



Troops wade ashore onto Cebu circa March 1945. (Photo from Kent Roberts Greenfield, ed., *The War against Japan: U.S. Army in World War II Pictorial Record*, 2nd ed. [Washington, DC: U.S. Army Center of Military History, 2001], 382)

A “Light but Aggressive Command”

The 1945 Campaign in the Southern Philippines

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The contributions of the U.S. Army in the Pacific theater during World War II, particularly with regard to amphibious operations,

were significant despite not being as well-known as operations principally undertaken by the Marine Corps.¹ By the end of the war, three field armies

commanded five Army corps comprising twenty-one Army divisions in addition to various separate units equivalent to another three divisions of personnel. This force structure dwarfs even that of the current Total Army. In contrast, six Marine divisions overseen by two corps headquarters served in the Pacific during the war. The breadth of experiences of the Army in the Pacific during World War II can provide useful insights for future operations conducted in the Indo-Pacific Command area of responsibility.

Looking specifically at amphibious landings, the U.S. Marine Corps primarily conducted operations to attack defended beaches in the central and South Pacific, albeit with the support of many Army units that operated under Marine Corps or Navy joint commanders. In contrast, U.S. Army ground troops, in conjunction with Allied units, were the primary forces that conducted operations in the Southwest Pacific Area (SWPA). The Army participated in the assault or support phases for fifty-eight of the sixty-one major amphibious operations conducted worldwide during World War II, including the vast majority of those in the Pacific.²

While operating as the primary ground force, the U.S. Army in the southwest Pacific often found itself fighting on larger land masses, such as New Guinea or Luzon and Leyte in the Philippines, than the islands assaulted by the Marine Corps. The Allies used many amphibious operations in SWPA to outmaneuver Japanese forces instead of attacking strong Japanese defenses directly, amplifying current doctrine, which argues for amphibious forces to “avoid or bypass enemy strengths and to exploit enemy weaknesses and gaps.”³ Lacking oceangoing amphibious shipping, naval gunfire support, and/or carrier-based air support, the Army often found itself assaulting undefended beaches and subsequently supplying itself using smaller landing craft out of necessity.⁴

Additionally, the Army often had to seize multiple smaller objectives near simultaneously or in rapid succession to enable support from land-based aircraft. Commanders routinely task-organized amphibious operations around task forces smaller than a division, whether regimental combat teams (RCTs, roughly equivalent to modern brigades) or even individual battalions and companies. To better inform preparations for future large-scale combat, this article will highlight

key aspects of a specific campaign, the liberation of the southern Philippines in 1945, during which the Eighth U.S. Army commanded a joint force and conducted several dozen amphibious operations in the span of a few weeks.

Ultimately, this campaign, though little discussed in the grand arc of the war and usually overshadowed by campaigns on Leyte and Luzon, can provide context to the use of capabilities currently residing in the Army and those it might possess in the future. First, no “one-size-fits-all” approach is feasible for seizing islands and key terrain in the Pacific. Based on mission variables, the Army assaulted defended or undefended beaches with company to corps-sized formations under compressed timelines. Flexible organizations and planners are essential. Second, amphibious operations are difficult and incredibly complex, but extensive training and *joint/combined* service rehearsals can reduce friction and speed the process of unloading combat power.

Finally, amphibious landings are just the start of an operation; planners must account for the terrain, weather, and enemy inland defense networks during subsequent phases of an operation. Failing to account for these factors

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risks culmination due to extended lines of communication over restrictive terrain, loss of troops to disease, and/or unanticipated enemy forces and defenses.

The Campaign Begins

By the end of January 1945, Gen. Douglas MacArthur had done much to realize his promise to return to the Philippines and liberate the archipelago from Japanese occupation. The previous October, his forces had landed on Leyte and managed to complete major operations on that island in a hard-fought campaign by the end of 1944. In January 1945, MacArthur's Sixth U.S. Army initiated the campaign to seize Luzon, the largest island in the Philippines and home to the capital, Manila. While the campaign to seize Manila and its adjoining bay were completed in a rapid, albeit bloody, fashion, Sixth Army would remain locked in a struggle to clear the remainder of the island for the rest of the war. With operations on Luzon slowly grinding forward, MacArthur turned his attention southward.

Initially launched without approval from the Joint Chiefs of Staff, the campaign to secure the southern Philippines, the islands south of Leyte, was spurred by MacArthur's desire to liberate the entirety of the archipelago in keeping his promise to "return" to the islands, no doubt adding to his own prestige and enhancing his chances of commanding the anticipated invasion of Japan.⁵ For practical reasons, the liberation of the southern Philippines would also provide excellent bases for subsequent operations such as the planned invasion of Japan or air interdiction of Japanese shipping and installations around Borneo and the South China Sea. The seizure of the islands south of Leyte would also allow the liberation of Filipino civilians and Allied prisoners of war from Japanese control, especially given reports of the Palawan Massacre where some 150 American prisoners had been burned alive and shot by Japanese troops.⁶ MacArthur issued the initial order for operations in the southern Philippines on 6 February 1945 and charged Lt. Gen. Robert Eichelberger's Eighth Army with conducting the liberation of the remaining islands, including the Visayas in the central Philippines and the larger island of Mindanao further south.

Dubbing the series of operations Victor I–V (numbered in the order in which the operations were planned, not executed), the campaign would see

Eichelberger's troops conduct fifty-two "D-Days" of operations before the end of the war, including thirty-eight landings in one forty-four-day period (see figure 1).⁷ Eichelberger would use his five divisions and supporting units to conduct landings ranging in size from company to corps operations and take advantage of extensive networks of guerrillas and Filipino civilians to gather intelligence on the Japanese and root out the defenders. Although the Japanese nominally possessed about one hundred thousand troops, roughly equal to the number of troops at Eichelberger's disposal, the Japanese in the area lacked air, naval, and logistical support, meaning they were isolated and fixed in place, and fewer than half were combat troops.⁸ Additionally, when one considers that well over fifty thousand guerrillas were able to support the Americans, the force ratio tipped in Eighth Army's favor. However, numbers alone do not guarantee victory, and the Eighth Army would have to contend with other factors to successfully conclude the campaign.

By 1945, the Japanese were well aware of American advantages in mobility and firepower. As opposed to earlier defensive operations on Tarawa and in the Marianas, the Japanese followed new doctrine that called for extensive defenses on high ground inland as opposed to fighting at the water's edge.⁹ While the Japanese would not fight hard on the beaches, the Americans would find some difficulty in locating and overcoming these defenses inland, although the combat experience of Eichelberger's units would certainly aid them in this regard. Additionally, the size of the area of operations, measuring some 650 by 600 miles, would present its own challenges as the Eighth Army conducted widely dispersed amphibious and ground operations while allocating air and naval support and sustaining an unrelenting operational tempo. Given the number of islands of various sizes that Eighth Army was trying to seize in rapid succession, liberation of the southern Philippines was not a foregone conclusion but would require careful planning, bold maneuver, and the determination down to the individual soldier to root out the stubborn Japanese defenders.

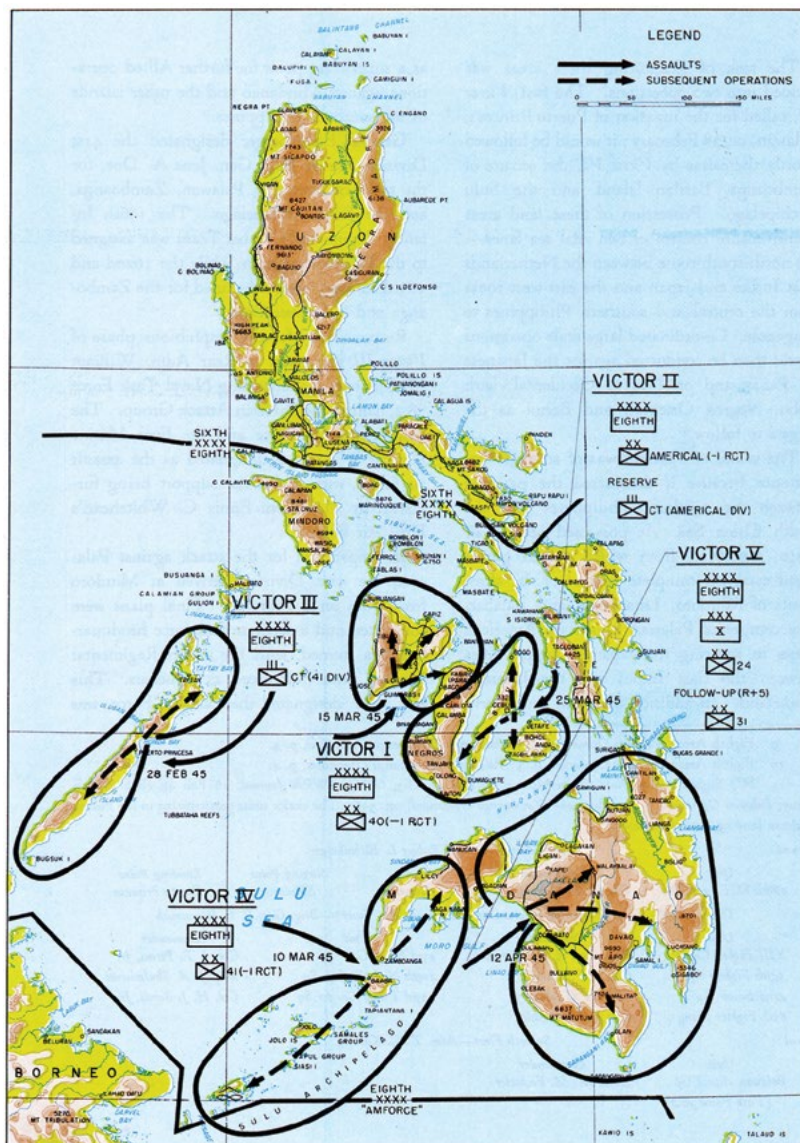
Victor III and IV: Palawan and The Sulu Archipelago

The first operation, Victor III, saw the 41st Infantry Division's 186th RCT land on Palawan Island on 28

February 1945 to seize the key port of Puerto Princesa and allow the building of airbases to facilitate strikes on Japanese shipping in the South China Sea and oil installations in what is now Indonesia.¹⁰ While the landing was unopposed by the nine hundred Japanese on Palawan, the preinvasion bombardment caused some confusion, which led to the disembarkation of the 186th onto the wrong beaches.¹¹ Eichelberger viewed the landings from his personal B-17 bomber along with Brig. Gen. William F. Heavey, commander of the 2nd Engineer Special Brigade, which provided landing craft and amphibian tractors for the operation.¹²

After the landings, the 186th RCT found itself working extensively with 1,200 local guerrillas to root out the Japanese, who opted to fight a defense farther inland in accordance with late-war Japanese doctrine. This resulted in a tough fight approximately ten miles north of Puerto Princesa, where the Japanese had established a series of strongpoints. From 3 to 8 March, the 186th managed to destroy these strongpoints and then embarked on grueling overland movements to clear the rest of the island, where the mountainous jungle terrain proved more formidable than the Japanese.¹³ Clearing Palawan itself was only part of the operation, however. The 186th eventually conducted several smaller amphibious landings on outlying islands in company and battalion strength to successfully clear Japanese from those areas. Over the course of all these operations, the 186th RCT only suffered ten killed and forty-five wounded after inflicting some nine hundred casualties on the Japanese.¹⁴

Following Victor III, the balance of the 41st Infantry Division landed in the Sulu Archipelago and on the Zamboanga Peninsula in western Mindanao on 10 March (Victor IV). Due to delays getting the airfields on Palawan functional, the 41st prioritized the seizure of an airfield in Zamboanga prior to their main



(Figure from General Headquarters, Far East Command, *Reports of General MacArthur: The Campaigns of MacArthur in the Pacific*, Vol. 1 [1994], 330)

Figure 1. The Victor Operations, 1945

amphibious assault. Fortunately for the Americans, Filipino guerrillas controlled a small airfield at Dipolog, and the 41st quickly seized this opportunity by moving a Marine Air Group there. With air support from Dipolog and a three-day bombardment, the main landing on 10 March was largely unopposed, and the 162nd and 163rd Infantry Regiments quickly seized Zamboanga City and a nearby airfield. However, the Japanese had prepared a formidable defense further inland with deeply dug positions, mines, barbed wire, and booby traps. The 41st took two weeks to reduce the Japanese positions with extensive air and naval



(Figure from 10th Information and Historical Service, Headquarters Eighth Army, *Operational Monograph on the Cebu-Bohol Negros Oriental Operation, Victor II* [1947], 234)

Figure 2. Americal Division Cebu Plan of Attack

gunfire support, finding the terrain so restrictive that it precluded the use of tanks. Reinforced by elements of the 186th RCT sent back to the division after their Palawan mission, the 41st Infantry Division ultimately forced the Japanese to retreat by the end of March. Although mopping up pockets of Japanese continued, the Americans had killed some 6,400 Japanese at the cost of 220 killed in action themselves.¹⁵

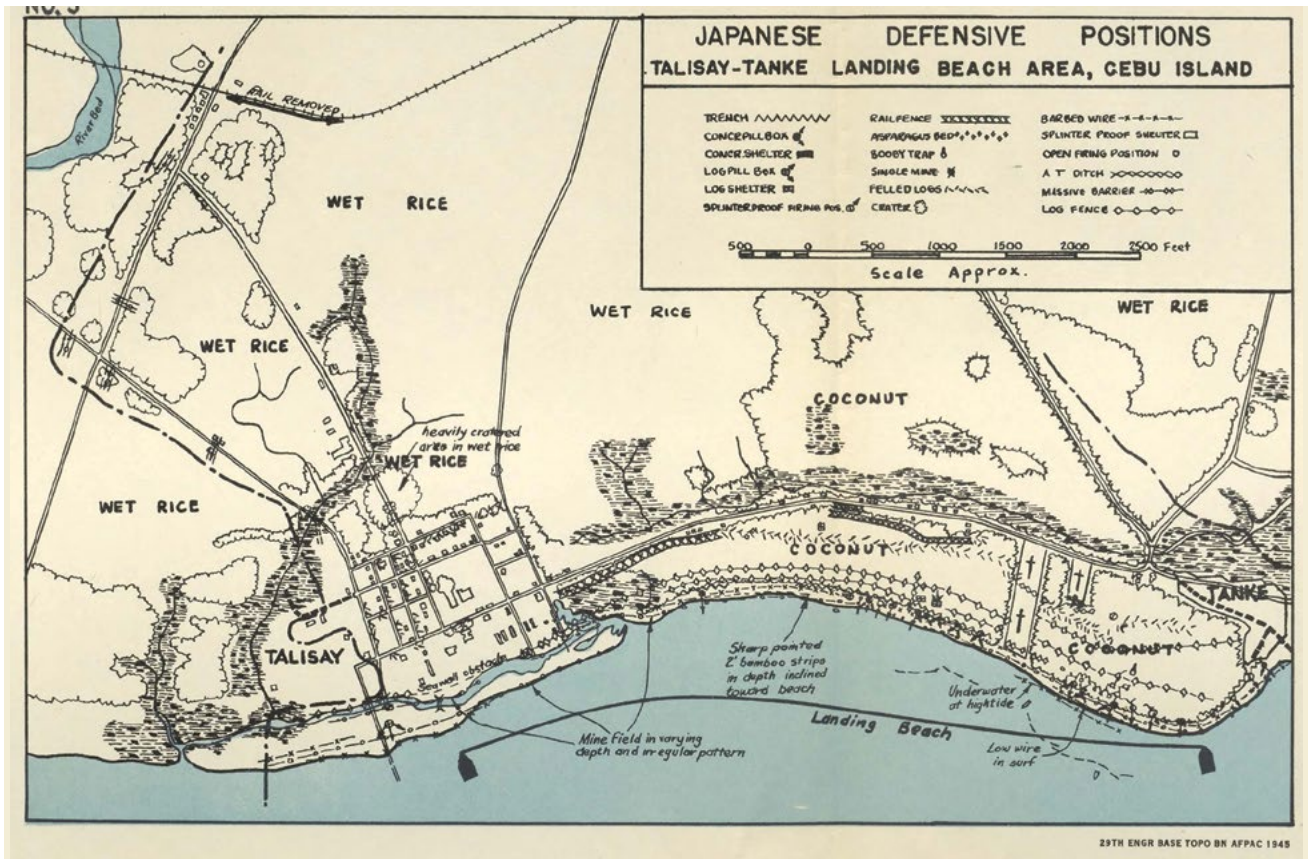
In the Sulu Archipelago, the 41st Division was able to seize the islands of Basilan, Malamaui, Tawi Tawi,

Sanga Sanga, and Bangao in rapid succession using company- and battalion-size landing forces. However, the division's 163rd RCT, supported by Filipino guerrillas, found itself locked in intense combat to dislodge 3,900 Japanese defenders around Mount Daho on Jolo Island.¹⁶ Even with significant artillery and Marine Corps air support, it took from 9 to 22 April to dislodge the defenders and another two months to mop up the remaining Japanese, with the Americans losing forty killed and 125 wounded to two thousand Japanese losses. Fewer than ninety Japanese survived to surrender at the end of the war.

Victor I and II: Panay and Cebu

Operations on Palawan and in the Sulu Archipelago were followed by the landing of the 40th Infantry Division, minus one RCT, on Panay (Victor I) on 18 March.¹⁷ On Panay, the troops of the 40th Division were greeted by Filipino guerrillas under Col. Macario Peralta in parade formation. Peralta's forces, numbering over twenty-two thousand, had already secured much of the island, leaving a force of approximately 2,700 Japanese isolated in the city of Iloilo and nearby towns.¹⁸ The Japanese, able to destroy some 70 percent of Iloilo before they withdrew before the overwhelming force of the 40th Division, managed to retreat into the interior of the island after overcoming guerrilla defenses that had tried to trap them south of the town of Jaro.¹⁹ However, the 40th Division and the guerrillas continued a relentless pursuit, effectively eliminating resistance on Panay and outlying islands by 22 March.

On 25 March, the Americal Division, minus the 164th RCT in Eighth Army Reserve, landed on Cebu (Victor II, see figure 2).²⁰ The Americal troops, although landing without Japanese opposition, lost ten of the first fifteen LVTs (Landing Vehicle, Tracked) that arrived on the beach to an extensive Japanese minefield (see figure 3).²¹ This unforeseen obstacle temporarily halted beach and inland movements for ninety minutes until engineers cleared paths inland. Fortunately for the Americal, the Japanese chose



(Figure from 10th Information and Historical Service, Headquarters Eighth Army, *Operational Monograph on the Cebu-Bohol Negros Oriental Operation, Victor II* [1947], 235)

Figure 3. Japanese Defensive Positions on Cebu

not to defend these obstacles with direct or indirect fires. This allowed various elements of the reinforced Americal Division to establish shore party operations, begin medical treatment of the wounded, and ferry serious casualties offshore via amphibious DUKWs (colloquially known as “ducks”) to waiting hospital ships.²²

The Americans soon linked up with the Philippine 82nd Division, veterans of two years of guerilla operations on the island. Led by a mining engineer, the division assisted in securing the initial beachhead before moving to help secure or occupy Americal Division objectives.²³ The guerillas’ airfield on the island’s north end served as a forward refueling area for the Americal’s L-4 artillery spotter aircraft during the first few days of the invasion until a larger airfield was captured and put into operation.²⁴ Accompanying both forces were Philippine civil affairs units charged with assisting beleaguered Filipinos as they emerged from Japanese occupation. This effort later laid the

groundwork for creating the division’s base camp as it staged for follow-on operations.²⁵ Meanwhile, guerrilla actions made it difficult for the Japanese to maintain communications between dispersed units or gather food locally.²⁶

On 29 March, the 182nd Infantry encountered another minefield at the base of Gochan Hill north of Cebu City that was covered with Japanese fires amidst the Americans’ combined arms assault on the hill itself with a company of tanks. Elements of the 57th Engineer Battalion worked to clear a path for the tanks to lead the assault, and infantrymen of the 182nd were later decorated for removing American casualties from the tanks’ path. As the Americans secured the hill’s eastern slope, a large explosion rocked the area, soon followed by mortar and machine gun fire. A Company, 182nd Infantry, was virtually wiped and not reconstituted for two weeks until enough replacements arrived to fill out the company along with personnel needs across the division.

It was later discovered that the Japanese had packed Gochan Hill with explosives set to a timed fuse. The arrival of a unit with 90 mm guns to the Americal on 9 April allowed these weapons to be used as a direct-fire asset on such caves along with pillboxes.²⁷ The 164th Infantry, which entered combat on Cebu beginning 11 April, discovered a similar setup in its sector on Hill 27 a short time later. The 164th RCT's stay with the Americal was short-lived, as the RCT was pulled off the line on Cebu to land in Southern Negros to help reduce the last Japanese concentration in the Visayas.²⁸

The Americal Division was largely reconsolidated by 1 July as major combat operations for Victor II came to an end. Cebu was designated as the Americal Division's staging base for future operations, which appeared to be an invasion of the Japanese home islands. Immediately, the division transitioned into a three-week period of amphibious training led by mobile training units from the 7th Fleet's amphibious force, which were sent to all division staging areas beginning in June.²⁹ The Americal followed its amphibious training regimen with onshore training. In fact, the division was beginning a two-day field problem when official word arrived from the War Department announced the Japanese surrender. This necessitated another transition by the division, this time to Operation Blacklist, the occupation of Japanese territory.³⁰

Victor V: Mindanao

Mindanao, southernmost of the main islands of the Philippines, is the second largest island in the archipelago. The Japanese had concentrated most of their defenses, including anti-aircraft guns, naval mines, and artillery, in eastern Mindanao near the Davao Gulf, which was ideal for an amphibious landing and included Davao City, the largest and most important city on the island. The Japanese had also arrayed strong defenses in depth several miles inland to prolong the campaign as long as possible.

On the Allies' side, Mindanao possessed one of the strongest guerrilla forces in the entire Philippines, ably led by American reservist Col. Wendell Fertig, with some twenty-four thousand troops who were confining the Japanese to towns and major roads. Besides fighting the Japanese on the frontlines, the guerrillas passed important targeting information to Marine Corps air wings, going so far as to fly in Marine aircraft to point

out targets.³¹ In successful coordination with U.S. Navy Task Group 70.4, following rehearsals, guerrillas also conducted an amphibious raid at Talisayan and an amphibious landing at Nasipit in northern Mindanao.³²

Beyond these operations, the guerrilla network and other intelligence sources allowed Eichelberger to deduce the disposition of the Japanese defenses. Instead of a frontal attack into the teeth of the defenses around Davao, the Eighth Army commander opted for a landing at Ilana Bay some one hundred miles to the west of Davao to attack the Japanese from the rear.³³ This plan would require surprise, expeditious unloading of forces, and a rapid advance to succeed, lest the Japanese reorient their forces to stop the American advance in the jungles and mountains in Mindanao's interior and prolong the campaign into the rainy season.

In the final Victor operation, X Corps oversaw the landing of the 24th Infantry Division on Mindanao on 12 April in Victor V, with the 31st Infantry Division following soon after (see figure 4).³⁴ There was no preinvasion bombardment to maximize the element of surprise, but the Americans were quick to conduct an aggressive advance once ashore. Lt. Gen. Gyosaku Morozuni, commander of the Japanese 30th Division defending Mindanao, later related that American attacks were "much more severe and rapid" than he had expected.³⁵ Guerrillas and Marine Corps airstrikes facilitated a rapid seizure of the primary landing beaches and the airfield at Malabang, and Maj. Gen. Franklin C. Sibert, the X Corps commander, decided to land the bulk of the 24th Infantry Division at Parang instead.³⁶ This put them closer to Highway 1, the main route east.

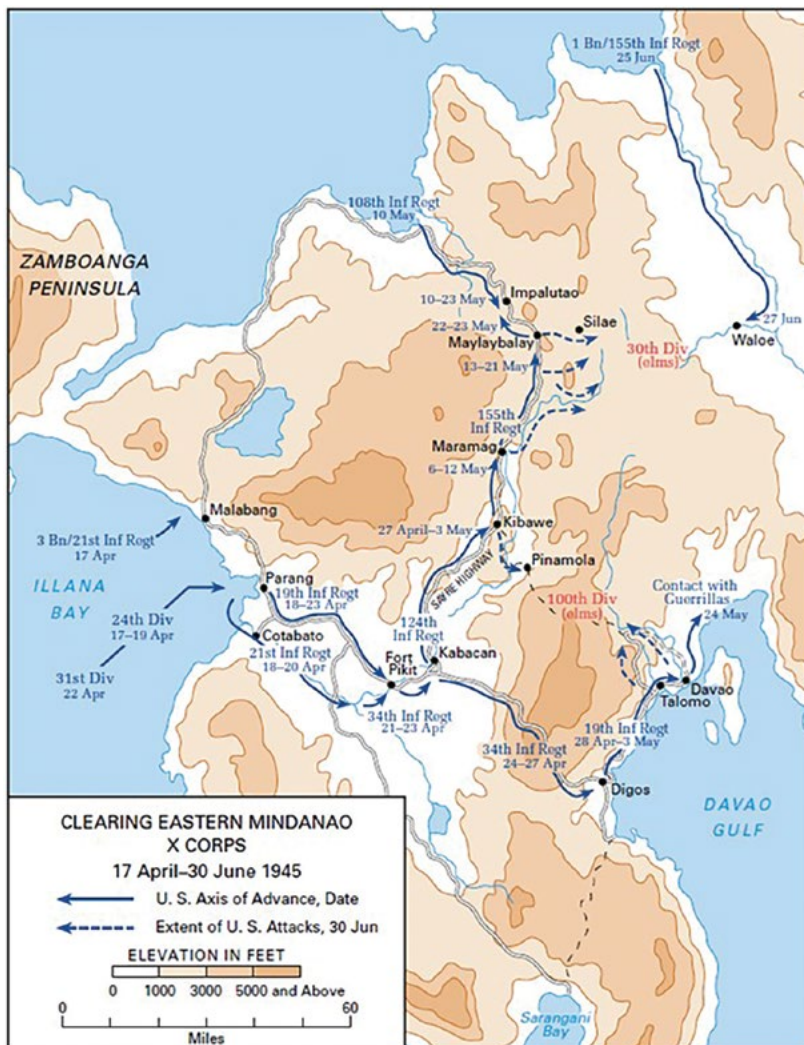
Following an unopposed landing, the troops of the 24th Infantry Division moved rapidly east along Highway 1. American planners had correctly deduced that the Japanese would destroy the bridges along the highway and decided to use the boats of the 533rd Engineer Boat and Shore Regiment on the Mindanao River to seize key terrain further inland. A small fleet of gunboats and landing craft managed to secure the crucial town of Kabacan and the junction of Highway 1 and the north-running Sayre Highway on 21 and 22 April, forcing the Japanese garrisons to flee.³⁷ Importantly, the Mindanao River would provide the main line of communication for X Corps as it continued its advance.

The rapid American advance split the defending Japanese 30th and 100th Divisions, and with the landing

of the American 31st Infantry Division on 22 April, Sibert decided to send the 31st Division north along the Sayre Highway while the 24th Division continued to advance eastward to Davao City. Quickly arriving to the rear of the Japanese defenses around the Davao Gulf on 27 April, the 24th Division overwhelmed the defenders, capturing Davao City on 3 May. However, after the seizure of Davao, the 24th moved to eliminate the remainder of the 100th Division, finding itself forced to conduct costly frontal attacks through fields of dense abacá plants. Given his extended lines of communication and mounting losses, Maj. Gen. Roscoe B. Woodruff, the 24th Division commander, successfully lobbied to receive back his 21st Infantry Regiment from the X Corps reserve, but it took until the middle of July to destroy the Japanese 100th Division in close small-unit fighting that many 24th Division veterans said was the worst they encountered during the entire the war.³⁸

Meanwhile, the 31st Division continued its advance up the Sayre Highway, which turned out to be a “highway” in name only. Daily rains turned an uncompleted stretch of the highway into a muddy morass, while Japanese and guerrilla actions had destroyed all seventy bridges along the route in one form or another.³⁹ Finding the terrain more an obstacle than Japanese opposition, the 31st ground forward, in some cases being unable to reposition its artillery and requiring aerial resupply due to the unsuitable ground lines of communication. From 6 to 12 May, the lead 124th Infantry Regiment fought a tough struggle to clear dug-in Japanese from camouflaged tunnels and pillboxes, repelling two suicidal Japanese banzai charges and losing 69 killed and 177 wounded.⁴⁰ Subsequently, the 31st Division was able to seize the crucial airfields at Maramag and Malaybalay, somewhat easing its resupply issues.

To help the advance, Eichelberger ordered an amphibious landing at Macajalar Bay by the 108th RCT from the 40th Infantry Division, which advanced



(Figure from Stephen J. Lofgren, *Southern Philippines: The Campaigns of World War II* [1996], 25)

Figure 4. The Clearance of Eastern Mindanao

south as the 31st Division advanced north. Despite having to overcome a tough Japanese defense anchored on a steep canyon over the course of four days, the 108th was able to effect a link-up with the 155th RCT of the 31st Division and put the Americans in complete control of the Sayre Highway.⁴¹ At this point, the Japanese 30th Division continued a slow withdrawal to the east, and even with an amphibious landing by the American 1st Battalion, 155th Infantry, which turned the 30th Division’s flank, fighting continued until mid-August. Despite the continuing mopping up operations, Eichelberger declared the end of organized Japanese resistance on 30 June. The fighting on Mindanao from 17 April to 15 August cost American forces 820 killed and 2,880 wounded,

while the Japanese lost 10,000 killed in combat and another 8,000 to starvation and disease.⁴²

Analysis

Overall, the fighting in the southern Philippines, although having low casualties for a World War II campaign, cost Eighth Army 2,070 killed and 7,000 wounded, close to the more than 2,300 U.S. deaths during the entire the war in Afghanistan.⁴³ While the Eighth Army's amphibious operations were generally unopposed, with the Japanese often withdrawing to more defensible terrain in the hilly interior of many islands, the Americans did have to overcome some stubborn Japanese positions, and the process of "mopping up" remaining Japanese forces, although often left to guerrillas, could take several weeks. Meanwhile, in a truly joint effort, much of the air support for Eighth Army's landings came from Marine Corps air groups, and the provision of Marine Corps air liaison officers directly with ground forces facilitated effective close air support.⁴⁴

The conduct of so many amphibious operations in rapid succession, even with minimal enemy interference, represented a feat of planning and organization; in the words of distinguished naval historian Samuel Eliot Morison regarding Eighth Army's landings, "Whilst, in general, no shortages of troops, ships, or materials existed, there were so many of these operations that planners had a jigsaw puzzle of providing amphibious shipping and follow-up support."⁴⁵ After the close of the campaign, MacArthur, in a message to Eighth Army, stated, "My heartiest commendation for the brilliant execution of the Visayan campaign. This is a model of what a light but aggressive command can accomplish in rapid exploitation."⁴⁶

How can the experience in the southern Philippines inform future U.S. Army operations, especially amphibious landings? Several factors can account for the Eighth Army's success, and the campaign provides several key considerations for future amphibious campaigns and island operations.

Eighth Army benefitted from significant staff continuity within its headquarters. Eichelberger had commanded the army since its activation in June 1944, and his chief of staff, Brig. Gen. Clovis E. Byers, operations officer, Col. Frank S. Brown, and many of the other primary staff officers had been with him since the Buna-Gona campaign in New Guinea in 1943.⁴⁷ Thus,

the Eighth Army staff had extensive prior experience conducting amphibious landings and working with other services and Allied partners.

The field army headquarters was not the only staff that was effective, however. From corps to battalions, subordinate headquarters in Eighth Army proved themselves equally adept at planning, resourcing, and synchronizing amphibious operations by units as small as a company during both simultaneous and sequential landings. The engineer special brigades (ESB) also displayed their depth of experience in supporting the relentless pace of operations with amphibious shipping and landing parties on beaches. The official U.S. Navy Seventh Amphibious Force history noted,

The Engineer Special Brigade or the Shore Battalion of the Engineer Boat and Shore Regiment is believed to be the best solution developed for the still unsolved shore party problem in amphibious operations. Throughout the New Guinea and Philippines campaigns these units performed their missions well. With sufficient service troops attached, they have always been capable of accomplishing the main task of a shore party—the expeditious movement of supplies across the beaches.⁴⁸

While the U.S. Navy currently possesses two naval beach groups, which fulfill a function like the ESBs, this will likely be an inadequate number of units if the U.S. military has to conduct several large amphibious operations simultaneously or in rapid succession. There would be initial teething problems with integrating Army forces and Naval Beach Groups, a relationship that is not habitual. Although the 7th Transportation Brigade (Expeditionary) trains for this mission as well, it may prove inadequate for conducting multiple landings rapidly. Therefore, Army planners must be prepared to designate additional forces to train and fulfill the role of the ESB, transportation brigade (expeditionary), or naval beach group in future amphibious landings.

Amphibious landings, however, were only the beginnings of operations. Leaders at all levels had to ensure a rapid unloading of combat power onto the beaches and then sustain operations inland through logistics over the shore using primitive or nonexistent ground lines of communication. Aerial or even riverine methods for extending operational reach were

necessary to keep maneuver forces advancing against the defending Japanese.

Current Army doctrine does not provide much for planning riverine operations, but given the number of rivers and other waterways on many large islands, the consideration of rivers not just as barriers to be crossed but as lines of communication should certainly remain for commanders and staffs.⁴⁹ Separately, the U.S. Army's rotary-wing capabilities along with potential future unmanned systems must be strongly considered for conducting resupply and backhauling personnel and equipment given the restrictive terrain in this theater. It is unlikely the future force will have the luxury of extensive ground lines of communication during all operations.

Eighth Army during the Victor operations did not possess any large units of fleet carriers and their extensive air wings, nor did it have a massive amount of amphibious shipping. However, it made extensive use of the shipping and assets that it did possess. Important among these were land-based aircraft of the Thirteenth Expeditionary Air Force and Marine air groups as well as the ESBs for their amphibious shipping. The rapid seizure and improvement of existing airfields were important to Eighth Army operations, but in the future, such facilities may present lucrative targets for enemy aircraft or guided munitions, so identifying austere locations for aircraft basing should be important planning considerations.

The guerrillas also provided valuable intelligence and combat units to Eighth Army. Effective liaison with the guerrillas and combined rehearsals enabled them to assist with airstrikes and even conduct amphibious operations on Mindanao using U.S. Navy landing craft. U.S. forces will likely conduct any future operations with troops from partner nations, and the effective coordination with guerrillas provides a model for cooperation with allies and partners, potentially with current Army Special Forces or security force assistance brigades.

Despite the difficulties that Eighth Army encountered and overcame, the future joint force may have even more difficulty than did the "Amphibious Eighth" if the enemy possesses extensive air and naval forces and antiship or anti-aircraft missiles and antiaccess/area denial systems. Reducing, suppressing, or destroying such systems will be a high priority during any future amphibious operation. However, the southern Philippines campaign still provides valuable insights into the planning, resources, and training required to undertake a rapid series of amphibious operations in a short period and provide support to forces inland in restrictive terrain. Ultimately, the past cannot provide commanders and planners all the answers, but it allows them to ask many of the right questions and shape training objectives for forces who may have to operate in the Pacific. ■

Notes

1. Cole C. Kingseed, "The Pacific War: The U.S. Army's Forgotten Theater of World War II," *Army Magazine* 63, no. 4 (April 2013): 50–56. The reasons for that lack of attention on the U.S. Army's experiences in the Pacific have been laid out by historian Cole Kingseed and includes a Europe-first grand strategy; the maritime nature of the theater; the cult of personality built around Douglas MacArthur; unbalanced press coverage that focused on Army operations in Europe; and the savagery and racial tone of the Pacific War, which made it less palatable to remember. John C. McManus, *Fire and Fortitude: The US Army in the Pacific War, 1941-1943* (New York: Dutton Caliber, 2019), 4. To these factors, John C. McManus added another: "the chaotic and tragic debacles of multiple early Allied defeats," which exacerbated the obscurity of the theater and a collective desire to forget the experiences there.

2. John T. Greenwood, "The U.S. Army and Amphibious Warfare During World War II," *Army History* 27 (Summer 1993): 8.

3. Karl James, "South-West Pacific: Amphibious Operations, 1942–45," Soundings Papers No. 30 (Fyshwick, AU: Sea Power

Centre-Australia, 2021), 1; Joint Publication 3-02, *Amphibious Operations* (Washington, DC: U.S. Government Publishing Office [GPO], January 2019), I-2.

4. Jon T. Hoffman, "The Legacy and Lessons of the New Guinea Campaign," *Marine Corps Gazette*, September 1993, 75.

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6. Michael E. Krivdo, "Catalyst for Action: The Palawan Massacre," *Veritas: Journal of Army Special Operations History* 14, no. 1 (2018): 35–41.

7. Historical Section, Eighth U.S. Army, *The Amphibious Eighth* (Tokyo: Eighth U.S. Army Headquarters, 1948), 27; Robert L. Eichelberger and Milton MacKaye, *Our Jungle Road to Tokyo* (New York: Viking Press, 1950), 200; figure 1 from General Headquarters, Far East Command, *Reports of General MacArthur: The Campaigns of MacArthur in the Pacific, Vol. 1* (Washington, DC: U.S. Army Center of Military History, 1994), 330.

8. Christopher M. Rein, *Multi-Domain Battle in the Southwest Pacific Theater of World War II* (Fort Leavenworth, KS: Combat Studies Institute Press, 2017), 160.
9. Waldo Heinrichs and Marc Gallicchio, *Implacable Foes: The War in the Pacific, 1944-1945* (New York: Oxford University Press, 2017), 329.
10. Headquarters, Eighth U.S. Army, *Report of the Commanding General Eighth U.S. Army on the Palawan and Zamboanga Operations, Victor III and IV* (n.p.: Eighth U.S. Army, 1946), 4.
11. S-3 Section, Headquarters, 658th Amphibian Tractor Battalion, *After Action Report, 658th Amphibian Tractor Battalion, April 43 thru 15 January 46* (n.p.: 658th Amphibian Tractor Battalion, 1946), 94.
12. Office of History, U.S. Army Corps of Engineers, *Put 'Em Across: A History of the 2d Engineer Special Brigade, 1942-1945* (1946; repr., Harrisburg, PA: Telegraph Press, 1988), 139.
13. Robert Ross Smith, *Triumph in the Philippines* (Washington, DC: U.S. Army Center of Military History, 1963), 589.
14. James P. Duffy, *Return to Victory: MacArthur's Epic Liberation of the Philippines* (New York: Hachette Books, 2021), 290.
15. Smith, *Triumph in the Philippines*, 597.
16. Lofgren, *Southern Philippines*, 13.
17. Rein, *Multi-Domain Battle in the Southwest Pacific Theater of World War II*, 162.
18. Smith, *Triumph in the Philippines*, 601; 10th Information and Historical Service, Headquarters Eighth Army (10th I&H Service, Eighth Army), "General Interrogation of Captain Sadayoshi Ishikawa, 25 July 1947," in *Staff Study of Japanese Operations on Panay Island* (n.p.: 10th I&H Service, Eighth Army, 1949), 7.
19. Far East Command, *Reports of General MacArthur*, 341-42.
20. The Americal Division got its name from a contraction of the words "American" or "America" and "New Caledonia." Formed in the United States and reinforced with units in New Caledonia when it arrived there in March 1942, the unit was saw combat on Guadalcanal and Bougainville in the Solomons before moving to the Philippines in 1944. Shelby L. Stanton, *World War II Order of Battle: An Encyclopedic Reference to U.S. Army Ground Forces from Battalion through Division 1939-1946*, rev. ed. (1984; repr., Mechanicsburg, PA: Stackpole Books, 2006), 185; figure 2 from 10th I&H Service, Eighth Army, "Plan of Attack, Cebu," in *Operational Monograph on the Cebu-Bohol Negros Oriental Operation, Victor II* (n.p.: 10th I&H Service, Eighth Army, 1947), 234 (page number refers to the PDF).
21. Gene Eric Salecker, *Rolling Thunder against the Rising Sun: The Combat History of U.S. Army Tank Battalions in the Pacific in World War II* (Mechanicsburg, PA: Stackpole Books, 2008), 324; figure 3 from 10th I&H Service, Eighth Army, "Japanese Defensive Positions: Talisay-Tanke Landing Beach Area, Cebu Island," in *Cebu-Bohol Negros Oriental Operation*, 235.
22. Francis D. Cronin, *Under the Southern Cross: The Saga of the Americal Division*, 3rd ed. (Washington, DC: Combat Forces Press, 1981), 273-79. The acronym DUKW stems from nomenclature used by the General Motors Corporation that manufactured them: D-1942 production series; U-utility; K-all-wheel drive; W-tandem rear axles, both driven.
23. Cronin, *Under the Southern Cross*, 276-78; HQ Philippines Command, U.S. Army Recognition Program of Philippine Guerrillas, ca. 1949 (1), pp. 60-61; Records Relating to the U.S. Army Recognition Program of Philippine Guerrillas; Records of General Headquarters, Far East Command, Supreme Commander Allied Powers, and United Nations Command, Record Group 554; National Archives at College Park, MD.
24. Cronin, *Under the Southern Cross*, 282.
25. *Ibid.*, 337.
26. 10th I&H Service, Eighth Army, "Interrogation of Colonel Satoshi Wada, 15 April 1947," in *Staff Study of Operations of the Japanese 102d Division on Leyte and Cebu* (n.p.: 10th I&H Service, Eighth Army, 1949), 3. Satoshi Wada was the chief of staff of the Japanese 102nd Division on Cebu.
27. Cronin, *Under the Southern Cross*, 284-86, 295, 307.
28. Eighth U.S. Army Historical Section, *The Amphibious Eighth*, 26-27.
29. Command History Staff and Daniel E. Barbey, *Seventh Amphibious Force Command History, 10 January 1943-23 December 1945* (Shanghai: U.S. Navy, 1945), II-22.
30. Cronin, *Under the Southern Cross*, 343-47.
31. John C. Chapin, ... *And a Few Marines: Marines in the Liberation of the Philippines* (Washington, DC: Marine Corps Historical Center, 1997), 21-22.
32. Cesar P. Pobre and Ricardo T. Jose, *Guerrilla Days in the Philippine South 1942-1945* (Camp Aguinaldo, Quezon City, PH: Philippine Veterans Affairs Office, Department of National Defense, 2022), 419-21.
33. Lofgren, *Southern Philippines*, 23-24.
34. *Ibid.*, 25.
35. 10th I&H Service, Eighth Army, "Interrogation of Lieutenant General Gyosaku Morozumi, Commanding General of the Japanese 30th Infantry Division on Mindanao, P.I., 1944-1945," in *Staff Study of Japanese Operations on Mindanao Island* (n.p.: 10th I&H Service, Eighth Army, 1949), 2.
36. Smith, *Triumph in the Philippines*, 621.
37. *Ibid.*
38. Don Gordon, *24th Infantry Division: "The Victory Division" First to Fight* (Paducah, KY: Turner Publishing, 1997), 57.
39. Heinrichs and Gallicchio, *Implacable Foes*, 342.
40. Lofgren, *Southern Philippines*, 31.
41. Heinrichs and Gallicchio, *Implacable Foes*, 343.
42. Lofgren, *Southern Philippines*, 32.
43. John C. McManus, *To the End of the Earth: The U.S. Army and the Downfall of Japan, 1945* (New York: Dutton Caliber, 2023), 157; "Casualty Status, as of 10 a.m. EST January 3, 2024," U.S. Department of Defense, accessed 24 January 2024, <https://www.defense.gov/casualty.pdf>.
44. Chapin, *And a Few Marines*, 28.
45. Samuel Eliot Morison, *History of United States Naval Operations in World War II: Volume 13: The Liberation of the Philippines: Luzon, Mindanao, the Visayas, 1944-1945* (1950; repr., Champaign: University of Illinois Press, 2002), 215.
46. Eighth U.S. Army Historical Section, *The Amphibious Eighth*, 27.
47. Lofgren, *Southern Philippines*, 34.
48. Command History Staff and Barbey, *Seventh Amphibious Force Command History*, II-42.
49. Army Techniques Publication 4-15, *Army Watercraft Operations* (Washington, DC: U.S. GPO, April 2015).