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SAIPAN AND JOINT OPERATIONS

BY

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12 February 1990

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Additionally, this study provides a short comparison of the Grenada Campaign with the Saipan Operation. The conclusion provides a summary of the important characteristics of joint operations that are applicable for todays leaders.

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SAIPAN AND JOINT OPERATIONS

AN INDIVIDUAL STUDY PROJECT

by

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SAIPAN AND JOINT OPERATIONS

CHAPTER I

INTRODUCTION

The Marianas Campaign was one of the key operations in the Central Pacific Theater during World War II. Capture of the Marianas would break the outer ring of the Japanese security islands and provide the United States with the ability to project its power against the Japanese homeland. Once Saipan and Guam were secured the Army Air Force (AAF) could begin bombing the main Japanese Islands with the new long range B-29's. This campaign (code name: FORAGER) was developed by the Joint Chiefs of Staff (JCS) and executed by a joint force comprised of Naval, Marines, Army, and Army Air Forces.

Joint operations (specifically amphibious) had improved significantly by January 1944, over the earlier operations in the Pacific (1942-1943). To ensure that any problems in joint operations were kept to a minimum, Admiral Chester W. Nimitz (Commander in Chief Pacific Ocean Area, CINCPOA) issued a letter to his Pacific Command on 15 January 1944, subject; Unity of Command:

> 1.The intricate nature of Joint operations, particularly amphibious ones, to be carried on makes it necessary that there exists a thorough understanding of the principles under which coordination of operations of the Army and Navy is to be effected. Both addressees and their appropriate subordinates will be held responsible for adherence to these fundamental precepts.

> Accordingly, it is desired that the following extracts from references (a) and (b) be brought immediately to the attention of all officers concerned in Joint operations....
> 2. I require Naval commanders of all Joint forces to see to it that not only detachments (large and small) of other Services whether Army or Marine Corps, but Navy as well, are left free to accomplish assigned tasks by the use of their own technique as developed by precept and experience, that is, prescribe the "what," "where," and "when" unhampered by the "how."1

Admiral Nimitz, his subordinate commanders, and his joint staff were keenly aware of the difficulties of conducting joint operations. Recent experiences had taught them well.

The focus of this study will be limited to the Saipan Campaign as a part of the overall FORAGER operation and to providing answers for the following questions: What was the U.S. Pacific War Strategy? What did the U.S. Forces do to prepare for the Marianas campaign? Were joint operations conducted successfully? Then a detailed look at the actual contribution made by the Navy, USMC (United States Marine Corps), Army and the U.S. Army Air Force. This will be followed by a short comparison of Grenada (URGENT FURY) as an example of a recent joint operation in the 1980's.

Every effort will be made to answer questions that can provide insights that are relevant for today's warfighters. The Goldwater/Nichols Act of 1986 has provided the catalyst for renewed emphasis on joint operations. Most war plans that exist today and those of the future will require the services to work together in accomplishing their wartime tasks/missions. Therefore it is vitally important to review

past military operations where joint operations were used. The insights gained from a review of these operations will be particularly relevant to the joint doctrine and leadership challenges associated with joint operations.

As World War II was coming to an end the Joint Chiefs of Staff had set the following postwar joint education objectives for the armed forces:

> Objective 1: To produce within each component of the armed forces a general knowledge and appreciation of the capabilities, limitations, and operating procedures of the other component.
> Objective 2: To promote teamwork between the components of the armed forces in order to achieve greater effectiveness of the armed forces as a whole.
> Objective 3: To prepare officers for planning and participating in joint operations.
> Objective 4: To prepare officers for the command of large scale joint operations.
> Objective 5: To prepare senior officers for the exercise of command and performance of staff functions in the highest echelons of the armed forces.
> Objective 6: To promote the development of understanding between high echelons of the military service and those other agencies of government and industry which contribute to the national effort.2

These objectives were identified by officers of the armed forces who, through actual experience in joint operations in World War II, had acquired the practical knowledge to establish these joint educational goals which are as relevant today as when they were written.

ENDNOTES

1. George Carroll Dyer, Vice Admiral. The Amphibians Came to Conquer. The Story of Admiral Richmond Kelly Turner, pp. 733-734.

2. A.J. McFarland and C.J. Moore, General Plan for Postwar Joint Education of the Armed Force p. 18.

CHAPTER II

BACKGROUND (PACIFIC STRATEGY)

The American economical conversion to products for fighting a war began the day after the attack on Pearl Harbor. In the summer of 1943 most of the Naval Force requirements were met in the Atlantic. This gave Admiral Ernest J. King (the highest ranking American in Washington D.C. who favored a greater effort in the Pacific) the opportunity to begin the badly needed buildup in the Pacific Theater. The current war plans (ORANGE PLAN) called for the first allied objective to be the Philippines. The Philippines were key to cutting off Japan's lines of communications (sea LOC's) with oil from the East Indies.

During the Casablanca Conference in January 1943, President Roosevelt, Prime Minister Churchill, and the Combined Chiefs of Staff mapped out a global strategy for the coming year.1 The conference agreed to begin the planning of the Central Pacific Campaign. This same group met again in May 1943 in Washington (TRIDENT Conference), where the U.S. planners presented a plan that proposed a two-pronged drive by U.S. forces. One prong would begin from Hawaii through the Central Pacific (Admiral Nimitz) to the Philippines, the other would go west to north along the Solomons-Bismarch-New Guniea line in General Douglas MacArthur's Southwest Pacific Area(SWPA). The two drives would come together in the Philippines-South China Sea area.

Priority was given to the Central Pacific effort and the South and Southwest Pacific would take a secondary role initially.2

The JCS had decided that they needed Formosa, Luzon and the Chinese coastal areas for staging the final assault on the Japanese homeland. A major struggle for resources existed in the Pacific. Admiral King believed that the original plan of securing a path through the Central Pacific (Admiral Nimitz) provided the best route to success in the Pacific Theater. The SWPA (Southwest Pacific Command, General MacArthur) preferred to take the battle from Kai, Tanimbars, Halmahera, and Mindanao to Luzon (objective), and that there should be one primary effort under an overall commander for the Pacific. General MacArthur's efforts were supported by the publisher William Randolph Hearst, who argued in his newspapers that a supreme commander should be appointed over the entire Pacific Theater.3

During the months of January through March 1944, heated discussions and recommendations were held on the best way to fight the Pacific Campaign. Lieutenant General Richard K. Sutherland, MacArthur's Chief of Staff, made trips to Pearl Harbor and to Washington to present General MacArthur's strategy for the Pacific. Rear Admiral Bernhard H. Bieri (Chief of the Joint War Plans Committee) had the responsibility of developing the JCS directives for the execution of the Pacific Plan. His staff had listened to the presentations of the SWPA planners (General Sutherland) and

Admiral Nimitz and his staff. Admiral King was of course in favor of the Nimitz plan and lobbied to get General George C. Marshall to support the Central Pacific Plan. The final outcome of these discussions and planning sessions resulted in a recommendation to the JCS by Admiral Bieri and his Joint Planning Staff. The committee recommendation supported a primary effort in the Central Pacific. The actual JCS decision was reached (in a closed session-no notes) to provide near term guidance and delay any decision on which operation (General MacArthur-Luzon, or Admiral Nimitz-Formosa) would get the emphasis for long term resourcing.

Thus on 12 March 1944 the JCS had decided on the following: General MacArther (SWPA) would seize Hollandria on 15 April 1944 and seize Mindanao on 15 November 1944. The Army Air Force was given the mission to neutralize Truk. Admiral Nimitz (CINCPAO) was directed to seize the Southern Marianas on 15 June 1944, and to seize Palau on 15 September 1944.4 The target date for Luzon or Formosa was set for 15 February 1945. Planning responsibilities had been assigned for Formosa-CINCPOA, Luzon-SOWESPAC, but no decision had been made on which plan to execute. As the planning and resourcing began its final stages for the Marianas the strategy for the Pacific remained a two pronged effort working its way toward the Philippines as the first major objective. As the Pacific Campaign Strategy continues evolving General Marshall began to favor the Formosa-first strategy along with Admiral King, Admiral Nimitz, and

Army, Army Air Force members of the Joint Planning Staff Committee, instead of MacArthur's Luzon-first strategy. The fight for resources would continue through the summer months.5

ENDNOTES

1. Philip A. Crowl, The War in the Pacific, Campaign in the Marianas, p. 6.

2. Ibid., p. 8.

3. Harry A. Gailey, Howlin Mad vs. The Army, Conflict in Command, Saipan 1944, p. 3.

4. Grace Person Hayes, The History of the Joint Chiefs of Staff in World War II: The War Against Japan, p. 560.

5. Kent Roberts Greenfield, Command Decisions, p. 468.

CHAPTER III

PLANNING AND PREPARATION

The Marianas (Saipan, Tinian, and Guam) were selected by the JCS in order to secure a forward position inside the enemy inner defense zone. This position would interrupt the Japanese air pipeline and would provide a forward basing facility for submarines and the new long range B-29 bombers. The new bombers would be able to strike the Japanese homeland from the Marianas. Additionally, this forward position adds another critical facility for staging operations for follow-on missions. Penetrating this inner defense zone (only 1,200 miles from Tokyo) might also force the Japanese fleet out into a decisive naval engagement.1

Saipan was 1,200 miles from the nearest American base and the troops to get the job done would be required to travel over 4,000 miles before assaulting their objectives. The Fifth Fleet would assemble over 535 ships for this operation, making this the largest amphibious operation in the Pacific to date.2

FORCE STRUCTURE (PACIFIC)

General MacArthur commanded the Southwest Pacific Area and was the Commander of Allied Forces (Primarily U.S. and Australian Army units). Rear Admiral Thomas C. Kincaid was his Naval Forces Commander; his command consisted primarily of the United States Seventh Flee. This naval

force as unique, since it served directly for General MacArthur and were not connected in any way with the Commander-in-Chief Pacific Fleet/Admiral Nimitz). The Seventh Fleet had its own naval facilities, lines of communications, and reported directly to the Navy Department for administrative instructions. General MacArthur's Southwest Pacific Staff was organized into two separate headquarters: a combined headquarters and a standard army headquarters.3

Admiral Nimitz commanded the Central Pacific Area. This was a larger ocean area than the Southwest Pacific Area and subsequently had a much larger naval force requirement. His dominant land force was the United States Marine Corps (USMC) commanded by Lieutenant General Holland M. Smith (nicknamed Howlin Mad Smith) and his Army forces were commanded by Lieutenant General Robert C. Richardson. Admiral Nimitz had a single headquarters that was organized jointly, with all the forces representing their component on the respective staff. This concept of organizing the staff jointly was adopted throughout the major subordinate commands in the Central Pacific, and played a vital role in the Marianas Campaign.

The Army Air Force (AAF) was to operate as a semi-autonomous organization in the Pacific Theater. Leadership of this organization was divided in Lieutenant General George C. Kenny supporting General MacArthur and Brigadier General Willis Hale was supporting Nimitz. Essentially the AAF were

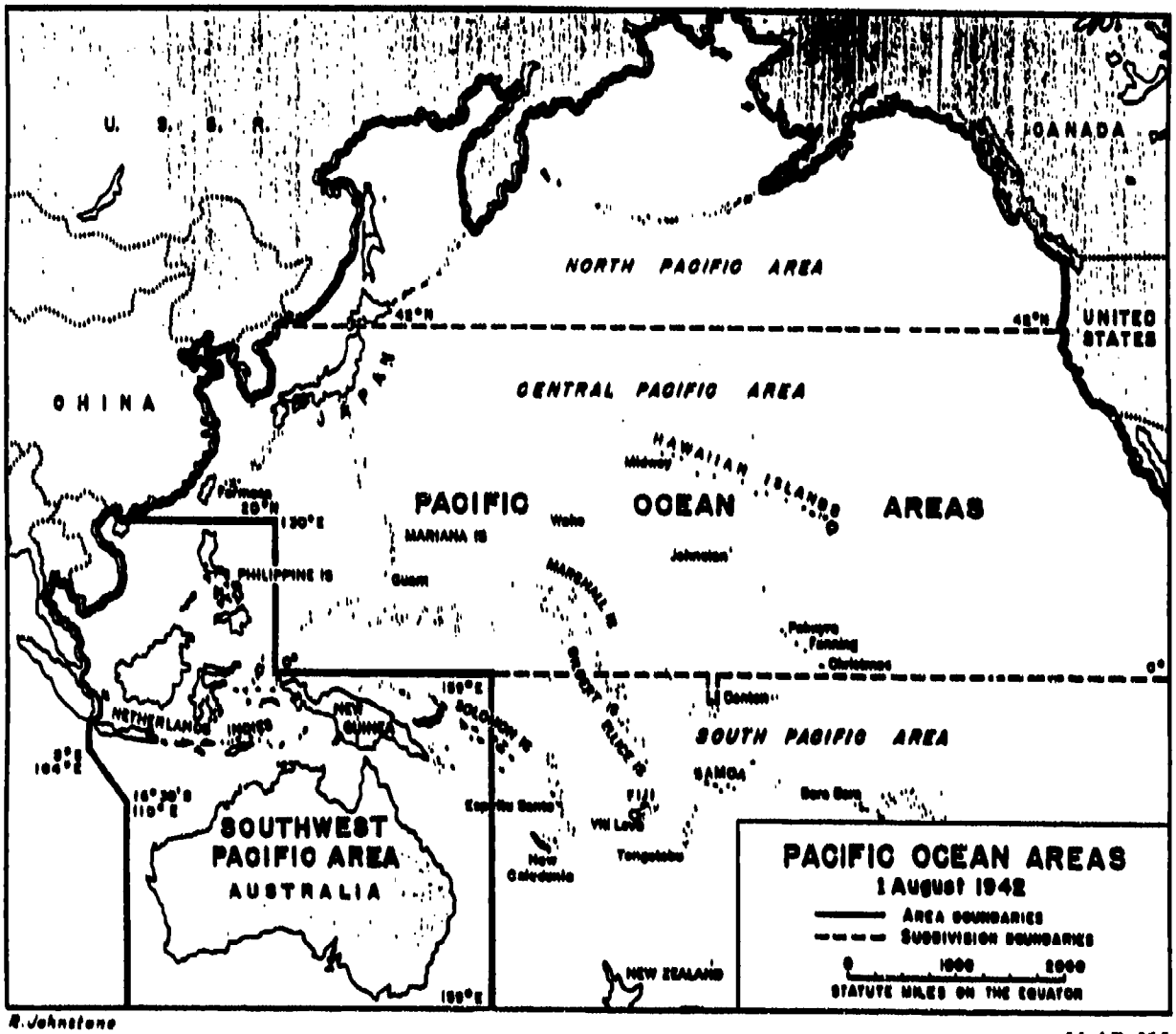


FIGURE 1

MAP IX

broker down as follows: Sixth-Central Pacific; the Eleventh-North Pacific; the Thirteenth-South Pacific; the Fifth-Southwest Pacific; the Tenth-India/Burma; and the Fourteenth-China. These forces were significantly spread out geographically and thus there was no unity of command for AAF in the war against Japan. The AAF worked in a supporting role and depended on the supporting commands for resources. The role of AAF in support of the Marianas will be discussed in a later chapter.

ENEMY

As the marines were getting ready to embark on their assault of Saipan, General Holland M. Smith's G-2 section estimated the enemy strength to be between 15,000 to 17,600. Of the total force, around 9,100 to 11,000 were expected to be actual ground combat forces. These enemy strength estimates were based on new aerial photographs and the estimated enemy reinforcement rate. This new estimate represented a significant increase of the 9 May 44 estimate of a total number of enemy troops on Saipan to be between 9,000 to 10,000.4 However the plan was developed based on the 9 May 1944 estimate. General Holland M. Smith had to get his plan published early to allow for the subordinate units to develop their plans and combat rehearsals. Actual strength of all enemy forces on Saipan on D-Day was approximately 30,000. This enemy size had a significant impact on the length of time it took the ground forces to

gain control of the entire island. These actual strength figures further explain the difficulties units were experiencing that was not initially fully understood by General Holland M. Smith and his staff.

What were the sources of information for developing the enemy intelligence? Essentially the three primary means for gathering information on the enemy for this operation were photo-recon, submarine sightings, and captured enemy documents. Some information was developed through signal intercept and decode; however, in this operation signal intercept was only used to find the Japanese Fleet (direction finding system) on one occasion.

Photographic coverage had developed into a joint operation. These intelligence missions required long range air-photo coverage. This was accomplished by flying Navy Liberators operating from Henderson Field Hawaii. The mission required five days of flying to complete the round trip to Saipan and back to Pearl Harbor.5 B-24's of the VII AAF were an important part of this air-photo mission. They would take care of intercepting the Japanese fighters and would conduct opportunity bombing missions.

To enhance photo usefulness the Navy had developed the technique of flying low and taking oblique shots of the shore. These photos and other information would be transferred onto large scale gridded maps/charts of the islands. These were then used by the ships, ground troops and supporting aircraft alike-thus eliminating the problems

of different maps and scales for all services.6 Similar efforts to standardize procedures were evident throughout much of the planning for this operation.

Japanese defenses on these islands depended primarily on shipping to bring personnel and equipment/supplies in support of their operations. The shortage of cement and steel was severely aggravated by the American submarine actions. A captured Japanese document, dated 10 May 1944, indicated that current freight shortages, caused by shipping losses, have deprived the islands of much needed defensive material. One ship out of three is sunk, and a second damaged, by enemy submarine action.7 Saipan was not in priority at the time. The Japanese believed that the next United States objective would be the Palaus Island and thus were placing Palaus in a higher priority for personnel, equipment, and barrier material.8

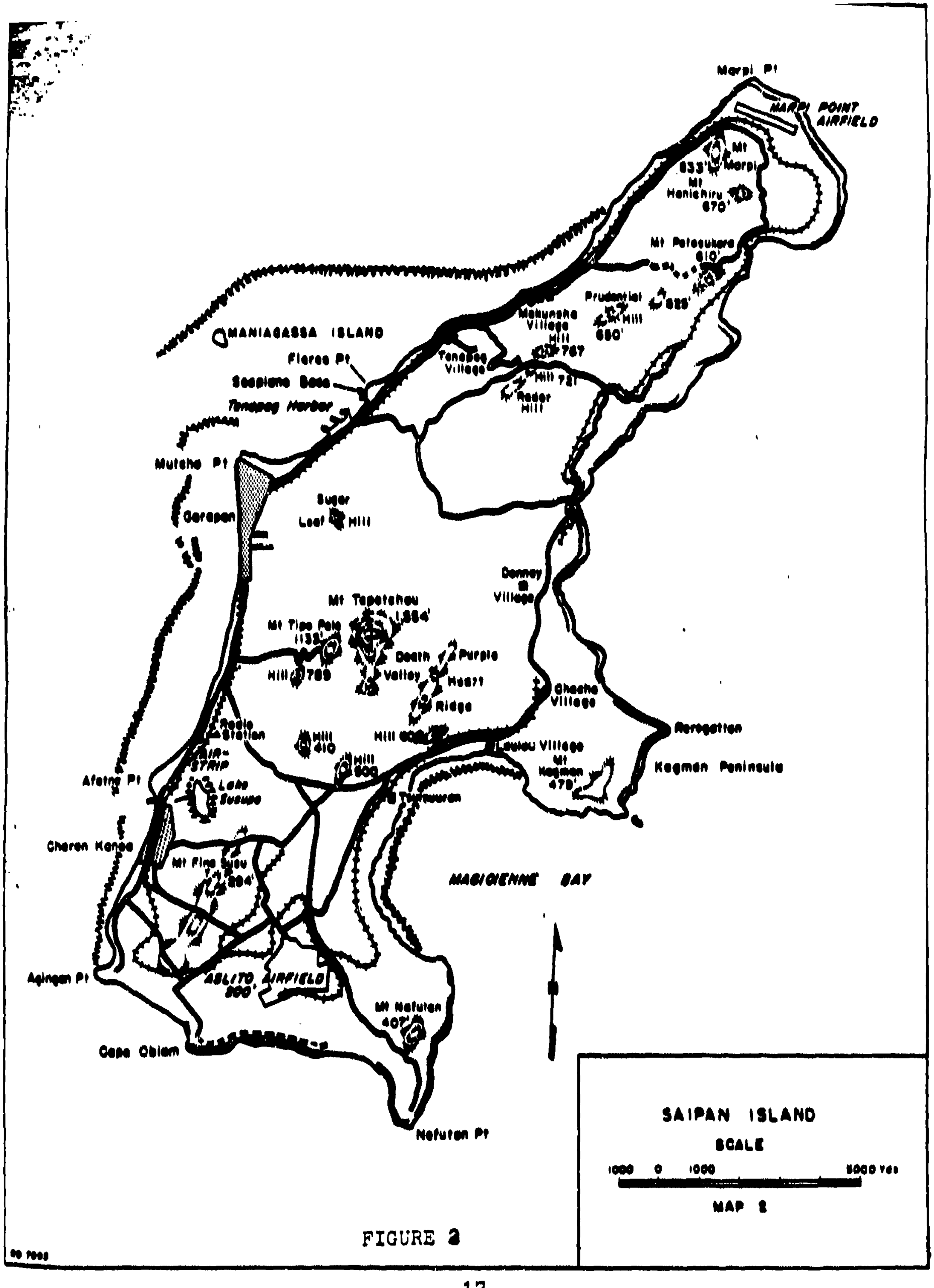
The Japanese strategy for island defense was to destroy the enemy landing force on the beach. Consequently, the defenders of Saipan did not dedicate much effort to defending the interior terrain. The two primary units defending Saipan were the 43rd Division (reinforced) and the 47th Mixed Brigade. Lieutenant General Yoshitsugu Saito (Commander of the 43rd Division) would be the commander in charge of defending Saipan. The enemy forces may not have been as well prepared as the German's on Normandy; however, they were more than 30,000 strong, backed by 48 tanks, a well developed fire support plan, with little maneuver space to

worry about. The most critical element was their determination-willingness to fight and die if necessary for the Emperor. This tenacious enemy was to earn the respect of all the fighting forces of the Pacific.

PLANNING AND REHEARSALS

Admiral Nimitz received his orders to seize the Marianas on 12 March 1944, and to commence operations on 15 June 1944. His staff and subordinate commands had been working on plans for the assault of Truk, the key island in the Carolina Island chain with good port and airfield facilities. Japanese airplanes could strike both Central Pacific and SWPA operations from here. The current JCS plan called for neutralization and bypassing of Truk and seizing the Marianas. Many questions had to be asked to get the plans moving at full steam. What was Saipan like? What was the enemy situation now? What would the enemy situation look like on 15 June? What could the U.S. do to deceive the enemy as to its next objective? What was the status of forces training for this large scale operation? What training was required based upon previous smaller operations? What forces would the U.S. use and who would be in command? Admiral Nimitz and his joint staff worked to find the answers. The order to begin photo-recon over the Marianas was given to the Navy and AAF. The submarine command (TF 17 Submarine Paicfic Fleet) was given the mission of gathering information and sinking everything it could that was headed for the Marianas.

Saipan-the first island objective in the Marianas-was



Marpi Pt
MARPI POINT AIRFIELD
Mt Marpi
833'
Mt Hanichiru
670'
Mt Petosukara
610'
Prudential Hill
650'
Makunsha Village
Hill 767
MANIAGASSA ISLAND
Flores Pt
Seaplane Base
Tanapag Harbor
Tanapag Village
Hill 721
Radar Hill
Mutcho Pt
Garapan
Sugar Loaf Hill
Donnay Village
Mt Tapotchau
1,554'
Mt Tipo Pale
1133'
Death Valley
Purple Heart Ridge
Hill 789
Chacha Village
Radio Station
Hill 410
Hill 500
Laulau Village
Mt Kagman
479'
Kagman Peninsula
AIR-STRIP
Lake Susupe
Afetna Pt
Charan Kanoa
Mt Fina Susu
MAGICIENNE BAY
Agingan Pt
ASLITO AIRFIELD
Mt Nafutan
407'
Cape Obiam
Nafutan Pt
SAIPAN ISLAND
SCALE
1000 0 1000 5000 Yds
MAP 2

FIGURE 2

approximately 14 1/2 miles long and 6 1/2 miles wide, and roughly 72 square miles of land. Situated 1,250 nautical miles southeast from Tokyo, it provided a key role as a refueling and resupply station for the Japanese Fleet. Two airfields and a seaplane base were critical in Japan's air recon and air cover. Saipan's east coast is free of coral reefs, except for areas within Magicienne Bay. However, the west coast is completely fringed by reefs extending from one-fourth to two miles from the shore. This is a volcanic island, thus providing more defensible terrain than the previous coral atolls captured in earlier amphibious assaults.

In the center of the island is Mount Tapotchau which dominates the island with its height of 1,554 feet. The landscape varies from urban areas around its main towns of Garapan and Charan Kanoa, to sugar cane fields, hills, and caves throughout the island.[9]

During the preparation phase the tactical plans were being finalized, enemy information refined, troop lists updated (final replacements), liaison teams assigned and critical rehearsals conducted. The logistical support plan was developed concurrently with the progression of the operational plan. Admiral Richmond Kelly Turner's (amphibious force commander) staff Had learned their logistics lessons from the five previous amphibious operations they had conducted. Now the senior leaders focused as much attention on the logistics support plan, as

they did on their battle plans.

> The present war has again demonstrated that logistics and operations are inseparable. Joint operations involve especially complex logistical problems which must be emphasized in joint education.10

On 4 April Admiral Turner personally put together some of the initial plans and objectives for the Marianas. He had decided they would take Saipan first, because of its ideal airfields and the fact that it was located 100 miles closer to Japan. The mission statement read: The objective is the capture of Saipan, Tinian, and Guam, in order to secure control of sea lines of communications throughout the Central Pacific for prerparation and support of future attacks on the Japanese homeland. Admiral Turner's amphibious operations had showed dramatic improvements in the Marshall Islands following the lessons learned at Guadacanal, Makin, and Tarawa. The command structure for FORAGER was as follows:

Under Admiral Nimitz

Fifth Fleet-Admiral Raymond A. Spruance
Recon and Patrol Submarines-Vice Admiral Charles A. Lockwood
Service Force Pacific Fleet-Vice Admiral William L. Calhoun

Under Admiral Spruance

Joint Expeditionary Force-Vice Admiral Richard K. Turner Fast Carrier Forces-Vice Admiral Marc A. Mitscher Forward Area Central Pacific-(Land Based Aircraft) Vice Admiral John H. Hoover

Under Admiral Turner (TF 51)

Expeditionary Troops-Lt Gen Holland M. Smith (USMC)
Northern Attack Force-Saipan and Tinian (TF 52),Vice Admiral Turner carrying V'Phib Corps, Gen Smith, Comprising 2nd and 3rd Marine Divisions,

reinforced. Mounted in Hawaii and on the West Coast.

Southern Attack Force-Guam (TF 53), Rear Admiral Richard L. Conolly, carrying III' Phibs Corps, MG Roy S. Geiger, USMC, comprising 3rd Marine Division and 1st Provisional Marine Brigade. Mounted in Guadalcanal-Tulagi Area.

Floating Reserve-(TF 51.1) Rear Admiral H.F. Blandy, carrying the 27th Division U.S. Army reinforced, MG Ralph Smith.11

Training for the Marianas operation (FORAGER) began in the later part of March 1944. The emphasis on training was placed on day and night exercises focusing on individual and small unit level training. Coordination was stressed, with the naval gun liaison team integrating naval gunfire and artillery. Further emphasis was placed on the coordination required among the infantry and supporting tanks. The 2nd and 4th Marine Divisions conducted amphibious maneuvers on Maui between 12-31 March, and 13-26 April respectively. On 17 May they conducted a full scale landing with two divisions at Moalaea Bay, Maui.12

The 27th Infantry Division (Army) was able to conduct its training for amphibious operations in late April at Maui, using the same doctrine for amphibious operations as the Marines.13 General Robert C. Richardson (commander of Army troops Hawaii) was in charge of the 27th Division training. General Holland M. Smith (USMC) was decidedly upset over the command relationship for training. He was going to command this unit in combat and he had no control over its training or administration while at Hawaii. This meant he was unable to supervise their amphibious training for combat.

General Richardson (Army) wanted General Holland M. Smith's (USMC) job and the friction that existed between these two generals would later fuel the problems with the 27th Division.[14]

Overall these rehearsals were extremely important in developing the ship-to-shore maneuver scheme that required over 700 LVT's (Light Vehicle Tanks). Communication problems were worked out during the critique sessions that followed the rehearsals. The 2nd Marine Division used a "walk through" rehearsal technique which Major General Thomas E. Watson (division commander) thought to be extremely helpful. This allowed for the officers and men to gain a better understanding of their role in the amphibious operation.[15]

ENDNOTES

1. E.P. Forrestel, Vice Admiral, Admiral Raymond A. Spruance, USN, p. 123.

2. Carl W. Hoffman, Major USMC, Saipan: The Beginning of the End, pp. 3-4.

3. Charles W. Florance, Lt. Col., Organization of the Pacific Ocean Area and the Southwest Pacific Area, pp. 82-83.

4. Philip A. Crowl, The War in the Pacific, Campaign in the Marianas, p. 51.

5. Samual Eliot Morrison, History of the United States Naval Operations in World War II, New Guinea and the Marianas, March 1944-August 1944, p. 164.

6. Ibid., p. 165.

7. Carl W. Hoffman, Major USMC, Saipan: The Beginning of the End, p. 9.

8. Philip A. Crowl, The War in the Pacific, Campaign in the Marianas, p. 10.

9. Carl W. Hoffman, Major USMC, Saipan: The Beginning of the End, p. 8.

10. A.J. McFarland and C.J. Moore, General Plan for Postwar Joint Education of the Armed Forces, p. 21.

11. Samual Eliot Morrison, History of the United States Naval Operations in World War II, New Guinea and the Marianas, March 1944-August 1944, pp. 158-160.

12. Harry A. Gailey, Howlin Mad vs. The Army, Conflict in Command, Saipan 1944, p. 107.

13. Carl W. Hoffman, Major USMC, Saipan: The Beginning of the End, p. 31.

14. Edwin P. Hoyt, To the Marianas-War in the Central Pacific: 1944, p. 7.

15. Carl W. Hoffman, Major USMC, Saipan: The Beginning of the End, p. 33.

CHAPTER IV

EXECUTION (NAVAL OPERATIONS)

> The Marianas Campaign, from an amphibious view point had nearly everything; great strategic importance, major tactical moves including successful troop landings on three enemy islands; tough enemy resistance of all kinds including a major Fleet battle; coordination of every type of combat technique of land, sea, and air; difficult logistic problems; and the build up of a great military base area concurrently with fighting.1
>
> Admiral Turner

The pre-assault operations began with the Army Air Force (AAF) bombing of Palau on 3 June 1944. These bombardment operations began the neutralization campaign against the forward defense (Japanese) airfields located at Truk, Puluwat, Satawan, Yap, Pelelice, and Woleai. These interdiction missions by land based AAF not only destroyed planes and damaged enemy airfields, they unintentionally deceived the enemy as to the true target (Saipan).2

On 11 June Vice Admiral Marc Mitscher's (TF 58) four fast carrier groups would start their air combat patrols and attacks on the Marianas.3 Admiral Mitscher's forces consisted of seven carriers, eight light carriers, seven fast battleships, three heavy cruisers, ten light cruisers, and fifty-two destroyers. Their mission was to gain air superiority over the Marianas.

Admiral Turner established his imperatives for successful amphibious operations. It was most important to

secure the sea lines of communications to the zone of conflict, then establish command of the seas and air around the objective.4 Admiral Mitscher's job was to accomplish command of the air and assist in the others.

TF 58's carrier first strike of the Marianas took place in the afternoon of 11 June and caught the Japanese by surprise. All previous attacks by carrier forces had taken place in the early morning hours. The results were-225 enemy planes destroyed and only twelve of over 200 attacking friendly planes lost. These air attacks by Mitscher would continue through the 15th of June (D-Day)

On 13 June the fast battleships began their bombardment of Saipan as cover for the six minesweepers that were in action at D-2 days. Fearing mines the naval gunfire that day was conducted at a range of 10,000-16,000 yards. No mines were found. The inexperienced crews of these new fast battleships (16 inch and 5 inch shells) inflicted little damage commensurate with their capabilities.5 Important targets were not identified and the gunners had a tendency to concentrate their fires on large buildings and easily identified targets that were of little military importance. The old battleships supporting Admiral Turner's Task Force did a better job on the 14th of June (D-1). They were more experienced in naval gunfire support and they were allowed to move closer to shore (2,000-5,000 yards) thus-within effective range of priority targets. Unfortunately the naval gunfire and air attacks had not touched the enemy artillery

positions that would subsequently cause problems during the first four days of land operations.6

While minesweepers were doing their job 2,000 yards off shore, the Underwater Demolition Teams (UDT) were reconing the landing beaches of Saipan. Three teams consisting of sixteen officers and eighty men, all navy personnel except for one army and one marine liaison officer per team.7 They covered the landing beaches and determined that no obstacles were present. The naval bombardment, minesweeping, and UDT's had given the enemy the probable site for the landing force. The following Japanese message was intercepted on D-1.

> Since early this morning the enemy small vessels have been planting markers and searching for tank passages on the reef. Because as one can see there are no transports, the landing will have to be after tonight or dawn tomorrow. The enemy bombardment is being carried out on coastal areas in anticipation of a landing.8

Certainly strategic surprise had been accomplished-since all the high level Japanese message traffic indicated they felt the next U.S. attack would be at Truk. However, U.S. tactical surprise had been lost on the 14th of June, with all of the previous bombardment and activities around the beach area.

BATTLE OF THE PHILIPPINE SEA

The Japanese Fleet was reorganized in March 1944 to reflect that the aircraft carriers had replaced the battleships as the most important ships in the fleet. Another strategy adopted in late 1943 was to mass the entire Japanese Fleet and throw it against the U.S. Pacific Fleet in

order to destroy it with one blow.9 At 0855, 15 June, Admiral Soeuma Toyoda, (Japanese Commander-in-Chief Combined Fleet), from his flagship, sent the following message to his subordinate commands:

> On the morning of 15 Jun a strong enemy force began landing operations in the Saipan-Tinian area. The Combined Fleet will attack the enemy in the Marianas area and annihilate the invasion force. Activate A-Go Operation for decisive battle.10

The A-Go plan was designed to fight the U.S. Pacific Fleet in waters south of the Wolesi-Yap-Palau line. This would conserve the fleets fuel supply and take advantage of the numerous land based aircraft from the surrounding islands. These land based aircraft were supplemented with 25 Japanese submarines that had been deployed in May 1944. The subs were completely unsuccessful-they gathered no valuable intelligence and never hit a ship with a torpedo. The Pacific Fleet sent a flock of destroyer escorts to find and destroy the subs. Seventeen were in fact destroyed. Of these, six were sunk by destroyer escort England in twelve days.11

Admiral Jisaburo Ozawa was to command the Japanese Fleet for Operation A-Go. He was outnumbered by the U.S. in every naval category; however, he felt he had the tactical advantages. His land based aircraft from Guam, Rota, and Yap (he estimated to have 500 planes on these islands) would supplement his carrier planes. Their quicker turn around time for armaments would increase his advantage. Japanese carrier planes had greater range than U.S. planes (American

planes were heavier due to armor plate protection and self-sealing fuel tanks). These planes could recon out to 560 miles, and U.S. 325 miles; they could attack up to 300 miles vs U.S. 200 miles-thus a standoff advantage. Most importantly the easterly winds allowed him to approach his enemy and launch and recover planes, while the U.S. Fleet would be required to turn away from the enemy and into the wind to conduct aviation operations.12

The U.S. Submarines (Flying Fish, Seahorse and Cavalla) gave Vice Admiral Raymond A. Spruance (Commander of Fifth Fleet) the critical information on the Japanese Fleet locations. On 16 June, Admiral Spruance met with Admiral Turner to let him know that he was going to delay the assault on Guam and was going to prepare for an imminent sea battle. He would leave Admiral Turner 7 battleships, 3 cruisers, and 5 destroyers to protect his forces at Saipan. On 19 June, Admiral Ozawa sent out 4 massive air raids against the U.S Fleet. These attacks were picked up on U.S. radar and intercepts were sent up to destroy the attackers. Of the 373 planes that the Japanese sent on the raids and searches, only 58 would return to their Japanese carriers. The U.S. lost 23 planes, with 20 pilots and 7 crewman killed. This was such a one sided show that it was called "The Great Marianas Turkey Shoot."13 Japanese carriers Shokahu and Taiho were both sunk on the 19th of June by the U.S. submarines Cavalla and Albacore.

On 20 Jun Admiral Mitscher got word of the Japanese

Fleet position about 1542 hours. He launched all aircraft at 1610 hours for a strike, with the airplanes returning after dark (1900 hours). This meant that they would be recovering the daylight trained air crews at night. That night, Admiral Mitscher gave the word to turn on all the lights. Seaman First Class Fahey, (from USS Montpelier) wrote in his diary:

> Then something never done before in war time happened, all ships in this huge fleet put their lights on, and flares were dropped into the water. This all happened right in the Japs back yard maybe 600-700 miles from the coast of Japan. We would be easy targets for Jap subs that might be around. It was a great decision to make and everyone thought the world of Admiral Marc Mitscher for doing this. This would make it easier for our pilots to land, and if they did hit the water they could be saved.14

The Japanese Fleet had been badly beaten. Her three largest carriers had been sunk, some 480 planes destroyed. The fleet would not have enough time to rebuild and replace her losses in time for the Battle For Layte Gulf in October.

During this battle Admiral Spruance had stuck to his primary task of taking the Marianas. He did not risk his fleet in an effort to destroy the Japanese Fleet. His actions did in fact enable Admiral Mitscher's fast carrier attack force to win a major sea victory over the Japanese and to ensure air superiority, over the Marianas.

ENDNOTES

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3. Frank O. Hough, The Island War, p. 239.

4. Ronald H. Spector, The American War With Japan: Eagles Against the Sun, p. 315.

5. Edwing P. Hoyt, To the Marianas-War in the Central Pacific: 1944, p. 7.

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7. George Carroll Dyer, Vice Admiral, The Amphibians Came To Conquer. The Story of Admiral Richmond Kelly Turner, p. 929.

8. Philip A. Crowl, The War in the Pacific. Campaign in the Marianas, p. 161.

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10. Harry A. Gailey, Howlin Mad vs. The Army. Conflict in Command. Saipan 1944, p. 43.

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CHAPTER V

AIR OPERATIONS

Air operations in the Central Pacific Theater were principally divided into land and carrier based air operation. They were both involved in reconnaissance, close air support (CAS), bombing missions, air defense, air evacuation, anti-submarine warfare, air transport, and airborne observation gunnery/artillery missions. General Henry H.(Hap) Arnold (AAF) had supported the decision to go for the Marianas as a target-since the B-29's (long range bombers) would be able to strike Japan from airfields located on Saipan.

As Central Pacific operations for FORAGER got cranked up, the problems in the command relationship between AAF and the Navy began to become a problem. The primary concern was over the fact that Naval commanders, who were normally in authority, went beyond the limits approved by Joint Army-Navy doctrine in how activities were to run. Admiral Nimitz tried to solve the problem by insisting that all commanders of Joint Forces ensure that all units be left free to accomplish assigned missions by use of their own technique as developed by doctrine and experience.1 This did not solve anything. In addition, Admiral Nimitz was getting added heat from AAF Headquarters in Washington, because the B-29 fleet would be scheduled for employment in the Central Pacific soon. The

AAF wanted the command relationship solved.

Admiral Nimitz decided on the following solution: Effective 1 May 1944 Shore Based Air Forces, in the forward area would be established as a Joint Task Force with Major General Hale (U.S. Army) as the Task Force commander.2 This new command was designated Task Force 59, and during the Marianas invasion would play a subordinate role to Task Force 57, commanded by Vice Admiral John H. Hoover.

The primary mission for the land based air, during the Marianas, was to neutralize the Carolina Islands, conduct reconnaissance, and to fly close air support for the amphibians. JCS directive had made the Thirteenth Air Force (General George C. Kenney, SWPA) available to support the Central Pacific Operations (FORAGER). This effort was coordinated by radio between General MacArthur's and Admiral Nimitz's staff. The Seventh and Thirteenth conducted almost daily attacks of the Carolinas in order to neutralize their location. The effort called for long overwater flights with careful attention to navigation. These neutralization missions also contributed to deceiving the Japanese as to the U.S.'s real objective. The Eleventh, flying from air bases in Alaska and the Aleutian Islands, contributed by bombing the Kurile Islands. This forced the Japanese to commit air force assets from the Central Pacific area and send them to the icy north Pacific Region.3

During the early part of the Saipan operation close air support was flown exclusively by the Navy. On 22 June Aslito

air field on Saipan was secured and army air operations began to provide close air support and airborne artillery observation. At no time during this fight were the marine pilots, who were specially trained for close air support, employed for this purpose.4

Following the battle, General Holland M. Smith (USMC) made these recommendations:

> ....that Marine Aviation provide air groups for this specialized duty. The troop experience of senior Marine pilots combined with indoctrination of new pilots in infantry tactics should insure greater cooperation and coordination between air and ground units.5

Admiral Nimitz concurred with this recommendation.

Close air support (CAS) problems were numerous even though naval air liaison teams were part of each battalion. During the ship travel, these air and naval gunfire officers conducted briefings on board ship for the army personnel on how their operations would be conducted.6 The CAS system took about an hour to respond to the ground commanders request. When the planes did arrive target identification was difficult. Dummy runs were conducted by aircraft to avoid hitting friendly forces. Only one frequency was available for all CAS missions, which meant that administrative landing operations on the carrier interfered with CAS missions. The best use of CAS was for strafing missions, the most effective against the enemy and the safest technique for friendly forces. Friendly forces used a variety of techniques for marking targets, some of which are still in use today. Ground units used white phosphorus

mortar rounds to effectively mark the target. In some cases an aircraft would make dummy dry runs to determine the correct target and await corrections; however, this is very time consumming and a poor method that was dropped early in the campaign. Colored florescent panel markers were deployed as a way to mark the forward advance of friendly troops. CAS became the least desirable means of fire support. It was the least accurate, least responsive, and artillery and naval gunfire had to be stopped in order to receive CAS.7

ENDNOTES

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3. Carl W. Hoffman, Major USMC., Saipan: The Beginning of the End, p. 43.

4. Jeter A. Isely and Philip A. Crowl, The Marines and Amphibious War, p. 333.

5. Carl W. Hoffman, Major USMC., Saipan: The Beginning of the End, p. 250.

6. Report by Canadian Officers, 27th Infantry Division United States Army, The Saipan Operation, 15 June to 9 July 1944, p. 3.

7. Philip A. Crowl, The War in the Pacific, Campaign in the Marianas, p. 132.

CHAPTER VI

AMPHIBIOUS OPERATIONS

The Saipan landing plan was a model of how to conduct amphibious landings and was used for the remaining operations in both the Central and SWPA Theaters. This operation incorporated several new techniques that became the standards for subsequent amphibious landings. Detailed plans were published for the organization and control by beachmasters, who were set in position to handle the landing of multiple divisions. A new communications scheme was developed to cover this complex landing party structure. A new system for the transfer of assault troops to LST's (Landing Ship Tank) in the final staging area was successfully used for the first time. The use of close support ships with rocket and mortars to provide direct support to the assault waves was refined. Lastly, the addition of specially designated hospital LST's with the initial assault forces which picked up and evacuated the initial casualties with new speed was implemented.1

The coordination, planning, and critical rehearsals resulted in a simultaneous landing, across a reef 250-700 yards wide, of two Marine divisions, landing eight battalion landing teams abreast on eight separate beaches in a front covering 6,000 yards. Within twenty minutes after the first assault wave hit the beach, over 8,000 troops were ashore-an achievement unequalled in any previous amphibious landing.

Overall 535 ships were employed to land 166,000 soldiers (71,000 for Saipan) in the Marianas.

Unfortunately, the enemy artillery had not been destroyed and the enemy had anticipated the landing beachheads. Having observed the flurry of activity created by the minesweeping and the UDT (Underwater Demolition Teams) the Japanese began last minute preparations.

> That night the Japanese came out in small boats and planted flags in the area between the reef's edge and the beaches, to help guide the fire of their machine guns, mortars and artillery when the Americans landed the next day.3

Poor intelligence of the enemy's strength and lack of good preparation fires from the Navy resulted in the initial assault taking several days to break out from their initial beachhead. The concept was to use the armored amphibious vehicles and tractors to move inland rapidly to clear the beach area for follow-on forces.

The debris created by the tree stumps, tank ditches and shell holes had made movement almost impossible for the vehicles. The Japanese followed their tactics and fought hard for the contested beachhead-using their artillery effectively and conducting minor uncoordinated counterattacks. They were hoping for support from their Navy to destroy the U.S. invasion fleet. The Japanese would continue to fight a tenacious battle until 9 July when the U.S. forces declared Saipan secure.

One of the key decisions for coordinating fire support activities was the employment of the 295th Joint Assault

Signal Company (JASCO). Elements (liaison teams) were attached to each battalion prior to deployment. This provided sufficient time to familiarize the units with their operating procedures. These teams assisted in naval gunfire, close air support and artillery support. They provided their own radios and were extremely effective in assisting the unit commanders in getting their fire support from assigned ships. During the initial phase of the battle each battalion was provided a destroyer which fired in direct support of their operations.4

When the 27th Infantry Division, the Corps Reserve, was committed to the battle, they immediately exchanged artillery liaison officers with adjacent Marine units to coordinate artillery fires. The Corps artillery cell was set up to prioritize fire support (artillery, CAS, and naval gunfire). Thus if the JASCO team needed additional fires they would request these through the Corps Artillery Headquarters. This insured effective use of resources and provided the capability to mass critical assets against the high priority targets. The units quickly determined that the low trajectory of the naval gunfire made it uniquely effective against caves. The ships had another advantage-mobility. They could move around the Island of Saipan and attack targets from various angles. The artillery required the use of jeeps, amphibious tractors, and army DUKES to move them around the battlefield.

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3. Edwin P. Hoyt, To The Marianas-War in The Central Pacific 1944, p. 120.

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CHAPTER VII

SMITH vs SMITH

It is important to examine the problems created by the relief of Major General Ralph C. Smith (Army) by Lieutenant General Holland M. Smith (USMC) during the Saipan invasion. Why was he relieved? What impact did this have on operations in the Pacific? The facts surrounding the incident deserve some attention, especially as one looks at the difficulties inherent in any joint operation involving more than one branch of the armed forces.

General Holland M. Smith (Corps Commander) had been repeatedly disappointed with the performance of the 27th Infantry Division, (Army) at Saipan. On the 23rd June the 27th was to conduct their division assault, beginning at dawn; however, they in fact did not jump off until 1330 hours. The next day, 24 June, General Holland M. Smith requested and received permission from Admirals Turner and Spruance to relieve Major General Ralph Smith of his command.1 There was nothing novel about an officer being relieved. It had happened several times in this war (five Army generals in the Pacific Theater alone).2

What was different in this case was that a Marine general in a smaller branch of service had relieved an Army general of a much larger branch. This action not only complicated problems at Saipan, it sent shockwaves back to Washington. Many articles were printed about the Smith vs

Smith controversy. In fact many articles discussed the differences between the fighting philosophy of the Army and the Marine Corps. This occurred at a time when emphasis in all theaters was on inter-service harmony and cooperation.3

Why was Ralph Smith relieved? Several key factors played a part in this relief action. The 27th Infantry Division was a National Guard Division from New York that had not been reorganized prior to deployment. Some service connected friction between the Army, the Marine Corps and some personalities did exist. Most important was the failure on General Ralph Smith's part to take effective action against poor performing commanders in his chain of command.

Most all of the National Guard units were thoroughly reorganized by the War Department prior to being sent overseas. This reorganization was designed to eliminate the typical leadership conflicts that exist in hometown organizations where former employers end up subordinate to their employees. The officers of the 27th Division were on the average ten years older than their peers in the Marines. Many of the officers were incompetent and had not been replaced prior to Saipan. General Holland M. Smith (USMC) saw some of these officers in action at Makin Island.4

During the Gilbert's invasion, General Holland M. Smith (USMC) had closely observed the actions of the 27th Division. He was disappointed with their performance and had been unhappy about their choice as a supporting unit during these operations(Saipan).5 He had expected the army troops to do

as well as the marines and in his opinion they had done poorly at Makin. He sincerely felt the problem with the 27th had been the failure of its officers.6 General Holland M. Smith let his opinion be known at Pearl Harbor and this made Lieutenant General Robert C. Richardson, the senior army officer on Admiral Nimitz staff, very mad. He sent a "FOR YOUR EYES ONLY" letter to Admiral Nimitz recommending General Holland Smith for USMC admin duties and that he (General Richardson) be placed in the Corps commanders position for the coming invasions (Marshall Islands).

> It is recommended that: a. The responsibilities assigned to the headquarters of Fifth Amphibious Corps be administrative duties in connection with USMC troops in the Central Pacific Area. b. When the time arrives for the employment of a tactical Corps as such in the Central Pacific Area, the Corps Headquarters and Corps Troops, combat and service, be furnished by the Army.7

Admiral Nimitz discounted the letter, believing that it was in response to the salty words General Holland M. Smith was spreading around Hawaii about General Ralph Smith's failures at Makin. These problems between the senior commander's would indirectly contribute to General Ralph Smith's relief at Saipan.

Many factors contributed to the poor performance of the 27th on Saipan. They were attacking the strength of the enemy force in the most difficult terrain (Death Valley). Friction between V Amphibious Corps Headquarters and the 27th Division Headquarters tended to add to the confusion in communications. There was certainly some justification in General Holland M. Smith's concern over the performance of

the 27th. The infantry attacks were frequently uncoordinated; units repeatedly withdrew from advanced positions to more favorable terrain for their night bivouacs; they repeatedly yielded terrain they had previously gained through hard fighting. Whatever the circumstances, these facts certainly raise questions about the aggressiveness and combat effectiveness of the division.8

During the war and since that time there have been long discussions about the differences in tactical doctrine between the Marine Corps and the Army. Non-Military writers believed that the Marines sacrificed lives for speed while the Army favored more conservative use of their manpower. Whereas, the Army relied on heavy concentrations of artillery prior to launching their infantry attacks; by-passing and mopping up techniques were used only by the Marines. Subsequently the Army was more likely to attack across the front and make the enemy defenses totally crumble.9 The truth was that officers of the Marine Corps and Army attended the same schools and had similar doctrine. No deficiencies in fighting doctrine was noted at Saipan. The primary problem lay in the manner of execution.

These two generals had superb backgrounds for command. Their personalities were different, but that should not have caused the friction that existed. General Ralph Smith (Army) had enjoyed a successful career. As a young officer he had fought with the 16th Infantry as part of the 1st Division in World War I. He served on several teaching assignments at

Ft. Benning, West Point, and Ft. Leavenworth. Following his year as a student at the War College, he replaced Colonel Robert Eichelberger (later a General and Commander of Eight Army) in the summer of 1938, on the G-2 staff of the War Department General Staff.10 His background was primarily European, including two years as an exchange officer in France at their military college. Brigadier General S.L.A. Marshall (World War II historian) said about his first impressions of General Ralph Smith:

> On first meeting Ralph Smith, I felt it was the beginning of a lifelong friendship and that we would always understand one another, with no small questions being asked. Ralph is rangy in build and breezy in nature. His extreme consideration for all other mortals would keep him from being rated among the great captains; he is a somewhat rarer specimen, a generous Christian Gentleman.11

General Holland M. Smith (USMC, "Howlin Mad Smith) left his job as an Alabama lawyer and joined the Marines as a 2nd Lieutenant in March 1905. He served in a variety of assignments to include one on the Third Army staff during World War I. He saw combat during Nicaragua, Santo Domingo and France prior to World War II. He was one of two Marine officers to attend the Naval War College in 1920. Following the War College he was in the War Plans Division of Naval Operations and the Joint Army Navy Planning Committee.12 In September 1942 he took command of the 1st Amphibious Corps and the 2nd Joint Training Force.

This placed him in charge of the amphibious training of all the new Marine divisions, and the amphibious training of the Army's 7th, 77th, 81st, and 96th Infantry Divisions.

General Smith had a reputation as a screamer and it was believed that this had initially kepted him from the war.

> Despite warnings against trying to mix the volatile personalities of General Holland M. Smith and Rear Admiral R.K. Turner, his naval expert on amphibious landings, Admiral Nimitz had decided to bring General Smith to the Central Pacific.
> Admiral Spruance noted: "Howlin Mad" and "Terrible Turner" together and they were both strong and determined characters, but I was confident that they would work things out between them-and they did.13

Probably the best assessment to come out of the Smith vs Smith controversy and to answer the question of the impact of this incident, was Admiral Turner's concept of what had to happen to make amphibious operations work:

> I learned a tremendous amount during World War II-about strategy and tactics and about naval doctrine. I also learned a lot about the technique of warfare, and particularly the technique of naval amphibious operations. We found the most important technique of amphibious warfare to be the willingness and ability to cooperate in spite of differences of opinion or viewpoint between individuals, between branches in each service and between the different services themselves, including allied services. Many different types of tactical elements are involved in amphibious operations. Each type has its particular use. If they are any good, the men of all these elements believe they are the particular group who will most contribute to success. Their opinions and efforts must always be considered and appreciated. Conflicts between the different elements (which are inevitable) must be adjusted in order to produce smooth working team.14

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3. Philip A. Crowl, The War in The Pacific. Campaign in the Marianas, p. 70.

4. George Carroll Dyer, Vice Admiral, The Amphibians Came to Conquer. The Story of Admiral Richmond Kelly Turner, p. 860.

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6. Jeter A. Isely and Philip A. Crowl, The Marines and Amphibious War, p. 331.

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12. Samuel Eliot Morrison, History of United States Naval Operations in World War II. New Guinea and The Marianas. March 1944-August 1944, p. 233.

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14. James J. Fahey, Pacific War Diary 1942-45, p. 173.

CHAPTER VIII

JOINT OPERATIONS AND GRENADA

Has the United States Military improved in its ability to conduct joint operations since World War II? Results from the most recent joint operation in Panama (Operation JUST CAUSE) have not been released; however, combat experience from Grenada showed that a lack of authoritative joint doctrine can lead to fratricide and complications on the battlefield.

In July 1947 Congress established the National Security Act of 1947. The intent of this act was to bring unification to the Armed Forces. The country would now have three distinct services, Department of the Army, Department of the Navy, and the Department of the Air Force. These services would be subordinate to the Department of Defense (DOD). By 1949 Secretary of Defense James Forrestal had established his position and had required the Joint Chiefs of Staff to develop joint doctrine for joint operations.1 The Joint Action Armed Forces (JAAF), developed an outline for joint policies and doctrine for joint operations in order to meet Secretary Forrestal's guidance. The JAAF became the basic document for today's joint publications.

From 1949 until the rescue/invasion of the Island of Grenada in 1983, the emphasis on joint training had received

little attention. The Inchon landing, during the Korean War, was certainly a superb joint Amphibious operation; however, all the key leaders involved had participated in World War II.2 Even the Inchon landing had several problems related to jointness. The ground commander, General Edward M. Arnold (Army) did not gain command of the ground forces until the fifth day of the battle, because Admiral James Doyle (Amphibious Commander) had convinced General Arnold to agree to 50% of land forces to be transferred to shore before turning over command. This delayed the attack toward Seoul.3

Once in command ashore, General Arnold began having problems with his Marine Division Commander Major General Smith. Every order was questioned on concerns over doctrinal differences and General Smith delayed or avoided compliance but never openly disobeyed General Arnold's orders.4

Congress passed the Defense Reorganization Act of 1986, better known as the Goldwater-Nichols Act. Several Senate Armed Services Committee studies had pointed out problems in joint operations and joint training.5 These studies were initiated by the results of Grenada and the problems associated with the DOD budget process.

A review of the results of Grenada (URGENT FURY) should provide some insights into the United States capability to conduct joint operations in 1983. This operation involved 20,000 servicemen, including sailors, soldiers, airmen and marines along with Special Operations Forces from the Army, Navy, and Air Force. The operation was conceived, planned

and launched in just four days.6 Several problems showed up in this operation. No overall ground component commander was initially designated for the operation. Communication problems were significant throughout the first three days of the operation. Failure in proper fire support planning and execution contributed to friendly casualties. Poor intelligence led to tactical problems and had the most adverse impact on the execution of the plan.7

An ad hoc headquarters was put together by the CINC of the Atlantic Command who was tasked to plan Urgent Fury. The Urgent Fury Task Force was rapidly assembled and named Joint Task Force 120 (JTF 120) with Vice-Admiral Joseph Metcalf III identified as its commander.8 His staff, which had never worked together before, had to develop a plan from scratch (JCS decided not to use an OPLAN already on the shelf) with little intelligence and very poor maps.

Problems in communications were significant. Valuable intelligence information was not relayed to the soldiers fighting the battle. Infantry units (Ranger Battalions) needing fire support were unable to talk to the Navy ships that were ten miles off shore and visible to the battalion commander.9 The support aircraft were unable to clearly understand the non-standard instructions and this led to confusion and possible unnecessary friendly casualties. JTF 120 lacked any staff members that knew how to plan and coordinate joint fire support programs (aircraft and naval gunfire) for the ground forces.10

The intelligence shortcomings led directly or indirectly to the delay of H-hour for Urgent Fury. Not knowing the status of the enemy dispositions, intentions and strength caused significant planning problems. These same problems carried themselves into the operation itself. The Rules of Engagement (ROE) were such that this operation was intended to be a quick surgical strike taking advantage of surprise. Our efforts to use stealth and surprise were lost due to intelligence. The plan called for the operation to begin at 0300 hours. Thus, utilizing the advantage of U.S. Forces capability to operate at night. Unable to get accurate information (intelligence) on the status of the primary airfield, SEAL teams were sent in to provide information and to emplace beacons for the aircraft. Delays with the SEAL teams led directly to the operation starting at 0530 hours (daylight) with a fully alert enemy who heard the C-130's flying around in a holding pattern at high altitudes.

SAIPAN vs GRENADA

A look back at the Saipan Campaign indicates that U.S. forces in the Pacific, at this stage of World War II, were well prepared to execute joint operations. They understood unity of command and kept their joint staffs together to take advantage of their expertise and to maintain continuity. Ground Force Commanders hand-over of the battle from the Naval (Amphibious) commander was efficient and effective in command and control.

Communication problems may have been a problem between

some of the senior commanders (one-on-one); however, the staffs were integrated at all levels and liaison teams were attached early on in the planning to allow for rehearsals and effective training to occur. They had learned the hard lessons of combat and incorporated these into their standard operating procedures (SOP's).

Fire support planning was far superior during the Saipan Campaign than was observed during Urgent Fury. Again, the use of trained liaison teams insured that units would get effective support at Saipan. These lessons were unfortunately lost in the Grenada operation. Even JTF 120 did not have trained personnel in joint fire support operations.11

Finally, intelligence was not done well for either operation. The Saipan operation lacked the resources to reach out and capture large amounts of data to analyze. They relied on submarine sightings, photo-recon, captured enemy documents, and radio intercepts. Their underestimate of the enemy strength caused a major delay in the campaign and the early commitment of the 27th Infantry Division (reserve), which General Holland M. Smith (USMC) wanted to avoid.

Urgent Fury suffered from a similar failure of knowing the enemy strength and locations. Failure to gain tactical surprise, due to the delay in H-hour, led to unnecessary casulties.12 Good intelligence is hard to get and is most often the reason for "friction in war."13 Commanders must be prepared for this in combat.

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7. William C. Smith, LTC, The United States Needs Joint War-Fighting Doctrine, p. 14.

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CHAPTER IX

CONCLUSION

What were the results of the Saipan Campaign and what can be learned from this operation? The operation had accomplished its mission by breaking the outer ring of the Japanese defense and thus, providing the United States with the capability to conduct air strikes on the Japanese homeland with its fleet of B-29 long range bombers. This represented the deepest thrust into the Japanese lines of communications which subsequently caused great concern to the Japanese population.1

> In November 1945, Marquis Koichi Kido, Lord Keeper of the Privy Seal of Imperial Japanese government, was asked by American interrogators at what date had he first given up hope that Japan could not win the war in the Pacific? He answered, "rather early-after the fall of Saipan. It was my opinion at that time that it was advisable to give consideration to ending the war." When further asked what were the particular significant results stemming from the fall of Saipan, he listed two: "First, the fall of Saipan meant the intensification of American air attacks upon the Japanese home islands. Second, the failure of the Navy, upon which our Japanese people in general had placed a high reliance....2

In general the results were clear, the Japanese Fleet had lost large numbers of carriers and land based aircraft. Their submarine fleet was made almost totally ineffective and their ground forces were defeated with casualties of over 30,000. The U.S. would move B-29's to the island and establish submarine staging bases; thus making it more effective in undersea warfare.

The results were just what the JCS and Admiral Nimitz and his staff had hoped to accomplish. Now a look at what was or can be learned from the Saipan Campaign? This was an excellent example of successful joint operation involving a joint staff, (Naval, Marine, Army, and Army Air Force) planning and executing together. They used the limited written Field Manuals available (USMC doctrine) on amphibious operations, and married this with what they had learned at Tarawa and the Marshals Islands. The planning had followed the amphibious strategy of Admiral Turner. They had secured the sea lines of communications to the zone of conflict, and commanded the seas and air around the objective.3

Tactical plans were developed simultaneously with support requirements and training. Rehearsals were conducted on all phases of the operation. Liaison teams for naval gunfire and close air support, along with compatible radios, linked up with the units they were to support during the training phase. Special photographic maps were made and distributed to the Navy, Marines, Army and AAF to insure that they had similar reference points for fire support. Earlier problems at Tarawa had taught this valuable lesson.

Support operations were also given the same importance as the tactical plan. General Holland M. Smith had required the units to practice their procedures for unloading the supplies.4 Detailed plans were developed and the Navy beachmasters were well schooled in their responsibilities. During the loading of equipment, careful attention was taken

to insure they followed combat load plans, thus insuring the important pieces of equipment would be readily available to come off the ships first.

Admiral Turner and General Holland M. Smith had carefully worked out the command relationship. General Holland M. Smith would take command once the two divisions were ashore in strength. This in fact occurred within the first hour. Smith commanded from the ship USS Rocky Mount, until 1350 hours on 17 June, when he established a command post in the village of Charan Kanoa.5 Transition of command went smoothly at Saipan.

Tactical operations among the services went as well as can be expected in the friction of combat. Certainly, the failure of the intelligence estimate created changes in the plan and the duration of combat. The success of this joint operation is a direct result of the bloody lessons learned during the previous amphibious assaults in the Central Pacific. They quickly learned the need for liaison teams to maintain coordination with adjacent units, to maximize available fire support and to provide tactical communications and advice.

This was not a perfect operation. Problems occurred during all phases of the operation. The controversy between General Holland M. Smith (USMC) and General Ralph Smith (Army) stands out as a major confrontation between the Marine Corps and the Army. This was an unfortunate problem that will never be properly explained in the context of history.

It was not a perfect world and rivalries did exist between the services. General Holland M. Smith points this out in his book, Coral and Brass:

> Looking back on this period from the vantage of years and distance, I sometimes wonder if we didn't have two enemies: the Japanese and certain brass hats in the Army and Navy.6

One lesson that has been analyzed by many historians and strategist of World War II, has been the unity of command issue in the Pacific Theater. It will never be known what would have happened with either General MacArthur or Admiral Nimitz in charge. Dividing the resources and responsibilities between these two leaders was not the best solution. Many manhours at all levels were used up in the debates over strategy in the Pacific. The JCS had to contend with two major competing headquarters over all the issues in the Pacific Theater, thus dividing the JCS members and staff along a service related strategy. Lieutenant Colonel Henry G. Morgan Jr. made the following observation in his research on the war strategy in the Pacific.

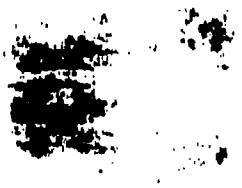
> Disagreement over the proper route of advance in the Pacific, like other disagreements over strategy, was largely an inter-service dispute. The strategy debates were conducted by skilled professional officers who were earnestly seeking the most objectively logical solutions to their problems. They succeeded admirably, but it was unavoidable that each officer should bring to his task certain preconceptions of warfare which were typical of the service prestige or on the post-war relationships of the services. Even so, these differences should not be dismissed simply as parochial and petty bickering. The protagonists were men of intelligence and professional competence, men with a high sense of honor and of public responsibility. Behind their concern for personal presitge was a concern for service

> prestige; behind that was a concern for the long run position of the services to each other and to the society they served; and behind this were deep-seated convictions about the safety of the nation. No doubt less noble motives intruded themselves from time to time into the debates on strategy, but this is to admit nothing more than that the strategist were being human.7

The Goldwater-Nichols Act of 1986 went a long way in motivating the services to place emphasis on joint doctrine, eduction and training. It is now 1990 and very little has been published in doctrine. The J-7 Directorate of the JCS has the requirement to publish this doctrine; however, only a few publications have hit the street, and these are in draft form. Qualified officers (Joint Staff Officer qualified-schooling and a three year assignment in a joint position) assigned to the National Defense University should be working closely with J-7 to assist in doctrine development. Additionally, every effort should be made to capture the recent lessons learned from "Operation Just Cause," in Panama. This involved all the services in an operation similar to Grenada. In Panama the Southern Command Staff, was utilized to plan and execute the entire operation, unlike Grenada where an ad-hoc staff was employed. "Just Cause" may illustrate positive movement toward organized joint service operations.

The Pacific Theater of operation during World War II provides some of the best historical battles dealing with joint and combined operations. Saipan was just one of several campaigns where commanders had to plan and coordinate Navy, Marine, Army and Army Air Forces to accomplish the

mission. Historians and the men that participated in these great battles have vividly reported their understanding of the facts and memories of the accounts of these historic times; however, understanding how they made it work in the past is the challenge for todays strategists and tacticians.



ENDNOTES

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4. Carl W. Hoffman, Major USMC., Saipan: The Beginning of the End, p. 23.

5. Ibid., p. 96.

6. Holland M. Smith and Percy Finch, Coral and Brass, p. 118.

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