

Staff Ride Walk Book

Battle of Noemfoor Island

2 July-31 August 1944



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Instructor Notes – Battle of Noemfoor Island

Instructions: Instructors should read through the read-ahead documents before attempting to read these notes to fully understand the scenario.

These notes contain the detail / analysis of each stand to be used by the instructor. They describe both the talking points of the slides and those used during the virtual view.

Each stand is broken into a Description and Analysis section. The analysis can be done throughout the field phase of this staff ride, or it can be left until the end. It is only dependent on the instructor's preference.

Slides. Some of the slides are animated. Each “Click” represents a build of the slide when it is viewed in the “slideshow” mode. These builds are activated by a click of the mouse or remote and are annotated in this document by a bold red “Click #”.

Virtual View. Movement is important in the virtual view as it gives the students a three-dimensional perspective. Movement instructions are shown in **bold green text**. Pictures in this document are provided as an orientation (you do not necessarily have to duplicate these pictures). Movement instructions are minimal to allow the instructor the flexibility to move where / how he or she wants to go.

Suggestions. There may be some suggestions provided to the instructor within the notes. When there are, they will be in **bold orange text and underlined**. The instructor does not have to follow these suggestions, but they are there to assist.

Questions. There are questions throughout the staff ride you can ask the students. All the questions will be in ***bold blue text and italicized***. There are some potential answers provided for some of the questions and they will be in ***normal blue text and italicized***. You do not have to use any or all of these questions, the instructor can ask different questions depending on the training objective or the participation level of the students.

It is best to project the slides and the virtual view on separate screens, side by side. However, it is possible to teach on one screen and switch back and forth between the two views. It does not matter which side the slides or the virtual view is at, set it up however the instructor is comfortable with.

Virtual Staff Ride (VSR) EXAMPLE Timeline				
Stand	Duration (minutes)	Time		Notes
		Start	Finish	
Link-Up with Unit Online Prior to Start of VSR	30	0830	0900	
1. Importance of Noemfoor	10	0900	0910	
2. Opposing Task Forces	10	0910	0920	
3. Initial Assault by the 158th RCT	15	0920	0935	
4. Airborne Assaults by the 503rd PIR	20	0935	0955	
5. Kamiri Counterattack and Japanese Garden Fight	10	0955	1005	
6. Continued Pursuit of the Japanese	20	1005	1025	
7. Securing Noemfoor / Follow-On Missions	5	1025	1030	
Integration	~30	1030	1100	

Introduction / Title Page

A. This is where the instructor introduces himself / herself and provides a quick self-background for the audience. If there is anyone else assisting with this staff ride, the instructor can introduce them as well.

B. There are three phases to any staff ride: the preliminary study phase, the field study phase, and the integration phase.

- You already completed the preliminary study phase when you went through the read-ahead packet and if you did any additional research prior to today.
- This is the field study phase where we will take you through what happened and try to provide you with some additional information or a different way to look at how things happened.
- At this end of this staff ride, we will go into the integration phase. That is the “so what” to the things that happened and how those things can be applied today.

C. As we go through this scenario, remember, you already know what happens and how this ends, so it can be easy to point out what someone did or didn't do right. Keep in mind that you need to place yourselves in the various positions during the scenario knowing only what the participants knew at that point in time and from there, decide what decisions could have been made.

- We are here to have a professional discussion on the insights gained from this experience. Keep in mind that you need to place yourselves in the various positions during the scenario knowing only what the participants knew at that point in time and from there, decide what decisions could have been made.

D. Our staff ride will be conducted using the O, D, A methodology; orient, discuss, and analyze. Of those, the discussion is the most important part. Ask questions, our time here today is your time. I will ask questions throughout as well, not to embarrass anyone or to put them on the spot, but to help spur thought and dialogue.

E. This is discussion based, we are here to facilitate. We can take this discussion just about anywhere, so please feel free to ask questions.

F. Today we are going to look at the Battle for Noemfoor (**NOOM-FOUR**) Island, part of the New Guinea campaign of World War II. It took place between 2 July and 31 August 1944. Allied forces landed on the island to capture Japanese bases as part of their advance through the Pacific towards the Philippines. Sporadic fighting took place over the course of two months as the Allies secured the three airfields on the island and pushed the surviving Japanese troops to the southeastern coast. The island was later used to support operations around Sansapor (**SANS-A-PORE**) and on Morotai (**MORE-ROW-TIE**).

Agenda

- A. Here is the agenda that we are going to cover today.
- B. We will discuss the strategic and operational importance of Noemfoor **(NOOM-FOUR)**, analyze the initial ground and airborne assaults onto the island, and the engagement and pursuit of the Japanese.
- C. Finally, we will discuss securing Noemfoor **(NOOM-FOUR)** Island, the importance of those actions and what came after for both the 158th RCT and the 503rd PIR.

So, are there any questions before we begin?

Stand 1: Importance of Noemfoor

Visuals:

- 1-1: Operational Overview
- 1-2: Area of Interest
- 1-3: Noemfoor Island
- 1-4: Selection of Noemfoor
- 1-5: Challenges with Jungle Operations

Virtual Views: **1-1: Overview of Noemfoor Island**

Orientation:

- In the center is Noemfoor Island.
- To the far north is the Philippines.
- To the northeast is Biak **(BEE-ACK)** Island.
- To the east is Hollandia, which is where the 503rd PIR was located.
- To the south is Geelvink **(GILL-VINK)** Bay.
- To the west is Vogelkop **(VOUGE-EL-COP)** where there was a Japanese concentration at Manoekwari **(MAN-KNOCK-WAAR-RAY)**.
- Further to the west is Borneo **(BORE-NEE-OH)**.

Description:

Visual 1-1: Operational Overview

1. Here is a map of the Pacific and Far East. Let's look at the operational orientation of this theater.
2. We will start here at Pearl Harbor and go clockwise to Australia, the Philippines, Okinawa, Tokyo, China, the USSR, and finally the Aleutian Islands.
3. There are also two different Allied approaches toward Japan at this time.

CLICK 1: Blue line and text box appear.

- a. Admiral Nimitz was going across the Central Pacific as the Commander-in-Chief of both the Pacific Ocean Areas and of the Pacific Fleet.

CLICK 2: Blue line and text box appear.

- b. while General Douglas MacArthur was island hopping throughout the southern portion of the Pacific as the Commander-in-Chief of the South West Pacific Area.
4. The dashed red line shows the area still controlled by the Japanese when the fight for Noemfoor (**NOOM-FOUR**) Island begins.
5. The red box is the area that we are going to focus in on during the staff ride.

Visual 1-2: Area of Interest

CLICK 1: Text box appears for Aitape (EYE-TA-PAY**).**

1. On 22 April 1944, United States Army forces - primarily the 163rd Regimental Combat Team from the 41st Infantry Division - landed at Aitape (**EYE-TA-PAY**) to help secure the flank of US forces fighting around Hollandia (**HOLE-LAN-DEE-AH**).¹

CLICK 2: Text box appears for Wewak (WE-WACK**).**

2. As New Guinea was an Australian territory at the time, it was argued that there was a responsibility for them to clear the Japanese from that area.²

CLICK 3: Text box appears for Hollandia (HOLE-LAN-DEE-AH**).**

3. The loss of Hollandia made the Japanese strategic defense line to the west and all Japanese positions to the east untenable. Japanese forces to the west were then reconfigured to form a defense line through Biak (**BEE-ACK**) and Manoekwari (**MAN-KNOCK-WAAR-RAY**)³

CLICK 4: Text box appears for Wakde (WOKE**).**

¹ Wikipedia. "Aitape–Wewak Campaign." https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Aitape-Wewak_campaign. Accessed 11 Dec 2023.

² Ibid

³ Wikipedia. "Battle of Hollandia." https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Battle_of_Hollandia. Accessed 12 Dec 2023.

4. Following the capture of Wakde island, the island's airbase was expanded and used to support operations around Biak and in the Marianas. ⁴

CLICK 5: Text box appears for Sarmi (**SAAR-ME**).

5. Army forces landed unopposed in Maffin Bay near Sarmi (**SAAR-ME**) on 17 May. To secure the high ground overlooking Maffin Bay, troops were ordered advance overland toward Sarmi village about eighteen miles west of the beachhead.
6. With the high ground in American possession, Maffin Bay became a major staging base for all or parts of five different task forces – Biak (**BEE-ACK**), Noemfoor (**NOOM-FOUR**), Sansapor (**SANS-A-PORE**), and Leyte (**LAY-TAY**), as well as Luzon (**LOU-ZAHN**) in the Philippines. ⁵

CLICK 6: Text box appears for Biak (**BEE-ACK**).

7. The objective here was to capture Biak Island and construct airfields there. After its capture, forces were then used to support operations elsewhere in the Pacific. ⁶

CLICK 7: Text box appears for Noemfoor.

8. Finally, we have the island of Noemfoor (**NOOM-FOUR**).

CLICK 8: Blue arrow appears going from Noemfoor to the Philippines.

9. Allied forces landed on Noemfoor to capture Japanese bases as part of their advance through the Pacific towards the Philippines. The Allies secured the three airfields on the island which were later used by the Allies to support operations around Sansapor (**SANS-A-PORE**) and on Morotai (**MORE-ROW-TIE**). ⁷

Q: What is the strategic operational objective? Why are we island hopping – what is the purpose of it?

- *To advance back to the Philippines.*

CLICK 9: Blue circle appears around the Philippines.

⁴ Wikipedia. "Battle of Wakde." https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Battle_of_Wakde. Accessed 12 Dec 2023.

⁵ Drea, Edward J. New Guinea: 24 January 1943-31 December 1944. Center of Military History, United States Army, Washington, DC, 2019, pgs. 23-24.

⁶ Wikipedia. "Battle of Biak." https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Battle_of_Biak. Accessed 12 Dec 2023.

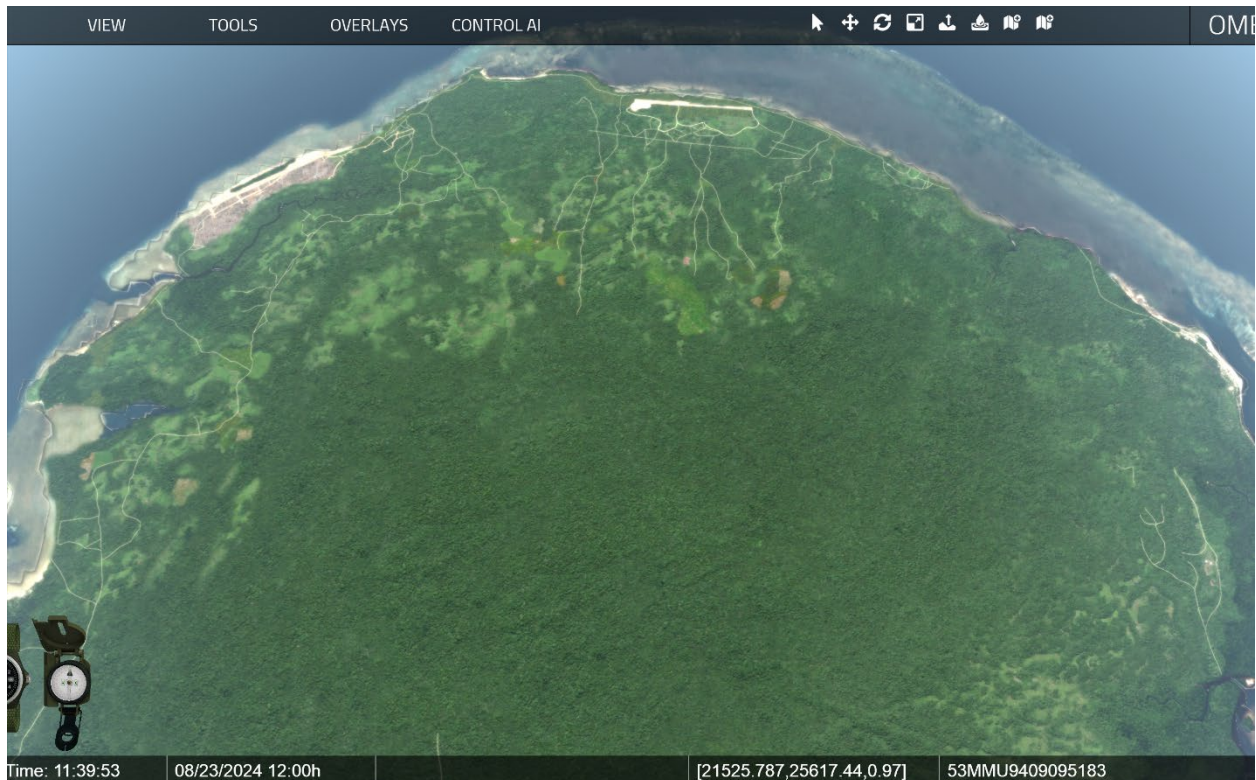
⁷ Wikipedia. "Battle of Noemfoor Island." https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Battle_of_Noemfoor. Accessed 15 August 2022.

10. Are there any questions regarding the operational overview before we continue?

Visual 1-3: Noemfoor Island

NOTE: Start with the virtual view below and then have the tech move around the island from the top going clockwise as you are describing the different locations.

Virtual View 1-1: Overview of Noemfoor Island



VIRTUAL VIEW 1-1: 21525.787, 25617.44, 0.97

Orientation:

- We are going to start at the top or northern part of Noemfoor and work our way around it clockwise.
- On Noemfoor (**NOOM-FOUR**) itself in the center north is Kornasoren (**CORN-NA-SORE-WREN**) airfield and the village of Sjoriboa (**SHORE-A-BOA**).
- On the east side of the island, you can see Broe (**BRO**) Bay, the village of Inasi (**IN-NAH-SEE**) and the village of Mandori (**MAN-DOOR-REE**).

- On the southeastern side of the island are the villages of Manoekwari **(MA-NOAK-WAAR-RAY)** South and Pakriki **(PACK-REE-KEE)**.
 - On the southwestern side of the island, you can see Romboi **(ROME-BOY)** Bay, Namber **(NAM-MER)** airfield, and Manoekwari **(MA-NOAK-WAAR-RAY)** West.
 - To the northwest is Kamiri **(KA-MERE-REE)** Village and Kamiri **(KA-MERE-REE)** airfield.
1. Approximately oval shaped, it has an area of 335 square kilometers (129 sq mi). It is mostly surrounded by coral reefs, except for some points on the southeastern coast. Also found on the southeastern coast are low, steep cliffs. ⁸
 2. The highest point on Noemfoor **(NOOM-FOUR)** is about 670 feet above sea level, its greatest north-south length is about fifteen miles, and its width is approximately twelve and a half miles. ⁹
 3. There were no anchorages of any significance, and the island was surrounded by a coral reef with a few small boat passages. Most of the coast on the north, south, and east portions of the island were covered in a mangrove swamp, but the terrain is somewhat broken in the south. The entire island is covered by jungle.
 4. Land communications consisted of native tracks skirting the coastline and connecting the many villages. ¹⁰

Visual 1-4: Selection of Noemfoor

Q: Just looking at the map, what reasons do you think Noemfoor was selected for capture?

1. Throughout 1943–1944, the Japanese built three airfields on the island, turning it into a significant air base.

CLICK 1: Red circle appears around Kornasoren Airfield.

2. The three fields were: Kornasoren **(CORN-NA-SORE-WREN)** Airfield, located toward the northern end of the island.

⁸ Wikipedia. "Numfor." <https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Numfor>. Accessed 15 Aug 2022.

⁹ Smith, Robert Ross. *United States Army in World War II: The War in the Pacific – The Approach to the Philippines*. Chapter 17: Operations on Noemfoor Island. Center of Military History: Washington, DC, 1953, pg. 397.

¹⁰ Smith, pg. 398.

CLICK 2: Red circle appears around Kamiri Airfield.

3. Kamiri (**KA-MERE-REE**) Airfield, on the northwestern edge of the island.

CLICK 3: Red circle appears around Namber Airfield.

4. And Namber (**NAM-MER**) Airfield, on the southwest coast of the island. Of these, Kornasoren (**CORN-NA-SORE-WREN**) was unfinished at the time of the battle. ¹¹
5. The object of the Operation TABLETENNIS (the codename for the invasion) was to seize and occupy the Noemfoor (**NOOM-FOUR**) Island area and then establish air and minor naval facilities for the purpose of supporting further operations to the west. ¹²
6. At the time of the battle, the area's strategic importance lay in its proximity along the planned Allied avenues of advance through the southwest Pacific and western New Guinea toward the Philippines and the capture of those airfields as part of that advance.
7. The Allies could quickly repair those fields for fighters and bombers which could cover the advance to the Vogelkop (**VOUGE-EL-COP**).
8. Noemfoor (**NOOM-FOUR**) was also used as a staging area for Japanese troops moving to reinforce Biak (**BEE-ACK**), which was invaded by the Allies in May 1944 as part of their westward advance along the northern New Guinea coast. ¹³
9. Intelligence indicated that enemy naval forces available in the area defending Noemfoor (**NOOM-FOUR**) Island comprised 1 CA (Heavy Cruiser), 1 CL (Light Cruiser), several DDs (Destroyers) and light escort craft. These were engaged in convoy duties. No enemy submarines were known to be operating in the area. ¹⁴

CLICK 4: Text box appears.

10. Specifically, Noemfoor (**NOOM-FOUR**) was selected for invasion for four reasons: ¹⁵
 - a. Allied commanders believed that Japanese troops equivalent to less than one battalion would be based there.
 - b. The Allies were already experiencing a shortage of amphibious vessels and Noemfoor (**NOOM-FOUR**) could be seized without a large-scale operation.

¹¹ Wikipedia. *Battle of Noemfoor Island*.

¹² Commander, Task Force 77. *Report on Noemfoor Operation*. Published on 16 July 1944.

¹³ Wikipedia. *Battle of Noemfoor Island*.

¹⁴ Commander, Task Force 77. *Report on Noemfoor Operation*.

¹⁵ Chant, Christopher. *Operation Cyclone*. <https://codenames.info/operation/cyclone/>. Accessed 15 Aug 2022.

- c. It also had the greatest number of useful airfields in the smallest area and.
 - d. Japanese air defenses in western New Guinea were almost negligible.
9. The lead unit for Operation TABLETENNIS was the 158th Regimental Combat Team (RCT); the "Bushmasters," an Arizona National Guard unit.
10. At the time the operation was given the green light, the 158th RCT was already fighting on Biak **(BEE-ACK)** Island.

Q: What difficulties do you foresee in trying to take the 158th out of the Biak fight while conducting a RIP / TOA with the incoming unit?

- *Not able to fully focus on either mission.*
11. 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.

Analysis:

- 1. What was the expected operational outcome for Operation TABLETENNIS?***
- 2. How do you think the weather and terrain would impact operations on Noemfoor?***

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Stand 2: Opposing Task Forces

Visuals:

- 2-1: Enemy Forces
- 2-2: CYCLONE Land Task Force
- 2-3: CYCLONE Naval / Air Forces
- 2-4: Invasion Preparation

Virtual Views:

- 2-1: Yellow Beach**
- 2-2: Kamiri Drome Area**
- 2-3: Looking at the Naval Task Force**

Orientation: None during this stand.

Description:

Visual 2-1: Enemy Forces

1. The Japanese began fortifying Noemfoor **(NOOM-FOUR)** Island in late 1943 as part of their western New Guinea defense network. ¹⁶
2. They hoped that the forces on this flat, jungle covered, circular island in Geelvink **(GILL-VINK)** Bay, north of New Guinea, would stop or at least delay General MacArthur's offensive drive toward the China-Formosa-Luzon region. ¹⁷

Q: What was the initial assessment of enemy forces on Noemfoor?

3. Considering it probable that the Japanese would expect an Allied invasion of the island, the ALAMO Force G-2 estimated that the Japanese garrison on Noemfoor **(NOOM-FOUR)** comprised 2,850 to 3,250 troops, with a combat strength of 1,600 to 2,000 men. ¹⁸

¹⁶ Sandler, Stanley (Editor). "World War II in the Pacific: An Encyclopedia." Garland Publishing, Inc., New York and London, 2001, pg. 439.

¹⁷ Ibid.

¹⁸ Smith, pg. 398.

4. The Noemfoor (**NOOM-FOUR**) Defense Detachment consisted of the headquarters of the 219th Infantry Regiment ¹⁹ and was commanded by *Colonel Suesada* (**SWAY-SAA-DA**) Shimizu (**SHE-MEE-ZOO**), who was also the commander of the 219th Infantry Regiment. ²⁰
5. The 3rd Battalion, 219th Infantry, contained the bulk of the combat troops, but there were also present *about 180 men of the 2nd Battalion, 219th Infantry*, and a like number from the 222nd Infantry, 36th Division, troops which had been unable to reach Biak (**BEE-ACK**). ²¹
6. Another unit, commanded by a *Major Mori*, but apparently under *Colonel Shimizu's* (**SHE-MEE-ZOO'S**) operational control, seems to have been a provisional organization containing mostly construction, transport, and airfield units, ²² numbering about 600 men. ²³
7. There were also 1,100 laborers on the island: a 600-strong Formosan (Taiwanese) auxiliary labor unit and 500 Indonesian civilian forced laborers. ²⁴

Q: What can you tell me about Colonel Shimizu?

8. Colonel Shimizu (**SHE-MEE-ZOO**) was born on 15 March 1894, making him 50 years old at the time of the battle. He had been promoted to colonel in August 1941 while he was attached to the *Kwantung* (**QUAN-TUNG**) Army. On 2 August 1943, he became the commander of the 219th Infantry Regiment. ²⁵
9. Shimizu (**SHE-MEE-ZOO**) had only about 2000 troops to defend the island, and as they had been on short rations for some time, their morale was low. ²⁶
10. 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 (**KA-MERE-REE**) Drome. ²⁷
11. Shimizu (**SHE-MEE-ZOO**) placed obstacles along the beach, including about 300 land mines improvised from bombs; but, being thoughtfully marked to protect Japanese troops, they caused Allied soldiers no trouble. ²⁸

¹⁹ Rottman, Gordon L. "World War II Pacific Island Guide: A Geo-Military Study." Greenwood Press, Westport, CT, 2002, pg. 243.

²⁰ Ibid.

²¹ Smith, pg. 400.

²² Rottman, pg. 243.

²³ Smith, pg. 400.

²⁴ Wikipedia. *Battle of Noemfoor Island*.

²⁵ Generals.dk. "Shimizu, Suesada." <https://generals.dk/general/Shimizu/Suesada/Japan.html>. Accessed 18 October 2023.

²⁶ Morison, Samuel Eliot. *History of United States Naval Operations in World War II, Volume 8 – New Guinea and the Marianas: March 1944-August 1944*. University of Illinois Press, Urbana and Chicago, 1953, pg. 136.

²⁷ Smith, pg. 398.

²⁸ Morison, pg. 136.

12. Interpretation of aerial photographs indicated that the Kamiri **(KA-MERE-REE)** area was possibly defended by ten coast defense guns, six heavy AA guns, seven medium AA guns, nine light AA guns and numerous machine guns. ²⁹
13. Most of the defensive weapons were concentrated near the northeastern end of the Kamiri **(KA-MERE-REE)** strip. No beach obstacles, other than the natural obstacles provided by the 400-yard coral reef, were disclosed. ³⁰

Virtual View 2-1: Yellow Beach



VIRTUAL VIEW 2-1: 11444.023, 23612.664, 70.104

14. Moreover, landing at YELLOW Beach had the advantage of placing the assault troops immediately on their objective, hopefully permitting a rapid seizure of Kamiri **(KA-MERE-REE)** Drome before the Japanese could recover from the shock of the naval and air bombardments.

Q: While that might be an initial advantage, what is the major disadvantage to coming ashore in this area?

- *That is where most of the enemy is templated to be located.*

²⁹ Commander, Task Force 77. *Report on Noemfoor Operation.*

³⁰ Ibid.

Virtual View 2-2: Kamiri Drome Area



VIRTUAL VIEW 2-2: 7430.143, 24171.446, 23.578

15. But at Noemfoor (**NOOM-FOUR**), the landing was to be made in the face of the enemy's strongest defenses, known to be located in the Kamiri (**KA-MERE-REE**) 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.

Visual 2-2: Cyclone Land Task Force

Q: What was the mission of the CYCLONE Task Force?

CLICK 1: The mission statement appears under the slide title.

1. 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 (**NOOM-FOUR**).³¹
2. The task force was initially tasked to prepare facilities for two groups of fighters and half a squadron of night fighters and later to expand these facilities for an additional

³¹ Smith, pg. 402.

fighter group, two squadrons of medium bombers, and two squadrons of light bombers.³²

CLICK 2: 6th Army, 158th RCT, and 503rd PIR patches appear.

3. For the Americans, Lieutenant General Walter Kruger, the commanding general of the 6th Army, was in overall command of the CYCLONE Task Force.
4. Major General Edwin D. Patrick, Commander of the 158th Regimental Combat Team (RCT) was the Land Component Commander.
5. General MacArthur's headquarters estimated that there were some 1700 Japanese soldiers on Noemfoor (**NOOM-FOUR**), but General Krueger suspected that the Japanese might reinforce the island at any time.³³
6. To play it safe, Krueger decided to use Patrick's 158th RCT for the assault, and then if needed, he could reinforce it with Colonel George Jones's 503rd Parachute Infantry Regiment.³⁴
7. Both were veteran units; the 503rd had jumped in Nadzab (**NAD-ZEEB**), New Guinea, the year before, and the 158th had recently conducted jungle fighting at Biak (**BEE-ACK**) and at Wakde (**WOKE**).³⁵
8. At the time of its assignment to the operation, the 158th RCT was engaged in fighting around Wakde (**WOKE**). To free it up for the assault, in mid-June, Kruger decided to replace the 158th at Wakde with the US 6th Infantry Division.

CLICK 3: Units supporting the 158th RCT appear.

NOTE: you do not need to list all the units if pressed for time, you can just group them together or make a blanket statement about the 147th FA BN, the 116th AAA Group, and the remaining support units.

³² Smith, pg. 402.

³³ Sandler, Stanley (Editor). *World War II in the Pacific: An Encyclopedia*. Garland Publishing, Inc., New York and London, 2001, pg. 440.

³⁴ Ibid..

³⁵ Ibid.

9. Major combat units supporting the 158th Infantry were: ³⁶

• 147th Field Artillery Battalion	476
• 116th AAA Group, Headquarters and Headquarters Battery	65
○ 487th AAA AW (Automatic Weapons) Battalion	743
○ 745th AAA Gun Battalion	645
○ Battery A, 222nd AAA SL (Searchlight) Battalion	240
○ 707th AAA Machine Gun Battery	82
○ 708th AAA Machine Gun Battery	84
• 1st Platoon, 603rd Tank Company	40
• Company B, 641st Tank Destroyer Battalion (4.2 Inch Mortars)	190
• HQs, 62nd Works Wing (Royal Australian Air Force) plus Detachments (including the 13th Survey and Design Section)	100
• 27th Combat Engineer Battalion	660
• 593rd Engineer Boat and Shore Regiment, less Boat Battalion	1077
• Company B, Boat Battalion, 593rd Engineer Boat and Shore Regiment	337

Total Combat Personnel from the Above Units 8069

10. The designated reserve unit was the 503rd Parachute Infantry Regiment.

Virtual View 2-3: Looking at the Naval Task Force

First, look to the left at the ships to that side, then to the right and look over there.



VIRTUAL VIEW 2-3: 4115.384, 23151.936, 0.691

³⁶ Sixth Army Headquarters. "Field Order 19 (N-12354)." ESCALATOR Headquarters, 21 June 1944, pg. 12.

Visual 2-3: Cyclone Air / Naval Forces

CLICK 1: 10 OG Patch and Scherger's info appears.

1. In mid-June, the No. 10 Operational Group (10 OG), **Royal Australian Air Force**, under Air Commodore Frederick Scherger (**SURE-GRR**), was designated the controlling Allied air force unit for Operation Cyclone.³⁷

CLICK 2: Four pictures of RAAF aircraft appear.

2. Scherger had three RAAF Wings (the 78th, 77th, and 81st) of Kittyhawk aircraft and one RAAF Wing (the 71st) of Beaufort Bombers assigned to his force.

CLICK 3: Five pictures of USAAF aircraft appear.

3. United States Army Air Force (USAAF) units attached to the 10 OG for the invasion had the 309th Bombardment Group as the command unit with the 58th and 348th Fighter Groups and the 307th and 417th Bombardment Groups underneath.
4. The No. 62 Wing of the **Royal Australian Air Force** (RAAF), a non-flying construction unit landed with US ground forces and was tasked with airfield improvement works.³⁸

CLICK 4: Navy Patch and Berkey's info appears.

5. Rear Admiral Russell S. Berkey was the Naval Component Commander.

CLICK 5: Three blue circles appear.

6. The overall Naval Attack Force consisted of three separate groups: the Main Body, Covering Force, and the Landing Craft-Tank - Landing Craft-Mechanized (LCT-LCM) unit.³⁹

CLICK 6: Ship pictures appear under each circle.

7. The Attack Force and the Main Body were under the command of Rear Admiral W. M. Fechteler (**FEKT-LER**), US Navy. The Main Body consisted of 15 Destroyers; 8

³⁷ Wikipedia. *Battle of Noemfoor Island*. https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Battle_of_Noemfoor. Accessed 15 August 2022.

³⁸ Ibid.

³⁹ Commander, Task Force 77. *Report on Noemfoor Operation*.

LSTs; 14 Landing Craft-Infantry (LCIs), including 3 rocket and 2 demolition LCIs; 8 LCTs; 4 Patrol Craft (PCs), and the tug SONOMA.⁴⁰

8. The Covering Force under the command of Rear Admiral Berkey, US Navy, consisted of 1 CA (Heavy Cruiser), 2 CLs (Light Cruisers), and 10 DDs (Destroyers).⁴¹

NOTE: A destroyer is a fast, maneuverable, long-endurance warship intended to escort larger vessels in a fleet, convoy, or carrier battle group and defend them against a wide range of general threats.⁴²

A heavy cruiser was a naval warship designed for long range and high speed, armed generally with naval guns of roughly 203 mm (8 inches) in caliber.⁴³

A light cruiser is a type of small or medium-sized warship that had a protective belt and deck. They served in a variety of roles, primarily as convoy escorts and destroyer command ships, but also as scouts and fleet support vessels for battle fleets.⁴⁴

9. The LCT-LCM unit consisted of 3 PCs, 5 LCTs and 40 LCMs commanded by the Army's 3rd Engineer Special Brigade. This unit was commanded by Lieutenant Commander J. S. Munroe, US Naval Reserve.⁴⁵

CLICK 7: Pictures of a DUKW and an LVT appear.

10. In addition, there were also Landing Vehicles, Tracked (LVTs) and DUKWs (**pronounced DUCKs**) used to bring personnel, equipment, and supplies on shore.
11. So as you can see, this is not just a joint task force, but a coalition, joint task force.

Q: What issues with this command structure do you see that could potentially impact this operation?

- *Ground forces not being familiar with airborne operations, capabilities, or limitations.*
- *Ground, air, and naval forces working together.*

⁴⁰ Commander, Task Force 77. *Report on Noemfoor Operation.*

⁴¹ Ibid.

⁴² Wikipedia. *Destroyer*. <https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Destroyer>. Accessed 8 November 2023.

⁴³ Wikipedia. *Heavy Cruiser*. https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Heavy_cruiser. Accessed 8 November 2023.

⁴⁴ Wikipedia. *Light Cruiser*. https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Light_cruiser. Accessed 8 November 2023.

⁴⁵ Commander, Task Force 77. *Report on Noemfoor Operation.*

Visual 2-4: Invasion Preparation

1. The landing force had received no regular amphibious training. The 158th Infantry Regiment was engaged in combat against Japanese forces in the SARMI **(SAAR-ME)** area until just prior to this operation, so that time was not available to conduct training other than an operational rehearsal. ⁴⁶
2. The naval forces involved were well trained and experienced in operations. Landing Vehicle Tracked (LVT) drivers were well trained and had participated in the assault on Biak **(BEE-ACK)**. DUKW **(pronounced DUCK)** drivers were inexperienced and untrained in assault operations. ⁴⁷

NOTE: DUKW is a manufacturer's code based on D indicating the model year, 1942; U referring to the body style, utility (amphibious); K for all-wheel drive; and W for dual rear axles.

Q: So, what can you do to help lessen the risk associated with little to no amphibious training?

- *Rehearsals.*
3. On 28 June (D-4 days) a rehearsal landing was conducted near Toem, Dutch New Guinea. Landing Ship - Tanks, control Patrol Craft, and any available destroyers participated, with troops of the two assault battalions (1st and 3rd – 158th) and the supporting artillery battalion (the 147th FA BN). ⁴⁸
 4. From the naval viewpoint the exercise was intended to perfect the control of the assault waves of Landing Vehicles - Tracked and DUKWs. In the rehearsal the timing and control of waves was excellent, although later waves of DUKWs tended to intermingle. ⁴⁹
 5. Several faults were discovered during the rehearsal, on the part of both army and navy personnel, which were later discussed in conference and corrective measures taken. ⁵⁰

⁴⁶ Commander, Task Force 77. *Report on Noemfoor Operation.*

⁴⁷ Ibid.

⁴⁸ Ibid.

⁴⁹ Ibid.

⁵⁰ Ibid.

6. A second rehearsal of DUKW formations was conducted on the afternoon of the same day to provide further exercise in formation keeping and control. Performance of the DUKWs was notably improved.⁵¹

Analysis:

1. Was there any reconnaissance done on Noemfoor before the 158th landing?

- *Krueger, commander of 6 Army, gave away tactical surprise by sending a large force of Alamo Scouts to Noemfoor on 22-23 June without informing Fechteler.*
- *The Japanese detected the Scouts and drove them off before they could gather much intelligence.*
- *The Japanese garrison commander, Colonel Shimizu, promptly concentrated his troops at Kamiri and began planting minefields.*

2. What was said about jungle fighting prior to the soldiers beginning to move inland?

3. How accurate were the maps distributed prior to the battle?

- *The maps were not accurate at all. They had been put together using overhead imagery, but since the island was mostly jungle, nothing could be seen making the maps practically useless.*

⁵¹ Commander, Task Force 77. *Report on Noemfoor Operation.*

Stand 3: Initial Assault by the 158th RCT

Visuals:

- 3-1: Naval and Air Support
- 3-2: Initial Assault
- 3-3: End of Day: 2 July

Virtual Views:

- 3-1: From the Attack Position Looking Toward Kamiri Drome
- 3-2: Landing Ships at YELLOW Beach
- 3-3: 1-158 Going West on Kamiri
- 3-4: 2-158 Going East on Kamiri
- 3-5: Tanks Unloading
- 3-6: Downed Japanese Aircraft

Orientation (only on the PowerPoint slide):

- To the north is Kornasoren **(CORN-NA-SORE-WREN)** Airfield with some identified enemy forces.
- To the northwest is Kamiri **(KA-MERE-REE)** Airfield along with more identified enemy forces.
- Just to the south of Kamiri **(KA-MERE-REE)** is Kamiri Village and to the southeast of that is an enemy location overlooking one of the Japanese gardens on the island.

Description:

Visual 3-1: Naval and Air Support

1. YELLOW 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.
2. Deep water on both sides of the boat lane, inside the reef, limited the lane to a width of 400 yards, opening out to 800 yards at the beach after clearing the deep water.

Virtual View 3-1: Moving Toward the Coast

Have the virtual tech begin moving forward from this position to where the landing ships are located at (Virtual View 3-2).



VIRTUAL VIEW 3-1: 4115.384, 23151.936, 0.691

3. From 0430 on 2 July, warships from the US-Australian Task Forces 74 and 75 - under Rear Admiral Berkey - bombarded Japanese positions on Noemfoor (**NOOM-FOUR**).⁵²
4. In response to the bombardment, Japanese antiaircraft guns briefly fired upon spotting aircraft until being knocked out by naval gunfire from Allied ships.⁵³
5. Immediately before the landing, an air bombardment, like much of the naval gunfire, was directed against the coral ridges and hills behind Kamiri (**KA-MERE-REE**) Drome.
6. It was believed that the most determined enemy opposition would come from positions in these ridges, and to neutralize these possible defenses, at approximately H-15 minutes, 33 B-24's dropped 500-pound bombs along the ridge lines.⁵⁴
7. The air attack ended 10 minutes before the landings, and the first wave of American troops found the Japanese defenders of the beach area still stunned by the attack.

⁵² Wikipedia. *Battle of Noemfoor Island*.

⁵³ Ibid.

⁵⁴ Smith, pg. 407.

The only delays were caused by the tendency of the lead units to stop to mop up pockets of resistance which should have been left to follow-up units. ⁵⁵

8. At the beginning of the naval bombardment on D-Day, *Colonel Shimizu* (**SHE-MEE-ZOO**) planned a general withdrawal to Broe (**BRO**) Bay on the eastern side of the island in the hope of being evacuated, but most of his troops fled to the hills.
9. Those who resisted broke into small parties and were cut off by Allied troops and were destroyed. ⁵⁶

Visual 3-2: Initial Assault

Instructor Note: All these pictures were taken on Noemfoor.

Virtual View 3-2: Landing Ships at YELLOW Beach



VIRTUAL VIEW 3-2: 9301.185, 5730.127, 0.672

1. H-Hour was set for 0800, 57 minutes after sunrise. This was later than normal and was done with the dual purpose of allowing more time for the prolonged naval gunfire bombardment and to ensure that sufficient light existed for accurate beach identification.

⁵⁵ Rickard, John. Battle of Noemfoor, 2 July-30 August 1944. http://www.historyofwar.org/articles/battles_noemfoor.html. Accessed 15 August 2022.

⁵⁶ Morison, pg. 139.

2. The latter consideration was of vital importance. It was considered doubtful that LVTs and DUKWs could negotiate the narrow deep lagoons which were inside the reef at both sides of the selected boat lane. ⁵⁷
3. Ships of Task Force 77 provided enfilade fires on the landing beach, two destroyers provided intermittent bombardment on KORNASOREN (**CORN-NA-SORE-WREN**), established communications with the two Shore Fire Control Parties (SFCPs), furnished fires requested by those parties, and provided intermittent bombardment on NAMBER (**NAM-MER**) airfield. ⁵⁸

NOTE: A destroyer is a fast, maneuverable, long-endurance warship intended to escort larger vessels in a fleet, convoy, or carrier battle group and defend them against a wide range of general threats. ⁵⁹

A heavy cruiser was a naval warship designed for long range and high speed, armed generally with naval guns of roughly 203 mm (8 inches) in caliber. ⁶⁰

A light cruiser is a type of small or medium-sized warship that had a protective belt and deck. They served in a variety of roles, primarily as convoy escorts and destroyer command ships, but also as scouts and fleet support vessels for battle fleets. ⁶¹

Q: What is the definition of a Forcible Entry operation?

- *These are operations to “seize and hold lodgments against armed opposition. A lodgment is a designated area in a hostile or potentially hostile operational area (OA) (such as an airhead, a beachhead, or combination thereof) that affords continuous landing of troops and materiel while providing maneuver space for subsequent operations.” ⁶²*

Q: How do you define a lodgment?

- *A lodgment is a “designated area in a hostile or potentially hostile operational area that, when seized and held, makes the continuous landing of troops and materiel possible and provides maneuver space for subsequent operations.” ⁶³*

⁵⁷ Commander, Task Force 77. *Report on Noemfoor Operation*.

⁵⁸ Ibid.

⁵⁹ Wikipedia. *Destroyer*.

⁶⁰ Wikipedia. *Heavy Cruiser*.

⁶¹ Wikipedia. *Light Cruiser*.

⁶² Joint Publication 3-18, *Joint Forcible Entry Operations*, Incorporating Change 1, 9 January 2018, Validated on 09 July 2021, Chairman of the Joint Chiefs of Staff Publications, pg. vii.

⁶³ Joint Publication 3-18, pg. GL-5.

Q: What makes a successful lodgment?

- *It involves securing the lodgment to protect the force and ensure the continuous landing of personnel and materiel*
- *organizing the lodgment to support the increasing flow of forces and logistic resource requirements*
- *and expanding the lodgment, as required to support the joint force in preparing for and executing follow-on operations.*⁶⁴

Virtual View 3-3: 1-158 Going West on Kamiri



VIRTUAL VIEW 3-3: 6503.193, 25039.726, 6.736

CLICK 1: 1-158 and 2-158 icons move to Yellow Beach.

4. At 0800 on 2 July, the 158th RCT were taken up to the beach by TF 77 under Rear Admiral Fechteler (**FECT-LER**).⁶⁵ There, the assault riflemen of the 1st and 2nd Battalions, 158th Infantry, dismounted, the 1st Battalion went to the west and the 2nd went to the east.⁶⁶
5. American newspapers later reported "almost no loss" of troops before reaching the shore. Shimizu's (**SHE-MEE-ZOO'S**) force had largely retired inland before the US landing.⁶⁷

⁶⁴ Joint Publication 3-18, pg. IV-7.

⁶⁵ Wikipedia. *Battle of Noemfoor Island*.

⁶⁶ Smith, pg. 407.

⁶⁷ Wikipedia. *Battle of Noemfoor Island*.

6. There had been extensive Japanese defensive preparations in the Kamiri (KA-MERE-REE) area including wire entanglements, trenches, dugouts, and prepared positions covering the Allied avenues of advance, but there was little resistance remaining at Kamiri (KA-MERE-REE) Airfield and the area was quickly secured as the assaulting infantry cleared the area. ⁶⁸
7. A captured *Japanese lieutenant* stated that they had prepared defenses and registered weapons 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.
8. The potentially hazardous landing at Noemfoor (NOOM-FOUR) was thus accomplished practically without opposition. ⁶⁹
9. An amplifying report on the operation against Noemfoor (NOOM-FOUR) stated that the landing of the 158th Infantry Regiment was successfully effected [sic] at 0800 (K) (local time) 2 July; was covered by 1 Heavy Cruiser, 2 Light Cruisers, and 10 Destroyers; extremely heavy air support was provided before, during, and after the landing by numerous heavy, medium, and attack bombers and fighters. The first troops landed without opposition other than enemy mortar fire from the interior. The landing force commander assumed control at 1025. Kamiri (KA-MERE-REE) Airdrome had been occupied south to the river. Our casualties have been very light, reported as 2 killed, 22 wounded. Thus far there has been no enemy air reaction to the operation. ⁷⁰

CLICK 2: HQs 158th icon moves to Yellow Beach.

10. General Patrick landed and assumed command ashore at 1025. The 158th had met little resistance and quickly seized the airstrip. The Americans took a number of prisoners during the initial assault. Even so, Patrick worried about conflicting interrogation reports, one of which placed Japanese strength as high as 7000 men. ⁷¹
11. Shortly afterward, he sent a message to Alamo headquarters requesting that the 503rd Parachute Infantry Regiment to reinforce the Cyclone Task Force; for prisoners taken during the morning indicated that there were more Japanese on the island than had been expected – an error, as it turned out. ⁷²
12. Early unloading was slowed somewhat until bulldozers could cut access points through the sand bank up to the air strip level. Some supplies were landed on the

⁶⁸ Wikipedia. *Battle of Noemfoor Island*.

⁶⁹ Craven, Wesley Frank, and James Lea Cate. *The Army Air Forces in World War II; Volume Four: The Pacific: Guadalcanal to Saipan; August 1942 to July 1944*. Office of Air Force History, Washington, DC., 1983, pg. 658.

⁷⁰ Nimitz, Chester W. Command Summary of Fleet Admiral Chester W. Nimitz, USN (Nimitz "Graybook") – Volume 5 (1 January 1944-31 December 1944.) United States Naval War College, Newport, RI, 2013.

⁷¹ Sandler, Stanley (Editor). "World War II in the Pacific: An Encyclopedia."

⁷² Morison, pg. 139.

narrow beach itself, but the bulk of them, and all vehicles, were moved up onto the strip level and dispersed there. ⁷³

Virtual View: Raise up to see the Kamiri River

13. On the western flank the 1st Battalion, 158th Infantry, encountered less opposition and had no difficulty securing a low hill off the southwest end of Kamiri **(KA-MERE-REE)** Drome. ⁷⁴

14. 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 **(KA-MERE-REE)** River. ⁷⁵

Virtual View 3-4: 2-158 Going East on Kamiri



VIRTUAL VIEW 3-4: 16673.607, 43331.184, 0.711

15. First resistance was encountered by the 2nd Battalion about 500 yards from the eastern end of Kamiri **(KA-MERE-REE)** Drome, when without warning about forty Japanese ran out of a cave in the ledge and began milling around in a rather aimless fashion. ⁷⁶

16. Showing no tendency either to surrender or to flee, the Japanese were killed by automatic and rifle fire.

⁷³ Commander Special Service Unit (CTU 77.3.7). Report of Operations; Capture and Occupation of Kamiri Airdrome, Noemfoor Island, Netherlands New Guinea, 2 July 1944. Published on 10 July 1944.

⁷⁴ Smith, pg. 408.

⁷⁵ Ibid.

⁷⁶ Ibid.

17. There was little organized resistance from those positions, but the 2nd Battalion, advancing slowly, halting its attack to mop up each cave, dugout, and foxhole. ⁷⁷

Virtual View 3-5: Tanks Unloading



VIRTUAL VIEW 3-5: 6283.854, 27155.364, 0.754

CLICK 3: 3-158th icon moves to Yellow Beach.

18. Meanwhile the 3rd Battalion, 158th Infantry, had come ashore. It marched rapidly westward after the 2nd and joined the latter unit in the mopping-up operations along the east end of the airstrip. ⁷⁸

Virtual View: Raise up to see the Kamiri River

19. Upon the arrival of the 3rd Battalion, most of the 2nd turned south from the field toward the Kamiri **(KA-MERE-REE)** River, meeting no opposition on its way over more ridges and through dense jungle to the north bank of the tidal stream. ⁷⁹
20. Kamiri **(KA-MERE-REE)** was captured within hours of the landing. Reports indicated that approximately 45 Japanese soldiers were killed, and about 30 Japanese planes

⁷⁷ Smith, pg. 408.

⁷⁸ Ibid.

⁷⁹ Ibid.

captured, although all of these were damaged because of the earlier bombardment and bombing.⁸⁰

Virtual View 3-6: Downed Japanese Aircraft



VIRTUAL VIEW 3-6: 10635.919, 6058.139, 0.756

Visual 3-3: End of Day: 2 July

CLICK 1: 147th FA BN icon appears.

1. The 105mm howitzers of the 147th Field Artillery Battalion were brought ashore and were in position by 1100, ready to provide hasty support to the 158th Infantry; registration for more accurate fire was completed by 1145.⁸¹

CLICK 2: 116th AAA GP icon appears.

2. Antiaircraft artillery units began coming ashore about 0810, and all were landed and set up to defend the beachhead by 1600.⁸²

⁸⁰ Wikipedia. *Battle of Noemfoor Island*.

⁸¹ Smith, pg. 409.

⁸² Ibid.

CLICK 3: Secure barrier icon wipes in from left to right.

3. 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 **(KA-MERE-REE)** River. ⁸³

CLICK 4: Text box fades in.

4. By 1750, when unloading was stopped for the day, 7100 troops, nearly 500 vehicles, and 2250 tons of supplies had been discharged and five of the eight LSTs had been completely unloaded. ⁸⁴
5. Despite extensive enemy defensive preparations in the Kamiri **(KA-MERE-REE)** Drome area, the CYCLONE Task Force's losses on D-Day were only 3 men killed, 19 wounded, and 2 injured.
6. The Japanese suffered much more heavily. About 115 were killed or found dead and 3 were captured.
7. Plans for 3 July were to institute patrolling designed to locate the main body of Colonel Shimizu's **(SHE-MEE-ZOO'S)** Noemfoor **(NOOM-FOUR)** Detachment.
8. The 2nd and 3rd Battalions, 158th Infantry, were to continue eastward toward Kornasoren **(CORN-NA-SORE-WREN)** Drome. These units began moving at 0900 on the 3rd. ⁸⁵
9. The 3rd Battalion was temporarily delayed at a mine field which the 27th Engineers cleared, but advanced over 1,800 yards by late afternoon. Several well-prepared defensive positions, situated both to defend the beach and prevent lateral movement between Kamari **(KA-MERE-REE)** and Kornasoren **(CORN-NA-SORE-WREN)** Dromes, were found, but none was manned by the Japanese. ⁸⁶
10. On the western flank, the 1st Battalion patrolled south of the Kamiri **(KA-MERE-REE)** River but located only a few enemy stragglers.
11. A total of 107 sorties were flown on D-Day and 189 tons of bombs were dropped on targets assigned by the support air controllers. ⁸⁷
12. The Combat Air Patrol was flown by P-38s without incident. The P-61 night fighters provided cover 45 minutes before sunrise and 45 minutes after sunset. ⁸⁸

⁸³ Smith, pg. 408.

⁸⁴ Morison, Samuel Eliot. History of United States Naval Operations in World War II, Volume 8 – New Guinea and the Marianas: March 1944-August 1944. University of Illinois Press, Urbana and Chicago, 1953.

⁸⁵ Smith, pg. 411.

⁸⁶ Ibid..

⁸⁷ Commander, Task Force 77. *Report on Noemfoor Operation*.

⁸⁸ Ibid..

13. There was no need for construction of beach roads and exits due to previous enemy construction. Taxiways and dispersal areas near the strip proved to be completely adequate.⁸⁹

Q: What does this help us transition to?

- *Quicker clearing of the island, an almost immediate improvement of the landing strips, and the ability to use those airfields as the Allies continued to push toward the Philippines.*

Analysis:

- 1. How well did the various branches of the Allied military (army, navy, air force) coordinate during the battle?***
- 2. How effective was the pre-invasion bombardment in neutralizing Japanese defenses?***
- 3. What was the role of naval support in the success of the Allied invasion?***
- 4. How do the seven current domains (land, sea, air, sub-surface, cyberspace, and space) apply to an operation like this today?***

⁸⁹ Commander, Task Force 77. *Report on Noemfoor Operation.*

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Stand 4: Airborne Assaults by the 503rd PIR

Visuals:

- 4-1: US Army Airborne Ops
- 4-2: 1-503rd PIR Airborne Assault – 3 July
- 4-3: Video of 503rd Jump
- 4-4: 1-503rd PIR Airborne Assault – 3 July
- 4-5: End of Day: 3 July
- 4-6: 3-503rd PIR Airborne Assault – 4 July
- 4-7: End of Day: 4 July

Virtual Views:

- 4-1: Kamiri Top View**
- 4-2: Kamiri Airstrip Looking Up at the Aircraft**
- 4-3: Air View around the Airstrip with Obstacles**
- 4-4: View From 2nd Battalion**

Video: 503rd PIR Jump on Noemfoor (Embedded on Visual 4-3).

Orientation: Done during the description with Visual 4-2.

Description:

Virtual View 4-1: Kamiri Top View

While the facilitator is discussing Slide 4-1 (US Army Airborne Ops), have the virtual tech move to the location shown in Virtual View 4-1 (Kamiri Top View). This will give the audience the chance to see the drop zone area around Kamiri one more time before we go into the discussion and show the video of the actual drop.



VIRTUAL VIEW 4-1: 7430.143, 24171.446, 23.578

Visual 4-1: US Army Airborne Ops

1. Before we talk about this specific airborne operation, let's look at the Army's experience with airborne operations prior to this.
2. Up to this time, the United States Army had only completed five other airborne operations; four in North Africa and Europe and one in the Pacific.
3. Airborne operations in the Pacific and Far East were not as extensive as those in the European and Mediterranean theaters. Tactical drops were on a scale of not more than a regimental combat team in any one operation.⁹⁰

CLICK 1: Text wipes in from left.

4. The first airborne operation took place on 8 November 1942 as part of Operation TORCH in North Africa. It was conducted by the 2nd BN, 509th PIR.

CLICK 2: Text wipes in from left.

⁹⁰ Huston, pg. 219.

5. The second took place on 9-10 July 1943 as part of Operation HUSKY, the airborne jump onto Sicily. This was conducted by two parachute infantry regiments: the 504th PIR and the 505th PIR.

CLICK 3: Text wipes in from left.

6. The third operation happened on 5 September 1943, when the 503rd Parachute Infantry Regiment jumped at the Nadzab airfield in New Guinea as part of the Lae campaign. **This was the first airborne operation in the Pacific.**
7. (At Nadzab) the three parachute infantry battalions dropped simultaneously. The drop was completed in 2-1/2 minutes while the planes flew in at minimum altitudes. The paratroopers found little resistance on the ground, but three deaths and a number of fractures occurred in the jump).⁹¹

CLICK 4: Text wipes in from left.

8. The next airborne operation happened just eight days later on 13 September 1943 when the 504th PIR, 505th PIR, and the 509th Parachute Infantry Battalion (PIB) jumped onto Salerno as a part of Operation AVALANCHE.

CLICK 5: Text wipes in from left.

9. The next airborne operation took place nearly nine months later. This was Operation NEPTUNE (the airborne portion of the Normandy invasion) that took place on 6 June 1944 and involved both the 82nd and 101st Airborne Divisions.

CLICK 6: Text wipes in from left.

10. The only parachute operation in the Pacific area during 1944 was the drop of the 503rd Parachute Infantry on Noemfoor (**NOOM-FOUR**) Island off the northwest coast of New Guinea on 3 and 4 July to reinforce the ground attack of the 158th Regimental Combat Team.⁹²

⁹¹ Huston, pg. 220.

⁹² Huston, pg. 224.

Visual 4-2: 503rd PIR Airborne Assaults – 3 July

Instructor Note: All these pictures were taken on Noemfoor.

Orientation:

- To the top right of the slide is Kornasoren **(CORN-NA-SORE-WREN)** Airfield with some identified enemy forces.
 - Along the route between Kornasoren **(CORN-NA-SORE-WREN)** and Kamiri **(KA-MERE-REE)** are some more identified enemy locations.
 - To the northwest is Kamiri **(KA-MERE-REE)** Airfield along with more identified enemy forces.
 - Just to the south of Kamiri **(KA-MERE-REE)** is Kamiri Village and to the southeast of that is an enemy location overlooking one of the Japanese gardens on the island.
1. According to author Chris McNab, “Airborne operations are often what we refer to as an example of “combined operations”, the coordination of aircraft (both those deploying the paratroopers and those providing supporting escort and ground-attack sorties), airborne infantry and ground forces in one carefully timetabled operation. If a single element of the whole should fall out of synch with the others, the whole enterprise can end in disaster.”⁹³
 2. The regiment was fully equipped and ready to move on 1 July 1944. All troops were informed and familiarized with the operation. Sand tables, maps, photos, and orientation lectures were used to familiarize all troops with conditions of the terrain and enemy situation.⁹⁴
 3. Thirty-eight C-47 airplanes were assigned to the regiment from the 54th Troop Carrier Wing. The planes arrived at Hollandia, on the afternoon of 30 June 1944. On 1 July 1944, a practice flight was flown, stressing formation, speed, and altitude.
 4. 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.⁹⁵

⁹³ McNab, Chris. “The Paratrooper Training Pocket Manual 1939-45.” Casemate Publishers, Oxford & Philadelphia, 2019, pg. 127.

⁹⁴ Headquarters, 503rd Parachute Infantry. *Noemfoor Island (Table Tennis) Operation*. Published on 1 September 1944, pg. 3.

⁹⁵ Ibid.

5. At 1430 on 2 July 1944, verbal instructions were received for the regiment to be prepared to jump at Kamiri **(KA-MERE-REE)** Strip, Noemfoor **(NOOM-FOUR)** Island, on 3 July 1944 to reinforce US ground troops. ⁹⁶
6. Patrick had requested the paratroopers based on mistaken intelligence from prisoner interrogations that stated a force of 3000 Japanese reinforcements had landed on Noemfoor **(NOOM-FOUR)** a week before the Allied landings. ⁹⁷

Q: What is the mission of a reserve force?

- *Commanders employ their reserves to exploit success or prevent failure. A reserve provides the unit flexibility by responding to unexpected situations and enables friendly forces to exploit or regain the initiative quickly because it is an uncommitted force.* ⁹⁸

7. The 503rd Parachute Infantry was ordered to parachute on to the secured Kamiri **(KA-MERE-REE)** Airdrome to reinforce the ground troops because of the unknown situation as to enemy strength and to speed up the island's occupation. ⁹⁹
8. However, because of a shortage of transport aircraft, only one battalion a day would be dropped between 3 and 5 July. ¹⁰⁰
9. The following day, 3 July, as a precaution against Japanese resistance elsewhere on the island, the 1st Battalion of the regiment began dropping onto the island. ¹⁰¹

Visual 4-3: 503rd PIR Airborne Assaults – 3 July

SHOW THE 503RD PIR JUMP ON NOEMFOOR. NOTE THAT THERE IS NO SOUND WITH THE VIDEO.

Visual 4-4: 503rd PIR Airborne Assaults – 3 July

CLICK 1: 1-503 icon jumps onto Noemfoor.

⁹⁶ Headquarters, 503rd Parachute Infantry, pg. 4.

⁹⁷ Pacific War Online Encyclopedia. *Noemfoor*. <http://pwencycl.kgbudge.com/N/o/Noemfoor.htm>. Accessed 15 Aug 22.

⁹⁸ US Army. *Army Field Manual 3-90 Tactics*. Publication dated 1 May 2023. Department of the Army, Washington, DC, 2023, pg. 1-16.

⁹⁹ Rottman, pg. 245.

¹⁰⁰ Ibid.

¹⁰¹ Wikipedia. *Battle of Noemfoor Island*.

10. At approximately 0930, Colonel Jones thought to himself that they seemed “pretty low for a drop” but attributed it to the fact that they were over smooth water and he could be deceived as his jump altitude was only four hundred feet.¹⁰²
11. According to Charles Rambo, “As we approached the drop zone, I noticed that the plane was dangerously low to the ground, but I assumed that we would climb to the standard jump altitude of 300 feet. This didn’t happen, the green light went on and we jumped at the unsafe jump altitude of 150 feet. Those of us at the rear jumped even lower.”¹⁰³
12. He further recounted, “I landed on the airstrip that was made from crushed compacted coral and broke my ankle. That day we had quite a few casualties. In our plane alone, Lane (doctor), Donovan (S-3) and I all broke our ankles. The three of us along with many other members of the Regiment were evacuated by LST to a hospital at Finchaven.”¹⁰⁴
13. The parachute drop was widely scattered, and the paratroopers encountered no enemy resistance, as the engineers already were working on the airfield where they landed.¹⁰⁵

Virtual View 4-2: Kamiri Airstrip Looking Up at the Aircraft



VIRTUAL VIEW 4-2: 25675.182, 31825.335, 0.658

¹⁰² Flanagan, Jr, Edward M. *Corregidor: The Rock Force Assault, 1945*. Presidio Press, Novato, CA, 1988, pg. 137.

¹⁰³ Rambo, Charles. “Drop Zone - Noemfoor Island.” <http://www.thedropzone.org/pacific/noemfoor.html>. Accessed 15 Aug 22.

¹⁰⁴ Ibid.

¹⁰⁵ Huston, James A. *Out of the Blue*. Purdue University Studies, West Lafayette, IN, 1972.

14. The First Battalion of the 503rd Parachute Regiment dropped over Kamiri (**KA-MERE-REE**) airstrip from aircraft flying two abreast, but the airstrip had not been cleared of vehicles and numerous paratroopers were injured by landings on top of bulldozers, trucks, and other vehicles. ¹⁰⁶
15. The two lead planes also came in at too low an altitude, due to faulty altimeters, and the parachutes of their passengers barely had time to deploy before the passengers hit the hard coral runway. ¹⁰⁷
16. The first ten C-47s approached between 175-400 feet (53-122 meters), too low for safe jumping. ¹⁰⁸

Virtual View 4-3: Air View around the Airstrip with Obstacles



VIRTUAL VIEW 4-3: 10757.1, 19087.073, 0.66

17. 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. ¹⁰⁹

¹⁰⁶ Pacific War Online Encyclopedia. *Noemfoor*. <http://pwencycl.kgbudge.com/N/o/Noemfoor.htm>. Accessed 15 Aug 22.

¹⁰⁷ Ibid.

¹⁰⁸ World War 2 Database. 1st Battalion, 503rd Parachute Regiment Lands on Kamiri Airfield. <https://worldwar2database.com/gallery/wwii1325?page=1>. Accessed 15 Aug 22

¹⁰⁹ Smith, pg. 415.

18. 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. ¹¹⁰

Q: What compelling reasons were there to have the 1/503rd jump on 3 July?

- *Possibility of more enemy troops than initially thought.*
- *Help in clearing the island faster.*

19. Not all of the landings were bad ones. Soldier Chet Nycum recalled, "After what now seemed to be short flight, we were given the order to stand up and hook up. The plane began losing altitude, ultimately dropping to, I believe, 500 feet." ¹¹¹

20. "With my Tommy gun strapped to my wrist, I went out the door, the number three man in the string. My chute popped open, and I had a brief moment to look over the area as I descended. I could see that the ocean was about 500 feet from me to the east. I hit the ground near the center of the runway, and it was a good landing, no injury." ¹¹²

Visual 4-5: End of Day: 3 July

CLICK 1: 3-158 and enemy icon move, followed by 2-158 icon moving.

1. The 1st Battalion, 503rd Parachute Infantry, upon its arrival on 3 July, assumed responsibility for about 2,000 yards in the center of the defenses around Kamiri (**KA-MERE-REE**) Drome, thus permitting the 2nd and 3rd Battalions, 158th Infantry, to concentrate at the eastern end of the field and extend the perimeter. ¹¹³
2. 158th Veteran Glenn Shankle added: "I waded ashore from the reef as part of the 3rd Battalion, 158th RCT. We landed directly on the beach parallel to Kamiri (**KA-MERE-REE**). With the help of tanks, we crossed the runway and cleared the bunkers on the opposite side of the runway. My regiment occupied the entire airfield before the 503rd paratroops landed. Because of an onshore wind, they made a low altitude jump onto the airfield after we had secured it. They suffered numerous casualties from the low jump but proceeded to secure our right flank. Both units dug in for the night with the airport secure in our possession." ¹¹⁴

CLICK 2: A/1-503 icon fades in, and the enemy icon moves back.

¹¹⁰ Ibid.

¹¹¹ Nycum, Chet. *How I Remember It*. https://corregidor.org/heritage_battalion/nycum/ch5.html. Accessed 15 Aug 22.

¹¹² Ibid.

¹¹³ Smith, pg. 416.

¹¹⁴ Pacific Wrecks. *Noemfoor*.

3. A Company of the 1-503rd moved to the area near the edge of the perimeter east of the Kamiri Airfield, allowing both 3-158 and 2-158 to pursue the enemy further east. The enemy was also pushed back in the area where A Co went into the line.

CLICK 3: The defensive perimeter is pushed out further.

4. By pushing the enemy back from Kamiri Airfield, the American defensive perimeter was pushed out even further in alignment with the progress of all three units.

CLICK 4: 1-503 icon fades in near the 1-158 RCT icon.

5. Instructions were given that had the remainder of the 1-503rd take over the battlespace held by the 1-158 RCT. The 1-158 troops were relieved, and the 1-503rd forces were in position on the perimeter by 1530 that afternoon. ¹¹⁵

Visual 4-6: 503rd PIR Airborne Assaults – 4 July

Instructor Note: This picture was taken on Noemfoor.

1. The 503rd Parachute Infantry was informed that another battalion was to drop on 4 July. In preparation for this second jump, General Krueger instructed General Patrick to make sure that the edges of Kamiri (**KA-MERE-REE**) Drome were clear of vehicles and the 54th Troop Carrier Wing was ordered to fly its C-47s in single file formation over the airfield. ¹¹⁶

Q: After the results of the 1/503rd jump the day before, why would you jump 3/503rd onto Noemfoor?

CLICK 1: 3-503 icon jumps onto Noemfoor.

2. At 0955 on the 4th, the 3rd Battalion, 503rd Parachute Infantry, and the rest of regimental headquarters began dropping on Kamiri (**KA-MERE-REE**) Drome; by 1025 the 685 men of this echelon were on the ground. This time all the C-47s flew at a height of at least 400 feet in single file formation. ¹¹⁷
3. Even with the new precautions there were 56 jump casualties. Most of the injuries on the second drop were attributed to the hard coral surface of Kamiri (**KA-MERE-REE**)

¹¹⁵ Headquarters, 503rd Parachute Infantry. *Noemfoor Island (Tabletennis) Operation*.

¹¹⁶ Smith, pg. 415.

¹¹⁷ Smith, pg. 416.

Drome, on which considerable grading, rolling, and packing had been accomplished since the morning of 3 July. ¹¹⁸

CLICK 2: Text Box appears.

4. At the end of both day's jumps, 1,424 officers and men of the 503rd Parachute Infantry Regiment had dropped at Noemfoor (**NOOM-FOUR**). Both missions were marred by high injury rates - 9.74 percent on the 3rd and 8.17 percent on the 4th. ¹¹⁹ There had been 128 jump casualties, a final rate of 8.98 percent, among them 59 serious fracture cases.

CLICK 3: Text box appears.

5. The parachute regiment had lost the services of one battalion commander, three company commanders, the regimental communications officer, and several key noncommissioned officers. ¹²⁰

CLICK 4: Text box appears.

6. By contrast, there had been no casualties caused by enemy action.
7. Colonel Jones, the regimental commander, requested that General Patrick arrange for water shipment of the remaining battalion due to the excessive injuries on both jumps. ¹²¹ As a result, the 2nd Battalion was brought ashore in LCIs instead of being dropped by air. ¹²²
8. A ground forces board subsequently concluded that the crushed coral airstrip was unsuited for paratroops and, with the exception of a few planes which had dropped below the prescribed 400 feet, absolved the Air Force of blame for the casualties. ¹²³

Q: They jumped onto a coral airstrip during this operation, but what are we doing today?

¹¹⁸ Ibid.

¹¹⁹ Craven and Cate. *The Army Air Forces in World War II; Volume Four: The Pacific: Guadalcanal to Saipan; August 1942 to July 1944.*

¹²⁰ Ibid.

¹²¹ Ibid.

¹²² Wikipedia. *Battle of Noemfoor Island.*

¹²³ Craven and Cate. *The Army Air Forces in World War II; Volume Four: The Pacific: Guadalcanal to Saipan; August 1942 to July 1944.*

- *Jumping onto concrete, asphalt, or hard-packed dirt tarmacs as part of modern airfield seizures.*

Q: What can we do to help mitigate those types of injuries?

- *Put a qualified jumpmaster on the ground with the 158th.*
- *Ensure the drop zone is cleared of obstacles.*

Visual 4-7: End of Day: 4 July

CLICK 1: 3-503 icon moves toward 3-158 icon.

1. After their jump was complete on 4 July, the 3rd Battalion, 503rd Parachute Infantry, was to relieve elements of the 3rd Battalion, 158th Infantry.

Virtual View 4-4: Movement Toward Kornasoren Airfield



VIRTUAL VIEW 4-4: 16673.607, 43331.184, 0.711

CLICK 2: 3-158 and enemy icon move toward Kornasoren Airfield, two enemy icons move toward Broe Bay.

2. As the latter unit pushed east to Kornasoren (**CORN-NA-SORE-WREN**) Drome, enemy units that had already been pushed from their positions the previous day kept on moving toward Broe (**BRO**) Bay in accordance with *Colonel Shimizu's* original orders.¹²⁴

¹²⁴ Pacific Wrecks. *Noemfoor*.

CLICK 3: 2-158 icon moves back toward YELLOW Beach.

3. The 3-503rd was also given the mission to relieve units of the 2nd Battalion, 158th RCT, on the east end of the perimeter about Kamiri **(KA-MERE-REE)** Strip, so that 2-158 could return to YELLOW Beach. Paratroop forces were in position by 1730, on 4 July. ¹²⁵

CLICK 4: Enemy icon moves toward the east coast; 3-158 icon moves to the eastern edge of Kornasoren.

4. The 3rd Battalion, 158th Infantry, moving eastward along the coastal road, encountered no opposition on 4 July. ¹²⁶
5. However, from a point near the eastern end of Kamari strip to Sjoriboe **(SHORE-A-BOW)** Village, they found a number of well-prepared, but abandoned, enemy defensive positions along both sides of the road, and the entire area around Kornasoren **(CORN-NA-SORE-WREN)** Drome. ¹²⁷
6. The second airbase captured by US forces, Kornasoren **(CORN-NA-SORE-WREN)** airstrip, was secured by 4 July and the Allied beachhead was expanded towards Kamiri **(KA-MERE-REE)** Village. ¹²⁸ By the evening of the 4th, the battalion dug in on the eastern end of Kornasoren Drome. ¹²⁹

Analysis:

1. What are some of the factors that caused the 503rd to suffer so many casualties during their jumps?

- *Jump altitude.*
- *Experience of the pilots.*
- *DZ not cleared of obstacles.*
- *No direct communications with the ground unit.*
- *No airborne liaison on the ground.*

2. Why is it important to ensure these (and other) areas are coordinated for – even with experienced pilots and jumpers?

¹²⁵ Ibid.

¹²⁶ Smith, pg. 417.

¹²⁷ Commander, Task Force 77. *Report on Noemfoor Operation.*

¹²⁸ Wikipedia. *Battle of Noemfoor Island.*

¹²⁹ Smith, pg. 417.

Stand 5: Kamiri Counterattack and Japanese Garden Fight

Visuals:

- 5-1: Japanese Counterattack at Kamiri
- 5-2: Fight at the Japanese Gardens
- 5-3: Capture of Namber Airfield
- 5-4: Splitting the Island

Virtual Views:

- 5-1: Looking South Across the River at Counterattack Position**
- 5-2: Overview of the Japanese Gardens**
- 5-3: The Intersection at the Japanese Gardens**
- 5-4: Japanese View of the 158th**
- 5-5: 2-158 View of Namber Airfield**

Orientation:

- 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.
- There are heavy mangrove swamps found along the banks of tidal inlets. ¹³⁰

¹³⁰ Smith, pg. 398.

Description:

Visual 5-1: Japanese Counterattack at Kamiri

Virtual View 5-1: 1-158 View of the Japanese Position



VIRTUAL VIEW 5-1: 7855.233, 23071.396, 45.29

1. After Kornasoren (**CORN-NA-SORE-WREN**) airstrip was taken on 4 July and the beachhead extended about a mile to the south of Kamiri (**KA-MERE-REE**), the 158th's 1st Battalion fought the operation's first engagement, beating back a strong but poorly coordinated Japanese attack.¹³¹

CLICK 1: Explosion icon appears and flashes four times.

2. It started early on 5 July and by 0630, it was all over.

CLICK 2: Picture appears on right side of slide.

¹³¹ Sandler, Stanley (Editor). "World War II in the Pacific: An Encyclopedia." Garland Publishing, Inc., New York and London, 2001.

3. Around 200 Japanese were killed during the assault, which was carried out by two companies from *the 219th Infantry Regiment* and around *150 Formosan laborers*.
4. Before the war in the Pacific widened to include the United States and its allies in 1941, Japan saw Taiwan as important to its military expansion. Japan established military bases there and used them as staging areas for invasions of the Philippines and other areas to the south.
5. Many Taiwanese served in the Japanese military and more than 30,000 were killed in combat.¹³²
6. Following this, the Japanese began to withdraw further inland, first heading south toward the Japanese Gardens.

Visual 5-2: Fight at the Japanese Gardens¹³³

Virtual View 5-2: 158th View of Japanese Gardens



VIRTUAL VIEW 5-2: 3243.355, 16121.845, 0.644

1. The dashed purple oval represents the approximate location of the Japanese Gardens.

¹³² Copper, John C. Taiwan as Part of the Japanese empire <https://www.britannica.com/place/Taiwan/Taiwan-as-part-of-the-Japanese-empire>. Accessed 25 July 2024.

¹³³ Unless otherwise noted, this section came from Smith, Robert Ross. United States Army in World War II: The War in the Pacific – The Approach to the Philippines. Chapter 17: Operations on Noemfoor Island. Center of Military History: Washington, DC, 1953, pgs. 417-419.

CLICK 1: 1-158 (-) icon to Kamiri Village.

2. After the 5 July Japanese counterattack, the 1st Battalion (less Company A), 158th RCT had crossed the Kamiri **(KA-MERE-REE)** River 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.
3. The Japanese garden area was about 600 yards long, east to 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.
4. The trail from Kamiri **(KA-MERE-REE)** 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 Kamari Drome to Namber **(NAM-MER)** Drome, located about six miles to the south.

NOTE: POINT OUT INTERSECTION ON THE VIRTUAL TERRAIN.

Virtual View 5-3: The intersection at the Japanese Gardens



VIRTUAL VIEW 5-3: 10246.977, 3022.572, 0.796

5. 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.

CLICK 2: 1-158 (-) icon disappears.

6. 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 **(KA-MERE-REE)**-garden trail.

CLICK 3: C / 1-158 icon appears north of enemy icons, B / 1-158 icon appears southeast of enemy icons.

7. First, Company C seized a knoll called Hill 180, lying 300 yards north of the gardens.
8. Then Company B surprised a Japanese platoon in a mangrove swamp at the southeast corner of the garden area and pushed the Japanese back.
9. 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.

CLICK 4: C and B / 1-158 icons shift, and then D / 158 icon appears.

10. 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.
11. 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 of Hill 201.
12. Company D's 81-mm. mortars registered on the edge of the mangrove swamp and on the trail to Kamiri **(KA-MERE-REE)** at the point at which that trail entered the garden area.
13. 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 **(KA-MERE-REE)** Drome at the point where the road entered the north edge of the garden.
14. A battery of the 147th Field Artillery Battalion's 105-mm howitzers, emplaced near Kamiri **(KA-MERE-REE)** 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.

15. By 1800, with only the hazard being occasional rifle fire from hidden Japanese soldiers, all defensive preparations were completed.

Virtual View 5-4: Japanese View of the 158th



VIRTUAL VIEW 5-4: 6795.514, 22379.858, 19.647

16. The Japanese mounted a major counterattack early on 6 July, the Noemfoor **(NOOM-FOUR)** Detachment's only significant offensive effort.

CLICK 5: Four small enemy icons appear, move toward the bigger enemy icons, stop, and disappear.

17. At 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.

CLICK 6: Four explosions appear twice intermittently (eight total explosions).

18. 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.

19. Now, two Japanese light machine guns opened up, one from the western slope of Hill 180 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.

NOTE: MOVE UP TO FENCE FOR THIS.

20. 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.
21. 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*.
22. 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.
23. After that, operations on Noemfoor (**NOOM-FOUR**) evolved into a series of patrol actions as the Allied forces extended their control over the island and rapidly expanded the airdrome facilities.

MOVE BACK TO KAMIRI AND THEN SIMULATE 2-158 MOVEMENT TO NAMBER.

CLICK 7: 3-158 icon moves to Kornasoren, 2-158 icon moves back to Kamiri.

24. As the 1st Battalion, 158th Infantry, mopped up the garden area, 3rd Battalion continued to patrol in northeastern Noemfoor (**NOOM-FOUR**), but found no Japanese.
25. Meanwhile, 2nd Battalion moved back to Kamiri Field to prepare for its movement to Namber (**NAM-MER**) Airfield the next day. It was relieved at Kamiri (**KA-MERE-REE**) Drome by the 3rd Battalion, 503rd Parachute Infantry Regiment.¹³⁴
26. There was no more offensive action from the Japanese. From here on, it was delaying actions, meeting engagements, and counterattacks.

¹³⁴ Smith, pg. 419.

Visual 5-3: Capture of Namber Airfield

Instructor Note: This pictures was taken on Noemfoor.

1. Despite this counterattack, all three airfields had been secured by 6 July and the better two were in use by the end of the month.¹³⁵

Virtual View 5-5: 2-158 View of Namber Airfield



VIRTUAL VIEW 5-5: 8788.129, 10409.261, 0.682

CLICK 1: 2-158 icon moves into Romboi Bay near Namber Airfield.

2. The 2nd Battalion, 158th Infantry Regiment embarked upon 20 LCTs and sailed down the western coast to capture Namber **(NAM-MER)** Airfield which came under Allied control, without resistance, on 6 July.¹³⁶
3. This operation got under way about 0900. LCMs of Company A, 543rd Engineer Boat and Shore Regiment, moved the 2nd Battalion, from Kamiri **(KA-MERE-REE)** Drome to the north side of Romboi **(ROME-BOY)** Bay, at the lower end of Namber **(NAM-MER)** Drome.¹³⁷

¹³⁵ Rickard, John. Battle of Noemfoor, 2 July-30 August 1944. http://www.historyofwar.org/articles/battles_noemfoor.html. Accessed 15 Aug 2022.

¹³⁶ Wikipedia. *Battle of Noemfoor Island*.

¹³⁷ Smith, pg. 419.

4. Following a short naval bombardment, which was accompanied by bombing and strafing by six B-25s, the 2nd Battalion poured ashore without opposition. ¹³⁸

CLICK 2: Four arrows come from the 2-158 icon.

5. Number **(NAM-MER)** Drome was secured by 1240, without a shot having been fired by the 2nd Battalion and not a single casualty having been suffered. Fifteen minutes after the airfield was taken, a liaison plane of the 147th Field Artillery Battalion landed on the strip. ¹³⁹

CLICK 3: A defensive perimeter wipes in from left.

6. The fact that the Japanese defense had been totally disorganized was reflected in the fact that by 6 July all three airfields were in US hands, and the operation was for all practical purposes completed on the following day. ¹⁴⁰
7. The island was officially declared secure on 7 July. ¹⁴¹
8. From 7 through 10 July vigorous patrolling by all elements of the CYCLONE Task Force continued, but individual *Japanese soldiers* continued guerrilla activities, albeit largely limited to nighttime raids. ¹⁴²
9. The conclusion was therefore reached that no organized large enemy force remained on Noemfoor **(NOOM-FOUR)** and that future operations would consist of hunting down small enemy groups. ¹⁴³
10. Following this, as the Japanese withdraw further inland. Despite *Shimizu's* **(SHE-MEE-ZOO'S)** plans to withdraw to Broe **(BRO)** Bay to wait for evacuation, most of his troops melted into the hills and the evacuation never occurred. Small groups attempted to resist, and *Shimizu's small force* was slowly pushed towards the southeastern part of the island. ¹⁴⁴

Visual 5-4: Splitting the Island

1. It was then decided to divide the island into two parts.

¹³⁸ Ibid.

¹³⁹ Ibid.

¹⁴⁰ Chant, Christopher. *Operation Cyclone*.

¹⁴¹ Wikipedia. *Battle of Noemfoor Island*.

¹⁴² Ibid.

¹⁴³ Smith, pg. 419.

¹⁴⁴ Wikipedia. *Battle of Noemfoor Island*.

CLICK 1: Red line bisects the island from left to right.

2. The 503rd Parachute Infantry responsible for the southern section of the island and the 158th RCT for the northern section. ¹⁴⁵

CLICK 2: The 158th RCT patch appears above the line, followed by the 503rd patch below the line.

3. Colonel Jones did not know it at the time, but his lightly equipped parachute regiment had just been assigned the toughest half of the island - overgrown with thick jungle and punctuated with high peaks. The northern half of the island was flat and generally clear. Hence, the enemy had selected the southern half in which to hide. ¹⁴⁶

CLICK 3: 2-503 icon appears and moves to Namber Airfield area.

4. Regrouping of units according to this plan started on 11 July, when the 2nd Battalion, 503rd Parachute Infantry, reached Namber **(NAM-MER)** Drome from Biak **(BEE-ACK)**, via LCIs. ¹⁴⁷
5. During the next day or so the 158th Infantry reconcentrated in northern Noemfoor **(NOOM-FOUR)**. ¹⁴⁸
6. To the 503rd Parachute Infantry fell the task of locating and engaging the remnants of the Noemfoor **(NOOM-FOUR)** Detachment, which, after the abortive attack at the Japanese Gardens, concentrated in southern Noemfoor. ¹⁴⁹

Analysis:

1. Why do you think that the light infantry paratroopers were given the more difficult portion of the island instead of the regular infantry units?

- *Easier to move light infantry through the jungle. The 158th had tanks which would have proved difficult to go across the same terrain.*
- *Unit may have already had experience fighting in a jungle environment.*

¹⁴⁵ Smith, pg. 419.

¹⁴⁶ Flanagan, Jr, Edward M. *Corregidor: The Rock Force Assault, 1945*. Presidio Press, Novato, CA, 1988, pg. 139.

¹⁴⁷ Ibid.

¹⁴⁸ Ibid.

¹⁴⁹ Smith, pg. 419.

Stand 6: Continued Pursuit of the Japanese

Visuals:

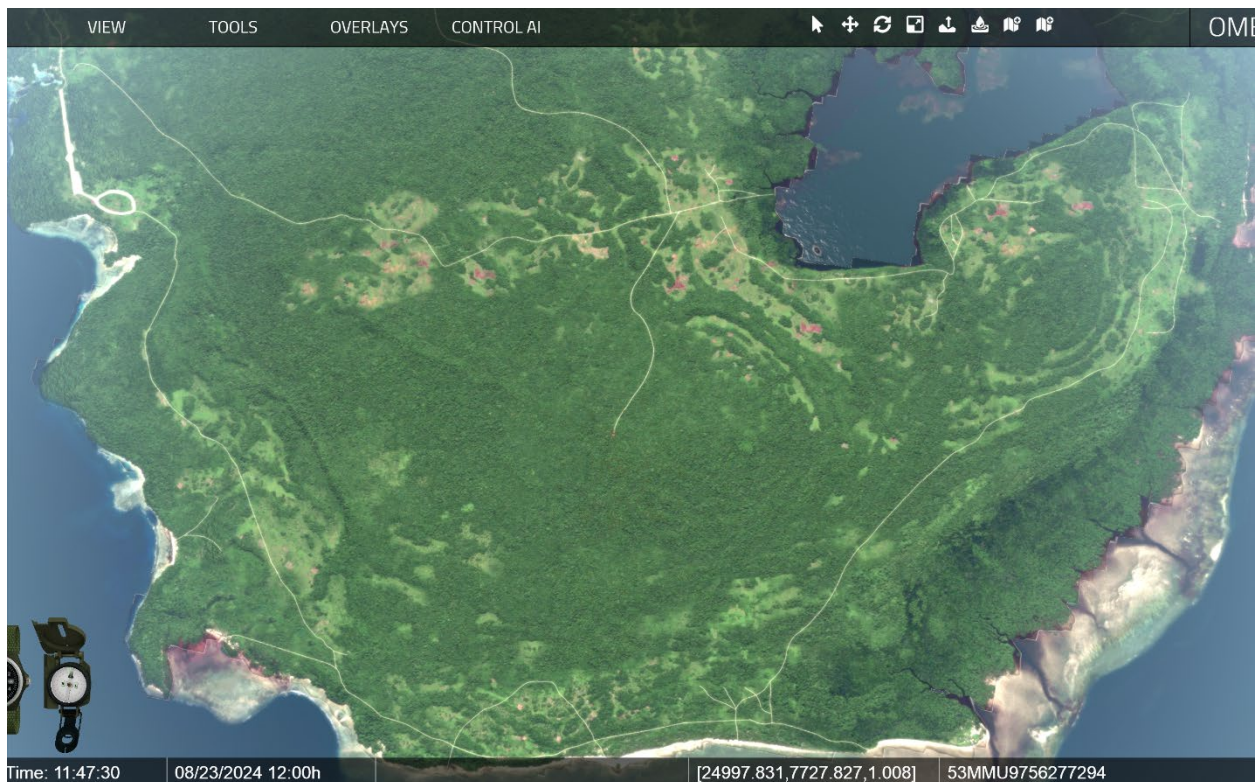
- 6-1: Southern Noemfoor
- 6-2: Skirmish at Hill 670
- 6-3: Jungle Operations
- 6-4: End of Active Operations
- 6-5: Actions of Sergeant Ray E. Eubanks
- 6-6: End of Active Operations
- 6-7: Unit Realignment

Virtual Views:

- 6-1: Overview of Southern Noemfoor**
- 6-2: 503rd View of Hill 670**
- 6-3: Japanese View of 503rd from atop Hill 670**
- 6-4: Jungle Shot**
- 6-5: Ridgeline at Inasi 1**
- 6-6: Ridgeline at Inasi 2**
- 6-7: Movement of Japanese from Inasi to Hill 380**
- 6-8: Hill 380 and Broe Bay**
- 6-9: Japanese Movement to Pakriki**
- 6-8: View Back Toward Broe Bay**

Visual 6-1: Southern Noemfoor

Virtual View 6-1: Overview of Southern Noemfoor



VIRTUAL VIEW 6-1: 24997.831, 7727.827, 1.008

NOTE: Similar to the earlier stand, start with the virtual view above and then have the tech move around the island from the center top (BROE BAY) and continue going clockwise as you are describing the different locations.

Orientation:

- We are at the lower half of Noemfoor **(NOOM-FOUR)** Island.
- Broe **(BRO)** Bay is the major water feature here.

- There is the village of Inasi (**IN-NAH-SEE**) just to the west of the southwestern edge of Broe (**BRO**) Bay.
- Further to the east is the village of Mandori (**MAN-DOOR-REE**).
- To the South, there are the villages of Manoekwari (**MAN-KNOCK-WAAR-RAY**) South and Pakriki (**PACK-REE-KEE**).
- Between Inasi (**IN-NAH-SEE**) and Pakriki (**PACK-REE-KEE**) is Hill 380.
- To the northwest is Hill 670.

Description:

Visual 6-2: Skirmish at Hill 670

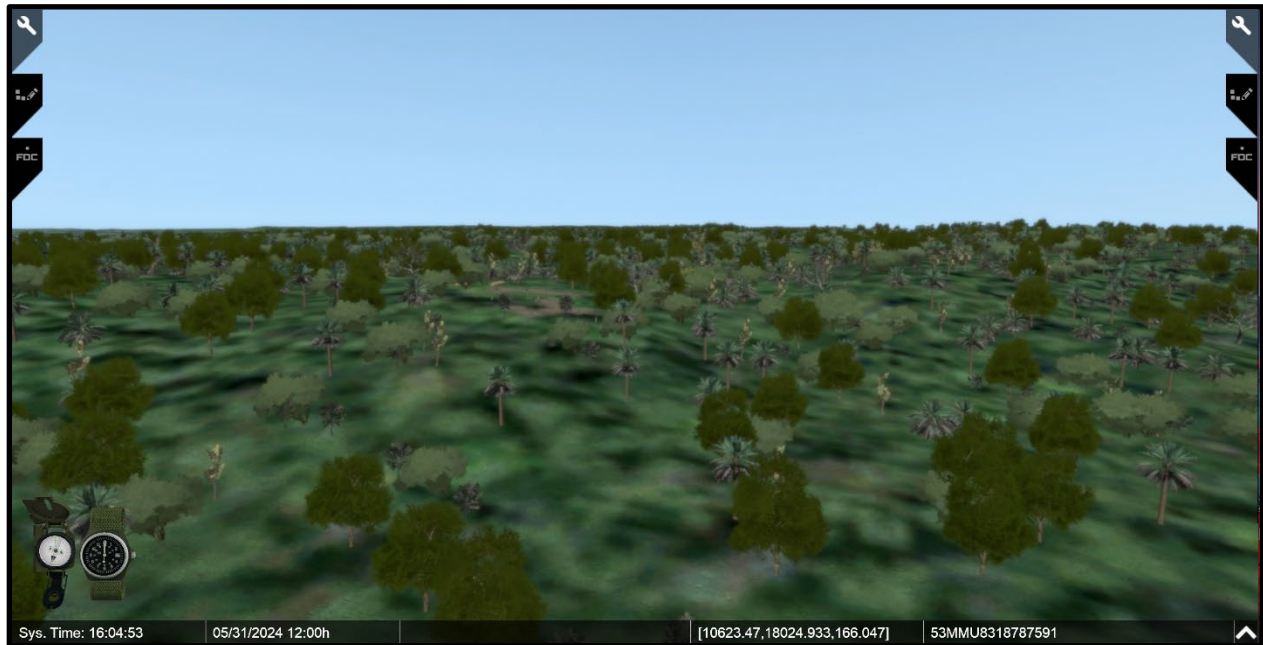
1. The troopers of the 503rd were beginning to realize the difficulties of jungle fighting. Roads were nonexistent in the thick, vine entangled jungle and had to be hacked out at times with machetes and axes.
2. Medics had a difficult time getting to the wounded and an even more arduous task carrying them by litter to an area where they might be moved to an evacuation strip. Moving just one wounded man required four litter bearers plus a few riflemen to protect them.
3. Field telephone wire was almost impossible to lay in the jungle, and, even when the wire was strung out along the ground, communication on the field phones was impossible beyond eight miles. Thus, operational and intelligence information was rarely available to a battalion in the field.
4. Resupply of food, water, and ammunition was sometimes available by drops from small planes, but their capacity was limited.
5. Coupled with the jungle diseases - malaria, scrub typhus, dysentery - life in the jungle, aside from clashes with the enemy, was not pleasant. ¹⁵⁰
6. Troops from the 503rd Parachute Infantry dispatched many patrols to pursue the withdrawing Japanese. Initially, a force of about 400–500 Japanese troops under Shimizu (**SHE-MEE-ZOO**) broke contact and gathered at Hill 670, several miles to the northeast of the Namber (**NAM-MER**) airfield. ¹⁵¹

¹⁵⁰ Flanagan, Jr, *Corregidor*, pg. 141.

¹⁵¹ Wikipedia. *Battle of Noemfoor Island*.

7. Hill 670 was hard to get to because of heavy jungle which overlaid the coral outcroppings. There were no roads or trails anywhere near the hill. The hill could not be seen from the air so bombing or shelling it with artillery would be a matter of pure guesswork. The hill would have to be found and attacked on the ground.¹⁵²

Virtual View 6-2: 503rd View of Hill 670



VIRTUAL VIEW 6-2: 10623.47, 18024.933, 166.047

GO TO GROUND AND LOOK AT THE STEEPNESS OF THE HILL FROM THE 503RD SITE LINE.

CLICK 1: 2-503rd Battalion icon moves off screen toward Inasi.

1. On 13 July, Company C was dispatched on patrol with the mission of contacting the enemy force and pushing them towards the 2nd Battalion at Inasi (**IN-NAH-SEE**).

CLICK 2: C / 1-503rd icon moves toward Hill 670.

2. At 1400 on 13 July, the main body of the enemy was contacted. This force was estimated at 400 and armed with heavy machine guns, light machine guns, and knee mortars.¹⁵³

¹⁵² Abbott, Don. "Purple Hearts on Noemfoor." <http://www.thedropzone.org/pacific/abbott.htm>. Accessed 23 March 2023.

¹⁵³ Headquarters, 503rd Parachute Infantry. *Noemfoor Island (Tabletennis) Operation*. Published on 1 September 1944.

Virtual View 6-3: Japanese View of 503rd from atop Hill 670



VIRTUAL VIEW 6-3: 10574.853, 17943.774, 165.326

CLICK 3: Explosion icon appears, blinks three times, and disappears.

3. The enemy were entrenched on Hill 670 with a strong sniper screen and all automatic weapons sited.

CLICK 4: C / 1-503rd icon moves north. B / 1-503rd icon appears.

4. 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 reinforcements.

CLICK 5: Explosion icon appears, blinks three times, and disappears.

5. During the night, harassing fire was placed on Hill 670 by Battery B, 147th Field Artillery Battalion. ¹⁵⁴

¹⁵⁴ Headquarters, 503rd Parachute Infantry. Noemfoor Island (*Tabletennis*) Operation.

CLICK 6: B / 1-503rd icon moves to Hill 670; enemy icons move right off-screen.

6. At 0700 on 14 July 1944, following an artillery barrage, Company B moved on to Hill 670. They encountered very light opposition and found that the *Japanese main body* had withdrawn during the night.

CLICK 7: Perimeter line wipe in on south part of Hill 670.

7. A perimeter defense was established on Hill 670 and far-reaching patrols were dispatched with the mission of again locating the main enemy force. ¹⁵⁵
8. 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 2nd Battalion at Inasi (**IN-NAH-SEE**) was patrolling to the north and northeast with the same mission. ¹⁵⁶
9. We do not know how fast the Japanese moved from Hill 670 to where they ran into 2nd Battalion near Inasi but took then seven days to move approximately four miles through the unbroken jungle terrain.

Visual 6-3: Jungle Operations. ¹⁵⁷

Instructor Note: All these pictures were taken on Noemfoor.

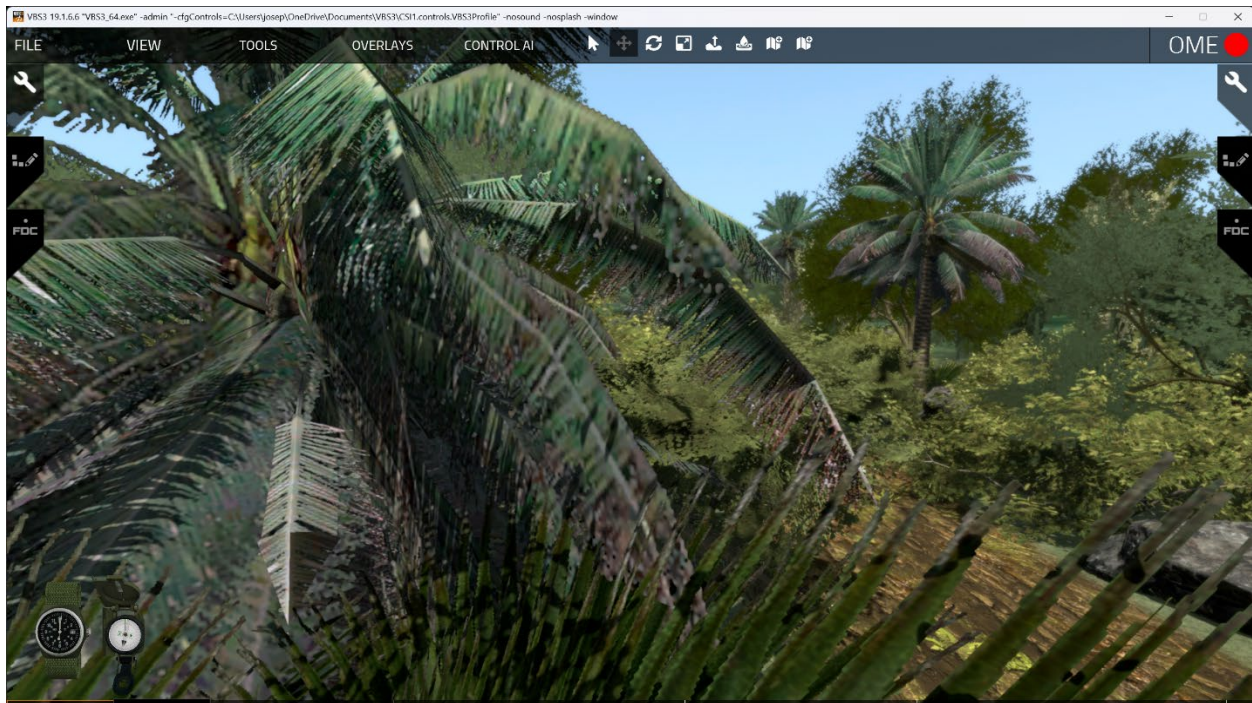
Note to instructor: You do not have to discuss each of the points below, it will depend on time and how much discussion is being generated by the students. This section has been broken down by an overall list followed by the list broken down within the different warfighting functions so you can either ask the question within certain warfighting functions or just in general. Not everything fits into just one warfighting function, some may have two or more components to them.

¹⁵⁵ Headquarters, 503rd Parachute Infantry. Noemfoor Island (*Tabletennis*) Operation.

¹⁵⁶ Ibid.

¹⁵⁷ US Army. Army Techniques Publication 3-90.98 *Jungle Operations*. Publication dated September 2020. Department of the Army, Washington, DC, 2020.

Virtual View 6-4: Jungle Shot



VIRTUAL VIEW 6-4: 10671.462, 17568.485, 186.495

Virtual Movement: Let's move from Hill 670 to the village of Inasi.

1. Just as a reminder, the ground we are looking at is not as open as shown. The trail we are going to follow within the virtual terrain was put in by us to help get us from Hill 670 to Inasi so we don't get lost within our own terrain.

Q: So as we move down toward Inasi, what are some of the challenges you might face when conducting jungle operations?

- *Impact on personnel and equipment, reduced mobility, limited line of sight, enemy fighting from fortified positions, higher potential for fratricide, offensive versus defensive engagements, communication and logistics challenges, interaction with the local population, limited mobility on trails or footpaths,*

CASEVAC challenges, conditioning / acclimation period, force protection, and Indigenous animals and insects.

Command and Control

1. Jungles are harsh environments, characterized by intense heat, heavy precipitation, and thick vegetation that can adversely impact operations for unprepared forces.
2. Large distances between units, dense foliage, and potentially significant vertical terrain prevalent in many jungles, coupled with the power constraints of man-portable radios, impede radio communications in the jungle.
3. The effectiveness of radio communications can be reduced by 10 to 25 percent in the jungle.

Movement and Maneuver

1. Mobility in the jungle is restricted by thick vegetation, steep grades, and severe terrain. Vehicular mobility, whether wheeled or tracked, is almost completely restricted to roads and trails.
2. Restrictive terrain can limit mobility while excessive heat and humidity can fatigue troops.
3. Higher casualties occur among troops on the offense, where observed assaults are often the only tactical option.
4. Defenders generally can withdraw under cover and concealment.
5. Troops operating in the jungle should also watch out for snakes and if in the water, watch for leeches on the body.

Intelligence

1. The local populace is a valuable source of information. Whether hostile, friendly, or indifferent, the people can provide information that will help complete the intelligence picture.
2. The local populace may provide information on enemy timelines and patterns, their routes, and locations of weapons or equipment caches.

3. Overhead imagery should be less than four months old as trails and clearings can grow over or change dramatically during that time.
4. Dense vegetation and thick overhead cover afford enemy forces ample cover and concealment, making target detection difficult.

Fires

1. Lenses, dials, and gauges often become fogged with internal moisture.
2. Defenders suffer lower casualties from direct and indirect fire.
3. In low canopy jungles, airbursts can increase casualty causing effects by creating dangerous shrapnel from the destroyed canopy.
4. Ground observation in the jungle is limited by sharp terrain and dense vegetation. Which can impede ground observers' ability to locate and identify targets as well as their ability to positively identify adjacent friendly units or even their own location.
5. Poor weather, heavy vegetation, and limited observation ranges in the jungle hinders target identification, laser designation, and guidance for aerial and joint fires.

Sustainment

1. A unit's tactical effectiveness in the jungle depends on the availability of supplies. However, a formation's largest vulnerability lies in its exposed LOCs and the immobility of its bases of supply and support.
2. Lack of roads and limited helicopter landing zones will hinder resupply and casualty evacuation requiring forces to carry additional supplies and casualties extended distances.
3. Battery life is shorter than normal and electrical connections corrode quickly.
4. General guidelines for jungle repair:
 - a. Repair only what is necessary to make the equipment combat effective.
 - b. Recover disabled equipment to the nearest secure site and conduct on-the-spot repair.
5. Excessive heat and humidity can degrade equipment.
6. Canvas items rot and rubber deteriorates much faster than in more temperate areas.

Protection

1. Approximately one week of daily heat exposure is necessary for heat acclimatization; however, Soldiers who are unusually susceptible to heat injuries require additional time to fully acclimatize.
 - a. Heat acclimatization requires a minimum daily heat exposure of about two hours that may be conducted in two, one-hour exposures.
2. Active security measures include patrols, observation posts, and perimeter security; reduce the likelihood of a unit being ambushed or attacked by surprise. These work best when used with passive security measures. Camouflage, odor control, trash control, and noise and light discipline also help prevent enemy detection.
3. Fratricide may be caused by:
 - a. Ineffective or degraded communications equipment.
 - b. The inability to recognize near and far recognition signals.
 - c. Short engagement ranges coupled with the need for quick reaction.
 - d. Location errors caused by challenging terrain and degraded or disrupted navigation devices.
4. Despite the obvious impact of heat and humidity, Soldiers must recognize that they will likely be exposed to cold as well. Temperatures in the jungle may drop 10 degrees or more at night. When coupled with high humidity and often rainy conditions.
5. While the largest health threat posed by mosquitoes is malaria, mosquitos carry numerous other diseases such as dengue and yellow fever.
6. Flies can also pose a health hazard to humans as they can carry and spread diseases if not controlled. Certain flies that feed on mammals and humans can cause lesions and infections. Soldiers should shake out sleep systems and ensure clothing and boots are free of insects before dressing.
7. There was also jungle rot, which came about when Soldiers could not keep themselves dry.

Visual 6-4: End of Active Operations

Virtual View 6-5: Ridgeline at Inasi 1.



VIRTUAL VIEW 6-5: 35489.593, 18190.998, 0.863

MOVE TO OTHER ENEMY POSITION ON THE OTHER SIDE OF THE TRAIL.

Virtual View 6-6: Ridgeline at Inasi 2.



VIRTUAL VIEW 6-6: 17137.713, 12393.492. 27.484

CLICK 1: Enemy avenue of advance arrow wipes in from Hill 670 to Inasi.

CLICK 2: Enemy icons move toward Inasi, avenue of advance arrow disappears, explosion appears, and blinks three times.

1. After withdrawing from Hill 670, Shimizu's **(SHE-MEE-ZOO'S)** force managed to evade the US patrols until 23 July. About 4 miles (6.4 km) northwest of Inasi **(IN-NAH-SEE)**, troops from the 2nd Battalion, 503rd Parachute Infantry Regiment clashed with the Japanese force.¹⁵⁸

Visual 6-5: Actions of Sergeant Ray E. Eubanks

1. When the Japanese surprised a platoon from the 503rd on 23 July, Sergeant Ray E. Eubanks led his squad to their relief. Enemy fire wounded Eubanks and smashed his rifle, yet he continued to lead his men forward and, using his rifle as a club, killed four Japanese before he was again hit and killed.¹⁵⁹ For his heroic action and leadership during this engagement, Sergeant Eubanks was later posthumously awarded the Medal of Honor.
2. Sergeant Eubanks' official Medal of Honor citation reads:

"For conspicuous gallantry and intrepidity at the risk of his life above and beyond the call of duty at Noemfoor Island, Dutch New Guinea, 23 July 1944. While moving to the relief of a platoon isolated by the enemy, his company encountered a strong

¹⁵⁸ Wikipedia. *Battle of Noemfoor Island*.

¹⁵⁹ Drea, pg. 34.

enemy position supported by machinegun, rifle, and mortar fire. **Sgt. Eubanks was ordered to make an attack with 1 squad to neutralize the enemy by fire** in order to assist the advance of his company. **He maneuvered his squad to within 30 yards of the enemy where heavy fire checked his advance.** Directing his men to maintain their fire, he and 2 scouts worked their way forward up a shallow depression to within 25 yards of the enemy. Directing the scouts to remain in place, **Sgt. Eubanks armed himself with an automatic rifle and worked himself forward** over terrain swept by intense **fire to within 15 yards of the enemy position when he opened fire** with telling effect. **The enemy**, having **located his position, concentrated their fire** with the result that **he was wounded, and a bullet rendered his rifle useless.** In spite of his painful wounds, **he immediately charged the enemy and using his weapon as a club killed 4 of the enemy before he was** himself again hit and **killed.** **Sgt. Eubanks' heroic action, courage, and example in leadership** so **inspired his men** that their advance was successful. **They killed 45 of the enemy and drove the remainder from the position, thus effecting the relief of our beleaguered troops."**¹⁶⁰

Visual 6-6: End of Active Operations

1. Contact between the two forces was lost from 25 July until 10 August, when a weeklong action took place around Hill 380.¹⁶¹

Virtual Movement: Let's move from Inasi down to Hill 380.

Virtual View 6-7: Movement of Japanese from Inasi to Hill 380

¹⁶⁰ Wikipedia. Ray E. Eubanks. https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Ray_E._Eubanks. Accessed 16 December 2022.

¹⁶¹ Wikipedia. Battle of Noemfoor Island.



VIRTUAL VIEW 6-7: 16694.043, 9165.836, 89.997

CLICK 1: Text box appears “No Contact”.

CLICK 2: Text box disappears, two enemy icons appear, delay, and then move southwest of Inasi; arrows appear around the 2-503 and 3-503 icons and then disappear.

2. Patrol activities during the period 24 July to 8 August 1944 continued in all directions from battalion command posts located at Inasi (**IN-NAH-SEE**), Manoekwari (**MAN-KNOCK-WAAR-RAY**), and Namber (**NAM-MER**). Due to the dense jungle and tropical rains, patrols of any duration were extremely difficult.¹⁶²

CLICK 3: Text box appears “11 August”.

CLICK 4: G Company icon moves toward enemy icons, and an explosion appears and blinks three times.

3. 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 hours. This information was given the battalion commander who immediately dispatched Company G to contact the enemy force. Contact was made at 1500 on 11 August 1944.

¹⁶² Headquarters, 503rd Parachute Infantry. *Noemfoor Island (Tabletennis) Operation*.

CLICK 5: Larger explosion icon appears and blinks three times.

4. The enemy force, under COL Shimizu (**SHE-MEE-ZOO**), was entrenched along a ridge southwest of Inasi (**IN-NAH-SEE**). Their strength was estimated at approximately three hundred and fifty 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. ¹⁶³

CLICK 6: “11 August” text box disappears, “12 August” text box appears.

CLICK 7: H Company icon moves south of G Company.

5. On 12 August 1944, Company H was sent forward to reinforce Company G. At 1000 that morning, US forces advanced upon the ridge only to find a covering force there. The delaying action continued throughout the day with the main body not being contacted. ¹⁶⁴

CLICK 8: “12 August” text box disappears, “13 August” text box appears.

Virtual View 6-8: Hill 380 and Broe Bay

¹⁶³ Headquarters, 503rd Parachute Infantry. *Noemfoor Island (Tabletennis) Operation*.

¹⁶⁴ Ibid.



VIRTUAL VIEW 6-8: 16711.87, 9144.738, 88.563

CLICK 9: Enemy icons move to Hill 380, G and H Company icons follow.

6. On 13 August 1944, contact was established at 0700 and a fire fight continued throughout the day with the enemy employing all small arms in delaying action. US forces were attacking throughout the day. Heavy losses were inflicted upon the enemy. ¹⁶⁵

CLICK 10: “13 August” text box disappears, “14 August” text box appears.

CLICK 11: A/1-503 icon moves from Hill 670 southwest of Hill 380, Company G and H icons move south toward Hill 380.

7. During this period units of the 1st Battalion were moved south to block enemy withdrawal to the south and west. Company A contacted units of the main body on Hill 380 at 1730 on 14 August 1944. ¹⁶⁶

CLICK 12: Explosion icon appears, blinks three times, and disappears.

CLICK 13: “14 August” text box disappears, “14-16 August” text box appears.

¹⁶⁵ Headquarters, 503rd Parachute Infantry. *Noemfoor Island (Tabletennis) Operation*.

¹⁶⁶ Ibid.

8. From 14 to 16 August 1944, clashes between patrols of 1st Battalion and covering forces of the enemy were numerous. ¹⁶⁷

CLICK 14: The two enemy icons fade out and one icon fades in.

CLICK 15: “14-16 August” text box disappears, “15-16 August” text box appears.

9. During the night of 15-16 August, *Colonel Shimizu* (**SHE-MEE-ZOO**) slipped through the cordon around Hill 380 and withdrew his remaining force, now not much over 200 men strong, toward Pakriki (**PACK-REE-KEE**), on the south-central coast. ¹⁶⁸

Virtual Movement: Now we’ll move from Hill 380 to the hills near Pakriki.

Virtual View 6-9: Japanese Movement to Pakriki



VIRTUAL VIEW 6-9: 17192.363, 5230.462, 30.339

CLICK 16: Enemy icon moves to Pakriki, A Company icon to the west, G Company icon to the north, and H Company icon to the east.

CLICK 17: “15-16 August” text box disappears, “17 August” text box appears.

¹⁶⁷ Headquarters, 503rd Parachute Infantry. *Noemfoor Island (Tabletennis) Operation*.

¹⁶⁸ Smith, pg. 420.

MOVE TO LOOK AT THE TWO OTHER ENEMY LOCATIONS. EACH IS DESIGNATED AGAINST ONE OF THE THREE US COMPANIES ATTACKING IT. THE FIRST LOCATION IS FACING A/1-503, THE SECOND IS FACING G/3-503, AND THE THIRD IS FACING H/3-503.

10. *Colonel Shimizu's (SHE-MEE-ZOO'S)* party was not again located until 17 August, when the remaining elements of the enemy force were driven into a pocket with US forces on three sides and the ocean on the other. The main force was routed, and an estimated twenty enemy escaped.¹⁶⁹ This action broke the last organized Japanese resistance.¹⁷⁰

CLICK 18: Enemy icon gets smaller

CLICK 19: Enemy icon heads toward Broe Bay.

11. At least 20 Japanese were killed, bringing to 342 the total of Japanese killed in the series of actions southwest from Inasi (**IN-NAH-SEE**) to Pakriki (**PACK-REE-KEE**) during the period 10 through 17 August. In the same week, 43 Japanese were captured.¹⁷¹

Virtual View 6-10: View From Pakriki Back Toward Broe Bay



VIRTUAL VIEW 6-10: 16199.765, 15120.122, 33.916

12. Although it was reported that *Colonel Shimizu (SHE-MEE-ZOO)* was not among those killed or captured and was at large at the end of the month, the *Japanese*

¹⁶⁹ Headquarters, 503rd Parachute Infantry. *Noemfoor Island (Tabletennis) Operation*.

¹⁷⁰ Ibid.

¹⁷¹ Ibid.

government listed him as killed in action on 18 August 1944 and promoted him posthumously to Major General on that same date.¹⁷²

Visual 6-7: Unit Realignment

CLICK 1: Battalion icons move toward Kamiri together.

1. On 21 August 1944, the Commanding General, Cyclone Task Force, directed that the 503rd, less three companies, would move to a new camp site near Kamiri **(KA-MERE-REE)** Strip. This move was completed 23 August 1944.¹⁷³
2. The three companies remaining at southern part of the island were:

CLICK 2: Company icon fades in, blinks two times.

- a. Company D at Namber **(NAM-MER)**,

CLICK 3: Company icon fades in, blinks two times.

- b. Company I at Inasi **(IN-NAH-SEE)**,

CLICK 4: Company icon fades in, blinks two times.

- c. and Company C at Manoekwari **(MAN-KNOCK-WAAR-RAY)** South with units at Wansra **(WANS-RAH)** and Menupuri **(MEN-AH-PURR-REE)**.
 - d. These units continued patrolling until relieved by units of the 158th Infantry on 27 August 1944.¹⁷⁴
3. Sporadic fighting continued throughout the rest of the month, but by 31 August all fighting had ceased and the operation was officially concluded.¹⁷⁵

Analysis:

¹⁷² Generals.dk. "Shimizu, Suesada."

¹⁷³ Ibid.

¹⁷⁴ Ibid.

¹⁷⁵ Wikipedia. *Battle of Noemfoor Island*.

1. How did the geography of Noemfoor impact military operations?

- *It was difficult maneuvering in the jungle with no trails; with no good maps, units could become lost.*

2. What were the logistical challenges faced by the Allies?

- *Difficulty in conducting CASEVAC, providing supplies, food, and water; weather caused equipment issues much faster than in a non-jungle environment.*

3. How did medical support and evacuation procedures function during the battle?

- *Units had to utilize four or more men to carry each litter to a designated location and they also had to provide infantrymen to protect them – meaning they lost nearly one squad for each casualty.*
- *It was difficult to provide medication needed to combat the different ailments that could happen while in the jungle.*
- *It took an extended amount of time to get a soldier back to a medical treatment facility or a surgical unit because of trying to get through the jungle terrain or because those facilities were located further away because they couldn't go any further forward.*

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Stand 7: Securing Noemfoor / Follow-On Missions

Visuals:

- 7-1: Results of Noemfoor
- 7-2: Attacks on Borneo
- 7-3: Results of Noemfoor
- 7-4: Follow-On Missions for the 158th and 503rd

Virtual Views: 7-1: Top View of Kamiri

Orientation: None

Description:

Visual 7-1: Results of Noemfoor

Virtual View 7-1: Top View of Kamiri



VIRTUAL VIEW 7-1: 7430.143, 24171.446, 23.578

1. Airfields constructed on Noemfoor (**NOOM-FOUR**) after its capture enabled the advance of Allied troops from New Guinea to the Philippines.

2. Strategically and tactically the most important result of the Noemfoor **(NOOM-FOUR)** operation was that airfield development on the island brought Japanese bases to the southwest, west, and northwest within a slightly closer range for Allied fighters and bombers. ¹⁷⁶
3. Other less tangible results were the destruction of the Japanese garrison; the elimination of Noemfoor as a way station for Japanese reinforcements moving toward Biak **(BEE-ACK)**, thus perhaps allowing quicker mop-up on the latter; and the reduction of airdrome construction requirements at Biak, enabling the Allied Air Forces to send more planes into the forward area without potentially dangerous crowding at Biak. ¹⁷⁷
4. Work on the Kamiri **(KA-MERE-REE)** Airdrome had begun on D-Day, and it was ready for limited use on 6 July. It was later extended to 5400 feet. (1645 meters). ¹⁷⁸
5. The Namber **(NAM-MER)** Airdrome was to be the next one improved, but it was on a poor site and the effort was switched to Kornasoren **(CORN-NA-SORE-WREN)**. ¹⁷⁹
6. A 7000-foot bomber runway was completed on 27 July in time to support operations on the Vogelkop **(VOUGE-EL-COP)** Peninsula. A second 7000-foot runway was completed in early August. The Noemfoor **(NOOM-FOUR)** airfields later supported operations on Morotai **(MORE-ROW-TIE)** Island and Borneo **(BORE-NEE-OH)**. ¹⁸⁰

Visual 7-2: Follow-On Missions for 158th and 503rd

Instructor Note: All these pictures were taken of Balikpapan.

1. Soon after that, B-24 Liberator heavy bombers began operating from Kornasoren **(CORN-NA-SORE-WREN)** Airfield, against Japanese petroleum facilities at Balikpapan **(BOLL-LEAK-PA-PAN)**, Borneo **(BORE-NEE-OH)**, which were supplying up to 35% of Japan's refined petroleum products. ¹⁸¹
2. In the five raids between 30 September and 18 October 1944, the Fifth and Thirteenth Air Forces put 321 B-24s over Balikpapan **(BOLL-LEAK-PA-PAN)**, dropped 433.3 tons of bombs and stopped production at Balikpapan's two refineries and paraffin plant for almost six months. ¹⁸²

¹⁷⁶ Smith, pg. 425.

¹⁷⁷ Smith, pg. 425, footnote 1.

¹⁷⁸ Rottman, pg. 246.

¹⁷⁹ Rottman, pg. 246.

¹⁸⁰ Rottman, pg. 246.

¹⁸¹ Wikipedia. *Battle of Noemfoor Island*.

¹⁸² Hackett, Bob. Borneo oil Fields and Refineries Under Imperial Japanese Navy Control.

<http://www.combinedfleet.com/BorneoOil.htm>. Accessed 8 November 2023.

3. In early 1945, another series of air raids destroyed Balikpapan's **(BOLL-LEAK-PAN'S)** plants completely. These attacks virtually eliminated Borneo **(BORE-NEE-OH)** as a source of oil, and it never again contributed to the Japanese war effort. By April 1945, oil imports dried up almost completely. ¹⁸³

Visual 7-3: Results of Noemfoor

Instructor Note: All these pictures were taken on Noemfoor.

CLICK 1: Text box and three pictures fade in.

4. By 31 August, the Cyclone Task Force had lost 66 killed or missing and 343 wounded. But it had accounted for 1900 Japanese, including, 186 captured, together with 550 Formosans. And it had recovered 403 emaciated Javanese laborers. ¹⁸⁴

Visual 7-4: Follow-On Missions for 158th and 503rd

CLICK 1: Japanese flag moves from Manoekwari to Sorong.

1. As far as the Japanese were concerned, the loss of Noemfoor **(NOOM-FOUR)** made the Japanese *2nd Area Army's* position in the eastern part of the Vogelkop **(VOUGE-EL-COP)** peninsula wholly untenable, and therefore pulled back the rest of the *Japanese 35th Division* from Manoekwari **(MA-NOAK-WAAR-RAY)** to Sorong at the extreme western end of New Guinea. ¹⁸⁵

CLICK 2: 503rd PIR patch moves toward the Philippines.

2. The 503rd Parachute PIR moved from Noemfoor **(NOOM-FOUR)** to Leyte, in the Philippines.

CLICK 3: 158th RCT patch moves toward Luzon.

3. And in mid-November, the 158th RCT left for the Luzon fight in January 1945.
 - a. The island remained under ALAMO Force control until 9 October, when it was passed over to the US Eighth Army.

¹⁸³ Hackett, Bob. Borneo oil Fields and Refineries Under Imperial Japanese Navy Control.

¹⁸⁴ Morison, pg. 140.

¹⁸⁵ Chant, Christopher. *Operation Cyclone*.

- b. By October, 1,957 Japanese had been killed or found dead on Noemfoor **(NOOM-FOUR)** and 247 had been captured, while 623 Formosans, 2 Koreans, and 1 Chinese were prisoners of war.

Analysis:

- 1. How did the capture of Noemfoor influence the broader strategic situation in the Pacific Theater of World War II?***
- 2. How did the presence of airfields on Noemfoor influence the battle's strategic importance?***

Integration

Visuals:

I-1: Lessons Learned – TF 77
I-2: Lessons Learned – 503rd PIR
I-3: Integration

Virtual Views: **None, virtual tech can shut off their screen.**

Orientation:

None

Description:

None

Analysis:

Q: What were some of the lessons learned by the navy during this operation?

Visual I-1: Lessons Learned – TF 77.

This section is from Commander, Task Force 77. Report on Noemfoor (NOOM-FOUR) Operation. Published on 16 July 1944, pgs. 20-21.

CLICK 1: Weather text appears.

1. The success of this operation was dependent on the existence of almost ideal conditions of wind and sea at the objective area on D-Day.
 - a. 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 onshore and the development of the landing area for future resupply.
 - b. 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.

CLICK 2: Types of Craft Used text appears.

2. The DUKW is not as well suited for operation over coral reefs as the LVT.

- a. Many DUKWs, stranded on the ragged edge of the reef, were damaged and required towing services.
- b. Until exit roadways were developed, DUKWs could not carry cargo inland past the sandy cliff at the beach.
- c. Future operations of this nature should provide a larger proportion of LVTs.

CLICK 3: Air Support text appears.

- 3. Patrol Craft (PC's) were used for the first time as control vessels and proved to be better suited for this type of work.
 - a. Their relatively heavy firepower, particularly in automatic weapons, maneuverability, and speed reserve, render them especially effective craft for close inshore support.
- 4. 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.
 - a. 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.
 - b. 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.
 - c. There is no doubt of their favorable morale effect on troops of the leading waves.
- 5. The air support furnished by the Fifth Air Force was considered to be the best example of coordination and timing yet achieved in the SWPA.
 - a. The bombing was very accurate.
 - b. The assigned targets were well covered and with enough weight to destroy or seriously damage them.
 - c. Communications of support air were generally excellent throughout the operation.
- 6. The bombardment in support of the landing was the heaviest conducted in this area to date. Approximately 2-1/2 times the amount of ammunition required to neutralize this area was expended from H-80 until H-Hour.

- a. Since the landing was a frontal assault on Kamiri **(KA-MERE-REE)** airdrome over coral reefs this expenditure of ammunition was justified to insure our troops getting ashore with a minimum of casualties.
- b. Throughout the splendid cooperation between the Shore Fire Control Parties (SFCP's) 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.
- c. The army called for and received more naval fire in the five days after the landing than had ever before been delivered in any operation in this area over the same period of time.
- d. Naval gunfire played a major part in the success of the operation. The casualty score on D+6 speaks for itself: own forces killed 8, Jap known dead 410.

Q: What were some of the lessons learned by the 503rd PIR during this operation?

Visual I-2: Lessons Learned – 503rd PIR.

Note that this section does not have to be used except with an airborne audience.

This section is from Headquarters, 503rd Parachute Infantry. Noemfoor Island (TABLETENNIS) Operation. Published on 1 September 1944, pgs. 7-12.

CLICK 1: Airborne Ops text appears.

1. Prior to D-Day every pilot participating should have training in dropping parachutists.
 - a. 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.
2. Parachutists should have had recent practice prior to the mission in participating in a tactical jump of at least the size of a company.
3. 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.
 - a. Prior ground reconnaissance would be invaluable in selection of suitable jumping areas.

4. Landing strips are unsatisfactory for jumping areas for parachute troops.
 - a. The hardness of the ground resulted in excessive casualties due to the shock of impact of a parachutist under the normal combat load.

CLICK 2: Situational Awareness text appears.

5. Radio communication with the SCR-284 voice network proved very satisfactory.
 - a. The SCR-511 radio was used up to a distance of five thousand yards in a voice network with the SCR-284.
 - b. The SCR-36 radio proved entirely unsatisfactory in the wet heavy jungle.

NOTE: SCR – Signal Corps Radio

6. Precautions should be taken when giving combat instructions over the telephone.
 - a. Effectiveness of combat operation would have been jeopardized if Japanese had tapped our telephone wire.
7. 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.

CLICK 3: Resupply text appears.

8. Resupply in the jungle is difficult by overland carriers.
 - a. Combat efficiency and mobility of action of troops fighting in the jungle is directly dependent on the steady supply of food, water, and ammunition.
9. Supply by native carriers or carrying parties of our own troops over long jungle distances was highly unsatisfactory.
 - a. Aerial resupply of minimum requirements of troops fighting in the jungle will enable a freedom of action.
 - b. In many cases pressure against the enemy could not be maintained due to the inadequacy of supply.

10. In jungle fighting large carrying parties of soldiers or natives are necessary to insure prompt evacuation of the wounded.
11. 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.

CLICK 4: Training text appears.

12. The necessity in training each individual in the basic elements of combat intelligence was evident in this operation.
 - a. On reconnaissance patrols vital information about the terrain and the enemy went unobserved.
 - b. Few individuals on either reconnaissance patrols or combat patrols thoroughly searched the killed or found dead for vital intelligence material.
13. Training in scouting and patrolling prior to the operation paid big dividends.
14. It was found that more training is required in issuing direct, clear orders by the junior officers and non-commissioned officers.
15. Too much training cannot be given in the use of maps and compasses and estimation of distances in jungle terrain.

CLICK 5: Soldier Safety text appears.

16. Prevention of malaria by taking proper dosages of the atabrine prophylaxis during the operation, although troops were in isolated and scattered places during much of the time, proved satisfactory.
17. Many small unit commanders, in establishing security during the halt, placed the importance on concealment over that of fields of fire for his automatic weapons.
18. During several fire fights troop leaders and individuals engaged in too much shouting and unnecessary noise.

CLICK 6: Equipment text appears.

19. The Thompson sub-machine gun proved a favorite weapon in the squad for jungle fighting.
 - a. A second tommy-gun per squad would have advantages.

- b. The 60mm mortar proved a particularly efficient jungle weapon where clearance could be obtained.
 - c. Because of its reduced length, the M-1 bayonet for parachute troops is preferable to the M1905.
 - d. The BAR proved itself a valuable aggressive weapon for parachute troops in fighting in the jungle.
20. In several cases, the machete proved a valuable weapon for quietly dispatching a lone Japanese soldier.
- a. American hand grenades proved their superiority over the Australian hand grenade because of its absolute watertight construction.
 - b. A large number of Australian grenades would not detonate after being exposed to wet weather.
21. Jungle boots are not satisfactory foot gear for movement in heavy jungle with large, rugged outcroppings of coral formation.
- a. The parachute boot is completely satisfactory foot gear under all conditions.

Visual I-3: Integration

Q: Why is it important that AARs / lessons learned are still being captured at this time?

Q: How were operations like this helping the Department of War (and today's Department of Defense) refine or develop the concepts of Joint Operations?

Q: What are your takeaways from this staff ride? What was it that really got you thinking as we went through this?

Q: Did seeing the actions using the virtual terrain help you better visualize what happened? Did it change the way you looked at this action?

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