30 January

The assigned vessels steamed through the night toward their objective without incident, taking base course  $237^{\circ} T.$  at a base speed of 17.5 knots. Approach was laid so that zero hour for the operation would find the ships at a point 9,000 yards distant bearing  $140^{\circ} T.$  from the southwest tip of the island. At 0530 on the 30th, course was changed to  $270^{\circ} T.$ ; 5 minutes later

<sup>34</sup> Killed in action 30 January.

disposition was changed from a two-column line of section guides to an approach disposition of the four cruisers in column—*Louisville*, *Santa Fe*, *Biloxi*, and *Mobile*—with the *Anderson*, *Morris*, and *Hughes* in antisubmarine screen 2,000 yards ahead of the guide, the *Fletcher* leading the guide, and the *Mustin* and *Russell* in column astern of the rear cruiser at 1,000-yard intervals. Between 0540 and 0610 the formation maneuvered on various courses to attain position on the proposed track.<sup>35</sup> At 0610 the group steadied on course 300° T., at 15 knots, and at 0620 changed course to 030° T. to approach the zero-hour point.

Weather conditions at this time were ideal for the operation. Wind was from the northeast at force 4, sea was moderate without swells, visibility was 25 miles, and the sky was clear. The cruisers each launched a spotting plane at 0625, and at 0630 all but the flagship opened on the dispersal areas, hangars, buildings, and other installations in the area between the intersection of the runways and a point a half mile south of the intersection.<sup>36</sup> The destroyers, with the exception of the *Hughes* which was on the disengaged side, commenced firing shortly thereafter, at an initial range of about 8,400 yards. Air spots indicated good coverage by the early salvos.

Almost immediately an accurate enemy defense battery opened up in reply. Its first two salvos fell somewhat short, with good deflection but a 500-yard deflection pattern. One shell in the third salvo, however, struck the *Anderson* on the port bulkhead of the Combat Intelligence Center, between frames 56 and 58 on the superstructure deck, killing the captain on the bridge and two officers and three men in Combat Intelligence Center, and wounding two more officers and 11 men. The executive officer on the bridge immediately assumed command.

The explosion blew a hole almost 4 feet in diameter in the superstructure bulkhead, completely severing frame 57. It also punched two holes about 2 feet in diameter in the superstructure deck. Damage to Combat Intelligence Center included destruction of the SC-2 radar transmitter, identification radar equipment, dead reckoning tracing gear, and air plot, and considerable damage to the SG radar and various radio units. Fragments penetrated quarter-inch boiler plate at distances of 15 feet and quarter-inch aluminum sheeting at 25 feet. Holes were torn in the deck and bulwarks of the port wing of the bridge, the pilothouse deck, the stack, the shield of

<sup>35</sup> A southerly set during the night had affected the dead reckoning position.

<sup>36</sup> The *Louisville* had intended to open with the others, but a casualty to her port airplane catapult delayed her first salvo until 0641.

gun No. 2, and other exposed points. Small resultant fires were easily controlled.

Steering control was lost at first on the bridge, and the ship began to swerve to port. Within a minute, however, control was shifted to after steering, and the *Anderson* quickly regained station to follow the movements of the flagship. Despite the hit, the *Anderson* finished her scheduled phase No. 1 firing on time, and in fact had gun No. 2 back in commission, manned by personnel from other stations and ready to fire, within 4 minutes.

The first phase of the bombardment was to end before 0800, at which time Task Group Ginder would carry out an air strike on the island. The planes arrived almost an hour ahead of schedule, however, and at 0708 "cease fire" was ordered. This timing, according to the *Mobile*, was "most inopportune," since the surface group was within 8,000 yards' range of shore batteries. The enemy's accuracy increased, while our ships were unable to fire back.

At 0719 the formation changed course to 330° T., and by 0742 had reached a point 4 miles bearing 020° T. from the island, ready to begin the second phase. Order and times of fire for this phase were scheduled as follows: *Santa Fe*, *Morris*, and *Anderson*, 0715-0800; *Louisville*, *Hughes*, and *Fletcher*, 0830-0930; *Biloxi*, *Mustin*, and *Fletcher*, 0945-1015; and *Mobile*, *Russell*, and *Hughes*, 1100-1200. As soon as it was apparent that the *Anderson* had been hit, however, the *Hughes* was ordered to take over part of her assignment for this half of the operation. Another change, occasioned by a dubious submarine contact, placed the *Morris* in screening station to seaward of the *Santa Fe's* port bow, thereby blanking the destroyer's battery for most of the run.

By 0733 the *Santa Fe* was maneuvering into position for her scheduled strike. The *Biloxi* and *Mobile*, however, were counter-battery firing at this time, and the *Santa Fe's* line of sight was fouled by the other ships. Her bombardment, therefore, did not begin until 0740, when she opened with her main and secondary batteries at a range of 11,000 yards. Expending a total of 254 rounds, she had silenced some of the persistent shore batteries before she ceased fire. Between 0752 and 0758 her main battery covered the northwest-southeast runway, and from 0758 to 0822 the 5-inch battery hammered coast defense dual-purpose and antiaircraft guns. The *Hughes* opened at 0756, following the movements of the cruiser, and ceased 29



minutes later after firing 29 salvos. Her opening range was 8,200 yards, later increased to a maximum of 10,400 yards.

The *Louisville* group then took up the bombardment, concentrating on runways, shore batteries, and adjacent buildings and dispersal areas. During the next hour the cruiser expended 150 rounds of 8-inch and 239 rounds of 5-inch before retiring from the firing area to make way for the remaining vessels. The *Fletcher* opened at 0906, at a range of 11,850 yards, on buildings, towers, and gun emplacements. Fire was continued until 0957, her 130 rounds of 5-inch causing conflagrations and toppling a large crane. She then moved to take screening station ahead of the *Biloxi* for the next run.

The *Biloxi* swung into firing position at 1002, and at 1004 fired 14 secondary battery salvos at hangars and runway facilities west of the runway intersection. At 1012 she began walking main battery salvos up and down the runway. Shortly thereafter return fire from the beach was noticed close aboard. At 1021 eight three-turret salvos were fired at the opposing batteries; a direct hit destroyed one twin-mount, and the gun crews hastily abandoned two others. At 1025, however, one of the remaining batteries scored a hit which struck the after end of the main battery control station on the starboard side. The shell did not detonate but broke open, fragments passing clear of the ship to port and picric acid powder spreading over the superstructure. Only minor structural damage was caused, and one man suffered a slight flesh wound. Between 1039 and 1046 the *Biloxi* resumed on the runway with her main battery, and after picking up a *Mobile* plane<sup>37</sup> maneuvered to clear the firing area.

The *Fletcher*, from her screen station, opened at 1025 on shore batteries, scoring a direct hit on her first half-salvo and probably putting the gun out of commission. Three minutes later she ceased fire, having expended seven rounds of 5-inch. The *Mustin*, during this run, was hindered from firing by the turns of the cruiser.

The *Mobile* was in the last group scheduled for this phase. She was delayed some 20 minutes, however, while trying to pick up one of her planes. The crane cable fouled in the plane's propeller while in the process of hooking on. As a result the plane was upset, the pilot and the radioman dumped into the water, and the crane cable damaged beyond repair. The *Morris* rescued the aviation personnel, and the *Biloxi* recovered the second plane. At 1115, however, the *Mobile* opened at a range of 12,000 yards, and

<sup>37</sup> See p. 66.

by 1128 observed a large fire break out on the right hand side of the island. At 1200 she ceased, having closed to 6,000 yards, her 6-inch battery covering both runways and her 5-inch the dispersal areas to the west and south of the runways. The *Hughes* and *Russell* made their runs in company with the cruiser, at ranges which ran as close as 4,300 yards from the center of the target. They encountered no return fire, however.

As soon as all groups had completed their runs, and the *Anderson* had transferred her most seriously wounded to the *Louisville* for further treatment, the group departed the Wotje area toward the northwest in line of section columns. Burial services for those killed on the *Anderson* were held shortly after 1800 that evening, and soon thereafter the special unit, proceeding via the pass between Likiep and Ailuk Atolls, rejoined the main body of Task Force Conolly proceeding to Kwajalein for the D-day assault.

### THE CAPTURE OF MAJURO

The occupation of Majuro Atoll began on D minus one day, and was carried out by Task Group Hill under the command of Rear Admiral Harry W. Hill. The atoll, although strategically located, had been virtually abandoned by the enemy. The eastern half of the lagoon, however, offered an unexcelled anchorage which proved to be of great value in the Kwajalein operation. The position of the atoll, halfway between Makin and Kwajalein, made its airfield extremely important as a staging point between the Gilberts and Marshalls.

The first actual amphibious assault of the operation fell, as planned, on Majuro. The importance of the early seizure and development of this atoll as an advance base had been realized ever since plans were initiated. Prior to the departure of the Fifth Fleet, special equipment was assembled, and detailed plans were laid down to sweep and mark channels and anchorage areas in Majuro Lagoon and to plant permanent buoys at the lagoon entrance preparatory to the establishment of a fleet base.

The force detailed for the assault was a heterogeneous one. Under the command of Admiral Hill, whose flagship was the attack transport *Cambria* (Capt. Charles W. Dean, USCG), it included the heavy cruiser *Portland* (Capt. Arthur D. Burhans); the escort carriers *Nassau* (Capt. Stanley J. Michael) and *Natoma Bay* (Capt. Harold L. Meadow); the destroyers *Black* (Comdr. Jack Maginnis), *Bullard* (Comdr. Bernard W. Freund), *Chauncey* (Lt. Comdr. Lester C. Conwell), and *Kidd* (Lt. Comdr. Allan B. Roby); the high-speed transport *Kane* (Lt. Comdr. Frank M. Christiansen); the high-speed minesweeper *Chandler* (Lt. Comdr. Harry L. Thompson, Jr.); the minesweepers *Oracle* (Lt. Comdr. John R.

Fels) and *Sage* (Lieut. Franklyn K. Zinn); and LST 482 (Lieut. George T. Wharton). The 2nd Battalion Landing Team of the 106th Infantry was embarked in the *Cambria* and the LST. Capt. Edgar A. Cruise, USN, future island commander, and his staff were also in the *Cambria*.

The majority of these vessels came from Pearl Harbor, leaving on 23 January in company with the Kwajalein Attack Force Reserve Group.<sup>38</sup> The destroyers, however, had been in the Southwest Pacific, and had sortied from Funafuti on the 22nd to rendezvous with the others at sea on the 27th, while the *Chandler* and LST 482 had sortied from Pearl Harbor in advance on the 19th, to join on the night of the 30th-31st. After the ships had fueled from four oilers, the combined groups steamed to the west. At 0300 on the 30th, Task Group Hill hauled out of formation to port and turned toward Majuro. Two hours later the *Kane*, carrying the entire Fifth Amphibious Corps Reconnaissance Company under Capt. James L. Jones, USMC, speeded ahead of the remainder of the task group and set out independently to make the first landings.

#### THE LANDINGS BEGIN

The Marines had been well briefed and were fully prepared. Accompanying them were Lieut. George Hard of the Ocean Island Defense Force as guide and interpreter and two Gilbertese interpreters. The period en route to the atoll was spent in familiarizing all hands with the geography and topography of the objective and with detailed plans of the operation. Ammunition and rations were distributed in the following quantities: 1/3 K ration per man; 1/3 D ration per man; 1 fragmentation grenade per man; 1 offensive grenade per man; 45 rounds per M-1 carbine; 48 rounds per M-1 rifle; and 280 rounds per Browning automatic rifle.

Navigating by radar in complete darkness, the *Kane* arrived at what she believed to be her initial station 5,000 yards off Calalin Pass at 2030.<sup>39</sup> The Fourth Platoon and a mortar section, designated for the capture of Enoj and Calalin Islands, debarked into rubber boats. Almost immediately, however, it became apparent that misinterpretation of the island profiles had caused an error in navigation, and the detail reembarked. The *Kane* then proceeded northward some 12,000 yards. At 2130 the men debarked for the second time into two LCR(L)'s, carrying 10 men each, and one LCP(R) containing the remaining 20 men and two officers. The entire

<sup>38</sup> See chart on p. 73.

<sup>39</sup> See chart facing p. 7.

detail was under the command of 1st Lieut. Harvey C. Weeks. The LCR(L)'s were to be towed in line astern by the LCP(R), but within the first 2,000 yards, in spite of slow speeds, heavy seas pulled the towing rings right out of both rubber craft. An attempt was made to continue towing by having men aboard the boats grasp the towline and brace their feet against the rubber cross-pieces. This proved impractical when two men with full equipment were jerked overboard.

After the men in the water had been recovered, all attempts at towing were discontinued, and the assault group was taken aboard the LCP(R). The two rubber boats were secured astern, one by a line to the handles and the other by a line to the inflation valve. The latter soon tore away, and because of the advancing hour was abandoned. The LCP(R) then proceeded at 1,200 r.p.m. through Calalin Pass into the lagoon for 2,000 yards, turned east to a point approximately 2,000 yards south of the eastern tip of Calalin Island, thence turned north and headed for shore at 400 r.p.m.

At 2300 the detail debarked at the eastern end of Calalin. The immediate vicinity of the beachhead appeared to be uninhabited, so a local command post was established and security measures initiated. Simultaneously patrols were sent out, one of which shortly brought back a single native. After interrogating this man,<sup>40</sup> Lieut. Weeks at 2345 sent a radio report to Capt. Jones in the *Kane* giving the following information:

Between 300 and 400 Japanese laborers were on Darrit Island; there were no Japanese on any of the other islands. The channel through Calalin Pass might be mined. English-speaking inhabitants of mixed blood lived on Uliga Island. The last vessel to call at Majuro—a small enemy craft—had put in on an unknown mission some 6 weeks previously. The attitude of the native was friendly, cooperative, and seemingly honest.

The *Kane* meanwhile had moved 12,000 yards southeast toward Dalap Island, where she awaited the report of the reconnaissance group. When the full account had been received, she steamed at full speed to a position approximately 3,000 yards southeast of Uliga Island, and by 0200 on the 31st was on station at that point, ready to disembark the troops for the landing on Dalap.

Before this took place, however, Eroj Island had to be scouted. At midnight the detail of 16 men assigned to this task (60-mm. mortar section plus five men from the 4th Platoon, under the command of 2nd Lieut. Boyce L.

<sup>40</sup> This was a complicated process. The interpreter with the group was a Gilbertese, and his Marshallese was somewhat faulty. Furthermore, his knowledge of English was slight, although he spoke good German. Lieut. Weeks spoke some German, but his vocabulary was limited.

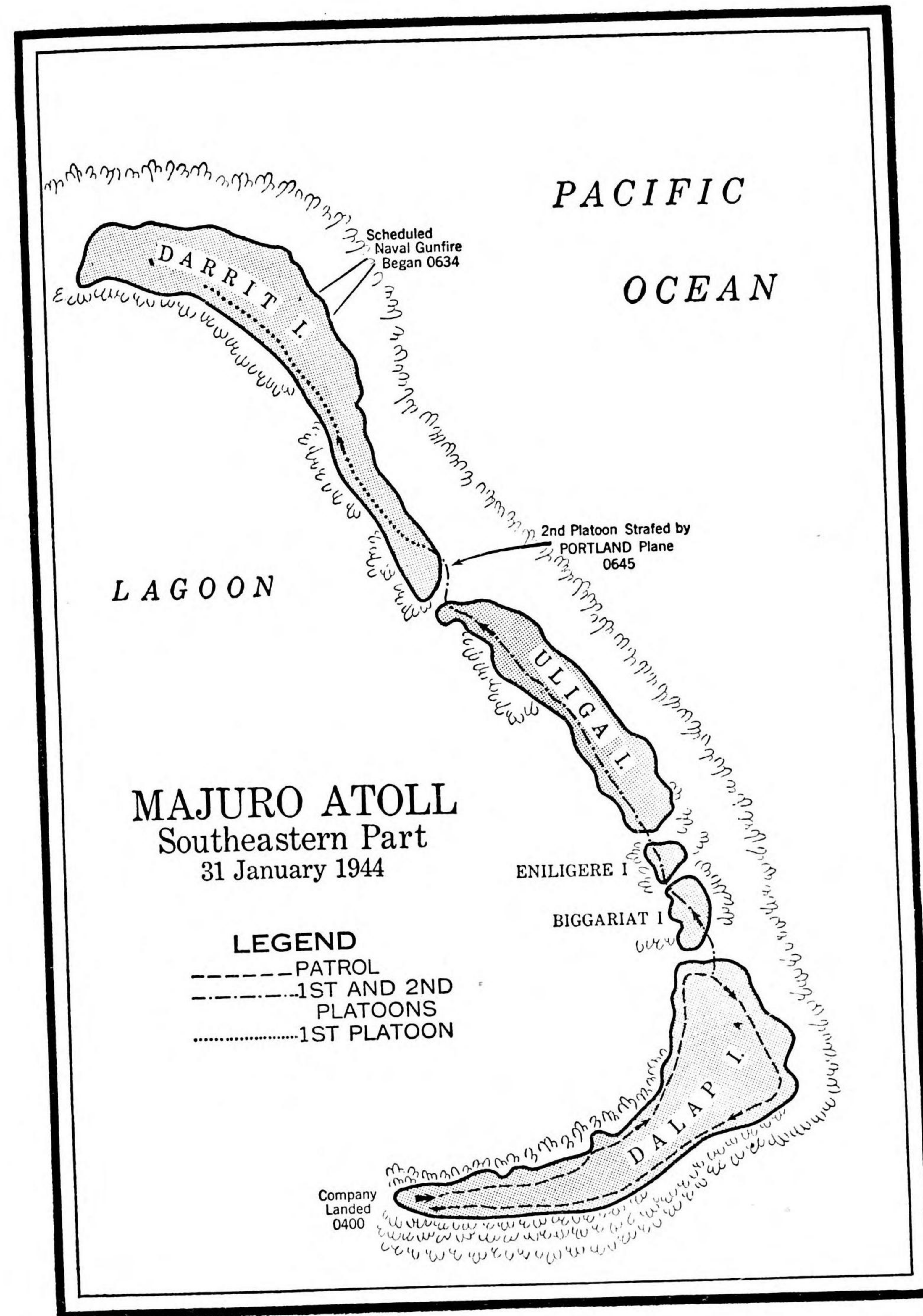
Lassiter) embarked in the LCP(R) and crossed Calalin Pass to Eroj. The boat proceeded very cautiously because of the poor visibility and the shallow reefs off the southeastern tip of the island. At 0230, however, the troops landed without incident. The detail split into five patrols of three men each and fanned out across the island but found no Japanese or even natives. After reporting the island secure they settled down to await the return of the LCP(R).

Inasmuch as Dalap Island lay on the windward side of the atoll, a point on the southwest tip was selected for the landing. The troops were boated in six 10-man and three 7-man LCR's. Ship's boats were used to carry the rubber boats within 1,000 yards of the shore, whence two guide LCR's carrying the 3rd Platoon were sent in ahead to cover the landing of the balance of the company. This platoon, commanded by 1st Lieut. Russell E. Corey, was taken in at 0230 by 1st Lieut. M. E. Silverthorn. The rubber boat carrying Lieut. Silverthorn capsized in the surf, and several men lost their helmets. Luckily no opposition developed, and at 0300, after reconnoitering the landing beach, Lieut. Silverthorn signaled in the main body by flashlight.

Meanwhile the *Kane* had moved to the north side of the atoll and was standing by the entrance to Calalin Pass to act as antisubmarine patrol and radar guide for the remainder of the task group which, having effected a rendezvous with the *Chandler* and LST 482, was approaching the islands. As the group drew near, it split up and the various units went about their assigned business. The *Portland* and the *Bullard* proceeded to a fire support area east of Darrit to prepare for their scheduled dawn bombardment. The *Nassau* and *Natoma Bay*, escorted by the *Black* and the *Chauncey*, took suitable air support stations northeast of the atoll. The transport unit, consisting of the *Cambria*, *Chandler*, and LST 482, led by the mine-sweeping and hydrographic unit (*Oracle* and *Sage*), proceeded to a point near the entrance to the lagoon. The *Kidd* accompanied this group, preparing to follow them into the anchorage area and bombard Darrit from the lagoon side in order to cover the troop landings.

At 0400 the remainder of the company (1st, 2nd and Headquarters Platoons) landed. Four of the heavily-laden boats turned over in the surf, but most of the equipment was salvaged. Leaving Lieut. Silverthorn to hold the beachhead with a mortar group and some headquarters personnel, the company prepared to move out on reconnaissance along the lagoon shore toward the eastern tip of the island. The 1st Platoon led the way, followed

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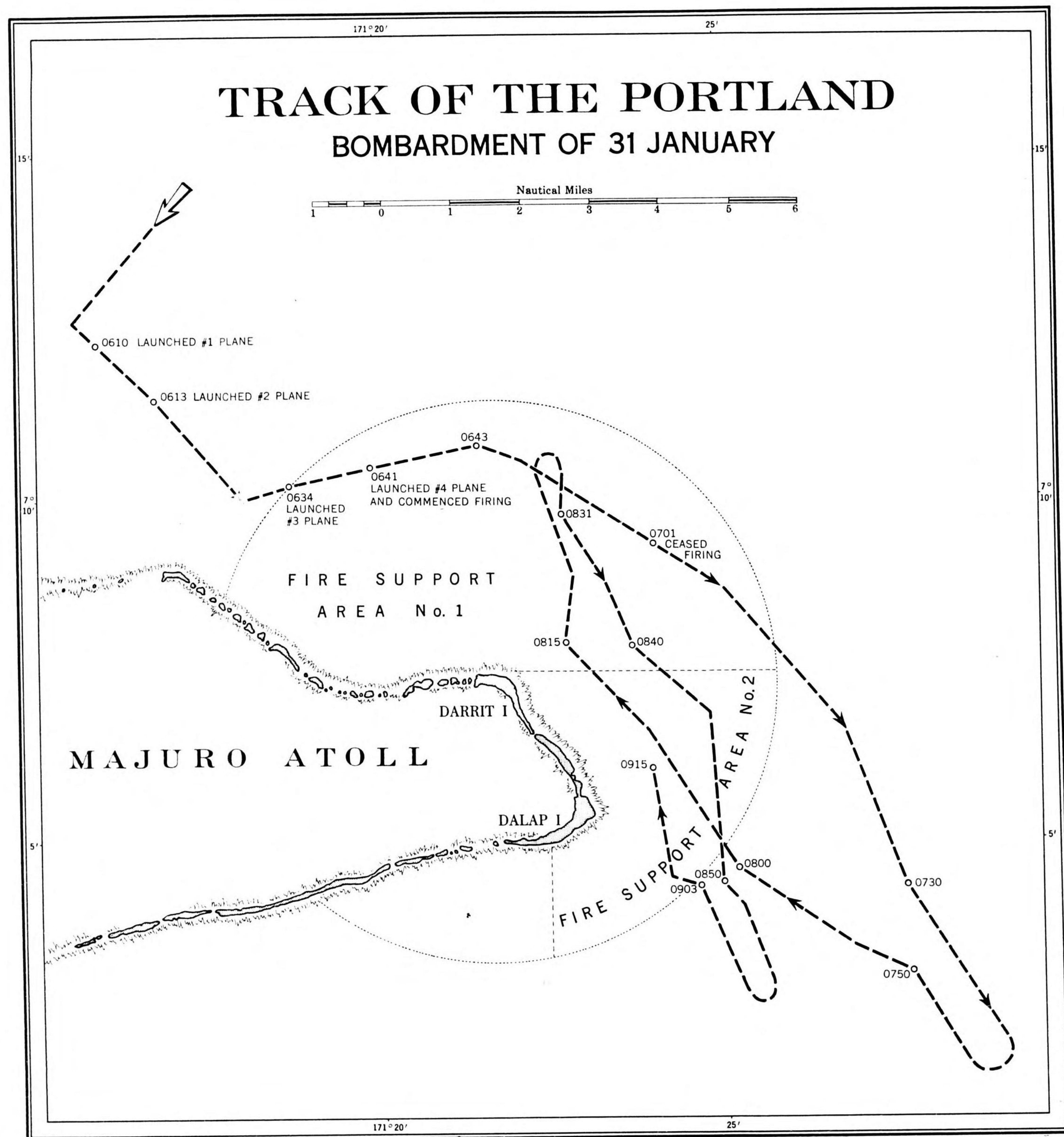
by the Headquarters and 3rd Platoons, with the 2nd Platoon acting as rear guard. At 0415 they got under way, and 45 minutes later ran across a native village. Interrogation of the inhabitants revealed that the Japanese occupation force had departed from the atoll a year previously, leaving only one officer and a few civilians who lived on Majuro Island. By 0530 the group had reached the northwest corner of Dalap. At this point 1st Lieut. Leo B. Shinn was ordered to take a group consisting of four men from his own (1st) Platoon and the entire 2nd Platoon under 1st Lieut. Harry C. Minnier, cross to Uliga Island, and halt at the northwest end to await further instructions.

#### BOMBARDMENT

The *Portland* and the *Bullard*, navigating by radar, arrived at their assigned stations shortly before 0630, V-hour for the bombardment. At this time they were unaware of the departure of the enemy garrison and were acting on their original assumption that a large body of troops was concentrated on Darrit. The *Portland* launched four planes—two for spotting, one as antisubmarine patrol, and one for liaison by Admiral Hill—and at 0634 the *Bullard* opened fire. Slow, full-salvo, indirect fire was used at first, since it was not possible to see the target from the director. Firing course was 088° T., speed 15 knots, initial target bearing 167° T., opening range 6,900 yards. Six minutes later the *Portland* opened with her main battery. Throughout the bombardment the *Portland* received aerial spots, but because of communication failures the *Bullard* could not receive the planes and the planes could receive neither ship. Almost all salvos, however, landed directly in the target area. Bombardment continued until 0700 when Admiral Hill, on receipt of the Marines' report, ordered "cease firing immediately." The *Bullard* had expended 284 rounds of 5-inch 38 caliber antiaircraft common ammunition; the *Portland* had fired 159 8-inch and 12 5-inch rounds. A few minutes later Admiral Hill sent a TBS message stating that Marine scouts would continue the investigation of Darrit. Both ships held fire while awaiting further orders.

#### SECURING THE ATOLL

Lieut. Shinn and his group meanwhile crossed to Uliga, and had reached a point about halfway up the lagoon shore when the naval gunfire began to fall on Darrit. While waiting for the bombardment to cease, the patrol made contact with an English-speaking native who confirmed previous



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information concerning the flight of the enemy garrison. As soon as the bombardment lifted, the Marines proceeded on to Darrit.

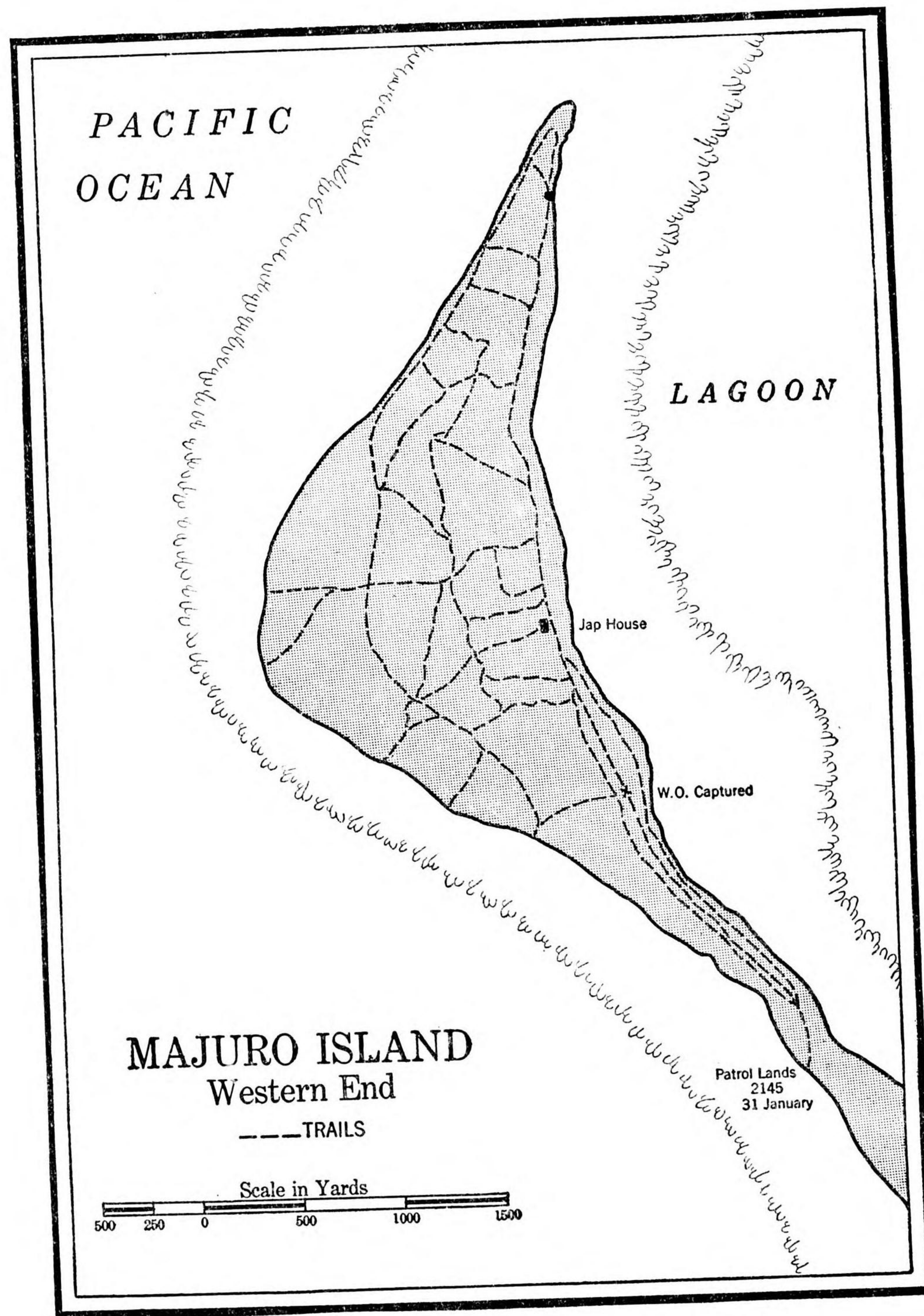
At 0645 Lieut. Shinn and the four men from his platoon waded across the reef passage and moved northwest along Darrit's lagoon shore. Lieut. Minnier's 2nd Platoon followed closely and had reached the middle of the passage when one of the *Portland's* observation planes appeared overhead. Despite the fact that the troops waved to the pilot (who was not cognizant of the Japanese evacuation), he proceeded to strafe the Marines. Fortunately he scored no hits, although several men suffered painful cuts when they fell on the coral. After this interlude, the 1st Platoon detachment continued its reconnaissance of Darrit, while the 2nd Platoon went to the beach on the southwest corner of the lagoon side to assist in guiding boats if troop landings became necessary.

By 0730 patrols had reached the main installations on Darrit and corroborated the information previously learned from the natives. The village was deserted, but all 20 buildings were found to be in good condition, undamaged by the naval gunfire.<sup>41</sup> Among the installations were a dilapidated 75-by-12-foot pier; a 200-yard narrow-gage railroad complete with a small steam locomotive; a steam roller; two elderly trucks; and miscellaneous electrical supplies and construction equipment. Several cisterns were available, but no potable water could be found. An old concrete seaplane ramp located 100 yards to the south appeared available for landing craft smaller than LST's, while west of the building area lay an open level stretch suitable for construction of a fighter strip.

By this time the lagoon anchorages were rapidly becoming available for the vessels of the task group. Shortly before 0700 the *Oracle* and the *Sage* entered Calalin Pass for a mine and hydrographic sweep. The *Sage* used her sweep wire as a drag to determine hydrographic data, and the *Oracle* laid several Dan buoys to mark the clear area. The *Chandler* followed, sweeping for magnetic mines; when none was found, the *Cambria*, screened by the *Kidd* and leading LST 482, entered through the swept channel and proceeded to the anchorage area 1,000 yards west of Darrit. The *Chandler* thereupon returned to the pass and relieved the *Kane* of anti-submarine patrol duties, while the *Oracle* and *Sage* began minesweeping and hydrographic surveys inside the lagoon. The buoyed channels they laid down through the eastern end of the lagoon to the anchorage checked within one degree of courses determined from preliminary study of aerial

<sup>41</sup> One of the largest of these was designated as base hospital.

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photographs. Few coral heads were discovered in the anchorage area. The least depth of water in the 400-yard wide entrance was determined to be 13 fathoms, while 10 miles of good water were found to be available for carrier operations at the eastern end of the lagoon.

At 0955 landing boats from the *Cambria* picked up Captain Jones on Dalap Island. Once aboard the transport, he received orders to reembark his company on the *Kane* and prepare for reconnaissance of Majuro Island and nearby Arno Atoll that night. The *Kane*, relieved of her patrol duties, entered the lagoon to fuel from the *Cambria*. The various Marine patrols were regathered and embarked, and at 2100 the *Kane* hove to 12,000 yards to seaward off the eastern point of Majuro Island, where the reported enemy officer and men were believed to be hiding.

The patrol designated to flush and capture them was headed by Lieut. Weeks. It comprised 40 men and a native interpreter who had been picked up on Calalin and was quite familiar with Majuro. By 2200 they had debarked from their LCP(R)'s and had begun a reconnaissance of the island, working north along the wooded trails. Various natives whom they intercepted corroborated previous information about the enemy group and stated that it consisted of one Japanese naval officer and three civilian traders. All these natives were passed through the patrols away from the village, but none was allowed to go through the lines toward the enemy.

At 2300 the native guide ran across two of his friends, who agreed to lead the patrol to the houses occupied by the Japanese. The first of these dwellings, discovered an hour later, stood about 30 feet south of the trail, facing a bare yard. Although the patrol was careful to conceal its presence, it was sighted by many natives—by this time too numerous to control silently—so an assault by frontal rush was necessary. The attack succeeded in disrupting a dinner which the Japanese were giving for a group of natives, but unfortunately the enemy disappeared into the heavy jungle growth. A search of the house disclosed four machine guns with ammunition and a number of home-made grenades. As part of the patrol proceeded back down the trail, however, it ran across and seized the officer—Warrant Officer Nagata—who, although armed with a Samurai saber and a .45 caliber automatic, offered no resistance. He confirmed reports that he had been in charge of the 400-man labor garrison and had been left behind to take custody of the remaining equipment when the atoll was evacuated. At 1630 on 1 February, after exploring the island thoroughly, the detail reembarked with its prisoner.

As soon as the reconnaissance of Majuro had got underway, the *Kane* with the remainder of the reconnaissance troops crossed the 10 miles of open sea to Arno Atoll, which was to be investigated for possible garrison forces. At 0030 on the 1st, a 40-man patrol under Capt. Jones and Lieut. Corey landed at a point believed to be about a mile from Arno Village, crossed to the lagoon side, and moved east. After proceeding about 8 miles and finding neither natives nor houses, the patrol returned to the original landing point where it made contact with a native. This man reported that the village, partly occupied by Japanese civilians, lay 10 miles to the east. The troops thereupon embarked in the *Kane's* boats, taking the native as a guide, sailed down the coast, and shortly discovered the town.

Several well-built wooden houses, which gave evidence of Japanese occupancy, were found, but the Japanese themselves had been warned and had fled to the bush. Printed matter in the houses told of the recent crash of a B-24 in the lagoon and the transfer of the survivors to Maloelap. In the village meeting-house were found the plane's sextant, camera, ammunition, flying coats, and one machine gun. At 1150 the patrol returned aboard the *Kane* and got under way for Majuro. That evening Captain Jones reported to Admiral Hill in the *Cambria* and was ordered to proceed to Kwajalein and report to Maj. Gen. Holland M. Smith, commanding general of the 5th Amphibious Corps. The following morning, with his entire company, he left Majuro aboard the *Kane*.

While the attack on Majuro was in progress, the main assault forces of the greatest amphibious armada which had yet been sent into action in any war theater were swinging toward Roi and Namur from the east and toward Kwajalein Island from the south. Securing of the Majuro lagoon was to be, in the next few days, extremely important to many of the vessels, both heavy and light, whose formations silently approached the Kwajalein beaches in the pre-dawn of 31 January.

The Southern Attack Force, under Admiral Turner, had been rejoined by the cruisers and destroyers of Task Group Giffen, and had cut southwest beyond the beaches of Kwajalein Island. It had already detached the Channel Island Transport Group, which was to seize control of the islands of Gea and Ninni, controlling the entrance of Gea Pass. The main body, according to plan, swung north early on D-day and was gaining position for the Army landings and assault which were to secure the southern half of the atoll.

The main body of the Northern Attack Force, under Admiral Conolly,

reunited with Task Group Oldendorf, had passed north of and beyond the atoll, and had reversed course to approach the Roi-Namur area from the west. Its initial attack group, detached during the night, had made contact with the first tractor group, and was preparing to land its marines on Ennuebing and Mellu, flanking North Pass. The curtain was about to go up on a well-timed, skilfully planned and brilliantly executed amphibious assault.

APPENDIX A  
Task Force Organization

Task Force Spruance (Fifth Fleet), Vice Admiral Raymond A. Spruance.  
Fleet Flagship *Indianapolis*, Capt. Einar R. Johnson.  
Task Force Turner (Joint Expeditionary Force) Rear Admiral Richmond K. Turner.  
Task Force Turner-One (Southern Attack Force) Rear Admiral Richmond K. Turner.  
*Rocky Mount* (FF), Capt. Stanley F. Patten.  
Task Group Sallada, Capt. Harold B. Sallada.  
Support Aircraft, Capt. Harold B. Sallada.  
Task Group Corlett (Southern Landing Force), Maj. Gen. Charles H. Corlett, USA.  
7th Infantry plus attached units, Maj. Gen. Charles H. Corlett, USA.  
Southern Garrison Force, Brig. Gen. Herbert D. Gibson, USA.  
Southern Base Support Aircraft, Col. Gilbert T. Collar, USA.  
Task Group O'Connor (Channel Island Transport Group),  
Lt. Comdr. Desmond K. O'Connor.  
Two high-speed transports:  
*Overton* (F), Lt. Comdr. Desmond K. O'Connor.  
*Manley*, Lt. Comdr. Robert T. Newell, Jr.  
Task Group McGovern (Advance Transport Unit), Capt. John B. McGovern.  
TransDiv Four, Capt. John B. McGovern.  
Three attack transports:  
*Zeilin* (F), Comdr. Thomas B. Fitzpatrick.  
*Ormsby*, Comdr. Leonard Frisco.  
*Windsor*, Capt. Douglas C. Woodward.  
One transport:  
*President Polk*, Comdr. Clarence J. Ballreich.  
One attack cargo ship:  
*Virgo*, Comdr. Claton H. McLaughlin.  
One landing ship, dock:  
*Ashland*, Capt. Clarence L. C. Atkeson, Jr.  
Tractor Unit One, Comdr. Richard C. Webb, Jr.  
Eight LST's:  
LST's 34, 78, 224, 226, 242, 243, 246, 272.  
Three LCT's (deck load):  
LCT's 931, 934, 937.  
Task Group Knowles (Southern Transport Group), Capt. Herbert B. Knowles.  
TransDiv Six, Capt. Thomas B. Brittain.  
Four attack transports:  
*Harris* (F), Comdr. Albert M. Van Eaton.

*Fayette*, Capt. John C. Lester.  
*Harry Lee*, Comdr. Joseph G. Pomeroy.  
*Leedstown*, Comdr. Harold Bye.  
One attack cargo ship:  
*Centaurus*, Capt. George E. McCabe, USCG.  
One landing ship, dock:  
*Lindenwald*, Capt. William H. Weaver, Jr.  
TransDiv Eighteen, Capt. Herbert B. Knowles.  
Four attack transports:  
*Monrovia* (F), Comdr. John D. Kelsey.  
*J. Franklin Bell*, Capt. Oliver H. Ritchie.  
*Pierce*, Capt. Arthur R. Ponto.  
*Feland*, Comdr. Gordon M. Jones.  
One attack cargo ship:  
*Thuban*, Comdr. James C. Campbell.  
One landing ship, dock:  
*Belle Grove*, Comdr. Morris Seavey.  
Tractor Unit Two, Comdr. Adrian M. Hurst.  
Eight LST's:  
LST's 29, 31, 41, 127, 218, 240, 273, 481.  
Three LCT's (deck load):  
LCT's 933, 935, 936.  
Task Group Coleman (Control Group), Comdr. Coleman.  
Three SC's:  
SC's 539, 999, 1066.  
Two LCC's:  
LCC 36 (from *Virgo*)  
LCC 38 (from *Centaurus*)  
Task Group Thompson (Transport Screen), Capt. Edward M. Thompson.  
Advance Transport Screen, Capt. Edward M. Thompson.  
Two destroyers:  
*John Rodgers* (F), Comdr. Herman O. Parish.  
*Hazlewood*, Comdr. Volckert P. Douw.  
Southern Transport Screen, Comdr. Joseph H. Nevins, Jr.  
Four destroyers:  
*Haggard* (F), Comdr. David A. Harris.  
*Franks*, Comdr. Nicholas A. Lidstone.  
*Schroeder*, Comdr. John T. Bowers, Jr.  
*Hailey*, Comdr. Parke H. Brady.  
Two high-speed minesweepers:  
*Zane*, Lt. Comdr. William T. Powell, Jr.  
*Perry*, Lieut. Ira G. Stubbart.  
Two SC's:  
SC's 1033, 1068.



Task Group Giffen (Fire Support Group), Rear Admiral Robert C. Giffen.

FiSuU One, Comdr. John J. Greytak.

Two destroyers:

*McKee* (F), Comdr. John J. Greytak.

*Stevens*, Lt. Comdr. William M. Rakow.

FiSuU Two, Rear Admiral Robert C. Giffen.

Two heavy cruisers:

*Minneapolis* (F), Capt. Richard W. Bates.

*New Orleans*, Capt. Samuel R. Shumaker.

Two old battleships:

*Idaho*, Capt. Horace D. Clarke.

*Pennsylvania*, Capt. William A. Corn.

Four destroyers, Capt. Bernard L. Austin:

*Bailey* (F), Comdr. Malcolm T. Munger.

*Frazier*, Comdr. Elliott M. Brown.

*Meade*, Comdr. John Munholland.

*Hall* (ComDesRon 51, Capt. Hugh J. Martin), Comdr. John F. Delaney.

FiSuU Three, Rear Admiral Robert M. Griffin.

Two old battleships:

*New Mexico* (F), Capt. Ellis M. Zacharias.

*Mississippi*, Capt. Lunsford L. Hunter.

One heavy cruiser:

*San Francisco*, Capt. Harvey E. Overesch.

Three destroyers, Capt. Harry B. Jarrett:

*Colahan* (F), Comdr. Donald T. Wilber.

*Murray*, Comdr. Paul R. Anderson.

*Harrison*, Comdr. Carl M. Dalton.

FiSuU Four, Comdr. Henry Crommelin.

Two destroyers:

*Ringgold* (F), Comdr. Thomas F. Conley, Jr.

*Sigsbee*, Comdr. Benjamin V. Russell.

LCI(L) Unit, Lt. Comdr. Theodore Blanchard.

LCI(L) Div 13, Lt. Comdr. James L. Harlan.

Six LCI(L)'s:

LCI(L)'s 77 (F), 78, 79, 80, 366, 437.

LCI(L) Div 15, Lt. Comdr. Theodore Blanchard.

Six LCI(L)'s:

LCI(L)'s 365 (GF), 438, 439, 440, 441, 442.

Task Group Davison (Carrier Support Group), Rear Admiral Ralph E. Davison.

Three escort carriers:

*Manila Bay* (F), Capt. Boynton L. Braun.

*Coral Sea*, Capt. Herbert W. Taylor.

*Corregidor*, Capt. Roscoe L. Bowman.

Four destroyers, Comdr. Edward L. Beck:

*Bancroft* (F), Comdr. Ray M. Pitts.

*Coghlan*, Lt. Comdr. Benjamin B. Cheatham.

*Caldwell*, Comdr. Horatio A. Lincoln.

*Halligan*, Comdr. Clarence E. Cortner.

Task Group Sima (Mine Sweeping and Hydrographic Group), Comdr.

Frederick F. Sima.

Sweep Unit One, Comdr. Frederick F. Sima.

Three minesweepers:

*Revenge* (F), Comdr. Frederick F. Sima.

*Pursuit*, Lieut. Romer F. Good.

*Requisite*, Lt. Comdr. Herbert R. Peirce, Jr.

One LCC

LCC 39 (from *Ormsby*)

Task Group Curtis (Southern Salvage Group), Comdr. Allen D. Curtis.

Two ocean-going tugs:

*Tekesta*, Lieut. John O. Strickland.

*Tawasa*, Lieut. Fred C. Clark.

Task Force Conolly (Northern Attack Force), Rear Admiral Richard L. Conolly.

*Appalachian* (FF), Capt. James M. Fernald.

Task Group Buchanan (Transports), Capt. Pat Buchanan.

TransDiv 24, Capt. Pat Buchanan.

Four attack transports:

*DePage* (F), Capt. George M. Wauchope.

*Wayne*, Comdr. Thomas V. Cooper.

*Elmore*, Comdr. Drayton Harrison.

*Doyen*, Comdr. John G. McClaughry.

One attack cargo ship:

*Aquarius*, Capt. Raymond V. Marron, USCG.

TransDiv 26, Capt. Allan D. Blackledge.

Four attack transports:

*Callaway* (F), Capt. Donald C. McNeil, USCG.

*Sumter*, Capt. Theodore G. Haff.

*Warren*, Capt. William A. McHale.

*Biddle*, Capt. Leon F. Brown.

One attack cargo ship:

*Almaack*, Comdr. John Y. Dannenberg.

One landing ship, dock:

*Epping Forest*, Comdr. Lester Martin.

TransDiv 28, Capt. Henry C. Flanagan.

Three attack transports:

*Bolivar* (F), Capt. Robert P. Wadell.

*Sheridan*, Comdr. John J. Mockrish.

*Calvert*, Comdr. Edward J. Sweeney.  
 One transport:  
*La Salle*, Comdr. Fred C. Fluegel.  
 One attack cargo ship:  
*Alcyone*, Comdr. James B. McVey.  
 One landing ship, dock:  
*Gunston Hall*, Comdr. Dale E. Collins.  
 Raider Unit, Lt. Comdr. Edward T. Farley.  
 One high-speed transport:  
*Schley*, Lt. Comdr. Edward T. Farley.  
 Transport Screen, Capt. Jesse G. Coward.  
 Five destroyers:  
*Remey* (F), Comdr. Reid P. Fiala.  
*MacDonough*, Comdr. John W. Ramey.  
*Hughes*, Lt. Comdr. Ellis B. Rittenhouse.  
*Ellet*, Comdr. Thomas C. Phifer.  
*Fletcher*, Comdr. Robert D. McGinnis.  
 Two high-speed minesweepers:  
*Stansbury*, Lt. Comdr. Donald M. Granstrom.  
*Hamilton*, Comdr. Robert R. Sampson.  
 Task Group Loud (Minesweepers), Comdr. Wayne R. Loud.  
 One high-speed minesweeper:  
*Palmer* (F), Lt. Comdr. Robert H. Thomas.  
 Three minesweepers, Comdr. Ralph S. Moore:  
*Chief* (F), Lt. Comdr. John M. Wyckoff.  
*Heed*, Lieut. Magruder Dent, Jr.  
*Motive*, Lt. Comdr. George W. Lundgren.  
 Four motor minesweepers, Lieut. Thomas W. Burns:  
 YMS's 262, 263, 283, 320.  
 Task Group Schmidt (Northern Landing Force) Maj. Gen. Harry Schmidt,  
 USMC.  
 Fourth Marine Division (reinforced).  
 Task Group Oldendorf (Northern Support Group), Rear Admiral Jesse B.  
 Oldendorf.  
 Battleship Unit  
 Three old battleships:  
*Tennessee* (F, Rear Admiral Howard F. Kingman), Capt. Robert S.  
 Haggart.  
*Maryland*, Capt. Herbert J. Ray.  
*Colorado*, Capt. William Granat.  
 Cruiser Unit  
 Two heavy cruisers:  
*Santa Fe* (F, Rear Admiral Laurance T. DuBose),  
 Capt. Jerauld Wright.

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*Louisville* (GF), Capt. Samuel H. Hurt.  
 Three light cruisers:  
*Indianapolis*, Capt. Einar R. Johnson.  
*Mobile*, Capt. C. Julian Wheeler.  
*Biloxi*, Capt. Daniel M. McGurl.  
 Screen Unit, Capt. Edward A. Solomons.  
 Nine destroyers:  
*Morris* (F), Comdr. Gordon L. Caswell.  
*Anderson*, Comdr. John G. Tennant, III.<sup>42</sup>  
 Lieut. George E. Alexander.  
*Mustin* (ComDesDiv 4, Comdr. Thomas H. Tonseth),  
 Comdr. Monro M. Riker.  
*Russell*, Lt. Comdr. Lewis R. Miller.  
*Porterfield*, Comdr. John C. Woelfel.  
*Haraden*, Comdr. Halle C. Allan, Jr.  
*Johnston*, Comdr. Ernest E. Evans.  
*Hopewell*, Comdr. Corben C. Shute.  
*Phelps*, Lt. Comdr. David L. Martineau.  
 Task Group Ragsdale (Carrier Group), Rear Admiral Van H. Ragsdale.  
 CarDiv 22, Rear Admiral Van H. Ragsdale.  
 Three escort carriers:  
*Sangamon* (F), Capt. Maurice E. Browder.  
*Suwannee*, Capt. William D. Johnson.  
*Chenango*, Capt. Dixwell Ketcham.  
 Carrier Screen, Capt. Ira H. Nunn.  
 Three destroyers:  
*Farragut* (F), Lt. Comdr. Edward F. Ferguson.  
*Monaghan*, Lt. Comdr. Waldemar F. A. Wendt.  
*Dale*, Comdr. Charles W. Aldrich.  
 Task Group Robertson (Initial Tractor Group), Capt. Armand J. Robertson.  
 Nine LST's:  
 LST's 222 (F), 38, 43, 45, 212, 122, 221, 270, 271.  
 One destroyer:  
*LaVallette*, Comdr. Robert L. Taylor.  
 Twelve LCI's, Comdr. Michael J. Malanaphy:  
 LCI's 457 (F), 82, 345, 346, 347, 348, 449, 450, 451, 452, 453, 455.  
 Three SC's, Lieut. William C. Coughenour, Jr.:  
 SC's 1012 (F), 670, 997.  
 Task Group Lillard (Reserve Tractor Group), Capt. Joseph S. Lillard.  
 Eight LST's:  
 LST's 119 (F), 34, 42, 126, 128, 223, 240, 274.  
 One destroyer, Capt. Ray E. Malpass:

<sup>42</sup> Killed in action 30 January.

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*Aylwin*, Comdr. Robert O. Strange.

Two SC's:

SC's 1028, 1031.

Task Group Foss (Northern Salvage Group), Lt. Comdr. Henry O. Foss.

Three ocean-going tugs:

*Mataco*, Lt. Comdr. William G. Baker.

*Chickasaw*, Lt. (jg) Glenn W. McClead.

*Molala*, Lieut. Rudolph L. Ward.

Task Force Mitscher (Fast Carriers), Rear Admiral Marc A. Mitscher.

Task Group Reeves, Rear Admiral John W. Reeves, Jr.

Two aircraft carriers:

*Yorktown* (FF), Capt. Joseph J. Clark.

*Enterprise* (F), Capt. Matthias B. Gardner.

One small aircraft carrier:

*Belleau Wood*, Capt. Alfred M. Pride.

Three battleships, Rear Admiral Willis A. Lee, Jr.:

*Washington* (F), Capt. James E. Maher.

*Massachusetts*, Capt. Theodore D. Ruddock, Jr.

*Indiana* (ComBatDiv 8, Rear Admiral Glenn B. Davis), Capt. James M. Steele.

One light cruiser (AA):

*Oakland* (F, CL and DD's), Capt. William A. Phillips.

Nine destroyers:

*Clarence K. Bronson* (ComDesRon 50, Capt. Sherman R. Clark),

Lt. Comdr. Joseph C. McGoughran.

*Cotten*, Comdr. Frank T. Sloat.

*Dortch*, Comdr. Robert C. Young.

*Gatling*, Comdr. Alvin F. Richardson.

*Healy*, Comdr. John C. Atkeson.

*Cogswell*, Comdr. Harold T. Deutermann.

*Caperton*, Comdr. Wallace J. Miller.

*Knapp*, Comdr. Frank Virden.

*Ingersoll*, Comdr. Alexander C. Veasey.

Task Group Montgomery, Rear Admiral Alfred E. Montgomery.

Two aircraft carriers:

*Essex* (F), Capt. Ralph A. Ofstie.

*Intrepid*, Capt. Thomas L. Sprague.

One small aircraft carrier:

*Cabot*, Capt. Malcolm F. Schoeffel.

Three battleships, Rear Admiral Edward W. Hanson:

*South Dakota* (F), Capt. Allen E. Smith.

*Alabama*, Capt. Fred D. Kirtland.

*North Carolina*, Capt. Frank P. Thomas.

One light cruiser (AA):

*San Diego* (F, CL and DD's) (ComScreen Rear Admiral Lloyd J. Wiltse), Capt. Lester J. Hudson.

Ten destroyers:

*Owen* (ComDesRon 52, Capt. George R. Cooper), Comdr. Robert W. Wood.

*Stembel*, Comdr. William L. Tagg.

*The Sullivans*, Comdr. Kenneth M. Gentry.

*Stephen Potter*, Comdr. Charles H. Crichton, Jr.

*Hickox*, Comdr. Willard M. Sweetser.

*Hunt* (ComDesDiv 104, Comdr. Harman B. Bell, Jr.), Comdr. Halford A. Knoertzer.

*Lewis Hancock*, Comdr. Charles H. Lyman, III.

*Lang*, Comdr. Harold Payson, Jr.

*Sterett* (ComDesDiv 15, Capt. Charles J. Stuart), Lt. Comdr.

Francis J. Blouin.

*Stack*, Lt. Comdr. Philip K. Sherman.

Task Group Sherman, Rear Admiral Frederick C. Sherman.

One aircraft carrier:

*Bunker Hill* (F), Capt. John J. Ballentine.

Two small aircraft carriers:

*Monterey*, Capt. Lester T. Hundt.

*Cowpens*, Capt. Robert P. McConnell.

Two battleships, Rear Admiral Olaf M. Hustvedt:

*Iowa* (F), Capt. John L. McCrea.

*New Jersey*, Capt. Carl F. Holden.

One heavy cruiser:

*Wichita*, Capt. John J. Mahoney.

Nine destroyers:

*Izard* (ComDesRon 46, Capt. Carl F. Espe), Comdr. Earl K. VanSwearingen.

*Charrette*, Comdr. Eugene S. Karpe.

*Conner*, Comdr. William E. Kaitner.

*Bell*, Comdr. Lynn C. Petross.

*Burns*, Comdr. Donald T. Eller.

*Bradford* (ComDesDiv 92, Comdr. Harry F. Miller), Comdr. Robert L. Morris.

*Brown*, Comdr. Thomas H. Copeman.

*Cowell*, Comdr. Charles W. Parker.

*Wilson*, Lt. Comdr. Charles K. Duncan.

Task Group Ginder, Rear Admiral Samuel P. Ginder.

One aircraft carrier:

*Saratoga* (F), Capt. John H. Cassidy.

Two small aircraft carriers:

*Princeton*, Capt. George R. Henderson.  
*Langley*, Capt. Wallace M. Dillon.  
Commander Support Unit, Rear Admiral Hewlett Thébaud.  
Two heavy cruisers:  
*Boston* (F), Capt. John H. Carson.  
*Baltimore*, Capt. Walter C. Calhoun.  
One light cruiser (AA):  
*San Juan*, Capt. Guy W. Clarke.  
Commander Screen, Capt. John M. Higgins.  
Eight destroyers:  
*Maury* (F), Lt. Comdr. Joseph W. Koenig.  
*Craven*, Lt. Comdr. Raymond L. Fulton.  
*Gridley*, Comdr. Jesse H. Motes, Jr.  
*McCall*, Comdr. Edward L. Foster.  
*Dunlap* (ComDesDiv 12, Capt. Harold P. Smith), Comdr. Clifton Iverson.  
*Fanning*, Comdr. Ranald H. MacKinnon.  
*Case*, Comdr. Charles M. Howe, III.  
*Cummings*, Comdr. Paul D. Williams.

Task Force Hill (Majuro Attack Force), Rear Admiral Harry W. Hill.

One attack transport:  
*Cambria* (F), Capt. Charles W. Dean, USCG.  
One heavy cruiser:  
*Portland*, Capt. Arthur D. Burhans.  
Two escort carriers:  
*Nassau*, Capt. Stanley J. Michael.  
*Natoma Bay*, Capt. Harold L. Meadow.  
Four destroyers, Comdr. Chester E. Carroll, Commander Screen:  
*Black*, Comdr. Jack Maginnis.  
*Bullard* (F), Comdr. Bernard W. Freund.  
*Chauncey*, Lt. Comdr. Lester C. Conwell.  
*Kidd*, Lt. Comdr. Allan B. Roby.  
One high-speed transport:  
*Kane*, Lt. Comdr. Frank M. Christiansen.  
One high-speed minesweeper:  
*Chandler*, Lt. Comdr. Harry L. Thompson, Jr.  
Two minesweepers:  
*Oracle*, Lt. Comdr. John R. Fels.  
*Sage*, Lieut. Franklyn K. Zinn.  
One LST:  
LST 482.

Task Force Small (Neutralization Force), Rear Admiral Ernest G. Small.

Three heavy cruisers:  
*Chester* (F), Capt. Francis T. Spellman.

*Salt Lake City*, Capt. Leroy W. Busbey, Jr.  
*Pensacola*, Capt. Randal E. Dees.  
Four destroyers, Capt. John T. Bottom, Jr.:  
*Hale*, Comdr. Karl F. Poehlman.  
*Walker*, Comdr. Harry E. Townsend.  
*Erben* (F), Lt. Comdr. Morgan Slayton.  
*Abbot*, Comdr. Marshall E. Dornin.  
Two light minelayers:  
*Preble*, Comdr. Frederic S. Steinke.  
*Ramsay*, Lt. Comdr. Robert H. Holmes.

## APPENDIX B

### *Symbols of U. S. Navy Ships*

AB	Crane Ship	AT	Ocean Tug
ACM	Auxiliary Mine Layer	ATA	Ocean Tug, Auxiliary
AD	Destroyer Tender	ATF	Ocean Tug, Fleet
AE	Ammunition Ship	ATO	Ocean Tug, Old
AF	Provision Storeship	ATR	Ocean Tug, Rescue
AG	Miscellaneous Auxiliary	AV	Seaplane Tender, Large
AGC	Amphibious Force Flagship	AVC	Catapult Lighter
AGP	Motor Torpedo Boat Tender	AVD	Seaplane Tender (high speed)
AGS	Surveying Ship	AVP	Seaplane Tender, Small
AH	Hospital Ship	AVS	Aviation Supply Ship
AK	Cargo Ship	AW	Distilling Ship
AKA	Cargo Ship, Attack	AX	(Planned Auxiliary, New Construction)
AKN	Net Cargo Ship	BB	Battleship
AKS	General Stores Issue Ship	CA	Heavy Cruiser
AKV	Cargo Ship and Aircraft Ferry	CAZ	(Planned Auxiliary, Conversion)
AM	Mine Sweeper	CB	Large Cruiser
AMb	Base Mine Sweeper	CL	Light Cruiser
AMc	Coastal Mine Sweeper	CM	Mine Layer
AMc(U)	Coastal Mine Sweeper (underwater locator)	CMc	Coastal Mine Layer
AN	Net Layer	CV	Aircraft Carrier
AO	Oiler	CVB	Aircraft Carrier, Large
AOG	Gasoline Tanker	CVE	Aircraft Carrier, Escort
AP	Transport	CVL	Aircraft Carrier, Small
APA	Transport, Attack	DD	Destroyer
APB	Barrack Ship (self-propelled)	DE	Destroyer Escort
APc	Coastal Transport	DM	Light Mine Layer
APD	Transport (high speed)	DMS	Mine Sweeper (high speed)
APH	Transport for Wounded	IX	Miscellaneous Unclassified
APL	Barrack Ship (non self-propelled)	LCC	Landing Craft, Control
APV	Transport and Aircraft Ferry	LC	Landing Craft (flotilla flagship)
AR	Repair Ship	LCI(G)	Landing Craft, Infantry (gunboat)
ARB	Repair Ship, Battle Damage	LCI(L)	Landing Craft, Infantry (large)
ARG	Repair Ship, Internal Combustion Engine	LCI(M)	Landing Craft, Infantry (mortar)
ARH	Repair Ship, Heavy Hull	LCI(R)	Landing Craft, Infantry (rocket)
ARL	Repair Ship, Landing Craft	LCM	Landing Craft, Mechanized
ARS	Salvage Vessel	LCP(L)	Landing Craft, Personnel (large)
ARS(D)	Salvage Lifting Vessel	LCP(N)	Landing Craft, Personnel (nested)
ARS(T)	Salvage Craft Tender	LCP(R)	Landing Craft, Personnel (with ramp)
ARV	Aircraft Repair Ship	LCR(L)	Landing Craft, Rubber (large)
ARV(A)	Aircraft Repair Ship (aircraft)	LCR(S)	Landing Craft, Rubber (small)
ARV(E)	Aircraft Repair Ship (engine)	LCS(L)	Landing Craft, Support (large)
AS	Submarine Tender	LCS(S)	Landing Craft, Support (small)
ASR	Submarine Rescue Vessel	LCT	Landing Craft, Tank
		LCV	Landing Craft, Vehicle

LCVP	Landing Craft, Vehicle and Personnel
LSD	Landing Ship, Dock
LSM	Landing Ship, Medium
LSM(R)	Landing Ship, Medium (rocket)
LST	Landing Ship, Tank
LSV	Landing Ship, Vehicle
LSX	(Planned Landing Ship)
LVT	Landing Vehicle, Tracked
LVT(A)	Landing Vehicle, Tracked (armored)
PC	Submarine Chaser (173')
PCE	Patrol Craft Escort
PCE(R)	Patrol Craft Escort (rescue)
PCS	Submarine Chaser (136')
PE	Eagle Boat
PF	Frigate
PG	Gunboat
PGM	Motor Gunboat
PR	River Gunboat
PT	Motor Torpedo Boat
PY	Yacht
PYc	Coastal Yacht
SC	Submarine Chaser (110')
SS	Submarine
YA	Ash Lighter
YAG	Miscellaneous District Auxiliary
YC	Open Lighter
YCF	Car Float
YCK	Open Cargo Lighter
YCV	Aircraft Transportation Lighter
YDG	De-gaussing Vessel
YDT	Diving Tender

YF	Covered Lighter; Range Tender; Provision Store Lighter
YFB	Ferryboat and Launch
YFT	Torpedo Transportation Lighter
YG	Garbage Lighter
YHB	Houseboat
YHT	Heating Scow
YMS	Motor Mine Sweeper
YN	Net Tender
YNg	Gate Vessel
YNT	Net Tender, Tug Class
YO	Fuel Oil Barge
YOG	Gasoline Barge
YOS	Oil Storage Barge
YP	District Patrol Vessel
YPK	Pontoon Stowage Barge
YR	Floating Workshop
YRD(H)	Floating Workshop, Dry Dock (hull)
YRD(M)	Floating Workshop, Dry Dock (machinery)
YS	Stevedore Barge
YSD	Seaplane Wrecking Derrick
YSP	Salvage Pontoon
YSR	Sludge Removal Barge
YT	Harbor Tug
YTB	Harbor Tug, Big
YTL	Harbor Tug, Little
YTM	Harbor Tug, Medium
YTT	Torpedo Testing Barge
YTX	(Planned District Craft)
YW	Water Barge

## APPENDIX C

### *List of Published Combat Narratives*

- The Java Sea Campaign*, January–February 1942 (out of print)  
*Early Raids in the Pacific Ocean*, 1 February–10 March 1942  
*The Battle of the Coral Sea*, 4–8 May 1942  
*The Battle of Midway*, 3–6 June 1942  
*The Landing in the Solomons*, 7–8 August 1942  
*The Battle of Savo Island*, 9 August 1942  
*The Battle of the Eastern Solomons*, 23–25 August 1942  
*Battle of Cape Esperance*, 11 October 1942  
*Battle of Santa Cruz Islands*, 26 October 1942  
*The Landings in North Africa*, November 1942  
*Battle of Guadalcanal*, 11–15 November 1942  
*Miscellaneous Actions in the South Pacific*, 8 August 1942–22 January 1943 (out of print)  
*Battle of Tassafaronga*, 30 November 1942  
*Japanese Evacuation of Guadalcanal*, 29 January–8 February 1943 (including loss of the *Chicago*)  
*Bombardments of Munda and Vila-Stanmore*, January–May 1943  
*Operations in the New Georgia Area*, 21 June–5 August 1943  
*Kolombangara and Vella Lavella*, 6 August–7 October 1943  
*The Aleutians Campaign*, June 1942–August 1943  
*The Bougainville Landing and the Battle of Empress Augusta Bay*, 27 October–2 November 1943  
*The Sicilian Campaign*, 10 July–17 August 1943  
*The Assault on Kwajalein and Majuro (Part One)*

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