

Noemfoor Read Ahead

The read ahead for the Battle of Noemfoor is a compilation of four different sources.

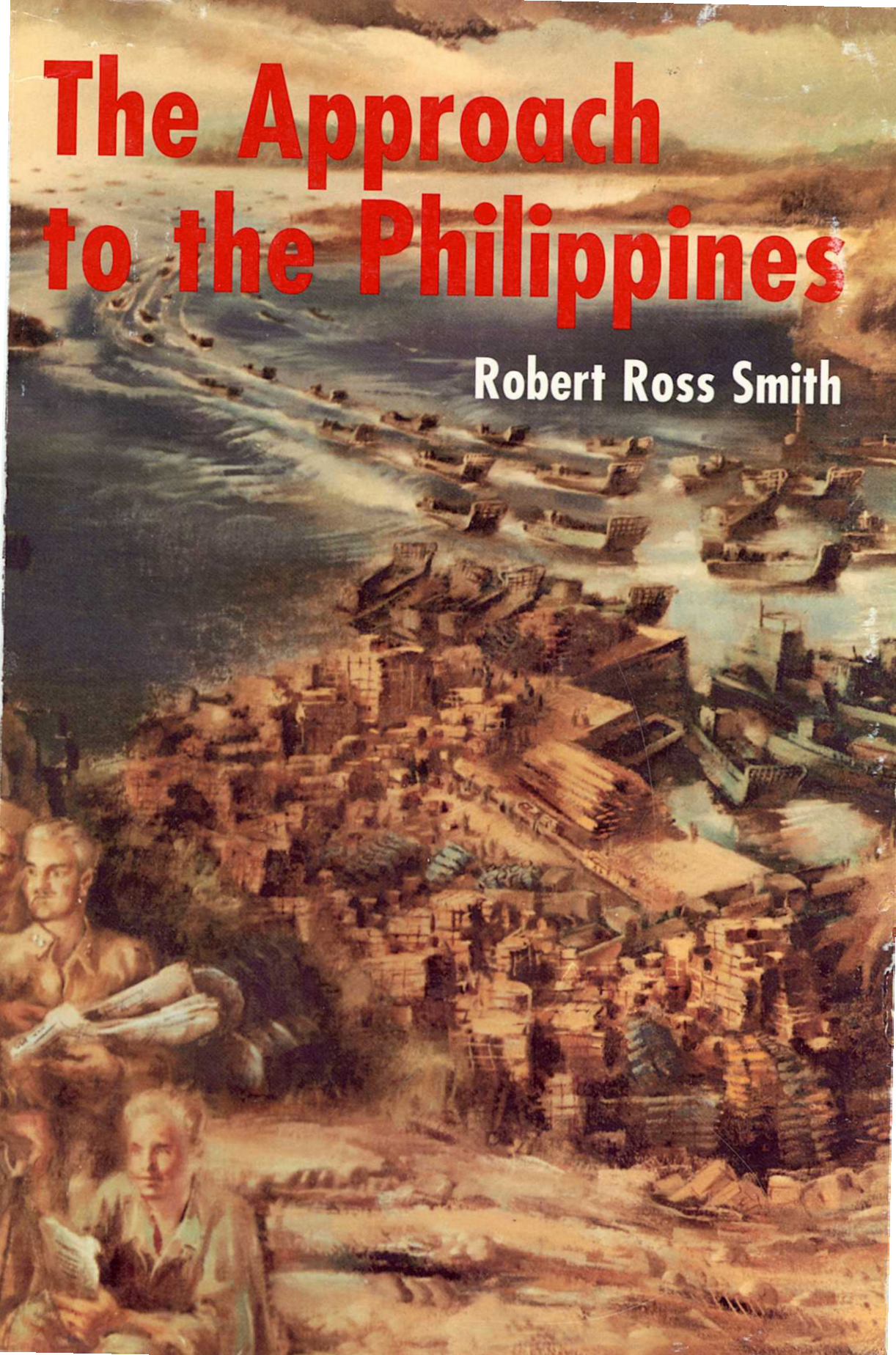
The first source is from the *Center for Military History Publication 5-8-1 (The Approach to the Philippines)* and provides some background to the Noemfoor operation, the execution of it, as well as some of the results that came from the seizing of the island.

The second source is the Army Air Forces in World War II, Volume 4; The Pacific: Guadalcanal to Saipan: August 1942 to July 1944, which also provides a condensed history of the Battle of Noemfoor.

The last two sources are *AARs from CTF 77 and the 503rd Parachute Infantry Regiment*. These sources provide the reader with some background of the battle for the naval and airborne perspectives. Each also provides some AAR comments which could have been used in support of future operations.

The Approach to the Philippines

Robert Ross Smith



UNITED STATES ARMY IN WORLD WAR II

The War in the Pacific

THE APPROACH TO
THE PHILIPPINES

by

Robert Ross Smith



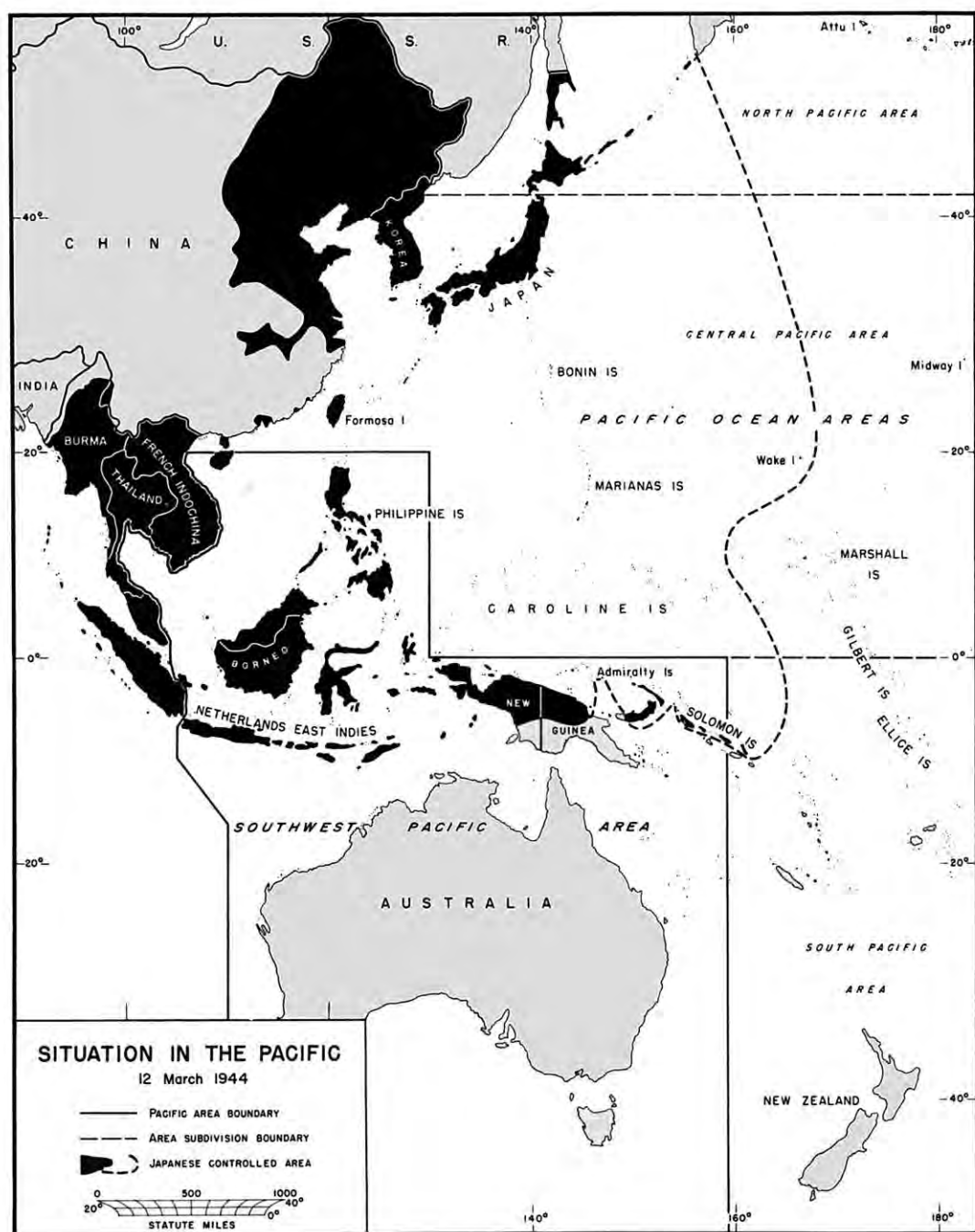
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V. Brooks

MAP 1

CHAPTER XVII

Operations on Noemfoor Island

Even before the HURRICANE Task Force had landed on Biak, planners at General MacArthur's headquarters had considered the possible necessity for occupying additional islands in Geelvink Bay to protect the gains achieved at Biak. With the initial reverses of the HURRICANE Task Force, continuing enemy air attacks against Biak, and growing indications that the Japanese might be attempting to reinforce that island, expansion to near-by enemy bases began to appear an imminent necessity. Moreover, occupation of another island near Biak would provide an additional air base from which the Allied Air Forces could dominate the Vogelkop Peninsula, where another operation was soon to take place. If, as appeared likely during the first week of June, there was to be considerable delay in making the fields on Biak operational, the move to the Vogelkop might have to be postponed. On 4 June, therefore, General Headquarters began preparations for the seizure of Noemfoor Island, which lay about midway between Biak and the Japanese base at Manokwari on the northeast tip of the Vogelkop Peninsula.¹

¹ Memo, G-3 GHQ Plng Sec for ACofS G-3 GHQ SWPA, no sub, 4 Jun 44, in G-3 GHQ Jnl, 4 Jun 44; Rad, GHQ SWPA to ALAMO, C-13296, 5 Jun 44, in ALAMO G-3 Jnl Noemfoor, 6-19 Jun 44. As it had for previous operations, ALAMO Force kept a separate set of records concerning the Noemfoor operation.

The Noemfoor Plan

Noemfoor was used by the Japanese as a staging area for troops moving to reinforce the *Biak Detachment*. Japanese barges could make the run from Manokwari to western Noemfoor, a distance of about 60 nautical miles, during the hours of darkness, and another overnight run would take reinforcements the additional 75 nautical miles to western Biak. Two other reasons dictated the choice of Noemfoor. First, the Japanese had constructed or partially completed three airdromes on the island. The Allies could quickly repair those fields for fighters and bombers which could cover the advance to the Vogelkop. Finally, Allied occupation of Noemfoor would deny to the Japanese a base from which the sea lanes west of Biak could be threatened.

The Terrain and the Enemy

Noemfoor, roughly circular in shape, consists of a series of limestone and coral terraces, a topography in many ways similar to that of Biak but not as rough. The highest point on Noemfoor is about 670 feet above sea level, its greatest north-south length is about fifteen miles, and its width approximately twelve and a half miles. Most of the natives, about 5,000 in all, lived in a number of coastal hamlets. The island had experienced little commercial development be-

fore the war, there were no towns of any importance, and port facilities were lacking. Land communications consisted of native tracks skirting the coast line and connecting the many villages. (*Map 17*)

Inland, the terrain is fairly rugged, although there are some large flat areas on the northern and southwestern sections of the coast. Dense rain forest grows everywhere except along a few strips of the beach, and along the banks of tidal inlets where heavy mangrove swamps are found. The island is completely surrounded by coral reefs, behind which are beaches of many types—sand, forest, mangrove swamp, or rocky shore. Seaward approaches to the island are deep and free of navigational hazards, permitting large ships to draw up to the outer edges of the reefs both day and night. The best landing areas, considering both reef and beach conditions, are on the northwest shore, near Menockwari West and Kamiri.²

It is not known when the Japanese first occupied Noemfoor, but early in 1944 they began to construct airfields there in accordance with their policy of strengthening their new strategic main line of resistance in western New Guinea. By the end of May the Japanese had completed two fields on Noemfoor: Namber Drome on the southwest coast and Kamiri Drome on the northwest. On the north-central coast, about four miles east of Kamiri Drome, the Japanese had left unfinished a third airfield, designated Kornasoren Drome. The only other construction of note was some widening of

native trails to serve as motor roads between the airfields.

In mid-June, realizing that the Japanese were using Noemfoor as a way station for troops moving to reinforce Biak and considering it probable that the Japanese would expect an Allied invasion of the island, the ALAMO Force G-2 Section estimated that the Japanese garrison on Noemfoor comprised 2,850 to 3,250 troops, with a combat strength of 1,600 to 2,000 men. Most of the combat troops were believed to be members of the *3d Battalion, 219th Infantry, 35th Division*. Other combat units of that division and at least a company of the *36th Division* were also thought to be stationed on the island. The Japanese were known to have concentrated their strength at the airfields, and the largest single body of Japanese was believed to be stationed at Kamiri Drome.³

Intelligence officers estimated that since the Japanese probably considered Noemfoor only a delaying position, they would make few efforts to reinforce it. No naval interference was expected because, after the fiascos of the *KON* and *A-GO Operations*, most of the *Combined Fleet* had retired to homeland or Philippine waters, leaving only a few destroyers and one light cruiser in the western New Guinea area. Some reaction by Japanese aircraft was expected, but not on the scale attempted at Biak. Allied aircraft could keep Japanese fields within range of Noemfoor out of operation most of the time and, in co-operation with Seventh Fleet PT boats, could stop most overwater

² AGS SWPA, Terrain Handbook No. 27, "Schouten Islands," 12 May 44, copy in OCMH files; ALAMO Force, G-2 Photo Int Sec Rpt 135, 13 Jun 44, in ALAMO G-3 Jnl Noemfoor, 6-19 Jun 44. Menockwari West is not to be confused with Manokwari on the Vogelkop Peninsula nor with Menockwari South, a village located on the southern coast of Noemfoor.

³ ALAMO Force, G-2 Est of Enemy Sit with Respect to Noemfoor Island, 15 Jun 44, in ALAMO G-4 Jnl Wakde-Biak, 6-15 Jun 44; ALAMO Force, G-2 Daily Rpt 200, 2 Jul 44, in ALAMO G-4 Jnl Noemfoor, 27 May-8 Jul 44; ALAMO Force FO 19, 21 Jun 44, in G-3 GHQ Jnl, 25 Jun 44.

reinforcing movements of the scale the Japanese could mount.⁴

Allied estimates of Japanese strength on Noemfoor were too high, for there were not more than 2,000 Japanese on the island. Probably not more than 900 of these could be counted infantry effectives. In addition to the 2,000 Japanese, there were 600-odd Formosan laborers and approximately 500 Javanese slave laborers. The *3d Battalion, 219th Infantry*, contained the bulk of the combat troops, but there were also present about 180 men of the *2d Battalion, 219 Infantry*, and a like number of the *222d Infantry, 36th Division*, troops which had been unable to reach Biak. The Japanese garrison on Noemfoor was commanded by a Colonel Shimizu, who was also the commanding officer of the *219th Infantry*. Another unit, commanded by a Major Mori, but apparently under Colonel Shimizu's operational control, seems to have been a provisional organization containing mostly armed service personnel and numbering about 600 men.⁵

The ALAMO G-2 Section was correct in assuming that an invasion of Noemfoor would come as no surprise to the Japanese. Colonel Shimizu had estimated as early as 1 June that the Allies would soon invade the island in the vicinity of Kamiri Drome. For

reasons unknown, the colonel later changed his guess and began making extensive defensive preparations along the north coast at Kornasoren Drome. During the night of 22-23 June, the colonel's men discovered an Allied reconnaissance party which, brought to Noemfoor by PT's, was attempting to obtain accurate information concerning reef and tide conditions off Kamiri. When no American landing was immediately forthcoming, Colonel Shimizu re-estimated that the invasion of Noemfoor would occur at the Kamiri Drome area during the first week of July.⁶ His estimate was soon to prove remarkably accurate.

Organization of the Forces

On 5 June 1944 General MacArthur informed General Krueger that the Noemfoor operation was to take place under ALAMO Force direction. At the same time General Krueger was warned that operations on the Vogelkop Peninsula were to follow close upon the occupation of Noemfoor. General MacArthur's planners wanted to use a regimental combat team of the 6th Infantry Division at Noemfoor,⁷ but General Krueger planned to employ that division for the Vogelkop invasion, and therefore secured General MacArthur's approval to send the 158th Regimental Combat Team against Noemfoor. The latter unit was then at Wakde-Sarmi, and provision had to be made to speed shipment of the 6th Division

⁴ Annex G, Int, to CTF 77 Opn Plan 6-44, 22 Jun 44, in G-3 GHQ Jnl, 27 Jun 44; ALAMO Force FO 19, 21 Jun 44, in G-3 GHQ Jnl, 25 Jun 44; Rad, ALAMO Adv Hq to ALAMO Rear Hq, WH-723, 23 Jun 44, in ALAMO G-3 Jnl Noemfoor, 19-24 Jun 44; ALAMO Force, G-2 Est of Enemy Sit with Respect to Noemfoor Island, 15 Jun 44, in ALAMO G-4 Jnl Wakde-Biak, 6-15 Jun 44.

⁵ Hist of *2d Area Army*, pp. 58, 67; *2d Army Opns*, p. 6; S-2, 503d Prcht Inf Regt, Enemy Order of Battle Noemfoor Island, 20 Sep 44, in 503d Prcht Inf, S-2 Rpt, Noemfoor Opns; CyTF Hist Rpt Noemfoor, p. 16. The complete names of Shimizu and Mori cannot be ascertained from available records.

⁶ CyTF Hist Rpt Noemfoor, pp. 17-18; CTF 77 [Comdr, Naval Attack Force], Noemfoor Opn—Rpt on, 16 Jul 44, pp. 1-2; ALAMO Force, G-2 Est of Enemy Sit with Respect to Noemfoor Island, 15 Jun 44, in ALAMO G-4 Jnl Wakde-Biak, 6-15 Jun 44.

⁷ Memo, G-3 GHQ Plng Sec for ACofS G-3 GHQ SWPA, no sub, 4 Jun 44, in G-3 GHQ Jnl, 4 Jun 44; Rad, GHQ SWPA to ALAMO, C-13296, 5 Jun 44, in ALAMO G-3 Jnl Noemfoor, 6-19 Jun 44.

there so that the 158th could prepare for the Noemfoor operation.⁸

As in previous operations along the New Guinea coast, General Krueger was made responsible for co-ordinating air, naval, and ground planning for Noemfoor. He scheduled an interservice planning conference for 16 June, a date to which Allied Naval Forces planners objected. Most of the important naval planners were at least a day away from ALAMO Force headquarters, and, moreover, the Allied Naval Forces did not believe that enough intelligence data was on hand for planning purposes. General Krueger, on the other hand, considered available data sufficient, and held the conference as scheduled. The Allied Naval Forces was represented only by one officer from the staff of the VII Amphibious Force, Seventh Fleet.⁹

At the conference it immediately became apparent that, as usual, the provision of air support for the landing was the major problem. Allied Air Forces held that since carrier-based aircraft were not available, a minimum of two fighter groups would have to be based at Biak before the Noemfoor operation could be initiated. General Kenney, the air commander, estimated that Mokmer Drome could be used by 20 June

without further interference from the *Biak Detachment* and that the airfield then being constructed on Owi Island, off southeastern Biak, would be ready on 25 June. Upon completion, each field would be able to accommodate one group of fighters. These aircraft would need a few days to become acquainted with the target areas on Noemfoor. Finally, while the concentration of troops and supplies for ground elements scheduled to land on Noemfoor could be accomplished by 26 June, it would be necessary to allow these forces time for rehearsal, and more time would be needed for loading. The combination of these factors led General Krueger to believe that 30 June would be the earliest practicable date upon which the Noemfoor landing could take place. This date was approved by General MacArthur.¹⁰

On 20 June a second planning conference was held at General Krueger's headquarters, this time attended by the commanders of all the major air, ground, and naval units participating in the Noemfoor operation. It was discovered that the 30 June target date was optimistic. First, additional time was needed for rehearsing the amphibious phases of the operation. Next, General Kenney wanted the landing delayed until a second runway could be completed on Owi Island. It still appeared possible that the *Biak Detachment* might delay full use of Mokmer Drome for some time, and the expansion of the Owi strip was believed necessary to provide a safe airfield for fighters supporting

⁸ Rad, ALAMO Adv Hq to ALAMO Rear Hq, WH-227, 6 Jun 44, in ALAMO Adv Hq G-3 Jnl Wakde-Biak, 6-7 Jun 44; Rad, ALAMO Adv Hq to TTF, WH-315, 9 Jun 44, in ALAMO Adv Hq G-3 Jnl Wakde-Biak, 9-10 Jun 44; Memo, ACofS G-3 ALAMO to ACofS G-4 ALAMO, ALAMO AAO, and ALAMO FAO, no sub, 7 Jun 44, and Rad, GHQ SWPA to ALAMO, C-13742, 15 Jun 44, last two docs in ALAMO G-3 Jnl Noemfoor, 6-19 Jun 44. See also above, Ch. X.

⁹ Rad, GHQ SWPA to AAF, SWPA, ANF SWPA, ALAMO, and USASOS, CX-13693, 14 Jun 44, Rad, Com7thFlt to ALAMO, 15 Jun 44, and Rad, ALAMO to CTF 76, WF-8059, 15 Jun 44, all three in ALAMO G-3 Jnl Noemfoor, 6-19 Jun 44; Rad, ALAMO to GHQ SWPA, WF-3357, 17 Jun 44, in G-3 GHQ Jnl, 17 Jun 44.

¹⁰ Rad, ALAMO Adv Hq to ALAMO Rear Hq, WH-494, 15 Jun 44, in ALAMO Adv Hq G-3 Jnl Wakde-Biak, 15-16 Jun 44; Ltr, AAF SWPA to GHQ SWPA, sub: TABLETENNIS Opn, 17 Jun 44, and Rad, ALAMO to GHQ SWPA, WF-3357, 17 Jun 44, last two docs in G-3 GHQ Jnl, 17 Jun 44; GHQ SWPA OI 55, 17 Jun 44, in G-3 GHQ Jnl, 18 Jun 44.

the Noemfoor landing. The additional construction on Owi could not be completed until 30 June. Finally, more time was needed to move forward to the staging area (Wakde-Sarmi) a number of LCM's and LCT's which were to participate in the landing. Therefore, General Krueger secured approval from General MacArthur to postpone the landing until 2 July. With the date settled, other points of air, ground, and naval co-ordination were discussed by the conferees, and agreement on all important issues was soon reached. The commanders returned to their respective headquarters which, within a few days, produced the necessary field orders, operations instructions, or other final plans.¹¹

For the Noemfoor operation the 158th Regimental Combat Team, reinforced, was designated the CYCLONE Task Force. The task force and combat team commander was Brig. Gen. Edwin D. Patrick, who had commanded the same combat team and the TORNADO Task Force at Wakde-Sarmi. The CYCLONE Task Force staff was formed by members of ALAMO Force headquarters, the 158th Infantry, No. 62 Works Wing of the Royal Australian Air Force, and other units attached to ALAMO Force for the operation. The total combat strength of the task force was approximately 8,000 men, of whom over 7,000 were to land on D Day.¹²

¹¹ Rad, ALAMO to GHQ SWPA, WF-3961, 20 Jun 44, in ALAMO G-3 Jnl Noemfoor, 19-24 Jun 44; Rad, GHQ SWPA to ALAMO, ANF SWPA, AAF SWPA, *et al.*, CX-13999, 21 Jun 44, in G-3 GHQ Jnl, 21 Jun 44; CTF 77 Noemfoor Opn Rpt, p. 2.

¹² Major combat units were the 158th Infantry, the 147th Field Artillery Battalion (105-mm.), the 116th Antiaircraft Artillery Group (of two battalions and three additional batteries), a platoon of the 603d Tank Company, a 4.2-inch mortar company of the 641st Tank Destroyer Battalion, the 27th Engineers, the Shore Battalion of the 593d

The principal mission of the CYCLONE Task Force was to seize airdrome sites which were to be quickly developed so that Allied aircraft could support operations west of Noemfoor. The task force was initially to prepare facilities for two groups of fighters and half a squadron of night fighters and later to expand these facilities for an additional fighter group, two squadrons of medium bombers, and two squadrons of light bombers. To accomplish the necessary airfield construction, service units of the CYCLONE Task Force were to include two American engineer aviation battalions and No. 62 Works Wing. With an excellent record of achievement at Aitape as engineer of the PERSECUTION Task Force, the commander of the Australian works wing, Group Capt. W. A. C. Dale (RAAF), was appointed engineer of the CYCLONE Task Force.

The service units assigned to the task force numbered about 5,500 men, among whom approximately 3,000 were to be engaged in airdrome construction. Other service troops included the usual medical, quartermaster, ordnance, and signal units needed for a small amphibious operation. Air force units scheduled to arrive on Biak after the airfields were completed totaled some 10,000 men. Air operations from Noemfoor were to be controlled initially by No. 10 Operational Group, Royal Australian Air Force, and later by the Fifth Air Force's 309th Bombardment Wing (H). The first aircraft scheduled to operate from Noemfoor were to be Australian, and Fifth Air Force planes were to follow on a date

Engineer Boat and Shore Regiment, a boat company of the 543d Engineer Boat and Shore Regiment (both the latter from the 3d Engineer Special Brigade), and the Support Battery, 2d Engineer Special Brigade.

governed by the extent of airfield construction.¹³

The amphibious phase of the Noemfoor operation was to be directed by Rear Adm. William M. Fechteler as the Commander, Naval Attack Force.¹⁴ Admiral Fechteler divided his Attack Force into three groups. The Covering Force, under the command of Rear Adm. Russell S. Berkey (USN), contained 1 heavy cruiser, 2 light cruisers, and 10 destroyers. Admiral Fechteler retained command over the Main Body, consisting of 15 destroyers, 8 LST's, 8 LCT's, 4 patrol craft (PC's), 1 tug, and 14 LCI's (including 3 rocket-equipped LCI's and 2 LCI's transporting demolition experts and their equipment for blasting approaches for landing craft through the reefs). An LCT-LCM Unit, commanded by Lt. Comdr. James S. Munroe (USNR), contained 3 PC's, 5 LCT's, and 40 LCM's, the latter manned by Company A, 543d Engineer Boat and Shore Regiment. A Beach Party and two Reinforcement Groups (the latter arriving after D Day) completed the naval organization.¹⁵

¹³ GHQ SWPA OI 55, 17 Jun 44, in G-3 GHQ Jnl, 18 Jun 44; ALAMO Force Opns Rpt Noemfoor, pp. 3-5; CyTF Hist Rpt Noemfoor, pp. 1-5; 3d ESB Opns Rpt, Jul 44, n.p.; 5th AF OI 3, 22 Jun 44, in G-3 GHQ Jnl, 25 Jun 44; CyTF FO 1, 23 Jun 44, in file of CyTF's FO's.

¹⁴ The Attack Force was administratively designated Task Force 77, and contained the bulk of the combat elements of the VII Amphibious Force, U. S. Seventh Fleet, as well as Australian units. Admiral Fechteler, deputy commander of the VII Amphibious Force, was in command of that force from May until early July, its regular commander, Rear Adm. Daniel E. Barbey, being temporarily absent on other duty.

¹⁵ CTF 77 Opn Plan 6-44, 22 Jun 44, in G-3 GHQ Jnl, 27 Jun 44; CTF 77 Noemfoor Opn Rpt, p. 3. The Covering Force had two sections: one under Commodore John A. Collins (RAN), containing 1 heavy cruiser and 4 destroyers, was known administratively as Task Force 74; the other section, under Admiral Berkey and containing 2 light cruis-

The bulk of the air missions in support of the landing were to be flown by the U. S. Fifth Air Force, now under Maj. Gen. Ennis C. Whitehead. The newly arrived Thirteenth Air Force, under Maj. Gen. St. Clair Streett, was to have a share in the support, as were Australian and Dutch planes. Also available was Task Force 73, the Seventh Fleet's land-based aircraft, which flew under the operational control of the Allied Air Forces.¹⁶

Initially, ALAMO Force Reserve for the Noemfoor operation was the 503d Parachute Infantry Regiment. This unit, stationed at Hollandia, was to be prepared for airborne movement to Noemfoor on C-47's of the 54th Troop Carrier Wing, Fifth Air Force. Since there were not enough C-47's available to move the entire regiment at one time, provision was made to fly it forward in battalion groups.¹⁷ Late during the planning for Noemfoor, General Krueger, concerned lest the ground situation on Noemfoor on D Day require overwater reinforcements as well, alerted the 34th Infantry, then on Biak, to prepare for waterborne movement to Noemfoor on twenty-four hours' notice. He requested and

ers and 6 destroyers, was Task Force 75. The destroyers of the Main Body were also divided into Fire Support Groups.

¹⁶ 5th AF OI 3, 22 Jun 44, in G-3 GHQ Jnl, 25 Jun 44; ANF SWPA Opn Plan 8-44, 17 Jun 44, in G-3 GHQ Jnl, 20 Jun 44; 13th AF OI 2, 27 Jun 44, in G-3 GHQ Jnl, 1 Jul 44; AAF SWPA OI 55, 20 Jun 44, in G-3 GHQ Jnl, 20 Jun 44. General Kenney had previously commanded the Fifth Air Force, but, on 15 June, the headquarters of that unit became Headquarters, Far Eastern Air Force, under which were placed both the Fifth and Thirteenth Air Forces. General Whitehead's previous command, the Advance Echelon, Fifth Air Force [Advon5AF], then became Headquarters, Fifth Air Force.

¹⁷ ALAMO Force FO 19, 21 Jun 44, in G-3 GHQ Jnl, 25 Jun 44; 5th AF OI 3, 22 Jun 44, in G-3 GHQ Jnl, 25 Jun 44; ALAMO Force Opns Rpt Noemfoor, p. 7.

obtained from the VII Amphibious Force the use of ten LCI's, which were to stand by off Biak at Mios Woendi pending a decision on the necessity for moving the 34th Infantry to Noemfoor.¹⁸

The CYCLONE Task Force had no specific reserve set aside as such for the landing. The Task Force Shore Party, however, consisting of engineer and quartermaster units, was to assemble the equivalent of three rifle companies for combat missions upon call from General Patrick. The reserve for the 158th Infantry was to be Company K, reinforced by a heavy machine gun platoon from Company M. The 1st Platoon, 603d Tank Company, once ashore, was to assemble to assist the attack of the 158th Infantry and, until needed for this task, could be considered as a mobile reserve.¹⁹

Logistics and Tactics

The logistic plan for Noemfoor was similar to that for earlier operations along the New Guinea coast. As usual, the transportation of men and supplies to the forward area was a responsibility of the Allied Naval Forces until relieved by the Services of Supply. The date for the transfer of this respon-

sibility was not set prior to D Day.²⁰ The assault elements of the CYCLONE Task Force were to carry with them ten days' supply of rations, clothing, unit equipment, fuels, lubricants, medical supplies, and motor maintenance matériel. All weapons except the 4.2-inch mortars were to be supplied with two units of fire; the mortars were to have four units. Provision for resupply was similar to that of previous operations. Ultimately, thirty days of supply of all matériel (except engineer construction equipment) and three units of fire for all weapons were to be built up at Noemfoor. Engineer construction supplies were to be brought forward as necessary.²¹

There were no critical shortages and no supply problems other than relatively minor difficulties concerned with loading and unloading. The Naval Attack Force did not want any bulk supplies loaded on LST's of the D-Day echelon, but planned that all supplies would be carried packed on vehicles transported by the LST's. This plan was prompted by Admiral Fechteler's wish to pull the LST's away from Noemfoor as quickly as possible, since he felt there might be a strong enemy air reaction to the landing, a reaction which, because of possibly adverse weather conditions, the Fifth Air Force might not be able to counter. After conferences with the task force and ALAMO Force supply sections, however, Admiral Fechteler agreed to bulk-load 200 tons of cargo on each LST of the D-Day echelon, provided that a 100-man unloading detail for each ship were made available. The 6th

¹⁸ ALAMO Force Opns Rpt Noemfoor, p. 7; Rad, ALAMO to CTF 77 and 76, WF-1172, 28 Jun 44, and Rad, CTF 76 to ALAMO, 29 Jun 44, both in ALAMO G-2 Jnl Wakde-Biak, 16 Jun-10 Jul 44.

¹⁹ CyTF FO 1, 23 Jun 44, in file of CyTF's FO's; 158th Inf FO 1, 26 Jun 44, in 158th Inf Jnl file, 22 Jun-31 Aug 44. The Shore Party consisted of the Shore Battalion, 593d Engineer Boat and Shore Regiment, an amphibian truck company, a company of the 27th Engineers, and various quartermaster detachments. It was under the Commanding Officer, 593d Engineer Boat and Shore Regiment. Naval plans and reports for the Noemfoor operation consistently refer to the 3d Battalion, 158th Infantry, as the reserve battalion. Actually, this battalion was to follow the other two ashore and assemble for offensive operations rather than hold itself ready as a reserve.

²⁰ GHQ SWPA OI 55, 17 Jun 44, in G-3 GHQ Jnl, 18 Jun 44. The transfer of responsibility from ANF SWPA to USASOS SWPA was not made until 1 Sep, according to GHQ SWPA OI 55/2, 26 Aug 44, in G-3 GHQ Jnl, 18 Jun 44.

²¹ CyTF Adm O 1, 24 Jun 44, atchd to CyTF FO 1, 23 Jun 44, in file of CyTF FO's.

Infantry Division, at Wakde-Sarmi, was called upon to provide 800 men for the unloading. These men were to return to Wakde-Sarmi on the LST's they unloaded and were not to be committed to combat operations on Noemfoor. Admiral Fechteler also believed it necessary to make roller conveyors available to unload the bulk cargo at Noemfoor, and ALAMO Force procured adequate lengths of these conveyors from stocks in eastern New Guinea bases.²²

In many essentials, the landing plans for Noemfoor were very similar to those used at Biak. Like the latter island, Noemfoor was surrounded by coral reefs which were barely covered by water even at high tide. Therefore, as at Biak, LVT's and DUKW's were to make up the assault landing waves for Noemfoor. Again, LCM's and LCT's were to be run up on the reef and over it if possible, probable damage to these craft having to be accepted because of the importance of their cargoes of tanks, trucks, bulldozers, and engineer equipment. LCI's and LST's were to beach at the outer edge of the reef, their troops and vehicles to go ashore over the reef. DUKW's and LVT's were to aid in the unloading of the LST's.

In one major essential the Noemfoor landing plan differed radically from that employed at Biak. At the latter island the HURRICANE Task Force had used a beach which, while within easy marching distance of the principal objectives and the main concentration of enemy troops, was relatively undefended. But at Noemfoor, the landing was to be made in the face of the enemy's strongest defenses, known to be located in

the Kamiri Drome area. Yellow Beach, as the landing area was designated, extended approximately 800 yards along the western end of the airfield, which was situated almost at the high water mark. The reef presented fewer hazards there than elsewhere, since it was somewhat narrower than at most other points along the island's coast. The relative narrowness of the reef at Kamiri would also permit LCI's, LCT's, LCM's, and LST's to approach to within 450 yards of the beach, which, at the airfield, was believed to be firm. Moreover, landing at Yellow Beach had the advantage of placing the assault troops immediately on their objective, permitting a rapid seizure of Kamiri Drome before the Japanese could recover from the shock of the naval and air bombardments. Enemy forces on the island would be split, and those stationed at Namber and Kornasoren Dromes would be isolated.

To insure that the assault troops would get ashore with minimum casualties, the landing plan demanded the heaviest naval bombardment yet delivered in the Southwest Pacific area. Two and one-half times the amount of ammunition normally thought necessary to neutralize the landing area was to be expended against Yellow Beach and its environs. Any miscarriage of plans, it was realized, would allow the Japanese to recover from this bombardment and inflict serious losses on the landing waves. Admiral Fechteler recognized that the landing plan called for ideal conditions of wind and sea, and he planned to postpone the assault if unfavorable weather conditions prevailed on the morning of 2 July. The landing itself was scheduled for 0800, fifty-seven minutes after sunrise. This hour was later than customary for landings along the New Guinea coast, but it had the double

²² Memo, Asst ACofS G-4 ALAMO for QM ALAMO, no sub, 20 Jun 44, in ALAMO G-4 Jnl Noemfoor, 27 May-8 Jul 44; Rad, ALAMO to TTF (for CG 6th Inf Div) WF-4393, 22 Jun 44, in ALAMO G-3 Jnl Noemfoor, 19-24 Jun 44.

purpose of allowing more naval gunfire to be laid on the beach with accuracy and insuring proper beach identification. The plan of naval support fire, except for its volume, was similar to that of previous operations, as was the composition and timing of assault waves.²³

The Landing

The CYCLONE Task Force was formally organized on 21 June, when General Patrick, in order to co-ordinate his final planning with that of other organizations concerned with the Noemfoor operation, set up a temporary command post near ALAMO Force's rear headquarters at Finschhafen. General Patrick's plan of operations was approved by General Krueger on 22 June and published as CYCLONE Task Force Field Order No. 1 the next day. General Patrick and his staff then returned to the Wakde-Sarmi area to complete final preparations for the Noemfoor operation. A rehearsal for amphibian vehicles was held on 28 June, and final loading of the assault ships was finished soon thereafter.²⁴

Approach and Bombardment

The LCT-LCM Unit, escorted by three PC's, left Toem on 29 June and sailed for Biak, where the landing craft had a twenty-four hour layover. Two LCI's, carrying most of the troops who were to move to Noemfoor aboard LCM's, accompanied the unit as far as Biak. The Main Body of the Attack Force

departed Toem at 1800 on 30 June, arriving off southeastern Biak about 1740 hours on 1 July. The LCM troops then left the LCI's for their own craft, and 8 of the 13 LCT's were taken in tow by LST's of the Main Body, which immediately sailed for Noemfoor. The 8 LCT's were towed to Noemfoor in order that they might be available to unload equipment from the LST's during the first phases of the assault. The rest of the LCT-LCM Unit, consisting now of 5 LCT's, 40 LCM's, and 3 PC's, proceeded behind the Main Body at best speed, arriving off Noemfoor not much more than half an hour after the Main Body.²⁵

The Main Body began deploying off Yellow Beach about 0500 on D Day, 2 July. Various sections of the Main Body, including accompanying destroyers, were released from formation during the predawn hours to take up assigned control or fire support stations. About 0700 the assault ships stopped while the LST's cast off their LCT tows. As a result of this halt, the Main Body arrived at the transport area, about 3,000 yards offshore, approximately ten minutes late, and the LST's were delayed an additional five minutes in completing their deployment. However, the LST's then steamed on to their stations with bow doors open and ramps half lowered, thus speeding launching of LVT's and DUKW's of the assault waves and making up all the lost time.

Four control craft had already arrived on station, two at the line of departure about 1,000 yards beyond the outer edge of the reef and two more at the reef's edge. Heavy haze, caused by the smoke and dust of the prelanding air and naval bombardments, obscured Yellow Beach and the control

²³ CTF 77 Opn Plan 6-44, 22 Jun 44, in G-3 GHQ Jnl, 27 Jun 44; CTF 77 Noemfoor Opn Rpt, pp. 4, 20-21; CyTF FO 1, 23 Jun 44, in file of CyTF FO's; ALAMO Force Opns Rpt Noemfoor, p. 8; CyTF Hist Rpt Noemfoor, p. 7.

²⁴ CTF 77 Noemfoor Opns Rpt, p. 8; CyTF Hist Rpt Noemfoor, pp. 7-8; ALAMO Force Opns Rpt Noemfoor, p. 3.

²⁵ CTF 77 Noemfoor Opn Rpt, p. 9; Ltr, Maj Robert M. Luby [3d ESB Obsr] to CG 3d ESB, sub: Obsr's Rpt, Noemfoor Opn, 11 Jul 44, in binder entitled 3d ESB Opns Rpt, Jul 44.

boats, which could not be seen from a distance of more than 500 yards. The control boats therefore turned on white flood lights, enabling the assault craft to obtain correct bearings for the run to the beach.

The naval bombardment was carried out by the Covering Force, augmented by destroyers of the Main Body. The Covering Force had formed at the Admiralty Islands, whence it had sailed westward to reach a point about thirty miles southeast of Biak at 1900 hours on 1 July. Proceeding toward Noemfoor about ten miles ahead of the Main Body, the Covering Force made a few radar contacts with Japanese aircraft, but its trip was otherwise without incident. The force moved into assigned fire support areas in time to begin its bombardment on schedule at H minus 80 minutes.

One heavy cruiser (HMAS *Australia*) and four destroyers bombarded Yellow Beach and its flanks from H minus 80 to H minus 30 minutes, while two American light cruisers and six destroyers threw the weight of their fires on target areas east of the beach, including Kornasoren Drome. Four additional destroyers hit Yellow Beach and its right flank and four more fired on the left flank of the beach. Among the most important targets were low coral ridges immediately behind Kamiri Drome. Three destroyers stood by for call fire, and two others set course south along the west coast of Noemfoor to place harassing fire on Namber Drome and its environs.²⁶

The Allied Air Forces had been bombing Noemfoor and enemy air bases on the Vogelkop Peninsula for some days in preparation for the landing of the CYCLONE Task Force. On 1 July, 84 B-24's, 36 A-20's, and 12 B-25's were over the island, dropping

195 tons of bombs, while 22 P-38's glide-bombed Kamiri and Kornasoren Drome installations with 11 tons of 1,000-pound bombs. On D Day 33 B-24's, 6 B-25's, and 15 A-20's expended 108 tons of bombs and 32,000 rounds of ammunition in strafing runways. In addition, two squadrons of fighters were on air alert over the landing area to protect the assault shipping and drive off any Japanese planes which might appear. Immediately before the landing, air bombardment, like much of the naval gunfire, was directed against the low coral ridges and hills behind Kamiri Drome. It was believed that the most determined enemy opposition would come from positions in these ridges, and to neutralize these possible defenses the 33 B-24's, at approximately H minus 15 minutes, dropped 500-pound bombs along the ridge lines.

As this bombing ended, the first wave of troop-carrying LVT's began approaching the outer edge of the reef. About the same time, rocket-equipped LCI's launched almost 800 rockets into the immediate beachhead area, adding final touches to the bombardment. Automatic weapons aboard four LVT(A)'s of the Support Battery, 2d Engineer Special Brigade, accompanying the leading assault wave, kept up a steady fire on Yellow Beach as the troop-carrying LVT's, also manned by the Support Battery, clambered over the reef toward the beach.²⁷

The Assault

There was no opposition to the landing. The LVT's of the first wave, ashore on

²⁶ CTF 77 Noemfoor Opns Rpt, pp. 5-6, 9, 12.

²⁷ CTF 77 Noemfoor Opns Rpt, pp. 10, 12-13; CyTF Hist Rpt Noemfoor, p. 8; AAF SWPA, Int Sum 222, 5 Jul 44, in G-3 GHQ Jnl, 4 Jul 44; Ltr, Pvt Frank E. Burnside, 2d ESB photographer, to CG 2d ESB, no sub, 8 Jul 44, in G-3 GHQ Jnl, 2 Jul 44.

schedule at 0800, continued from the beach line across Kamiri Drome to the base of a coral ledge overlooking the field. There the assault riflemen of the 1st and 2d Battalions, 158th Infantry, dismounted, the 1st Battalion on the west and the 2d on the east. Subsequent waves of LVT's and DUKW's (the latter manned by the 464th Amphibian Truck Company) brought the rest of the two battalions ashore quickly. The troops assembled at the coral ridge and rapidly began advancing west, east, and south to extend the beachhead.

First resistance was encountered by the 2d Battalion about 500 yards from the eastern end of Kamiri Drome, when without warning about forty Japanese ran out of a cave in the ledge and began milling around in a rather aimless fashion. Showing no tendency either to surrender or to flee, the Japanese were killed by rifle fire or the automatic weapons of the Support Battery's LVT(A)'s. Beyond the area of this encounter, a number of lightly manned caves and prepared defenses were found. There was little organized resistance from these positions, but the 2d Battalion, advancing slowly, halted its attack to mop up each cave, dugout, and foxhole. These methodical operations were supported by the Support Battery LVT(A)'s, later joined by the 1st Platoon, 603d Tank Company. On the west flank the 1st Battalion, 158th Infantry, encountered less opposition and had no difficulty securing a low hill off the southwest end of Kamiri Drome. While part of the battalion cleared that hill, the rest of the unit pushed south from the airfield about 1,000 yards to the north bank of the Kamiri River.

Meanwhile the 3d Battalion, 158th Infantry, had come ashore. It marched rapidly westward after the 2d and joined the latter unit in the mopping-up operations along

the low, jungled, coral ridges at the east end of the airstrip. Upon the arrival of the 3d Battalion, most of the 2d turned south from the field toward the Kamiri River, meeting no opposition on its way over more ridges and through dense jungle to the north bank of the tidal stream. By 1600 hours the three infantry battalions had secured a rectangular area about 3,000 yards wide and some 800 deep, extending south to the banks of the Kamiri. It had been expected that the 158th Infantry would have moved some 1,800 yards farther east toward Kornasoren Drome on D Day, but progress had been delayed because the advance elements of the 2d and 3d Battalions had lost momentum as they stopped to mop up minor points of enemy resistance instead of leaving such defenses to follow-up forces.²⁸

While the assault battalions had been seizing the beachhead, the rest of the CYCLONE Task Force had been pouring ashore. The first seven landing waves, consisting almost entirely of LVT's and DUKW's, moved to the beach in good order, slowed only by the difficulty experienced by some DUKW's in negotiating the reef. The eighth wave, comprising four LCT's with the 1st Platoon, 603d Tank Company, aboard, followed the last DUKW wave to the outer edge of the reef where the tanks unloaded and lumbered ashore, reaching the beach by 0850. LCI's carrying the 3d Battalion and other nonassault elements of the 158th Infantry, closed on the reef about 0825. Some of the men debarked into water about waist-deep, but most of them waded ashore in less than a foot of water. Small rubber boats, inflated aboard the LCI's, were used by some

²⁸ CyTF G-3 Per Rpts, 23 Jun-31 Jul 44; CyTF Hist Rpt Noemfoor, pp. 9-10, 23; 158th Inf Opns Rpt Noemfoor, 22 Jun-31 Aug 44, pp. 1-2; CTF 77 Noemfoor Opns Rpt, p. 18.

troops to drag ashore heavy equipment such as ammunition and mortars. The debarkation of all elements of the 158th Infantry was completed by noon.

LCM's, carrying engineer equipment, trucks, and bulldozers, began coming up to the reef about 0815 and three hit the reef at full throttle to see if it could be jumped. This proving impossible, the LCM's unloaded their cargo at the reef edge. It had been planned to keep the LCM's clear of the approach lane until the LCT's had finished unloading. Somehow, orders to this effect had either gone astray or been misunderstood, and within fifteen minutes after the first LCM's hit the reef, the approach lane began to be clogged with these craft, jockeying for position with LCT's and LCI's. Crowded out, the LCM's moved west of the lane to an unmarked section of the reef. This proved a happy circumstance, for at the new area wheeled vehicles found a smoother reef crossing.

Nevertheless, during the first stages of the landing, practically all wheeled, nonamphibian vehicles, whether waterproofed or not, had to be towed over the reef by DUKW's, LVT's, tanks, or bulldozers. After H plus 2 hours, ebbing tide permitted most of the vehicles to move ashore under their own power without drowning out their engines. During the course of the landing, 6 trucks, 2 jeeps, and 5 small trailers were lost in pits in the reef. All but one truck and one trailer were later salvaged.

As soon as the assault waves were on the beach, naval demolition personnel began blasting operations along the outer edge of the reef so that LST's could move closer inshore, and the Shore Battalion, 593d Engineer Boat and Shore Regiment, began constructing temporary causeways over the

reef. Some vehicles aboard the LST's were set directly on the reef, but most of them were transshipped to the reef edge from the landing ships by LCM's. Bulk cargo aboard the LST's was manhandled into LVT's and DUKW's which returned from the beach for the express purpose of aiding unloading. The 27th Engineer Battalion was responsible for unloading three LST's and getting the cargo thereof ashore, and troops of the 6th Division handled most of the bulk cargo aboard the others. By a combination of all the foregoing methods, four LST's were completely unloaded on D Day and most of the cargo of the others had been sent ashore. The latter moved out to sea at dusk and returned on D plus 1 to complete unloading.

The 105-mm. howitzers of the 147th Field Artillery Battalion were brought ashore from LST's by DUKW's and were dropped into position on land by a few DUKW's which were especially equipped with A-frame cranes. The battalion was ashore and in position by 1100, ready to provide hasty support to the 158th Infantry; registration for more accurate fire was completed by 1145. Antiaircraft artillery units began coming ashore about 0810, and all were landed and set up to defend the beachhead by 1600.

The first sign of enemy countermeasures came about 0905, when Japanese mortar or 70-mm. artillery shells began falling in the beachhead area and on the coral reef beyond. Few casualties were suffered from this fire which, far from slowing the landing, probably did much to speed unloading. The enemy's shells set one DUKW afire and destroyed a truckload of ammunition. The fire continued intermittently for about two hours, despite efforts of naval support ves-



DUKW BURNING ON THE BEACH AT NOEMFOOR

sels and planes of the air umbrella to locate and destroy the Japanese weapons.²⁹

The Shore Battalion of the 593d Engineer Boat and Shore Regiment, the Naval Beach Party, and other elements of the Shore Party quickly organized the landing beach. Matting was laid on the beach so that wheeled vehicles could find traction, dispersal areas were located and cleared on the south side of Kamiri Drome, supplies

were sent off the beach to these dumps, shell holes were filled in, and Japanese supplies piled up out of the way. Some of the 27th Engineers participated in these Shore Party activities while other elements of the battalion moved inland with the infantrymen to supply flame thrower teams for mopping up operations. The rest of the battalion, working under the direction of Headquarters, No. 62 Works Wing, began repairs on Kamiri Drome, pending the arrival of the rest of the Australian engineer unit and American engineer aviation battalions.³⁰

²⁹ CTF 77 Noemfoor Opns Rpt, pp. 11-13, 15, 20; CyTF Hist Rpt Noemfoor, p. 9; 158th Inf Opns Rpt Noemfoor, 22 Jun-31 Aug 44, p. 2; 27th Engr Bn (C) Opns Rpt Noemfoor, p. 1; Maj Robert M. Luby, *op. cit.*; 593d EB&SR Opns Rpt Noemfoor, pp. 2-3, in binder entitled 3d ESB Opns Rpt, Jul 44.

³⁰ 27th Engr Bn (C), Opns Rpt Noemfoor, p. 2; 593d EB&SR Opns Rpt Noemfoor, pp. 3, 5; Noemfoor Opns Hist of No. 62 Airfield Construction

Despite extensive enemy defensive preparations in the Kamiri Drome area, the CYCLONE Task Force's losses on D Day were only 3 men killed (1 accidentally), 19 wounded, and 2 injured. This is a tribute to the heavy air and naval bombardment, which succeeded in driving most of the Japanese away from the beach or keeping those that remained pinned down as the assault waves moved ashore. The Japanese suffered much more heavily. About 115 were killed or found dead and 3 were captured.³¹

The CYCLONE Task Force had expected to meet about 3,000 of the enemy, most of whom were considered combat troops. By evening on D Day, the task force had put ashore over 7,000 men, nearly all of them, including the 3,300 of the 158th Infantry, classed as combat troops.³² So far, there had been no evidence of organized resistance and few Japanese had been located or observed. In the evening, however, General Patrick concluded that 3,500 to 4,500 Japanese combat troops were on Noemfoor and that the enemy garrison totaled about 5,000 men. This new estimate was apparently

Wing, p. 1. No. 62 Works Wing's designation was changed late in July to No. 62 Airfield Construction Wing.

³¹ CyTF G-3 Per Rpts, 23 Jun-31 Jul 44; 158th Inf Jnl and Jnl file, 22 Jun-31 Aug 44; 1st Bn 158th Inf, Rpt entitled: Oriental Obliteration—A Japanese Night Attack, covering the period 2-5 Jul 44, p. 1, filed with other 158th Inf materials concerning Noemfoor; 158th Inf Opns Rpt Noemfoor, 22 Jun-31 Aug 44, p. 2. Losses of the 158th Inf were 1 killed, 11 wounded, and 2 injured; the rest of the casualties were apparently suffered by 27th Engrs or 2d ESB units. Of the Japanese dead, it appears that not many more than 60 were killed by the 158th Inf.

³² ALAMO Force, G-2 Daily Rpt 200, 2 Jul 44, in ALAMO G-4 Jnl Noemfoor, 27 May-8 Jul 44; 158th Inf FO 1, 26 Jun 44, in 158th Inf Jnl file, 22 Jun-31 Aug 44; ALAMO Force FO 19, 21 Jun 44, in G-3 GHQ Jnl, 25 Jun 44.

based upon the evidence of a Japanese prisoner who had heard that 3,000 Japanese infantry reinforcements had arrived on Noemfoor about 25 June. The prisoner admittedly had not seen any of these troops and his information was either uncorroborated or flatly contradicted by two other prisoners and a recovered Javanese slave laborer.³³

Since little organized resistance had been encountered, plans for 3 July were to institute patrolling designed to locate the main body of Colonel Shimizu's *Noemfoor Detachment*. The 2d and 3d Battalions, 158th Infantry, were to continue eastward toward Kornasoren Drome. These units began moving at 0900 on the 3d. The 3d Battalion was temporarily delayed at a mine field which the 27th Engineers cleared, but advanced over 1,800 yards by late afternoon. A number of well-prepared defensive positions, situated both to defend the beach and prevent lateral movement between Kamiri and Kornasoren Dromes, were found, but none was manned by the Japanese. On the west flank the 1st Battalion patrolled south of the Kamiri River but located only a few enemy stragglers. By the day's end the 158th Infantry had lost only 2 men wounded and 1 injured, while 14 Japanese had been killed.³⁴

While the 158th Infantry had been expanding the beachhead, American paratroopers began to drop on Kamiri Drome

³³ Rads, CyTF to ALAMO, NF-248, NF-249, and NF-252, 2 Jul 44, in ALAMO G-3 Jnl Noemfoor, 30 Jun-3 Jul 44, and in CyTF Out-Msg file, 22 Jun-31 Aug 44. Where one file gave a garbled or incomplete version, the other was used as a check. The first of these radios was dispatched at 1859 and the last about 2030. They were received at ALAMO Force between 2355, 2 Jul, and 0455, 3 Jul.

³⁴ CyTF Hist Rpt Noemfoor, p. 11; 158th Inf Opns Rpt Noemfoor, 22 Jun-31 Aug 44, p. 2; CTF 77 Noemfoor Opns Rpt, pp. 15-16.

to reinforce the CYCLONE Task Force. This reinforcing operation was to have tragic results for the airborne soldiers.

Ordering the 503d Parachute Infantry Forward

One of the missions assigned to the CYCLONE Task Force had been to secure a suitable dropping ground for paratroopers. From study of maps and aerial photographs before the landing, General Patrick had decided that he would use Kamiri Drome if that field were found reasonably free of shell holes and other obstacles. Examination of the ground on the morning of the landing confirmed General Patrick's decision and at 1028, three minutes after he assumed command ashore, he radioed to General Krueger that Kamiri Drome was a satisfactory dropping ground.³⁵

At 1115 General Patrick dispatched another radio to General Krueger recommending that the 503d Parachute Infantry be sent forward to Noemfoor and dropped on Kamiri Drome. General Patrick gave the following reasons for requesting reinforcements: "... to guard against unknown situation as to enemy strength and to speed up operation on island."³⁶ This radio was decoded at ALAMO Force headquarters at 1410.³⁷ Twenty minutes later the 503d

Parachute Infantry received verbal instructions from ALAMO Force's advance headquarters at Hollandia to the effect that one battalion of the regiment was to drop on Noemfoor on 3 July and that the other two battalions would drop on the succeeding two days.³⁸

This drop plan meant that it would be midmorning of 5 July before all the 2,000-odd men of the 503d Parachute Infantry could reach Noemfoor. The other ALAMO Force Reserve for Noemfoor—the 34th Infantry, 24th Division, at Biak—was assembled on the beach at Biak Island on the afternoon of 30 June and could load for overwater movement to Noemfoor on less than twenty-four hours' notice. LCI's taking the 34th Infantry to Noemfoor could cover the 75–80 nautical miles from the beach at Mokmer Drome, Biak, to the reef off Kamiri Drome, Noemfoor, in not more than nine hours.³⁹ Figured from 1115 on 2 July, when General Patrick first asked for reinforcements, the 2,700 men of the 34th Infantry could have reached Noemfoor not later than 2000 hours on the 3d. By that time, in accordance with the air reinforcement plan, only one battalion of less than 750 men of the 503d Parachute Infantry would be on the island.

General Patrick's request for paratroop reinforcements and ALAMO Force's speedy acquiescence and subsequent orders to the 503d Parachute Infantry probably surprised no one. Apparently, the parachute

³⁵ CyTF Hist Rpt Noemfoor, p. 10; Ltr, Comdr CyTF to Comdr ALAMO Force, 7 Jul 44, no sub, in ALAMO G-3 Jnl Noemfoor, 31 Jul–6 Aug 44; Rad, CyTF to ALAMO, NF-223, 2 Jul 44, in ALAMO G-3 Jnl Noemfoor, 30 Jun–3 Jul 44. The letter of 7 July states that on D-Day morning a paratroop officer of the Canadian Army, who was an observer at Noemfoor, advised General Patrick that Kamiri Drome was a suitable dropping ground.

³⁶ Rad, CyTF to ALAMO, NF-228, 2 Jul 44, in ALAMO G-3 Jnl Noemfoor, 30 Jun–3 Jul 44.

³⁷ The time of decoding is from a notation on the copy of NF-228 in the ALAMO G-3 Jnl Noemfoor, 30 Jun–3 Jul 44.

³⁸ 503d Prcht Inf Opns Rdt Noemfoor, p. 2.

³⁹ Rad, ALAMO to CTF 77 and CTF 76, WF-1172, 28 Jun 44, and Rad, CTF 76 to ALAMO, 29 Jun 44, both in ALAMO G-2 Jnl Wakde-Biak, 16 Jun–10 Jul 44; Rad, ALAMO to HTF, WH-1426, 30 Jun 44; Rad, HTF to ALAMO, TD-1239, 30 Jun 44; Memo, Asst ACofS G-3 ALAMO to ACofS G-3 ALAMO, 30 Jun 44, sub: Proposed Plans for Reinforcement of CYCLONE Task Force. Last three docs in ALAMO G-3 Jnl Noemfoor, 30 Jun–3 Jul 44.

unit was to have been sent to Noemfoor unless General Patrick was strongly opposed to its movement; only the 1115 radio from the CYCLONE Task Force was awaited before the machinery for the movement started. In fact, the 503d Parachute Infantry had known at least as early as 1615 on 1 July—the day before D Day—that one battalion of the regiment was to drop on Noemfoor on 3 July. Orders to that effect had been sent to the regimental command post at Hollandia during the afternoon of 1 July by the ALAMO Force G-3 section.⁴⁰ The only alteration in plans made necessary by the receipt of jump orders at 1430 on 2 July was to change the dropping ground. The 503d had expected to jump at Kornasoren Drome, but now it had to restudy available information in preparation for the drop on Kamiri Drome.⁴¹

*The 503d Parachute Infantry
Drops at Noemfoor*

About 0515 on 3 July regimental headquarters and the 1st Battalion, 503d Parachute Infantry, began loading at Cyclops Drome, Hollandia, on thirty-eight C-47's of the 54th Troop Carrier Wing, Fifth Air Force. At the same time, three B-17's, from which supplies and ammunition were to be dropped on Kamiri Drome, were loaded. The first C-47 took off from Cyclops Drome at 0630, and by 0747 all forty-one planes were in the air. The commanding officer of the parachute regiment, Col. George M. Jones, and most of his staff were in the lead C-47. The planes were to fly over Kamiri Drome in flights of two each, the first plane

at a height of 400 feet and the second echeloned slightly to the right rear at 450 feet. Subsequent flights were to follow at a distance of 300 yards.⁴²

About 0600 on the 3d, almost twenty hours after he had been advised on the point by a paratroop officer, General Patrick radioed to ALAMO Force that it would be wise if the C-47's flew over Kamiri Drome in single file.⁴³ He made this recommendation because he feared that the falling paratroopers might suffer casualties if they landed on obstacles along the sides of the narrow airfield, which comprised a 250 by 5,500-foot cleared area and a 100-foot-wide runway. The radio was received at Headquarters, ALAMO Force, about 0740 but apparently was not delivered to the G-3 Section until 0915. Sometime between 0740 and 0915 the radio was passed to Headquarters, Fifth Air Force, by the ALAMO Force message center.⁴⁴ By then, the troop-carry-

⁴⁰ 503d Precht Inf Jnl, 29 Jun-29 Aug 44; 503d Precht Inf Opns Rpt Noemfoor, p. 2; 5thAF OI 3, 22 Jun 44, in G-3 GHQ Jnl, 25 Jun 44; Noemfoor Air Plan, atchd to CyTF Hist Rpt Noemfoor; 503d Precht Inf FO 1, 28 Jun 44, in 503d Precht Inf S-3 Rpt Noemfoor; Ltr, Col Jones to Gen Ward, 22 Nov 50, in OCMH files.

⁴¹ Rad, CyTF to ALAMO (for 5th AF), NF-253, 3 Jul 44, in ALAMO G-3 Jnl Noemfoor, 30 Jun-3 Jul 44 and in CyTF In-Msg file, 22 Jun-10 Jul 44; Ltr, Comdr CyTF to Comdr ALAMO, 7 Jul 44, no sub, in ALAMO G-3 Noemfoor, 31 Jul-6 Aug 44. According to the CyTF In-Msg file, NF-253 originated at 0600, but the ALAMO Force G-3 Jnl notation says it originated at 0603. In the letter of 7 July, the CyTF commander stated that at midmorning of 2 July the Canadian Army paratroop officer advised him that the troop-carrying aircraft should fly over Kamiri Drome in single file.

⁴² Rad, CyTF to ALAMO (for 5th AF), NF-253, 3 Jul 44, in ALAMO G-3 Jnl Noemfoor, 30 Jun-3 Jul 44. A penciled notation on the ALAMO Force G-3 Jnl copy of this radio states: "Passed by Msg Ctr to 5thAF," but no time is given for this passing. The time of receipt of the radio at the ALAMO Force G-3 Sec is noted on the index sheet to the ALAMO G-3 Jnl Noemfoor, 30 Jun-3 Jul 44. The dimensions of

⁴⁰ Entry timed 1615, 1 Jul 44, in 503d Precht Inf Jnl, 29 Jun-29 Aug 44.

⁴¹ 503d Precht Inf FO 1, 28 Jun 44, in 503d Precht Inf S-3 Rpt Noemfoor.

ing planes were airborne and well on their way to Noemfoor.

No attempt seems to have been made to establish radio contact with the 54th Troop Carrier Wing's C-47's to effect the desired change in formation. Whether such an eleventh-hour alteration could have been made is a difficult question. Last-minute attempts to change plans might have created confusion which could have delayed or postponed the parachute drop. Moreover, the radio traffic necessary to effect the change might have brought every Japanese plane within range of Noemfoor over that island. In any case, no change in formation was made, and the thirty-eight C-47's flew into sight of Kamiri Drome about 1000. Ten minutes later, the 'troopers from the leading C-47 were on the ground, followed closely by the men in the neighboring plane.

Contrary to plans, the first two C-47's flew over the strip at a height of about 175 feet, and the next eight planes all flew below 400 feet. Dropping from this low altitude caused the paratroopers in the first ten C-47's to suffer many casualties; more casualties resulted because the planes flew over the strip two abreast. The broad formation caused many 'troopers to land off the southern edge of the 100-foot-wide runway in an area where Allied vehicles, bulldozers, supply dumps, and wrecked Japanese aircraft were located. Additional hazards beyond the cleared area were jagged tree stumps, trees partially destroyed by pre-assault air and naval bombardments, and a number of anti-aircraft gun emplacements. Altogether, there were 72 casualties among the 739 men who dropped on 3 July. Included in this number—a rate of almost 10

percent—were 31 severe fracture cases, most of whom would never again be able to make a parachute jump.⁴⁵

The first reports of the 3 July jump received by ALAMO Force stated that there had been only 1 percent casualties during the drop.⁴⁶ Later information, received at Hollandia about 0200 on the 4th, raised that rate to 6.7 percent.⁴⁷ But even before these reports began to filter back to Hollandia, the 503d Parachute Infantry was informed that another battalion was to drop on 4 July.⁴⁸ In preparation for this second jump, General Krueger instructed General Patrick to make sure that the edges of Kamiri Drome were clear of vehicles and the 54th Troop Carrier Wing was ordered to fly its C-47's in single file over the airfield.⁴⁹

⁴⁵ 503d Pchtf Inf Opns Rpt Noemfoor, p. 2; 503d Pchtf Inf Jnl, 29 Jun–29 Aug 44; Rad, CyTF to ALAMO, NF-275, 3 Jul 44, in CyTF In-Msg file, 22 Jun–10 Jul 44; Rpt, Board of Officers to Comdr CyTF, 7 Jul 44, sub: Report of Investigation by Board of Officers on Casualties Resulting from Parachute Drops on 3–4 Jul 1944, in ALAMO G-3 Jnl Noemfoor, 10–16 Jul 44; Ltr, Jones to Ward, 22 Nov 50. The Board of Officers comprised Lt Col John J. Tolson (Inf), Executive Officer of the 503d Parachute Infantry, acting as president of the board; Lt Col Francis L. DePasquale (MC), of Headquarters, Cyclone Task Force; and Maj Franklin E. Carpenter (FA), of Headquarters, Sixth Army (ALAMO Force). The board was convened on 7 Jul by CyTF SO 4, 7 Jul 44.

⁴⁶ Rad, CyTF to ALAMO, NF-265, 3 Jul 44, in ALAMO G-3 Jnl Noemfoor, 30 Jun–3 Jul 44.

⁴⁷ Rad, CyTF to ALAMO, NF-275, 3 Jul 44, in CyTF In-Msg file, 22 Jun–10 Jul 44 and in ALAMO G-3 Jnl Noemfoor, 4–6 Jul 44. Time of receipt stated in the text is taken from the copy of NF-275 in the ALAMO Force Journal.

⁴⁸ 503d Pchtf Inf Jnl, 29 Jun–29 Aug 44; Rads, ALAMO to CyTF, 5thAF, TF 77, *et al.*, WH-424 and WH-425, 3 Jul 44, in ALAMO G-3 Jnl Noemfoor, 30 Jun–3 Jul 44.

⁴⁹ Rad, CyTF to ALAMO, NF-275, 3 Jul 44, in CyTF In-Msg file, 22 Jun–10 Jul 44; Bd of Off Rpt to Comdr CyTF, 7 Jul 44; Rad, ALAMO to CyTF and 5thAF, WH-426, 3 Jul 44, in CyTF In-Msg file, 22 Jun–10 Jul 44.

Kamiri Drome are from ALAMO Force, G-2 Photo Int Sec, Rpt 135, 13 Jun 44, in ALAMO G-3 Jnl Noemfoor, 6–19 Jun 44.

At 0955 on the 4th the 3d Battalion, 503d Parachute Infantry, and the rest of regimental headquarters began dropping on Kamiri Drome; by 1025 the 685 men of this echelon were on the ground. This time all the C-47's flew at a height of at least 400 feet in single file formation, and, although the flight pattern of five to seven planes was not entirely satisfactory, nearly all the 'troopers landed on the airstrip.⁵⁰

Even with the new precautions there were 56 jump casualties, a rate of over 8 percent. Most of the injuries on the second drop were attributed to the hard coral surface of Kamiri Drome, on which considerable grading, rolling, and packing had been accomplished since the morning of 3 July. So far, 1,424 officers and men of the 503d Parachute Infantry had dropped at Noemfoor. There had been 128 jump casualties, a final rate of 8.98 percent, among them 59 serious fracture cases. There had been no casualties from enemy action. The parachute regiment had lost the services of one battalion commander, three company commanders, the regimental communications officer, and a number of key noncommissioned officers.⁵¹

Colonel Jones, the regimental commander, considered that injuries had been excessive on both the 3d and 4th of July, and he therefore requested General Patrick to arrange for water shipment of the remaining battalion.⁵² The task force commander agreed that no more drops should

be attempted, but he suggested to ALAMO Force that the remainder of the regiment be brought forward by air as soon as Kamiri Drome was sufficiently repaired to receive C-47's. With these recommendations, General Krueger agreed.⁵³ However, torrential rains and a shortage of heavy equipment at Noemfoor combined to keep the airfield inoperational longer than had been expected. Finally the 2d Battalion, 503d Parachute Infantry, was flown from Hollandia to Mokmer Drome on Biak. Disembarking from C-47's at Mokmer, the 'troopers moved aboard LCI's for the trip to Noemfoor, which they reached on 11 July.⁵⁴

The Occupation of Noemfoor Island

Possibly the only valuable result of the parachute drop was that mopping-up operations on Noemfoor could begin sooner than might otherwise have been possible. The 1st Battalion, 503d Parachute Infantry, upon its arrival on 3 July, assumed responsibility for about 2,000 yards in the center of the defenses around Kamiri Drome, thus permitting the 2d and 3d Battalions, 158th Infantry, to concentrate at the eastern end of the field and extend the perimeter. The 3d Battalion, 503d Parachute Infantry, when it landed on 4 July, relieved elements of the 3d Battalion, 158th Infantry, as the latter unit pushed east to Kornasoren Drome.⁵⁵

⁵⁰ Bd of Off Rpt to Comdr CyTF, 7 Jul 44; 503d Prcht Inf Jnl, 29 Jun-29 Aug 44; 503d Prcht Inf Opns Rpt Noemfoor, p. 2; Rads, CyTF to ALAMO, NF-291 and NF-302, 4 Jul 44, in ALAMO G-3 Jnl Noemfoor, 4-6 Jul 44.

⁵¹ Bd of Off Rpt to Comdr CyTF, 7 Jul 44; ALAMO Force Opns Rpt Noemfoor, p. 11.

⁵² Rad, CyTF to ALAMO (CO 503d Prcht Inf to Rear Ech, 503d Prcht Inf), NF-307, 4 Jul 44, in ALAMO G-3 Jnl Noemfoor, 4-6 Jul 44.

⁵³ Rad, CyTF to ALAMO, NF-302, 4 Jul 44, and Rad, ALAMO to CyTF, WH-618, 5 Jul 44, both in CyTF In-Msg file, 22 Jun-10 Jul 44.

⁵⁴ 503d Prcht Inf Jnl, 29 Jun-29 Aug 44; Rad, CyTF to ALAMO and 5thAF, NF-399, in CyTF G-3 Jnl, 30 Jun-6 Jul 44; Rad, ALAMO to HTF, WH-1023, 7 Jul 44, in ALAMO G-3 Jnl Noemfoor, 6-10 Jul 44; ALAMO Force Opns Rpt Noemfoor, p. 11.

⁵⁵ 503d Prcht Inf Opns Rpt Noemfoor, p. 2; CyTF G-3 Jnl, 30 Jun-6 Jul 44.

Hill 201

The 3d Battalion, 158th Infantry, moving eastward along the coastal road, encountered no opposition on 4 July.⁵⁶ The battalion found a number of well-prepared, but abandoned, enemy defensive positions along both sides of the road, and the entire area around Kornasoren Drome and the village of Kornasoren was discovered to be mined in a haphazard fashion, principally with 200-pound aerial bombs, many of which were incompletely buried. The infantry unit had little difficulty picking its way through the mine fields, which the engineers rapidly cleared. At evening on the 4th, the battalion dug in at the eastern end of Kornasoren Drome. Meanwhile the 1st Battalion (less Company A) had crossed the Kamiri River by LVT and LCM and occupied Kamiri village without opposition. Out of Kamiri, the battalion followed a road leading southeast to a large Japanese garden area 1,700 yards distant. The battalion's leading elements began approaching a terrain feature designated Hill 201, in the western section of the garden area, about 1330. So far, only scattered rifle fire had opposed the march from Kamiri village.

The Japanese garden area was about 600 yards long, east and west, and 350 yards across, north to south. The ground was devoid of large trees except for a few atop Hill 201, but thick, secondary jungle growth covered the eastern and southern slopes of the hill, while the rest of the garden area was overgrown with partially cultivated papaya,

taro, and cassava, all averaging about eight feet in height. The trail from Kamiri village passed over the southern slope of Hill 201, and 300 yards away, near the eastern edge of the gardens, joined the main road from Kamiri Drome to Namber Drome, located about six miles to the south. Another trail ran along the eastern side of the hill, branching to the north and northwest at the northeastern corner of the low terrain feature.

As the 1st Battalion approached the western side of Hill 201, a small group of Japanese, heavily armed and carrying packs, was seen hurrying south along the main road below the hill. Fearing that Hill 201 might be occupied in some force, the battalion commander halted the advance and prepared a double envelopment, to be supported by heavy machine guns from positions west of the hill and south of the Kamiri-garden trail. First, Company C seized a knoll called Hill 180, lying 300 yards north of the gardens. Then Company B surprised a Japanese platoon in a mangrove swamp at the southwest corner of the garden area and pushed the Japanese southeast over Mission Hill, a low terrain feature lying east of the main road and southeast of Hill 201. With the ground on both flanks of Hill 201 secured, the battalion, at 1515, began concentrating around the hilltop for the night, setting up a tight defensive perimeter.

Company C protected the northern and eastern slopes; Company B was on the south and southeast; and Company D, together with battalion headquarters and headquarters company, dug in along the western slope. One heavy machine gun was sighted to cover a trail leading up the southern slope of the hill from the mangrove swamp, and a section of heavies was emplaced to fire on the main road and Hill 170, 600 yards east

⁵⁶ This subsection is based principally on: CyTF Hist Rpt Noemfoor, pp. 11-12; 158th Inf Opns Rpt Noemfoor, 22 Jun-31 Aug 44, p. 3; 1st Bn 158th Inf, Oriental Obliteration Rpt, pp. 2-10; CyTF G-3 Jnl, 30 Jun-6 Jul 44; CyTF G-3 Per Rpts, 23 Jun-31 Jul 44; 158th Inf Jnl and Jnl file, 22 Jun-31 Aug 44.

of Hill 201. Company D's 81-mm. mortars registered on the edge of the mangrove swamp and on the trail to Kamiri at the point at which that trail entered the garden area. Three guns of an attached platoon of 4.2-inch mortars (641st Tank Destroyer Battalion) registered on the eastern slopes of Hill 180, on a trail leading north past that hill, and on a target area on the main road to Kamiri Drome at the point where the road entered the north edge of the garden. A battery of the 147th Field Artillery Battalion's 105-mm. howitzers, emplaced near Kamiri Drome, registered along the main road through the gardens, on the west side of Hill 170, and on Mission Hill, where the main road left the garden area. By 1800, with the accompanying hazard of occasional rifle fire from hidden Japanese, all defensive preparations were completed. Moonset was at 0500 on the 5th, and the battalion commander called his men's attention to the danger of a Japanese attack between that hour and first light. The warning was well taken.

About 0430 a few Japanese were heard moving around at the northeast edge of the perimeter. Near the same time, more enemy approached Hill 201 from Mission Hill and through the mangrove swamp south of the perimeter. At 0520, without the warning of preparatory fire, Japanese infantry began pressing forward all along the southern and southeastern sides of the perimeter. As the attack started, some enemy light mortars began firing, but all the shells from these weapons landed about 200 yards west of Hill 201. As soon as the enemy attack began, the 1st Battalion requested that the prearranged artillery and mortar concentrations be fired. The battalion's 81-mm. mortars immediately began throwing shells into the mangrove swamp and along the trail ap-

proaching Hill 201 from the south. Cries of wounded or dying Japanese attested to the effectiveness of these fires, and the enemy was driven off the trail into the second-growth jungle and overgrown gardens. Now, two Japanese light machine guns opened up, one from the western slope of Hill 170 and another from Mission Hill. Both these weapons were firing from positions on which the 147th Field Artillery Battalion had previously registered. They were quickly put out of action.

Some Japanese managed to get through the mortar and artillery barrages and continued up the sides of the trail from the south through fire from Company D's machine guns. The enemy found cover behind a low, 150-yard-long log fence which led from the southeast toward the center of the 1st Battalion's defenses. While the fence afforded some protection, the attacking infantrymen were silhouetted as they tried to clamber over the top. The main body of the attacking force therefore kept down behind the fence, trying to crawl along it to the top of the hill. But the fence did not extend beyond the 1st Battalion's outer defenses and the attackers soon found themselves debouching into steady machine gun and rifle fire from the defenders atop the hill. The attack soon degenerated into a series of small suicide charges by groups of three to six Japanese, all of whom were cut down as they tried to climb the fence or move beyond its end. By 0630 the last enemy efforts had ceased and all firing had stopped.

The 1st Battalion now sent patrols out over the battlefield. From prisoners it was determined that the attacking force had consisted of 350 to 400 men—the *10th* and *12th Companies*, *219th Infantry*, reinforced by approximately 150 armed Formosan laborers. During the morning over 200 dead

Japanese were counted around the 1st Battalion's perimeter, and the number of enemy dead found or enemy wounded captured on subsequent days along trails leading south from the hill indicated that virtually the entire original attacking force had been annihilated.

Mopping Up

At Hill 201, the *Noemfoor Detachment* made its only significant offensive effort, and after that affair operations on Noemfoor evolved into a series of patrol actions as the Allied forces extended their control over the island and rapidly expanded the airdrome facilities.⁵⁷ On 5 July, the 1st Battalion, 158th Infantry, mopped up the garden area, while the 3d Battalion patrolled in northeastern Noemfoor, finding no Japanese. The 2d Battalion, relieved at Kamiri Drome by the 3d Battalion, 503d Parachute Infantry, started preparing for an amphibious landing at Namber Drome, on the southwest coast.

This operation got under way about 0900 on 6 July. LCM's of Company A, 543d Engineer Boat and Shore Regiment, moved the 2d Battalion, 158th Infantry, from Kamiri Drome to the north side of Roemboi Bay, at the lower end of Namber Drome. The Support Battery, 2d Engineer Special Brigade, covered the landing with anti-aircraft boats, and three destroyers and a rocket-equipped LCI were also on hand. Following a short naval bombardment,

which was accompanied by bombing and strafing by six B-25's, the 2d Battalion poured ashore without opposition. Namber Drome was secured by 1240, not a shot having been fired by the 2d Battalion and not a single casualty having been suffered. Fifteen minutes after Namber Drome was taken, a liaison plane of the 147th Field Artillery Battalion landed on the strip.

From 7 through 10 July vigorous patrolling by all elements of the CYCLONE Task Force was continued, but only small Japanese parties were encountered. The conclusion was therefore reached that no organized large enemy force remained on Noemfoor and that future operations would consist of hunting down small enemy groups. For the latter purpose, it was decided to divide the island into two parts, making the 503d Parachute Infantry responsible for the southern section and the 158th Infantry for the northern.

Regrouping of units according to this plan started on 11 July, when the 2d Battalion, 503d Parachute Infantry, reached Namber Drome from Biak, via LCI's. During the next day or so the 158th Infantry reconcentrated in northern Noemfoor. The regiment's activity to 31 August was confined to extensive patrolling, which produced contacts only with small groups of enemy stragglers. To the end of August the regiment killed 611 Japanese, captured 179, and liberated 209 Javanese slave laborers. During its operations on Noemfoor, the 158th Infantry lost 6 men killed and 41 wounded.

To the 503d Parachute Infantry fell the task of mopping up the remnants of the *Noemfoor Detachment*, which, after the abortive attack at Hill 201, concentrated in southern Noemfoor. The largest organized group of Japanese (400-500 strong)

⁵⁷ Information in this subsection is from: CyTF FO 3, 5 Jul 44, in CyTF G-3 Jnl, 30 Jun-6 Jul 44; CyTF G-3 Per Rpts, 23 Jun-31 Jul and 31 Jul-31 Aug 44; CyTF G-3 Jnls, 7-10, 11-14, and 14-17 Jul 44; CyTF Hist Rpt Noemfoor, pp. 12-16; 158th Inf Opns Rpt Noemfoor, 22 Jun-31 Aug 44, pp. 3-5; 503d Prcht Inf Opns Rpt Noemfoor, pp. 3-4; 503d Prcht Inf S-3 Rpt, Noemfoor, n. p.; 2d Bn 503d Prcht Inf Opns Rpt Noemfoor, pp. 1-3.

gathered under Colonel Shimizu's command at Hill 670, in the west-central part of the island about three miles northeast of Namber Drome. The 1st Battalion, 503d Parachute Infantry, made contact with this enemy group on 13 July. Finally reaching the top of Hill 670 on the morning of the 16th, the 'troopers found that the Japanese had evacuated the hill the previous night. Contact with the main body of Colonel Shimizu's force was lost until 23 July, when patrols of the 2d Battalion, 503d Parachute Infantry, located the group about four miles northwest of Inasi, a native village on the shore of the lagoon which cuts into Noemfoor's eastern coast.⁵⁸ Contact was again lost on the 25th and not regained until 10 August, when the main Japanese force was found near Hill 380, two and a half miles south-southwest of Inasi. From the 10th through the 15th, the 3d Battalion, 503d Parachute Infantry, supported by the 147th Field Artillery Battalion and a few B-25's of the 309th Bomb Wing, converged on Hill 380. At the same time, elements of the 1st Battalion moved toward the hill from Menoekwari South to prevent enemy escape. Though boxed in by the bulk of five companies of the 503d Parachute Infantry, Colonel Shimizu, during the night of 15-16 August, slipped through the cordon around Hill 380 and withdrew his remaining force, now not much over 200 men strong, south-

southwest toward Pakriki, on the south-central coast.

Colonel Shimizu's party was not again located until 17 August, when two brisk engagements resulted in the capture or destruction of the last machine guns left to the *Noemfoor Detachment* and broke the last organized resistance. At least 20 Japanese were killed, bringing to 342 the total of Japanese killed in the series of actions southwest from Inasi to Pakriki during the period 10 through 17 August. In the same week, 43 Japanese were captured. Colonel Shimizu was not among those killed or captured, and was at large at the end of the month.

On 23 August the 503d Parachute Infantry, less three companies, began concentrating at a new camp near Kamiri Drome. The three companies, which had been left in the southern part of the island to continue patrolling, were finally relieved on the 27th by elements of the 1st Battalion, 158th Infantry. According to one report, the last paratroopers left the southern section of Noemfoor with some regrets:

As the troops left the area in which they had chased SHIMIZU so relentlessly, their disappointment was not so much at their failure to apprehend SHIMIZU the man, nor even to capture the regimental colors of the 219th Infantry. It was rather that they missed their chance of retrieving the colonel's 300 year old saber which prisoners said he still carried when last seen near PAKRIKI. When the operation officially closed on 31 August this same saber was still inducing the most vigorous patrolling by the 1st Battalion, 158th Infantry.⁵⁹

By 31 August, when General Krueger declared the Noemfoor operation over, the CYCLONE Task Force had lost 63 men killed,

⁵⁸ For heroic action and signal leadership on 23 July, Sgt. Ray E. Eubanks, a squad leader of Company D, 503d Parachute Infantry (Company D was in the 2d Battalion), was awarded the Congressional Medal of Honor. Leading his squad to the relief of a platoon isolated by the Japanese, Sgt. Eubanks was wounded and his rifle rendered useless by Japanese fire. He continued to lead his squad forward, using his rifle as a club. By this means he killed four more Japanese before he himself was again hit and killed.

⁵⁹ CyTF Hist Rpt Noemfoor, p. 16. There is no indication in available records that either Shimizu or his saber was ever found.

343 wounded, and 3 missing. Approximately 1,730 Japanese had been killed and 186 were captured. Most of the Allied casualties were suffered by the 503d Parachute Infantry during its clashes with the *Noemfoor Detachment* in southern Noemfoor after 11 July, and the regiment can claim credit for killing about 1,000 Japanese. In addition to the Japanese losses, 1 Korean, 1 Chinese, and 552 Formosan prisoners of war were taken. Finally, 403 Javanese slave laborers were recovered on the island.⁶⁰

Base Development on Noemfoor

Civil Affairs and Atrocities

For the purpose of supervising the civil population of Noemfoor, a Netherlands Indies Civil Administration (NICA) Detachment was attached to the CYCLONE Task Force, just as NICA parties had been attached to previous Allied task forces operations in Dutch New Guinea.⁶¹ Initially, the Noemfoor NICA Detachment consisted of 4 officers and 35 enlisted men, but it was later augmented by 10 local policemen recovered on the island. The detachment assisted in obtaining intelligence information, recruited and supervised native labor, and administered the native population. Only 400 of the total native population of some 5,000 were ever used as laborers, the rest

being either women or children or men too old or too ill to work.

The Japanese had never brought the Melanesians of Noemfoor entirely under their control, for the natives had either offered a passive resistance or had faded into the interior to live off the land. A few were impressed into service by the Japanese, while others who were captured but still refused to co-operate were executed. The natives greeted the Allied landings with great enthusiasm and came out of hideaways in the hills carrying Dutch flags which they had concealed from the Japanese. Under the direction of NICA, the natives were gradually resettled in their old villages, where they were protected by CYCLONE Task Force outposts. Late in July the village chiefs gathered in formal council and officially declared war on the Japanese. Thereafter, native co-operation increased. Up to 31 August the natives had captured and brought to Allied outposts more than fifty Japanese and had killed an equal number.

One tale of horror concerns the Javanese on Noemfoor. According to information gathered by the NICA Detachment, over 3,000 Indonesians were shipped to Noemfoor in late 1943, mostly from Soerabaja and other large cities on Java. The shipment included many women, children, and teen-aged boys. The Japanese, without regard to age or sex, put the Javanese to work constructing roads and airfields almost entirely by hand. Little or no clothing, shoes, bedding, or shelter was provided, and the Javanese had to supplement their very inadequate allowance of rations by shifting for themselves. Driven by hunger, many attempted to steal Japanese rations but for their pains were beheaded or hung by their hands or feet until dead. Starvation and disease (the Japanese provided no medical

⁶⁰ CyTF G-3 Per Rpts, 31 Jul-31 Aug 44; ALAMO Force Opns Rpt Noemfoor, p. 19; CyTF Hist Rpt Noemfoor, pp. 16-17.

⁶¹ This subsection is based principally on: ALAMO Force Opns Rpt Noemfoor, p. 19; CyTF Hist Rpt Noemfoor, pp. 21-22. Specific evidence concerning atrocities (in addition to the general outlines provided by the foregoing documents) is to be found in messages and other documents in the G-3 Journals of ALAMO Force and the CYCLONE Task Force, as well as in the journals of the 503d Parachute and 158th Infantry Regiments.

care) took a steadily increasing toll. The dead were periodically collected for mass burial, and survivors alleged that many of the sick were buried alive. It was considered probable that not more than ten or fifteen Javanese were killed accidentally by Allied forces. Yet only 403 of the 3,000-odd brought from Java were found alive on Noemfoor by 31 August. The physical condition of these survivors almost defied description—most of the others had succumbed to Japanese brutality within a period of eight months.

The story of Formosan labor troops brought to Noemfoor, ostensibly as part of the Japanese armed forces, is also tragic. Originally the Formosans had numbered about 900 men. They had been worked for months on airfield and road construction, on half the ration of rice issued to the regular Japanese troops. When they collapsed from exhaustion or hunger, or became victims of tropical diseases, they were herded into what the Japanese euphemistically called a labor convalescent camp, actually a sort of prison stockade into which the Formosans were placed to die. There, their rations were again cut in half, and the shelter and blankets provided covered but a fraction of the inmates. Medical care was given only to the worse cases, and then was inadequate. Upon the arrival of Allied forces on Noemfoor, most of the remaining Formosans were rounded up, armed, and forced to fight. But these attempts at compulsion were fruitless. Over 550 Formosans voluntarily surrendered to the Allies, more than half of them suffering from starvation and tropical diseases. Not more than twenty had been killed by Allied action, but about 300 had died before 2 July.

To complete the story of the dire straits to which the Japanese on Noemfoor had

been reduced, it is necessary to tell of cannibalism. About 1 August CYCLONE Task Force patrols began to discover Japanese bodies from which portions of flesh had been cut. Initially, this was not considered direct evidence of cannibalism, although increasing numbers of bodies with fleshy portions removed were later found. Finally, some American dead, left outside defensive positions overnight, were discovered in like condition. The prisoners began to report that cannibalism had been generally practiced since 1 August, principally on freshly-killed Formosans. Some prisoners admitted eating human flesh themselves. In at least one instance a two-day-old cadaver had been used for food.

Construction and Unloading

Airfield construction on Noemfoor Island began on D Day, 2 July, when elements of the 27th Engineers used improvised drags and rollers rigged behind six-by-six trucks to start grading Kamiri Drome. This work continued until the afternoon of 4 July when, in the opinion of the task force engineer, Group Captain Dale, the strip was ready to receive a few aircraft. But because of bad weather and existing plans for parachute drops, no planes used the strip until the afternoon of 6 July, when an Australian P-40 squadron landed to remain for future operations.⁶²

It was not until 16 July that sufficient facilities were completed at Kamiri Drome to accommodate an entire fighter group. Ultimately, the 1874th Engineer Aviation Battalion and No. 5 Mobile Works Squad-

⁶² 27th Engrs Opns Rpt Noemfoor, p. 2; ALAMO Force Opns Rpt Noemfoor, p. 13; Rad, CyTF to ALAMO, NF-454, 7 Jul 44, in ALAMO G-3 Jnl Noemfoor, 6-10 Jul 44.

ron of No. 62 Works Wing extended the Kamiri runway to 5,400 feet. Sufficient taxiways and aircraft dispersal facilities for the two groups of fighters were also completed. All except maintenance work on the field was finished on 9 September.⁶³

At first, it had been planned to improve Namber Drome, and some work started there immediately after the field was secured. But Group Captain Dale, finding the site rough and badly graded, recommended that Namber be abandoned in favor of Kornasoren, although he realized that this would increase construction needs at the latter field. General Krueger approved the new plan and preliminary surveys were immediately begun at Kornasoren. Plans were made to construct there two parallel runways 7,000 feet long, with correspondingly large taxiways and dispersal areas.⁶⁴

On 14 July, General MacArthur directed that by 25 July minimum facilities would have to be prepared at Kornasoren Drome to accommodate fifty P-38's in order to provide additional air cover for the impending invasion of the Vogelkop Peninsula. Except for continuing work at Kamiri Drome, all remaining engineer units, all available heavy equipment, all service troops who could possibly be spared from ship unloading, all available native labor, and large numbers of combat troops were concentrated at Kornasoren Drome to complete the necessary new construction on schedule. For ten days all hands worked around the clock and by 1200 on 25 July had completed

a 6,000-foot-long strip which, with associated dispersal facilities, could accommodate one fighter group. Two days later this strip was extended to 7,000 feet, and the second 7,000-foot runway was completed on 2 September.⁶⁵

Ultimately, Allied aircraft based on Noemfoor supported not only operations on that island but also the invasions of the Vogelkop Peninsula and Morotai Island. Soon after Kornasoren Drome was completed, B-24's began flying from the field to conduct the first large-scale bombing attacks on Japanese sources of petroleum products at Balikpapan, Borneo.⁶⁶

Ship unloading operations at Noemfoor were hampered by the surrounding reefs, but gradually, by the construction of jetties or temporary ramps and by extensive demolitions at the outer edges of the reefs, the difficulties attending supply operations were reduced. Service troops and native labor were both inadequate at Noemfoor, and throughout the operation a daily average of some 600 combat troops had to be used for ship unloading, while others were used on various construction projects.⁶⁷

⁶³ Rad, GHQ SWPA to ALAMO, 5thAF, and USASOS, CX-14883, 14 Jul 44, and Rad, ALAMO to CyTF, WH-2255, 15 Jul 44, both in ALAMO G-3 Jnl Noemfoor, 10-16 Jul 44; CyTF Hist Rpt Noemfoor, p. 20; ALAMO Force Opns Rpt Noemfoor, pp. 15-16.

⁶⁴ 27th Engr Constr Bn [a redesignation of 27th Engr Bn (C)], "Going Hard: History of Overseas War Service of 27th Engineer Construction Battalion," Dec 43-Oct 45, p. 17. The heavily loaded B-24's (of the Thirteenth Air Force) were unable to take off until high trees on the approaches to Kornasoren Drome were cleared by the 161st Parachute Engineer Company, which had recently arrived at Noemfoor to form part of the 503d Parachute Regimental Combat Team, then being organized around the 503d Parachute Infantry Regiment. Ltr, Jones to Ward, 22 Nov 50.

⁶⁵ CyTF Hist Rpt Noemfoor, pp. 19-20; 27th Engr Constr Bn, "Going Hard . . .," pp. 14-17.

⁶⁶ ALAMO Force Opns Rpt Noemfoor, p. 15; No. 62 Airfield Constr Wing Noemfoor Opns Hist, p. 1.

⁶⁷ CyTF Hist Rpt Noemfoor, p. 20; ALAMO Force Opns Rpt Noemfoor, pp. 13, 15-16; Rad, CyTF to ALAMO, NF-669, 12 Jul 44, and Rad, CyTF to ALAMO, NF-680, 13 Jul 44, last two in ALAMO G-3 Jnl Noemfoor, 10-16 Jul 44.

The reefs at Noemfoor created another hazard concerning which a classic remark is attributed to Group Captain Dale. The story goes that on D Day Group Captain Dale, after striding up and down Kamiri Drome to ascertain the extent of repairs necessary to that field, returned to his temporary command post, looked out to sea over the reef, and said, "Bad show this—no bloody place for a swim!"⁶⁸

⁶⁸ This story, perhaps apocryphal, was heard by the author when in the Southwest Pacific during 1944–46. A quotation from an unnumbered issue of *Ramp*, the 3d Engr Special Brigade's newspaper,

cited in the 3d ESB's Opns Rpt for July 1944, provides essentially the same tale, without mentioning names.

General Krueger closed the Noemfoor Operation for historical records purposes on 31 August. On 6 September Brig. Gen. Hanford MacNider took over command of the task force and the 158th RCT. The island remained under ALAMO Force control until 9 October, when it passed to the U. S. Eighth Army. The 503d Parachute RCT moved from Noemfoor to Leyte, in the Philippines, in mid-November, and the 158th RCT left for Luzon in January 1945. By October, 1,957 Japanese had been killed or found dead on Noemfoor and 247 had been captured, while 623 Formosans, 2 Koreans, and 1 Chinese were prisoners of war. These figures are from ALAMO Force, G-2 Wkly Rpt 61, 4 Oct 44, copy in G-2 DofA files.



Volume Four

THE PACIFIC: GUADALCANAL TO SAIPAN

AUGUST 1942 TO JULY 1944

THE ARMY AIR FORCES

In World War II

PREPARED UNDER THE EDITORSHIP OF

WESLEY FRANK CRAVEN

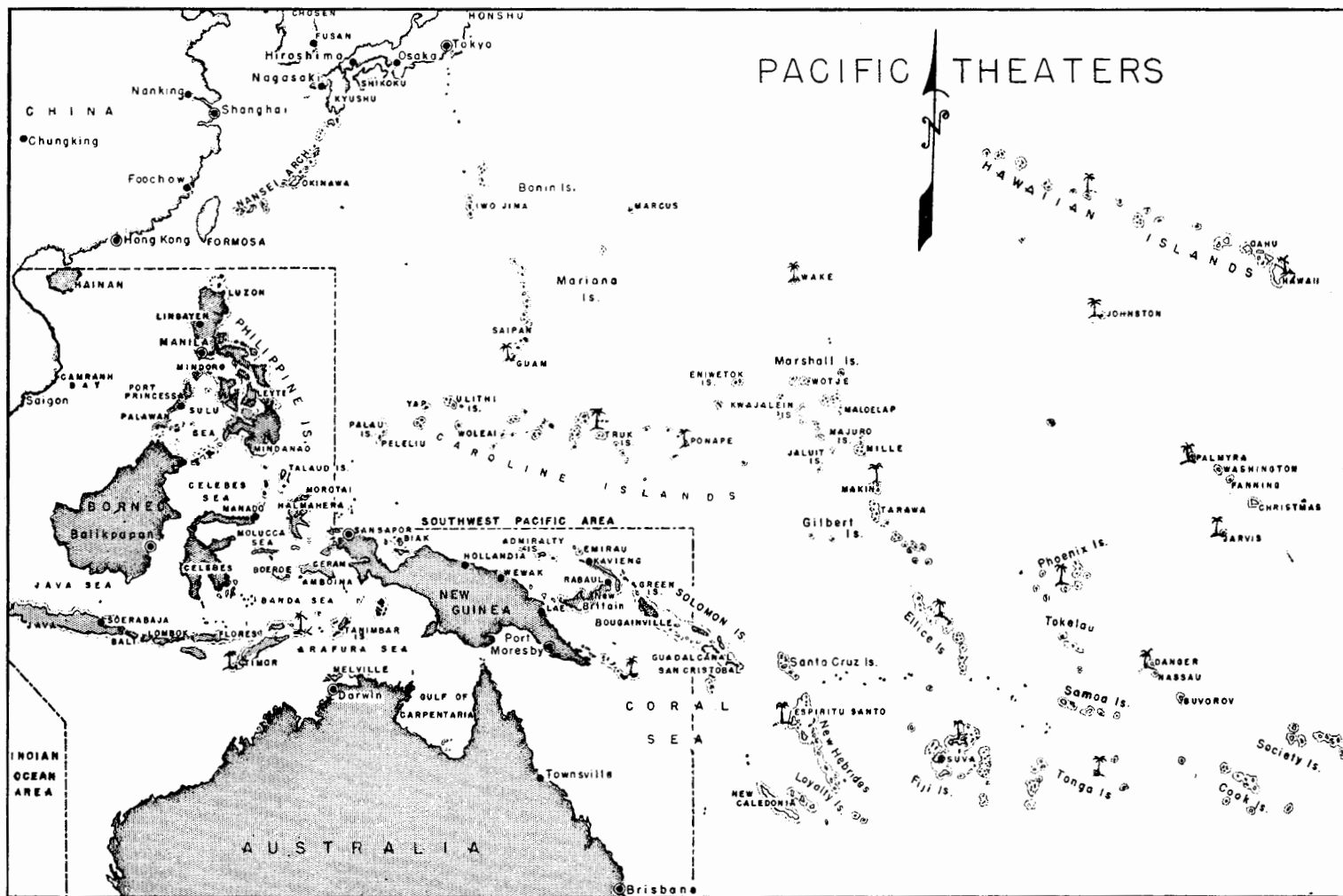
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Noemfoor

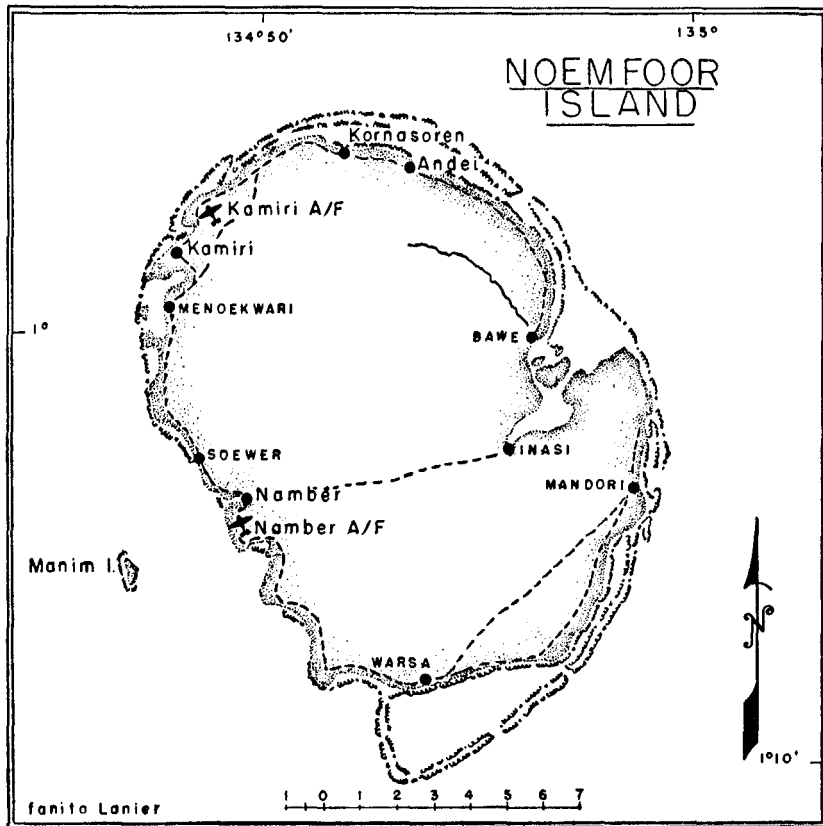
Neither RENO IV nor MacArthur's radio to the JCS on 8 May had contemplated the seizure of an objective in Geelvink Bay other than Biak, but by mid-May air planners were agitating their need for Noemfoor Island. Whitehead urged that such an operation could be undertaken as soon as the Fifth Air Force had two fighter groups operating at Biak, or about 15 June. By this time the RAAF engineers would be completing their work at Tadjik and could be released to construct fields on Noemfoor needed for the 10 Operational Group and a few Fifth Air Force units. An air garrison on Noemfoor would facilitate fighter escort for bomber strikes on the Halmaheras, could maintain the neutralization of Vogelkop airfields, could break up Japanese efforts to reinforce Biak from Manokwari, and would also be of value in case the Japanese navy, observed to be effecting a concentration around Tawitawi, attempted to raid Biak.⁸³

Geography and enemy efforts had fitted Noemfoor for exploitation. It lies near the northwestern limit of Geelvink Bay, eighty-one miles west of Biak and forty-five miles east of Manokwari. Roughly elliptical in shape upon axes of about fourteen miles north-south and thirteen miles east-west, Noemfoor's low coral-limestone hills are predominantly timber covered. The northern half of the island is low and flat. A fringe of coral reef almost completely surrounds the island, allowing access to only a few landing beaches. In November 1943, the Japanese, seeking to speed development of airfields, had impressed some 3,000 Javanese men, women, and children for labor on Noemfoor, where all but 403 of the mistreated slaves were to die before liberation. Three partly completed airdromes had been built: Kornasoren, on the north-central coast, with a partially cleared 5,000-foot strip; Kamiri, on the northwest coast near Kornasoren, with a 5,000-foot strip and seemingly extensive parking areas; and Namber, one-half mile inland in the southwest part of the island, with a 4,000-foot runway and limited dispersals. Other than a good path running around the perimeter of the island there was no well-developed system of communications.⁸⁴

Allied prognostication as to the number of defending troops likely to be encountered on Noemfoor was hampered by the closeness of the island—two hours by destroyer or eight hours by barge—to Manokwari. On 21 June, ALAMO estimated that 2,850 enemy troops, including 1,600 combat troops, were then on Noemfoor, and that the Japanese

FINAL VICTORY IN NEW GUINEA

would be able to move an additional combat battalion there prior to an Allied landing. Estimates of air resistance for Noemfoor were about the same as for Biak. Within 800 miles the Japanese held at least forty-nine operational airdromes, and within 200 miles they had seven advanced staging fields. FEAF intelligence expected a maximum enemy



air strength of 554 aircraft, predominantly fighters, to be within a radius of 600 miles of Noemfoor. The concentration of Japanese warships at Tawitawi was first believed a threat to Noemfoor, but before the target date these ships would have sortied for the Marianas. Whitehead, convinced that the Japanese had been reinforcing Noemfoor steadily, felt that they would "fight to beat hell."⁸⁵

GHQ planners had been in no hurry to commit themselves on a Noemfoor invasion, obviously preferring to await developments at Biak, but on 5 June, MacArthur indicated that it might be necessary to

use one regiment of infantry against Noemfoor in order to consolidate Biak. A preliminary GHQ plan contemplated use of this regiment and two engineer aviation battalions to seize and develop Kamiri drome for a fighter group, beginning on 22 June. The Allied Air Forces staff, while realizing that seven miles of road would be required to exploit Namber, urged that all three of the airdromes would be needed. The air forces were facing a strong air concentration, and their attacks on Amboina, Jefman, and Halmahera bases would need a minimum installation on Noemfoor to serve air units which otherwise would have to be less economically placed on Biak. GHQ accepted the concept of a Noemfoor operation designed to secure all airdromes and issued a warning instruction on 14 June, designating the 158th RCT, augmented with combat and service units, as the invading force. The target date would depend upon the establishment of fighter units at Biak.⁸⁶

Discussions, including the highly controversial determination of a target date, now passed to ALAMO's Finschhafen headquarters. MacArthur had maintained that Noemfoor could be invaded between 22 and 25 June, but most of his staff seemed to believe it impossible before mid-July, a time which also jibed with Seventh Fleet thinking. No one, however, was particularly anxious to inform MacArthur that there would have to be delay. Kenney was exceedingly anxious to get two fighter groups to Biak in time to permit an invasion on 25 June—so anxious, indeed, that he would have been willing to see the attack launched with only one fighter group in place. A preliminary conference at Finschhafen on 16 June, however, estimated that Biak air facilities could not permit the invasion before 30 June, and at a conference between Krueger, Whitehead, and Fechteler on 20 June, it was decided that 2 July would be the best target date. By then the task force, scheduled to have completed concentration at Toem by 26 June, would have held a landing rehearsal, the engineers would have completed a parallel taxiway on Owi desired by Whitehead, and additional LCM's and LCT's would have moved forward. MacArthur immediately approved this target date.⁸⁷

GHQ had already released its formal operations instructions on 17 June, and the naval, ground, and air plans for TABLETENNIS soon followed. The mission of the Allied Naval Forces was the usual transportation and supporting function.* Reef conditions off Kamiri drome,

* TF 74 and TF 75 would furnish cover and fire support, while TF 77, commanded by Admiral Fechteler, would embark troops at Toem and proceed so as to arrive off Noemfoor in time for H-hour (1800K) on 2 July.

the desired landing area, necessitated more than usual attention. Air photos showed no depth of water over the continuous reef about 450 yards offshore, but a team of ALAMO Scouts reconnoitered on the night of 22/23 June and found four feet of water in a pronounced break about 400 yards long off the southwest end of Kamiri strip. LCI's, LCT's, and LCM's might be able to get across the reef there (the ALAMO Scouts had been uncertain as to the state of the tide when they sounded), but LST's would have to off-load the assault troops and supplies into LVT's and DUKW's. This would take time, and the Japanese garrison, probably alerted by the party of scouts, might well concentrate their fire on the narrow boat lane and inflict Tarawa-like damages before the 158th RCT could get ashore. Thus it was vital that naval gunfire and aerial bombing paralyze the enemy defenses immediately prior to H-hour.⁸⁸

ALAMO organized the CYCLONE Task Force under command of Brig. Gen. Edwin D. Patrick and charged it to land at Kamiri, seize the airdrome area, and subsequently occupy all of Noemfoor. The total combat force numbered only 7,415 men, and both Krueger and Whitehead, while realizing the shipping limitations, were skeptical that so few combat troops could accomplish the mission with any degree of speed. There being no really valid information as to enemy strength, Krueger committed the 503d Parachute Infantry Regiment at Hollandia as the task force reserve and alerted the 34th Infantry at Biak. CYCLONE engineers were expected to prepare initially one 5,000-foot runway capable of extension into a fighter-medium bomber field if terrain permitted, one 6,000-foot runway for expansion into a heavy bomber field, and one additional fighter-medium bomber field. Large undispersed parking aprons might be prepared initially, but eventually 280 hardstands were contemplated. Of these facilities, one usable runway with limited dispersal for 75 fighters and 8 night fighters would be ready by D plus 3; limited dispersals for 75 additional fighters by D plus 10; one additional runway and limited dispersals for 128 light bombers and 75 additional fighters by D plus 28; and the whole program would be completed by D plus 66.⁸⁹

At Brisbane on 26 June, an ALAMO representative presented the combined TABLETENNIS plan to MacArthur's staff conference. MacArthur approved it, seemingly without his usual enthusiasm. Kenney's side comments were somewhat skeptical. "If it were not for the confidence that I have in your flattening the defenses before the infan-

try gets in," he wrote Whitehead, "I would be willing to bet that the show would be a flop, but having a lot of faith in the thousand pound bomb and reading the continuous stream of reports of the Gloucesterizing going on I am not worried about it at all."⁹⁰ TABLETENNIS was a small operation, but if the Japanese defenders remained able to fight they could make it costly both in men and time for the Allies.

Much of the aerial preparation for Noemfoor had already been accomplished in support of Biak. As early as 11 June, Whitehead had directed Hutchinson to use the 3d Bombardment Group against Manokwari in force approximately equal to that against Noemfoor so as to confuse the Japanese command as to the next Allied objective. He especially enjoined him to continue the "intelligent and aggressive" strikes against barge and lugger concentrations at Manokwari, both to reduce their ability to ship reinforcements to Biak and to deny them any opportunity to build up Noemfoor. During June, the 310th Wing claimed destruction of 107 Japanese vessels, mostly barges and luggers but including some twenty-four freighters. The 3d Group's "Grim Reapers," in their busiest operational month overseas, claimed 74 of the 107 vessels. With such a splendid record to indicate what A-20's up front could do, delay in getting a second A-20 group to Hollandia was doubly bitter to Whitehead.⁹¹

Similarly, the campaign against the Vogelkop airfields would assist an engagement at Noemfoor. Following the eradication of Japanese air units at Jefman and Samate,* the Fifth Air Force had only to keep the Vogelkop strips sufficiently cratered to prevent their use by sneak raiders. During the latter part of June, the 3d Group attacked Babo, Moemi, and Waren dromes, and the 90th Group's B-24's, staged into Wakde on 22 June, raided Jefman, Samate, Ransiki, and Moemi. The 38th Group, staging B-25's through Hollandia, also hit Manokwari and Ransiki on 26 and 27 June. Neutralization raids against Babo, designed to cover the heavy bombers at Wakde, were made by the 380th Group on 27 and 29 June. Since there were no Japanese interceptions over the Vogelkop after 22 June, fighter escorts strafed targets of opportunity for want of better to do. By 1 July such hostile air power as remained in New Guinea was generally debilitated. Jefman seemed abandoned, there was little activity at Samate, Babo's strips were cratered, Waren was unserviceable, and Moemi was used but sparingly. The Allied Air Forces estimated that there were approximately fifty-

* See above, pp. 639-41.

six enemy planes in northwestern New Guinea, of which probably no more than twelve were actually serviceable.⁹² Only the weather and the long distance from Nadzab hindered the neutralization of Noemfoor.

Sustained air attacks against the island began on 20 June with a four-squadron Liberator attack on Kamiri drome. Nadzab-based B-24's returned to the target next day, but bad weather, which would linger in the Markham valley for the remainder of the month, then closed in, and the 22d and 43d Groups were able to reach Noemfoor only on 25 and 26 June. Except for 23 June, when weather completely shrouded Noemfoor, the A-20's of the 3d Group and dive-bombing fighters from the 49th, 348th, and 475th Groups continued the assault; but these planes could not deliver the bomb tonnage necessary to saturate the beachhead defenses, and Whitehead, after moving his advanced command post to Hollandia on 28 June, called for Thirteenth Air Force support. On 30 June the 5th and 307th Groups, joined by the 90th Group at Hollandia and assisted by a miscellany of shorter-range forward units, delivered 159.5 tons of bombs to Noemfoor. The next day a break in Markham valley weather permitted all five FEAF heavy bombardment groups, plus the miscellaneous units, to drop 220.6 tons of bombs on the island. Between 20 June and 1 July, FEAF planes had thus deposited 801 tons of bombs on Noemfoor, mostly on the defenses in the Kamiri area. These missions proved uneventful, for the Japanese garrison elected to save its ammunition to withstand invasion, permitting the island to become an undefended target over which Allied aircraft were free to bomb and strafe from any level. Thus on 26 June a 403d Squadron formation, after five runs over Namber looking for an opening in the clouds, descended to 3,000 feet to bomb. After such experiences, one intelligence officer wondered whether a "milk-run" to Noemfoor was actually "an engagement with the enemy."⁹³

The naval convoys, covered by Wakde and Biak fighters, had begun leaving Toem on 29 June, and by about 0630 on 2 July the landing and fire support ships were standing off Kamiri. Just before the sun rose three cruisers opened fire, and a few minutes later destroyers and three rocket-launching LCI's joined. Four other destroyers off Namber and Kornasoren began a simultaneous barrage. Between H minus 80 and H-hour the ships off Kamiri had fired two and one-half times as much ammunition as normally required to neutralize such an area. Promptly at 0731 the first B-24's appeared, and by 0747 the last of the sixteen

Liberators had dropped their cargoes of 250-pound instantaneous demolition bombs precisely on Japanese ridge defenses and personnel areas overlooking the beachhead. Admiral Fechteler described their work as "the best example of coordination and timing yet achieved in the SWPA."⁹⁴ Proceeding ashore successfully in LVT's, the assault wave of the 158th RCT found that the Japanese had abandoned their beach defenses. The first defensive troops encountered, near the center of Kamiri strip, had been so badly stunned by the aerial and naval bombardment that they could offer little resistance. Throwing a perimeter defense around the airdrome, the 158th spent the rest of D-day cleaning huddles of dazed Japanese troops out of the caves east of the airdrome. A captured Japanese lieutenant and abandoned documents revealed that the Japanese commander had observed the soundings of the ALAMO Scouts and had anticipated an Allied landing at Kamiri early in July. He had prepared defenses and registered weapons so as to destroy the landing forces on the reef, but his forces, their morale and combat efficiency already sapped by aerial bombings, collapsed under the immediate pre-invasion air and naval bombardment.⁹⁵ The potentially hazardous landing at Noemfoor was thus accomplished practically without opposition.

The B-24's from the 90th Group represented only a part of the D-day aerial support. A 421st Night Fighter P-61 had taken station over the beachhead at 0630, and another provided last-light cover. Between times, the 8th, 348th, and 475th Groups covered the beachhead with 161 fighter patrol sorties. Encountering no opposition, they strafed such targets as the naval air controller designated. Four A-20 squadrons each sent two missions to orbit off Noemfoor until directed to ground targets, and the 17th Reconnaissance Squadron provided three similar B-25 missions. These support aircraft silenced mortar positions, knocked out a few automatic weapons, and strafed small parties of enemy troops attempting to reach the combat area. In general, however, few worth-while targets appeared, and one A-20 flight was sent home for lack of a suitable objective. At noon, forty-four B-24's from Nadzab bombed Kornasoren airdrome.⁹⁶

The ground fighting on Noemfoor had progressed beyond all expectations on D-day, but Patrick, his early intent to ask for the 503d Parachute Infantry strengthened by erroneous P/W reports that there were 3,500 to 4,500 Japanese troops on Noemfoor, requested reinforcements by air beginning on 3 July. By the evening of D plus 2, he

had correctly assessed enemy opposition at not more than 1,500 men, but he still needed the additional force for expanding operations.⁹⁷ The 317th Troop Carrier Group had been concentrated at Hollandia, and on the mornings of 3 and 4 July its C-47's dropped 1,424 parachutists on Kamiri strip. Both missions were marred by high injury rates—9.74 per cent on the 3d and 8.17 per cent on the 4th. On the former day, a smoke screen laid by A-20's and B-25's to mask the drop zone from sniper fire drifted over the strip, with the result that many of the parachutists, missing the strip, landed among debris and parked vehicles on either side of it. On the second day the C-47's released the jumpers properly and most of them landed in the drop area, but by this time the engineers had begun compacting the strip and there were more fractures than on the previous morning. A ground forces board subsequently concluded that an airstrip was unsuited for paradrops and, with the exception of a few planes which had dropped below the prescribed 400 feet, absolved the 317th Troop Carrier Group of blame for the casualties.⁹⁸ Because of the high injury rate, a third battalion scheduled to be dropped was flown to Biak and thence moved to Namber by LCI's on 11 July.⁹⁹

Meanwhile, the 158th RCT had occupied Kornasoren drome on 4 July, and the next day a battalion moving southward from Kamiri broke up a Japanese counterattack to end organized resistance. On 6 July, by means of a shore-to-shore landing, a battalion of the 158th secured Namber. The same day a platoon of paratroopers seized Manim Island, desired by the air forces as a radar site. After 7 July patrols pushed remnants of the enemy, soon reduced by a lack of food to the most loathsome and promiscuous cannibalism ever noted in SWPA, to the interior of the island, where by the end of August they had been surrounded and destroyed. Other than routine fighter patrols, the CYCLONE force required virtually no air support after a few strafing sorties on D plus 2.¹⁰⁰

During the four weeks in July that Noemfoor was the most advanced Allied base, enemy air attacks amounted to nine sorties in five raids, which, if credence is given to a P/W shot down at Noemfoor, seem to have originated at Ceram bases and to have staged through Moemi. Neither the first raid, made by a single bomber at 2150 hours on 4 July, nor the following efforts were effective. Aircraft warning and control functions at Noemfoor were performed by Detachment G, Fighter Wing, utilizing the 35th Fighter Control Squadron and

operating units of the 565th and 569th Signal AW Battalions. They opened an assault control center on D-day, and after encountering shipping delays and various unloading accidents they finally completed the permanent installations of the 34th Fighter Sector on 20 August.¹⁰¹

Construction of initial air facilities on Noemfoor had to be timed in relation to the Vogelkop operation scheduled for 30 July. Fortunately, construction could begin as soon as the engineers were ashore. The Japanese strips, unfortunately, were of little use. Kamiri was poorly surfaced with sand and clay and, instead of supposedly "extensive dispersals," had no more than ten hardstands. Kornasoren was "only a location." Namber strip was suitable for transports, but its utilization would require a supply route overland from Kamiri and construction of a standard airfield would be complicated by heavy standing timber and rugged terrain. Work began at Kamiri on D-day, when the 27th Engineer Combat Battalion dragged lengths of Japanese railway irons behind trucks to smooth ruts and used abandoned rollers to begin compacting the strip. By 5 July the 1874th Engineer Aviation Battalion started 24-hour construction, and after a coral surfacing coat had been laid the strip was opened on 16 July for transport aircraft. Work had not begun at Kornasoren when, without warning on 14 July, GHQ indicated that air plans to begin raids against the Halmaheras would require a serviceable strip and parking for fifty P-38's there by 25 July—this without slowing work at Kamiri—but the RAAF 62 Construction Wing, service units, and combat troops working together met the deadline. During August the Fifth Air Force and ALAMO would agree to forego a fighter-medium bomber field at Namber, reasoning that the engineering effort could better exploit a limited expansion at Kamiri and a large expansion at Kornasoren.¹⁰² But, after the middle of August, the base-construction program on Noemfoor became a factor in immediate pre-Philippine operations and will be discussed in a later volume.

The air garrison, moved to Noemfoor before early August, was by no means as extensive as the Fifth Air Force had scheduled, because of a shipping jam even more aggravated than that at Biak. With the worst unloading conditions ever encountered in SWPA, only about 4,940 tons of shipping could be debarked between 2 and 15 July. Naval demolition parties had blasted a slot through the barrier reef off Kamiri and engineers had built an LST jetty there by 13 July, but even with attainment of a maximum daily unloading capacity of 1,500

tons ALAMO predicted that the shipping backlog could not be cleared before the end of August. This tie-up both delayed the movement of air force units and hindered construction on Noemfoor. By 12 August air force movements into Noemfoor were 69 per cent behind schedule for troops, 76 per cent for vehicles, and 66 per cent for other impedimenta. An advanced detachment of 10 Operational Group went ashore on 4 July, and on 21-22 July, P-40's of the 78 Wing flew to Kamiri. Waterborne echelons of the RAAF 22 and 30 Squadrons (77 Wing) were to have reached Noemfoor before 12 July, but these shipments could not be debarked until 24 July and 14 August and their Bostons and Beaufighters could not be accommodated at Kamiri before the middle of August. The American garrison was even more tardy, and when the advanced detachment of the 309th Bombardment Wing reached Kornasoren on 28 July, two days before D-day at Sansapor, it found only a detachment of the 419th Night Fighter Squadron in place. Failing to get transportation from Saidor for the 58th Fighter Group, Whitehead flew the air echelon of the 35th Group, which had been biding its time at Nadzab since early June, to Kornasoren in time to cover Sansapor.¹⁰³ Fortunately, the landing at Sansapor did not depend too heavily upon the build-up at Noemfoor.

Sansapor

Both RENO IV and the new RENO V plan had assumed that it would be necessary to establish an advanced air base midway between Geelvink Bay and the Halmaheras. An air garrison at such a base—located either on Waigeo Island or the coast of the Vogelkop—would assist in neutralizing the Halmaheras, cover the convoys and the invasion beaches there, and interdict Japanese air forces based on the left flank of the Allied movement. To assure completion of air bases and the orderly installation of air units in time to assist an invasion of the Halmaheras (tentatively set for 15 September), the Vogelkop operation would have to begin about 1 August.¹⁰⁴

Allied planners soon discovered that it was one thing to recognize the strategic utility of a Vogelkop base and quite another to specify its exact location, and GHQ, lacking even general information as to what areas might be profitably explored by ground infiltration parties, overloaded the Fifth Air Force's 91st Photo Reconnaissance Wing with requests for aerial photos. Weather and lack of staging space for photo planes at Wakde and Hollandia proved a hindrance, and the evi-

GLOSSARY*

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AAABC	Assam American Air Base Command
ACSEA	Air Command, South East Asia
ADC	Alaska Defense Command
ADVON	Advanced Echelon
AFDMA	Materiel Division, AC/AS, Materiel and Services
AFDPU	AAF Program Planning
AFMSC	Office of Statistical Control
AFRAL	Allocations Branch, AC/AS, OC&R
AFRBS	Directorate of Base Services
AFRTH	Theater Branch, AC/AS, OC&R
AFTSC	Director of Communications
AFTSI	Director of Technical Inspection
AGC	General communications vessel
AKA	Cargo ship, attack
ALF	Allied Land Forces
ANGAU	Australia-New Guinea Administrative Unit
APA	Transport, attack
APD	Transport, high speed
ASSRON	Air Service Support Squadron
CA	Heavy cruiser
CACW	Chinese-American Composite Wing
CAF	Chinese Air Force
CAVU	Ceiling and visibility unlimited
CHRONICLE	Kiriwina-Woodlark Islands
CINCPOA	Commander in Chief, Pacific Ocean Area
CL	Light cruiser
COIR	Combat Operations Intelligence Report
COMAIRCENPAC	Commander Aircraft Central Pacific
COMAIRFORWARD	Commander Aircraft Forward Area

* This glossary includes only terms not listed in preceding volumes, and it omits code words for which the index provides a ready guide to definition. For Japanese aircraft types and their designations, see Vol. I, 79 n.

THE ARMY AIR FORCES IN WORLD WAR II

COMAIRNORSOLS	Commander Air North Solomons
COMAIRSOLS	Commander Air Solomons
COMAIRSOPAC	Commander Aircraft South Pacific
COMCENPAC	Commander Central Pacific
COMGENSOPAC	Commanding General, U.S. Army Forces, South Pacific Area
CRTC	Combat Replacement and Training Center
CV	Aircraft carrier
DAT	Directorate of Air Transport
DE (PF)	Destroyer escort (patrol vessel, frigate)
DIMINISH	Finschhafen, New Guinea
DUKW	Amphibious truck
F/E	Forward Echelon
HHD	Headquarters, Hawaiian Department
IATF	India Air Task Force
IBS	India-Burma Sector
ICPOA	Intelligence Center, Pacific Ocean Area
ICW	India-China Wing
JICPOA	Joint Intelligence Center, Pacific Ocean Area
JSSC	Joint Strategic Survey Committee
JWPC	Joint War Plans Committee
LAB	Low-altitude bombardment equipment
LCI	Landing craft, infantry
LCM	Landing craft, mechanized
LCP (R)	Landing craft, personnel (ramp)
LCT	Landing craft, tank
LCV	Landing craft, vehicle
LSD	Landing ship, dock
LST	Landing ship, tank
LVT	Landing vehicle, tracked
NATS	Naval Air Transport Service
NCAC	Northern Combat Area Command
NGF	New Guinea Force
Patron	Patrol squadron
PF	Patrol vessel, frigate
POSTERN	Lae-Finschhafen-Madang
PV	Navy patrol bomber
RNZAF	Royal New Zealand Air Force

GLOSSARY

SAC	Supreme Allied Commander in Chief
SCAT	South Pacific Combat Air Transport (USMC)
SEAC	Southeast Asia Command
TCC	Troop Carrier Command
USAFICPA	U.S. Army Forces in Central Pacific Area
VB	Navy dive-bomber squadron
VCS	Cruiser-scouting squadron
VF	Navy fighter squadron
VMF	Marine fighter squadron
VMSB	Marine scout-bombing squadron
VP	Navy patrol squadron
VS	Navy shore-based scouting squadron
VTB	Torpedo-bombing plane
WDC	Western Defense Command
WDCSA	War Department Chief of Staff, U.S. Army
WDGBI	War Department General Staff, Intelligence (G-2)

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EXCLUDED INFORMATION

UNITED STATES GOVERNMENT
OFFICE OF THE SECRETARY OF DEFENSE
WASHINGTON, D. C. 20301

SECRET

10 August 1944

To: [redacted] Staff Room

Distribution of CTF 77 Serial 0001 of 16 July 1944, and 1st
and 2nd. (Subject: Report of HAWKINS Operation.)

1. FIVE AND SEVEN report

NO.	REF. SYMBOL	NO.	REF. SYMBOL	NO.	REF. SYMBOL	NO.	REF. SYMBOL
1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1
2	2	2	2	2	2	2	2
3	3	3	3	3	3	3	3
4	4	4	4	4	4	4	4
5	5	5	5	5	5	5	5
6	6	6	6	6	6	6	6
7	7	7	7	7	7	7	7

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copy of Page 14 only.
18 SEP 1944

REMOVED WHEN NO LONGER REQUIRED

2nd Correspondence # 07471
P.O. Reg. # 3163470

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From: Commander Task Force 34, NAVFOR-SEVEN.
To : Commander in Chief, United States Fleet.
Via : Commander Seventh Fleet.

Subject: **Nonstop Operation - report on**

Enclosures: (4) Copy of OCEP FY 1994 Plan, 6-11-94, - "2000" - "2000" - "2000" - "2000"

1. Object of the Organization.

The object of the operation was to seize and occupy the NEMPOUR ISLAND area and establish in that area air and minor naval facilities for the purpose of supporting further operations to the westward.

2. Intelligence.

(a) Information indicated that enemy naval forces available in the area for the defense of MUNDORF ISLAND comprised 1 CA, 1 CL and several DEs and light escort craft. These were engaged in convoy duties. No enemy submarines were known to be operating in the area.

(b) Ground forces defending HONMFOOK ISLAND were estimated to number 3,000. An estimated 11,000 to 13,000 were available for reinforcement at HANCOCK, an overnight barge trip from HONMFOOK.

(c) Efficient and aggressive attacks against our surface forces by enemy naval air units, based at the WOELNDP drums, were expected.

(d) Excellent maps of MBLAPOOR ISLAND, prepared from aerial photographs by U.S. Army Engineers, scale 1:20,000 and 1:63,360 were available. Sections of the 1:20,000 map, including KAMINI and KOHNASOREN dromes, were suitable for naval use, and were overprinted to show naval gunfire target areas, transport areas, line of departure and beaches. Good vertical and oblique aerial photographs were available and were the basis for the selection of the landing beach.

(e) Two parties of Army Scouts were sent in from PT boats on the night of D-minus eleven day, with the mission of determining the character of the reef off KAMIRI drone. Naval

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Subject: KAKIRI Operation - report on.

people were not included in these parties, and the Attack Force Commander was not advised, in advance, of the project. Scouts were detected by enemy beach defense forces, and withdrew. The information obtained was meager and inconclusive. The attempted reconnaissance disclosed the Japanese defense to be on the alert and possibly gave forwarding of our intentions. The value of these reconnaissance immediately prior to an operation is considered to be questionable.

(f) Interpretation of aerial photographs indicated that the KAKIRI area was defended by 10 possible coast defense guns, 6 heavy AA guns, 7 medium AA guns, 9 light AA guns and numerous machine guns. Most of the defense weapons were concentrated near the northeastern end of KAKIRI strip. No beach obstacles, other than the natural obstacle provided by the 400 yard coral reef, were disclosed.

3. Tasks Assigned Naval Attack Force.

The mission of this Force was to transport and land elements of the assault and supporting forces and their supplies as required by Commander ALAMO Force (U.S. Fifth Army); to furnish the necessary naval protection for the overwater movement; to provide close support for the landing operation, and to provide transportation, including escort, for personnel and equipment of the Army, Air Force and Navy until relieved by USARUS.

4. Planning.

First notice of the projected operation was received on 15 June. At that time the Force Planning Section was on the flagship, temporarily out of the forward area. A representative was sent to attend a preliminary conference at Headquarters, Commanding General, ALAMO Force, on 16 June, while the members of the Planning Section were returning by air to the forward area. On 20 June a commanders conference was held at the Headquarters of Commanding General, ALAMO Force, attended by representatives of the ALAMO Force, Fifth Air Force, SEVENTH Amphibious Force and the Landing Force. All major points were discussed and agreements reached and then the various representatives returned to their headquarters to prepare their respective plans. The Plan for the Naval Attack Force was completed on 22 June 1944.

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Subject: [REDACTED] Operation - report on.

5. Composition of Naval Attack Force:

(a) The Naval Attack Force consisted of three separate groups which united enroute to or at the objective area. These were the Main Body, Covering Force, and LOT-LCM unit.

(b) The Attack Force and the Main Body were under the command of Rear Admiral T. M. FORTNEY, U.S. Navy. The Main Body consisted of 19 DD; 8 LST; 14 LCI, including 3 Rocket and 2 Demolition LCI; 8 LCT; 4 PG, and the tug SCHOONER.

(c) The Covering Force under command of Rear Admiral HENCKY, U.S. Navy, consisted of 1 CA, 2 CL and 10 DD.

(d) The LOT-LCM Unit consisted of 3 PG, 3 LCT and 40 LCM manned by the THIRD Engineer SPECIAL BRIGADE, U.S. Army. This unit was commanded by Lieutenant Commander J. S. MONROE, USNR.

(e) Ships of the Covering Force were divided into fire support groups for the assault phase.

(f) Ships of the Main Body were divided into Fire Support Groups, Fighter Directors, Control Groups, Rocket Units, Demolition Units, Salvage Units, A/S patrol units and Landing Units (LST, LCI and LCT) for the assault and landing phase.

(g) Escort ships of the LOT-LCM unit were used for A/S patrol during the landing phase.

6. Composition of the Landing Force.

The Landing Force was built around the 158th U.S. Infantry Regimental Combat Team. It was reinforced by Artillery Anti-Aircraft, Tank, Engineer and Service Units to a total strength of 7,078 men. Principal supporting weapons included:

6 Medium tanks
12 105 mm Howitzers
24 40 mm AA guns
8 90 mm AA guns
24 50 cal AA machine guns
12 4.2" mortars

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14 JUL 1961

Subject: Operation: Operation - Report 100

7. Outline of Landing Plan

(a) The lack of any beach in the objective area upon which assault landing craft could be landed required the necessity for landing all of the assault waves in LVTs and LCs. JMWAVE Beach was selected as the landing point because aerial photographs indicated that the coral reef at that point was relatively smooth and level and free of deep water areas inside the reef. Deep water on both sides of the boat lane, inside the reef, limited the lane to a width of 400 yards, opening out to 500 yards at the beach after clearing the deep water.

(b) Four PCs were employed as control vessels. Two marking the limits of the line of departure and two the inner control line about 200 yards off the edge of the reef. The latter two PCs were assigned the additional task of guiding troops at the edge of the reef to mark the boundaries of the boat lane. A destroyer, assigned by a nuclear spotting plane, was in position off Yellow Beach upon the arrival of the control ships to insure that they took proper stations initially.

(c) H-hour was set for 0800, fifty-seven minutes after sunrise. This was later than is customary in this area, and was adopted with the double purpose of allowing more time for the prolonged naval gunfire bombardment and to insure that sufficient light existed for accurate beach identification. The latter consideration was of vital importance. It was considered doubtful that LVTs and LCMs could negotiate the narrow deep lagoons which were inside the reef at both sides of the selected boat lane.

(d) The landing plan provided for landing two battalions abreast, in seven assault waves with three minute intervals between waves. The assault battalions, with the amphibian vehicles which were to land them, were embarked in 3 LVTs. The first three waves were composed of a total of 39 LVT(2)s, and the following four waves totaled 32 LCMs. The reserve battalion, embarked in LCIs, was to be landed in the second trip of LVTs and LCMs, or, if found practicable, was to be landed directly on the coral ledge from the ramps of the LCIs. This was only to be attempted on specific authority of the Attack Force Commander, if surf conditions and the depth of water over the reef were found to be favorable.

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(e) The artillery battalion was assigned to LCTs. The plan provided for its landing in the second trip of LCTs, and its unloading secured by means of LCMs equipped with "A" frames.

(f) Tanks, tractors and bulldozers were carried forward in the 13 LCTs. They were to be landed, beginning with the 5th wave, at H+1, across the coral reef. The successful landing of these vehicles was considered to be so vital to the success of the operation that the risk of serious damage to the LCTs on the coral reef was accepted.

(g) Forty LCMs carried shore party personnel, vehicles and supplies. The plan provided for them to remain in the LCM assembly area until called into the beach by the Control Officer. It was anticipated that reconnaissance would disclose suitable beaching points for LCMs at the edge of the reef, where, particularly at low water, vehicles could be discharged across the reef. Failing this, the LCMs would remain loaded until demolition parties could blast test channels through the reef.

(h) Bulk stores (200 tons per LCT) consisting of rations, ammunition and gasoline, were to be unloaded in shuttle trips of amphibian vehicles.

8. Outline of Naval Gunfire Support Plan.

(a) Ships of Task Force 77 were assigned gunfire tasks in support of the landing on YELLOW Beach on D-day as follows:

(1) Fire Support Group A (1 CA, 2 CL, 10 DD)

(a) Fire Support Unit One (1 CA, 4 DD) enfilade fires on the landing beach and on target areas approximately 900 yards on both sides of the beach from H-60 until H-30.

(b) Fire Support Unit Two (2 CL, 6 DD) enfilade fire on target areas extending from approximately 900 yards to 3000 yards on the left flank of

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YELLOW Beach from H-50 until H-hour. Two DDs intermittent bombardment on KONAHEHE air-
 drome from H-50 minutes until H plus 7 hours.
 Two DDs intermittent bombardment in target areas
 east of YELLOW Beach from H-hour until H plus
 2 hours.

- (2) Fire Support Group B (4 DD) bombardment of YELLOW Beach and the right flank of YELLOW Beach from H-50 until H-5.
- (3) Fire Support Group C (4 DD) bombardment of the left flank of YELLOW Beach from H-50 until H-hour.
- (4) Fire Support Group D (5 DD)
 - (a) Fire Support Unit Three (3 DD) at H plus 30 to establish communication with SFOPs No. 1 and 2, and furnish call fires requested by those parties.
 - (b) Fire Support Unit Four (2 DD) intermittent bombardment on KAHAKO air-drome from H-50 until H plus 7 hours.
- (5) Rocket ships (LCIs 31, 34 and 73) to accompany leading boat waves to the beach. LCIs 31 and 73 to fire half a load of rockets on target area 11 from H-27 until H-23. LCIs 31, 34 and 73 to deliver fire on YELLOW Beach and on both flanks of the beach from H-5 until H-hour.
- (6) Shore Fire Control Parties. Three Shore Fire Control Parties to land with the leading assault waves. One party to be attached to each of the two assault battalions, and one to Task Force Headquarters.

9. Outline of Air Support Plan

(a) The plan provided for a preliminary air bombardment of the areas directly inland from the landing beaches. After H-hour the maximum effort of light and attack bombers from HOLLANDIA and BIAK was to be placed at the disposal of

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the Support Aircraft Controller for target assignment.

(b) Fighter cover was to consist of a minimum of two squadrons patrolling the landing area. The remaining fighter squadrons were committed to ground alert at MIAK. The fighter cover (Combat Air Patrol) was to be directed from the designated fighter director ship until such time as the fighter commander was established on shore.

(c) The Air Force was to provide airplanes for naval gunfire observer, air observer of ground situation, and the air coordinator of the Support-Air Team.

(d) A Navy PBY was to be provided to assist in the rescue of aviators forced down at sea.

10. Language of Orders.

The naval plan for the operation was completed on 22 June 1944, and distribution started on 23 June. Distribution was not completed to all units until 29 June due to the wide separation of vessels taking part in the operation. Upon completion of the plans, orders were transmitted by radio to the various ships to proceed to the staging and assembly points and giving a limiting time for arrival at those points. In general, the distribution of the plan was made to ships after their arrival at the staging and assembly points, as sufficient time was not available to reach them at their scattered locations.

11. Training.

The Landing Force had received no regular amphibious training. The 158th Infantry Regiment had participated in the unopposed landings at WOODLARK and KIRIVINA about a year previously, and had later been staged forward in Amphibious Force craft. It was engaged in combat against Japanese Forces in the SAKAI area until just prior to this operation, so that time was not available to conduct training other than an operational rehearsal. The naval forces involved were well trained and experienced in operations. LVT drivers were well trained and had participated in the assault on MIAK. DUKW drivers were inexperienced and untrained in assault operations.

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-----12. Rehearsals.

(a) On 18 June (3 miles four day) a rehearsal landing was conducted near TUM, Dutch New Guinea. LSTs, control PCs and available DDs participated, with troops of the two assault battalions and the supporting artillery battalion. From the naval viewpoint the exercise was intended to perfect the control of the assault waves of LSTs and DDs. Timing of the waves was controlled as in the BIAK Operation, by launching the component parts of each wave from the carrying LSTs in time for them to proceed directly to the line of departure and cross it on schedule. In the rehearsal the timing and control of waves was excellent, although later waves of DDs tended to intermingle. Several faults were developed in rehearsal, on the part of both Army and Navy personnel, which were later discussed in conference and corrective measures taken. Most important was the failure to land artillery promptly because DDs equipped with artillery landing ramps failed to return to the LSTs carrying artillery. It was arranged to have the ramps loaded and left with the artillery, so that any DD could be employed to land it.

(b) A second rehearsal of DD waves was conducted on the afternoon of the same day to provide further exercise in formation keeping and control. Performance of DDs was notably improved.

13. Preliminary Air Operations.

BAGO, JAMPAN, SAMATI, KAMOKWARI and other Japanese airfields were bombed frequently in an effort to eliminate the enemy's ability to counter-attack through the air. A total of 888 tons were dropped by the 9th Air Force bombers, in support of the KUMPOON landings, prior to D-day. Seventy-five enemy airplanes were shot down during these operations, ten were probably destroyed, and an undetermined number destroyed or seriously damaged on the ground.

14. Overseas Movement

(a) The overseas movement of the force proceeded without incident except for numerous "Bogies" being picked up by radar the night before the landing.

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(b) The track from the staging point to the objective area was laid to pass close to BLAK, which place had been occupied by our forces about five weeks previously. The object of this was to cause deception, if spotted, by making the Jap think that we were reinforcing our BLAK forces. The run from BLAK to MORPHEE was under cover of darkness.

(c) The LVT-LCU unit was the slowest group. This group was sent ahead from the staging area in sufficient time to allow them to have about a 10 hour stopover at MORPHEE LAGOON off BLAK. The group consisted of 3 LCUs carrying personnel for the LCU's, 13 LCUs and 40 LCU's manned by the Army Engineer Special Brigade. Three POC provided the escort. At MORPHEE the personnel for the LCU's joined their craft for the onward movement and the 3 LCUs remained behind. Eight of the 13 LCUs were taken in tow by LST's of the Main Body when it passed BLAK late in the afternoon of D-1 day. This was done in order to have 5 LCUs available to unload equipment during the early part of the landing. The remaining 5 LCUs with the 40 LCU's and 3 POC escorts proceeded behind the Main Body at best speed and arrived in the transport area about a half hour after the Main Body.

(d) The Main Body departed from the staging area at 1000 at 1800 D-2 and proceeded along the track arriving off BLAK about 1740, D-1 day. A stop of about 45 minutes was made for the 5 LCUs to take in tow 3 LCUs and then the convoy proceeded toward MORPHEE. Between 0500 and 0630 D-day various groups of the formation were released to go to their assigned stations for control and shore bombardment. About 0700 the formation was stopped for about 10 minutes for the LST's to cast off their tows. Deployment was made into the transport area at 0725 and LCU's stopped and commenced unloading assault vehicles about 0745.

(e) The Covering Force consisting of cruisers and destroyers departed from their base at SAKALAN HARBOR in sufficient time to reach a point about 30 miles SE of BLAK by 1900 D-1 with instructions to keep out of sight of land until that time. They were then to increase speed in order to arrive at a point about 10 miles ahead of the Main Body by midnight. This force was kept back in order not to indicate to the Japs that an Attack Force was moving forward to make a new landing. The Covering Force acted as an independent force under the Attack Force Commander and

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proceeded ahead to its assigned stations in the Fire Support Areas where it commenced shore bombardment at H-80 minutes.

(f) After the landing was accomplished various groups departed from the objective area at various times during the day in accordance with the operation plan and had unsuccessful trips back to their bases.

15. Landing and Assault Plans.

(a) Execution of Landing Plan

(1) The Main Body arrived in the objective area about ten minutes late, due to a stop made to allow LVTs to cast off tow. LVTs were about fifteen minutes late in completing deployment, but arrived on station with bow doors open and ramps half lowered, thus enabling them to make up time lost and to launch their LVTs on schedule.

(2) Control ships had arrived on station, planted buoys at the reef's edge and reconnoitered the reef according to plan, and had taken positions to mark the boat lane and line of departure. A heavy haze caused by the smoke and dust of the naval and air bombardments completely obscured the beach, and, at H minus 10 minutes control vessels could not be identified from 500 yards away. This difficulty was overcome by the control ships showing white flood lights, which were very effective in marking their positions.

(3) The landing was planned to give the landing vehicles a maximum run to the beach of 2000 yards. The LVTs closed in to about 600 yards from the outer control PCs and the launching of the assault vehicles progressed on schedule and without any apparent confusion. The landing waves approached and crossed the Line of Departure in good order and alignment. The LVT waves were closed in to two minute intervals instead of the prescribed three minutes, but no effort was made by the Control Officer to increase the interval because of the inherent lack of maneuverability of the LVTs and the fact that they were proceeding very close to their schedule. The DUKW waves, each carrying a naval boat officer loaned from APDs, also closed up, but were checked at the Line of Departure by

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flag signals. Discipline in the assault waves was excellent and there was no need to use the COM JOO radio channel for controlling these waves. The wave leader of the first assault wave reported by radio at 0801 1/2 that the wave had landed and that there was no opposition on the beach. The LVT waves cleared the rough edge of the reef in good order but the LCMs had some difficulty in getting up onto the reef shelf. Several lodged on coral heads at the edge of the reef, but the majority worked their way on to the shallow level. This process slowed down later waves to some degree, but not sufficiently to interfere with the orderly progress of the landing.

(4) Wave 8, consisting of four LVTs, followed immediately behind the last DUKW wave. Meanwhile the LCIs had been called in to beach and discharge troops at the edge of the reef. In the thick cloud of dust and smoke the approach of the LVTs and 40 LCMs had not been noticed until the LCMs began crowding through the two left hand control PCs and headed for the edge of the reef at about 0810. These craft entered the transport area in a separate convoy and it had been directed that, except for the four LVTs carrying tanks, they were to remain clear until called in. The LCMs had no definitely scheduled landing time. With the approach lane choked with DUKWs, LVTs, approaching LCIs, and a few LCMs from about 0815, the efforts of the Control Unit were concentrated on clearing this congestion. At 0820 LVTs commenced beaching at the edge of the reef and it was seen that the tanks were proceeding shoreward without difficulty. Unloading of the 4 LVTs of the 8th wave was completed at 0853. Three or four LCMs also beached at the left edge of the marked landing point and discharged their vehicles. The LCIs also closed to the edge of the reef in succession and at 0825 began discharging troops, who, in some cases, went into waist deep water for a few feet and thereafter to the beach in not more than one foot of water. Rubber boats, carried inflated on decks of LCIs, were used by troops to float heavy equipment, including mortar ammunition, ashore. By this time the falling tide had exposed the outer edge of the reef. Discharging of LVTs and LCIs was carried out simultaneously and expeditiously from

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then on. The LCI's completed discharging troops by 0940. Communication between the Control Officer and the Army LCM commander was established through the Navy Beachmaster ashore and the Shore Party. An order to keep the LCI's clear until the LCM's were discharged was apparently misinterpreted in relaying, for at about 0830 several LCI's crossed the reef to the right of the right hand buoy and beached. This proved to be a fortunate error for vehicles found an easier crossing of the reef on this side of the lane. Most of the subsequent unloading was done on the right hand section of the reef edge.

(5) At 0905 the first enemy opposition developed at the beach. Enemy mortar or light artillery fire, evidently previously registered, began falling on YELLOW Beach. Naval gunfire and bombing and strafing by supporting aircraft were brought to bear on suspected gun positions, but the firing continued intermittently for a period of about one and a half hours. Two vehicles were set afire on the beach, and a few casualties resulted.

(b) Execution of Support Plan

(1) Naval Gunfire: The Naval Gunfire Support Plan was executed almost exactly according to plan. Time schedules were followed closely and all ships turned in an excellent performance. A few more water bursts occurred than would normally be expected but it is believed that these were from ships enfilading the landing beach whose observation was partially obscured by smoke. The intermittent fire on the left flank, continued until H plus 2 hours, proved invaluable by giving the troops time to reorganize before pushing on. Cruiser aircraft reported AA fire about two miles east of the landing beach and these targets were promptly and effectively taken under fire by destroyers responsible for that area. Rocket fire from three LCI gunboats added the final touches to an already devastating bombardment. Army personnel expressed complete satisfaction with the support rendered by the warships and were most enthusiastic in their praise. No unforeseen developments arose that affected the conduct of the naval bombardment and no serious casualties were reported.

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(2) Air Support: Seventeen B-24's dropped 100 pound bombs in the hills immediately behind the landing air-
 zone, where the most determined resistance was expected to
 develop, at 11:00 and 11:10. Bombing was accurate and the
 timing excellent. B-24's were on station at
 11:15/2. Thereafter B-24's and B-25's arrived on station
 in flights of six every 10 minutes. The entire effort was
 confined to the approaches to KUMABAND strip and the road
 south of the KUMAB strip leading to KUMAB strip. Anti-
 aircraft fire was sporadic during the early evening hours
 and finally ceased. The Air Coordinator led the low level
 bombers in strafing and bombing attacks on probable gun
 positions and other fortified enemy positions. Small fires and
 explosions with results generally unobserved. Personnel and
 trucks were bombed and strafed on the road south of the
 KUMAB strip disrupting any effort of the enemy to bring up
 organized reserves. The B-24's came back at 11:00/2 to lead
 the approaches to KUMABAND strip preceding the advance of
 our troops. A total of 107 sorties were flown in 1 hour and
 100 tons of bombs were dropped on targets assigned by the
 Support Air Controller.

(3) The Combat Air Patrol was flown by B-24's
 without incident. On the completion of the patrol with
 squadron reported to the Support Air Controller for a straf-
 ing target. The night fighters (F-61) provided cover 45
 minutes before sunrise and 45 minutes after sunset.

(4) Enemy Casualties.

Enemy opposition to the landing was feeble and
 of no consequence. Mortar fire fell intermittently near the beach
 for about two hours after the landing. One KUM and one truck were
 hit and destroyed by resulting fire. Casualties in the KUM were
 one killed and about five wounded. No other personnel or equipment
 was observed to be hit by mortar fire. A squad of enemy riflemen
 held out near the east (left) flank of YELLOW Beach but broke for
 cover when Buffaloes started toward them. All were mowed down by
 a Buffalo gunner. No mines, barbed wire entanglements, obstacles,
 or emplacements were seen on YELLOW Beach. There was no organized
 opposition. Some observers believed that a few rounds of three
 inch fire fell within the beach but without inflicting damage or
 casualties. This belief is supported by the subsequent

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capture of three 70mm pieces.

(d) Weather Conditions.

(1) During the night approach to the landing area the weather was cloudy with passing showers. Wind was light and variable with a calm sea. The cloudiness and showers gave considerable protection to the convoy as the moon was approaching the full stage.

(2) During the assault and landing stage, around 0800, partly cloudy skies prevailed with scattered low and intermediate clouds. Visibility was excellent. Surface winds were southeasterly about two knots. The swell was about one foot from north northwest. The calm sea enabled the landing to be made by LVTs and LCMs over coral shelf without difficulty.

(3) The equatorial front was lying near the objective area and caused numerous heavy rain showers between 1100 and 1300. There was no wind with the showers, however, so no swells were set up which affected landing operations. The frontal condition probably kept enemy aircraft from approaching the area. Our air cover was able to fly around the squalls as was not seriously hampered. The only adverse effect of the heavy showers was that they slowed slightly the unloading of the LSTs.

(4) In the late afternoon cloudy to overcast skies with intermediate cloudiness prevailed. Visibility was good to excellent. Wind was southeasterly force one and sea calm. The equatorial front had moved to the northwest so offered some protection from air attack from that direction.

(5) During the retirement at night the weather was partly cloudy with passing showers. Sea calm with wind from east-southeast force one.

(e) Beach Conditions.

No landing beach free of natural obstacles existed in the objective area. YELLOW Beach was an 800 yard coral sand

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beach about 15 yards wide, rising abruptly at its inshore edge in a 6 to 8 foot bank to the strip level. Approach from seaward was across a 400 yard coral reef. The seaward edge of the reef was rough and broken, with numerous coral heads. The surface of the reef was fairly smooth, dry in parts at low water. At H-hour, about half tide, falling, the depth of water over the reef varied from 1 to 2 1/2 feet.

(7) Unloading.

Because of unsuitable landing area, the LSTs were unable to beach. This resulted in a loss of unloading time as it was necessary for the LST's to first discharge troops before commencing a systematic program of cargo discharge. The Engineer Special Brigade LSTs were ordered to assist, and at 1130 Commander 1st Flotilla SEVEN reported that his ships were approximately 40% unloaded. At this point the LST's which had promptly discharged their original cargo reported to assist in unloading the LSTs. Because of this, and because a heretofore absence of control over the LSTs was provided, the unloading proceeded at an accelerated rate. The unloading continued, and at 1740 all LSTs departed.

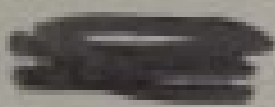
16. Enemy Reaction.

(a) Defensive positions and weapons.

As previously stated no defenses were encountered at the landing beach. However, from a point near the eastern end of KALINI strip to KUMIKON VILLAGE pill boxes, barbed wire entanglements and natural coral caves were found every few yards by advancing infantry. Positions immediately east of KALINI were largely in caves in the first coral terrace inland from the sea. These defenses were set up all the way from KALINI to KUMIKON strip and were designed both to repulse landings on the shore and to inhibit the seaward progress of troops. The positions held numerous light machine guns ranging from .30 caliber to 20mm. Two five-barrel machine guns were reported but not confirmed. 37mm guns were also reported. These caves would have been extremely difficult to knock out had they not been abandoned during the preliminary naval bombardment and in subsequent close supporting missions. These caves had the natural disadvantage of having fields of fire primarily to sea-

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was and being relatively weak on their flanks and rear. Japanese laborers reported five 70 or 75mm guns on KODAYOON ISLAND but only three had been taken by D+3 day. Stubborn resistance was encountered on both sides of the mouth of KODAI RIVER from mortars and light machine guns well emplaced in palm log pill boxes. These were finally cleared out by tanks. New and freshly completed palm log emplacements were found east of KODAYOON on D+3 day. These were hastily abandoned but indications were strong that construction had been started after the initial landings.

(b) Enemy opposition, ground.

Japanese resistance throughout was half-hearted and seldom, if ever, reached the fanatical heights experienced on other islands. No counter-attack in force was ever launched during the first days and the defending troops showed no intentions of making a final stand anywhere near the coast. Most observers agreed that not over 2,000 troops were present on the entire island.

(c) Enemy opposition, air.

There were no enemy aircraft observed in the area during the entire period of D-day and D+1.

17. Shore Party.

(a) Organization

The Shore Party comprised the following units:

50th Shore Battalion, M MB
50th Boat Co.
14th Amphibian Truck Co.
Co G, 27th Engineer Battalion (C)

with a total strength of 1645 men, and was commanded by Colonel G. W. Van den Berg, USA.

(b) Execution of Tasks

Assigned duties were carried out on D-day reasonably well but constant and increasing breakdown of LUMAs and

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LAMs slowed down unloading considerably after D-day. Unloading became a serious problem after D-day and probably will not be entirely corrected for a considerable period of time.

(c) Beach Areas.

Beach areas were well dispersed and there was little danger of serious fires resulting from bombings. Vehicles congested the vicinity of LAMBI strip for about two days but this problem diminished as the perimeter expanded.

(d) Beach Roads and Exits.

There was no need for construction of beach roads and exits due to previous enemy construction. Entryways and dispersal areas near the strip proved completely adequate. In D plus one a road was cut over the ridge overlooking the strip and the trail leading from Yellow Beach to LAMBI RIVER was improved sufficiently to handle truck traffic.

18. Beach Party.

(a) Organization.

The Beach Party employed consisted of three officers and seventeen enlisted, which is normal in this Force. It included a medical officer and three enlisted medical.

(b) Execution of Tasks.

The Beach Party was given, as its most important initial tasks, the early establishment of communications with the Attack Force Commander, and the expeditious beaching and unloading of the four LCTs of the 8th Wave, carrying tanks. Communications were established at 0855, and the tank carrying LCTs were completely unloaded by 0855. Thereafter, the Beach Party carried out its difficult tasks in an efficient manner. Twenty-two wounded and one dead were evacuated to medical LCTs.

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19. Military Operations on Beach.

With one exception the ground forces plan of attack was carried out almost on schedule. The one important exception was the failure to reach the second phase line on D-day. Throughout the operation the assault troops carried out their mission with determination and skill. At no time were they in difficulty and they demonstrated a high degree of competence. After D-day the coordinated use of artillery and tanks in support of infantry was excellent. Communications were reasonably good after the late afternoon of D-day. Considerable trouble with telephone communication was experienced on D-day due to Buffaloes cutting wires on the ground.

20. Communications.

(a) Communications during the operation were satisfactory. Communications were established between the Flagship, control vessels, rocket boats, LSTs and LCIs on VHF prior to H-hour and functioned effectively throughout the day. There was some delay in establishing communication with the Beachmaster due to difficulties in getting equipment ashore over the reefs. Initial contact, Headquarters ship to Beachmaster, was established at 0855 local time.

(b) Minor material casualties were encountered, however, flexibility of equipment and capable technical personnel eliminated any serious problem. The simplicity of shifting frequency on the SCR 300 VHF set is a great advantage for amphibious communications. In two instances failure of VHF fighter communications were reported. The material troubles encountered are not yet known as complete reports have not been received. The sets employed for this channel were SCR 522A. Air support control communications were otherwise satisfactory. Further tests are being conducted to improve the operation of SCR 522A VHF sets.

(c) One of the most serious problems encountered was the lack of circuit discipline on the boat control circuits. This is the first time circuit discipline has presented a serious problem. Immediate steps are being taken to eliminate this hazard. Circuit discipline on the TBS was unusually good.

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(a) Long Range point to point W/T circuits functioned satisfactorily although atmospheric due to thunder heads in the vicinity of the landing area made reception difficult at times.

(a) The problem of continuously supplying batteries for type SCR 300 equipment is still present but should be solved shortly by the receipt of Navy type 100 equipment. The practice of using EF equipment, which is powered from the ships line, for convoy maneuvering will become increasingly dangerous as we close with larger enemy bases. This problem can only be solved by the immediate procurement and installation of bureau authorized VHF FM equipment powered from the ships line or by wet battery, thereby permitting continuous operation. CMO serial 0197520 of 11 April 1944 listing type installations for ships, including landing craft, authorizes installation of equipment with characteristics similar to SCR 508, 608, 610 and 619 to provide adequate communications. The early procurement and installation of prescribed communication equipment in landing craft in accordance with CMO serial 0197520 is of utmost importance in order to provide adequate communications for subsequent operations.

21. Medical.

Surgical teams were embarked in LSTs 397 and 439. Total casualties evacuated on D-day were: Army, 1 dead, 21 wounded; Navy, 1 wounded.

22. Summary of Troops, Equipment and Stores Landed on D-day.

(a) The following totals were landed on D-day:

7,078 troops
477 vehicles, including
40 LTVs
53 DUKWs
23 Bulldozers
6 Medium tanks
2,247 tons bulk stores

(b) Returning LSTs had on board 4 vehicles, 208 drums of fuel and 1 MK 51 quadruple 50 cal AAM, without prime mover, which were not offloaded because to do so would have delayed the scheduled departure of all LSTs.

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-----23. Remarks.

The first resupply echelon arrived on D+2 day and reinforcing echelons will land at stated intervals thereafter until a total of 13,350 troops with necessary stores and equipment have been landed on the island.

24. Comments and Recommendations.

(a) The success of this operation was dependent upon the existence of almost ideal conditions of wind and sea at the objective area on D-day. Only in a perfectly calm sea could LCTs be expected to beach at the ragged edge of the reef and discharge the tanks and vehicles necessary to the military operations on shore and the development of the landing area for future

resupply. Fortunately, such conditions prevailed, permitting not only the successful initial landing but the landing of additional vehicles, from the tops decks of LSTs, by means of ramp to ramp unloading into LCTs. These additional vehicles were carried forward with little expectation of their landing. It had been the Attack Force Commander's intention to postpone D-day had unfavorable weather conditions prevailed. That the landing was executed on schedule must therefore be regarded as rare good fortune and not as a pattern for future operations under similar conditions.

(b) The DUKW is not as well suited for operation over coral reefs as the LVT. Many DUKWs, stranded on the ragged edge of the reef, were damaged and required towing services. Until exit roadways were developed, DUKWs could not carry cargo inland over the sandy cliff at the beach. Future operations of this nature should provide a larger proportion of LVTs.

(c) PCs were used for the first time as control vessels and proved to be much better suited for this type of work than SCs. Their relatively heavy fire power, particularly in automatic weapons, maneuverability, and speed reserve, render them especially effective craft for close inshore support.

(d) The demolition units commenced operations on the reef face as soon as the assault wave passed and continued throughout the day.

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(e) The LCI gunboats again turned in a spectacular performance with their rocket fire, discharging about 800 rockets into the immediate beachhead area, as the LVTs made their final run for the beach. While it is difficult to assess the destructive power of these projectiles it seems significant that in every operation in this theater where rockets have been used, enemy resistance at the beach has been negligible. While of doubtful value against dug-in positions, they prevent any above-ground movement. Their bursting zone is horizontal, rather than conical as is a bomb burst, and the concussion waves of bursting rockets were distinctly felt 1200 yards offshore. There is no doubt of their favorable morale effect on troops of the landing waves.

(f) The air support furnished by the 5th Air Force was considered to be the best example of coordination and timing yet achieved in the S.W.P.A. The bombing was very accurate. The assigned targets were well covered and with enough weight to destroy or seriously damage them. Communications of Support-Air were generally excellent throughout the operation. The Air Coordinator performed his mission in an excellent manner, and once more proved to be the most important link in the Support-Air Team. The Deputy Support Air Controller (Air Liaison Party) ashore appeared to be operating under material difficulties. The lack of sufficient power supply seriously hampered his effort and prevented the transfer of control of Support-Air from ship to shore until 1800, D-day.

(g) The bombardment in support of the landing was the heaviest conducted in this area to date. Approximately 2½ times the amount of ammunition required to neutralize this area was expended from H-80 until H-hour. Since the landing was a frontal assault on KAKIHI airdrome over coral reefs this expenditure of ammunition was justified to insure our troops getting ashore with a minimum of casualties. Through the splendid cooperation between the SFCs and the firing ships after H-hour, naval gunfire rendered valuable assistance to our troops ashore by repeatedly driving the enemy from prepared defenses, and dispersing his forces whenever they attempted to assemble for attack. The Army called for and received more naval fire in the five days subsequent to the landing than had ever before been delivered in any operation in this area over the same period of time. Naval gunfire played a major part in the success of the operation. It completely fulfilled its mission. The casualty score on D+6 day speaks for itself:- own forces killed 8, Jap known dead 410.


Subject: REDFOX Operation - report on.

25. Commendations.

Only the supreme efforts and untiring energy of all hands under most difficult conditions were responsible for the successful execution of the operation. The performance of LCTs in successfully unloading their own cargo, and then materially assisting in the unloading of LSTs was outstanding.

W. H. Fuchter

W. H. FUCHTER.

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HEADQUARTERS 503D PARACHUTE INFANTRY
Office of the Regimental Commander

APG 704
1 September 1944

SUBJECT: NOEMFOOR ISLAND (TABLETENNIS) Operation.

TO: C. G., U. S. Forces, APG 704.

MAPS: Special Map, Noemfoor Island, Dutch New Guinea, 1:63360
Special Map, Noemfoor Island, Dutch New Guinea, 1:20000, Kamiri
Drome, Andei, Menggari, Namber Drome, Central Noemfoor, Cape
Insomaken, Cape Aikar, and Wanara Sheets.

The 503d Parachute Infantry Regiment received its warning order re its participation in the NOEMFOOR ISLAND (TABLETENNIS) Operation on 28 June 1944.

The regiment was announced as ESCALATOR (Sixth Army) Reserve with the mission of being prepared to jump on call on NOEMFOOR ISLAND to re-inforce U. S. ground troops who were to land on 2 July 1944 in offensive combat against forces of the Imperial Japanese Army.

At the time of receipt of the warning order, a movement order was received ordering the regiment to move from its location at NOLLEKANG, DUTCH NEW GUINEA, to vicinity of EBELI'S PLANTATION, HOLLANDIA, DUTCH NEW GUINEA. This move was completed on 30 June 1944.

2200 freshly packed parachutes were ordered by ALAMO FORCE (Sixth Army) to be transported from our rear base at GORDONVALE, QUEENSLAND, AUSTRALIA, by air. These parachutes arrived at HOLLANDIA, DUTCH NEW GUINEA, on 1 July 1944.

Preparations for the jump consisted in complete inspection of all troops and equipment with the view of immediately replacing all shortages. The regiment was fully equipped and ready to move 1 July 1944. All troops were informed and familiarized with the jumping operation on 1 July 1944. Sand tables, maps, photos and orientation lectures were used to familiarize all troops with conditions of the terrain and enemy situation. Four (4) reconnaissance flights were flown over the area of the impending jump. The officers who participated in reconnaissance flights were Colonel GEORGE M. JONES, Regimental Commander; Lt. Col. JOHN W. BRITTEN, 2d Bn. Commander; Major CAMERON KNOX, 1st Bn. Commander; Major JOHN R. BRICKSON, 3d Bn. Commander; Captains HARRIS T. MITCHELL, JOHN B. PRATT and JOHN R. RICHMOND, and 1st Lt. WILLIAM T. BOSSERT.

Thirty eight (38) type C-47 airplanes were assigned the regiment from the 54th Troop Carrier Wing. The planes arrived at HOLLANDIA, DUTCH NEW GUINEA, the afternoon of 30 June 1944. On 1 July 1944, a practice flight was flown, stressing formation, speed and altitude. Each plane contained the officer who would jumpmaster that plane on the first day of the jump. Parking of the planes was arranged and all planes were taped and put in jumping condition by Air Corps personnel under the direction of the Assistant Regimental Operations Officer, 1st Lt. LAWRENCE S. BROWNE.

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At 1430 hr. 2 July 1944, verbal instructions were received from the Commanding General, ALAMO FORCE (Sixth Army), for the regiment to be prepared to jump at KAMIRI STRIP (TIPTOE), NOEMFOOR ISLAND (TABLETENNIS), on 3 July 1944 to re-inforce other U. S. ground troops.

Arrangements were made to have thirty eight (38) trucks at the regimental CP at 0300 hr., 3 July 1944, each truck numbered to correspond with a similarly numbered plane. The take-off was scheduled for 0630 hr., 3 July 1944. Having only thirty eight planes assigned necessitated jumping the regiment in three (3) elements. The 1st battalion and elements of regimental headquarters and service companies were to jump on 3 July 1944. The 3d battalion and remaining elements of regtl. hq. and service companies were to jump on 4 July 1944. The 2d battalion was to jump on 5 July 1944.

Personnel to jump reached strip at 0505 hr. and were at stations in the planes at 0615 hr. The first plane took off at 0630 hr. and the rest followed at thirty (30) second intervals. Planes rendezvoused over HUMBOLDT BAY, HOLLANDIA, DUTCH NEW GUINEA, until all planes were in formation.

The formation for the flight to the drop zone was column of V's of 12 planes. Upon reaching drop zone, the formation changed to flights of two planes each, echeloned to right rear. The distance between flights was six hundred feet with first flight flying at 400 feet and alternate flights flying at 450 feet.

The first plane commenced jumping at KAMIRI STRIP (TIPTOE) at 1010 hr., 3 July 1944. Troops proceeded to designated assembly points and awaited instructions.

Colonel GEORGE M. JONES, Regimental Commander; Major CAMERON KNOX, 1st Battalion Commander; and Captain HARRIS T. MITCHELL, Regimental Operations Officer, reported to the Commanding General, CYCLONE TASK FORCE, for instructions and the 1st Battalion was given the mission of taking over the perimeter defense around KAMIRI STRIP (TIPTOE) that was held by the 1st Battalion, 158th Infantry. The 1st Battalion, 158th Infantry troops were relieved and our forces were in position on the perimeter by 1530 hr., 3 July 1944. Regimental and 1st Battalion CP's were established at KAMIRI STRIP (TIPTOE).

On 4 July 1944, at 1000 hr., the 3d Battalion and the remainder of regimental headquarters company began jumping. The jumps were completed at 1025 hr. and the 3d Battalion Commander reported to the regimental commander for instructions.

The 3d Battalion was given the mission of relieving units of the 2d Battalion, 158th Infantry, on the EAST end of the perimeter about KAMIRI STRIP (TIPTOE). Our forces were in position at 1730 hr., 4 July 1944.

Our 2d Battalion, scheduled to jump on 5 July 1944, did not jump upon the recommendation of the regimental commander. Excessive injuries sustained on the two (2) previous jumps due to obstacles and condition of drop zone was the reason for the recommendation.

On 7 July 1944, Battery B, 147th Field Artillery Battalion, and Company B, 98th Chemical Battalion, (less one platoon) (4.2" mortars) were attached to the regiment.

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The 2d Battalion arrived by LCI at NAMBER STRIP (VERMOUTH) at 0930 July 1944. They were ordered to proceed overland to INASI and patrol area in that vicinity. They reached INASI 10 July 1944.

During the period 3-12 July 1944, units of the 1st and 3d Battalions vigorously patrolled to the SOUTH and SOUTHEAST from their positions in the perimeter around KAMIRI STRIP (TIPTOE).

On 13 July 1944, Company C was dispatched on patrol with the mission of contacting the enemy force and pushing them towards our 2d Battalion at INASI. At 1400 hr., 13 July 1944, the main body of the enemy was contacted. This force was estimated at 400 and armed with heavy MGs, LMGs and knee mortars. Information later received from PW states that the force was actually 1200 troops under the command of Colonel SHIMIZU. The enemy were entrenched on Hill 670 with a strong sniper screen and all automatic weapons sited. After engaging the enemy in a fire fight for 3 1/2 hours, Company C withdrew 300 yards to the NORTH, established a defensive position and called for re-inforcements. Companies A and B were sent as re-inforcements and were in position with Company C at 1845 hr. During the night, harrassing fire was placed on Hill 670 by Battery B, 147th Field Artillery Battalion.

14 July 1944, patrols were sent from the 1st Battalion to determine if the enemy was still in position on Hill 670. Our patrols received both rifle and automatic fire upon approaching the enemy position. Our patrols then withdrew and an artillery barrage was placed on Hill 670. Patrol activity then continued throughout the day attempting to locate the enemy flanks.

At 0700 hr., 14 July 1944, following an artillery barrage, Company B moved on to Hill 670. They encountered very light opposition and found that the main body had withdrawn during the night. A perimeter defense was established on Hill 670 and far reaching patrols were dispatched with the mission of again locating the main enemy force.

On 14 July 1944, Company B, 98th Chemical Battalion, (less one platoon) and Battery B, 147th Field Artillery Battalion, were relieved from attachment. The regiment was ordered to NAMBER STRIP (VERMOUTH) with the mission of securing the Island SOUTH of horizontal grid 60.

Battery A, 147th Field Artillery Battalion, at NAMBER, was attached to the regiment on 14 July 1944.

During the period 15-23 July 1944, the 1st Battalion continued patrolling to the SOUTH and SOUTHEAST from Hill 670 attempting to locate the main body of the enemy force again. The 2d Battalion at INASI was patrolling to the NORTH and NORTHEAST with the same mission.

On 23 July 1944, patrols of Company D and Company E, operating NORTH from INASI, again encountered the main body of the enemy. After following the enemy, who were employed in delaying action using a strong sniper screen, for two days, our troops were forced to return to base for supplies. Patrols were again dispatched but the enemy force was not contacted immediately.

Patrol activities during the period 24 July to 8 August 1944 continued in all directions from battalion command posts located at INASI, MENOEKWARI and NAMBER. Due to the dense jungle and tropical rains, patrols of any duration were extremely difficult. Only small groups of enemy were encountered and most

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contacts were made in the vicinity of INASI where heavy losses were inflicted upon the enemy.

On 10 August 1944, a patrol from Company G found a trail which indicated a large force had moved down it within the last twenty four (24) hours. This information was given the battalion commander who immediately dispatched Company G to contact the enemy force. Contact was made at 1500 hr., 11 August 1944. The enemy force, under Colonel SHIMUZU, was entrenched along a ridge SOUTHWEST of INASI. Their strength was estimated at approximately three hundred and fifty (350) and were armed with all types of small arms weapons. During the night 11 August 1944 artillery fire was placed on the ridge occupied by the enemy force.

On 12 August 1944, Company H was sent forward to re-inforce Company G. At 1000 hr., 12 August, our forces advanced upon the ridge only to find a covering force. Delaying action continued throughout the day with the main body not being contacted. Artillery fire was again placed against the enemy during the night by Battery A, 147th Field Artillery Battalion.

On 13 August 1944, contact was established at 0700 hr. and a fire fight continued throughout the day with the enemy employing all small arms in delaying action. Our forces were attacking throughout the day. Heavy losses were inflicted upon the enemy.

During this period units of the 1st Battalion were moved from the SOUTH to block enemy withdrawal to the SOUTH and WEST. Company A contacted units of the main body at 1730 hr., 14 August 1944.

From 14 August 1944 to 16 August 1944, clashes between patrols of 1st Battalion and covering forces of the enemy forces were numerous.

On 17 August 1944, the remaining elements of the enemy force were driven into a pocket with our forces on three (3) sides and the ocean on the other, in the vicinity of PAKRIKI. The main force was routed and an estimated twenty (20) enemy escaped. All reported heavy machine guns were captured during the encounter. Patrolling continued until 22 August when 1st Battalion less one (1) company was ordered to proceed overland to NAMBER.

On 21 August 1944, the Commanding General, CYCLONE TASK FORCE, directed that the regiment, less three (3) companies, would move to a new camp site near KAKIRI STRIP. This move was completed 23 August 1944.

The three (3) companies remaining at SOUTHERN part of the Island were Company D at NAMBER, Company I at INASI and Company C at MENOEKWARI SOUTH WITH units at WANSRA and MENOUPURI. These units continued patrolling until relieved by units of the 158th Infantry on 27th August 1944. They were then moved to new camp site near KAKIRI STRIP.

On 27 August 1944 one platoon of Company E was given the mission of relieving a platoon of Company F, 158th Infantry, at MENOEKWARI WEST, guarding a radar unit located there.

During the period 3 July to 31 August 1944, enemy casualties were:

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1087 KIA
82 POW

312 POW (Formosan)
9 Javanese liberated

The 503d Parachute Infantry casualties were as follows:

	<u>OFFICERS</u>	<u>ENLISTED MEN</u>
Killed	3	29 (2 at BIAK)
Died of Wounds	0	5
Wounded (Evacuated)	7	45
Wounded (Non Evacuated)	4	16
Injured (Evacuated)	4	60
Injured (Non Evacuated)	2	58
Sick (Evacuated)	9	152
Sick (Non Evacuated)	7	246
Captured	0	0
Missing	0	0
TOTALS:	36	591

The following observations were made and lessons learned during the operation:

1. PRELIMINARY PREPARATION FOR PARACHUTE COMBAT JUMP

a. Preparation. - Prior to D-Day every pilot participating should have training in dropping parachutists. A number of pilots dropping parachutists in this mission had not flown for a jump for a period of 12 months. Many had never dropped parachute troops. Lack of practice caused a feeling of uneasiness on the part of the pilots.

b. Jump Practice. - Parachutists should have had recent practice prior to the mission in participating in a tactical jump of at least the size of a company. The majority of jumpers on this mission had made only one jump within the 6 months prior to the mission. None of these jumps were in connection with a tactical problem due to the small number of planes that were ever available at one time.

c. Reconnaissance by Air. - It is most important that reconnaissance by air be made, and at such altitude that the texture of the terrain can be studied prior to D-Day. A study of air photographs does not give satisfactory information as to the texture of the terrain or of the obstacles on the ground to be encountered. Prior ground reconnaissance would be invaluable in selection of suitable jumping areas.

d. Air Strips. - Landing strips are unsatisfactory for jumping areas for parachute troops. The hardness of the ground results in excessive casualties due to the shock of impact of a parachutist under the normal combat load. Native gardens, kunai grass or scrub timber are satisfactory jumping areas.

2. TACTICAL INFORMATION AND PLANNING PRIOR TO JUMP

Warning order and necessary tactical information should be given to the parachute commander at least 2 weeks prior to D-Day in order that: (1) An exhaustive study can be made of all maps and photographs; (2) To determine

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detailed tactical loadings; and (3) The proper logistical plans can be made for the mission.

3. COMMUNICATIONS

Sound Power Wire. - Sound power wire type W130 proved to be the most satisfactory means of positive and dependable communication. The use of this wire with EE8 telephones up to 12 or 15 miles will give dependable communication. A complete network of telephone communication was maintained with this type wire during the entire operation. At one stage of active operations against the enemy, the regimental command post was able to converse with units of two battalions, 8 or 10 miles distant, which were closing on the enemy from opposite directions, and separated only by a few hundred yards. Fire adjustment for supporting field artillery by the same means was highly satisfactory, even though the distance to the impact area approached the maximum range of the guns. Radio communication with the 284 net proved very satisfactory. The SCR-511 radio was used up to a distance of five thousand yards in a voice net with the SCR-284. The SCR-536 radio proved entirely unsatisfactory in the wet heavy jungle.

4. EVACUATION OF WOUNDED

In jungle fighting large carrying parties of soldiers or natives are necessary to insure prompt evacuation of the wounded. Native carriers proved a great asset in this work when they could be induced to go near the front lines. The present litter is too heavy for satisfactory use in the jungle where long carries by foot are necessary in the evacuation of the wounded. A light canvas litter without side poles is considered satisfactory.

5. COMBAT INTELLIGENCE

a. Training of All Individuals. - The necessity in training each individual in the basic elements of combat intelligence was evident in this operation. On reconnaissance patrols vital information about the terrain and the enemy went unobserved. Few individuals on either reconnaissance patrols or combat patrols thoroughly searched the killed or found dead for vital intelligence material.

b. Value of Trained Intelligence Personnel. - The work of the battalion and regimental intelligence sections was excellent. The value of the work done by trained intelligence personnel cannot be overestimated.

6. COUNTER INTELLIGENCE MEASURES

a. Precaution should be taken in giving combat instructions over the telephone. Effectiveness of combat operation would have been jeopardized if Japanese had tapped our telephone wire. In giving combat instructions by wire the use of the PMC was not rigidly adhered to. No positive evidence of the enemy tapping the wires was discovered during the entire operation.

b. On the move of a battalion 8 miles cross country the number of food wrappers promiscuously thrown along the trail may have disclosed the approximate number of troops and the approximate time of the movement to an intelligent and observant enemy.

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7. HEALTH OF THE TROOPS

A. Prevention of malaria by taking proper dosages of atabrine prophylaxis during the operation, although troops were in isolated and scattered places during much of the time, proved satisfactory. Results should always be favorable if the individual is sold on the idea that the atabrine prophylaxis does work and suppresses malaria.

b. Skin Diseases. - Troops must be discouraged from going bare-foot or unclothed at any time in the locality of native villages or at water points where natives bathe.

8. SUPPLY

a. Resupply of Troops in the Jungle. - Resupply in the jungle is difficult by overland carriers. Combat efficiency and mobility of action of troops fighting in the jungle is directly dependent on the steady supply of food, water and ammunition.

b. Supply by native carriers or carrying parties of our own troops over long jungle distances was highly unsatisfactory. Aerial resupply of minimum requirements of troops fighting in the jungle will enable a freedom of action. Great difficulty was encountered in securing only one transport plane for a short period each day for re-supply of troops. In many cases pressure against the enemy could not be maintained due to the inadequacy of supply.

c. It is recommended that arrangements be made to supply parachute troops for 7 days solely by aerial re-supply. After that period where the smaller units are operating over a wide-spread jungle terrain a number of transport planes should be made directly available to the parachute commander for the purpose of re-supply.

9. TRANSPORTATION

As the parachute troops are primarily shock troops and are lightly equipped, arrangements should be made for a limited supply of transportation (jeeps and trailers) to be brought in when water transportation or air transportation is practicable. As prior arrangements had not been made for bringing in organizational transportation by boat, this regiment conducted the entire operation with practically no transportation.

10. WEAPONS

The Thompson sub-machine gun proved a favorite weapon in the squad for jungle fighting. A second tommy-gun per squad would have advantages. The 30 round TSMG clip in lieu of the 20 round clip is preferred. The 60 mm. mortar proved a particularly efficient jungle weapon where clearance could be obtained. Because of its reduced length, the M-1 bayonet for parachute troops is preferable to the M1905. The BAR proved itself a valuable aggressive weapon for parachute troops in fighting in the jungle. The carbine when fired, closely resembles the

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report of the Jap M-1 rifle. The carbine that never was a weapon with the rifle squad. For this reason the firing of the carbine in a fire fight proved very confusing. The M-1 rifle continued to be a favorite weapon. It is contemplated to replace the carbine within the squad by M-1 rifles. In several cases the machete proved a valuable weapon for quietly dispatching a lone Jap. American hand grenades proved their superiority over the Australian hand grenade because of its absolute water tight construction. A large percentage of Australian grenades would not detonate after being exposed to wet weather.

11. EQUIPMENT

a. Rifle and carbine carrying pouches now in use by this regiment (manufactured by our parachute maintenance section) proved unsatisfactory. The bulkiness prevented the individual from crawling properly. The standard rifle belt and carbine clip pouches are believed to be satisfactory replacements.

b. Jungle boots are not satisfactory foot gear for movement in heavy jungle with large rugged outcroppings of coral formation. The parachute boot is completely satisfactory foot gear under all conditions.

c. Because helmets interfered with the detection of various sounds of the jungle the helmet was not desired while patrolling. For this reason the individual soldier lost sight of the value of the helmet as protection against shell fragments of enemy field artillery and aerial bombs.

12. JAPANESE TACTICS

a. Individual Fighting. - On patrols, on meeting Japanese face to face along the trail, our men consistently out-thought and out-shot the Japanese. The reaction of the individual Jap seemed to be much slower than that of our soldiers. Japanese throughout this operation employed clever withdrawals with delaying action. On numerous occasions our troops upon meeting a Jap outpost position, consisting of one automatic weapon and 2 or 3 rifles, did not take prompt effective action to knock out this small force.

b. Determination of Enemy Troops. - Japanese proved a determined fighter, one who would not give up unless cornered. During the last 2 weeks of the operation the Jap resorted to cannibalism of our dead and their dead in order to prolong the resistance. The Jap appears to have a very high regard for the grenade and bayonet. These two weapons were always carried even by those who were not armed with a rifle. Lack of oil to keep their individual rifles in a good state of operation, contributed a great deal to the success of our troops at various times. In several fire fights the Japanese, upon becoming excited, seemed to lack judgement and control. In the employment of the heavy machine gun, the Juki, on two known occasions these guns were fired into the ground a few yards to the front without any apparent effort to traverse or search. Japanese defensive positions though hastily set up, appeared to follow a well thought out plan, consisting of well sighted automatic weapons on forward sloped hills of high ground, protected by rifles, with a ring of tree

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snipers several hundred yards in front of the main positions. Small outpost groups of one or two riflemen or sometimes an automatic weapon were usually found just inside the ring of snipers and covering the trail approaches to the positions. Cases were reported of outposts consisting of one or two unarmed porters who were apparently posted as a sacrificial warning of the approach of our troops. The tree snipers seemed always to permit our troops to advance and come under the enemy automatic weapons fire prior to opening their fire.

13. TACTICAL OBSERVATIONS

- a. Scouting and Patrolling. - Training in scouting and patrolling prior to the operation paid big dividends.
- b. Estimate of Situation. - Training of the small unit leaders to accurately estimate the situation and to evolve a specific plan of action prior to closing with the enemy cannot be overstressed.
- c. Combat Orders. - It was found that more training is required in issuing direct, clear orders by the junior officers and non-commissioned officers.
- d. Mission of Patrols. - Many patrols failed in their mission because they were not specifically informed of the requirements of their mission. Instructions were not clearly given as to whether the patrol was a combat patrol or a reconnaissance patrol.
- e. Reconnaissance. - Reconnaissance patrols were consistently too large and too few patrols were dispatched.
- f. Unnecessary Noise. - During several fire fights troop leaders and individuals engaged in too much shouting and unnecessary noise.
- g. Security. - Many small unit commanders, in establishing security during the halt placed the importance of concealment over that of fields of fire for his automatic weapons.
- h. Compass and Map Reading. - Too much training cannot be given in the use of maps and compasses and estimation of distances in jungle terrain.
- i. Infantry-Field Artillery Team. - As prior work with field artillery had not been engaged in, the effectiveness and accuracy of field artillery fire was first appreciated by our troops.
- j. Varied Tactics. - A definite routine should be avoided by a unit engaged in jungle fighting, in order to outwit the enemy. Every effort should be made to do something that he does not expect.
- k. Fire Discipline was excellent. Men were not prone to be trigger happy.
- l. Officers and soldiers displayed a great eagerness to close with the enemy throughout the operation.

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The co-ordinated use of a field artillery liaison plane and colored smoke released in the jungle at specified hours proved valuable in pin pointing the location of our troops.

15. EMPLOYMENT OF LIAISON PLANE

The field artillery liaison plane was widely used for terrain reconnaissance, location of our own men and enemy troops, emergency delivery drop messages, sound power wire, blood plasma, and food in limited quantities.

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