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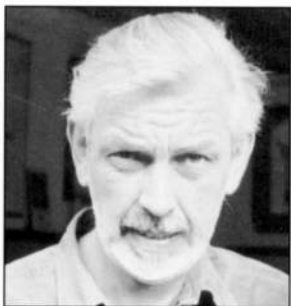
Operation Flintlock, the capture of
Kwajalein and Eniwetok



Gordon L Rottman • Illustrated by Howard Gerrard



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The Marshall Islands 1944

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Kwajalein and Eniwetok



Gordon L Rottman • Illustrated by Howard Gerrard

Series editor Lee Johnson • Consultant editor David G Chandler

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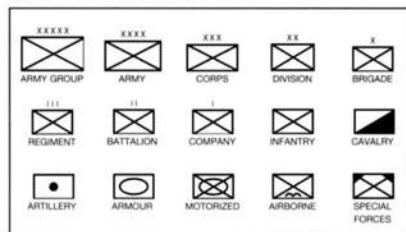
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KEY TO MILITARY SYMBOLS



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Abbreviations

Adm	Admiral
AmphBde	Amphibious Brigade (IJA)
amtrac	amphibian tractor (see also LVT)
BAR	Browning Automatic Rifle
CINCPAC	Commander in Chief, Pacific Ocean Area
CP	Command Post
DUKW	2½-ton amphibious truck ("Duck")
FMFPac	Fleet Marine Force, Pacific
HQ	Headquarters
IMR	Independent Mixed Regiment (IJA)
InfDiv	Infantry Division (US Army)
IJA	Imperial Japanese Army
IJN	Imperial Japanese Navy
LCI(G)	Landing Craft, Infantry (Gun)
LCM	Landing Craft, Mechanized
LCT	Landing Craft, Tank
LCVP	Landing Craft, Vehicle and Personnel
LSD	Landing Ship, Dock
LST	Landing Ship, Tank
LVT	Landing Vehicle, Tracked ("amtrac")
LVT(A)	Landing Vehicle, Tracked (Armored)
MarDiv	Marine Division
NTLF	Northern Troops and Landing Force
O-1 Line	Objective 1 Line
OpPlan	Operations Plan
RCT	Regimental Combat Team
SNLF	Special Naval Landing Force (IJN)
STLF	Southern Troops and Landing Force
TacGrp 1	Tactical Group 1, VAC
TF	Task Force
TG	Task Group
UDT	Underwater Demolition Team
US	United States
USMC	United States Marine Corps
VAC	V Amphibious Corps
(-)	reduced (elements detached from parent unit)
(+)	reinforced (additional elements attached)

US Marine and Army Officer Ranks

2ndLt: 2nd Lieutenant
1stLt: 1st Lieutenant
Capt: Captain
Maj: Major
LtCol: Lieutenant Colonel
Col: Colonel
BrigGen: Brigadier General ("one-star")
MajGen: Major General ("two-star")
LtGen: Lieutenant General ("three-star")
Gen: General ("four-star")

Japanese Army Officer Ranks

SubLt: Sub-Lieutenant
Lt: Lieutenant
Capt: Captain
Maj: Major
LtCol: Lieutenant Colonel
Col: Colonel
MajGen: Major General
LtGen: Lieutenant General
- Gen: General

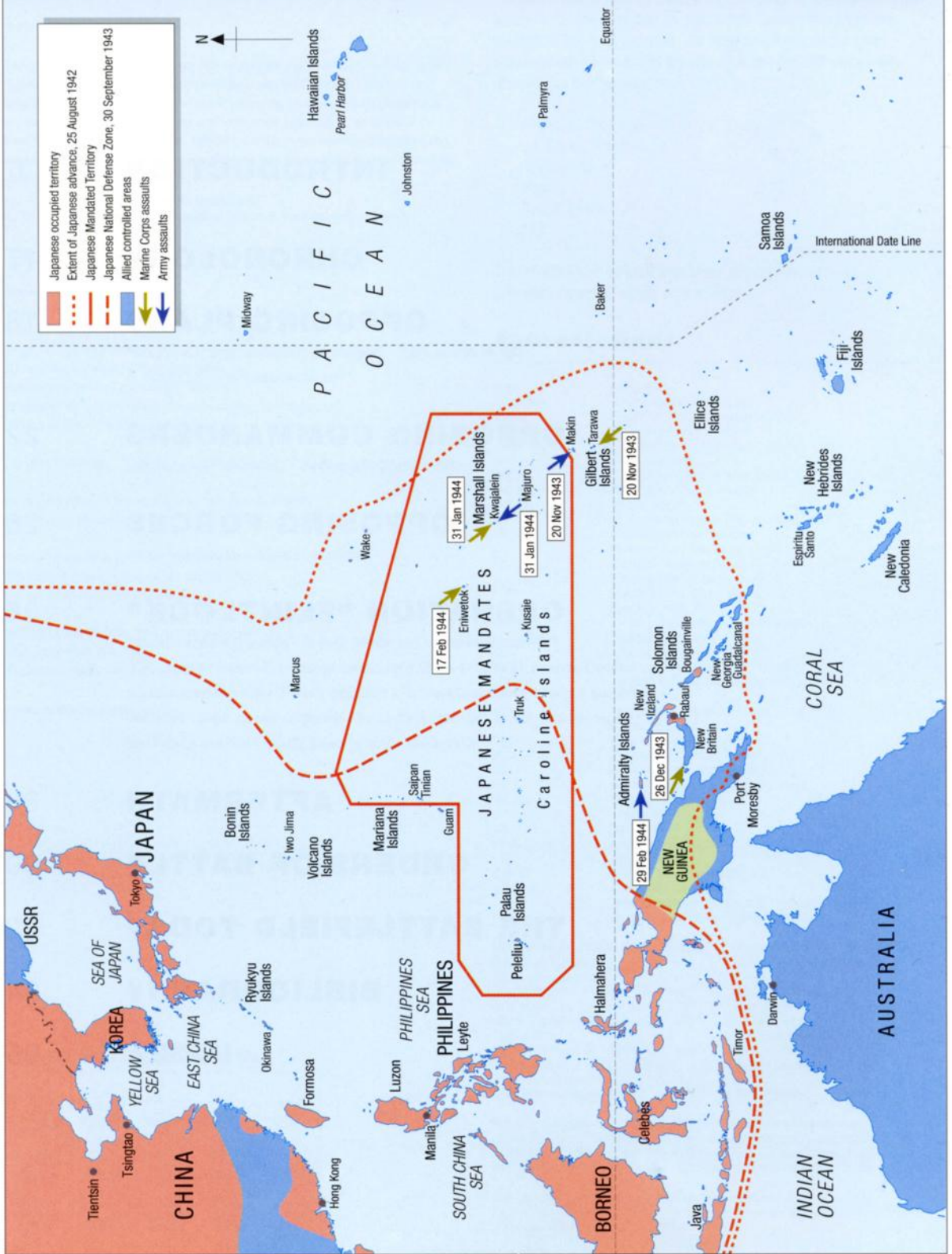
Battalions organic to US Marine and Army regiments are designated with the battalion and regimental number, e.g. 1/24 is 1st Battalion, 24th Marines and 2/184 is 2nd Battalion, 184th Infantry Regiment. Companies and batteries are designated, for example A/1/24 - Company A, 1st Battalion, 24th Marines.

The Japanese place the surname first and the personal name second. Contemporary and post-war writings usually reverse the two. This book follows the Japanese practice.

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STRATEGIC SITUATION IN THE PACIFIC, JANUARY 1944



INTRODUCTION

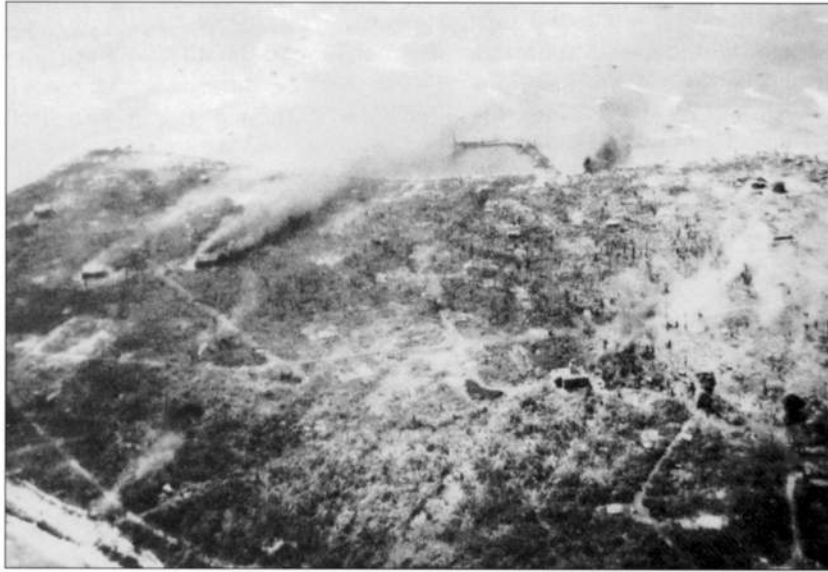
The seizure of the Marshall Islands in the Central Pacific had long been recognized as a necessity in a war with Japan. As far back as 1921, Marine Major E.H. "Pete" Ellis had formatted a hypothetical plan to seize four Marshall's atolls to serve as staging bases for further naval operations against Japan. Ellis died under mysterious circumstances in the Japanese-controlled Palau Islands in 1923.

In May 1943 the "Trident", or Washington, Conference determined the war's course and reexamined earlier decisions. In regards to the war with Japan, two thrusts would converge on the Home Islands. The main effort would be in the Central Pacific by Admiral Chester Nimitz's Pacific Fleet, with General Douglas MacArthur conducting a secondary effort in the Southwest Pacific through New Guinea and the Philippines. MacArthur argued for a concentration of effort in the Southwest Pacific, but it was felt the Japanese would mass their forces to meet one thrust. The Central Pacific route was more direct and required fewer troops. The Japanese would be unable to deploy as many troops and aircraft on the small widely scattered islands as they could in New Guinea and the Philippines. The Gilberts and Marshalls were earmarked to be seized.

US Fifth Fleet seized the Gilberts after the bloody November 1943 battles for Tarawa and Makin. Meanwhile, US and Australian forces were advancing in New Guinea. A major issue was to decide which atolls in the Marshalls would be seized. The Japanese had bases on six atolls plus Kusaie and Wake Islands. On 1 September 1943, Eniwetok Atoll (the



A pre-bombardment view of Namur Island. This is the Yokohama Pier on the island's south-central coast, the lagoon side. The pier would serve as a boundary between the two landing beaches and the two assault battalions. In the upper left corner can be seen the concrete causeway connecting Namur to Roi.



By the time of the invasion Namur's appearance had been transformed by extremely heavy naval and aerial bombardment. This view is looking south across the island into the lagoon. While devastating the island's facilities, the bombardment created obstacles to movement because of the downed trees, wreckage, and craters. It also provided hiding places for the defenders. The torpedo warehouse's crater can be seen below the "V" of the three large concrete structures near the left edge.

northernmost), Kusaie Island (westernmost), and Wake Island (far to the northeast, but under control of the Japanese Marshalls forces) had been selected as targets to be taken. At this time the new 4th Marine Division (MarDiv), 7th Infantry Division (InfDiv), and the separate 22nd Marines were designated to execute Operation "Flintlock" (originally "Bankrate") under the command of the Marine V Amphibious Corps (VAC). However, Admiral Nimitz proposed Kwajalein (the main base near the Marshalls' geographic center), Maloelap, and Wotje (the latter two being closer to Pearl Harbor) as alternatives. These three atolls held 65 per cent of the air bases in the Marshalls and the other bases could be neutralized without necessarily being physically occupied. The target date was 1 January 1944. The date for the seizure of Eniwetok by 27th InfDiv was tentatively set as 1 May, however, when it became clear that the atoll was lightly defended, the assault was rescheduled for 1 March.

Initial planning was conducted prior to the Tarawa assault but lessons from this operation were subsequently incorporated. Earlier amphibious landings had been mostly conducted against large hilly and forested islands against limited or no resistance. The lessons learned in the Tarawa assault, a small atoll island ringed with strong defenses, were critical: particularly those pertaining to using amphibian tractors to attack across broad coral reefs. This was the first assault in which amphibian tractors ("amtrac", landing vehicle, tracked - LVT) were employed to deliver assault troops. They were previously used as cargo carriers. Other lessons were also learned, especially with regard to naval gunfire and aerial bombardment. Based on the experiences at Tarawa, it was realized the forces available for "Flintlock" might not be able to secure the proposed objectives. Operational planning was reevaluated, changes made, and less ambitious objectives assigned. On 7 December, Kwajalein became the primary objective and D-Day was set for 17 January. The revised plan, designated "Flintlock II", was issued on 20 December. Admiral Raymond A. Spruance, Commander, Central Pacific Forces and Fifth Fleet, expressed concerns that Kwajalein was located deep within the Japanese defenses, preferring Wotje and Maloelap to be secured first. Nimitz soon

recommended the target date be changed to 31 January. The Joint Chiefs of Staff insisted the operation commence in January, but the landing forces could not be ready by the original 17 January date. Admiral Spruance, still concerned about bypassing the outer bases, requested that Majuro Atoll to the east be secured. It was either lightly or undefended and would provide airfields to protect Kwajalein from Japanese forces on Jaluit, Maloelap, Wotje, and Mille. It would also serve as a fleet anchorage. The 106th Infantry was assigned to the operation and a reinforced battalion tasked to secure Majuro. A further delay was requested, to 10 February, to allow the divisions to fill equipment shortages and permit the 4th MarDiv to conduct a full rehearsal. This request was denied.

The other bases were to be neutralized by air and naval bombardment through the campaign. Eniwetok in the extreme northeast of the Marshalls would receive particular attention, as it was key to the aerial supply route from Japan. It would be seized later in the operation to block this flow. Once the objectives were secured they would be developed to provide staging and supporting bases for the Western Pacific drive. The bypassed islands would continue to be neutralized from the new American bases established on the captured atolls.

THE MARSHALL ISLANDS

A Japanese expeditionary force took control of the German possessions of the Marshall, Caroline, and Mariana Islands in 1914. In 1920 Japan was granted a mandate by the League of Nations to govern the islands, effective 1922. To garrison and defend the Japanese Mandated Territories, or simply the Japanese Mandate, the South Seas Defense Force was formed. The civilian-run South Seas Bureau, operating under the Ministry of Overseas Affairs, was headquartered on Koror in the Palau Islands, Western Carolines.

By the late 1930s, Japanese settlers outnumbered the native Micronesians, or Kanakas, as they developed the islands economically. After serving the required two-year notice, Japan withdrew from the League of Nations in 1935 and the Mandate became a “closed territory” with entry by Westerners restricted. Japan was accused of illegally fortifying the islands, but was under no legal obligation not to do so.

In November 1939, Japan activated the 4th Fleet to defend the Mandate with amphibious and light forces. Each of the three main island groups was provided with an independent defense system centered on Jaluit, Truk (pronounced “Chuck”), and Saipan. The defense strategy was to marshal, service, and supply 4th Fleet air and naval forces as they launched raids and small-scale operations out of range of enemy bases and reconnaissance aircraft. This would buy time for the Combined Fleet to deploy to meet the invading fleet and defeat it in a decisive engagement.

The Mandated Territory totaled some 1,458 islands, islets, and reefs; 860 square miles of land in total. They spanned an area of 2,500 miles (4,023km) from east to west and 1,200 miles (1,931km) north to south. The Marshalls are the easternmost group and lie north of the Gilberts and the Equator. The Carolines are strung out to the west running toward the Philippines while the Marianas are to the north of the central Carolines.

Militarily the Mandate provided Japan with a barrier to the Australian, British, American, and French possessions to the south and east, an outer defense belt, but they could also serve as a launch point for the conquest of those same territories.

The Marshall Islands (US codename "Bully"), or *Maasyaru Shoto* to the Japanese, are roughly 2,500 miles (4,023km) southwest of Hawaii,



Atoll codenames

Only the codenames of the key atolls on which action occurred or on which major Japanese installations were situated are listed.

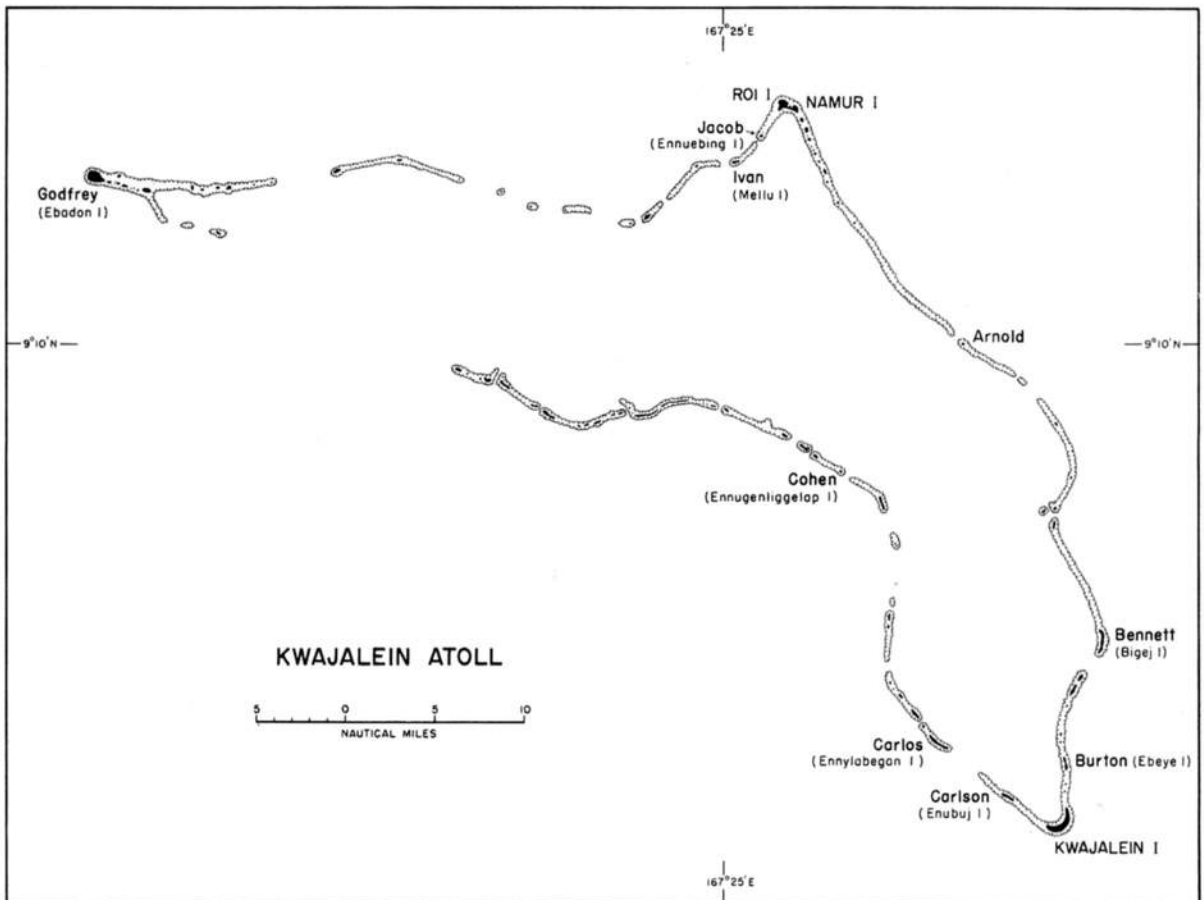
Common Name	Codename
Kwajalein	"Porcelain"
Majuro	"Sundance"
Eniwetok	"Downside"
Jaluit	"Deadwood"
Maloelap	"Cordial"
Wotje	"Creosote"
Mille	"Caddie"

2,500 miles southeast of Japan, and 1,000 miles (1,609km) northeast of New Guinea. The Eastern Caroline Islands are some 500 miles (805km) to the west, with the great Japanese naval base at Truk some 900 miles (1,448km) and Guam 1,500 miles (2,414km) in the same direction. The Gilberts are 160 miles (257km) to the southeast. The Marshalls contain 29 atolls, five separate islands, and 867 reefs providing only 70 square miles of land and scattered over 750,000 square miles of ocean. Counting the atoll's islets there are 1,152 islands. The islands are arranged in two parallel chains running northwest to southeast, separated by roughly 100 miles, the eastern Radak (Sunrise) Group with 16 atolls and islands and the western Ralik (Sunset) Group with 18 atolls and islands.

Spain discovered the first of the Marshalls in 1525 and annexed the islands in 1686, but little effort was made to develop them. In the late 1700s and early 1800s various Russian, British, and American explorers discovered more islands. They were named after British Captain John Marshall, who discovered some of the southern Radak Group. There was no government within the islands and freebooters, adventurers, and traders did as they pleased. Germany purchased the islands from Spain in 1899 and annexed them in 1902.

From 1914 Japanese trading firms took over control of the islands and the previous Australian interests dwindled. The first simple airstrip

Kwajalein Atoll



to be built in the Marshalls was laid out on Roi in the mid-1930s. The only available pre-war population figures date from 1935, listing 10,000 native Marshallese and 490 Japanese. The islands experience a northeast trade wind from December to May, a dry season with little rain. From June to November the southwest monsoon brings 5–15ins. (12.7–38cm) a month. Temperatures range from the high 60°Fs at night to the high 90°Fs in the day and humidity can be high. Rain catchments are the only source of freshwater.

Most of the Marshalls' land area consists of coral atolls varying 3–20ft (0.9–6.1m) above sea level with around 7ft (2.1m) being the average. The larger islands are covered with coconut palms, pandanus and breadfruit trees, and salt brush. The smaller ones are bare or covered with salt brush. All atolls and islands are surrounded by coral reefs, which lie closer to shore on the lagoon side. The beaches are narrow and either flat or very gently sloping.

Atolls are the lips of subsided volcanoes on which coral has formed over millions of years to create a large roughly circular reef. Most of the reef is beneath the surface, but numerous islets have built up along the lip. Gaps of various widths allow entry into the reef-enclosed lagoon, which provides a protected anchorage. The Japanese physically occupied few of a given atoll's islets, usually only those large enough for an airfield and support facilities. Often the largest island of an atoll bore the atoll's name.

Kwajalein (pronounced "Kwa-dja-linn") Atoll measures 66 miles (106km) in length and is 20 miles (32km) across. There are 93 islands and islets with 38 being of significant size. Despite being the world's largest atoll, its total land area is still only 6¹/₃ square miles. Kwajalein forms a misshapen triangle with numerous breaks in the reef allowing entry into the lagoon. The atoll forms two arms to the south and the west, with a small portion projecting to the north.

Conjoined Roi and Namur Islands are at the corner of the northward-projecting barrier reef, the atoll's northernmost islands. Both islands are irregularly shaped and separated by 500yds, but connected by a sandspit along the lagoon side and a concrete causeway. Roi measures 1,170x1,250yds (1,070x1,143m) while Namur is 800x890yds (732x812m). Both islands had well-developed road systems. An airfield (shaped like a number "4"), taxiways, and dispersal areas occupied most of Roi, with a few hangars and machine shops. Airfield support facilities, machine shops, and barracks were concentrated on Namur. The L-shaped 450ft-long (137m) Yokohama Pier jutted into the lagoon from Namur while a much shorter pier was located on Roi. Both islands are low and flat. On the ocean side the reef is 125–450yds (114–412m) broad and falls steeply into the sea resulting in heavy surf. On the lagoon side the reef is gradually sloped with light surf. A line of small islands and islets runs southeast from Namur along the barrier reef. The largest and closest are "Abraham" (460yds/421m away), "Albert", "Allen", and "Andrew". Two miles (3.2km) to the southwest of Roi is "Jacob" on the edge of "Jacob Pass" and 2 miles farther on sits the somewhat larger "Ivan" beside the main entrance into the lagoon, "Ivan Pass".

Kwajalein Island is crescent-shaped with its concave side on the lagoon or north side. It is two and a half miles long and averages 800yds (731m) wide, but narrows to 300yds (274m) at the north end. Kwajalein

Kwajalein Atoll island codenames

Only the codenames of the islands on which action occurred are listed. Common names will be used for the main islands, but codenames are used for smaller outlying islands as the native names were confusingly similar or the smaller islets had no common name. Interestingly, today some of the islets are more commonly known by their wartime codename rather than their traditional name.

Common Name	Codename
<i>Northern Kwajalein</i>	
Roi	"Burlesque"
Namur	"Camouflage"
Ennuebing	"Jacob"
Mellu	"Ivan"
Ennugarret	"Abraham"
No name	"Albert Junior"
Ennumennet	"Albert"
No name	"Alexander"
Ennubirr	"Allen"
No name	"Alton"
No name	"Alvin"
Obella	"Andrew"
No name	"Anthony"
Edgigen	"Anton"
<i>Southern Kwajalein</i>	
Kwajalein Island	"Porcelain"
Ebeye	"Burton"
Enubuj	"Carlson"
Ennylabegan	"Carlos"
Gea	"Carter"
Ninni	"Cecil"
Gehn	"Chauncey"

The results of the 18-19 November 1943 carrier strike on Mili Island, the main island in Mille Atoll. This atoll was one of the by-passed Marshalls, which remained in Japanese hands to the end of the war. Part of the airfield can be seen in the upper right.



Island is located at the extreme south end of the atoll. Kwajalein's beaches slope steeply to 10ft above sea level. In 1944 both Kwajalein and its adjacent islands were covered with woods, these being densest at the north end. A road ran around the island of Kwajalein, and two 100yd-long (91m) wharves and an L-shaped, 500yd-long (457m) one jutted into the lagoon. Numerous administrative buildings, barracks, machine shops, and warehouses were built along the north shore and toward the north end. A large building complex was located inland where the island ran north and was known as the Admiralty Area – the island headquarters. A radio direction-finder was located near the west end. Most of the Japanese defenses were positioned along the ocean side and the north and west ends. The uncompleted 5,000ft (1,524m) airfield was located in the central section of the island. On the lagoon side the reef is 500–800yds (457–731m) wide and studded with boulders and outcrops. On all sides, the beaches are 10–20yds (9–18m) wide, rising to higher ground. “Carlson” Island is three miles (4.8km) northwest of Kwajalein and is two-thirds of a mile long and less than 300yds (274m) wide. Some 4,300yds (3,932m) northwest of “Carlson” is “Carlos”, one mile long and 300yds wide. Two islets are located nine miles northwest of Kwajalein and a half-mile beyond “Carlos” – “Carter” and “Cecil”. The two sit on either side of the half-mile-wide “Cecil Pass” through which the attack force would enter the lagoon.

The third most strongly defended island in the atoll was Ebeye, or “Burton”, located two and a half miles north of Kwajalein Island. The rectangular-shaped island is 1,770yds (1,619m) long north to south and 250yds (229m) wide. Engebi was dotted with palms and brush with the densest brush and mangroves on the ocean side of the island. An improved road ran along the lagoon side and an L-shaped pier jutted 530yds (485m) into the lagoon. Two seaplane ramps occupied the northern portion of the lagoon side. As well as a radio direction-finder, there were some 250 barracks, support buildings, hangars, and machine shops scattered over the island.

Majuro is in the lower portion of the eastern Radak Group 280 miles (451km) southeast of Kwajalein. Arno Atoll is nine miles (14.5km) to the east. Elongated Majuro is 26 miles (42km) east to west and six miles (9.7km) wide. Most of its circumference is edged with a continuous reef with the only openings on the north-central side. Majuro Island ("Laura") is the largest of the atoll's 57 islets. It is a narrow sandbar, no more than 300yds (274m) wide and 21 miles (33.8km) long, running east from the atoll's southwest corner, where a 1x1³/₄-mile-wide lobe sits. Sandbar islets are scattered along the south side for some 12 miles (19km). At the tapered east end are three larger islets, and more islets are scattered along the north side. The submarine reef continues northwest to a few islets on the atoll's northwest corner. The 33 islands and islets are covered with low salt brush. The Japanese built a seaplane base on Darrit Island at the atoll's northeast corner.

Eniwetok (pronounced "En-ni-we-tok," vowels short, no accent), the northwesternmost atoll in the western Ralik Group, is 337 miles (543km) northwest of Kwajalein. It served as an outpost for Truk some 400 miles (644km) to the southwest. The roughly circular atoll has 40 islets and is 21 miles (34km) across from northwest to southeast and 17 miles (27.4km) across the center. The highest elevation is 15ft (4.6m). On the south side of the atoll is the Wide Passage, five-miles wide, which is the main entrance into a lagoon providing anchorage for up to 2,000 ships. Eniwetok Island is the largest in the atoll and is on the east side of Wide Passage. It was commonly known as Brown Island and to the Japanese as *Chairo Jima*. Parry Island, the third largest, is two and

Eniwetok island codenames

Only the codenames of the islands on which action occurred are listed.

Common Name	Codename
Engebi	"Fragile"
Eniwetok	"Privilege"
Parry	"Heartstrings"
Bogon	"Zinnia"
Aitsu	"Camellia"
Ruijiour	"Canna"
Japtan	"Ladyslipper"

Taroa Island in Maloelap Atoll was another island that remained under Japanese control. This photo was taken early in the bombing campaign to neutralize the island. By the time the war was over its surface was more akin to that of the Moon. Aircraft revetments are scattered near the apex of the X-shaped airfield.





Carrier aircraft attack Japanese shipping moored off Kwajalein Island. Most of the ships were sunk during this attack. The 500yd-long (457m) concrete pier near the island's north end juts into the lagoon.

a quarter miles to the northeast of Eniwetok Island with the one-mile-wide Deep Passage off its north end. On the north side of Deep Passage is Japtan Island. On the atoll's northeast side is a string of scattered islets with Engebi Island, the second largest, at the north end.

Prior to the war the Japanese had established no military facilities in Eniwetok Atoll. It was not until December 1942 that work began on an airfield on Engebi, which was completed in mid-1943. The airfield was not used until November, when it became a ferrying way-station for aircraft withdrawing westward into the Carolines.

Engebi Island is a low and flat triangular island measuring 1,500yds (1,371m) on its northwest side, 2,000yds (1,829m) on its east, and 2,100yds (1,920m) on the southwest. An airfield ran parallel to the northwest shore and most of the support facilities were built along the road-lined southwest shore. Most of the island was lightly covered with brush and scattered palms, but the east-central position had a thicker covering of palms and underbrush and the north corner was covered by very dense brush. The surrounding coral reef was broad and flat with no natural obstacles on the lagoon side.

Eniwetok Island is two miles long from the northeast to the southwest and a quarter-mile wide near the southwest end. It was unique among the atoll's islands in that the lagoon side was faced with a steep 8–15ft (2.4–4.6m) bluff immediately behind the narrow beach, presenting a difficult obstacle. A road ran most of the island's length but only limited support facilities had been built. Along the southern portion of the lagoon shore the reef extended 200–500yds (183–457m), but presented no major obstacle, while along three-quarters of the rest of the island's lagoon side there were broken fringing reefs and coral outcroppings.

Parry is a teardrop-shaped island two miles long and 600yds (549m) wide near its north end. A road followed the circumference of the shoreline. A small seaplane base was located on the upper central portion

of the lagoon side as was a radio direction-finding station. The low, flat island is densely covered with palm and brush, although the upper portion of the west side is fairly clear. On the lagoon side the reef fringes the shoreline for most of the island's length, but along the upper central portion it is free of reefs, although there are some coral outcroppings offshore as well as off the lower west shore.

Four other atolls were significant in the campaign: Jaluit, Maloelap, Wotje, and Mille would be by-passed. Cutoff from reinforcement, incapable of any offensive action owing to the destruction of all aircraft and seagoing vessels, these islands merely became targets being relentlessly bombed until the war's end.

Jaluit Atoll is located near the south end of the western Ralik Group. Kwajalein Atoll is 245 miles (394km) to the northwest. Wotje and Maloelap Atolls are in the central portion of the eastern Radak Group while Mille Atoll is at the south end of the group. Majuro Atoll is situated between Maloelap (98 miles/157km north) and Mille (65 miles/105km southeast). Wotje is 164 miles (264km) east of Kwajalein, Maloelap is 70 miles (113km) southeast of Wotje, and Mille is 165 miles (266km) south-southeast of Wotje.

Jaluit is about 12 miles (19km) across its broader southern end from East to West Points, but only 4 miles (6.4km) wide at its north end, and almost 30 miles (48km) long from west-northwest to east-southeast. Of its 50 islands the largest is the long, narrow, L-shaped (with an extremely long vertical arm) Jaluit Island. Jabur Island was the administrative center of the Marshalls and the Japanese developed a major naval base on Jaluit Island, but with only a seaplane base and no airfield.

Maloelap is 30 miles (48km) long from northwest to southwest and 8-15 miles (12.9-24.1km) wide. The largest of its 64 islands are on the southeast end. An airfield was located on Taroa Island and the US considered it to be the most important Japanese airfield between Tarawa and Truk.

Wotje Atoll is 30 miles long from east to west and 8-12 miles (12.9-19.3km) across. Most of its 65 islands are found along its east rim, where the largest islands are located, the central south side, and a few scattered along the western north side. The largest island is Wotje Island on the extreme east-central end. An airfield and a seaplane base were located there.

Mille Atoll is 20 miles (32.2km) long from the west-northwest to the southeast and about 10 miles (16.1km) across. Its 30 islands are distributed around most of the atoll's rim with the east side being open. A large airfield was built on the main Mille Island. This was the only airfield in the Marshalls that was within Japanese fighter range of the Gilberts to the southeast. It was from there that some of the strikes were flown against Tarawa and Makin during the Gilberts campaign.

CHRONOLOGY

OPERATION CALENDAR

Operation "Flintlock" – Majuro, Kwajalein, Roi-Namur

D-1	30 January
D-Day	31 January
D+1	1 February
D+2	2 February
D+3	3 February (Ebeye)
D+4	4 February

Operation "Catchpole" – Eniwetok

D-Day	17 February
D+1	18 February
D+2	19 February
D+3	20 February
D+4	21 February
D+5	22 February
D+6	23 February

1943

- 11 May** Decision made at "Trident" Conference to seize the Marshalls.
1 July CINCPOA submits plan to seize Marshalls.
20 July CINCPOA ordered to train and prepare forces to seize the Marshalls.
20 August CINCPOA submits plan to seize Kwajalein, Wotje, and Maloelap.
September CINCPOA allocates 4th MarDiv and 7th InfDiv to VAC.
12 October CINCPOA issues Marshalls OpPlan.
15 November VAC issues Marshalls OpPlan.
19–29 November Tarawa and Makin Atolls in the Gilberts seized.
December Marshalls invasion date postponed and revised OpPlan issued.

1944

- 5 January** Revised VAC Marshalls OpPlan issued.
13 January Main body of TF 53 (4th MarDiv) departs San Diego.
22 January Main body of TF 51 (Joint Expeditionary Force) departs Hawaii.
30 January–1 February Majuro Atoll occupied.
31 January D-Day in the Marshalls with outlying islands secured in Kwajalein Atoll.
1 February Roi-Namur and Kwajalein Islands assaulted. Roi secured.
2 February Namur secured.
4 February Kwajalein secured.
8 February Kwajalein Atoll declared secure.
17 February Eniwetok Atoll assaulted.
17–18 February Navy neutralizes Truk.
22–23 February Navy conducts attacks in southern Marianas.
23 February Eniwetok Atoll declared secure.
29 February Army assaults Admiralties.
4 March Bombing campaign on Jaluit, Maloelap, Wotje, and Mille commences.
7 March–21 April Lesser Marshall Islands secured.

1945

- 6 August** Atomic bomb dropped on Hiroshima.
9 August Atomic bomb dropped on Nagasaki.
10 August Japan sues for peace.
14 August Ceasefire in Pacific Theater.
2 September Japan formally surrenders (V-J Day). By-passed Japanese forces in the Marshalls and Carolines surrender.

POST-WAR

- 1946–62** Nuclear weapons tests at Bikini and Eniwetok Atolls.
1949 Marshall Islands District of the Trust Territory of the Pacific Islands established.
1979 Republic of the Marshall Islands established.

OPPOSING PLANS

THE AMERICAN PLAN – OPERATIONS “FLINTLOCK” AND “CATCHPOLE”

While the Marshalls campaign consisted of a series of relatively small-scale and short duration battles, it was nonetheless complex with battles fought on seven main islands scattered over a large area and made more complex by the by-passed Japanese garrisons and the scores of other islands that had to be reconnoitered and cleared.

Staffs at all levels were hampered by changes in plans, a shortage of time, and lack of precise information on the objectives. The 4th MarDiv was additionally handicapped being in California, over 2,000 miles (3200km) from Hawaii and the VAC, 7th InfDiv, naval, and air force staffs.

Operation “Flintlock” was divided into nine phases. The main phase was the first, the seizure of Kwajalein and Majuro Atolls between 29 January and 8 February. Phase II was the seizure of Eniwetok Atoll scheduled for 17–23 February. This was essentially a separate operation – “Catchpole”. The remaining phase would become known as “Flintlock, Jr.” and involved the clearing of the largely unoccupied remaining Marshalls between March and April.

Preliminary bombardment to soften the many island garrisons and neutralize airfields began on 4 December 1943 with carrier- and land-based aircraft attacking Roi, Kwajalein, Mille, Ebeye, and Wotje. There were no new attacks until January 1944, when land-based aircraft from the new Gilberts airfields began frequent raids on all Japanese installations, with the result that by D-Day there were no operational Japanese aircraft in the Marshalls.

The plan was for Amphibious Reconnaissance Company, VAC, to reconnoiter Majuro Atoll before midnight on D-1 to determine Japanese troop locations. If there were Japanese troops present, 2nd Battalion, 106th Infantry (2/106), would assault the islands. The Marine 1st Defense Battalion would then occupy the atoll, airfield construction would begin, and the atoll prepared as a fleet anchorage. Once Majuro was secured, US forces would reconnoiter nearby Arno Atoll.

Two forces would assault Kwajalein Atoll in a three-phase plan (not to be confused with the nine phases of “Flintlock”). The Northern Troops and Landing Force (NTLF) – 4th MarDiv – would assault Roi-Namur while the Southern Troops and Landing Force (STLF) – 7th InfDiv – landed on Kwajalein Island. Phase I would first clear Japanese lookouts from outlying islets near the objective islands to allow artillery to support the main assaults to be placed on them. Other islets flanking the lagoon entrances would also be secured. Phase II, the main assault, would commence on D+1 and it was projected that the islands would be secured within two

Operation "Flintlock" Schedule

Phase	Dates	Objectives
I	29 Jan–8 Feb	Kwajalein, Majuro, Arno
II	17–23 Feb	Eniwetok ("Catchpole")
III	9–13 Mar	Wotho, Ujae, Lae
IV	11 Mar	Lib Island
V	21–27 Mar	Namu, Namorik, Ailinglapalap, Ebon, Jabwot and Kili Is.
VI	28 Mar–5 Apr	Bikini, Ailinginae, Rongelap, Rongerik, Taka, Utirik, Bikar
VII	31 Mar–4 Apr	Likiep, Ailuk; Jemo and Mejit Is.
VIII	21 Apr	Erikub, Aur
IX	23 Apr	Ujelang

days. The memory of Tarawa left some nagging doubts, however. Phase III entailed clearing the atoll's remaining islets.

The Northern and Southern Attack Forces would enter Kwajalein lagoon separately and approach their objective islands before dawn on 31 January. At Roi-Namur the 4th MarDiv's Regimental Landing Team 25 (RCT25) would begin landing on islets to the southwest of the twin islands at 09.55hrs and other troops on

islets to the southeast after 15.00hrs. Once these islets were secure the entire 14th Marines would land with their artillery. It was also essential to clear these islets as they would be on both flanks of the assault waves as they approached Roi-Namur. RCT25 would become the Division Reserve and its amtracs would consolidate to support the next day's main assault. On the morning of D+1, RCT23 would assault Roi from the south and RCT24 would attack Namur. RCT24 was also responsible for the sandbar and causeway connecting the islands. The regimental assault plans were straightforward enough: two battalions would land abreast and, supported by tanks, drive across the islands as rapidly as possible to the Objective 1 Line (O-1 Line)¹, where they would consolidate and continue the advance. On Roi the O-1 Line was about one-third of the way across the island. On Namur it was just over halfway across. Once troops reached the north shore, the reserve battalion would mop-up.

In the south, the 7th InfDiv's RCT17 would secure the islets flanking the lagoon's entrance and adjacent to Kwajalein Island, with the reinforced 7th Reconnaissance Troop tasked with this particular mission. Other RCT17 elements would secure "Carlson" and "Carlos" Islands to the northwest of Kwajalein on D-Day. The Division Artillery would deploy on the former, while on the latter a supply base was to be established and RCT17 assembled to become the Division Reserve for Kwajalein if necessary. The Kwajalein assault would commence on the morning of D+1, with two regiments landing on the west end; RCT184 on the left and the more combat-experienced RCT32 on the right facing the heavier defenses. The regimental boundary split the island lengthwise until 700yds short of the north end, from which point RCT32 would be responsible for clearing the rest of the island. RCT17 would assault "Burton" once the situation was stabilized on Kwajalein. The regiment would land in a column of battalions on the west side of the island near its south end. The island was narrow enough to allow only one battalion to attack up its length while the other battalion mopped-up behind it.

The other islets in the atoll would be cleared and preparations made to clear other Marshall atolls and islands and begin a routine bombardment of the by-passed atolls. TacGrp 1 would remain afloat as the Joint Expeditionary Force Reserve throughout.

The original date for the 2nd MarDiv assault on Eniwetok was 19 March 1944, with 27th InfDiv taking Kusaie Island to the southeast at the end of the month. A later plan called for the 3rd MarDiv to secure Eniwetok after completing the New Ireland operation in April, but this was subsequently

¹ The O-1 Line was designated on an identifiable terrain feature and was the first day's main objective.



cancelled. The 27th InfDiv was tasked to seize Eniwetok on or about 1 March. When it became apparent on 2 February that Kwajalein would be easily secured, it allowed the Joint Expeditionary Force Reserve to be released to take Eniwetok and D-Day was set for 17 February. The somewhat impromptu planning lasted from 3 to 15 February. The battle for Eniwetok was tougher than the US troops originally envisaged as a result of the recent arrival of Japanese reinforcements.

Due to the level of resistance expected on the three main defended islands and a lack of reserves, TacGrp 1 would attack the islands one by one. In each case, the plan was to land on the lagoon side, drive across the island and then fan out to clear the length of the island. The operation would be conducted in four phases. Phase I: on D-Day Amphibious Reconnaissance Company, VAC, would secure two islets southeast of Engebi on which to emplace artillery. On D+1 the 4th MarDiv scout company would secure some islets to the west to block any Japanese escape routes. Phase II: on 17 February RCT22 would attack Engebi, with two battalions abreast and one in reserve supported by artillery from adjacent islets. Phase III: RCT106 would land on Eniwetok Island with two battalions in column on a date to be determined. One battalion would be withdrawn after two hours to serve as a reserve for the Parry assault. A Marine battalion would also be in reserve. Other islets on the atoll's eastern rim would be secured and artillery placed on Japtan to support the Parry assault. RCT22 would land on Parry the same day as the Eniwetok assault. Two battalions would land abreast and a reserve battalion would follow them ashore. The Army battalion withdrawn from Eniwetok would serve as the floating reserve. All other islets in the atoll would be cleared during Phase IV once the three main

Roi Island receiving a B-24 bomber strike. The lagoon, or south, side is at the photo's bottom. The 500yd concrete causeway to Namur is to the right. The design of the figure 4-shaped airfield was not lost on the 4th MarDiv. It later requested its shoulder patch be redesigned in a similar style, but the new design had already been approved.

islands were secured. The time of the landings on each of the many islands was assigned a different letter to prevent confusion.

THE JAPANESE PLAN – Z OPERATION

After the loss of the Solomons and Aleutians, the Imperial General Headquarters established a new National Defense Zone on 30 September 1943. This line ran along the south edge of the Netherlands East Indies facing Australia, turned north through eastern New Guinea, then through the Carolines anchoring on the great bastion of Truk, and through the Marianas, Volcano and Bonin Islands. The Marshalls were not encompassed within the “Tojo Line”, as the National Defense Zone was known, and the bases there were to fight a delaying action while preparations continued on the main line of defense.

To defend the National Defense Zone, Admiral Koga Mineichi, commander of the Combined Fleet, planned the Z Operation. Key positions along the defensive line were strengthened and reinforced. The plan was based on a mutually supporting system of naval and air bases scattered in-depth throughout the region. Island garrisons possessed their own air units to protect themselves from air attacks and, in the event of an airfield being temporarily put out of action, other fields in the area could be used to disperse aircraft. Additional air units would flow into the area’s surrounding bases to strengthen the defense and attack the approaching invasion fleet from what Japan viewed as “unsinkable aircraft carriers.” In due course the Combined Fleet would arrive from Truk and engage the American fleet in the long-sought decisive battle.

Island garrisons under direct attack were to use their own initiative. They were to establish defenses designed to destroy the enemy at the water’s edge. If the enemy were to force a landing, the garrison was to conduct persistent counterattacks to delay the invaders as long as possible. Mobile amphibious reserves were established on some islands to conduct a counter-landing on the enemy beachhead or reinforce islands under attack.

The overall concept of the Z Operation was based on airpower, both land and carrier-based, but proved ineffectual in the face of overwhelming American airpower, naval forces, and resources. The Japanese failed to appreciate that, before attacking the targeted islands, the Americans would eliminate all Japanese aircraft in the entire region. With much of the strength of Japan’s carrier-based aircraft having been expended in the November 1943 battles over Rabaul, what remained was insufficient for the task. Naval guard forces were too weak to defend the islands effectively and reinforcing IJA units were sent too late and too few in numbers to establish adequate defenses.

Overall, Japanese forces in the Marshalls were too weak to mount a solid defense. To make matters worse the Japanese weighted their defenses on Mille and Jaluit Atolls on the south edge of the Marshalls assessing that was where the Americans would strike first. They had not counted on the Americans first strike being at the very heart of the Marshalls and at the main bases in Kwajalein Atoll. Although the Americans feared another Tarawa, history was not to repeat itself; none of the Marshall Islands had defenses to rival that bloody bastion.

OPPOSING COMMANDERS

AMERICAN COMMANDERS

Vice Admiral Richmond K. Turner (USN) graduated from the Naval Academy in 1908, serving on battleships during the Great War. In 1926, however, he made a major career change and was rated a Naval Aviator. This transfer to the air arm was followed by a variety of aviation staff assignments, including a spell as executive officer of the carrier USS *Saratoga* (CV-3). The last of this string of staff appointments was as Commander, Aircraft, Battle Force of the US Fleet and he subsequently took command of a cruiser and then attended the Naval War College. He was director of the Navy Department's War Plans Division when war broke out and, in the summer of 1942, Turner took command of amphibious forces in the South Pacific. His experience as a staff officer and in command of both air units and ships of the line proved valuable during the bitter campaign in the Solomons, but could not prevent him suffering the only defeat of his career at Savo Island (9 August 1942). He took command of Fifth Fleet Amphibious Force, in August 1943, to perfect landing force operations in preparation for attacks on the Gilberts and Marshalls. He commanded both the Joint Expeditionary Force and Northern Attack Force for the Saipan and Tinian operations, later oversaw the Guam and Okinawa landings, and directed the amphibious forces of both Third and Fifth Fleets. In his post-war career



Col Franklin A. Hart, Commander, 24th Marines, discusses the landing plan for Namur Island with his regimental staff. The white tags on the terrain board identify defenses, installations, and key terrain features.



Vice Adm Richmond K. Turner commanded both the **Joint Expeditionary Force (TF 51)** and **Southern Attack Force (TF 52)**, the latter assigned to seize **Roi-Namur** in northern Kwajalein Atoll. Turner was also **Commander, Fifth Amphibious Force**, the force providing the amphibious warfare ships for **Operation "Flintlock"**.



Fiercely LtGen Holland M. Smith commanded **V Amphibious Corps**, which served as the **Expeditionary Troops (TF 56)** responsible for land operations in the Marshall Islands.

he served as the US Navy representative to the UN Military Staff Committee. Admiral Turner retired in 1947 and died in 1961.

Until commissioned in the US Marine Corps in 1905, **Lieutenant General Holland M. Smith (USMC)** was a practicing Alabama lawyer. He served in the Philippines, Panama, Dominican Republic, and France in World War I but it was in the Dominican Republic that he received his most appropriate nickname, "Howlin' Mad". Smith attributed his own aggressive style to having adopted the philosophies of Napoleon Bonaparte, on whom he had read widely. Following his graduation from the War College in 1921, his service on the Joint Army-Navy Planning Committee, Marine Corps Schools, Post Quartermaster, Force Marine Officer for the Battle Force, Chief of Staff of the Department of the Pacific, and Director of Operations and Training at Headquarters, Marine Corps, as well as actually commanding troops, gave him a wealth of experience. He was to draw heavily on this as he molded the Fleet Marine Force (FMF) into probably the world's most formidable amphibious assault force. In 1939 he took command of the 1st MarBde, which was expanded into the 1st MarDiv in 1941. Shortly thereafter he took command of Amphibious Force, Atlantic Fleet and then Amphibious Corps, Pacific Fleet, which was in turn re-designated V Amphibious Corps (VAC) in August 1942. Promoted to lieutenant general in May 1944, Smith led VAC during the operations to capture Tarawa, Makin, Roi-Namur, Kwajalein, and Eniwetok. For the Marianas operation, he was designated Commanding General, Expeditionary Troops, and, while still holding this command, in July 1944 gave up VAC to take command of the newly activated FMF, Pacific, overseeing all Marine forces in the Pacific Theater. A controversial figure, Smith was a consistent, ruthless and outspoken critic of the Army and Navy. When this eventually became a liability to joint operations, he was reassigned in July 1945. He retired in 1946 and died in 1967.

Major General Harry Schmidt (USMC) was commissioned in the Marine Corps in 1909 from Nebraska. He served overseas on Guam, in the Philippines, Nicaragua, and served four tours in China. Graduating from the Army Command and General Staff School in 1932, Schmidt served in numerous command, staff, and instructor positions, including Headquarters, Marine Corps. Before taking command of the newly activated 4th MarDiv in August 1942, he was Assistant to the Commandant of the Marine Corps. He led the Division on Roi-Namur and Saipan, before taking command of VAC on 12 July 1944, allowing LtGen Smith to oversee the Guam operation. He commanded VAC through the rest of the war, including the assault on Iwo Jima, and then served as part of the occupation force in Japan. On returning from Japan, he led Marine Training and Replacement Command until retiring, as a full general, in 1948. General Schmidt died in 1968.

Major General Charles H. Corlett (USA) graduated from the Military Academy in 1913 to serve in France during World War I in staff assignments. He resigned from the Army in 1919, but returned to duty the next year and was assigned to the coast artillery. Corlett graduated from the Command and General Staff College in 1923 and later served on its faculty as well as on the War Department General Staff, was Provost Marshal of Hawaii, and commanding officer of the 30th Infantry. Taking command of the 7th InfDiv in April 1943, he doubled as commander of Amphibious Training Unit 9, the Kiska Task Force, and was the ground



FAR, LEFT
Rear Adm Richard L. Conolly (left), Commander, Northern Attack Force (TF 53), which would deliver MajGen Harry Schmidt's (right) 4th MarDiv to Roi-Namur.

LEFT
LtGen Holland M. Smith (left) confers with MajGen Charles H. Corlett, Commanding General, 7th InfDiv responsible for Kwajalein Island in southern Kwajalein Atoll.

force commander for the invasion of Kiska Island in the Aleutians. After "Flintlock" he went on to command XIX Corps in Europe from March to October 1944 until relieved for health reasons. He was then on the Twelfth Army staff until taking command of XXXVI Corps in 1945. Corlett retired in 1946 and passed away in 1971.

A Louisianan commissioned in the Marines in 1916, **Brigadier General Thomas E. Watson (USMC)**, served in China, Nicaragua and on three separate occasions in China. He served in the War Plans Division, Headquarters, Marine Corps from 1938 to 1942, having previously graduated from the Army War College, and then commanded the 3rd MarBde in Western Samoa. He then led the brigade-sized TacGrp 1 during the capture of Eniwetok, subsequently taking command of the 2nd MarDiv in April 1944. He commanded that formation through the Saipan and Tinian operations and supported the Okinawa assault, although here only one-third of the Division served ashore. He took over as Director of Personnel, Headquarters, Marine Corps in July 1945 and commanded FMFPac from 1948 to 1950, after which he retired as a lieutenant general. He died in 1966.

JAPANESE COMMANDERS

Vice Admiral Kobayashi Marasmi (IJN) (misspelled "Marashi" in official US histories) graduated from the Naval Academy in 1906 to serve mainly on cruisers and smaller ships. He graduated from the Naval College in 1917, specializing in navigation, and was later an instructor at the same institution. His first command was a gunboat in 1923–24. From 1925 to 1928 he resided in the United States, where he learned English and served as an assistant naval attaché and again as attaché from 1932 to 1934. He commanded the battleship *Yamashiro* in 1936 and then became chief of staff of the 4th Fleet. After this he served in a number of naval base command assignments, was promoted to vice admiral in October 1941, and took command of the 4th Fleet on 1 April 1943 with his headquarters



Rear Adm Yamada Michiyuki commanded the 24th Air Flotilla based on Roi-Namur and died during the pre-invasion bombardment on Namur.



Rear Adm Akiyama Monzo was the commander of the 6th Base Force responsible for the guard forces and other defense forces in the Marshall Islands. He died on Kwajalein Island.

on Truk. For a brief period prior to the attack he maintained a temporary headquarters on Kwajalein. He was replaced on 19 February 1944, possibly because of ill health. He briefly served on the Navy General Staff and was placed in the Reserve in May 1944. He died in 1977.

Rear Admiral Yamada Michiyuki (IJN) graduated from the Naval Academy in 1914 and became a flyer in 1918. After visiting Britain in 1920 he served in numerous flying units receiving his first command assignment in 1936. He continued to command land-based flying units early in the war and was given command of the 24th Air Flotilla responsible for the air defense of the Marshalls on 20 January 1943. He had been promoted to rear admiral² in November 1943 while commanding the Kasumigaura Air Group, a fighter unit. He was killed on 28 January 1944 on Namur during the pre-invasion bombardment.

Rear Admiral Akiyama Monzo (IJN) served aboard battleships and cruisers after graduating from the Naval Academy in 1919. He became a noted gunnery officer attending numerous gunnery courses. His first command was a supply ship in 1936, however. From 1938 he began receiving base force assignments. In 1943 he was promoted to rear admiral² and assigned to the 4th Fleet staff. In November he assumed command of the 6th Base Force responsible of defense of the Marshalls. On 2 February 1944 he was killed on Kwajalein.

Major General Nishida Yoshimi (IJA) (misspelled "Yoshima" in official US histories) was the commander of the 1st Amphibious Brigade (AmphBde) at Eniwetok. He was a graduate of the IJA Military Academy and served as an infantry regiment commander in China. In late 1942 he took command of an independent garrison unit in Manchuria, which was converted to the 1st AmphibBde in November 1943. He died in his headquarters on Parry Island, Eniwetok, on 23 February 1944.

² Official US histories cite Yamada and Akiyama as vice admirals, but they were posthumously promoted to vice admiral only after the battle.

OPPOSING FORCES

AMERICAN FORCES

The Joint Expeditionary Force (Task Force 51) was responsible for the whole of the Marshalls' operation under Rear Adm Richmond K. Turner, Commander, Fifth Amphibious Force. TF51's 297 ships were organized into three attack forces to seize northern and southern Kwajalein Atoll and Majuro Atoll. These forces contained transport, fire support, and carrier support groups to transport the landing force and provide support. These were backed by the Reserve Force, the Fast Carrier Force (TF 58), and Defense Forces and Land-Based Air (TF 57) with Seventh Air Force and Navy land-based and patrol aircraft. TF 51 included 11 aircraft carriers, seven old battleships, 12 cruisers, 75 destroyers, 46 transports, 27 cargo ships; five landing ships, dock (LSD); and 45 landing ships, tank (LST). The Fast Carrier Force amassed 12 more carriers, eight battleships, six cruisers, and 34 destroyers. Fifth Fleet (TF 50), under Admiral Spruance, oversaw the entire operation.

Naval Force

Joint Expeditionary Force (TF 51)
Southern Attack Force (TF 52)
Northern Attack Force (TF 53)
Reserve Force (TG 51.1)
Majuro Attack Group (TG 51.2)

Assault Force

Expeditionary Troops (VAC) (TF 56)
Southern Troops and Landing Force (TG 56.1)
Northern Troops and Landing Force (TG 56.2)
Reserve Landing Force (TG 56.3)
Majuro Landing Force

The Southern Attack Force, directly under Adm Turner's command, would seize Kwajalein with the 27th InfDiv. The Northern Attack Force commanded by Rear Admiral Richard L. Conolly would deliver the 4th MarDiv to Roi-Namur. The Reserve Force, under Captain D.W. Loomis, carried TacGrp 1, which would later be tasked to seize Eniwetok. The Majuro Attack Group was commanded by Rear Admiral Harry W. Hill and carried a small Army and Marine force to occupy Majuro Atoll.

V Amphibious Corps doubled as the Expeditionary Troops, deploying with only minimal corps troops, since it would not fight as a unified corps, but rather land its two divisions at opposite ends of Kwajalein Atoll, their primary objectives being 43 miles (69km) apart. Corps Troops included VAC HQ and Service Battalion and VAC Signal Battalion, plus the 1st Armored Amphibian Tractor Battalion with 75 37mm gun-armed LVT(A)1 amphibian tanks and the 4th and 10th Amphibian Tractor Battalions with 100 and 144 LVT(2) amtracs respectively. The 1st Defense Battalion would serve as the garrison for Roi-Namur, with 15th Defense Battalion garrisoning Kwajalein. VAC was activated on 25 August 1943 at Camp Elliott, California, from the old Amphibious Corps, Atlantic Fleet staff. It was to serve as the Fifth Fleet's amphibious force and in September it relocated to Pearl Harbor under the command of MajGen

Viewed from the stern of a transport, other attack transports are seen en route to Kwajalein Atoll. In the foreground is the stern deck of a landing craft, mechanized Mk VI (LCM(3)) carried as deck cargo with, unusually, four .50-cal M2 machine guns – these vessels normally mounted two.



Holland M. Smith. In November 1943, with Marine and Army divisions attached, it seized Tarawa and Makin in the Gilberts.

Activated at Camp Pendleton, California, on 16 August 1943 from existing units and cadres from the 3rd MarDiv, the **4th Marine Division**, “The Fighting Fourth”, had the luxury of relatively uninterrupted training. It was not required to split units or provide cadres for new units, a fact that plagued earlier divisions. The one exception to this was the 23rd Marines, who had been split earlier to organize the 25th Marines. The 14th (artillery) and 24th Marines were activated at Camp Pendleton while the 20th (engineer), 23rd, and 25th Marines were activated at Camp Lejeune, North Carolina, and relocated to Pendleton in July and August. The division was able to train for over four months, including amphibious training at Coronado, before departing for the Central Pacific in January 1944 with 24,902 troops.

The 4th Light Tank Battalion had two light companies (A and B) with 37mm gun-armed M5A1 Stuart tanks while Company C had 75mm gun-armed M4A2 Sherman medium tanks. Both types of company had 18 tanks, three in the HQ and five in each of the three platoons. The 14th Marines’ (artillery) 1st–3rd Battalions each had four 75mm M1A1 pack howitzers and the 4th had four 105mm M2A1 howitzers.

The 3,242-man Marine infantry regiments had a 186-man headquarters and service company, 197-man regimental weapons company, and three 953-man infantry battalions. The regimental weapons company had two 75mm M3A1 halftrack-mounted guns and 12 37mm M3A1 antitank guns.

The battalion headquarters company had 137 men. The three 196-man rifle companies each had a headquarters, three rifle platoons, and a weapons platoon with three .30cal. M1919A4 air-cooled light machine-guns and three 60mm M2 mortars. The 288-man battalion weapons company had a platoon of four 81mm M1 mortars and three platoons each with four .30cal. M1917A1 water-cooled heavy machine-guns.

The designation of Marine regiments does not include any branch of service description, nor is the term “regiment” included in the designation. In this way the 23rd Marines might be an infantry regiment

whilst 14th Marines is artillery and 20th Marines an engineer unit. For clarity the branch of service will be included in brackets after the designation of Marine artillery and engineer regiments thus: 20th Marines (engineer).

The 4th MarDiv's regimental combat teams consisted of an infantry regiment, a composite engineer battalion (one each engineer, pioneer, and Seabee companies) from Colonel Lucian W. Burnham's 20th Marines, amphibian tractor battalion, two armored amphibian tractor companies, tank company, medical company, motor transport company, 37mm anti-tank battery and 40mm anti-aircraft gun platoon from the special weapons battalion, MP platoon, ordnance platoon, supply and service platoon, joint assault signal company detachment, and band section as litter bearers.

The **7th Infantry Division** had been reactivated (having served in World War I) at Fort Ord, California, on 1 July 1940. Having initially received desert training, the 7th was originally organized as a motorized division, but never received the necessary trucks. It then undertook amphibious training with the Marines before seizing Attu Island in the Aleutians in May 1943, having received no cold weather training. Although a Regular Army division, its 184th Infantry, which joined the Division after Attu, was a California National Guard unit. The "Bayonet Division" moved to Hawaii in August 1943 and undertook additional amphibious training, before its 21,768 troops were attached to VAC on 11 December in preparation for the Kwajalein assault.

Each Army infantry regiment had 3,257 men organized as follows: a 108-man headquarters and headquarters company, a 118-man cannon company with six 75mm M1A1 pack howitzers, a 165-man anti-tank company with nine 37mm M3A1 anti-tank guns (some personnel reassigned as LVT crews), a 110-man service company, and a 135-man medical detachment. The three infantry battalions, each with 871 men, included a 155-man headquarters and service company, three rifle companies, each of 193 men, and a 160-man heavy weapons company with eight .30cal. M1917A1 heavy machine-guns and six 81mm M1 mortars. Each rifle company had three rifle platoons and a weapons platoon of two .30cal. M1919A4 light machine-guns and three 60mm M2 mortars. The cannon company of 106th Infantry, 27th Infantry Division, was armed with two 105mm M7 and four 75mm M8 self-propelled howitzers. The former consisted of an open compartment on the M4 medium tank chassis, while the latter had an open turret on the M5 light tank chassis.

Army division artillery consisted of three 105mm M2A1 howitzer battalions and one battalion of 155mm M1A1 howitzers, but the 7th



Roi (top) and Namur Islands displaying the damage caused by bomber strikes between 7 November 1943 and 17 January 1944. The islands' lagoon side is to the left. Roi-Namur was a rare instance where island codenames actually related to physical characteristics. "Burlesque" (Roi) was bare of vegetation while "Camouflage" (Namur) was covered with undergrowth.

The Namur fuel dump burning after a carrier strike. Roi is in the background. In the lower left corner is "Abraham" (Ennugarret) Island on which the 25th Marines emplaced numerous heavy weapons to support the 24th Marines' assault on Namur.



InfDiv actually had four battalions of 105mm howitzers assigned. Also attached to the division was the 767th Tank Battalion. Each of its first three companies (A–C) were equipped with M4A2 Sherman tanks, with 17 tanks in each company, organized as three platoons of five and a two-vehicle headquarters. Company D had 18 M5A1 light tanks mounting flamethrowers in lieu of bow machine-guns. The battalion also had a few 76mm gun-armed M10 tank destroyers and M8 self-propelled 75mm howitzers.

The 708th Amphibian Tank Battalion was partly reorganized as an amphibian tractor unit known as the 708th Provisional Amphibian Tractor Battalion. It maintained one company of 17 LVT(A)1 amphibian tanks and four company-size groups each with 20 LVT(2) amtracs and 14 amphibian tanks. Another 17 LVT(2)s were retained in reserve with the additional crewmen drawn from infantry regiment anti-tank companies.

To secure "Cecil" and "Carter" Islands flanking the entrance into the lagoon, the company-size 7th Reconnaissance Troop and Company B, 1st Battalion, 111th Infantry Regiment (Separate) were consolidated into two provisional troops comprised of men from both units. Once the islets were secured, B Company, 1st Bn., 111th Inf. Regt. would provide the garrison while the reconstituted 7th Reconnaissance Troop reconnoitered other islets.

The regimental combat teams were generally organized with an infantry regiment, medium tank company, engineer combat company, medical collecting company, a company-size LVT group, DUKW group (20 Ducks), 4.2in. mortar platoon, and detachments from signal, supply, maintenance, and joint assault signal companies plus a shore party consisting of a non-divisional engineer company.

VAC formed TacGrp 1 on 1 November 1943 on Oahu around the 22nd Marines (Separate) to serve as the Reserve Landing Force. The regiment had been raised in June 1942 at Camp Elliott, California, and garrisoned Western (British) Samoa until moved to Oahu in November 1943. The 22nd Marines possessed organic units, more normally attached



from divisional units in the event the regiment was assigned to a division: engineer, medical, motor transport, pioneer, and M4A2 tank companies; reconnaissance, ordnance, and supply and service platoons; plus a 75mm pack howitzer battalion. These regimental units were designated, for example, Tank Company, 4th Marines or Pack Howitzer Battalion, 22nd Marines. The Army's 106th Infantry Regiment (less 2nd Battalion), 27th InfDiv³, was attached to TacGrp 1 in December and would come with its own slice of divisional support units. This gave the Reserve Landing Force 3,701 marines and 5,624 soldiers. Army and Marine units detached from VAC would augment the Group to 10,269 (5,760 USMC/Navy, 4,509 Army) for the late February assault of Eniwetok Atoll. Garrison forces would include 6,217 Army, 9,454 Marine, and 15,278 Navy personnel, some of whom were drawn from the assault troops.

The Majuro Landing Force (aka "Sundance" Landing Force) consisted of the 2nd Battalion, 106th Infantry and Amphibious Reconnaissance Company, VAC, with 1,459 soldiers and 136 marines.

JAPANESE FORCES

The Japanese 4th Fleet was not a conventional fleet, but rather an operational command, with few assigned ships, responsible for the defense of the Japanese Mandate. Its assigned units included base forces, guard forces, Special Naval Landing Forces (SNLF), naval base units, and air units without aircraft based throughout the Mandate. A small number of IJA units were assigned to the defense of the islands as well. At this time there was no dedicated IJA headquarters to control army units; they were under local IJN control. Guard forces were defense units of varied size with coast defense anti-aircraft guns and infantry weapons.

Once the American fleet arrived in the Marshalls, the 4th Fleet would have little effect on the battle and the forces there. The immediate head-

Troops of 4th Battalion, 14th Marines unload 105mm howitzer ammunition from LCVPs on "Ivan" (Mellu) Island on D-Day to support the next day's Roi-Namur assault. Each "cloverleaf" of ammunition tubes contained three rounds.

Assessment of Forces

United States

The 4th Marine Division was a green unit with no combat experience. Amphibious Reconnaissance Company, V Amphibious Corps, had some combat experience in the Gilberts. The 7th Infantry Division had fought a bitter battle on Kiska, but had received numerous replacements as well as replacing one of its experienced regiments with the green 184th Infantry. The 106th Infantry detached from the 27th Infantry Division was also a green unit.

Japanese

With the exception of the 1st Amphibious Brigade, none of the Japanese forces had ground combat experience. The 1st Amphibious Brigade had been organized from the 3rd Garrison Unit and provided railroad security in North China. Its combat experience was probably limited to small-scale anti-guerrilla and security operations. It was filled out by troops from other units who may have had some combat experience at an individual level.



The assault companies were organized into "boat teams", even though landing by amtracs. They would land and fight as boat teams until reaching the O-1 Line where they would reconstitute into platoons. A boat team under a platoon commander or platoon sergeant was composed of: 4-man light machine-gun group, 3-man bazooka group, 5-man demolitions group, 6-man support group (2 BAR teams)

quarters responsible for the Marshalls was the 6th Base Force on Kwajalein. This unit had arrived in March 1941 and was first based on Wotje, relocating to Kwajalein in August. Later in the year guard forces arrived to garrison the islands. IJN air bases in the Marshalls included fields for ground-based aircraft on Roi at the north end of the atoll, Mille, Maloelap, Wotje, and Eniwetok, and seaplane bases at Jaluit, Wotje, Majuro, Taongi, and Utirik. There was an uncompleted field on Kwajalein Island. Also located on Kwajalein were the 6th Submarine Base Force, 6th Communications Unit, 61st Guard Force (-), a detachment of the 4th Fleet Construction Unit (Korean laborers), a company of the Yokosuka 4th SNLF, 952nd Air Unit, and numerous unassigned casualties and stragglers. The 1st Company, 3rd Mobile Battalion, 1st AmphBde was assigned to defend Kwajalein while the 2nd Mobile Battalion (less 1st and 2nd Companies, but with attachments totaling 729 men) was caught on Kwajalein while en route to Wotje. There were about 5,000 personnel on Kwajalein, 933 of them Imperial Japanese Army. Some 500 personnel were located on nearby Ebeye Island.

Roi-Namur was defended by a detachment of the 61st Guard Force, a detachment of the 4th Fleet Construction Unit, Headquarters 24th Air Flotilla and its 275th, 281st, and 735th Air Units. The 22nd Air Flotilla had been assigned to the Marshalls, but in late November the 24th Air Flotilla deployed from Japan with 30 fighters and 40 bombers. Another 18 fighters and some torpedo-bombers were sent from Rabaul. The depleted 22nd Air Flotilla, battered during the Gilberts fighting, was withdrawn to the Marianas in early December taking nine bombers. There were some 3,000 IJN personnel on Roi-Namur. Aircraft remaining in the Marshalls included 35 on Roi, ten on Kwajalein, 59 on Maloelap, nine on Wotje, and 15 on Eniwetok.

Jaluit, Maloelap, Wotje, and Mille were defended by the 62nd, 63rd, 64th, and 66th Guard Forces, respectively, plus detachments of 4th Fleet, 6th Base Force, and 24th Air Flotilla. III Battalion, 170th Infantry



This LVT(A)1 amphibian tank was forced to wait in the water because of the crowded beachhead on Roi. In the background a diminutive LCVP rests beside a landing craft, tank Mk V (LCT(5)). The Marshalls was the first time the LCT was employed in combat.



M4A2 Sherman tanks roll across Roi's airfield as they approach "Nat Circle", littered with aircraft wreckage, at "Estelle Point" on Roi's northeast corner.

Regiment of the 52nd Division on Truk was located on Mille with IJA south sea garrison detachments located on the others. The following strengths are the IJN and IJA totals with the IJA in parentheses: Jaluit – 2,200 (620), Maloelap – 3,100 (404), Wotje – 3,300 (667), Mille – 5,100 (2,530). The Japanese had built a seaplane base on Majuro, but had abandoned the atoll a year before the American invasion. The 6th Base Force was also responsible for the defense of Kusaie and Wake Islands.

The Japanese defenders of Eniwetok, including remaining air and ground crews, numbered some 3,500. There were 800 laborers of the 4th Fleet Construction Unit and a 61-man detachment of the 61st Guard Force. The main defense force was the 1st AmphBde. It had been organized in Manchuria from the 3rd Independent Garrison Unit, a railroad security unit, in November 1943. It arrived at Eniwetok on 4 January 1944. Part of the 3,940-man brigade was detached to defend other islands, but 2,586 remained on Eniwetok. It had a headquarters,

three 1,036-man mobile battalions, a 76-man machine-cannon unit (six 20mm guns), 66-man tank unit (nine Type 95 light tanks), 243-man engineer unit, 139-man signal unit, and 190-man medical unit. The mobile battalions had a 103-man 1st Company while the other two had 197 men, plus a 155-man mortar company (12 80mm mortars), 121-man artillery company (three 75mm mountain guns, two 37mm anti-tank guns), and a 66-man engineer platoon with a 50mm mortar.

The brigade headquarters was on Parry Island with 1,115 troops plus 250 IJN personnel. This included many of the brigade units and a mobile two-company reserve drawn from brigade elements. The 1st Mobile Battalion held Eniwetok with 779 troops. The 3rd Mobile Battalion defended Engebi with 692 troops, some 500 IJN personnel plus the 61st Guard Force detachment.

Altogether there were 28,000 IJN personnel, IJA troops, and laborers in the Marshall Islands.

Japanese defenses

While Truk in the Carolines was heavily fortified as the 4th Fleet's home base, few other islands in the Mandate possessed fortifications other than air, seaplane, and naval bases. Coast defense and anti-aircraft guns were few. The small, low islands with vegetation varying from light to dense, and few natural obstacles, gave little opportunity to establish an effective defense. There was no room for a defense in-depth, no dominating terrain features on which to construct strongpoints, no space to maneuver reserves for counterattacks, and artillery could not be positioned in-depth to provide concentrated fire. The fringing reefs would present an obstacle to conventional landing craft, but not amtracs. The Japanese expected any assault to come from the ocean side, where the reef was narrower than on the lagoon side, exposing debarking troops for less time and because ships could approach closer to shore offering landing craft a shorter run ashore. For this reason the Japanese concentrated their defenses on the ocean side. Anti-boat



On each corner of Roi Island were 40ft-diameter (12.2m) concrete blockhouses mounting 7.7mm Type 92 heavy machine-guns. This one had sustained several direct hits by large-caliber naval guns, but survived until knocked out by Marine assault teams.



obstacles and underwater mines could not be emplaced on this side because of heavy surf. While the light surf on the lagoon side allowed such obstacles, virtually none were emplaced. Mines were sometimes emplaced above the high-tide line on oceanfront beaches. Large coral rocks were imbedded in concrete above the high tide line in some areas. Anti-tank ditches were found inland on some islands, but had little effect on armor. There was little barbed wire. Small lookout detachments were positioned on some of the islets adjacent to the main defended islands. They offered nothing to the defense and were swept away with little effort.

Reinforced platoon strongpoints were positioned along the ocean side at irregular intervals as well as on the ends of long narrow islands. The strongpoints consisted of clusters of trenches, foxholes, and machine-gun positions. Concrete machine-gun pillboxes and gun emplacements were built on some islands, but were few and far between. Many of the permanent buildings (headquarters, signal centers, machine shops, ammunition bunkers, etc.) were constructed of reinforced concrete and, while they provided cover, were not sited as defensive positions. Some heavy concrete bomb shelters existed, but simple slit trenches were all that was available to many defenders. The Japanese had less than two months to construct defenses in earnest. Construction materials were inadequate. Most defenses consisted of fighting trenches without revetments, 2–3-man foxholes, and simple machine-gun bunkers with light overhead cover. On the Eniwetok islands “spider-web” positions were built and gave assault troops considerable difficulties (see Battlescene 2, pages 62–63).

The wrecked concrete and flattened wood and corrugated-roofed barracks, machine shops, warehouses, etc. provided cover and concealment to the defenders as did the many craters. The wreckage, debris, craters, and fallen palm trees proved to be obstacles to tanks. It also made it difficult for the attackers to remain accurately oriented in the blasted terrain.

Dozens of aircraft carcasses of the 24th Air Flotilla litter the Roi airfield. In the foreground is a G4M1 “Betty” attack bomber.

Naval guard units defended Roi-Namur, Kwajalein, and Ebeye Islands. With comparatively substantial armament, but largely deployed facing the ocean side, their usefulness was negated. Roi had two twin 12.7cm dual-purpose guns on the northwest corner, two 37mm anti-tank guns, six 20mm guns mostly around the airfield, and 19 13.2mm machine-guns, again mostly on the ocean side. Three 40ft-diameter blockhouses and nine concrete pillboxes with 7.7mm machine-guns defended Roi. Namur had two 12.7cm twin guns on the north corner, two 37mm anti-tank guns, and four 20mm guns. Ten pillboxes with 7.7mm machine-guns and a 40ft blockhouse were found on Namur. Most of the defenses were on Roi's north and west shores and Namur's north and east.

Kwajalein had a pair of twin 12.7cm guns on each end with two three-gun 80mm dual-purpose batteries on the ocean side plus two 80mm guns on the lagoon. There were also five 70mm infantry guns, two 37mm anti-tank guns, 11 13.7mm and 18 7.7mm machine-guns with some housed in 15 pillboxes. The Army identified 12 strongpoints on the island's ends and the ocean side. A low anti-tank seawall constructed along the shore proved to be a minor obstacle. Two 80mm guns on the ocean side, a 20mm gun, and two 13.2mm machine-guns defended adjacent Ebeye ("Burton"). As on other islands in the atoll the main defenses were built on the ocean side, but on "Burton" additional positions had been built in the vicinity of the lagoon-side seaplane ramps.

The three defended islands of Eniwetok Atoll had no naval-manned defenses, other than two 120mm coast defense guns and two 13.2mm twin machine-guns on Engebi's north corner. Three 75mm and 28 20mm anti-aircraft guns had been delivered, but were not emplaced. In the six weeks following the Kwajalein assault, the 1st AmphBde began constructing defenses on the lagoon side based on reports they received from the Kwajalein attack. While significant construction materials had been delivered, there was not enough time to make much progress. Defenses were mainly dugouts, trenches, and foxholes. The brigade deployed its infantry weapons more or less equally. Engebi was expected to be the most heavily defended, but instead the most troops were on Parry.

Weapon	Parry	Engebi	Eniwetok
80mm mortar	10	11	11
75mm mountain gun	2	2	—
50mm mortar	1	1	1
37mm anti-tank gun	2	2	—
20mm gun	4	3	4
7.7mm heavy machine-gun	6	4	2
light tank ⁴	3	3	3

³ The 27th InfDiv was a New York National Guard division. This would be the regiment's first action.

⁴ The tanks were dug-in, but on Parry they did attempt a counterattack.

OPERATION “FLINTLOCK”

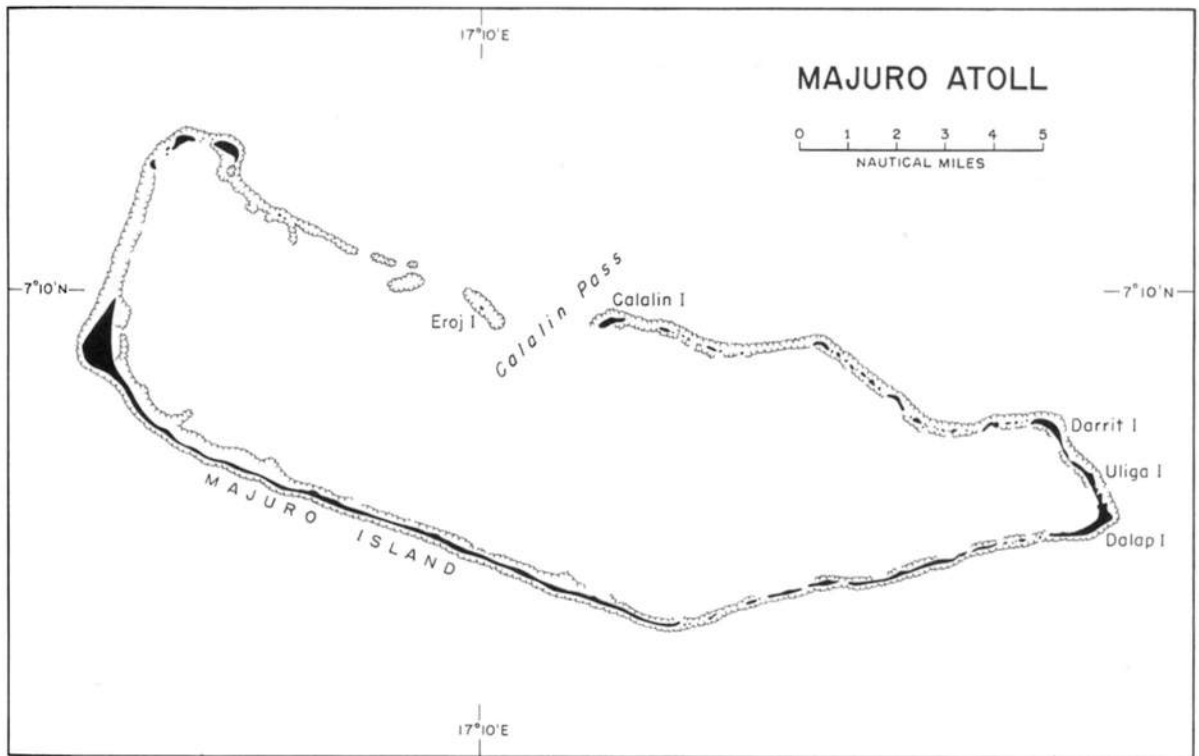
On 4 December 1943, two American carrier groups attacked Kwajalein and Wotje Atolls. While a number of Japanese aircraft were destroyed, many of those on Roi were camouflaged and escaped detection. Seven freighters were sunk at Kwajalein Island, but about 20 escaped unscathed. Importantly, reconnaissance aircraft managed to get complete aerial photography of all the islands. In the months that preceded this attack Seventh Air Force had been pounding the islands.

Task Force 51 departed the Hawaiian Islands on 22–23 January 1944, heading southeast for 2,200 miles (3,541km). Other elements of the attack force departed from Fiji, Samoa, and the Ellice Islands. On 29 January, four carrier groups began attacking the islands with 700 aircraft, supplemented by the bombardment of warships offshore. On 30th the Northern and Southern Attack Groups separated and headed for the north and south ends of the huge Kwajalein Atoll. The 4th MarDiv had departed California on 13 January for the longest shore-to-shore amphibious assault in history – 4,300 miles (6,920km), a distance not exceeded until the 8,000-mile (12,875km) British 1982 Falklands expedition. The Attack Force Reserve positioned itself such that it could respond to any contingency.

IJN units were conspicuous by their absence in the Marshalls. During the November Tarawa and Makin assaults, Japanese 2nd Fleet elements sped to Kwajalein rendezvousing with the few defending 4th Fleet



4th MarDiv troops pull a Japanese or Korean prisoner from his hiding place during the Roi-Namur mop-up. Of the 91 prisoners taken on the twin islands, 40 were Korean laborers. During mopping-up marines would dump their equipment nearby to allow them complete freedom of movement.



Majuro Atoll

elements. The two commanders conferred and concluded that without carrier air support their forces were too weak to challenge the US Fifth Fleet. They withdrew to Truk on 7 December.

Occupation of Majuro

The Majuro Attack Group departed Hawaii, accompanying the Reserve Force, on 23 January. TG 51.2 consisted of an attack-transport, a destroyer-transport, two escort carriers, a cruiser, four destroyers, three minesweepers, and an LST. The group split off from the main task force on 30th and headed from Majuro Atoll, 280 miles (451km) southeast of Kwajalein. Aboard was the "Sundance" Landing Force, 2/106th Infantry, detached from the 27th InfDiv, and the Amphibious Reconnaissance Company, VAC, totaling 1,600 troops. At about 23.00hrs 30 January a platoon of the reconnaissance company landed in rubber boats on Calalin Island, making them the first American troops to land on any territory that Japan had possessed since before the war⁵. The rest of the company landed on other islands and found the Japanese had abandoned the atoll, including the seaplane base on Darrit, a year earlier. Only an IJN warrant officer overseeing Japanese property was captured on Majuro Island. Three civilian employees fled.

The force occupied Darrit and Dalap Islands and the Marine 1st Defense Battalion soon arrived as the garrison force, along with the 100th Naval Construction Battalion. The former Japanese seaplane base on Darrit was soon operational once more and a 5,800ft (1,768m) emergency airfield was built on Dalap in less than two weeks, using existing Japanese facilities and supplies. Minimal fleet support facilities were built and the air facilities were expanded as Fleet Anchorage, Naval Base, and Naval Air

Facility, Majuro. A 4,000ft (1,219m) fighter strip was built on Uliga Island and a 35-mile (56km) coral causeway was built connecting Majuro, Dalop, Uliga, and other islets, which was later paved and remains in use. The 4th Marine Base Defense Aircraft Wing Headquarters was based at Majuro. US submarines soon began evacuating natives from Japanese-held islands that would continue to be bombarded, to both protect them and deny the Japanese their labor; 4,000 were housed on Majuro. The Navy provided for the natives' needs and after the war returned them to their home islands.

ROI-NAMUR ASSAULT

The Northern Attack Force (TF 53), with the 4th MarDiv, arrived off Roi-Namur in the pre-dawn hours of 31 January (D-Day) with three battleships, five cruisers, three escort carriers, 21 destroyers, five subchasers, 11 minesweepers, 13 attack transports, seven troop transports, three attack cargo transports, one destroyer-transport, two LSDs, 20 LSTs, and two tugs. The seas were rougher than expected and this would affect amtrac operations on the outlying islets. The skies were overcast with occasional rainsqualls with 20mph winds. Sunrise was at 07.12hrs.

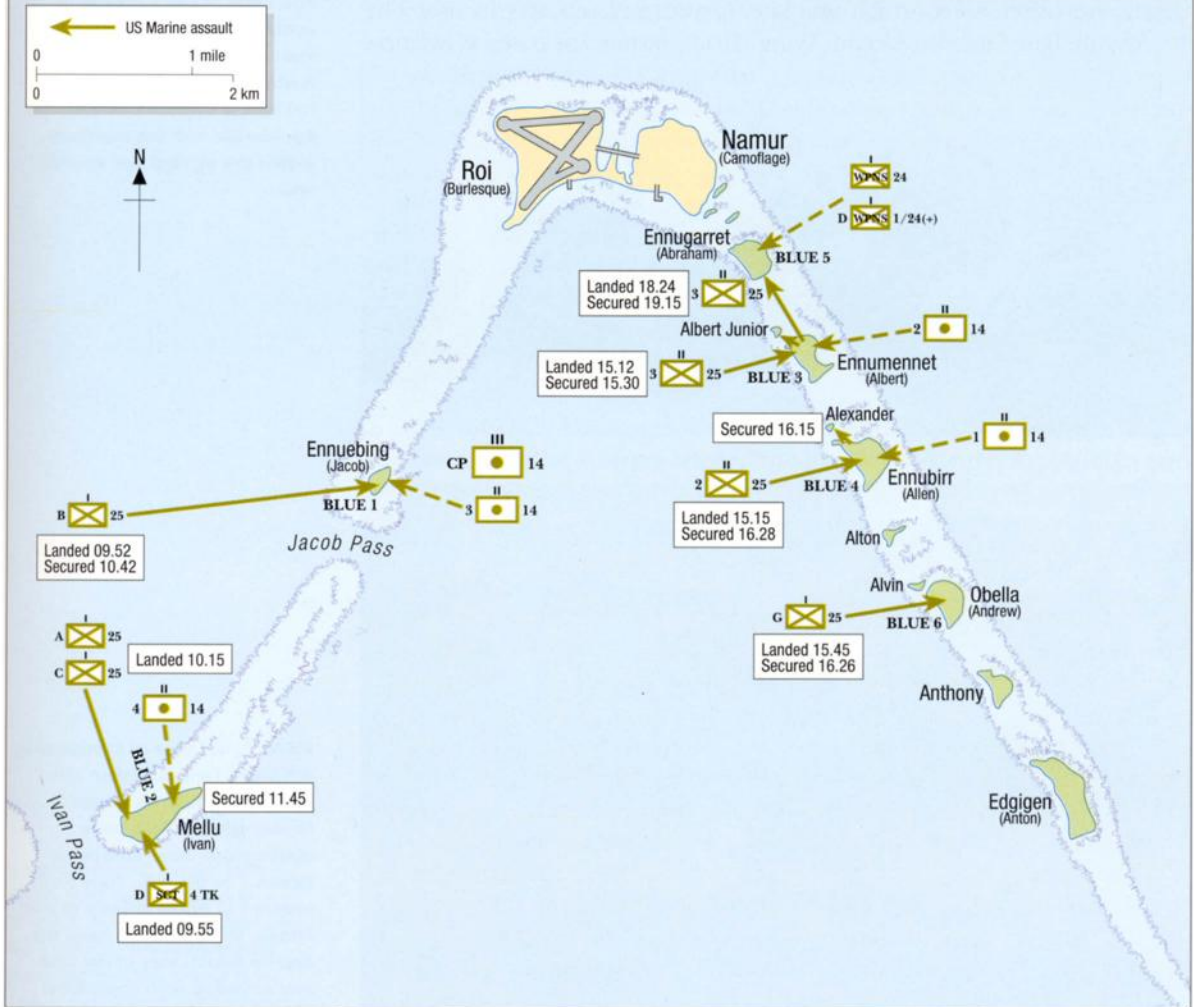
Roi-Namur's neighboring islands, D-Day (31 January 1944)

The Ivan Landing Group with RCT25 under the direct control of the assistant division commander, Brigadier General James L. Underhill, would secure islets to the southwest and southeast of Roi-Namur. "Ivan" and "Jacob" would be seized from the seaward side to allow the Northern Attack Force to enter the lagoon for the main attack the next day. The troops boarded landing craft at 05.30hrs to be boated to a transfer point, where they would in turn board amtracs unloading from LSTs. The preparatory bombardment commenced at 06.51hrs, concentrating on "Ivan" and "Jacob" as well as Roi-Namur. It lifted at 07.15hrs to allow an air-strike by carrier-based planes, and then the gunfire resumed. H-Hour for "Ivan" and "Jacob" was 09.00, A-Hour for "Albert" and "Allen" was 11.30, and B-Hour for "Abraham" was 16.00. The second gunfire barrage ceased at 08.25 and another air attack struck. The rough sea and



Viewed from the north, the 24th Marines assault waves approach Namur from the lagoon. Shepherded by the destroyer USS *Phelps* (DD-360), the amtracs are preceded in by rocket-firing LCI(G) gunboats. Fire at this time is concentrated on the beach area. From the causeway on the right one can follow the faint trace of "Sycamore Blvd" across the island. This is the O-1 Line.

D-DAY ROI-NAMUR, 31 JANUARY 1944



inadequate rehearsals back in California soon began to show their effects. The swells slowed the amtracs to half speed and wind-driven spray drowned radios. The area in which the transfer from LCVPs to amtracs was taking place became congested and confused. H-Hour was reset for 09.30. As the amtrac waves advanced from 6,000yds (5,486m) offshore the final air attack was launched and six landing craft, infantry (gun) (LCI(G)) closed in. While the 4.5in. rocket-armed LCI(G) had been tested in the Treasury Islands the previous October, this was their first large-scale use. The 432 rockets aboard each ripped loose 1,000yds from shore and the fighters strafed the beaches one last time. The 12.7cm gun battery on the north end of Roi opened fire on the fire support ships. They immediately returned fire and the twin-mounted guns fell silent.

At 09.52hrs, B/2/25 Marines came ashore on "Jacob" and overran the island in 15 minutes. It was declared secure at 10.42, the 19 defenders killed or captured. Difficulties were encountered at "Ivan" to the southwest. Surf, winds and reef conditions slowed the amtracs. Strafing attacks prevented the enemy from taking advantage of the delay, but the



24th Marines assault troops pinned down on a Namur beach. The crate in the foreground contains medical supplies indicated by the red cross on a white swatch. The yellow half-circle symbol identifies the 4th MarDiv and the numbers within the symbol the specific unit.



M5A1 light tanks of Company B, 4th Light Tank Battalion roll ashore at 13.00 on Green 2, Namur Island. They were supposed to have landed on Green 1 to the left. They were ordered to move latterly to that beach, but as can be seen the narrow beach was congested and crowded with equipment delaying the move. The tanks have begun to shed their LT-5 fording stacks.

12.7cm battery again opened fire and was again silenced. To speed the pace the RCT25 commander, Colonel Samuel C. Cumming, ordered Company D (Scout), 4th Light Tank Battalion to swing south around the islet into the lagoon and land through the calmer surf. This was accomplished at 09.55, and C/1/25 landed on the opposite northwest shore at 10.15, followed by Company A. Three prisoners were captured, 13 defenders killed and the island secured at 11.45. Very shortly thereafter 3/14 Marines landed on "Jacob" with its 75mm pack howitzers, and 4/14, with its 105mm pieces, was deployed on "Ivan" where 14th Marines also established its regimental CP under Colonel Louis G. DeHaven.

Now the action shifted east to a string of islets running to the southeast. Here the landings would occur from inside the lagoon. A-Hour was set for 11.00. The LCI(G), gunfire, and air strike plan was similar to the earlier assault. The 2/25 troops had been in their LCVPs since before dawn while they served as the "Jacob/Ivan" reserve. The amtracs from

that assault met 2/25 and 3/25, the latter still aboard its transport, but again rough seas delayed the transfers. LVTs became scattered and some followed the wrong control craft. A-Hour was changed to 14.30 as stray amtracs were rounded up and communications problems persisted. Minesweepers were clearing the lagoon entrances as naval gunfire continued to pound Roi-Namur. Insufficient amtracs reported in from the earlier assault and some of 3/25 had to be landed by LCVP. The amtracs entered the lagoon through "Jacob Pass" and headed for "Andrew", "Allen", and "Albert", A-Hour was now set at 15.00 as the amtracs struggled across the lagoon. The aircraft, which were to deliver strikes on the islets, had to be released, as they were now low on fuel, but released their loads on the targets before departing. Fortunately an air cover flight arrived. The pilots were familiar with the plan and since no enemy aircraft had appeared they were tasked to strafe the islets as the amtracs made their run.

The LCI(G) launched their rockets and peppered the islets with cannon fire as the amtracs crossed the line of departure. Amphibian tank

Another view of Namur with M5A1 light tanks stalled on Green 2. In the background are the LCM(3)s, which delivered them. Behind the crater is a 75mm gun-armed M3 halftrack.



Marines pause as they fight their way across Namur. The marine in the foreground is armed with an M1918A2 BAR with the bipod removed and its barrel shortened. Beside him lies a 61st Guard Force defender.



1. 06.50HRS. **USS Tennessee** opens direct fire with its 14in. guns against the blockhouse on the sandspit linking Roi-Namur.

2. 07.10HRS. **14th Marines** artillery commences bombardment of Roi, followed by air attacks.

3. 11.33HRS. **Companies A & C, 1st Armored Amphibian Tractor Bn.** come ashore on Beach Red 2.

4. 11.50HRS. Bombardment lifts.

5. 11.57HRS. **Companies A & B, 1st Bn., 23rd Marines** come ashore on Red 2.

6. 11.50HRS. **Companies E & F, 2nd Bn., 23rd Marines** come ashore on Red 3 preceded by 18 amphibian tanks.

7. 12.15HRS. By this time companies E & F, 2nd Bn. have reached the O-1 Line.

8. 11.45HRS. **Company C, 4th Tk. Bn.** with a light tank platoon of Company A lands and soon catches up with the infantry at the O-1 Line.

9. Relieved by the negligible resistance, **US troops** begin a disordered dash across the island.

10. After about an hour the tanks and infantry return to the O-1 Line.

11. 14.45HRS. By this time order has been restored and the tanks and infantry are ready to launch a coordinated attack on the northern sector of the island.

12. 15.20HRS. The "re-assault" of northern Roi Island begins.

13. 16.00HRS. **1st Bn., 23rd Marines**, which has been using its firepower to support the advance of 2/23, now advances itself.

14. 16.45HRS. By this point the swarm of **US marines, tanks and halftracks** have smashed all organized resistance on Roi Island.

15. 18.20HRS. **Colonel Jones** declares Roi secure.

16. **Companies B & D, 1st Armored Amphibian Tractor Bn.** come ashore but halt on the beach rather than pushing inland.

17. 12.00HRS. **Companies I & K, 3rd Bn., 24th Marines** land on Green 1 and push north. B/1/24 follows them ashore as the reserve.

18. 13.00HRS. **3/24** reaches the O-1 Line. Company I has advanced 100yds beyond the line and is ordered back.

19. 11.55HRS. **Company F, 2nd Bn., 24th Marines** lands on Green 2.

20. 12.00HRS. **Company E, 2nd Bn., 24th Marines** lands to far to the right, coming ashore partly behind Company F.

21. **Companies E and F** cross paths and become intermingled. A gap develops on the left between 2/24 and 3/24.

22. 13.00HRS. **Companies E and F** reach the O-1 Line.

23. 13.05HRS. **Company F** breach a large concrete structure with a shaped charge. Throwing satchel charges in triggers a massive explosion in this torpedo warhead bunker. The explosion kills 20 marines and wounds a further 100, leaving a 100ft water-filled crater.

24. 15.31 **Company L, 3rd Bn., 24th Marines** lands as the reserve. **Company B** replaces **K** in the line.

25. 16.30HRS. **3/24** renews its attack. **2/24** is so disrupted it is unable to attack. **Divisional CP** established on Green 1 between the sandspit and the pier.

26. **Company C, 1st Armored Amphibian Tractor Battalion** crosses the sandspit from Roi before dark.

27. 19.30HRS, 1 FEB. **Colonel Hart** orders **24th Marines** to dig in or the night.

28. **FIRST LIGHT, 2 FEB.** Japanese counter-attack strikes the gap between companies **I** and **K**. **Company L** moves to close the gap and the attack is beaten off with the assistance of four tanks from **Company C**.

Detachment  61st Guard Force

NANCY POINT

ROI


WENDY POINT

TOKYO PIER

RED 2

RED 3

 1st  23rd
HART

 23rd  4th
JONES Mar. Div.

 2nd  23rd
DILLON

 3rd  24th
BRUNELLI

 24th  4th
DYESS Mar. Div.

EVENTS



ROI-NAMUR ISLANDS, D+1-D+2

06.50hrs, 1 February–14.18hrs, 2 February 1944, viewed from the southeast, showing 4th Marine Division's assault on the twin islands against surprisingly light Japanese resistance.

Note gridlines are shown at intervals of 150yds/137m



US MARINES

-  – LVT(A)1 amphibian tank
-  – LVT(2) amtrac

24th Air Flotilla 
YAMADA

US MARINES

- 1 Company A, 1st Armored Amphibian Tractor Battalion.
- 2 Company C, 1st Armored Amphibian Tractor Battalion.
- 3 Company A, 1st Battalion, 23rd Marines
- 4 Company B, 1st Battalion, 23rd Marines
- 5 Company C, 1st Battalion, 23rd Marines
- 6 Company E, 2nd Battalion, 23rd Marines
- 7 Company F, 2nd Battalion, 23rd Marines
- 8 Company G, 2nd Battalion, 23rd Marines
- 9 Company C, 4th Tank Battalion, 1 light tank platoon of Company A, 4th Tank Bn.
- 10 Company B, 1st Armored Amphibian Tractor Bn.
- 11 Company D, 1st Armored Amphibian Tractor Bn.
- 12 Company E, 2nd Battalion, 24th Marines
- 13 Company F, 2nd Battalion, 24th Marines
- 14 Company G, 2nd Battalion, 24th Marines
- 15 Company H, 2nd Battalion, 24th Marines
- 16 Company I, 3rd Battalion, 24th Marines
- 17 Company K, 3rd Battalion, 24th Marines
- 18 Company L, 3rd Battalion, 24th Marines
- 19 Company B, 1st Battalion, 24th Marines
- 20 Company A, 1st Battalion, 24th Marines
- 21 Company C, 1st Battalion, 24th Marines
- 22 Company B, 4th Tank Battalion
- 23 Two companies, 3rd Battalion, 23rd Marines


2nd BRINK 24th

29. 09.00HRS, 2 FEB. 3/24 launches its attack.

30. 10.00HRS, 2 FEB. Delayed by the late arrival of their tank support, 2/24 finally launch their attack.

31. 12.15HRS. 3/24 secures "Nora Point".

32. 12.15HRS. 2/24 and 3/24 meet at "Natalie Point".

33. 14.18HRS, 2 FEB. Namur Island declared secure.

Companies B and D, 1st Armored Amphibian Tractor Battalion led the way in, laying down suppressive fire. 3/25 landed on "Albert" at 15.12 and 2/25 on "Allen" at 15.15. Both islets were quickly cleared with only one marine KIA and seven WIA on "Albert", the only Marine casualties on the adjacent islands. "Albert" and "Allen" were secured at 15.30 and 16.28, respectively, with 10 Japanese killed on the first and 24 on the second. G/2/25, the Battalion Reserve, was not needed on "Allen" so was ordered to secure "Andrew" to the southeast of "Allen". The company landed at 15.45 and declared the unoccupied islet secure at 16.26.

1/14 and 2/14 landed on "Allen" and "Albert", respectively, and were deployed before dark. Additional ammunition was delivered by amtracs through the night to allow the guns to effectively support the next day's main assault. 3/25 was then ordered to secure "Abraham", the closest islet to Namur. Amtracs were still in short supply and the original 16.00 B-Hour had passed. "Albert Junior", a tiny islet 200yds (183m) off "Albert", was secured and machine-guns emplaced to support the "Abraham" assault. Only four amtracs were available, but the assault went in at 18.24. Six Japanese were killed, the rest fled to Namur, and the islet was secured at 19.15 with one marine wounded. The amtracs shuttled in troops with five 75mm gun halftracks, 17 37mm anti-tank guns, four 81mm and nine 60mm mortars, and 61 machine-guns, which were emplaced to support the Namur landing. RCT25 was reassigned as the Division Reserve at 07.00hrs, 31 January.

Regardless of repeated delays the "Ivan" Landing Force had accomplished all its D-Day missions. The incompletely trained amtracs of the 10th Amphibian Tractor Battalion, without the benefit of adequate rehearsals, had done their best. Damaged and scattered amtracs, others unable to refuel, would create further shortages for the D+1 assault. Roi-Namur was cut off, supporting artillery was in place, and the assault troops ready to get off their ships after 19 days at sea. Frogmen of Underwater Demolition Team 1 (UDT-1) had reconnoitered the beaches and approaches and found them clear of obstacles and mines. This was the first use of UDTs.

ROI ISLAND, D+1 (1 FEBRUARY)

The Roi and Namur assaults were conducted simultaneously, but for clarity are described separately. Unit locations are described from left to right as if viewed from behind the US front line.

The original plan called for the assault troops to be boated by LCVPs from their transports to the tractor LSTs where they would have the luxury of boarding the amtracs in the holds of the "large slow targets." This was planned to take place outside the lagoon, but because of the problems encountered the day before with the rough conditions, the LSTs entered the lagoon after first light to provide the amtracs a shorter and smoother ride, conserve fuel, and reduce turnaround delays. At 06.50 the USS *Tennessee* opened direct fire with its 14in. guns against the blockhouse on the sandspit linking Roi-Namur. The Roi bombardment commenced at 07.10 with the 14th Marines artillery on the adjacent islets joining in followed by air attacks. W-Hour was 10.00.

RCT23, under Colonel Louis R. Jones, was aboard its 4th Amphibian Tractor Battalion amtracs and ready to go, though a bit behind schedule

Namur's dense vegetation and numerous structures were largely destroyed by naval and aerial bombardment, making movement difficult and providing cover and concealment for the defenders.



because of problems disembarking the amtracs. RCT24, destined for Namur, was having more serious difficulties, so W-Hour was set back to 11.00. Although RCT23 reached the line of departure on time, the assault was again delayed, but naval gunfire continued. The bombardments were lifted at 11.50 and RCT23 made its run to Roi, hitting the beaches at 11.57.

Red 2 was 550yds (503m) wide on the western half of the south coast and Red 3 was on the eastern half. 1/23 and 2/23 Marines, respectively, would land on these beaches with two companies abreast. The boundary line between the two battalions ran east-northeast across the island, bisecting the junction of the figure 4-shaped airfield. The O-1 Line ran across the island west to east roughly 200–300yds inland with its east end on the causeway.

Amphibian tanks of Companies A and C, 1st Armored Amphibian Tractor Battalion came ashore at 11.33. Those on Red 2 sought hull defilade positions and concentrated their 37mm fire on the "Wendy Point" blockhouse, which could deliver flanking fire on the assault waves. A and B/1/23 followed the amphibian tanks ashore, but were bunched to the left. Regardless, they reached the O-1 Line very quickly. Some amphibian tanks directed their fire toward "Nancy Point" on the northwest corner to protect advancing A/1/23. The company expected to encounter heavy fortifications on "Wendy Point", but found only blasted ruins. B/1/23 encountered no heavy concentration of defenses between the beach and the O-1 Line. The reserve company, C/1/23, arrived without difficulties.

On Red 3, E and F/2/23 came ashore at 11.50hrs. They had been preceded by 18 amphibian tanks which, confused by dense smoke, had clustered together in a single wave rather than two. The line of tracks "accordioned" back and forth as vehicles were shoved out of the line and more than a few minor collisions occurred. Certain following LVT(2)s had been fitted with 4.5-in. rockets and some of these fell short amidst the amphibian tanks, but no damage or casualties were suffered, although the experience must have been somewhat disconcerting for the tank crews. Some LVTs landed their troops on the sandspit just







TANK SUPPORT ON ROI ISLAND (pages 46–47)

Company C, 4th Light Tank Battalion was committed to Roi with the 23rd Marines. Attached to the M4A2 Sherman medium tank unit was 1st Platoon, Company C with M5A1 Stuart light tanks. (The rest of the company was attached to the 25th Marines serving as the Division Reserve.) The M5A1 would soon be replaced by the Sherman as it was found that its main armament, the 37mm M6 gun, was less than effective against pillboxes. Regardless, the Stuart was effective in supporting advancing infantrymen with its .30-cal machine-guns, an M1919A4 in the bow (1), an M1919A5 coaxial (2), and another M1919A4 atop the turret (3) although some lacked this gun. The tanks were fitted with the LT-5 fording stack (4), but these proved unnecessary, as the water-covered reef was shallow. The stacks were jettisoned by pulling on a cable release. The tanks had sand-colored camouflaging stripes painted over their forest green base color. The Shermans were not similarly painted, retaining their all-over forest green

appearance. The 4th MarDiv had undertaken extensive tank-infantry training and this proved to be of value. The 12-man Marine rifle squad consisted of a .30-cal M1 carbine-armed squad leader (5), an M1 rifle-armed assistant squad leader, two automatic riflemen with .30-cal M1918A2 BARs (6), two assistant automatic riflemen with M1 rifles (7), and six riflemen, one with a grenade launcher. In order to communicate with the tank crew an ammunition can was retrofitted to the tank's rear fender and a TS-10 sound-powered phone provided (8). Tank crews have limited visibility and squads operating with tanks detected targets and directed the tank's fire at them. White phosphorus and M16 colored smoke hand grenades (9) were often used to mark targets. The ability to suppress enemy fire and destroy enemy positions greatly aided the infantry in its advance. In return the infantrymen reconnoitered passable routes for the tanks, essential on these cratered islands littered with wreckage and debris, and protected the tanks from close-in enemy attacks. (Howard Gerrard)

Marines direct fire on a concrete blockhouse. These massive structures dotted Namur and for the most part survived the bombardment. While not sited for defense and lacking firing ports, they nonetheless proved to be tough nuts to crack.



outside the regimental boundary and they had to fight their way back to the sector destroying positions along the way. Enemy resistance on Red 3 was just as weak as on Red 2. Large numbers of positions had been destroyed by the bombardment and survivors were dazed. Some Japanese resisted nevertheless as one marine reported, "two left their entrenchment to rush the landing troops." The command post of 2/23 was in operation by 12.15hrs, by which time E and F/2/23 had reached the O-1 Line. G/2/23, the reserve company, came ashore and began clearing by-passed positions. Medium tanks of Company C, 4th Tank Battalion, with a Company A light tank platoon attached, landed from landing craft, mechanized (LCM) at 11.45hrs and soon caught up with the infantry at the O-1 Line.

The light resistance was illustrated by the observations of a spotter plane that reported, "troops seen not taking advantage of cover." Colonel Jones reported to MajGen Schmidt, "This is a pip." However, the light resistance actually led to difficulties controlling the troops, a phenomenon seldom seen in other Pacific island assaults. Encouraged and relieved by the inconsequential resistance, squads and platoons began a disordered headlong dash across the island. The medium and amphibian tank crews were the worst offenders. The Company C tank commander, claiming radio interference must have prevented his request to press the attack from getting through, charged toward the north shore. Crossing the runway without orders and all guns blazing, the infantry followed, as they had been trained to protect the tanks. The amphibian tanks rumbled along the west shore, some on land, others in the water because of overcrowding. Surviving Japanese were driven north, but the hasty nature of the attack left many defenders by-passed hidden in positions, rubble, and runway culverts. General Schmidt actually asked Col Jones, "Can you control your tanks and bring them back to the O-1 Line for a coordinated attack?" The tank commander kept requesting additional infantry support, but the regimental CP did not receive the messages. After rampaging about the island for an hour the tanks finally returned to the O-1 Line, mainly because of a lack of targets. The rambunctious infantry meandered back as well, and by 14.45 Col Jones had his unit



The torpedo warhead warehouse on Namur detonates at 13.05. This photograph was shot from the Roi beachhead. This explosion caused half of the 24th Marines' entire casualties.

reined in and ready to commence a coordinated attack. No one can be faulted for the unit's actions, which resulted from the unexpectedly light resistance, relief, enthusiasm, and aggressiveness acquired through excellent training.

The "re-assault" of Roi's northern two-thirds kicked off at 15.30 preceded by a naval gunfire barrage commencing 20 minutes earlier. The earlier disorganized charge had served to confuse the enemy, and he had not yet recovered to face this new even more devastating coordinated attack. 1/23 on the left used their firepower to support 2/23's advance, but advanced themselves at 16.00hrs and in 45 minutes the swarm of infantrymen, tanks, and halftrack guns smashed all organized resistance. 2/23 on the right pushed north toward "Estelle Point" with 75mm gun-halftracks supporting. Resistance in this area was wiped out in 45 minutes. A company from 3/23, the Regimental Reserve, was also supposed to use its firepower to support the advance, but even this attack moved too fast for them to keep pace so they satisfied themselves with mopping-up. The battalion's other two companies deployed to protect against a counterattack from the sandspit. Both battalions began digging in, 1/23 on the west and north coasts to protect against a counter-landing. Scattered defenders were being mopped-up in the "Nancy Point" area. At 18.02hrs, Col Jones declared Roi secure. 3/23 troops, frustrated at having contributed little to the battle, began expending ammunition indiscriminately against non-existent snipers. Three Marines were wounded in this widespread fusillade. Mopping-up continued, but the bombardment had obliterated many fortifications and killed large numbers of defenders. The 121st Naval Construction Battalion landed on D+1 and immediately began clearing debris. The tanks supporting 3/23 were withdrawn before Roi was declared secure and sent across the sandspit to assist RCT24 on Namur. That island turned out not to be a "pip".

The torpedo warhead warehouse once stood over this crater, which filled with seawater immediately after the devastating explosion.



NAMUR ISLAND, 1-2 FEBRUARY 1944 (D+1-D+2)

RCT24 under Colonel Franklin A. Hart began experiencing difficulties even before reaching the line of departure. The unit was to be landed by the 10th Amphibian Tractor Battalion, which had supported the assault on the neighboring islands the day before. Parent LSTs were not equipped with recognition lights and fuel-hungry amtracs could not find their mother ships. Fearing insufficient fuel for their own amtracs, LST skippers turned away stranger amtracs. Many failed to report back to the LSTs in the dark and spent the night sitting on islets. Others were damaged or suffering mechanical problems. At 06.30hrs Col Hart reported to Gen Schmidt, "We are short 48 LVTs" (of 110 allotted). A frantic search was made for stray amtracs, but to no avail in the short time remaining. Division was attempting to assemble LCVPs for use by the following assault battalion waves.

Both the assault battalions' reserve companies had received their full complement of amtracs. 3/24 redistributed its reserve amtracs to the assault companies, while 2/24 replaced Company G with its reserve Company E. With the assault battalions' reserve companies lacking amtracs, Companies A and B/1/24 were detached to 2/24 and 3/24, respectively as their reserves, but in LCVPs. At the last minute G/2/24 arrived aboard scrounged amtracs and LCVPs and A/1/24 was returned to its parent battalion. The organization of the assault waves was confused however, and control officers were still trying to sort them out when the signal was given to attack. Col Hart attempted to halt 3/24, which had begun to advance but, seeing the Roi assault was under way, desisted realizing that it could endanger the entire operation.

The assault waves were somewhat disorganized and the leading amphibious tanks of Companies B and D, 1st Armored Amphibian Tractor



Marines flush prisoners from a concrete blockhouse. The tangle of torn reinforcing bars indicates a direct hit, but the massive steel doors remain intact.

Battalion stopped on the beach rather than advancing inland 100yds, halted by anti-tank ditches, trenches, and debris. RCT25's heavy weapons emplaced on "Abraham" compensated for the reduced fire support.

Green 1 encompassed the sandspit and the western third of Namur's south coast. The Yokohama Pier marked the boundary between Green 1 and Green 2 to the east, which extended to "Sally Point". The pier also marked the battalion boundary between 3/24 and 2/24, which ran to "Natalie Point" on the north shore. The O-1 Line ran from the causeway east along a main road. The wreckage of the many blasted buildings and dense brush caused a great deal of control and orientation problems.

3/24 came ashore on Green 1 at 12.00 with Companies K and I attacking north. The companies became intermingled with the equivalent of a platoon finding itself mixed up with the other company. Regardless, they pressed on, even though fire was heavier than 2/24 on the right experienced. B/1/24 followed ashore as the new reserve. Two light tanks bogged down in soft sand and the Japanese conducted repeated attacks to overwhelm them, but they were beaten back with heavy losses. At 13.00hrs the battalion reached the O-1 Line. Company I had advanced 100yds beyond the line and was ordered back.

2/24 hit Green 2 at 11.55 with Company F on the right and E landed 5 minutes later in the center with part of it behind Company F rather than to the left. Amtracs were supposed to carry the troops 100yds inland, but an anti-tank ditch blocked both amtracs and tanks. This led to congestion on the narrow beach. Companies E and F crossed paths and became intermingled on the line with a gap developing on the left flank between the two assault battalions. Part of Company G was sent in to fill it. By 13.00 most of Companies F and E had reached the O-1 Line, but resistance was stiffening. The streets used for boundaries on which units would guide had been obliterated and covered with debris. The extremely dense 6ft-high brush made control difficult.

As Company F approached the O-1 Line near the east coast an assault team breached a large concrete structure with a shaped charge. Japanese

in the vicinity began withdrawing as marines threw satchel charges into the hole. A massive explosion obliterated the structure and blocks of concrete, palm trees, wood, torpedo warheads, and other debris rained down over the island. Two nearby structures also exploded, although these blasts were not as large as the original; they were probably ammunition bunkers detonated when the torpedo warhead bunker exploded. A cloud of black smoke rose 1,000ft skyward and most of the island was immediately covered by a blast of smoke and dust. The explosion, which left a 100ft water-filled crater, left 20 dead and 100 wounded marines across the island. Company F lost 14 dead and 43 wounded.

At 16.30hrs 3/24 renewed its attack, but the blast had so disrupted 2/24 it was unable to attack. L/3/24, previously without a means of landing, arrived at 15.31 as the reserve and Company B went into the line replacing K, which was sent to the sandspit. Company A was attached to 2/24 to reinforce the battered battalion. More tanks were landed and the assault passed the O-1 Line, achieving greater depth on the left. Japanese resistance was increasing with the defenders taking advantage of the rubble and dense brush, and 37mm canister rounds were used to blast away foliage. The Division advance CP was established on Green 1 between the sandspit and pier at 16.30. 3/23, RCT23's reserve on Roi, was ordered to reinforce Namur, but could not move before dark. Company C of the tank battalion did manage to cross the sandspit before dark. Some units almost reached the north coast, but were pulled back from untenable positions. At 19.30 Col Hart ordered his unit to dig in for the night. Nightfall was 19.45.

From left to right the units were deployed: K and part of M on the sandspit, I and B on-line in the 3/24 sector with L and the tank battalion's Company C in reserve. In the 2/24 sector G, F, C, E, and A were on-line with H in reserve along with Company B of the tank battalion. The Japanese attempted to harass the Marines with probes and the green troops indiscriminately fired into the brush. Company C tanks were low on fuel and ammunition, forcing all ammunition to be transferred to the four tanks with the most fuel.

At first light the tanks were in position to help beat off a counter-attack, which struck the gap that had developed between Companies I and B. The tanks moved forward to engage the attackers as Company L moved in to close the gap and contain any breakthrough. The attack was defeated and the Marines had advanced some 50 yards. Company K began to withdraw from the sandspit. Col Hart launched his attack at 09.00. By 12.15, 3/24 had secured "Nora Point" on the northwest corner. 2/24's tank support was late so its attack was delayed an hour. The two battalions met at "Natalie Point" on the north end at 12.15. Mopping-up continued in the rear and the island was declared secure at 14.18.

The 4th MarDiv had performed well for its first operation, suffering just over 1,000 casualties in the process. Fire discipline had been lax, as expected of green troops, and control measures loose, but this was all part of learning their trade. It was felt if sufficient amtracs had been available on time Namur could have been secured on D+1. The effectiveness of naval gunfire and air attacks had improved dramatically since Tarawa. While the numbers may be high, it was estimated that the naval bombardment and air attacks killed 50-75 percent of Roi-Namur's garrison before the landings.

RCT25 went on to clear 47, mostly unoccupied, Kwajalein Atoll islets between 2 and 5 February in Phases III–V.

KWAJALEIN ASSAULT

In the moonless pre-dawn hours of D-Day, 31 January, the Southern Attack Force (TF 52) with the 7th InfDiv, slipped into its transport and fire support areas 6–10 miles (9.7–16.1 km) southwest of Kwajalein Island. The force consisted of four battleships, three cruisers, three escort carriers, 18 destroyers, three sub-chasers, five minesweepers, 18 attack-transports, five troop-transports, two attack cargo-transports, two destroyer-transports, two LSDs, 20 LSTs, and three tugs.

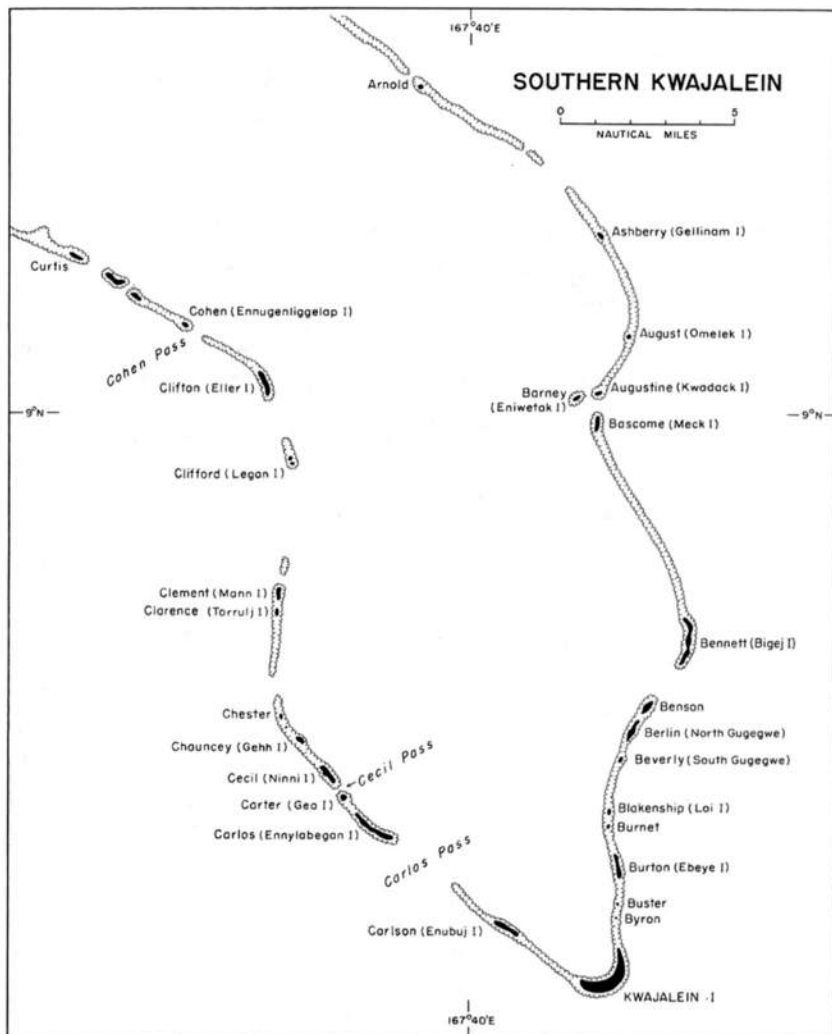
Kwajalein – neighboring Islands, D+1 (1 February)

Two destroyer-transports raced ahead of the task force closing on “Cecil” and “Carter” guarding the lagoon’s entrance, a half-mile apart and the latter nine miles northwest of Kwajalein. Two composite company-size units had been formed from the 7th Cavalry Reconnaissance Troop and Company B, 111th Infantry and attached to Colonel Wayne C. Zimmerman’s RCT17. Troops A and B were made up of roughly half of each unit. The reconnaissance elements’ rubber boats would be towed by launches to within 800yds of the islets and would then paddle ashore to mark landing sites. The rifle platoons would then come ashore in LCVPs. Once “Cecil” and “Carter” had been secured the cavalry troop elements on the two islets were to be reconstituted and then reconnoiter “Chauncey” while the infantry held “Cecil” and “Carter”.

Even with delays and minor problems Troop A landed on “Cecil” at 05.45hrs. Four Japanese defenders had been killed and two captured before the US troops realized they were on the wrong islet – “Chauncey” one mile northwest of “Cecil”. They discovered a beached Japanese tug and left a small element to watch it as the rest of Troop A re-embarked at 09.29hrs. They then landed on “Cecil” at 11.24 finding it clear of enemy and declared it secure at 12.35.

Troop B landed on “Carter” at 06.20, and although the dense brush slowed the reconnaissance, they discovered a Japanese force and all 20 defenders were killed with one American wounded. “Carter” was declared secure at 09.48hrs. On “Chauncey” the infantrymen discovered a force of over 100 Japanese hidden in the islet’s center with others found on the tug. Almost half the Japanese troops were killed and the US infantry withdrew losing two men. The next morning they were transferred to “Cecil”, but a squad, reinforced by destroyer-transport crewmen, was left to watch the tug. They would be reinforced later to deal with the remaining Japanese.

“Carlson” is two miles northwest of Kwajalein Island and 900yds southeast of “Carter”, and separated by a shallow reef from “Carlos” 4,300yds (3,932m) to the northwest. RCT17 was tasked to secure both “Carlson” and “Carlos”. The two assault battalions transferred from their transports to LCTs where they boarded the amtracs for the actual assault. Carrying out this task in the dark caused delays and H-Hour was re-set from 08.00 to 09.10. At 08.10hrs the cruisers began a sustained bombardment of the two objective islands as well as of Kwajalein, “Burton”, and “Beverly”. They were



joined by the two battleships, which had already been pounding Kwajalein since 06.18. Daylight revealed three merchant ships in the lagoon, which were sunk by gunfire. Carrier air strikes commenced on Kwajalein at 08.40hrs.

1/17 Infantry came ashore unopposed on the seaward coast of the north end of "Carlos" at 09.10. The troops moved south with one company in the lead. 17 Japanese were killed and eight taken prisoner and the island secured at 16.15.

2/17 Infantry landed on the northeast end of "Carlson" at 09.12. The troops moved south and received some artillery from Kwajalein, but this was suppressed by air and naval gunfire. Resistance had been expected on "Carlson", but other than scattered rifle fire, which wounded one man, there was no serious enemy action. The Japanese fled leaving 21 Koreans who were taken prisoner and the island was declared secure at 12.10. The Division Artillery, under Brigadier General Archibald V. Arnold, landed its five battalions; four of 105mm and one of 155mm howitzers. Space was at a premium with 60 artillery pieces emplaced on an island only two-thirds of a mile long and 300yds wide. On "Carlos", RCT17 Infantry assembled as a reserve for Kwajalein.



Amtracs, Ducks, and LCVPs of the supporting waves land on "Carlson" (Enubu) Island where five field artillery battalions would be emplaced to support the Kwajalein Island assault. In the foreground in front of the bulldozer lies an M5A1 light tank's LT-5 fording stack.

Ammunition and supply dumps were established along with an amtrac repair shop and the division CP.

The field artillery and warships continued to bombard Kwajalein and "Burton" through the night. The assault troops of RCTs 32 and 184 transferred from transports to the amtrac-carrying LSTs while it was still light and retired away from Kwajalein to return to station just before light. UDT-2 reconnoitered Kwajalein and discovered no obstacles or mines.

KWAJALEIN ISLAND, D+1, 1 FEBRUARY 1944

H-Hour for Kwajalein was set for 09.30, 1 February. The power of the pre-assault barrage was unprecedented in the Pacific; 36,000 rounds of naval gunfire and artillery plus sizeable air attacks pummeled the island. Alternating barrages of naval gunfire and 96 carrier aircraft sorties hit the island as the assault waves disembarked from their LSTs on the ocean side. LCI(G)s spewed forth rockets and poured in automatic cannon fire as the amtracs, with 20 in the first wave mounting portable flamethrowers⁶, churned towards the shore. The landing force was released at 09.00.

The landing beaches, Red 1 and Red 2, were on the island's westernmost end, with Red 1 to the north and Red 2 to the south. RCT184 under Colonel Curtis D. O'Sullivan, landing on 250yd-wide Red 1, would be led in by 3/184 with Company L on the left and I on the right. Company B, 767th Tank Battalion followed it ashore and then came 2nd and 1st Battalions.

RCT32 commanded by Colonel Marc J. Logie assaulted 300yd-wide Red 2, with 1/32 leading the way ashore. Company B was on the right and A on the Left. Company A, 767th Tank Battalion followed with 2/32 and 3/32 behind it.

Each beach was covered by a strongpoint, but these had been largely obliterated. Small numbers of defenders managed to reoccupy craters

"Carlson's" battered power plant was turned into a command post by an artillery unit. The island had served the Japanese as a communications site. Note the sandbagged machine-gun position built by marines atop the bunker.



Kwajalein Island prior to the assault with Japanese ships in the lagoon. The landing beaches were on the west end at the lower left edge of the photo. The radio direction-finder station, known as the "Wart Area" (a large clearing) is just to the right of the beaches. The uncompleted airfield occupies much of the island's western portion. The area roughly midway between the airfield and Nob Pier is the "Admiralty Area", the main IJN headquarters for the Marshalls. A falling 500lb bomb is seen over the west end of the airfield taxiway.



and wreckage and a few pillboxes had survived. The current forced amtracs to veer to the right, but most landed on the assigned beaches at 09.30. Fire was weak and the assault troops suffered few casualties.

Undestroyed seawall sections, craters, stumps, and debris halted many amtracs and tanks, some still in the water. They maintained a torrent of machine-gun fire as artillery from "Carlson" shifted inland. Marshes were found in the dense brush behind the beaches. Bulldozers were landed in subsequent waves and began plowing paths inland even though they were under fire. Many amtracs, instead of turning to the flanks to circulate back to the LSTs, instead turned around on the beach causing congestion as more amtracs rolled in. The reef halted later waves in LCVPs and the troops waded ashore.

The assault troops had pushed 250–300yds inland to the edge of the radio direction finding station in a large clearing. The two lead companies

KWAJALEIN ISLAND, D+1

09.30hrs 1 February–19.20hrs 4 February, viewed from the south, showing RCT 184's and RCT 32's assault and drive along the length of the island through a series of Japanese strongpoints.

Note gridlines are shown at intervals of 300yds/274m

US FORCES

Regimental Combat Team 184

- 1 Company L, 3rd Battalion, 184th Infantry
- 2 Company I, 3rd Battalion, 184th Infantry
- 3 2nd Battalion, 184th Infantry
- 4 Company E, 3rd Battalion, 184th Infantry
- 5 Company G, 3rd Battalion, 184th Infantry
- 6 1st Battalion, 184th Infantry
- 7 Company A, 1st Battalion, 184th Infantry
- 8 Company B, 1st Battalion, 184th Infantry
- 9 Company C, 1st Battalion, 184th Infantry

- 10 Company B, 767th Tank Battalion
- 11 Company A, 767th Tank Battalion

Regimental Combat Team 32

- 12 Company A, 1st Battalion, 32nd Infantry
- 13 Company B, 1st Battalion, 32nd Infantry
- 14 Company C, 1st Battalion, 32nd Infantry
- 15 2nd Battalion, 32nd Infantry
- 16 Company E, 2nd Battalion, 32nd Infantry
- 17 Company F, 2nd Battalion, 32nd Infantry
- 18 Company G, 2nd Battalion, 32nd Infantry
- 19 3rd Battalion, 32nd Infantry
- 20 Company I, 3rd Battalion, 32nd Infantry
- 21 Company K, 3rd Battalion, 32nd Infantry
- 22 Company L, 3rd Battalion, 32nd Infantry

JAPANESE STRONGPOINTS

- A Wolf
- B Wet
- C Whistler
- D Wheeler
- E Worden
- F Canary
- G Cat
- H Corn
- I Nap
- J Net
- K Norris
- L Nero

184th  7th
O'SULLIVAN

32nd  7th
LOGIE



EVENTS

1. 09.30HRS, 1 FEBRUARY. 3/184 lands on Beach Red 1 with Company L on the left and Company I on the right.
2. Company B, 767th Tank Battalion comes ashore behind 3/184 followed by 2nd and 1st battalions.
3. 09.30HRS, 1 FEBRUARY. 1/32 lands on Beach Red 2 with Company A on the left and Company B on the right.

4. Company A, 767th Tank Battalion comes ashore behind 1/32 followed by 2nd and 3rd battalions.
5. The Japanese strongpoints defending the beaches have largely been obliterated.
6. The assault troops push some 250-300yds (229-274m) inland to the edge of the radio direction finder station.
7. The lead companies skirt the clearing through the vegetation long the coast.



 6th Sub Base Force
AKIYAMA

 61st Guard Force

2nd  1st Amp. Bde.
ASO



- 8. 14.30HRS. Companies A and B, 1/32 reach a road crossing the island some 800-900yds (732-823m) from the landing beach.
- 9. 14.50HRS. Companies L and I, 3/184 reach the same road.
- 10. 16.00HRS. Having swung too far north and strayed into the 3/184 sector, Company C, 1/32 is recalled.
- 11. 16.30HRS. 1/32, fighting through strong-points on the ocean coast, is relieved by 2/32.
- 12. 18.00HRS. 3/184 halts for the night. Its advance has been slowed by a burning Japanese fuel dump.
- 13. 18.00HRS. Companies F and E, 2/32, advance half way up the runway before halting for the night. There is now a 300yd (274m) gap along the runway between 2/32 and 3/184.
- 14. 18.00HRS. Company E, 2/32 covers the gap between the two battalions. Before dawn, Company C, 1/32 moves forward to guard the area.

- 15. During the night the Japanese attempt several counterattacks and repeated infiltration.
- 16. 07.15HRS, 2 FEBRUARY. 2/184 begins its advance with Company E on the left and Company G on the right.
- 17. 07.15HRS, 2 FEBRUARY. 2/32 advances with only Company G forward.
- 18. 1/184 mops up behind 2/184.
- 19. 12.45HRS. 3/32 relieves 2/32 and continues the advance.
- 20. 16.30HRS. Company G, 2/184 relieves Company F, 2/184. The battalion fails to reach its objective line, halting 150-200yds (137-201m) short.
- 21. 3/32 just reaches its objective line and halts for the night.
- 22. 07.15HRS, 3 FEBRUARY. 1/184 advances through 2/184 with Company B on the left and Company A on the right.
- 23. Company B is held up by Japanese resistance in a group of shattered buildings on the lagoon shore.
- 24. Company A pushes further north through the Admiralty Area, attempting to outflank the Japanese position on the lagoon shore.

- 25. On the ocean side of the island 3/32 advanced with Companies L on the left and Company I on the right.
- 26. Company K relieves Company L but has to swing into the 1/184 sector through the Admiralty area to do so.
- 27. 13.30HRS. Company C and Company A, 1/184 attacks west into the shattered buildings.
- 28. 13.30HRS. Company B secures the southern flank of the Japanese position.
- 29. 18.00HRS. 1/184 overcomes the Japanese defences to reach the lagoon.

- 30. 2/184 attacks north around the built-up area with Company E on the left and Company G on the right. Company F follows behind. 2/184 pushes forward almost level with 3/32 short of Nob Pier.
- 31. 3/32 attacks north into Japanese strongpoint "Nap" with Company K on the left and Company I on the right. Company L advances behind Company K to screen the exposed left flank.
- 32. 17.30HRS. The advance halts for the night.
- 33. After sunset the Japanese launch a counterattack from the Nob Pier area. 2/184 defeat this attack.
- 34. 04.00HRS, 4 FEBRUARY. Japanese counterattack against 3/32 is defeated.
- 35. 05.00HRS. A further Japanese counter-attack against 3/32 is defeated.
- 36. 05.30HRS. A final Japanese attack hits Company E, 2/184.
- 37. 07.15HRS. 2/184 attacks, advancing north only as far as Nob Pier.
- 38. 07.15HRS. 1/32 attacks and pushes towards the island's north end.
- 39. 13.45HRS. 2/32 attacks through 1/32 pushing to Nero Point.
- 40. 16.10HRS. MajGen Corlett declares Kwajalein secure.
- 41. 19.20HRS. The north end of the island is finally cleared.

of each assault battalion skirted the clearing through the coastal vegetation and then fanned out. Between 14.30 and 14.50hrs, they reached a road crossing the island 800–900yds from the island's west end. The follow-on battalions mopped up and the reserve battalions secured the beachheads. The advance turned into a slow crawl as every surviving pillbox, trench, and shelter was laboriously cleared. One example of a troublesome pillbox required a rifleman to throw several white phosphorus grenades in, empty his rifle into the embrasure, and then fling in a satchel charge. A flamethrower tank had to finish it off. C/1/32 swung too far north and moved into the 3/184 sector before being recalled at 16.00. 1/32, fighting its way through strongpoints on the ocean (rather than lagoon) side, was relieved by 2/32 at 16.30. There was an anti-tank ditch 200yds in front of the battalion. A Japanese fuel dump was ignited by artillery fire and blocked 3/184's advance for a time, although it eventually pushed on another 500yds before halting at 18.00 for the night. Companies F and E of 1/32 pushed on to a point halfway up the length of the unfinished runway, some 200yds further east than 3/184. Company F dug in for the night, to be the only company in the frontline. So many scattered field works were encountered that the advance slowed to a crawl and there was now a 300yd gap along the runway between the two battalions. E/2/32 covered the gap and before dawn C/1/32 moved forward to guard the area. The Japanese attempted several concentrated attacks and endlessly attempted to infiltrate the US positions. Several showers swept across the island during the night.

American casualties were startlingly light to this point; 21 dead and 87 wounded in the two assault regiments. 75mm howitzers and 4.2in. mortars were landed adding to the firepower. An underwater cable was run across the reef to "Carlson" providing direct telephone link to the Division CP and artillery.

KWAJALEIN ISLAND, 2-4 FEBRUARY (D+2-D+4)

A coordinated attack was to be launched at 07.15. Tanks were moved forward and 2/184 would attack through 3/184. Artillery began a preparation followed by air strikes and naval bombardment. 2/184 began its advance with Company E on the left and G on the right. 2/32 was forced to advance with only Company G forward. All companies were heavily reinforced with tanks.

2/184's advance was easier than had been expected, experiencing only light resistance; 1/184 mopped up behind it. G/2/32 initially ran into more resistance than expected, but was able to move faster once a



An LVT(1) amtrac passes three DUKW-353 2½-ton amphibian trucks waiting to be loaded in the transport area. The "Ducks" carry a spare tire and three 5-gallon gasoline cans on their rear decks.

particular coastal strongpoint had been reduced. At 12.45hrs, 3/32 relieved 2/32 and continued to advance. An unexpected anti-tank ditch separated the tanks and infantry as they by-passed it to the left. Some by-passed on the beach to the right and supported the attack into another strongpoint. It was in this area that the island's coast began to swing around to the north. The advance was slowed because of resistance, obstacles, and rubble. 2/184 did not quite make it to the objective line, halting 150–220yds (137–201m) short, but 3/32 did make it to the line ... barely. G/2/184 relieved F Company at 16.30hrs. The day's casualties for both regiments were 11 dead and 241 wounded. Enemy prisoners reported only a few hundred defenders remaining, their communications disrupted, and the defenses severely battered. The forward companies were alerted to expect a *banzai* attack that night. There were probes and a great deal of small arms, grenade, and mortar fire, especially after midnight, but an attack never materialized. The next day's (D+3) assault would commence at 07.15hrs.

Preceded by preparatory fires as was the previous day's attack, 1/184 led off on the left with Companies B and A passing through 2/184. They was soon held up by strong resistance in a group of shattered buildings along the lagoon shore. From this point the island's northern end was covered with buildings and four strongpoints remained on the ocean side and north end. Company A pushed farther north and attempted to attack from the flank through the Admiralty Area, but became bogged down. 3/32 on the ocean side advanced with Companies L and I taking the lead. Company K soon relieved L, although it had to swing into the 1/184 zone through part of the Admiralty Area to do so: good progress was made. 1/184 was quite a way behind 3/32 now and rather than hold up the drive north the plan was adjusted. The built-up area holding up 1/184 would be contained and neutralized by that battalion as 2/184 by-passed it to the east. At 13.30hrs the new attack was launched with



7th InfDiv troops transfer from LCVPs, which carried them from their transports, into LVT(1) amtracs. Burdened with weapons and equipment, this was a difficult task in rolling seas.







CLEARING SPIDER HOLES, KWAJALEIN (pages 62–63)

On Kwajalein Island and the three defended islands of the Eniwetok atoll, Engebi, Eniwetok and Parry, the Japanese 1st Amphibious Brigade built numerous underground bunkers with substantial log roofs. Each of these was big enough to allow a half-dozen or so men to sit out the American bombardment. In each case the Japanese dug several 10–15ft-long trenches radiating outward from the central bunker. These were covered with corrugated metal sheeting, which was then covered over. Alternatively, the Japanese cut the ends out of metal fuel drums and then laid several end-to-end. These were concealed by covering them up with sand. At the end of each trench or tunnel was a one-man rifle position. Each of these was concealed with a camouflaged trapdoor (1). These “spider-web” positions were effectively invisible to the naked eye and difficult to locate. The Japanese riflemen would throw off the cover and fire on assault troops, often after they had passed the

position. Both bursting-type M15 white phosphorus (2) and Mk IIIA1 concussion (3) hand grenades were employed to blast the defenders out of these troublesome positions. Another method was to tape a 1/2lb TNT block to a Mk IIA1 “pineapple” fragmentation grenade (4) to provide the necessary additional blast effect. M16 colored smoke grenades were thrown into detected openings and the escaping smoke sometimes revealed other entrances and firing positions (5). Unlike their Imperial Japanese Navy counterparts, the Imperial Japanese Army’s 1st Amphibious Brigade was armed with 7.7mm weapons such as this Arisaka Type 99 (1939) rifle (6). In an effort to reduce the number of casualties suffered as a result of “friendly fire” incidents, the men of the 7th Infantry Division wore red and white air/ground marker panels on their backs (7). It would appear that this was not a particularly effective recognition system as the Marshalls campaign is the only known instance in which it was used. (Howard Gerrard)

With Kwajalein smothered in smoke from the preparatory bombardment, the first wave heads for the island's west end as subsequent waves form up. In the bottom-center of the photo are LCM(3)s carrying tanks. While the sea appears moderate, a close comparison of the wave action to the size of the amtracs and landing craft allows one to appreciate how rough the water was.



C and A/1/184 attacking west into the built-up area as Company B secured the area's south flank. They reached the lagoon by 18.00. 2/184 attacked north around the built-up area with E/2/184 on the left and G on the right followed by F to push forward almost level with 3/32 and short of Nob Pier. 3/32 attacked north into a strongpoint with Company K on the left and I on the right. Company L followed K to screen the exposed left flank. Halting for the night at 17.30, the day's casualties had been high, 54 dead and 255 wounded. More Japanese had been killed than were expected to still be on the island. The battalions were 200–350yds (183–320m) short of their objective line.

After sunset a Japanese counterattack was launched from the Nob Pier area and defeated by 2/184. Additional counterattacks were broken up before they began by massed mortar and artillery fire. A counterattack was launched against 3/32 before 04.00hrs and another an hour later with both defeated. Numerous infiltration attempts were made including one from the lagoon reef. A last attack hit E/2/184 at 05.30hrs. A sizeable number of enemy remained in the 400x1,000yd (366–914m) north end and constant blasting by artillery, mortars, naval gunfire, and air strikes could not reduce them. It was taking longer than expected to secure the island, mainly due to the stiff resistance of the Imperial Japanese Army's 2nd Mobile Battalion and SNLF troops.

The US regimental and divisional command posts launched the final D+4 attack to clear the island in the belief that the forward troops were somewhat farther north. Far too many small pockets remained in the rear and the reserve battalions were experiencing difficulties rooting them out. This made it still more difficult to support the attack. Before dawn 1/32 was deployed with great difficulty with Companies C, B, and A to attack through 2/184 and 3/32. 2/184 would advance only as far as Nob Pier. The 32nd Infantry would clear the remainder of the north. The attack was launched at 07.15hrs, supported by tanks, and immediately ran into stiff resistance. The advance was slow and confused, with many attacking platoons tied down clearing pockets of defenders. Comparatively large numbers of prisoners began to surrender, mostly Koreans. 2/184 had

taken so many casualties that the Company G commander assumed command of the remnants of all three rifle companies and B/1/184 was pushed into the attack. 2/32 attacked though 1/32 at 13.45hrs, with Company G on the left and F on the right. At 16.10hrs, Major General Corlett declared the island secure, even though the north end was not cleared until 19.20hrs: mopping-up continued.

Ebeye Island, 3-4 February 1944 (D+3-D+4)

Once it was determined the reserve regiment would not be needed on Kwajalein, preparations began for the Ebeye, or "Burton", Island assault 2 1/2 miles (4km) north of Kwajalein. Scheduled for 09.30 on 3 February (D+3), the island had been shelled and bombed since D-1; in addition 155mm batteries on "Carlson" had added their firepower. On "Carlos", RCT17 prepared for the assault, and embarked aboard an assault transport and LSTs carrying amtracs on 2 February. Beach Orange 4 was on the lagoon side on the island's south portion where the defenses appeared lightest.

Two cruisers and 155mm and 105mm artillery blasted the island as the amtracs went in. 1/17 landed with Company C on the left and A on the right coming ashore against light fire at 09.35hrs. Company B followed with Company C, 767th Tank Battalion. The battalion pushed quickly across the island and then worked north. 3/17 landed to mop up the south end. Company B relieved Company C on the left at 17.00. The advance continued north until 19.00 when they halted for the night just short of Bailey Pier midway up the island's length. Throughout the night Japanese attempts to organize counterattacks were harassed by US artillery and naval gunfire.

The attack resumed at 07.30 on 4 February, but it was soon held up by Japanese who had reoccupied pillboxes on the ocean coast, but these

105mm M2A1 howitzers on "Carlson" support the Kwajalein Island landing taking place 3 miles to the southeast.



Troops advance on Kwajalein covered by an M4A2 tank of the 767th Tank Battalion. The blasted vegetation proved to be an obstacle to foot and vehicle movement.



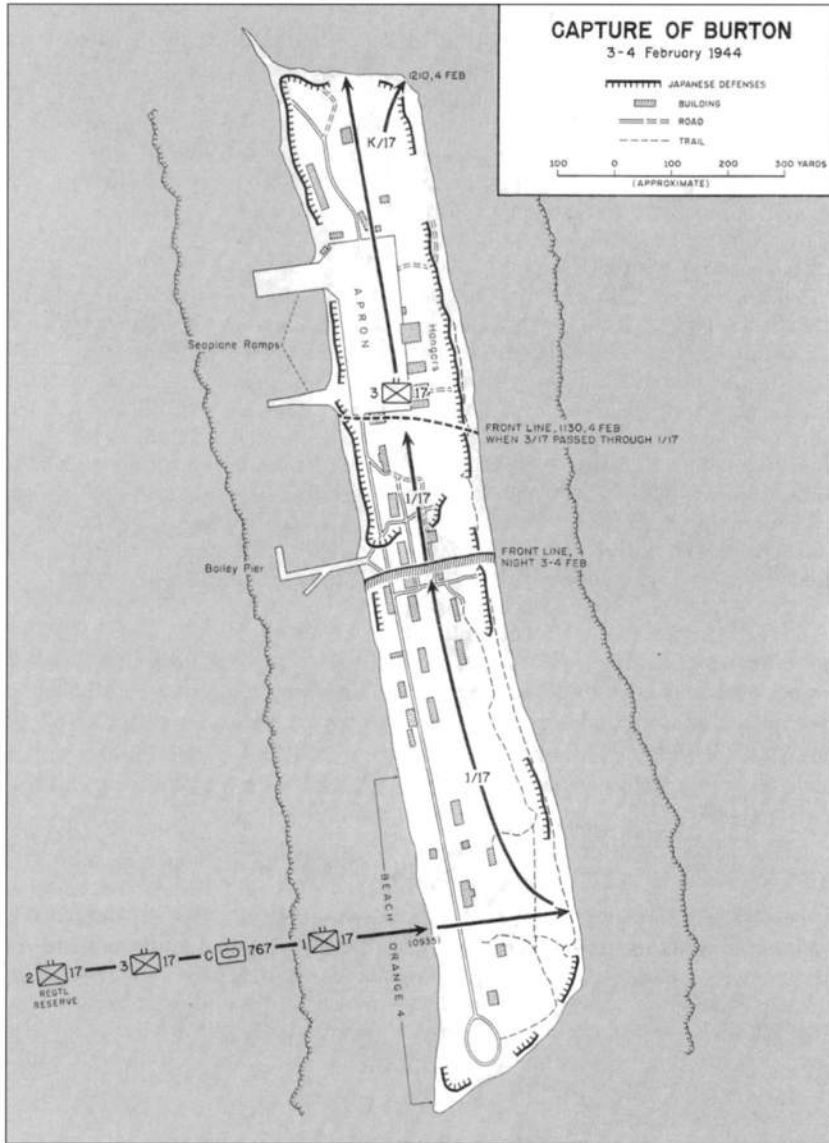
were soon overcome. At 11.30hrs, 3/17 passed through 1/17 as the attack reached the seaplane apron. On the left, Company L advanced behind tanks across the open apron as K on the right pushed through the hangar area and reached the island's north end in less than an hour at 12.10; "Burton" was declared secure at 13.37. Some 450 Japanese were killed and seven captured. US losses were seven dead and 82 wounded.

Two islets, "Buster" and "Byron", between Kwajalein and "Burton" were secured by 2/17 while the battle for "Burton" was being fought. This battalion went on to secure the many other, mostly undefended, Kwajalein islets in the southern part of the atoll. A few marooned sailors and stragglers were found on some. On one, "Clifton", 101 Japanese troops were killed for the loss of one American and four wounded. On 5 February, 1/17 landed on "Berlin", killing 119 Japanese for the loss of three dead and four wounded. On the same day, 3/184 Infantry and the 7th Reconnaissance Troop on "Bennett" killed 94 Japanese, losing one dead and two wounded in the process.

ENIWETOK ASSAULT

Brigadier General Thomas E. Watson's TacGrp 1, VAC, was given the task of securing Eniwetok, having served as the Fleet Reserve at Kwajalein. Additional units augmented the Group for Operation "Catchpole". D-Day was set for 17 February and the force departed Kwajalein on 15th aboard the Eniwetok Expeditionary Group (TG 51.11). Carrier strikes had been conducted against the atoll since the end of January.

At the same time "Catchpole" was launched, TF 57, the Fast Carrier Force, attacked Truk (17-18 February). Much of the Combined Fleet had withdrawn to the Palaus, but the strikes sank 39 warships, auxiliaries, and merchantmen, as well as destroying over 200 aircraft. Operation "Hailstone" neutralized the Japanese Navy's "Gibraltar of the Pacific," eliminating the need for a costly amphibious assault on the atoll.



Naval shelling of Engebi, Eniwetok, Parry, and Japtan Islands began in the early morning hours, to be joined by air strikes after dawn. The ships of the Expeditionary Group steamed single file through two passages in broad daylight, three battleships, three cruisers, 15 destroyers, one sub-chaser, four minesweepers, seven attack-transports, two attack cargo-transports, six cargo ships, two destroyer-transports, two tugs, an LSD, and nine LSTs. Four escort carriers, their screening destroyers, and auxiliaries remained outside the lagoon. A fleet carrier and two light carriers provided additional support. One US Navy officer remarked, "one of the most thrilling episodes that I witnessed during the entire war." Another officer in the area took a somewhat different view: Major-General Nishida sent a plaintive radio message, "Enemy fleet entering lagoon in large numbers. Request reinforcements."

All three main landings were led by Company A, 708th Amphibian Tank Battalion. The 708th Prov Amphibian Tractor Battalion provided

A rifleman eats K-rations while another services his BAR, both ignoring the bodies of Kwajalein's defenders.



the troop amtracs. The separate 22nd Marines under Colonel John T. Walker would take on most of the workload. Colonel Russell G. Ayers' 106th Infantry, detached from the 27th InfDiv, and with its 2nd Battalion still on Majuro, would back up the Marines.

Eniwetok's neighboring Islands, 17-18 February (D-Day-D+1)

As the larger warships blasted the main islands, destroyers shot-up "Camellia" and "Canna" to the southeast of Engebi. Elements of Amphibious Reconnaissance Company, VAC, were landed by amtrac on "Camellia" at 13.20 and on "Canna" at 13.30. Finding them unoccupied, they were secured by 14.00, D-Day, 17 February. 2nd Separate Pack Howitzer and 104th Field Artillery Battalions soon landed, the former on "Camellia" the latter on "Canna", to support the Engebi assault. In the meantime UDT-1 frogmen were reconnoitering Engebi and found it free of obstacles and mines. Company D (Scout), 4th Tank Battalion secured "Zinnia" and four other islets west of Engebi in the early morning of D+1 to prevent the enemy escaping from Engebi. There had been a great deal of confusion during the positioning of ships for this phase, but it was nonetheless accomplished on schedule.

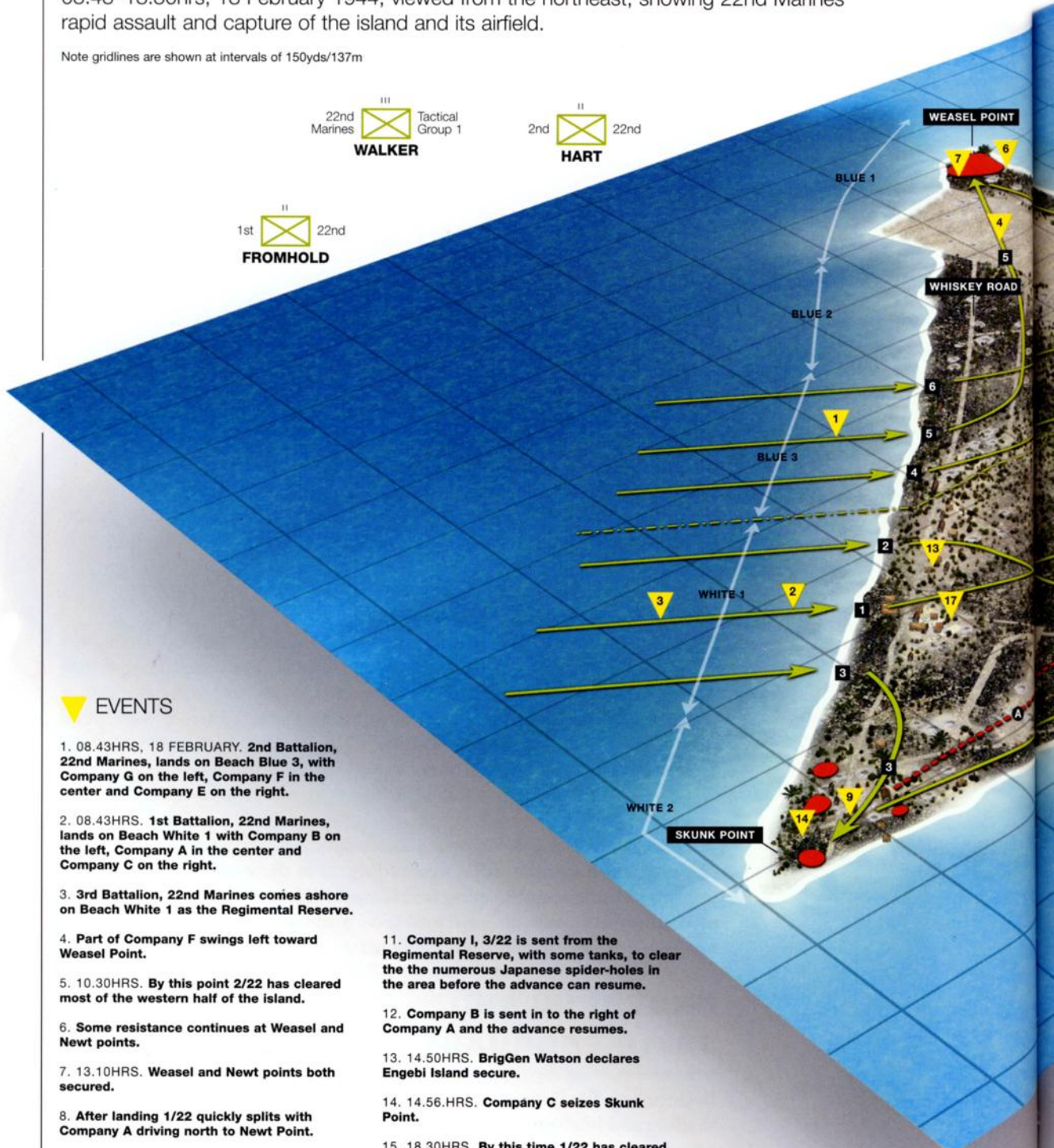
ENGEBI ISLAND, 18-19 FEBRUARY (D+1-D+2)

W-Hour was 08.45 on D+1 (18 February), and after heavy preparatory shelling and bombing, which detonated the main ammunition dump, the assault amtracs followed the LCI(G)s toward Engebi. The latter's rockets fell short, however, and the resulting spray and smoke forced some amtracs off course. Other amtracs broke down because of their heavy use at Kwajalein. Regardless, the assault waves hit the beach two minutes early. Each battalion landed with all three companies in line. The landings were

ENGEBI ISLAND

08.43–18.30hrs, 18 February 1944, viewed from the northeast, showing 22nd Marines' rapid assault and capture of the island and its airfield.

Note gridlines are shown at intervals of 150yds/137m



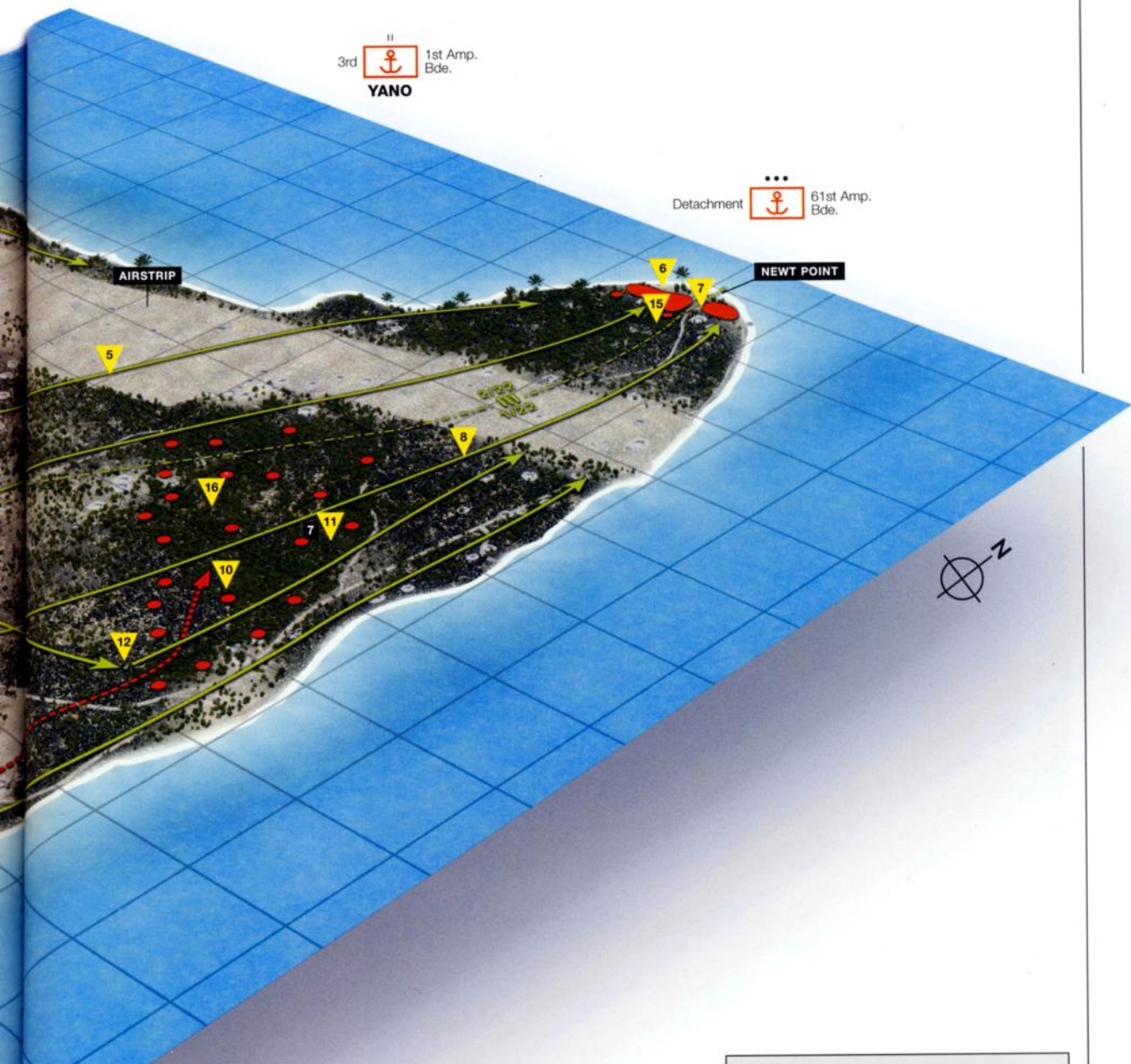
EVENTS

1. 08.43HRS, 18 FEBRUARY. 2nd Battalion, 22nd Marines, lands on Beach Blue 3, with Company G on the left, Company F in the center and Company E on the right.
2. 08.43HRS. 1st Battalion, 22nd Marines, lands on Beach White 1 with Company B on the left, Company A in the center and Company C on the right.
3. 3rd Battalion, 22nd Marines comes ashore on Beach White 1 as the Regimental Reserve.
4. Part of Company F swings left toward Weasel Point.
5. 10.30HRS. By this point 2/22 has cleared most of the western half of the island.
6. Some resistance continues at Weasel and Newt points.
7. 13.10HRS. Weasel and Newt points both secured.
8. After landing 1/22 quickly splits with Company A driving north to Newt Point.
9. Company C swings to the southeast towards Skunk Point.
10. Japanese retreating from Skunk Point find themselves in the gap between Company A and Company C and fire into the flank of the former.

11. Company I, 3/22 is sent from the Regimental Reserve, with some tanks, to clear the numerous Japanese spider-holes in the area before the advance can resume.
12. Company B is sent in to the right of Company A and the advance resumes.
13. 14.50HRS. BrigGen Watson declares Engebi Island secure.
14. 14.56.HRS. Company C seizes Skunk Point.
15. 18.30HRS. By this time 1/22 has cleared Newt Point.
16. Infiltrators and by-passed Japanese troops continue to cause trouble through the night.
17. 08.00HRS, 19 FEBRUARY. Engebi Island formally secured.

3rd  1st Amp. Bde.
YANO

Detachment  61st Amp. Bde.



US FORCES

1st Battalion, 22nd Marines

- 1 Company A, 1st Battalion, 22nd Marines
- 2 Company B, 1st Battalion, 22nd Marines
- 3 Company C, 1st Battalion, 22nd Marines

2nd Battalion, 22nd Marines

- 4 Company E, 2nd Battalion, 22nd Marines
- 5 Company F, 2nd Battalion, 22nd Marines
- 6 Company G, 2nd Battalion, 22nd Marines

- 7 Company I, 3rd Battalion, 22nd Marines

JAPANESE FORCES

- A Japanese troops withdrawing from Skunk Point

on the island's central southwest shore, with 2/22 (left to right Companies G, F, and E) coming ashore on Blue 3 as 1/22 (Companies B, A, and C) landed on White 1, while 3/22 was the Regimental Reserve. Tank Company, 22nd Marines, and a platoon of Cannon Company, 106th Infantry, followed. Fallen palms blocked the advance of some amtracs. Part of F/2/22 on the left swung toward "Weasel Point" on the west corner. Their rush across the airfield was so rapid that when the 2/22 executive officer heard the report he said, "My gosh, Fox Company is trying to take the whole island!" Marine tanks easily knocked out their dug-in Japanese counterparts. By 10.30hrs, 2/22 had cleared most of the island's west half, much of which was occupied by the airstrip. Resistance continued at "Weasel" and "Newt" points, but they were cleared by 13.10. The northeast shore, riddled with Japanese defenses, proved a tougher job, however.

On the right, 1/22 quickly split with Company A driving north to "Newt Point" and C toward "Skunk Point" on the southeast corner. The



75mm M1A1 pack howitzers of the regimental cannon companies were landed in later waves and set up to fire across the lagoon at the north curve of Kwajalein.



Clearing defenders from a dump of construction materials, a rifleman covers a flamethrower operator in the photo's left-center.

Captured Korean laborers point out the locations of Japanese concentrations and defensive positions. Only 79 Japanese were taken prisoner on Kwajalein along with 127 Koreans.



A 7th InfDiv assault team attacks a pillbox with an M1A1 flamethrower. This flamethrower is using unthickened fuel, which shortened its range.



Japanese there attempted to escape north and found themselves in the wide gap between the two assault companies. This allowed them to fire into Company A's flank. Covered by dense brush and palms, the area also had numerous Japanese spider-hole defenses. Tanks and I/3/22 from the Regimental Reserve had to be sent in to clear it before the advance could resume. Company B was sent in between A and I on the left and C on the right. At 14.50hrs, Brigadier General Watson declared the island secure. "Skunk Point" was seized six minutes later and I/22 cleared "Newt Point" by 18.30. The assault had been executed so quickly that even the experienced IJA defenders were unable to offer any meaningful organized resistance. By-passed Japanese troops and infiltrators caused difficulties through the night, but mopping-up continued and Engebi was formally secured at 0800, 19 February. US losses were 85 dead and missing and 166 wounded.







**JAPANESE DEFENSE OF A BOMB CRATER,
ENGEBI ISLAND** (pages 74–75)

The IJA 1st AmphBde made an enormous effort in the less than six weeks it had to fortify Engebi, Eniwetok, and Parry Islands. Time and resources were not on their side. Besides trenches, dugouts, spider-web positions, and lightly constructed pillboxes the island defenders made use of the numerous bomb craters created by 500, 1,000, and 2,000 general-purpose bombs. The Japanese rifle platoon (*shotai*) relied on five basic infantry weapons, the 7.7mm Type 99 (1939) Arisaka rifle (*shoju*) (1), 7.7mm Type 99 (1939) Nambu light machine-gun (*keikikanju*) (2), 5cm Type 89 (1929) heavy grenade discharger (*jutekidanto*) (3), Meiji Type 30 (1897) bayonet with a 15 1/2in. blade (*juken*) (4), and Type 97 (1937), Type 91 (1931), and Type 99 (1939) hand grenades (*shuryudan*) (5). The Japanese equivalent to a US rifle squad was a 13-man light machine-gun section (*buntai*). Designating the section a “light machine-gun” rather than “rifle” emphasized the focus on the machine-

gun as the section base of fire and that the riflemen protected it. The LMG was bipod mounted and fed by a 30-round top-feeding magazine. It had a 2.5x telescopic sight and a quick-change barrel. To emphasize the Japanese’s propensity for close combat, these 20lb weapons could be fitted with a rifle bayonet. The grenade discharger was able to provide a high rate of fire to deliver purpose-made high explosive projectiles or hand grenade fitted with a propelling charge on the enemy as he sought cover or maneuvered. Popularly called “knee mortars” by the Allies because of their curved base plates, these compact weapons could not be fired from the thigh as rumored without breaking a bone. Another theory for their nickname is that they were carried in a bag strapped to the thigh. This is not true as they were carried in a canvas case slung over the shoulder. Three 37mm gun-armed Type 95 (1935) light tanks (6) were dug in on all three of Eniwetok’s defended islands, but were easily knocked out by 75mm gun-armed M4A2 Shermans. (Howard Gerrard)

ENIWETOK ISLAND, 19-21 FEBRUARY (D+2-D+4)

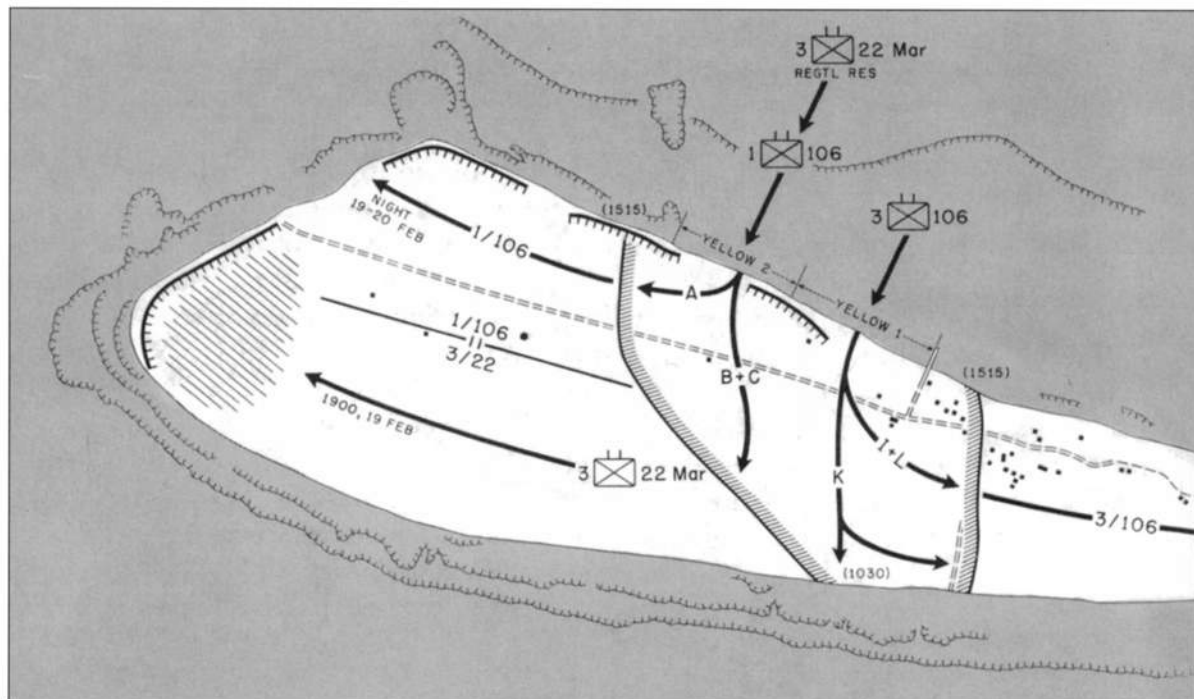
RCT106 was in position off Eniwetok early on the morning of 19 February with an assigned Y-Hour of 09.00. The original plan called for 1/106 to land on Yellow 2 followed by 3/106, which would be withdrawn within two hours to serve as a floating reserve for the capture of Parry. New intelligence indicated Eniwetok was more heavily defended than expected. Instead, the two battalions would land abreast and 3/22 Marines, the reserve, would be prepared to land sooner. Eniwetok received only a fraction of the bombardment targeted against Engebi and Parry. Additionally, there was no field artillery support available from adjacent islets. Y-Hour was postponed 15 minutes as the Marine tanks were being transported by LCMs from Engebi 25 miles (40km) to the north and were delayed by choppy seas. Arriving just in time the assault commenced with the lead troops coming ashore at 09.16.

A 9ft (2.7m) embankment just inland halted the amphibian tanks. The beaches were just to the west of the center-point of the island's northwest coast. 3/106 hit Yellow 1 with Company L swinging east followed by I, with K pushing across the island to reach the opposite coast at 10.30. Part of K also swung wider inland and pushed east. The battalion's job was mainly to screen the east flank while the southwest third of the island was secured. 1/106 landed on Yellow 2 to the west of 3/106. They encountered dense spider-hole defenses as Companies C and B attempted to push across the island, while A attacked southwest along the coast. At 15.15hrs, Company L relieved Company K. The Japanese battalion commander withdrew half his troops to the southwest end and sent the others to counterattack 3/106's right flank. The attacks were beaten back by 12.45, but American casualties were high.

3/22 was ordered ashore to land on Yellow 2 at 14.25hrs, and passed through 1/106 an hour later. Both battalions would launch an attack toward the southwest end at 15.15hrs, with 3/22 on the left (Company



A 37mm M3A1 anti-tank gun crew blasts a pillbox. The gun was light enough to allow it to be manhandled into position on rough terrain. Canister rounds were used to strip camouflaging vegetation from fortifications and then high explosive and armor-piercing rounds aimed into firing ports.

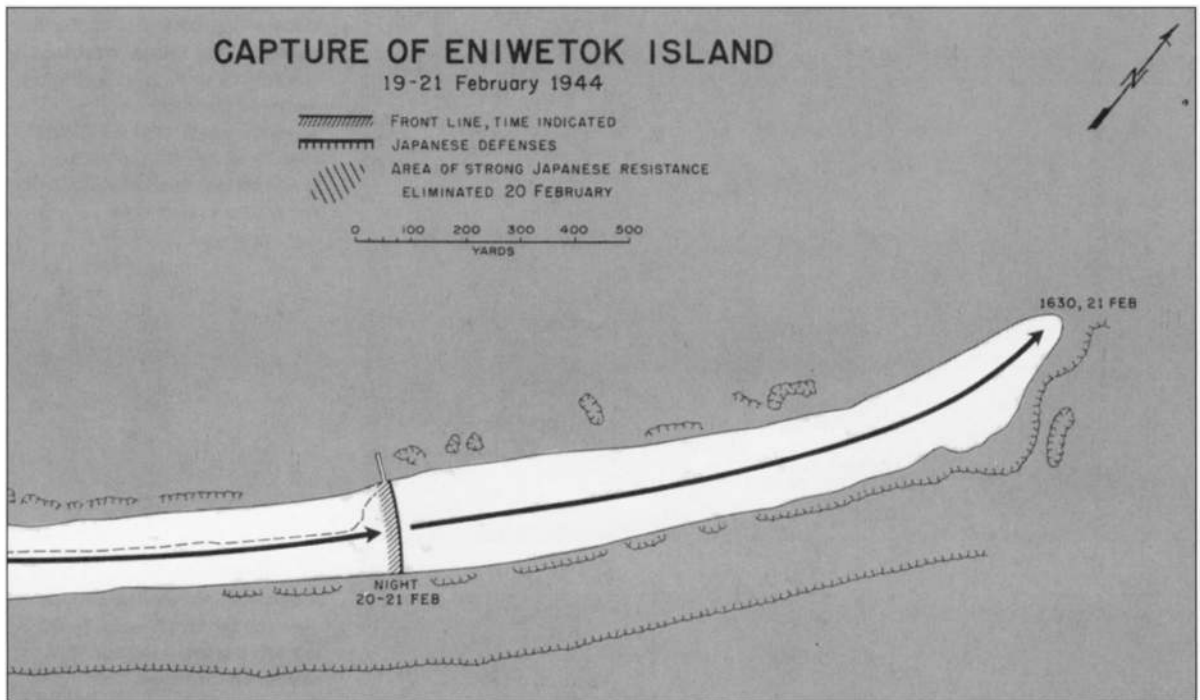


Capture of Eniwetok

K on the left, L on the right) and 1/106 on the right (Company C on the left, A on the right). The 106th commander ordered the attack be continued after dark and B/1/106 relieved Company A just before the jump-off. 104th Field Artillery Battalion began landing at 17.40hrs. The attack did not go well for the Marines, who felt night attacks were futile in rugged terrain and would allow many enemy positions to remain undetected. While the Army battalion received adequate illumination from ships in the lagoon, the Marines did not and had no tanks available either. A gap developed between the two battalions and the Marines lagged behind. At 03.33hrs, 1/106 reached the end of the island, but 3/22 was 100yds to their left rear. The Japanese attempted to probe and infiltrate through the night. At 09.10hrs, the Japanese counterattacked 3/22 and one group of infiltrators hit the battalion command post. The attacks were fought off and the advance to the coast continued. The Marines ran into a final stronghold and tanks and self-propelled guns were required to reduce it, but this had been accomplished by 14.45.

3/106 also attempted to continue its attack during the night, but this proved futile as the troops lacked the confidence and experience for such a difficult task. The battalion halted at 04.30hrs, about a third of the way from the island's north end. The attack was renewed at 07.00hrs on 21 February, with the unit later accused of being overly cautious. Company K relieved Company I at 10.30. Resistance dwindled as the advance continued and the north end was reached at 16.30. The island was declared secure at 17.21. Army and Marine losses were 37 killed in action and missing, and 94 wounded in action.

While the fight for Eniwetok was under way Amphibious Reconnaissance Company, VAC, occupied Japtan at 18.00 on 19 February after first securing 10 unoccupied islets on the atoll's eastern rim. The next day the 2nd Separate Pack Howitzer Battalion landed on Japtan to support the



Parry operation. Company D (Scout), 4th Tank Battalion, secured eight islets on Eniwetok's western rim on 18-20 February; Rigilli was the only islet defended, and this only by a section.

PARRY ISLAND, 22-23 FEBRUARY (D+5-D+6)

BrigGen Watson tentatively planned the Parry assault for 21 February, to be carried out by the battalions that had seized Engebi. They reported their readiness in the afternoon of 20th. Because action was bogged down on Eniwetok, the assault was postponed to 22nd, after 3/22 on Eniwetok had re-embarked as the Regimental Reserve. To this point the 22nd Marines had lost 380 troops, but was still capable of attacking heavily defended Parry. The Marine engineer, Army light tank, Amphibious Reconnaissance, and Scout companies were all assigned to reinforce the attack. They were to land, in the above order, behind 2/22 while the Marine medium tank company would land behind 1/22, except for a platoon attached to 2/22. 3/106 was designated as the Group Reserve as was the 10th Defense Battalion, organized into a 500-man, five-company Provisional Landing Force. The Marines had found the M1 carbine, with which many men had armed themselves, to be a less than effective combat weapon, and M1 rifles and Browning Automatic rifles were redistributed from 106th Infantry units to replace them. An emergency resupply of concussion grenades and blasting caps had to be flown in and there were shortages of 105mm and 75mm ammunition. In light of the resistance encountered on the other islands the naval bombardment plan was increased in weight. 104th Field Artillery and 2nd Separate Pack Howitzer Battalions on Eniwetok and Japtan, respectively, would provide additional fire support. Assault



Many of the scores of concrete structures on Kwajalein were completely destroyed during the repeated pre-invasion bombardments. The numerous structures on "Burton" (Ebeye) Island to the north of Kwajalein suffered a similar fate.

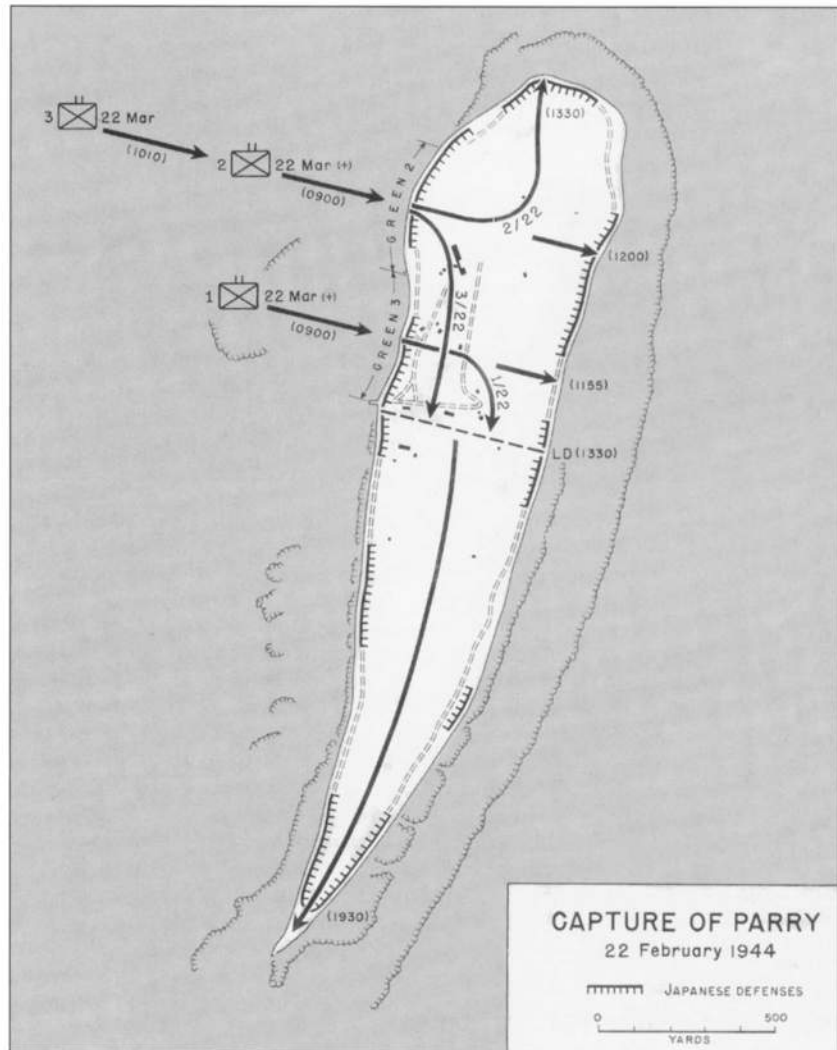


A battalion aid station set up near the landing beach. To the left are piles of weapons and equipment removed from casualties. In some instances weapons were evacuated to ships with the wounded, to be collected later from the crews.

frontages on the landing beaches were shortened to concentrate combat power by placing all three companies in the line and no battalion reserves were maintained. Z-Hour was set for 09.00hrs, 22 February.

The field artillery battalions began shelling at 06.00. A mishap occurred as the LCI(G)s approached the island when 5in. rounds from the destroyers damaged three, forcing them to retire, but they unleashed their barrage of rockets first. The destroyers were firing by radar because the island was thickly shrouded in smoke and blowing directly west into the assault waves. Another result of this was that assault elements landed out of position.

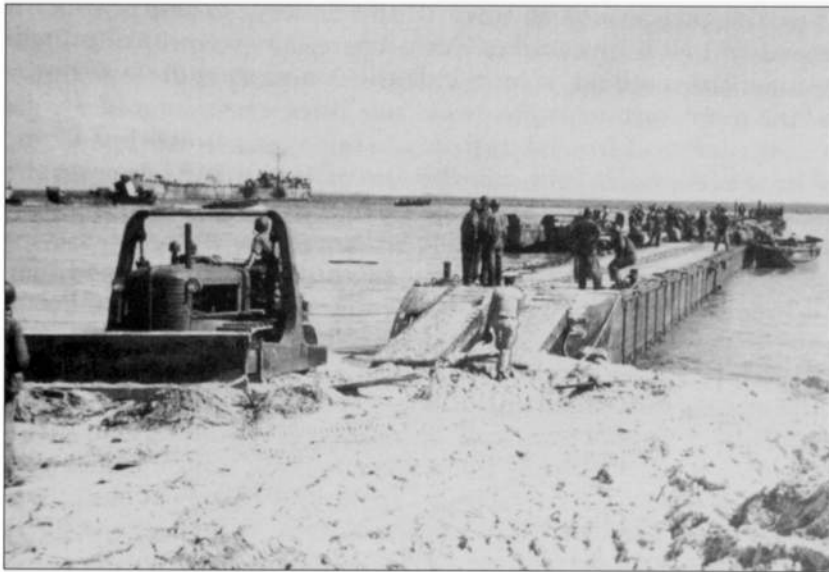
2/22 landed at 09.00hrs on Green 2 near Parry's northwest corner, but 200yds farther south than intended, with part of the battalion landing on about two-thirds of Green 3 to the south. Mines were encountered on the beach, causing some casualties. In the line were, from left to right, companies G, F, and E. Companies G and F swung left to reach the north



end by 13.30 while F Company drove straight across to reach the ocean shore by 12.00. While the troops were consolidating after the landing, a group of 150–200 Japanese were discovered marching north and were wiped out in minutes.

1/22 also landed at 09.00hrs on Green 1 just north of the island's central portion, with Companies B, C, and A in line left to right. It was 200yds too far south, only landing on the extreme south edge of its assigned beach. Marine medium tanks soon came ashore behind both battalions. It was at this point that three dug-in Japanese light tanks behind Green 1 decided to attack, rather than earlier when the infantry were vulnerable. The Shermans immediately destroyed them before they inflicted any damage. Company B reached the ocean (east) coast at 11.55hrs, while C and A swung south toward the O-1 Line. This was originally farther north, but had been shifted to just south of the Valentine Pier as a result of 1/22 landing farther south than intended. This line was reached by 13.30.

The actual landing beaches were now redesignated with the names of the planned landing beaches and operations continued, although this



A pontoon pier on Green 4 under construction by the Seabees. It would reach to the lip of the coral reef to allow landing craft to unload. Directly behind the D-8 bulldozer is an LST. Green 4 was located on the lagoon side of Kwajalein's west end and used for the delivery of supplies and not as an assault beach.



The 767th Tank Battalion employed a small number of 76mm gun-armed M10 tank destroyers. Here one prepares to support infantry, who are being briefed by their squad leader.

caused some confusion for later support waves. 3/22 was to have landed on Green 3, but because the landings had gone somewhat adrift it was ordered to land at the extreme north end of the new Green 2 at 10.00. The battalion moved south, clearing by-passed enemy pockets, and took up position on the east half of the O-1 Line with Company I leading, Company L mopping up, and Company K in reserve. 1/22 shifted to the east half of the line, with Company B on the left and Company C the right; both were reinforced by a platoon of Company A. The scout company reinforced Company A (-) as the reserve. The island's southern two-thirds was split down the middle between the two battalions. 2/22 continued to mop-up the north end where numerous Japanese held out. The Amphibious Reconnaissance Company was attached to the battalion, with its four platoons split between Companies E and F.

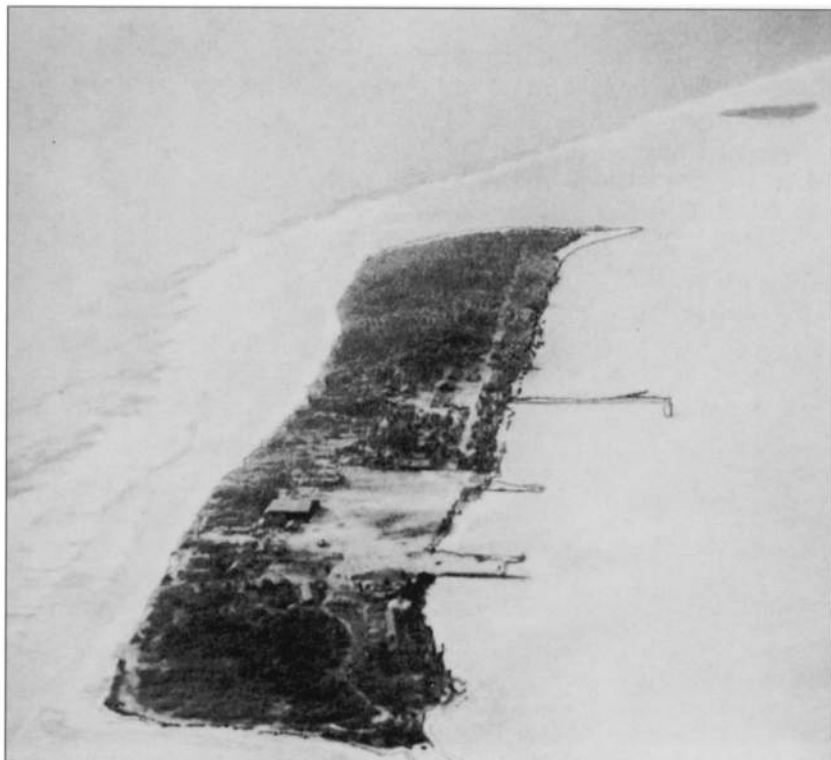
The attack south was launched at 13.30hrs, after a short artillery barrage. Progress was rapid even though numerous spider-holes were encountered. The battalions were 450yds (412m) from the island's southern tip when they halted for the night. Regardless, the regimental commander radioed BrigGen Walker, "I present you with the island of Parry at 19.30." There was only slight enemy activity with occasional sniping. Emphasis had been placed on collecting abandoned weapons so Japanese remnants in the rear could not easily rearm themselves, a problem encountered on Engebi. Elements of both battalions and the scout company completed clearing the south end in the morning at 09.30. Marine casualties were 73 dead and missing and 261 wounded.

A .30cal M1917A1 water-cooled heavy machine-gun emplaced to cover advancing infantrymen. Extremely accurate at long ranges and able to maintain a sustained rate of fire, it was an excellent support weapon.



A 37mm M3A1 antitank gun is manhandled forward behind two M4A2 tanks. 7th InfDiv troops wore red and white-checked air/ground marker panels on their backs in an effort to reduce casualties from friendly fire.





A pre-bombardment photo of "Burton" (Ebeye) Island looking south toward Kwajalein Island 3 miles away at the right top edge of the photo. The heavily wooded nature of the island concealed its 250 buildings. The 530yd-long (485m) pier juts into the lagoon from the island's center. The two seaplane ramps and large apron are obvious near the island's north (lower) end.

"Burton" received a heavy battering from the bombardments. This reinforced concrete shelter suffered several direct hits from naval guns.



Most of "Burton" was heavily wooded, but was virtually blasted clean of vegetation. In the upper left is a concrete air-raid shelter with its typical two entrances.



This coral rock-revetted trench system on "Burton" was almost obliterated during the bombardment.



3/106 landed on the 23rd and completed mopping-up. The 10th Defense Battalion came ashore the same day and assumed full responsibility for the island on the 25th. The 3rd Army Defense Battalion garrisoned other islands. On the 23rd and 24th the 22nd Marines re-embarked and departed the next day for Kwajalein Atoll where it relieved the 25th Marines as the garrison force. TacGrp 1 was disbanded on 22 March after the staff returned to Hawaii.

5 A similar claim was mistakenly made by B/2/25 Marines landing on Ennuebing ("Jacob") off Roi-Namur.
6 Most failed to function because of water damage.

AFTERMATH

In the early morning hours of 12 February six four-engine H8K "Emily" flying boats raided Roi, bombing the huge Marine and Navy ammunition, fuel, and supply dump in the island's center. Some 85 per cent of the supplies and 35 per cent of the equipment were destroyed, 30 men killed, and 300 wounded, mostly Seabees. The raid had staged through Ponape from Saipan 1,300 miles (2,092km) to the northwest.

Despite the occupation of Kwajalein, Majuro, and Eniwetok Atolls, Operation "Flintlock" was not yet over. The 22nd Marines, operating from Kwajalein, conducted Operation "Flintlock, Jr." between 7 March and 5 April 1944. Its goal was to destroy any Japanese elements, installations, and materiel in the Lesser Marshalls and inform natives the US was in control while establishing good relations with them. The 22nd Marines secured 14 mostly unoccupied atolls and islands. Usually one or two rifle companies landed by amtrac were employed with civil affairs (military government) and medical personnel to assist the natives. Twenty-nine landings were conducted on these islands, resulting in almost 100 Japanese killed and a few captured. Only two Marines were killed. The Japanese were lookouts, weather parties, and stranded airmen or sailors. A detachment of the 1st Defense Battalion secured unoccupied Erikub and Aur Atolls on 17 April, and I/3/111 Infantry seized Ujelang Atoll on 21 April killing 18 Japanese.



Carrier air strikes hit Dublon Island in Truk Atoll, Japan's "Gibraltar of the Pacific," on 17-18 February during Operation "Hailstone". This island housed the main IJN base in the atoll.

The W-shaped formation of amtracs and amphibian tanks approach Engebi Island, Eniwetok Atoll, from the south. The 4,025ft (1,227m) airfield parallels the island's northwest shore. The denser vegetation of the large palm grove can be seen on the right portion of the island.



The south shore of Engebi Island is covered with hundreds of bomb and shell craters as well as an extensive trench system. The photo was taken three weeks before the assault; by the time of the attack itself the island had taken an even heavier pounding. The small pier to the left separates Beaches Blue 3 and White 1.



The Japanese still held out on Mille, Maloelap, Jaluit, and Wotje Atolls and Kusaie, Wake, and Nauru Islands. Rear Admiral Masuda Nisuka commanded the 13,000 personnel from Jaluit. Beginning on 4 March, the 4th Marine Base Defense Aircraft Wing, headquartered on Majuro, and Seventh Air Force commenced a concerted campaign to neutralize the Japanese garrisons, which continued until the war's end. Navy Aviation and Army Air Forces had previously destroyed most Japanese aircraft on these islands. The 13,000 tons of aerial-delivered ordnance, coupled with frequent naval shelling, killed 2,564 Japanese and 4,876 died of disease and starvation; the Marines sprayed oil over the garrisons' gardens. Fighter-bomber units deploying to the Pacific would first serve in this role perfecting their bombing techniques before moving forward to support other operations as new units replaced them. The Japanese survivors would surrender on 2 September 1945.



A marine on Engebi surveys a 500lb bomb crater before advancing. Both the Marines and Japanese habitually used such craters for shelter and cover.

Seabee battalions would construct numerous airfields in the Marshalls to support that summer's Marianas operation. Besides an airfield for Marine operations and Army Air Forces staging efforts, another was built for the Navy carrier replacement aircraft pool, as well as a seaplane base on Majuro, the latter also serving as a fleet anchorage with fleet service facilities and a submarine base.

In Kwajalein Atoll airfields were built on Roi and Kwajalein Islands and a seaplane base on Ebeye. In Eniwetok Atoll airfields were built on Eniwetok and Engebi Islands and a seaplane base on Parry. The atoll was used as a major fleet anchorage, though no shore facilities were developed other than a recreation center. Eniwetok served as the staging base for the Marianas expedition. Besides supporting operations in the Marianas all of these airfields supported the neutralization of the islands still in Japanese hands.

Marine and Army Casualties, Kwajalein and Eniwetok

Operation	KIA	DOW	WIA	MIA	Total
Roi-Namur	175	31	617	181	1,018
Kwajalein/Engebi	142	- ⁷	845	2	989
Eniwetok (USMC)	181	38	568	39	826
Eniwetok (US Army)	94	- ⁷	311	38	443

Japanese Casualties, Marshall Islands

Island	KIA	POW
Roi-Namur adjacent islands	70	3
Roi-Namur	3,500	87
Kwajalein adjacent islands	185	33
Kwajalein	4,300	166
Kwajalein northern islands	400	2
Ebeye	450	7
Engebi	1,280	16
Eniwetok Island	800	23
Parry	1,300	66
Lesser Marshalls	116	16

A dug-in Type 95 (1935) light tank on Engebi. Three of these tanks, armed with a 37mm gun and two 7.7mm machine-guns, were dug in on each of Eniwetok Atoll's three defended islands. Only on Parry did they attempt a counterattack. Shermans easily knocked out the dug-in tanks.



Operation "Flintlock" was particularly important because it illustrated that the many hard lessons learned at Tarawa had been successfully implemented. While there were instances of confusion and misunderstood orders, overall the multiple landing operations went very well and in many ways set the standard for future operations. This was also the first large-scale employment of amtracs to deliver assault waves. While problems were encountered, mainly because of too few amtracs being available, their employment in such a manner became standard operational procedure. "Flintlock" also saw the first employment of amphibian tanks, flamethrower tanks, rocket-firing LCI(G) gunboats, LSTs, and "Duck" amphibious trucks. Also for the first time UDT frogmen were employed to reconnoiter beaches, their approaches, and clear and mark obstacles. Numerous innovations were made in the delivery of supplies. Pillbox assault techniques and the value of flamethrowers, bazookas, and demolitions were validated.

The 4th MarDiv went on to fight on Saipan, Tinian, and Iwo Jima. The 22nd Marines fought on Guam as part of the 1st Prov MarBde and Okinawa as a component of the 6th MarDiv. The 7th InfDiv later fought on Leyte and Okinawa, while the 106th Infantry of the 27th InfDiv fought on Saipan and Okinawa.

ORDERS OF BATTLE

US FORCES

Northern Troops and Landing Force (TG 56.2)

4th MarDiv (Reinforced)

Regimental Combat Team 23 [RoI]

23rd Marines (+)

3rd Composite Engineer Battalion

4th Amphibian Tractor Battalion [100xLVT(2)]

Companies A and C, 1st Armored Amphibian Tractor Battalion [LVT(A)1]

Company C (Medium) (+), 4th Light Tank Battalion [M4A2/M5A1]

Company C, 4th Medical Battalion

Company C, 4th Motor Transport Battalion

Battery C, 4th Special Weapons Battalion

Regimental Combat Team 24 [Namur]

24th Marines (+)

2nd Composite Engineer Battalion

10th Amphibian Tractor Battalion (LVT(2))*

Companies B and D, 1st Armored Amphibian Tractor Battalion [LVT(A)1]*

Company B, 4th Light Tank Battalion [M5A1]

Company B, 4th Medical Battalion

Company B, 4th Motor Transport Battalion

Battery D, 4th Special Weapons Battalion

* Transferred from RCT25 D+1.

Regimental Combat Team 25 ["Ivan" Landing Group/Division Reserve]

25th Marines (+)

14th Marines [artillery] (division control D+1)

1st Composite Engineer Battalion

10th Amphibian Tractor Battalion (Reinforced) [LVT(2)]

Company A (+), 11th Amphibian Tractor Battalion [LVT(2)]

Companies B and D, 1st Armored Amphibian Tractor Battalion [LVT(A)1]

Company A, 4th Light Tank Battalion [M5A1]

Company D (Scout), 4th Light Tank Battalion

Battery B, 4th Special Weapons Battalion

Company A, 4th Medical Battalion

Company A, 4th Motor Transport Battalion

Support Group

HQ Battalion, 4th MarDiv (-)

20th Marines [engineer] (-)

1st Armored Amphibian Tractor Battalion (-)

4th Light Tank Battalion (-)

4th Medical Battalion (-)

4th Motor Transport Battalion (-)

4th Service Battalion (-)

4th Special Weapons Battalion (-)

15th Defense Battalion (Garrison Force)

Southern Troops and Landing Force (TG 56.1)

7th Infantry Division (Reinforced)

Regimental Combat Team 17

17th Infantry Regiment (+)

Company A, 13th Engineer Combat Battalion

Company A, 7th Medical Battalion

two groups, 708th Prov Amphibian Tractor Battalion

Troops A and B, 7th Cavalry Reconnaissance Troop

Regimental Combat Team 32

Company A, 767th Tank Battalion [M4A2]

Company B, 13th Engineer Combat Battalion

Company B, 7th Medical Battalion

group, 708th Prov Amphibian Tractor Battalion

Regimental Combat Team 184

Company B, 767th Tank Battalion [M4A2]

Company C, 13th Engineer Combat Battalion

Company C, 7th Medical Battalion

group, 708th Prov Amphibian Tractor Battalion

Division Artillery

31st Field Artillery Battalion (105mm)

48th Field Artillery Battalion (105mm)

49th Field Artillery Battalion (105mm)

57th Field Artillery Battalion (105mm)

145th Field Artillery Battalion (155mm) [attached]

Prov DUKW Battery, 7th InfDiv Artillery

7th Medical Battalion (-)

13th Engineer Combat Battalion (-)

Special Troops

7th Signal Company

7th Quartermaster Supply Company

707th Ordnance Light Maintenance Company

Attachments

50th Engineer Combat Battalion

708th Prov Amphibian Tractor Battalion

787th Tank Battalion

Company D, 34th Engineer Combat Regiment

75th Joint Assault Signal Company

91st Separate Chemical Company [4.2in. mortar]

31st Medical Field Hospital

Garrison Force

1st Battalion, 47th Engineer General Service Regiment

3rd and 4th Army Defense Battalions

139th AAA Group

96th, 98th (-), and 753d (-) AAA Battalions (90mm Gun)

867th AAA Battalion (Automatic Weapons) (-) [40mm/.50cal.]

Battery A, 55th Coast Artillery Battalion (Harbor Defense)

[155mm gun]

Batteries E and F, 57th Coast Artillery Battalion (Harbor Defense)

[155mm gun]

Company B, 376th Quartermaster Port Battalion



ABOVE **Roi-Namur** after being completely rebuilt by Seabees and established as an airbase. As with many such conquered islands, it was virtually stripped and leveled as extensive base facilities were constructed.

BELOW Scores of unopposed landings were made on islands and islets throughout the Marshalls as part of Operation "Flintlock, Jr.," the securing of the Lesser Marshalls.



Reserve Landing Force (TG 56.3)/Eniwetok Landing Force (TG 51.2)

Tactical Group 1, VAC

HQ, Tactical Group 1, VAC

708th Prov Amphibian Tractor Battalion (-)

Company A, 708th Amphibian Tank Battalion

Amphibious Reconnaissance Company, VAC

Company D (Scout), 4th Light Tank Battalion

Portable Surgical Hospital No. 1 (Prov)

22nd Marines (Reinforced)

2nd Separate Pack Howitzer Battalion

Engineer Company, 22nd Marines

Medical Company, 22nd Marines

Motor Transport Company, 22nd Marines

Tank Company, 22nd Marines [M4A1]

Groups B and C, 708th Prov Amphibian Tractor Battalion

106th Infantry Regiment (Reinforced) (- 2nd Battalion)

104th Field Artillery Battalion (105mm Howitzer)

104th Engineer Combat Battalion (Corps) (-)

Company B (-), 102nd Engineer Combat Battalion

Company C, 766th Tank Battalion [M4A1]

Group D, 708th Prov Amphibian Tractor Battalion

Companies C and D (-), 102nd Medical Battalion

Prov DUKW Battery, 7th InfDiv Artillery

Group Reserve

10th Defense Battalion (Garrison Force)

Garrison Force

3rd Army Defense Battalion

1st Battalion, 47th Engineer General Service Regiment

One company, 110th Naval Construction Battalion

Majuro Landing Force

2nd Battalion (+), 106th Infantry Regiment

Amphibious Reconnaissance Company, VAC

1st Defense Battalion (Garrison Force)

THE BATTLEFIELD TODAY

In 1949 the United Nations placed the Marshalls under US control as the Marshall Islands District of the Trust Territory of the Pacific Islands. On 1 May 1979, the Republic of the Marshall Islands was established in political union with the US. Some of the atolls have been employed by the US armed forces. From 1946 to 1958 Bikini Atoll was a nuclear weapons test site. Its natives were relocated to Rongerik Atoll then Kili Island. Kwajalein Island became the downrange monitoring station for the Pacific Test Range with missiles being fired from California and the target being the huge lagoon. Roi-Namur served as a supporting tracking radar site. Kwajalein and Roi-Namur, while both designated US national historical sites, are off limits to the public. The remains of Japanese structures and fortifications are still found on the islands, though post-war construction destroyed much. Adjacent Ebeye ("Burton") Island is the home of Marshallese workers employed on Kwajalein by the US Government. The lagoon has numerous World War II wrecks and tourists can reach Ebeye as a dive destination. Bikini has been open for scuba diving since 1996 with almost 100 nuclear test wrecks littering the lagoon, the most notable being the battleships USS *Arkansas* (BB-33) and Imperial Japanese Navy's *Nagato*, and the carrier USS *Saratoga*. The German cruiser *Prinz Eugen* was a target ship in the tests, but was later towed to Kwajalein, where it capsized and rests exposed in shallow water. Near Mellu Island is a site where a large number of US carrier aircraft were dumped.



The American flag is hoisted over still smoking Namur Island on 4 February. It was one of scores of flag raisings throughout the Marshall Islands, though most of the islands were not bought at such a cost.



This photo of Parry Island, looking south, was taken during the pre-landing bombardment, the day before the D+5 landing. The clear area on the island's north (near) end was designated Heart's Circle. The smaller clearing was called Flower's Circle. Beach Green 2 is on the shore bulge to the right and Green 3 just above it. The area from which the smoke streams is approximately the cross-island O-1 Line.

Eniwetok was a nuclear test site from 1947 to 1962. The first thermonuclear (hydrogen) bomb test was conducted there obliterating Elugebah Island. The atoll is basically uninhabited and entry is restricted. Little evidence remains of Japanese occupation.

Three of Majuro Atoll's islands, Delap, Uliga, and Darrit, combine to form the D-U-D Municipality, the nation's capital and port of entry. Jaluit, Maloelap, Wotje, and Mille Atolls, the by-passed Japanese garrisons, are accessible to the public and still possess Japanese facilities (mostly bombed out), fortifications, guns, and aircraft wreckage. Sunken Japanese merchant ships and other craft are found in many of the lagoons.

Because of the islands' out of the way location, access restrictions to the main islands on which fighting occurred, and few tourists, there are virtually no memorials or museums commemorating the battle for the Marshalls. The only one of significance is the Peace Park Memorial, a large granite block built by Japan to commemorate its Pacific War dead, on the west end of Majuro Island.

Navy Corpsmen assigned to Marine units treat wounded at a battalion aid station. Because of the Japanese propensity to shoot at medical personnel, marines were instructed to shout "Sailor" rather than "Corpsmen" when aid was needed. The Corpsmen also refrained from wearing red cross armbands for the same reason.



The bombing campaign to neutralize the by-passed Marshalls began on 4 March. Here Mille Atoll is attacked by Seventh Air Force B-24 bombers. Much of Mili Island was covered by its "X" shaped airfield.

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Army infantrymen pause below Eniwetok Island's 9ft embankment, which had halted amphibian tanks attempting to move inland. An M1917A1 heavy machine-gun is being emplaced to cover their advance.

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The Marshall Islands 1944

Operation Flintlock,
the capture of Kwajalein
and Eniwetok

Following the capture of Tarawa in November 1943, American eyes turned to the Marshall Islands. These were the next vital stepping-stone across the Pacific towards Japan, and would bring the islands of Guam and Saipan within the reach of US forces. In their first amphibious attack, the new 4th Marine Division landed on Roi and Namur islands on February 1, 1944, while US 7th Division landed on Kwajalein. At the time this was the longest shore-to-shore amphibious assault in history. The lessons of the bloody fighting on Tarawa had been well learned and the successful attack on the Marshalls set the pattern for future amphibious operations in the Pacific War.

