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OPERATION TORCH

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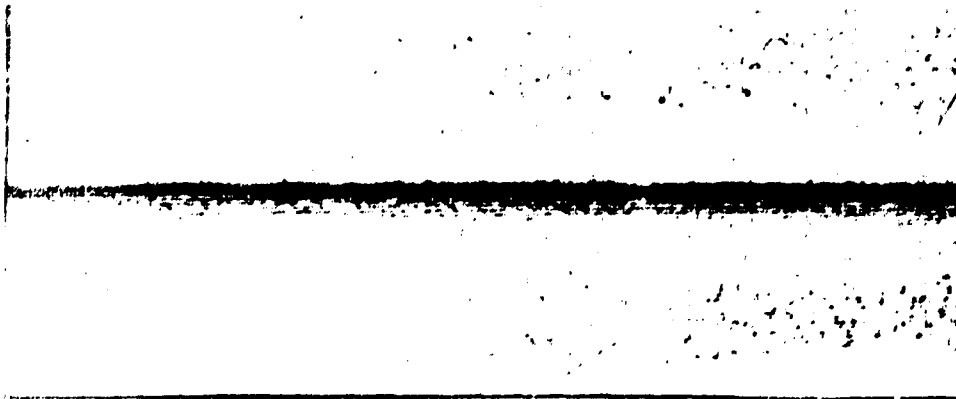
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(20) 20. ABSTRACT (Continue on reverse side if necessary and identify by block number) The 3rd Infantry Division reinforced with additional armor, AAA, and engineer units, conducted an amphibious assault to capture the city of Casablanca, Morocco, on 8 November 1942. This action was part of a larger campaign involving allied forces directed to secure strategic port and airfield facilities in Morocco and Tunisia which would serve as bases for further operations against Rommel's Afrika Korps and subsequent assault into Southern Europe. The division's concept of operations called for landing three regimental combat teams in the vicinity of Fedella, located sixteen miles northeast of Casablanca, "seize Fedella as a		

temporary base of operations" and attack towards Casablanca.

Operation TORCH represented the first major US effort against Axis forces outside the Pacific Theater of Operations. Most of the new amphibious craft used in later operations had yet to be developed or produced, even though Casablanca was captured. But, as the division's historians point out, "That is why the landing at Fedala was so important . . . The revelation of the great number of mistakes made by an organization in its first action, and overcoming all difficulties to attain its final objective was prophetic"

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OPERATION TORCH
(North Africa Campaign)

TYPE OPERATION
Offensive, Deliberate Assault, Amphibious

UNITS CONDUCTING OPERATION
Allied: 3d Infantry Division (Reinforced)
French: (Vichy) Casablanca Division

DATE OF OPERATION
8 November 1942

Prepared by: Staff Group 3A

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SECTION I. INTRODUCTION TO OPERATION TORCH

On 7 December 1941, the Japanese Imperial Navy conducted a surprise attack against U.S. Naval Forces in the Pacific Ocean. The resulting declaration of war by the United States Congress aligned the United States with the Allied Forces against the major Axis powers of Germany, Japan, and Italy. Previously agreed upon Allied strategical objectives between the U.S. and Great Britain were implemented as the basis for planning of future operations. On 8 November 1942, less than a year from the Japanese attack, a predominately U.S. force, augmented with British units, conducted the largest amphibious assault ever known in North Africa. The assault, Operation Torch, into Morocco and Algeria was the first offensive operation in the Atlantic campaign that would eventually lead to an Allied victory in World War II.

Operation Torch consisted of three assault forces (see Annex A): Western Task Force with landings in Morocco at Safi, Casablanca, and Port Lyautey; Center Task Force with landings in Algeria at Les Aandalouses, Oran, C. Figalo, and Arzeu; Eastern Task Force with landings in Algeria at Castiglione, C. Genuch, Algiers, C. Matifou, and Ain Taya. The Western Task Force, under the command of Major General George S. Patton, deployed from the United States across

3,000 miles of German submarine infested waters. The Center and Eastern Task Force, the latter being a mixture of U.S. and British units, deployed from the United Kingdom. In spite of the many administrative and logistical problems faced by the combined-staff planners in developing the Allied operation, Operation Torch established the framework for future combined-staff operations of the war. The focus of this Battle Analysis will be on the 3d Infantry Division as part of the Western Task Force.¹

The decision to conduct offensive operations in French North Africa was made in July 1942, following a visit to the U.S. by British Prime Minister Churchill. The Allied plan resulted from the British losses in North Africa, a need to assist the Russians by conducting a diversionary attack, and the inability of the Allied forces to logistically support a major cross-channel amphibious attack on the European continent. Lieutenant General Dwight D. Eisenhower, as Commander in Chief of the Allied Expeditionary Force, was given the mission in August 1942 to direct military operations against French North Africa to achieve Allied strategical objectives in conjunction with Allied forces in the Middle East to secure control of North Africa from the Atlantic to the Red Sea.²

The opposing forces consisted mostly of pro-Vichy French who believed that collaboration with the Germans was in the best interest of their country after German occupation of France. The pro-Vichy French did not share the same feelings of resentment for the "Boche" as did their

fellow countrymen located in France and England; however, the Allied forces hoped for only a token resistance by the French while establishing a lodgement area in Morocco. (See Annex B, Enemy Order of Battle)³

The final plan, issued on 20 September 1942, provided for major assaults on Casablanca, Oran, and Algiers.⁴(See Annex C, Operation Torch Map)⁵ The 3d Infantry Division, as part of the Western Task Force under the command of Major General Jonathon Anderson, combined landing forces with other U.S. units to form Task Force Brushwood. (See Annex E, Friendly Forces Order of Battle). After securing Casablanca, the Western Task Force was to establish and maintain lines of communications between Casablanca and Oran, be prepared to repel a German attack through pro-Axis Spain, and occupy Spanish Morocco.

The Western Task Force commenced amphibious operations at 0515 hours, 8 November. CCB, 2d Armored Division and the 47th RCT, 9th Infantry Division attacked Safi. The 40th RCT, 9th Infantry Division, attacked Port Lyautey, and the 3rd Infantry Division (See Annex F, 3d Infantry Division Operations Map) attacked Fedala. All three amphibious operations achieved tactical surprise. Safi was captured rather easily by 1015 hours on the first day; however, the French at Port Lyautey and Fedala offered greater resistance. By 1500 hours, Fedala had fallen and the 3d Inf Div began its movement toward Casablanca. The fighting at Port Lyautey continued until 1100 hours on 10 November. Shortly thereafter, the first American planes began landing

at the Port Lyautey airfield.⁶

As the 3d Inf Div prepared to attack Casablanca from the southeast at 0730 hours, 11 November, the French, responding to orders from Admiral Darlan, surrendered. The highly successful combined operation placed almost all of French North Africa into Allied hands. Within three days of fighting, the Allied casualties totaled 1010 soldiers killed or missing and 1110 wounded. The 3d Inf Div learned many lessons that would serve it well throughout the remainder of World War II.⁷

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SECTION II. STRATEGIC SETTING

A. Principal Antagonists (1942):

1. United States

The United States entered the war in December, 1941. The United States had been logistically supporting England and the Russian war effort against the Nazis. In 1942, the United States was anxious to launch the first American offensive campaign against the Axis powers. With a Presidential election scheduled in November 1942, President Roosevelt wanted a strong offensive action prior to the election to boost the morale of the American public.¹

The United States entered World War II with a plan to fight a defensive naval war in the Pacific and an offensive ground war in Western Europe. President Roosevelt and the Joint Chiefs of Staff did not agree on offensive strategy for Western Europe. The military favored a cross-channel move into Western Europe which could not be accomplished in 1942 due to lack of seaworthy landing craft capable of making the cross-channel crossing. The military leaders favored building a large logistics and training base in England in 1942 and then move on the offensive in 1943.² The President was afraid if Russia fell before

our first offensive, it would free German forces to move to the Western Front and prolong the war. Loss of Russia to Germany would also bolster German supply of war material and oil resources.

President Roosevelt did not want Germany to control the Mediterranean. Germany could then move into Spain and Gibraltar and block all shipping in the Mediterranean. Additionally, Germany could move down the coast of Africa and block all shipping in the Atlantic route around the southern tip of Africa. Germany would then be able to control all access to Middle East oil.³

2. Great Britain

The United States entered the war in 1941. At that time, Great Britain felt the war would soon be over due to the large industrial base in the United States; it was just a question of time.⁴

Great Britain had been receiving logistical support from the United States and had been fighting Germany prior to our arrival in the war. The British had withdrawn their land forces from France during the German invasion of the Western European countries. When Germany turned its attention to the East and attacked Russia, England knew it was next. Great Britain was also fighting German forces in North Africa. They wanted the United States to open a second front early in 1942 to relieve pressure from the Russians and prolong the campaign to drain Germany of war

supplies. In addition, the British wanted an early American offensive in Western Europe or North Africa to bolster the morale of the British people.⁵

Politically, Prime Minister Churchill had undergone a Parliamentary "Vote of Confidence" after the fall of Tobruk in North Africa. Even though he won the Parliamentary procedure, Churchill knew he needed a successful offensive to bolster English support of the war effort and himself. He, therefore, favored early offensive action against the Axis in North Africa.⁶

3. Russia

In 1941, Russia was fighting defensively for its very existence on its home soil. German forces invaded Russia and were in sight of their major objectives. To sustain their defense, Russia had been receiving supplies from the United States. Russia was effectively "tying up" a large portion of the German Army and denying Hitler critical oil reserves and mineral resources. It was in the best interest of the Americans to sustain Russia's war effort against the Nazis.⁷

Russia (Soviet Commissar of Foreign Affairs, Molotov) desperately wanted the Allies to open a second front to reduce German pressure on the Russian Front. Molotov pressured the United States (Roosevelt) and Great Britain (Churchill) to launch a second front in 1942. This would bolster the spirit of the Soviet people and give them

hope to continue fighting.⁸

4. France

France had been over-run by Nazi Germany and had surrendered the government to Germany. There were actually two governments in France: Free French and Vichy.⁹ The Germans recognized the Vichy Government, which governed occupied France. The Vichy French felt that cooperation with the Nazis was the best manner to insure the safety of their country.¹⁰ The Free French resisted the Nazis and controlled large portions of the French Army in North Africa and the Navy in the Mediterranean. The Free French wanted to see Germany defeated and the borders of France restored as they were prior to the war.¹¹ They needed the United States to assist in munitions and personnel to overthrow German Forces in French North Africa and France proper.

The Free French occupied North Africa and wanted desperately to restore the military honor of France after the Vichy Government's surrender to Germany.¹² The Free French leadership had given word to their forces in North Africa to repel invasion by any force.

England had broken diplomatic ties with France when Germany invaded and France surrendered. The United States did not break diplomatic ties and needed the Free French support to invade North Africa. The Allies also needed France back in the war against the Axis powers. France

still had a sizeable naval force in the Mediterranean and more than 100,000 French troops in North Africa.¹³

5. Germany

After Hitler came into power, Germany invaded several European countries and occupied Poland, Holland, Belgium, and France by mid-1940. Germany then invaded Russia and was offensively striking deep into her homeland. Germany wanted to defeat Russia first and then turn its forces to the West to defeat the Allies in Western Europe. Germany did not want to fight a two-front war.¹⁴

Germany also had forces conducting successful campaigns against the British in North Africa. They wanted to defeat Russia and then launch a land-based offensive campaign through the oil rich Caucasus into the Middle East to link up with German forces fighting in North Africa.

B. UNITED STATES STRATEGIC DECISION: Defeat Germany First.

The decision to defeat Germany first was made before America entered World War II. Axis aggression, in both Europe and Asia, threatened the world. Before the Japanese attack on Pearl Harbor, the Defense Department developed a plan, Rainbow Five, to fight this aggression.¹⁵

After World War I and the signing of the Versailles Treaty, the prospect of any future European World War seemed

remote. Of all the European powers, only Britain had enough military force to go to war with the United States. It did not seem likely that Britain and the United States would go to war against each other.

In the Far East, Japan seemed our most likely enemy. United States strategic thought in 1919-1938 focused on Japanese aggression against American interests in the Far East. The United States geared all war plans, Plan Orange, toward fighting a war solely with Japan; however, the international scene changed.¹⁶ In late 1937, Hitler came to power in Nazi Germany. The Axis Pact was soon formed with Germany, Italy, and Japan. The United States realized it might have to get involved in a European war also. Great Britain and France were suffering through economic problems and could not sustain a long war effort.

From 1938 through 1940, strategic attention shifted to Europe as the site of the next war. Principal antagonists shaped up as Axis Powers versus the United States, Great Britain, and France.

The United States realized we would have Allies and came up with the Rainbow Plans in June 1939, five plans in all, each based on different situations.¹⁷ Rainbow Five assumed the United States, Great Britain, and France as Allies with early projection of United States forces to the Eastern Atlantic and to Africa and/or Europe. Rainbow Five stated the broad objectives and missions of the United States, allied with Britain and France against Germany, Italy, and Japan. The plan called for offensive operations

first with Germany and Italy with concurrent defensive operations against Japan.¹⁸ After Germany and Italy were defeated, then focus would be shifted to Japan. There was much discussion about a two-ocean war -- war with Germany in the Atlantic and war with Japan in the Pacific. However, our most pressing and dangerous enemy in mid - 1941 was Germany. Therefore, the decision was made to conduct defensive planning in the Pacific and offensive planning in the Atlantic. Germany would be defeated first and then Japan. The Rainbow Five Plan came closest to actual conditions of World War II; therefore, with the Japanese attack on Pearl Harbor the United States entered the war with the Rainbow Five War Plan as its strategy. Even though Japan unexpectedly attacked the United States in the Pacific, the United States stood behind the strategic plan to defeat Germany first and then turn its attention and war making machine against the Japanese.¹⁹ Germany and Italy would be dealt with first and the only question remaining was whether to land in Africa and/or Europe first.

C. JOINT STRATEGIC DECISION: Land in North Africa First

Rainbow Five was the strategy with which the United States entered the war. The plan called for offensive action in Europe, defeating Germany first, with defensive action in the Pacific against Japan. The only question unanswered by Rainbow Five was where we would make the first invasion,

Africa or Europe.

President Roosevelt eventually made the decision to invade North Africa first, against the advice of his military advisors.²⁰ The reasons to invade North Africa first were political in nature as much as military. Operation Torch, the invasion of North Africa, was an attempt to gain a beachhead and then a lodgement in French North Africa. This lodgement would serve several purposes. First, it opened the Mediterranean to allied shipping. There were several key positions in North Africa: Egypt, the Suez Canal, Syria, Gibraltar, and Malta. If lost, the sea lanes to India and the Far East became vulnerable.²¹ Second, it provided early offensive action against the Axis Powers. It sought to gain initiative against Germany less than one year after the attack on Pearl Harbor and our Declaration of War against the Axis.

The strategy was to hit the enemy in his flank to weaken him before striking the main blow on Western Europe where the enemy would be defeated.²² THE UNITED STATES MILITARY LEADERS HAD DOUBTS AS TO THE VALUE OF OPENING AN OFFENSIVE FRONT IN NORTH AFRICA) THEY FAVORED LANDING IN EUROPE INITIALLY AND BRINGING THE WAR TO GERMANY'S HEARTLAND) THIS REQUIRED A LARGE BUILD-UP OF FORCES AND SUPPLIES IN ENGLAND AND WOULD TAKE TIME)

ROOSEVELT FAVORED THE NORTH AFRICAN INVASION SINCE IT WAS THE EARLIEST WAY TO CARRY THE WAR TO THE GERMANS) THIS WOULD ALSO GIVE THE AMERICAN PUBLIC AND AMERICAN INDUSTRY AN EARLY FEELING OF BEING AT WAR WITH GERMANY)²³

Additionally, there was a need to open a second front to prevent Nazi Germany from taking Russia and her oil rich fields in the Caucasus and the raw materials in the Ukraine. If this happened, the war would be extended since Germany would become stronger. Also, if Russia fell, Germany could shift twenty divisions to the Western Front. The main question was whether to invade North Africa in 1942 or to invade Europe in 1943.²⁴

Plan Bolero, the build up of forces in England, was being written concurrently with Plan Round-Up, the invasion of Europe across the English Channel in 1943. This offered several military advantages. It was the shortest route to Europe and to the heart of Germany. Air superiority could be gained in Europe across the Channel. United States forces could mass in England along with British forces. The invasion across the Channel would shift German focus away from Russia. This would force Germany to fight on two fronts. This plan called for the invasion in the Spring of 1943. This would also help maintain the Soviet Union as a fighting force for eventual offensive action against Germany. British and United States forces would push Germany from the West and Russia would push from the East. Germany would be caught in a vice and defeated in detail.²⁵

This plan required mass production of landing craft seaworthy enough for Channel operations. Problems with the design of craft to handle the winter seas in the Channel delayed the program. Other requirements for landing craft

also arose. Military defeats and naval disasters in the Pacific further reduced the number of landing craft available.²⁶

Washington (Roosevelt) and Russia favored the early invasion of Western Europe in 1942. England initially favored waiting due to lack of sufficient and capable landing craft. With a lack of adequate landing crafts, invasion of Europe was felt by the British to be a sacrificial lamb and the only accomplishment would be to lessen pressure on Russia. United States military leaders also shared this view.²⁷

Rommel's rapid successes in Egypt and the possible loss of the Suez Canal influenced the political leaders and weakened arguments of U.S. military leaders to wait until 1943 to cross the Channel to Western Europe. The British Army was suffering defeats in Libya and had its back against the wall in Egypt. England (Churchill) now pushed for early invasion of North Africa.²⁸

Logistically, the Allies had only enough landing craft to transport four thousand men across the Channel. A lag in landing craft construction made an early invasion across the Channel impossible.²⁹

The President faced several intangible factors: public opinion, possible collapse of Russia, importance of British allegiance, lack of offensive capability in the Pacific since the naval fleet had to be rebuilt. Roosevelt seized the earliest opportunity to go on the offensive with a decisive effort.³⁰ Roosevelt also wanted to gain

assistance from the Free French Resistance Forces in North Africa and the Free French Navy which operated in the Mediterranean. Roosevelt hoped by going into North Africa, Free France would also become an Allied power and help defeat the Axis. Control of the Mediterranean and Middle East would be denied to Germany.

If offensive action was to occur in 1942, it had to be in North Africa. Roosevelt made the decision against the will of the American Joints Chiefs of Staff. The President specified the invasion of French North Africa, Operation Torch, to occur no later than the Fall of 1942.⁸¹

D. JOINT STRATEGIC DECISION: Main Effort of Torch

Once the decision had been made to land in North Africa, the main question was where. American military planners favored landing outside the Mediterranean in French Morocco.⁸² After establishing a base, forces could move north to secure the Straits of Gibraltar and solidify allied access to the Mediterranean Sea. This was a conservative approach and would insure secure lines of communication. The British, on the other hand, favored a crossing within the Mediterranean Sea at Tunisia.⁸³ This plan encompassed a bold move through the Straits of Gibraltar; however, the plan had several advantages. Weather, beach, and tidal conditions were more favorable inside the Mediterranean Basin as opposed to outside on the

Atlantic Coast of Morocco. Also, forward bases at Tunisia would hasten future operations in Libya and Egypt.

Other American planners favored simultaneous landings both inside and outside the Mediterranean Basin. Unexpected heavy naval losses by both the United States and Britain (coupled with a shortage of assault shipping), ruled out simultaneous landings.³⁴ The decision was initially made to make one landing at the softer coast of Algeria inside the Mediterranean. D-Day was initially established as 7 October and planning commenced. Severe shipping, equipment, and training deficiencies existed and it was still unclear as to whether or not the invasion date could be maintained. In fact, it was not.³⁵

Americans favored using an all-American assault force with British forces following in the build-up phase.³⁶ This view was mainly due to bad feelings among the people of North Africa against the British. A strong anti-British feeling was held by the French in North Africa due to the evacuation of British troops at Dunkirk and the British destruction of a portion of the French Navy. Also fueling the anti-British sentiment was the unsuccessful attack at Dakar by English backed French de Gaulle forces.³⁷

The British did not necessarily agree to the amount of anti-British feelings in French North Africa; however, Churchill agreed to all-American assault landings if Roosevelt would consider three as opposed to two landing sites. In an effort to make an invasion feasible in 1942, Roosevelt reconsidered and proposed three landing sites:

Casablanca (outside the Mediterranean Basin), Oran, and Algiers (inside the Mediterranean Basin). All assault forces and back up forces would be American at the first two sites and the third, Algiers, would consist of American assault forces and British back up forces.³⁸

The first Allied offensive operation against the Axis, having overcome significant planning obstacles, began on 8 November 1942. The offensive plan, Operation Torch, consisted of three assault forces conducting amphibious landings at three landing sites: the Western Task Force landing at Casablanca; the Center Task Force landing at Oran; and the Eastern Task Force landing at Algiers.³⁹

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SECTION III. REVIEWING THE TACTICAL SITUATION

Morocco is the only North African country which borders both the Atlantic Ocean and the Mediterranean Sea. The country has historically been important because only nine miles separate the continents of Africa (Morocco's Tangier Peninsula) and Europe (the Iberian Peninsula). Forming the southern shore of the Straits of Gibraltar, Morocco stands as a gateway to one of the world's most important waterways. Throughout history Morocco has served as an African outpost to the gates of Europe. Additionally, the country has served as the bridge between the African and European civilizations and the Muslim and Christian religions. Such a position of strategic importance has resulted in Moroccan shores being controlled by numerous nations for use as launching and landing sites for invading forces.¹

Morocco is the most mountainous country in North Africa, largely because of the impressive Atlas Mountain ranges that run from southwest to northeast in the south central part of the country. The highest range, the High Atlas, lie over 10,000 feet above sea level and have for centuries been a major barrier separating the northern and western parts of Morocco from the south and southeast. The High Atlas lower near the Atlantic coast, where they abruptly terminate in steep cliffs near Agadir.² South of the High Atlas are the Anti-Atlas, which are separated along the Atlantic coast by the triangular-shaped Souss Depression. The Wadi Souss flows

through this depression and reaches the Atlantic just south of Agadir. South of the Anti-Atlas is the broad valley of the Wadi Dra, which dries up before reaching the Atlantic. The Middle Atlas, a northern branch of the High Atlas, forms a western boundary of a triangular plain through which the Moulouya flows on its way to the Mediterranean east of Medilla.³

The High and Middle Atlas form a true central mountain block, which is difficult to penetrate and renders communication between regions difficult.⁴ The Rif Atlas, the northern Atlas branch--extended by the Beni Swassen Mountains to the east of Muluya--run along the Mediterranean coast, forming steep coastal cliffs before curving northwards towards the Straits of Gibraltar.⁵ The Rif Atlas is separated from the Middle Atlas by a broad corridor connecting the Moulouya plain and the Rharb depression. Through the Rharb depression flows the Wadi Sebou, which empties into the Atlantic at Port Lyautey. The town of Fez lies in the narrowest part of the corridor between the Rharb and the Moulouya plain, astride the main communications route between Morocco and Algeria.⁶

Rising 1000 feet above sea level, bordered in the north by the Rharb and the High and Middle Atlas in the east, is the Moroccan Mesata. Across the Mesata flows the Oum er Rbia and the Tensift, which restrict movement due to deep, narrow, and steep-sided wadis. A corridor, the Atlantic Coastal Plain, runs from the Rharb between the Atlantic Ocean and the Moroccan Mesata until it is terminated by the High Atlas

Atlantic coastal cliffs north of Agadir. The coast is generally rocky, with few sheltered bays to protect ships from the strong Atlantic swells; the river mouths are blocked partially by sand bars.⁷ This Atlantic coastal plain, the Chaouia, is up to thirty miles wide. Along it lie the great cities of Morocco: Rabat, Mehres, Casablanca, and Marrakech. Thus, the major road and the principal railroad connecting the cities parallel the Atlantic coast north from Marrakesh through Casablanca to Rabat. Entering the Rharb, the railroad turns east through the city of Fez to Ujda and beyond to Algiers and Tunis. Historically, this route has been the major route linking Morocco to the east.⁸

Morocco's position in the warm latitudes on the western side of the Eurafrikan land mass results in a sub-tropical or Mediterranean climate. The climate is influenced through the seasonal alternation between westerly winds--with accompanying depressions that move eastward from the Atlantic during the winter months--, and the northerly trade winds of summer. Winters are generally rainy and summers dry. The Moroccan climate is greatly influenced by the differences in the country's latitude, elevation variances, and the effects of the Atlantic Ocean and the Mediterranean Sea. Northern Morocco (37° N latitude) has a greater annual rainfall and lower average temperature than the southern portions of the country (27° N latitude). The Atlas Mountain zone is markedly cooler, and generally receives the greater amount of rainfall. The cool Canary Current, which flows southward off the

Moroccan coast, lowers the coastal strip temperatures."

The combination of all these factors results in a decrease in rainfall as one moves southward from the Mediterranean towards the desert, and eastward from the Atlantic. Summer is dry everywhere, except in the Atlas Mountains, where some rainfall occurs due to the elevation. During the winter season approximately 80 Per cent of the total precipitation occurs. In the winter, bitterly cold winds sweep over much of Morocco from the north, bringing with them below-freezing temperatures and snow in the High Atlas. During the spring and early summer, fiercely hot dry winds (sirocco) carrying sand particles occasionally blow from the Sahara.⁹

The Allied Force Headquarters' decision to capture the cities of Oran and Algiers on the Mediterranean coast, and Casablanca on the Atlantic, as the primary objectives of Operation TORCH acknowledged the importance of those cities as centers of French political control in North Africa. Further, those locales were key points of the French rail, highway, and air communication systems.¹⁰ French North Africa contained no substantial administrative complex of depots, storage installations, workshops, or well-developed communications systems to serve the forward troops should they become engaged in modern battles. Accordingly, Allied planners would have to consider those deficiencies and make provisions for bringing the requisite support ashore.¹¹

The beaches on the Atlantic coast were exposed to very

high surf, and the Mediterranean coast was rocky and cliff-lined. Thus, it was crucial that Operation TORCH seize ports at the beginning, as it would be impossible to build up and support further operations from the beaches. The Allied staff consequently decided upon Casablanca on the Atlantic coast, and Oran and Algiers along the Mediterranean. The three cities were to be captured by separate task forces: Algiers by the Eastern Task Force; Oran by the Central Task Force; and Casablanca by the Western Task Force.¹²

The Moroccan Atlantic coast is exposed to the high surf and swell, except in harbors protected by man-made jetties. The ports near Casablanca were too small, shallow, and inadequate to handle the large ships of the Western Task Force. Of the three adequate ports along the coastal roads southwest of Casablanca, Safi was only 140 miles away, while Agadir and Mogador were over two hundred miles. Thus, the harbor of Safi was to be used to land armor, and to prevent the reinforcements stationed at Marrakech from reaching Casablanca. Fifty-three miles northeast of Casablanca was Rabat, capital of French Morocco, and twenty-five miles further north was Mehdiya. Mehdiya-Port Lyautey offered a better port than Rabat, would provide a concrete runway and excellent beaches, and could probably be captured more easily. Thus, Mehdiya-Port Lyautey was to be used to seize the Port Lyautey airfields and to protect the northern flank of Operation TORCH.¹³

The coastline around Casablanca is characterized by

shallow beaches with difficult exits (due to high bluffs near the shore), except for the small fishing and Petroleum storage Port of Fedala. The beaches on the Baie de Fedala, eighteen miles north of Casablanca, were large enough to accomodate the bulk of the invading force. To the east, extending inland for about a mile, was a broad shelf dotted with a few low sand hills. The shelf, located between two rivers, then rose by rounded slopes to a two-hundred-foot Plateau. The beach offered not only a wide landing front and maneuver space, but also a small Port to expedite the landing of heavy equipment, less tanks. Accordingly, the Allied landing at Fedala was to initiate operations for the capture of Casablanca. ¹⁴

The town of Fedala, with a population of 16,000, lies on a shallow bay, Baie de Fedala, fourteen miles northeast of Casablanca. The town and bay lie between the Nefifikh River and Cherqui Point, three miles northeast, and the Mellah River to the southwest. The Fedala harbor is at the western end of the bay, inside the Cap de Fedala, and Protected by two perpendicular man-made Jetties. One 800-foot Jetty extends southeast from the Cap de Fedala, and a 1600-foot Jetty extends north from the southern shore of the bay. The entrance to the Port is through a dredged channel within a 100-yard-wide opening between the tips of the two Jetties. Between the Jetties and the Cherqui Point is a crescent line of sandy beaches, occasionally broken by rocky outcrops. ¹⁵

The beaches were designated Beach Red, Red 2, Red 3, Blue and Blue 2. All were exposed to the heavy Atlantic swell and

high surf, except for Beach Red--Protected somewhat by the Cap de Fedala.¹⁶ Beach Red lay directly beneath the coastal guns of Cap de Fedala, and Red 2 lay between the Port Jetty and a rocky reef 1800 yards to the east. The water leading to those two firm sandy beaches was shallow for a considerable distance offshore, and the beaches were separated by a small, covered, rocky reef two hundred yards offshore. Both beaches were between 30 to 60 yards wide, with Beach Red about 800 yards long and Beach Red 2 approximately 500 yards in length. Beach Red opened directly into the streets of Fedala; about 250 yards east of the Jetty was a larger wooden casino surrounded by gardens. Extending the complete length of Beach Red, between the town and the beach, was a 10-foot-high seawall with three or four openings. Beach Red 2 exited through cultivated plots and sparsely built-up town blocks.¹⁷

Adjacent to Beach Red 2, and separated by a long rocky reef, was a continuous 600-yard beachline, designated Beach Red 3 and Blue Beach. This long, continuous beachline was separated 400 yards offshore by a half-fathom sand bar. Both beaches were 400 to 500 feet deep, and exited through sand dunes into flat, cultivated fields to the Fedala road 400 yards inland. The Nefifikh River entered the bay through a deep wadi which extended for over a mile into the bay. At the head of a small cove near the mouth of Wadi Nefifikh, between Blue Beach and Cherqui Point, was Blue Beach 2. The cove entrance contained a one fathom-deep sand bar, and at half tide the beach was about 600 yards long. The beach

exited to bluffs paralleling the Wadi Nefifikh and overlooked on the east bluff by the coastal guns of Pont Blondin.¹⁸

One hundred yards to the south was the Fedala road, which crossed the Wadi Nefifikh by the Blondin bridge. A mile and a half inland from the beach was the Casablanca-Rabat road and the railroad. Beach Blue 3 was located three miles northeast of Cherqui Point; it too was situated at the head of a small cove --this one at the mouth of the Wadi Armenia. The south side of the cove contained a small beach fronted by rocks. The beach exited through gradually upward-sloping, cultivated fields to the Fedala road, 100 yards from the cove. Inland 2300 yards was the Casablanca-Rabat road.¹⁹

The Mellah River entered the Atlantic along a meandering course through marshes and tidal flats west of the Baie de Fedala, at the base of the Cap de Fedala. On the west side of the Wadi Mellah was a small beach, designated by Allied Planners as Beach Yellow.²⁰ Beach Yellow and Blue Beach 3, due to their small sizes, could handle only auxiliary forces on special missions. The main landings by battalion landing teams would utilize Beaches Red, Red 2, Red 3, Blue, and Blue 2.²¹

Casablanca, with a population of 257,430, lay on a six-mile coastal bulge between Table d'Oukacha on the east and El Hank on the west. An artificial harbor, the best on the Moroccan Atlantic coast, lay east of the bulge. The covered storage, lifting devices, auxiliary equipment, area, and depth of the harbor made the harbor essential for a

successful North African campaign. The terrain between Fedala and Casablanca was characterized by a flat shelf extending approximately one mile from the coast. The shelf rose gradually to a Plateau eroded into low ridges and hills dotted with small vineyards, farms, and clumps of trees.²²

The major routes to Casablanca were along the Fedala-Casablanca road, the Casablanca-Rabat road, and the Casablanca-Rabat railroad.²³ These three intersected at the eastern Casablanca suburb of Sebaa, about three miles from the Casablanca harbor. The Casablanca-Rabat road, and a spur of the railroad, passed through the Casablanca industrial section south of Roches Noires to the Port, with the road continuing southwest along the coast.²⁴ The Casablanca-Fedala road became the Route De Grande Centure where it turned south, forming the rim of a wheel four miles from the Port as it circled Casablanca and intersected the major road spokes from the city: Casablanca-Kasba road, the Casablanca-Marrakech, and the Casablanca-Safi, among others. The Route de Grande Centure passed by the Cazes airfield as it turned due west to again intersect the main Casablanca-Rabat road on the coast -- approximately three miles southwest of the Port. The road then proceeded southwest towards Safi, Mogador, and Agadir. Between the Route de Grande Centure and the main populated area of Casablanca, the level and gently-sloped terrain contained small residential sections, parks, and cemeteries.²⁵

The Western Task Force, of which the 3d Infantry Division

constituted the predominant ground element, consisted of nearly 35,000 soldiers under the command of Major General George S. Patton. Besides the 3d Division (Reinforced), Patton's force comprised a CCB Plus one armored battalion from the 2d Armored Division, and both the 47th and 60th Regimental Combat Teams (RCT) of the 9th Infantry Division.²⁶ Naval Task Force 34, commanded by Rear Admiral Henry K. Hewitt, was to provide escort for the 29 troop ships. To accomplish his primary task, Hewitt had three battleships, five cruisers, an aircraft carrier and three auxiliary carriers, an anti-aircraft cruiser, and thirty-four destroyers.²⁷ The mission assigned the overall Task Force, as outlined previously, was to seize and secure French Northwest Africa (and particularly the port of Casablanca) with a view to further offensive operations.²⁸

Naval air would support each of the three sub-task forces by eliminating enemy air forces in the area of operations, furnishing close support to landing parties, and by executing reconnaissance. Simultaneously, naval gunfire was to destroy opposition from enemy shore batteries, provide covering barrage against beach defense, and fire on targets of opportunity. Air Force P40's, aboard the carrier SHENANGO, were to reinforce the naval fighter force, and to land and operate from captured enemy airfields.²⁹

Sub-Task Force BRUSHWOOD, spearheaded by Major General J.W. Anderson's 3d Division, was to establish itself on shore, capture and secure Fedala, and initiate operations to the southwest to capture Casablanca from the rear (east). The

Headquarters and Headquarters Company, 3d Division, was designated headquarters also for the sub-task force. Including its normally attached tank units, the 3d's maneuver elements comprised three infantry brigades--the 7th, 15th, and 30th--and two tank companies from the 756th Tank Battalion. Additionally, the 2d Armored Division supported the task force with its 1st Battalion, 67th Armored Regiment (less Company C), a reinforced armored infantry company, and a reconnaissance platoon. (See detailed sub-task force organization at Annex D.)³⁰

Opposing Sub-Task Force BRUSHWOOD in the vicinity of Fedala were an estimated 2600 soldiers of the French Moroccan Army whose will to fight could not be ascertained. These forces included a company of the 1st Regiment Tirailleurs Marocains, the 2d Battalion 6th Regiment, and a reinforced company of the 6th Regiment Tirailleurs Senegalais. Enemy cavalry was expected to consist of the 2d Mechanized Troops, 3d Regiment Spahis Marocains, while artillery support was anticipated from mixed 75-mm and 13.2 mm machine guns of the 1st Battalion, Defense Artillerie du Territoire (DAT).³¹

Further south, at Casablanca, the enemy was estimated to have concentrated three additional infantry battalions (approximately 865 soldiers each), a mechanized cavalry troop, and a reinforced horse cavalry squadron. The Regt Artillerie Coloniale du Maroc had been identified near Casablanca, and was suspected to have available up to twenty-four 75 mm guns. Although not confirmed by intelligence reports, the presence

of the 1st Battalion 64th Regt d' Artillerie d' Afrique was anticipated also. Reports varied as to whether that battalion was armed with 75s, 105s, or 155s. Anti-aircraft artillery from the 410th Defense Contre Avions (D.C.A), employing ten 75 mm guns and two 13.2 mm guns among its three batteries, supported the enemy contingent, and friendly intelligence analysts further suspected the presence of two engineer detachments (from the 33rd and 41st Engineer Battalions). At Mediouna, about twenty miles inland from Casablanca, the 1st Infantry Battalion of the 64th Regiment Tirailleurs Marocains promised additional ground forces to be brought forward in defense during D-Day. ³²

For coastal defense, the opposing forces had positioned an estimated battery of four 138.6 mm guns, known as "Batterie du Pont Blondin," about three miles east of the lighthouse. With an approximate range of 18,000 meters, those guns were protected by a searchlight and one 13.2 mm AAMG. ³³ Another battery of two uncamouflaged 75 mm guns on the tip of Cape Fedala were reinforced further by the "Batterie de Fedala," with four 100 mm guns, near the signal station on the Cape. Yet another three or four large-caliber guns had been reported about 1600 yards southwest of Mansouria Inlet, northeast of Fedala. ³⁴

For additional anti-aircraft support, the French Moroccans counted twelve twin-barreled 13.2 mm AAMGs within range of the coastal defense guns, an estimated battery of four 75 mm AA guns near the golf course, and an additional two 105 mm AA

guns--together with two searchlights, a range finder, and sound-ranging equipment--at the battery position. Yet another six 37 mm AA guns were sited on the golf course across the river to the southwest of town, and three AA guns--with searchlight--had been reported a mile and a half west of Sidi Bou Lanouar, southwest of Fedala.³⁵

Analysts thought it probable that the enemy would employ a trench system, with weapon pits, along the coast from Cape Fedala to the mouth of the Mellah River, and also along a belt across the neck of the Peninsula which ended in Cape Fedala. There were numerous short trenches, apparently for anti-aircraft passive defense, in and about the town. There were no reports of underwater obstacles on any of the beaches targeted for amphibious assault.³⁶

In summary, each of the identified units had to be assumed as present for the defense against a hostile landing at Fedala, though the level of expected resistance could not be assessed precisely. In addition, the Allied sub-task force planners had to entertain the possibility that guns of the battleship JEAN BART, secured in Casablanca Harbor, might bear on the amphibious assault, albeit at a maximum range. Discounting those forces of the enemy likely to be diverted to defend against landings at Port Lyautey and Safi by the northern ("Goal Post") and southern ("Blackstone") sub-task forces, the division G-2's estimate of probable opposition to a landing at Fedala was:

	Considered Present	Additional On D-Day	On D+1	- TOTAL
Inf Mecz	5 Bns	1 Bn	2 Bns	8 Bns
Mecz Cav	3 Trs	1 Sq	-	3 Sqs
H Cav	3 Trs	-	-	3 Trs
Arty	4 Bns	-	2 Bns	6 Bns

The enemy air arm consisted of 74 fighters, 13 reconnaissance Planes, and 81 long-range bombers.³⁷ Initially, planners thought that those forces would operate from the coastal airdromes against the BRUSHWOOD convoy, withdrawing to the airdromes at Marrakech, Meknes, and Fez as landing operations commenced. The 3d Division staff thought air support by long-range German bombers, operating from French and Spanish airfields, a distinct possibility; however, they did not anticipate reinforcements of the French air forces in French Morocco, unless a marked increase in supplies of fuel and bombs was detected prior to D-Day.

Along with the JEAN BART, French naval forces identified at Casablanca included two light cruisers, eight to ten destroyers, ten to twelve submarines, two motor torpedo boats, and twelve navy fighter aircraft.³⁸ Submarines based at Casablanca were believed to be patrolling the coastal waters, and the opposition was known to be convoying its coastal shipping with destroyers. Accordingly, it appeared probable that the French would use their submarine and destroyer forces to intercept any Allied convoy approaching the Moroccan coast. Assessing the action at Dakar, analysts had concluded that the cruisers would not leave port, and that the JEAN BART would serve merely as a floating fortress.³⁹

From a study of the total forces available to the French for the defense of Morocco, intelligence officers had concluded that French defense would probably consist of initial air and naval attacks against the troop convoys, followed by a stubborn defense of the Ports of Port Lyautey, Rabat-Fedala-Casablanca, Safi, and Agadir. The opposition could reinforce those Ports quickly with mobile reserves at Meknes-Fez and Marrakech, with a final defense near Casablanca north of the Oued-Oum-Rbia.⁴⁰

A final comment on the organization and disposition of French forces in Morocco is warranted. Available French forces had been restricted under the terms of an armistice between France and Germany in 1940.⁴¹ By 1942, those forces were known to include 120,000 troops: 55,000 in Morocco; 50,000 in Algeria; and 15,000 in Tunisia at the outset of Allied operational planning in London.⁴² The twelve units of motorized field artillery allowed included neither medium nor heavy guns. The mechanized cavalry could muster between 120 and 160 obsolete tanks and 80 armored cars in Morocco, and antiaircraft artillery for the entire colony consisted of a single dispersed regiment. At the Ports, however, supplementary batteries were manned by naval personnel.

Of the combat planes known to be staged at the Moroccan airdromes, almost half were thought to be Dervoitine 520 fighters, low-wing, all-metal monoplanes with a reputed range of 500 miles, a speed of 340 miles per hour, and a ceiling of 32,500 feet. Thus, they were superior in maneuverability to

the carrier-borne fighters of the Allied navy.⁴³ The remaining half were thought to be twin-engined bombers, all manned by capable French pilots.

It was uncertain as to whether the German fighters would also respond to early warnings issued from submarine intercepts or from air patrols as the convoys approached. If the Germans opted to use the Spanish and Spanish Moroccan airdromes for their concentrations, they might achieve overwhelming air superiority during the initial phases of the amphibious assault; however, such superiority would be constrained--as pointed out previously--by available stocks of aviation fuel and bombs.⁴⁴

The 3d Infantry had remained on the west coast of the United States until just before the final phases of training, throughout the summer and fall of 1942. Meanwhile, participating elements from the 2d Armored Division, with supporting units, had trained at Fort Bragg and elsewhere on the east coast. The 3d Division finally arrived at Camp Pickett, Virginia, in mid-September, only a few days before scheduled rehearsal.⁴⁵

Consequently, troop training, especially in air/ground cooperation, was inadequate. The U.S. Army Air Corps, caught in the accompanying pressures of rapid expansion, could not afford the aircraft and personnel for effective training with ground troops. Moreover, considerable disagreement existed between air and ground components in their concepts of

battlefield support--the air forces being preferential to heavy concentration on strategic bombing. ⁴⁶

Available transport governed the preparation of schemes of maneuver, and training objectives of the sub-task force focused upon simulation of the actual conditions expected ashore at Fedala. General Patton's headquarters had directed that a landing exercise--code-named "QUICK"--be conducted on Solomon Island from 3-8 October. The purpose of the exercise was to organize the sub-task force with ships assigned; to formulate a master boat employment plan; and to train units in loading, ship-to-shore movement, joint communications, tactical operations ashore, and handling of supplies.

The training program was hampered further by the incessant drain of manpower to fill quotas for officer candidate school or to cadres of newly-activating units. The succession of individual "filler replacements"--whom time precluded from receiving the unit "integration" training advocated so widely nowadays--resulted in units with imbalanced training levels of proficiency. As the target date for the invasion neared and preparations came to a close, the prevalent atmosphere was one of improvisation and haste, unavoidable in view of the ambitious operation to be undertaken with limited resources. ⁴⁷

From its training experiences, the 3d Division's command had concluded that unit integrity and prompt reorganization upon landing ashore could best be accomplished by assembling

all assault and reserve BLTs afloat in landing craft prior to approaching the landing beach. All would be put ashore as quickly as possible. At Fedala, each assault battalion was given a unique landing schedule adapted to the particular characteristics of its beach and its mission.⁴⁸ Planners anticipated that the actual landings would require from one to three hours; for that purpose, each of the four BLTs was assigned up to forty-five personnel landing craft and as many as nine tank lighters. Since no transport could carry more than thirty-four landing craft, boats and crews from other transports were "loaned" temporarily. When combined, the detailed boat employment plan called for putting assault units ashore before daylight, with follow-on support elements debarking quickly during the morning.⁴⁹

The complicated logistical problem of supplying Allied soldiers from different countries was lessened by the nearly total American composition of ground elements among the Western Task Force. A command decision made by General Clark on 28 September in Washington--in conference with Generals Patton, Wilson, and Lutes--had fixed the level of supplies for the entire Western Task Force at forty-five days and ten units of fire. Further, organic equipment was pared to only fifty per cent of the normal ship tonnage required.⁵⁰ Pressing requirements dictated that the Western Task Force was to be short of equipment and service troops for a minimum period of three months.

Each primary task force was directed to organize its own

service of supply, including support bases to become operative at the port sites once lodgement areas had been secured. General Wilson was to command SOS, Western Task Force (and, eventually, the Atlantic Base Section at Casablanca). Planners recognized that the necessary housekeeping chores of providing adequate inventory controls and establishing requisitioning procedures were contingent upon rapid establishment of the support bases. Accordingly, replenishment of Class II, IV, and V items were based upon the "push" system, with automatic resupply of those commodities during the first two months. The Western Task Force was to be supplied directly from the United States, with requisitions being forwarded to the New York Port of Embarkation.

BRUSHWOOD planners had directed, in accordance with the Western Task Force order, that individual soldiers be issued sufficient "K" rations for only the first one and one-third days following debarkation ashore. Organizational units were to maintain an additional four days' rations (1 "C," 1 "D," and 2 type "K") from stores placed on vehicles prior to embarkation. Beach reserves were to stock another thirteen days' supply, while a sixty-day level of type "B" landing rations and thirty day "floating reserve"--with flour component--were to be established also.

Thirty-day levels of supply were also the norm for classes II, IV, and VII (with a ninety-day floating reserve of engineer material and equipment, the availability of which was "to be announced.")⁵¹ Fuel and lubricants were restricted

generally to a fifteen-day initial supply, with an additional fifteen day supply to be available on D+5.⁵²

Ammunition "units of fire" were allocated as follows:

Ground Troops

(1) 2 1/2 units for vehicular, individual, and non-vehicular automatic weapons, with an additional 2 1/2 units cargo-loaded on ships, marked for the Particular troops on those ships.

(2) Ten units of fire--all types--marked for each force, to be loaded as far as Practicable on the same ships as the weapons. Another 5 units, all types, plus any part of the first 15 units that could not be loaded, were to be carried in floating reserve.⁵³ Establishment of ammunition supply points were the responsibility of each force commander, assisted by ordnance personnel.

Water--a commodity of serious concern to planners--was to be furnished by naval vessels in support of the task force until adequate shore sources could be developed. Assault troops were ordered to debark with two filled canteens apiece.⁵⁴ Commanding officers were instructed to emphasize strict compliance with conservation, sanitation, and water Purification Procedures. A minimum of two gallons of water per man per day for drinking purposes was to be the norm.⁵⁵

Succession of command for Sub-task Force BRUSHWOOD was from MG Anderson, embarked on TRUE, to BG Campbell aboard the DIRK, next to BG Eagles--also embarked on TRUE--and finally

to Colonel Momor on GLUE. Six command Posts "afloat" were stipulated:⁵⁶

Sub-Task Force BRUSHWOOD	TRUE
RLG-7	ETCH
RLG-30	LOAF
RLG-15	GLUE
CT 2d AD	SPUR
2d Bn 20th Engrs	SORT
3d RCN TR (until H-2)	JUGS

Communications were Planned generally according to doctrine developed by the Amphibious Force.⁵⁷ Tactical nets were to function as normal, to facilitate Passage of command and control ashore. Each assaulting BLT was to be accompanied by a Joint Communications Section, whose assignment was to provide radio communications to the highest headquarters ashore, maintain a naval circuit to the ships and an army net to the headquarters ship, and establish a voice channel to traffic control boats standing off the beaches. Additionally, the sections were to maintain a signal lamp station, lateral wire communications to adjacent beaches, and a beach message center. Both army and navy Personnel were directed to man the sections.⁵⁸

Two radio circuits were Planned to work between Task Force HQ and the three sectors. These were to be manned aboard ship initially, with movement ashore synchronized with

the progress of the landing force. One circuit would remain at the beachhead site, with the other colocated forward with the tactical command Posts.⁵⁹

During Planning, a concerted effort was made to coordinate the use of ciphers, especially those common to both services. In addition, a specially-developed amphibious warfare code and special strip cipher were issued to all units, down to battalion level, by the Amphibious Force. Because the overall operation involved possible joint action by the British and U.S. navies, most ships maintained a special issue of British Publications. A detail of two British officers and twelve signal ratings had been assigned to the flagships for radio and cryptographic work.⁶⁰

As the convoy transited the Atlantic, leaders made efforts to emphasize communications training. Signal Personnel spent periods of "general quarters" handling drill traffic, routing, encoding and decoding, and familiarizing messengers and operators with the ship. As much as possible, subordinate Personnel received instruction pertaining to the mission of the force, the communications plan, and their respective roles in those plans.⁶¹

The French Moroccans, on the other hand, were able to rely upon submarine cable, telegraph, and telephone to supplement tactical communications ashore. Available information indicated that many of the smaller towns had telephone service, together with small common battery or magneto-type switchboards. The approximately 4,000 miles of

telegraph lines in French Morocco were thought to parallel most of the railroads and main-traveled highways, as pointed out previously. Existing radio facilities at Casablanca, to include the Air Ministry Station, had been pinpointed by Allied analysts.

The enemy was thought to have the capability to jam, transmit false messages, intercept, and to perform cryptanalysis.⁶² Accordingly, the 3d Division Field Order stipulated that no radio set would be allowed to operate while the amphibious convoy was enroute. Army circuits were to maintain radio silence until H-hour. During the assault phase, one of the principal channels of communication between the beaches and seaward was to be visual signalling by lamp or flag.⁶³

Task Force BRUSHWOOD's general scheme of maneuver called for initiation of landing operations during the ebbing tide of the early morning hours, with the main landings at Beach Red 2, Red 3, Blue, and Blue 2. Smaller unit landings would occur at Beach Yellow and Beach Blue 3. Follow-up landings would be attempted at Beach Red when the area was firmly established under friendly control. The initial beachhead would be approximately five miles deep, between the western bank of the Mellah River and the eastern bank of the Nefifikh River.

BLT 1, RLT 7, was to land at H-hour on Beach Red 2, enter Fedala from the east, and proceed along the Boulevard Moulay, Ruede Fez, Avenue de la Kasba, Road Point Pertain, and

Boulevard Foch. After seizing key areas in the town, BLT 1-7 was to continue its attack to silence the two coastal defense gun batteries on the Cape. BLT 2-7, commanded by Lt. Col. Rafael L. Salzmänn, would attack from Beach Red 3 to seize control of bridges over the Wadi Hellah and to clear a residential zone south and west of the town.⁶⁴ The 7th regiment's third BLT was ordered to land one rifle company at Beach Yellow at H+1. Advancing inland, the reinforced company was to seize the crossing of the Mediouna-Fedala Highway over the Wadi Mellah, and the railroad crossing approximately 1100 yards to the south. Upon seizure of the Wadi Mellah line, RLG-7 would continue the advance to the BRUSHWOOD objective.

RLG-30 was similarly directed to land two BLTs at H-hour, with BLT 1-30 advancing four miles inland from Beach Blue to a long ridge well beyond the main Casablanca-Rabat Highway. Commanded by Lt. Col. Fred W. Slatten, Jr., the BLT was ordered to assist the advance of RLG-7 as well. BLT 2, RLG-30, would land at Beach Blue, advance inland, and capture the powerful coastal guns of Batterie du Pont Blondin on the Cherqui headland. BLT 2-30 would seize and hold the Fedala road, Casablanca-Rabat railroad, and the Casablanca-Rabat road crossings over the Wadi Nefifikh. BLT 3-30, in reserve, would land a reinforced rifle company that would advance along the coast in the direction of Wadi Nefifikh, capture hostile defensive positions east of BLT 2's objective, and assist BLT 2 in the capture of the enemy's coastal defenses north of Beach Blue 2.⁶⁵

The entire 15th Regiment would constitute the Task Force BRUSHWOOD reserve. RLG-15 would land on BRUSHWOOD order after H+2 at a beach to be designated, move inland to an assembly area in the zone of RLG-7, and begin reconnaissance of routes to and crossing over the Wadi Mellah--in preparation for the advance on Casablanca on the left of RLG-7.⁶⁶ The combat team from 2d Armored Division would also land "on order" after H+3, assemble south of Fedala, and prepare to cross the Wadi Mellah and attack hostile formations advancing from the direction of Casablanca. Similarly, the 2d Battalion 20th Engineers also would land on order after H+3, move to Fedala, and prepare to relieve elements of RLG-7 in Fedala. The engineers would then mop up hostile resistance in Fedala and Fedala Harbor, with the intent to preclude damage to the harbor and port.⁶⁷

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SECTION IV: DESCRIBING THE ACTION

The 3d Infantry Division mission directed: land on beaches in the vicinity of Fedala; seize Fedala as a temporary base of operations; and attack toward Casablanca, sixteen miles to the southwest. Other elements of the Western Task Force conducted landings at Safi, 120 miles southwest of Casablanca, which had a harbor suitable for off loading armor, and at Port Lyautey, eighty miles northeast of Casablanca, which had an airfield from which the attack on Casablanca could be supported.¹

To accomplish the mission the 3d Infantry Division, reinforced by the 1st Battalion, 67th Armored Regiment, organized into three Regimental Landing Groups (RLGs), the 7th Infantry (Col. Robert Macon), the 15th Infantry (Col. Thomas C. Monroe), and the 30th Infantry (Col. Arthur H. Rogers). Each RLG consisted of three Battalion Landing Teams (BLTs) comprising a battalion of infantry, a platoon of combat engineers, self-propelled antiaircraft guns, shore fire control and air support parties, medical, signal, service, and other detachments. Supporting arms came from the 9th, 10th, 39th, and 41st Field Artillery Battalions, 10th Combat Engineer Battalion, 36th Engineer Regiment (shore party), 443d Coast Artillery (AA) Battalion, and two companies of the 756th Tank Battalion (light). The Armored Landing Team from the 67th Armored Regiment included

elements of the 41st Armored Infantry Regiment, 78th Armored Field Artillery Battalion, 17th Armored Engineer Battalion, and 82d Reconnaissance Battalion, all from the 2d Armored Division. Major General Jonathon W. Anderson commanded Sub Task Force Brushwood (3d Infantry Division reinforced). With all attachments the force totaled approximately 19,500 officers and men.² Annex D provides the detailed troop list.

Opposing forces consisted of Vichy French units, Moroccan Spahis (cavalry), and some Senegalese units.³ Information furnished by the War Department indicated that the attitude of the French armed forces was highly uncertain. Many French officers supported the Allied cause, while others staunchly supported Vichy control or favored the pro-Axis. Accordingly, defensive locations and the extent of enemy resistance could not be accurately estimated.⁴ Intelligence reports did place about a battalion and a half of infantry in Fedala, two or three antiaircraft batteries, and a coastal gun battery on Cape Fedala, and a field artillery battery and two troops of Moroccan Spahis also in the area. In Casablanca intelligence identified three or four infantry battalions, four troops of Spahis (one mechanized), and four artillery battalions.⁵

The tactical plan called for destruction of the enemy batteries on Cape Fedala and the Batterie du Pont Blondin on the Cherqui Headland three miles to the northeast. Until these batteries were silenced, no craft could safely approach shore, nor could the Port of Fedala be used to off

load follow-on troops and supplies. The 7th Infantry was to capture the town and Cape Fedala, neutralizing the guns. The 30th Infantry was to attack and reduce the Batterie du Pont Blondin and protect rear and left flank of the division. The 15th Infantry, landing as the division reserve regiment, was to pass inland on the left of the 7th Infantry, and in conjunction with the 7th Infantry conduct a coordinated attack on Casablanca.⁶

A. SHIP TO SHORE MOVEMENT

The 3d Infantry Division convoy, known as Sub-Task Force Brushwood was part of the Central Task Group of the Western Task Force. On 7 November 1942, the Western Task Force convoy, consisting of one aircraft carrier, three battleships, five cruisers, three auxiliary carriers, one antiaircraft cruiser, thirty-four destroyers, and twenty-nine transports,⁷ turned northeast from a deceptive course laid toward Dakar and began deploying the task groups to their respective transport areas just before dark.⁸

Due to intermittent rain squalls, Sub Task Force Brushwood arrived off Fedala at 2340 on 7 November, vice the planned 2300.⁹ Shortly afterward the lights in Fedala and Casablanca went out. At 0100 8 November President Roosevelt and the Allied High Command broadcast to the people of North Africa that the landing was forthcoming. Further, should they desire to cooperate, they should stack

arms and point their searchlights into the sky.¹⁰ This broadcast may have alerted some of the defenses in Casablanca, but not in Fedala. The transports formed into four columns with the Leonard Wood (BLT 1-7), Thomas Jefferson (BLT 2-7), Charles Carroll (BLT 1-30), and the Joseph T. Dickman (BLT 2-30) in the column nearest the shore. As the convoy neared its destination, the naval task force commander discovered that an unexpected current had carried the convoy a few miles from the desired position. To correct the error, the transports conducted two 45-degree turns. Some vessels misinterpreted the signals. As a result the convoy formation became deranged. Radar revealed some transports at least 10,000 yards from their designated positions. Ships continued movement in darkness, aided by a control vessel, in order to reestablish their planned formation six to eight miles off shore.¹¹

Captain Emmett, the naval task force commander, described the situation to General Anderson at 0130. The two reasoned that the four assault Battalion Landing Teams (BLTs 1-7, 2-7, 1-30, and 2-30) were near enough to their assigned positions to make the 0400 H-hour. In fact, one of the four ships, thought to be in position, carried a reserve unit, while one of the assault BLTs was one hour away. Three scout boats moved toward the shore to mark the beaches. At 0215 the Leonard Wood reported a lagging rate for unloading of vehicles and heavy equipment as well as a slowness for the assembly of the landing craft. The detailed boat employment plan tasked landing craft from ships other

than assault ships to carry assault units to the beach. Shortage of landing craft deemed such action necessary. More modern landing vehicles such as LSTs, LCIs, and "ducks" were still on the drawing boards.¹² Because the assault ships had lost formation, these small craft had great difficulty locating their assigned ships.¹³ Captain Emmett in consonance with General Anderson delayed H-hour to 0430, and directed the transports to use their own landing craft to disembark as large a proportion of the assault BLTs as possible without waiting for boats from transports in the outer positions.¹⁴ In effect; Sub Task Force Brushwood disregarded the loading plans for ship to shore movement. Great confusion resulted. Boat crews drifted aimlessly in the dark from transport to transport megraphoning "Is this the Ancon ?" "Is this the Leonard Wood ?" The navigator on the Biddle could not locate the Bliss , which was entirely out of position.¹⁵

Troops, overburdened with heavy, combersome packs, took longer than planned to load the landing craft. The four control destroyers Wilkes , Swanson , Ludlow , and Murphy , which were located 4000 yards off shore, reported at 0415 that some of the assault battalions had only one wave present for the assault. Accordingly, General Anderson delayed H-hour another fifteen minutes until 0445.¹⁶

Two assault ships Allen and Anthony were believed to be six miles out when the first waves of landing craft left their transports. This led to the breaking of radio silence by the Navy. Then, while loading of landing craft

continued, five French commercial ships with lights on passed through the Center Task Group. One of the ships flashed "Caution ashore.....alerted for 5 A.M."17

The leading waves of Task Force Brushwood started toward the beaches from the line of departure at 0445 with the follow on waves three minutes late. The scout boats had difficulties identifying the beaches. They signalled energetically as the lead waves approached the beach, but no sign of action was observed on land. Between 0500 and 0505 on 8 November 1942, the first wave started landing on the beaches under cover of darkness and without opposition. The majority of the French troops slept in the barracks. When the motors of the landing craft were first heard, searchlights shot skyward from Cape Fedala looking for aircraft. Because the Allied High Command broadcast specified vertical searchlight beams as a signal of nonresistance, a brief moment of hope glimmered. But almost immediately the lights came down to the sea approaches on the boatloads of troops. An escorting patrol boat fired its .50 caliber machine gun to put out the lights as the first man leaped ashore.18

Although the surf never attained more than four feet for all of D-day, the inability of the scout boats to locate specific beaches and the cross currents in the surf zone impaired an orderly landing. Correspondent Harold V. Boyle, landing with the 30th Infantry, painted the scene in an Associated Press release.

"Our section of the convoy reached its journey's end in a light rain. Darkest Africa was only a dim glow as we pulled away from the transport and circled toward our rendezvous point.

Phosphorescent flecks gleamed briefly in the water and were gone like drawing fireflies when the boats assembled. We turned suddenly toward shore at full speed with motors roaring.

We were in the third assault wave. The first two waves, which preceded us by a matter of moments, landed safely on a four-mile stretch of beach between Cape Fedala and the Pont du Blondin area known as the Riviera of French Morocco.

They had reached shore in the darkness, completely surprising French batteries at each end of the beach. As we neared the coastline, however, a bright searchlight stabbed the skies at Pont du Blondin and then swept seaward, catching our assault wave.

In a bright glare that dazzled the coxswains, we ducked to the bottom of the boat. Machine gun bullets ripped across the water at us. A naval support boat on our left flank opened fire at the searchlights with .50 caliber machine guns.

We could clearly see in quick glimpses, the red path of the tracer bullets striking above, below, and to the right of the shining target.

Then came a grinding crash as our landing boat smashed full speed into a coral reef which has helped to win this shore the name of Iron Coast.

The craft climbed futilely, then fell back in the water.

From its ripped front ramp the water climber to our shootops, then surged to our knees.

"Everyman overboard," said the boat commander.

We plunged from the sides of the settling craft up to our armpits in the surf and struggled to the reef. Waves washed over our heads, doubling the weight of our 60-pound packs with water, but sweeping us nearer safety. I grabbed an outcropping of coral.

A soldier there before me, lay on it completely exhausted. He was unable to move and was blocking me. Twice the surf pulled me loose and twice it returned me.

My strength was ebbing fast when another soldier pulled up the man before me and lent me a wet hand to safety.

When I could stand again, I saw the scores of dripping soldiers, their legs weary and wide-braced.

Staff Sergeant John Anspacher, my public relations escort, and I discarded our lifebelts and turned toward the shore. We had to clamber

across a 100-yard patch of spike-sharp coral reef and wade to the shore.

The way those soaked men, a few moments before so weary they could not stand, forgot their fatigue on seeing their objectives is a never-to-be-forgotten example of soldierly fortitude.

Forlorn on a hostile coast, with much of their heavy equipment fathoms under the salt water, they quickly organized and turned to their assigned tasks when we had crossed the beach and flung ourselves beneath a covering grove of pepper trees.

I found I had a two-inch gash on my right thumb and a lace work of cuts on both hands to remember our soggy trek through the coral.

Our grove quickly became dangerous. We were caught between our own fire and the batteries of Pontd'Blondin above us. After one shell showered dirt only a few yards behind us, we split away from the beach and turned toward Cape Fedala...."13

BLT 1-7 from the Leonard Wood landed on beaches Red, Red 2, Red 3, and the rocky shore between Red2 and Red 3, instead of Red 2 as planned. Artillery and machine gun fire hit the beaches causing considerable confusion. However, opposition consisted of one poorly equipped Senegalese company and the landing succeeded. The surf swept many boats out of control, throwing them against rocks with such destructive force that they either capsized or smashed. Twenty-one of the thirty-one boats were lost. Troops, overburdened by packs could not swim and drowned. The Thomas Jefferson took BLT 2-7 to beach Blue 2 and points further northeast instead of the planned Red 3. Their actual landings commenced about 0600. The Jefferson lost sixteen of her thirty-one landing craft.²⁰ BLT 3-7, the reserve BLT less Company L, began landing over beach Red 3 at 0930. The landing lasted longer than scheduled due to

the shortage of landing craft.²¹

The Carroll landed BLT 1-30 on Blue Beach at 0510 as planned, but severe losses of landing craft and troop casualties resulted from the surf. Many boats crashed on rocks bordering the beaches. The second and third waves hit the beach by 0535. Of the twenty-five landing craft from the Carroll, eighteen wrecked on the first landing, five more on the second, and only two continued in service.²²

BLT 2-30 experienced similar loading confusion from the transport. Last minute boat team assignments created an even greater air of uncertainty. However, the Dickman transported BLT 2-30 to its assigned beach Blue 2 by daybreak. The Dickman boat crews lost only two of twenty-seven craft during these initial landings. The Regimental Landing Group-30 (RLG-30) reserve, BLT 3-30 started landing on its assigned beach Blue 2 and the rocks and reefs northeast of Cherqui (Batterie du Pont Blondin area) about 0900. It suffered some casualties from artillery and occasional strafing aircraft.²³

RLG-15, the division reserve, began landing about 1100 under strafing fire from French aircraft. Naval air concentrated on gaining general air superiority as well as protecting the transports from surface attack, thereby limiting the number of combat air patrols available.²⁴

Company L, BLT 3-7, scheduled to land on beach Yellow 2, landed instead some five miles northeast of Fedala and later joined BLT 3-7. The 3d Reconnaissance Troop, also scheduled to land on beach Yellow 2, did not land until late

morning and then on Red Beach. The failure of these two units to land as scheduled resulted in a delay in reducing the Cape Fedala batteries and increased casualties on the beach.²⁵ The 67th Armored Battalion started landing at 1800 on D-Day. By this time nearly half the landing craft were lost, so only one platoon from Company A got on Red Beach. Due to the swell of the sea and lack of tank lighters, unloading of the Arcturus and Biddle proceeded slowly. Most of the remaining vehicles of 67th Armored Battalion came ashore by 1900 on 9 November, D+1.²⁶

Headquarters RLG-7 (forward echelon) landed behind BLT 1-7 on beach Red 2 at 0815. The antitank company, headquarters company, cannon company, service company, medical detachment, platoons of Company A, 443d CA (AA), Company A, 756th Tank Battalion, 1-36 Engineer, 10th FA Battalion, and Battery A, 9th FA Battalion continued to land throughout D-Day and D+1.²⁷ General Anderson landed on beach Blue 2 at 0945 D-Day. Sub Task Force Brushwood now had the assault elements ashore.

General Patton prepared to leave Augusta for the Fedala beachhead at 0800 on D-Day. His personal effects were loaded in a landing craft swinging from the davits. But, before the craft was lowered, the Augusta engaged in firing missions and maneuvers against French warships from Casablanca Harbor. General Patton's personal effects were destroyed, but he did retrieve his prize revolvers just prior to the blast. The Augusta battled for over three hours. Finally, General Patton reached Fedala at 1320.²⁸

An extract from the Regimental Diary of the 36th Engineers recounted:

"The surf became very heavy during the day causing the wrecking of many landing craft which strewn the beaches. The weather was fine, warm, and clear and high morale maintained. Lieutenant Barili, Company A, braved the surf and strafing to release a stunned driver from an amphibian tractor and was able to salvage most of the supplies aboard the tractor!"²⁹

Beginning at noon on D-Day, Commander Jamison, USN, the beachmaster, concentrated the landings on areas in Fedala Harbor and beach Red 2, in order to better control the small boat traffic and conserve the dwindling landing craft. The change upset plans of the assault unit commanders and directed considerable criticism toward the beachmaster. In retrospect, Commander Jamison was vindicated. General Patton recognized his courageous efforts in a diary entry, "Red Jamison saved the whole Goddamned operation."³⁰

The landings began during ebb tide. The following tide made it difficult for craft to get back out. Additionally, the follow-up waves came in so closely that not only could they not be warned away from obstacles, but they prevented retraction operations of previous boat waves. Lighters with vehicles aboard held at water's edge because motors did not start. Consequently vehicles had to be pulled ashore.³¹ Additional time was lost by temporary abandonment of boats under air strafing and artillery fire. These abandoned boats either wrecked or broached on the beaches by the

incoming tide.³² Failure of shore party troops delayed retraction. Unassisted boat crews were too slow. Naval beach party personnel helped instead of conducting salvage operations and marking hydrographic obstacles. All together between 150 and 160 of the 347 landing craft were expended, only two or three of these the result of direct hits by enemy fire.³³ This high loss of landing craft on D-Day seriously inhibited the buildup of troops and supplies ashore for the entire operation. Nevertheless, by 1700 on D-Day, 7,750 officers and men, 39 percent of all troops, including 90 percent of the assault battalions came ashore. Yet only 16 percent of the vehicles and 1.1 percent of the supplies arrived on the beach.³⁴ This shortage of vehicles precluded systematic resupply of forward elements and, thus, caused General Anderson to restrain their advance.³⁵ Colonel Harry McK Roper, observer from the Army ground forces concluded:

"Boat crews must be trained thoroughly. The coxswain of a small boat should be a man of intelligence, good judgement, and initiative. Personnel in small boats should remove their equipment except for life preservers, or at least be ready to be jettisoned. Equipment should be stripped to the minimum."³⁶

The 204th Military Police Company suffered one of the most tragic disasters of the ship to shore movement. Four landing craft with 113 officers and men disembarked at 0200 9 November to land at Yellow Beach. Instead they entered the Casablanca harbor over fifteen miles away. Second Lieutenant

"We were suppose to land on the beaches of Fedala, but through error, the assault boats headed toward Casablanca fifteen miles away, where the French fleet was quartered. It was not until we were in Casablanca harbor that we realized that the fire toward which we were headed was not from oil tanks on Cape Fedala, but a French ship hit by our naval fire.

Two of our boats drew back. The other two had drawn near the vessel, which, in the darkness, they thought was a United States destroyer. I was in one. When the men in the other hailed the vessel, a foreign voice answered. They shouted back, 'We are American.' A burst of machine-gun fire came from the destroyer, then only fifteen yards away, and the first burst fatally wounded the Captain (Capt. William H. Sutton, the Commanding Officer).

Realizing that resistance was useless against a destroyer, the men stood up and threw up their hands - some even tearing off their undershirts and waved them. The destroyer, perhaps thinking they were up to a trick immediately opened fire with 3-inch shells. Some men in the boat were killed by the shells and machine-gun bullets. Then Sgt. Claude Cunningham, of Memphis, Tenn., sent the survivors over the side into the water. The French kept on pumping shells into the boat until it sank. Under international law, they could do this, since it was an assault vessel.

I was in the second boat, only twenty yards behind the first, and we shouted to the third and fourth boats to get away. Then we too turned and tried to escape by zigzagging. The destroyer was pouring 3-inch shells our way. A splinter took away the front of one of my shoes splitting two toes. Another shell blew a leg off the coxswain. The air was full of metal. A second lieutenant jumped up to take the wheel. A moment later he got a machine-gun slug through the thigh.

As I started to climb up for the wheel a shell crossed my lap and blew up the motor. Burning gasoline spread over the boat so I gave the order for the men to go over the side. A destroyer picked us up. The men in the first boat swam for the shore. Hundreds of French civilians waded out of drag them to safety. They chased away the Moroccan police and took off their own coats to wrap our dripping soldiers.

A French officer grabbed me and asked how many boats there were in the attack group. I told him I could tell nothing but my name, rank, and number. The officer ran excitedly to the bridge. They apparently thought the whole invasion was being centered at Casablanca, instead of Fedala, and steamed back to port. There were no doctors on the destroyer but our six wounded didn't let out a whimper..... We were taken to a French military hospital jammed with their own wounded.³⁷

According to Colonel McK Roper, "several members were killed while 45 more taken prisoner."³⁸

On D-Day logistic elements succeeded in providing only limited amounts of ammunition, gasoline, water, and rations. The substantial loss of landing craft coupled with unplanned emergency requests for materiel that was lost in the initial waves, interfered with the orderly removal of supplies from ships' holds.³⁹ Loss of adequate radio sets prevented satisfactory ship to shore party communication and seriously hampered the logistical buildup. At 1800 on D-Day the port became available for landing supplies directly and in safety. However, scarce land transportation combined with unsuitable rail and road terminals prevented the rapid unloading desired.⁴⁰ As a result, on 9 November General Anderson stopped the advance on Casablanca until enough supporting weapons (artillery), transportation, communications equipment and other support could be brought forward from the beach.⁴¹

Unloading improved on 9 November (D+1). At 1100 the transports again moved inshore. The Arcturus moored at the tanker's dock and completed off-loading the 67th Armored

Regiment.⁴²

At 1600 on 9 November the shore party elements established satisfactory communications with the ships. The transports still remained in dangerous locations however. At 1600 on 11 November a torpedo sunk the Hewes. On 12 November submarines torpedoed and sunk the Rutledge, Bliss, and Scott. On 13 November the remainder of the transports entered Casablanca harbor and completed off-loading.⁴³ When the second convoy arrived on 13 November (D+5) most of the ships had to be docked side by side at the piers due to the tremendous piles of stores on the docks. The last of the troops stepped ashore on 21 November, thirteen days after the landing.⁴⁴

B. SURFACE AND AIR BATTLE.

Naval gunfire support of the Fedala-Casablanca area consisted of silencing enemy coastal defense batteries and warding off attacks by French light naval forces against ships in the transport area. The cruisers Augusta and Brooklyn and the destroyers Wilkes, Swanson, and Ludlow supported the beach landings. Also, twelve light support craft equipped with barrage rockets and machine guns provided support for the landings. About 0615, on D-Day shortly after the assault waves had landed and just as daylight was breaking, coastal batteries from Cape Fedala and Batterie du Pont Blondin (Cherqui) opened fire on the beaches and landing craft. The destroyers and the Brooklyn

replied with counterbattery fire. The Augusta moved into range and fired on Cape Fedala.⁴⁵ Despite precarious targeting due to the proximity of petroleum tanks, which were to be left undamaged, as well as awareness of a safe gun-target line, the Augusta silenced the Cape Fedala batteries fifteen minutes later.⁴⁶

The Brooklyn sent up a spotter plane, and, at 0622 fired the first salvo of 6-inch shells toward Batterie du Pont Blondin on Cherqui Point. Shortly, the Brooklyn struck the control apparatus and rendered it useless. Another shell hit one of the gun emplacements, putting the gun out of action, igniting powder bags, and creating many casualties. Once the bombardment ceased about 0715, BLT 2-30 launched its final assault and received the surrender at 0730.⁴⁷

The Covering and Air Groups off Casablanca, consisting of the Massachusetts, Wichita, Tuscaloosa, Ranger, and Suwanee, launched spotter planes and dive bombers during the last hours of darkness. The dive bombers circled at 10,000 feet ready to attack any submarines that might leave port as well as blast any antiaircraft batteries that might fire. The Ranger had a squadron of fighters in position to attack the airdrome at Rabat and Cazes airfield, while planes from the Suwanee protected vessels of Fedala from submarine attack.⁴⁸

Just prior to 0700 antiaircraft guns in Casablanca harbor opened fire on the observation planes. French fighters launched and started driving other spotter planes

out to sea. Two French submarines began to leave port and a few minutes later the great guns of the French battleship Jean Bart and Batterie El Hank opened fire on the cruisers of the Covering Group. The U.S. ships replied immediately. In twenty minutes the Jean Bart's main battery was silenced. Other salvos fell on submarine pens and the coastal defense guns at Table d'Oukacha and Batterie El Hank. The salvos drove the crews away but a lack of direct hits failed to disable the guns.⁴⁹

While exchanging fire with the Jean Bart and the coastal batteries, the ships of the Covering Group began evasive maneuvers which took them well to the west. The French seized the opportunity to send their warships out of Casablanca northeast to attack the transports off Fedala, sixteen miles away. At 0827 a French cruiser and seven destroyers left the port at Casablanca behind a smoke screen and opened fire on the Ludlow, Wilkes, and landing craft. They hit the Ludlow and forced the Wilkes to retire toward the cruisers Augusta and Brooklyn. For half an hour the French vessels worked to penetrate the protection offered by the cruisers and the destroyers Wilkes and Swanson.⁵⁰ When the ships of the Covering Group, Massachusetts, Wichita, Tuscaloosa, and the destroyers returned, the French ships disengaged and retired to Casablanca.⁵¹

At 0935 three French destroyers tried a similar maneuver. Again the Augusta, Brooklyn, Wilkes, and Swanson aided by the Bristol intercepted and frustrated

the effort. The French cruiser Primauguet left Casablanca at 1015 to support the destroyers. The surface action continued until after 1100 when three of the attacking ships came within five miles of the transports before being driven off.⁵²

The French destroyer-leader Milan beached off Rockes Noires and burned furiously. Others limped back to port about noon. The Primauguet, badly hit, anchored just outside the port. But aircraft from the Ranger attacked relentlessly, starting uncontrollable fires and forced her to beach. A nearby destroyer had the same experience. Both ships smoldered all night, while the Primauguet's magazine explosions continued for another day.⁵³

Naval air units attacked their targets as soon as it became clear the French were hostile. Strafing and bombing runs and successful dogfights with French aircraft won air superiority quickly. The French Air Force was quickly reduced to irregular strafing runs over the Fedala beachhead.⁵⁴

Naval air also participated in the destruction of French naval units at Casablanca. When the French cruisers and destroyers moved out toward the transports, the VF-9 squadron decided to strafe the destroyers. A total of eight aircraft made one pass and turned the destroyers back to Casablanca. Repeated passes left the four destroyers in battered condition. Then the squadron strafed the two cruisers.⁵⁵

The naval surface and air combat off Casablanca on

D-Day eliminated the threat by French air and surface units to the landing force. However, the naval bombardment failed to silence the Batterie El Hank at Casablanca.⁵⁶

The naval air community noted the problem of friendly aircraft recognition by antiaircraft gunnery personnel. In mid afternoon on 9 November three cub observation aircraft plans launched from the Ranger to land at the Fedala racetrack for artillery support. Apparently their flight route came too close to the Center Attack Group. The Brooklyn (cruiser) and some transports fired on them. Then friendly antiaircraft batteries on shore fired as well. One aircraft was shot down severely injuring the pilot. The others landed safely, but received no fire control missions. Causes of this problem were: (1) failure of planes to approach friendly forces from proper sectors, (2) failure to use recognition signals, and (3) inability to identify planes under condition of poor visibility.⁵⁷

In all the French naval forces put up a dogged, determined fight. John A Moraso, III of the Associated Press described the naval action from his view aboard the Augusta in a dispatch dated 8 November:

"The audacious and well-trained Vichy French naval force today staged a furious, reckless and soulsearing battle against American ships attempting to land troops at Fedala, French Morocco.

The American force, the greatest of its kind in history, had crossed the Atlantic without casualty. With more than 100 ships and thousands of men determined to open the long-awaited second front we waded through Axis submarines.

Here is the battle as I logged it until

the order to cease fire reached the crew:

11:25 p.m. - We arrived at the designated area for operations in Stygian darkness and a slight rain squall. We are surprised that all navigation lights are on.

11:45 p.m. - At Casablanca and Fedala the lights go out suddenly and village blacks out. We are six miles offshore and we make several whistle signals. They know something is wrong.

12:05 a.m. - Our first motorboat leaves the transport and we start loading troops into landing barges.

4:45 a.m. - Destroyers go almost to the beach to help barges land. The swell is heavy and some boats are damaged. Overhead the big and little dipper and Orion stand out brilliantly as the Rev. Father O'Leary of Boston offers prayer. Lt. Comdr. George K. Williams of Salt Lake City gives last minute instructions.

4:55 a.m. - Our troops machine-gun a searchlight that appears on the beach. Red tracer bullets scream through the night air. Minutes later a destroyer machine-guns and then shells the French tanker Lorraine which disobeyed a command to stop. The Lorraine fires back and then gives up to a boarding party. Hell starts popping off in the dark.

5:47 a.m. - The captain asks for the range on the powerful Cherqui battery.

6:00 a.m. - Heavy firing is heard dead ahead.

6:12 a.m. - Cherqui opens with a terrific cannonading and our ships reply instantly. The sky fills with flame and smoke.

6:20 a.m. - A destroyer says Cherqui has his range and will need help. We give him plenty after closing to 11,500 yards.

6:35 a.m. - We give Cherqui rapid fire that obliterated our target in smoke and dust.

6:45 a.m. - We give Cherqui a round of drum-firing. An oil storage tank and two buildings break into fire, our plane spotter tells us. Three of four guns have been knocked out. Suddenly I note that our landing boats, loaded with soldiers, are making their way ashore in the midst of this inferno.

6:53 a.m. - Our plane reports the fourth gun smashed. Three minutes later two of their guns reopen fire. The Army reports no resistance was offered to landing.

7:01 a.m. - Cherqui is silent again and we close to 10,000 yards making fifteen knots. Later, one gun puts a shell 400 yards from us and water cascades skyward.

7:08 a.m. - Seventeen American planes approach us.

7:10 a.m. - Scores of landing boats are now in the water, heading shoreward. We fire fifty rounds in five minutes.

7:18 a.m. - Eleven friendly planes zoom over us. We need them because shells are coming closer and submarines have been detected.

7:21 a.m. - A tremendous salvo shatters the glass on our bridge.

7:25 a.m. - Cherqui has been silent five minutes, Lt. Eugene Bertram, senior aviator from Spokane, Wash., reports.

7:30 a.m. - Our planes are bombing and strafing Cherqui. Thirteen Grummans, United States Navy fighter planes join them.

7:32 a.m. - The French Battleship Jean Bart begins a long-range duel with one of our battle wagons. Huge flashes spring up and the Jean Bart takes a few pot shots at us from a distance of twelve miles. More glass shatters on the bridge.

7:36 a.m. - My head is reeling from the blast.

7:39 a.m. - They have fixed the gun at Cherqui and are shooting at us again. We pound them brutally and in two minutes score a direct hit.

7:41 a.m. - These Frenchmen are tough. Two of Cherqui's guns are going and we silence them with a round of rapid fire.

7:58 a.m. - One of our destroyers fires at one of our planes and we warn him.

7:59 a.m. - Our starboard 5-inch batteries blast away at French planes strafing soldiers on the beach and men in small boats.

8:00 a.m. - Planes begin attacking transports and all hell breaks loose. Right in the middle of this, those obstinate Frenchmen at Cherqui get another gun going.

8:05 a.m. - We put up two more planes for spotting.

8:10 a.m. - They report Cherqui is silenced.

8:14 a.m. - The planes tell us the location of the French antiaircraft guns ashore. We blaze away at them.

8:19 a.m. - The French ships escape from Casablanca under a smoke screen. We are ordered to destroy two cruisers coming our way and steam away at twenty-five knots.

8:28 a.m. - Our destroyer screen reports the cruisers are firing on them. Most of us are scared as hell, but we all try to hide it.

8:35 a.m. - We fire two batteries at the cruisers. We hear that some French ships have headed for the open sea.

8:50 a.m. - We make contact with the

French cruisers. Shells begin to fall all around us and we and our flagship give them plenty. The cruiser lookouts report one French cruiser is hit and possibly the other.

8:59 a.m. - After a furious action, the Frenchman reverses his course toward Casablanca. We speed up to thirty knots to chase them. Right in the middle of this the Army sends us this message: "Admiral refused to see me. I delivered the message to him at Casablanca. French army does not wish to fight. Citizens welcome us and hold us in high esteem." We learned later that only the French navy wants to continue the battle and they fight like mad dogs. A shell plunks into the water twenty feet from me.

9:05 a.m. - We fire away with renewed energy and our lookout reports we have twenty-three hits on one cruiser. She is smoking, but continues to fire at us. She is doing a fine job. We hear later that both cruisers we have engaged are beached, but this is not confirmed.

9:30 a.m. - A submarine is spotted off our starboard bow, but the captain tells us to ignore him. We are zigzagging at thirty-two knots, too fast for him to hit us - we hope. A few minutes later another submarine is sighted to port.

9:35 a.m. - We are ordered to return to Fedala to protect our transports. This makes us mad as hell.

9:49 a.m. - We are told French destroyers are coming out of Casablanca. Our orders told us to destroy them. Our battleship smacked a French cruiser, setting her ablaze.

10:01 a.m. - We are doing a wonderful job, radio message says.

10:09 a.m. - Shells appear from nowhere. Their bursts are a particular magenta color. I think we are gone this time. Shells whistle over my head. They are shortening range now. They have us. That last one hit about twenty feet away to port. We turn. Their range is short by 400 yards. We open with rapid fire and straddle a destroyer behind a smoke screen. These cagey Frenchmen are hiding in the sun and all we have to fire at is flashes. They are giving us fits.

10:20 a.m. - Their subs are in on us, firing torpedoes. We hit a destroyer as a torpedo goes by our port side.

10:25 a.m. - Two French submarines have periscopes up. Five torpedoes head at us. Watching their wakes, we reel into a zigzag and luckily go in between them.

10:29 a.m. - They straddled us again and we can't see them. We go into furious rapid fire. Our ship is reeling from our own gunfire. I

suddenly notice a number of birds swimming in the water. They are totally unaware of the battle. How I envy them.

10:47 a.m. - Lookout reports periscopes to port. Boy, how we could use some planes. They must be somewhere else. Somebody reports a torpedo wake, but we are too busy with the destroyers to watch it.

10:57 a.m. - A battleship is coming to help us. We are going to box in those destroyers and let them have it from all sides. Our guns thunder steadily and my head is a mass of pain.

11:30 a.m. - The French ships appear to be running away. Thank God we are returning to Fedala to guard transports.

11:40 a.m. - From ashore the Army sends word our officers are conferring with the French on whether naval gunfire must cease during an armistice. I run down to the captain's cabin - where I am living. I find blood all about. However, our four wounded are not in critical shape.

12:17 p.m. - We scatter from general quarters. We had been firing since six o'clock this morning, and have had no food. Our fliers return and tell us how we pounded the Cherqui battery to pieces.

12:55 p.m. - The French navy is ignoring the armistice at Fedala. Two cruisers and two destroyers just left Casablanca and are heading for us. In addition a French bomber attacked the beach during the armistice.

1:08 p.m. - We contact the French squadron and blaze away. It turns back toward Casablanca - and lets us have it. Our flagship falls back and we find ourselves fighting all four ships. The bursts are coming nearer and nearer.

1:30 p.m. - Our flagship gets in the battle. Our planes depth-charge a submarine off our port bow. The French are using submarines with their surface ships, but they have had no luck. Some Navy dive-bombers appear and we shout with joy. One of the French destroyers is reported dead in the water. Our dive-bombers roar in on the French ships and one of the destroyers is hit.

2:03 p.m. - Planes report that the French cruiser is being towed toward Casablanca and fifteen minutes later the planes tell us a French destroyer has been beached inside the harbor. We believe we hit at least three ships.

2:26 p.m. - The Army tells us Fedala has been taken and that minesweepers have been ordered to clear out the French minefields. The officers and I limp below for coffee and sandwiches.

3:20 p.m. - French bombers attack our soldiers on the beach.

4:27 p.m. - We don't even get up when planes drop depth charges off the starboard bow. We want to rest and eat. We expect a night riddled with submarine attacks and French planes at dawn." 58

C. ACTION ASHORE

(1) REGIMENTAL LANDING GROUP - 7

The 7th Regimental Landing Group (RLG) was to land on beaches in the vicinity of Fedala. BLT 1-7 (LTC Moore) was to land on Beach Red 2; BLT 2-7 (LTC Salzmänn) on Beach Red 3; and BLT 3-7 (MAJ Cloud) minus Company L was the Regimental floating reserve. Company L, 7th Infantry was scheduled to land on Beach Yellow and support BLT 2-7 from the western bank of the Mellah River. BLT 1-7 (LTC Moore) was charged with taking the town of Fedala and continuing on to the cape to seize the two batteries there. The 3rd Reconnaissance Troop (CPT Crandall), landing on Beach Yellow was to destroy the antiaircraft installations in the vicinity of the golf course and then after crossing the Mellah River, to attack positions on Cape Fedala from the southwest on the western side of BLT 1-7 (LTC Moore). The next most pressing objective was the control of the highway and railway bridges over the Mellah before they could be destroyed, or used by French troops for retreat or reinforcement. BLT 2-7 (LTC Salzmänn) was to seize these bridges from the east while Company L, 7th Infantry supported from the west.⁵³

BLT 1-7, the first elements of Force Brushwood, started toward the beaches from the line of departure at

about 0445 and landed at about 0500. Some of the force landed on Beach Red 3 instead of Red 2 because the surf swept the boats out of control throwing them against rocks. BLT 2-7 went to Beach Blue instead of Red 3. The BLT 2-7 landing began about 0600. Elements of BLT 1-7 (LTC Moore) assembled at the island edge of Red 2 without opposition and proceeded toward Fedala. One company of the 6th Senegalese Infantry Regiment, the only infantry unit in garrison was quickly surprised and captured. Ten German Armistice Commissioners fleeing from their headquarters were caught. By 0600 BLT 1-7 had Fedala under control.⁸⁰

BLT 1-7 had the mission of occupying Fedala, attacking the heavy antiaircraft batteries in the southwest part of town, and attacking along the cape to capture the 100mm guns of the Batterie du Port plus a 75mm battery, a fire control station and some emplaced antiaircraft machine guns. The heavy antiaircraft battery was scheduled for seizure by a surprise assault in darkness by the 3rd Reconnaissance Troop after a landing from rubber assault boats at Beach Yellow. A series of mishaps delayed the landing so long that the mission was abandoned. The battery thus was able to pin down C/1-7 Infantry by direct fire when they approached Cape Fedala from the town and it did not actually surrender to BLT 1-7 until about 1100 hours. American naval gunfire also deterred the attacking BLT 1-7. LTC Moore's request to terminate the bombardment was denied. The naval fires were required in support of the 30th RLG which was under fire from the French guns on the Cape. The

BLT 1-7 attack along the cape was delayed until 1140. At that time the unsuccessful attempt to neutralize the guns was superseded by an effort to seize them by means of a tank-infantry assault, supported by field artillery. A/1-7 Infantry supported by A/756th Tank Battalion obtained the surrender of the fire control station and the 100mm battery at about noon. The 75mm guns and machine guns surrendered at 1500 after receiving mortar and howitzer fire from Fedala. Neutralization of the enemy guns brought an end to the fires which had begun in the morning. BLT 1-7 successfully accomplished its three missions: occupying Fedala, capturing the heavy antiaircraft weapons in southwest Fedala, and capturing the enemy weapons on Cape Fedala.¶

BLT 2-7 (LTC Salzmänn) was put ashore at Beach Blue 2 and beyond Cherqui instead of Red 3, so the battalion aided BLT 2-30 in the capture of Batterie du Pont Blondin with one section of mortars and four rifle platoons. These units landed on the reefs and small beaches northeast of Cherqui instead of Beach Red 3 and could not proceed on their assigned mission. While the BLT 2-30 and elements of BLT 2-7 organized to attack the Batterie du Pont Blondin, the enemy took advantage of first light and began firing on the beaches, the approaches, and the control vessels near the shore. By 0610 four destroyers were exchanging fire with the enemy coastal artillery. Naval gun fire knocked out the enemy fire control system and hit the gun emplacements. The ground troops surrounded the enemy

battery and fired mortars at the target. At approximately 0730 the enemy surrendered to H/2-30 Infantry and LTC Salzmann acted as interpreter. After taking the battery the elements of BLT 2-7 crossed the Pont Blondin to an assembly area near Beach Red 3. Here the entire BLT 2-7 joined up and moved along the coastal road to the western bank of the Mellah river. The unit marched about seven miles which they completed during the latter part of the afternoon. Enroute to the days objective, BLT 2-7 successfully completed its primary mission of controlling the bridges over the Mellah River and clearing a zone south and west of Fedala.⁶²

BLT 3-7 (MAJ Cloud) (less Company L) began landing on Beach Red 3 at about 0930 hours. The operation took longer than scheduled because of the shortage of serviceable landing craft. The main body of the BLT 3-7 went into an assembly area southwest of Fedala near the 7th RLG command post. L/3-7 Infantry scheduled to land on the western flank of Force Brushwood was prevented from accomplishing its mission. Delays made its assault impossible because of daylight. The company went ashore during the morning on beaches unrelated to its original mission and marched to join the remainder of BLT 3-7.⁶³

By 1700 on D-Day approximately ninety percent of the 7th RLG personnel were ashore, but only a small percentage of the vehicles and supplies were landed. The lack of vehicles prevented the resupply. Additionally light artillery, self-propelled 105s and heavy support equipment

for the artillery was not landed on D-Day. Lack of supplies and combat support assets prevented the advance of ground troops to the initial objectives even though troops at the beaches were prepared to work through the night. The division commander directed the 7th and 15th RLG to stop at a line about two miles west of the Mellah River, a limit about three miles short of the original D-Day objective.⁶⁴

The outline plan for the attack on the final objective directed the advance toward Casablanca at 0700 on D+1. For the remainder of D-Day the 7th RLG took up positions preparatory for the next days advance. Losses reported for D-Day were 9 killed and 38 wounded.⁶⁵ The 2nd Battalion, 20th Engineer Regiment landed in Fedala on D-Day and by D+1 assumed the mission of police and local security of the town. This allowed BLT 1-7 to become the 7th RLG reserve.⁶⁶

At 0700 D+1, 9 November 1942, the force began the movement toward Casablanca unsupported by land-based air and seriously hampered by logistical difficulties. The advance had a four battalion front with 7th Infantry zone on the right (north) and the 15th Infantry on the left (south). From north to south the four BLTs were BLT 3-7 (MAJ Cloud), 2-7 (LTC Salzmänn), 2-15 and 1-15. BLT 1-7 (LTC Moore) moved up behind 2-7 and assumed the mission as regimental reserve. Companies A and C, 756th Tank Battalion were attached to the 7th RLG and were in the main attack.⁶⁷

The movement toward Casablanca was lightly resisted

with occasional strafing by low-flying French aircraft. A French reconnaissance patrol was driven off during the morning. In the afternoon an armored force of approximately thirty vehicles at the Fedala-Boulhant road intersection was dispersed by naval air attack. The 3rd Infantry Division Commanding General halted the progress of 7th RLG at approximately 1400 because of extremely critical supply situation caused by a lack of transportation.⁶⁸ In addition the assaulting battalions had insufficient supporting weapons and communications equipment. The 7th RLG was fairly well off except for radios for the supporting 10th Field Artillery Battalion equipment which were lost or damaged in landing. The 15th RLG however was unable to continue because of insufficient artillery, air defense and transportation support. Advance was resumed at 0001 on 10 November with transportation furnished to the 15th RLG by the 30th RLG. The length of the halt was minimized because the 3rd Infantry Division did not want to lose the element of surprise or lose momentum in its mission to capture Casablanca.⁶⁹

Shelling from field guns in the outskirts of Casablanca increased as the 7th RLG advanced. The fighting on 10 November was the hottest experienced by Force Brushwood. The regiment was halted twice on D+2 to wait for supporting arms to be brought forward. The element resumed its advance at midnight to get into position for the coordinated attack to begin at 0700 on D+3. RLG 7 positioned in a north-south line of departure east of

Casablanca with BLT 3-7 still in the north, BLT 2-7 to its south, and BLT 1-7 to the rear of BLT 2-7. BLT 3-7 straddling the coastal road, reached the suburbs of Casablanca after daybreak and was stopped by French Artillery and small arms. Companies I and K of BLT 3-7 captured a 90mm antiaircraft battery during the morning but the rest of the battalion was immobilized and out of communications with the regiment for some hours during the morning of D+2.⁷⁰

BLT 2-7 arrived at its line of departure for the attack one half hour before daylight on D+2. Small arms and artillery fire on the area stopped the advance. The battalion deployed in confusion, two company commanders were casualties and the BLT was split into three parts. The battalion commander led the bulk of battalion to high ground to the south clearing the enemy enroute. Leading elements the battalion remained in contact with enemy throughout the day capturing an artillery piece and killing the crew.⁷¹

Another element of the battalion withdrew and organized a line of defense around the supporting 10th Field Artillery Battalion. The 10th Field Artillery suffered 10 casualties including the battalion commander when it encountered enemy infantry and counterbattery fire.⁷²

At 1045 (after the BLT 2-7 situation was clarified) BLT 1-7 began moving to attack with tank and artillery support. The regimental order was to pass through the previous BLT 2-7 zone of action and capture the military barracks east of Casablanca. BLT 1-7 made good progress

under persistent artillery fire until 1700, when it stopped for the night east of its objective and about one and one half miles ahead of BLT 2-7.⁷³

RLG 7 reached the edge of Casablanca on 10 November at a cost of 27 killed and 72 wounded. French prisoners reported that they received orders to fall back and that an armistice was imminent.⁷⁴

The Commanding General notified the 7th RLG of the order for the D+3, 11 November attack in time for reconnaissance before darkness on D+2. Ground advance was to begin at 0730 on D+3 after an initial preparation by naval gunfire, carrier based planes, and field artillery. The preparation fires targets were EL Hank, the water front, and artillery and antiaircraft guns in the southeast sector of Casablanca. RLG-7 was still in the north and still supported by the 10th Field Artillery Battalion for the D+3 attack. The enemy French ground elements, exclusive of the personnel at the coastal defense batteries which were still operational, amounted to no more than 3,600 infantry, about 90 guns, and miscellaneous units.⁷⁵

During the night prisoners were taken by the regiments; they stated they had orders to cease firing pending an armistice. At 0230 D+3 two French officers entered G/BLT 2-30 area and stated that they had the authority from the Commanding General in French Morocco to seek an armistice. General Patton issued orders at 0655 on D+3 calling off the attack on Casablanca. Other than some artillery registration fires the 7th RLG did not fight in

(2) REGIMENTAL LANDING GROUP - 30

The general mission of the 30th Regimental Landing Group was to attack and reduce Batterie du Pont Blondin and protect the rear and left flank of the Division. The mission of the 30th RLG (COL. Arthur H. Rogers) was in three parts to each of the Battalion Landing Teams that comprised the RLG. BLT 1-30 (LTC. Fred W. Sladen, Jr.) was to push four miles southward to a long ridge well beyond the main Casablanca-Rabat highway. BLT 2-30 (LTC. Lyle W. Bernard) was to occupy the Cherqui headland, the bridges over the Nefifikk River, and a defense line on the eastern bank of that stream against possible reinforcements from the direction of Rabat. BLT 3-30 (MAJ. Charles E. Johnson) was in floating reserve. BLT 3-30 was minus Company L which had a mission to follow the landing team and assist in the capture of Batterie du Pont Blondin.

On D-Day the scheduled 0400 H-Hour had to be set back by 45 minutes to insure that the four battalion landing teams would have time to get four waves ashore without interruption. With Company L landing on Beach Blue 3 and attacking from the rear, BLT 2-30 was to land on Beach Blue 2 and assault Batterie du Pont Blondin from the direction of Fedala. This was the most important task to silence the coastal batteries. BLT 2-30 on Beach Blue 1 was to go inland and secure the rest of the Beachhead. The adjacent

unit RLG-7 had one of its BLTs land out of position, and instead of landing on Red 3 as planned, it landed on Beach Blue 2 with BLT 2-30.

The Commanding Officer of BLT 2-30 was also carried to the east out of position where his unit was to attack. The coastal guns at Batterie d' Pont Blondin were firing at U.S. troops near Cherqui across the bay where BLT 2-30 was landing. The Navy began to return fire and the French suspended their firing. Some of the rounds fired by the French fell very close to friendly troops and slowed down the American attack. Portions of the Batterie du Pont Blondin were captured by elements of the 7th RLG and the 30th RLG because of initiative and mission understanding of company commanders.

As stated before, the Commanding Officer of BLT 2-30 landed a couple of miles east of Beach Blue 2 where his unit began the attack. The heavy weapons company got mortars into position and with some units of rifle companies began to assault from the right (West). They encountered some fire from the coastal batteries, however four Navy destroyers suppressed that fire. With fire support from the Navy, the ground troops surrounded the battery, and by 0730 the enemy surrendered to Captain M. E. Porter, Commander of Company H, 30th Infantry. Not long afterwards LTC Bernard, Commanding BLT 2-30, reached the position, put a rifle company in charge and sent other elements to join the rest of the BLT in seizing the crossing over the Nefifikk River and setting up defenses against counter attacks from the

northeast.⁷⁷

BLT 1-30 landed on Beach Blue with its three rifle companies. The BLT organized after the landing and moved southward to gain control of the high ground which it was to hold. A train bound for Rabat was stopped and searched. There were some 75 enemy members of the armed forces aboard; they were removed and held as prisoners. BLT 1-30 received some artillery and air attacks, but BLT 1-30 reached its objective without a fight by 1600 and set up defensive positions. "BLT 3-30 which had been in reserve started to arrive at Beach Blue 2 about 0900 hours. It suffered some casualties from artillery and strafing air planes as it moved inland to an area west of Nefifikk during the remainder of the morning."⁷⁸

"D+1, 9 November 42 the Division Reserve was 3-30 Infantry and the remainder of the 30th RLG was to stay on its objectives of D-Day, 8 Nov 42, and perform local missions."⁷⁹ The 30th RLG on D-Day had 8 killed and 23 wounded in the action of the day. On D+1 the bridgehead was enlarged by the 30th RLG. BLT 1-30 was on the southeast and BLT 2-30 was on the east and northeast along with the 41st Field Artillery Battalion. "BLT 3-30, with one platoon of the 443 Coast Artillery (AA) attached, prepared to move westward from a point near Beach Red 3 during the morning to a new assembly area nearer the front."⁸⁰

The movement toward Casablanca by the 3rd Division was lightly resisted by artillery and French aircraft, (RLG 7 and 15, and BLT 3-30). The Bridgehead manned by BLTs 1-30

and 2-30 was under constant threats of counterattacks but all that came was a reconnaissance patrol which was driven off. General Patton issued orders about 0700 cancelling the attack and announcing an armistice.

(3) REGIMENTAL LANDING GROUP - 15

The 15th Regimental Landing Group (RLG-15) began the operation as the 3rd Division's reserve regiment.⁸¹ As the reserve, it was to be prepared to land two hours after the initial assault battalion.⁸² Its mission once ashore was to assemble in the zone of the 7th RLG, move inland, pass to the left of the 7th RLG, and then in concert with the 7th RLG drive southwestward to Casablanca.⁸³

Due to the initial confusion surrounding the landing and the fighting in Fedala, the 15th RLG was not ordered to commence its landing until approximately 1100 on D-Day.⁸⁴ COL. Thomas H. Monrow, the commander of the 15th RLG, was ordered to land his forces on Beach Red 1 and Red 2 as rapidly as possible.⁸⁵ BLT 1-15 was served by a small number of boats and because of the unfamiliarity of the naval coxswains with the shore line, it was put ashore on several different beaches.⁸⁷ Once ashore BLT 1-15 was directed to move to and seize the bridge over the Wedi Mellah on the main Rabat-Casablanca highway while the remainder of the Regimental Landing Group continued its movement ashore.⁸⁸

BLT 1-15, maintaining contact with the 7th RLG on

its right moved into an assembly area east of the bridge just prior to darkness.⁸⁹ It sent elements across the bridge to organize defensive positions on the western bank and all units prepared their night position.⁹⁰ Company D of BLT 1-15 with its heavy weapons arrived in the unit assembly area after dark.⁹¹ During the evening the remainder of the 15th RLG landed on the beaches from Fedala northward, assembled and moved to assembly areas near BLT 1-15.⁹² RLG-15 was ordered to halt its advance about 2 miles west of the Mellah River, which was three miles short of its D-Day objective so that necessary support could be brought forward to assist with the 0700 advance schedule for the next day.⁹³

At 0700 on D+1 the 3rd Division began its advance southwest toward Casablanca with the 7th RLG on the right and the 15th RLG on the left. RLG-15 advanced with BLT 2-15 on the right, BLT 1-15 on the left, and BLT 3-15 in the rear as the regimental reserve.⁹⁴ RLG-15 continued its movement without opposition until ordered to halt by division at 1100. The advance was halted due to the extremely critical supply situation brought on by a lack of adequate transportation and it was deemed ill advised to over-extend the supply lines.⁹⁵

The support situation was especially critical for the 15th RLG. It lacked the weapons of its Cannon Company; the self-propelled 105s of Battery B, 9th Field Artillery Battalion; the self-propelled 37mm antiaircraft guns of the 443d Coast Artillery (AA); and all the transportation of the

39th Field Artillery Battalion. The 15th RLG was also in need of additional transportation - as of 1000 the total transport of the entire unit consisted of 5 quarter-ton vehicles.⁹⁶ The advance was able to resume at 2400 hours with transportation furnished by the 30th RLG for moving the 15 RLGs: 39th Field Artillery Battalion and for resupply of ammunition.⁹⁷

The 15th RLG resumed its advance at approximately 2400 and almost immediately encountered enemy patrols south of its positions and an enemy position of unknown strength in a village north of the Tit Mellil crossroad. COL. Monroe informed Division Headquarters that he was encountering significant opposition to include automatic weapons and that a continued advance against this organized defense would be extremely difficult.⁹⁸ The 15th RLG was ordered to hold until dawn and preparations were made for an early daylight attack.⁹⁹

It was estimated that the 15th RLG was opposed by a squadron of cavalry which had occupied a village near the Tit Mellil crossroads. The enemy used some of the concrete buildings for positions and developed an indepth defense that included the use of interlocking machine gun fire across their front.¹⁰⁰ To support the attack, one battery of the 39th Field Artillery Battalion was displaced forward using a jeep and a French civilian truck.¹⁰¹ Unfortunately both the Cannon Company and the Antitank Company of RLG-15 were still aboard the transports, but some 37mm antitank guns were available for use as assault guns,

and the heavy machine guns and 81mm mortars of all three battalions were effectively employed.

At dawn on D+2 the 15th RLG initiated the attack. BLT 1-15 and BLT 2-15 immediately encountered strong rifle and machine gun fire from the waiting defenders.¹⁰² Under their covering artillery, mortar, and machine gun fire, the attacking BLTs were able to envelop the enemy position from both flanks. The enemy force withdrew to the south and west of Tit Mellil on horses which had been secured to the rear of their positions.¹⁰³ The enemy attempted to establish a defensive position on the ridge at Er Refifida but this attempt was defeated by accurate long range machine gun fire and 37mm antitank fire using high explosive shells.¹⁰⁴ After this last encounter, the enemy cavalry withdrew back toward Casablanca and contact was lost.¹⁰⁵

The 15th RLG continued its advance and by 1300 had pushed past Tit Mellil.¹⁰⁶ A platoon of light tanks was attached to BLT 1-15 at 1400 and by 1700 the BLTs were on their objectives astride the Casablanca-Marrakech highway from which they planned to launch the main attack on Casablanca.¹⁰⁷ However, just prior to 1700, BLT 2-15 received a 30 minute artillery barrage fired from a point in the center of Casablanca. BLT 2-15 withdrew approximately 500 meters from the impact area and prepared to spend the night in that position.¹⁰⁸ The 15th RLG had reached its attack positions south of Casablanca having suffered very light casualties. Only 11 members of the 15th

RLG had been wounded.¹⁰⁹

During the night, the 15th RLG prepared for its assault on Casablanca which was to commence at 0730 on D+3. The ground attack was to be supported by naval gunfire, carrier-based aircraft, and artillery. "RLG-7 in the north, RLG-15 in the east, supported respectively by the 10th and 39th Field Artillery Battalion (reinforced), and the tanks of the 1st Battalion, 67th Armored Regiment, in Rlg-15's sector were to attack toward the harbor along converging lines."¹¹⁰ However, during the early morning hours of D+3 the French sent emissaries to the 3rd Division requesting an armistice. When General Patton received definite word of the truce, he issued orders cancelling the attack.¹¹¹

For the entire Fedala-Casablanca operation, American casualties totaled 770 killed or missing and 1,050 wounded.¹¹²

D. FRENCH REACTION ASHORE

French resistance reflected the commander's assessment that the Fedala-Casablanca operation represented only a minor attack. The commander, Admiral Michelier disbelieved General Bethouart that a large American force waited offshore and that General Giraud, aided by American troops planned to take command in all French North Africa. Admiral Michelier discounted General Bethouart's letter as a hoax and planned a defense against a minor attack.¹¹³ The

standing orders for defense of Casablanca became effective. Admiral Michelier alerted the naval forces for action, while General Lahouille reluctantly sent his air units into action. Admiral Michelier with his decision made, twice refused to see General Patton's envoy, Colonel Wilbur, on the morning of D-Day. Despite his persistence Colonel Wilbur could not arrange the desired armistice to cease the action.¹¹⁴

When General Patton landed at Fedala in the early afternoon, General Anderson escorted the French commandant to him. The commandant urged that additional envoys be sent to Casablanca to demand a surrender, since the French army no longer desired to fight. Colonel Gay then rode to Casablanca under a flag of truce to persuade the French to cease hostilities. Again, Admiral Michelier refused to see the emissary.¹¹⁵ Accordingly, the attack toward Casablanca continued until 0655 on 11 November when General Patton received a request for armistice from Admiral Michelier as directed by General Nogues. With the landings at Safi and Port Lyautey completed and the news of the landings at Oran and Algiers, General Nogues recognized the weight of the allied attack.

E. THE FINAL OUTCOME

Sub Task Force Brushwood attained a clear-cut, decisive tactical victory. Many factors contributed to its success. First, on a broad scope, the Allied thrust achieved strategic surprise.¹¹⁶ Not only did the assault on North

Africa open a second front in the war, but Operation Torch itself consisted of three widely separated landings. Further, the Western Task Force carefully zigzagged across the Atlantic to avoid German submarines and intelligence gathering craft. Once in African waters the convoy charted a course toward Dakar, south of the intended landings in order to sustain the deception. This bearing did not change until just prior to nightfall on D-1.¹¹⁷ Once the ship to shore movement began, the swiftness of the landing overcame the less than well organized resistance. Because of the deception, French intelligence thought the landings at Port Lyautey, Fedala, and Casablanca represented only minor attacks. But the rapidity with which Sub Task Force Brushwood moved inland enabled the Allies to sever communications and reinforcement plans of the Vichy French resistance.¹¹⁸

Effective joint planning contributed significantly to the outcome.¹¹⁹ The plan for Operation Torch called for 100,000 troops, hundreds of planes, and 258 ships and war vessels.¹²⁰ Such a groupment represented the largest amphibious operation the world had seen.¹²¹ To plan an operation of this magnitude and embark over 3,000 miles away from the landing sites, required detailed, concurrent, and parallel planning between the highest echelons of the War Department and the Services. Some errors were encountered in execution, but that was expected from untested troops.¹²² Yet, the precise planning overcame execution errors and Sub Task Force Brushwood succeeded rather easily.

The lack of organized resistance attributed to the operation's success.¹²³ The resistance forces consisted of Vichy French Army units, Navy units, and Air Force elements, Moroccan defense forces, and Senegalese. General Giraud attempted to deliver a message to Admiral Michelier via General Bethouart not to oppose the landing. Admiral Michelier disregarded General Bethouart's letter as a hoax.¹²⁴ Consequently, the Army did not want to resist, while the Navy fought determinedly to repel the invaders. The air elements at Casablanca reluctantly took to the fight. The poorly trained company of Senegalese gave up immediately when the numbers of invading troops became known.

The Allied overall strength advantage of more than a two to one ratio contributed to the disorganization of the resistance. The Allies quickly obtained air superiority with greater quantities of aircraft. This dictated the success. With air superiority the Allies overcame the valiant effort put forth by the Vichy Navy and the coastal batteries. The air effort kept the Navy in check. Those vessels that did venture forth to disrupt the landing received tremendous assault from Allied dive bombers as well as the numerical superior U.S. Navy fighting ships.

These superior numbers of personnel, aircraft, and ships rapidly drained the political will of the defending forces. Conversely, the Allied forces maintained a strong, determined national will to defeat the Germans. Operation Torch represented a major step toward that end. That

national will carried over to the troops struggling through the surf to land at Fedala.

Finally, luck played a factor in the success of Sub Task Force Brushwood. The surf off Fedala never reached more than four feet for all of D-Day.¹²⁵ Normally six to eight feet of surf spill on the Fedala beaches. Considering the considerable difficulty encountered in locating the correct beaches and the nearly fifty percent loss of landing craft because of sea conditions, good fortune assisted the ship to shore movement. If eight feet of surf had been present on D-Day, may more lives and landing craft may have been lost. Additionally, more anxious moments and tenuous situations may have caused the Allies to withdraw mid way through the ship to shore movement. Such action by the Allies may have prompted the resistance forces to harden their will. The final outcome may have been different. One can not predict the outcome had the higher surf been present. However, the Allies clearly retained superiority in numbers of troops and weapon systems, as well as the dominant will to succeed. The strategic surprise, coordinated planning, lack of organized resistance, superiority in personnel and weapon systems, and luck carried Sub Task Force Brushwood to victory at Fedala and Casablanca.

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SECTION V: ASSESSMENT OF THE SIGNIFICANCE OF THE ACTION

Although the 3d Infantry Division's participation in Operation Torch was of short duration and fraught with difficulties and mistakes, it had significant positive ramifications for the division, the Allies, and the war as a whole. On the operational level, the 3d Infantry Division was able to seize the port of Casablanca and provide a base of operations for the subsequent Allied campaign against the Axis forces in North Africa. Strategically Torch successfully completed the first step in removing North Africa from Axis control, opening the Mediterranean to Allied shipping, and providing a base for later offensive operations against Europe. Indeed, the Torch operation certainly warrants classification as a decisive battle in World War II due to its positive immediate and long term impact on the Allied war effort. A detailed analysis of the results of this operation will now be undertaken.

A. Immediate Outcomes.

For the Allies the seizure of the port at Casablanca successfully attained the immediate tactical objective of establishing a firm lodgement in French Morocco on the Atlantic to support continued and intensified air, ground, and sea operations in North Africa.¹ Torch later

proved to be the critical first step in the Allied plan to annihilate the Axis in Africa by May of 1943.² The accomplishment of this goal provided many strategic benefits to the Allies. Specifically, these advantages were as follows:

1. The events of November, 1943, marked a change for the better in the Allied situation as a whole.³ With Montgomery pursuing Rommel's remnants across Egypt and Libya, the U.S. and the British advancing in Tunisia, and the initiation of the Russian winter offensive, the Allies passed finally onto the strategic offensive. Up to this point, the Allies had been involved in strictly defensive operations and not always successfully. The victory at Casablanca and subsequently in Africa as a whole was the first joint offensive action that the Allies had been able to undertake, and it marked an important turning point in the war.⁴ As such, it definitely provided a much needed lift to the morale of the Allies and the will of the Allied nations to support the war effort.

2. By mastering the North African shores the Allies achieved many strategic advantages in the future conduct of the war. For instance, Allied surface vessels were now able to move securely in the central Mediterranean.⁵ Allied shipping was relieved of the need to make the long haul around the Cape of South Africa.⁶ Furthermore, securing the Mediterranean lines of communication helped guarantee access to middle eastern oil reserves and continued Allied

support of the Russian war effort through the Persian Gulf supply route.² In addition, the success in North Africa provided strategically valuable airfields along the coast which permitted long range bombing missions deep into the European continent. Also, long-range reconnaissance bases were established for flights over the Atlantic to counter the enemy submarine campaign.³

3. The defeat and subsequent surrender of the Vichy French forces at Casablanca made an important contribution to Allied solidarity. Prior to Operation Torch, the French were divided in their loyalties as various factions favored differing affiliations in the war. When the French surrendered at Casablanca, Hitler moved into France causing the French navy to scuttle their fleet at Toulon.⁴

Thus, the pro-Axis French were alienated by the occupation of Vichy France, and France was welded into a unified and cooperative ally on our side.¹⁰ They assisted the subsequent advance on Tunisia and provided valuable support for future operations against the Axis in North Africa.

4. The Allied personnel matured as a fighting force as a result of the experiences they gained during Operation Torch. Allied soldiers at all levels gained combat experience in Operation Torch which was later to prove invaluable in the invasion of Europe. Eisenhower's Allied Forces Headquarters survived the disappointments, frustrations, and recriminations in the initial phases of the operation and was eventually molded into an effective and efficient joint staff.¹¹ Commanders were tested and

developed by the amphibious and ground operations in North Africa. This first taste of combat seasoned the troops as they gained confidence and skills which would lead to many future successes on the battlefield.¹² In this manner the Torch operation provided "the workshop in which the weapon of invasion was forged and the trial ground on which it was proved; it was here that the highest commanders learned their business...."¹³

5. For the Axis, the Allied entry into North Africa created unwanted difficulties at this point in the war. Rommel had his hands full with Montgomery and was not capable of fighting a two front campaign. With the Western flank of the Afrika Corps thus threatened, Hitler was confronted with the option of either giving up Africa or immediately reinforcing the Afrika Corps with assets vitally needed on Germany's eastern front. His eventual decision to send as many as 15,000 troops to Tunis detracted significantly from the execution of the campaign in Russia.¹⁴ As a result, the strategic Allied aim of relieving the pressure on the Soviet Union to some degree was achieved.¹⁵

B. Long Term Outcomes.

As has been discussed, the success in North Africa signalled the turning of the tide of the war in favor of the Allies. As the Allies were gaining momentum, the Axis lost the initiative and passed onto the strategic defensive. Henceforth, Hitler was not able to regain the initiative except for local operations.¹⁶ In addition, the threat

in Africa put a strain on the relationship between Germany and Italy.¹⁷ Because Hitler continued to give priority to the Eastern Front, Italy was required to provide the bulk of reinforcements to Africa which they were wont to do. The eventual defeat in Africa left Italy vulnerable to attack from the south as the Allies now threatened Axis positions in Sicily, Italy, the Balkans, Crete, and the Dodecanese Islands.¹⁸ As a result, Italy was not destined to remain a participant in the Axis war effort for much longer.¹⁹ As Howe stated, ".... in Africa the Allies had not only won territory of strategic worth but had inflicted such losses on the Axis powers as to weaken their ability, and perhaps to undermine their will, to fight."²⁰ Thus, although the Allied entry into North Africa was not in and of itself a mortal blow to the Axis, it was certainly a decisive event which marked a decisive turning point in the war. Henceforth, the Axis went over to the defensive as the resources to wage war within the strangling grip of the Allies became increasingly more scarce.

Conversely, the long term strategic picture for the Allies was considerably brightened by the events in North Africa. They had denied to the Axis an important source of supplies and a possible submarine base.²¹ With an air and sea base of operations in North Africa, the Allies had made the task of eventually gaining a foothold in Europe much easier.²² The Allies were now in position to step off into Italy where a decisive victory would greatly facilitate the invasion of France.²³ With the

establishment of secure sea lines of communication in the Mediterranean, the Allies were prepared to threaten Hitler from the south thus creating another possible invasion route into the continent.

C. Military Lessons Learned From "Torch"

There were as many lessons learned during Operation Torch as there were Allied personnel involved in the operation. From the standpoint of the United States, Torch was especially important because a tremendous number of amphibious operational problems were identified without destroying the effectiveness of the 3d Infantry Division during the learning process. So, not only did the forces involved profit from the experience of conducting a live fire amphibious assault against the enemy, but the success of the operation and the flood of after action and lessons learned reports that resulted prompted a renewed interest in development of amphibious doctrine and equipment much of which was successfully employed during the landings at Normandy.

Because amphibious operations are naturally divided into phases such as the planning phase, the loading phase, the crossing phase, the assault phase, and so on, the lessons learned are most conveniently summarized according to the phase to which they relate. The following subparagraphs deal with the phases in roughly the time sequence in which they occurred. Naturally, there is a substantial amount of overlap between some of the phases of

the operation, and there are no clear cut start and stop times to delineate the phases for the most part. Also included are lessons which apply to communications and operations with both the Air Force and Navy since these areas were critical to the success of the operation.

1. AMPHIBIOUS PLANNING:

a. The planning of Operation Torch was understood to be critical to the success of the operation by all those involved. LTG Eisenhower was chosen to lead the combined operation and he insisted on a fully integrated staff for the operation.²⁴ His insistence on full integration of the staff led to a maturing of the attitude with which the staff officers dealt with the other U.S. services and the Allies.

b. During the conduct of the operation, the differences in operating methods and vocabularies indicated that British and American units should not be mixed in combat operations without extensive joint training to insure that the differences would not lead to tragic errors.²⁵

c. The lack of information for the non-organic units which were attached to the assault force just prior to embarkation caused serious problems with load planning and stowage of equipment when the units were loaded aboard the transport ships.²⁶ Complete and accurate information on all units is absolutely essential to the efficient planning and organization of any amphibious operation.

d. Unit replacement personnel should join the unit at

least two months prior to the start of operations in order for them to learn the procedures of the unit and to establish themselves as part of the unit team.²⁷ If they join the unit at the last minute they will not be able to contribute and may even detract from the performance of the unit as a whole.

2. EMBARKATION.

a. Stowage of equipment must be carefully and properly controlled to prevent damage by handling and the environment during transport to the area of operations.²⁸ In addition, because not all of the equipment was properly combat loaded, there were delays at the debarkation point while the problems were corrected.²⁹ The equipment should be loaded in inverse order of the need for the equipment on shore at the assault location.³⁰ Otherwise, equipment has to be shifted in the hold of the ship to set up the assault loads.

b. Ships must be combat loaded with the equipment on the same ship as the troops who will use it during the assault operations. The British system of loading equipment on one ship and men on another was found to be unsatisfactory for assault landings. In addition, the equipment must be given sufficient priority so that it gets ashore with the troops who will use it.³¹

c. Poor marking of crated equipment delivered to the port required that the equipment be unpacked to determine what it was and to insure that it was loaded in proper

sequence. Better marking methods using color codes or symbols were needed. In addition, weight and cube information on equipment was sometimes incorrect or completely missing. This led to significant problems during stowage of the equipment aboard the ships.³⁷

3. TRANSPORTATION TO THE AREA OF OPERATIONS:

a. Navy personnel did not provide sufficient guidance to Army personnel on shipboard living.³⁸ Commanders of ground troops must insure that their personnel are well informed of how to live aboard ships. In addition, Army personnel require detailed training from Naval personnel on abandoning ship to minimize loss of life if the ship is sunk.³²

b. The time spent aboard ship enroute to the amphibious landing site is very valuable to the success of the operation, and training should be conducted both day and night with emphasis on night maneuvers and command and control.³⁵ Also while enroute, the troops should exercise as much as possible so they will be ready for the rigors of the amphibious assault and subsequent operations.³⁶

4. ASSAULT OPERATIONS:

a. All amphibious assaults should be practiced with as much detail and as realistic conditions as possible.³⁷

The infantry needs to train for night attacks and the engineers need to train for mine location and removal at

night.³⁸ Small units must train for and use aggressive fire and maneuver to reduce enemy defensive positions.³⁹

b. The initial approach to the assault location should be done under cover of darkness, but because of the problems of command and control at night, amphibious operations should be conducted at dawn.⁴⁰ Transport ships must be properly positioned at H-Hour to insure that the assault plan can be implemented and to make sure that the combat teams don't go ashore in increments or scattered all over the beach.⁴¹ Navy coxswains must be properly trained on landing operations to insure they are able to unbeach their boats and return to the ships for additional loads of men and equipment. Many landing craft were lost because the coxswains couldn't or didn't unbeach them.⁴² Additionally, each boat should have a magnetic compass and the coxswain should be given a magnetic bearing to their beach point and a return bearing to the ship.⁴³

c. Surf operations of the landing craft are critical. To avoid damage to the landing craft, rapid closing of ramps after a quick unloading are essential. Improved methods of unloading heavy equipment were required.⁴⁴ The Higgins Boat - LCP(L), landing craft personnel, large - was simply unacceptable for amphibious assault operations. It holed on rocks, wrecked on beaches, and made it difficult for the assault troops to get out.⁴⁵ In general, better built landing craft were required to reduce losses to reefs and surf.⁴⁶

d. Assaulting troops were overburdened with equipment.

In general, lighter and less bulky equipment was needed.⁴⁷ During ship to shore operations, personnel should wear their life preservers and be prepared to jettison their equipment if thrown into the water by an accident. A number of troops were drowned when their landing craft overturned or when they were knocked off their feet by a wave. The equipment they were carrying was too heavy and too bulky for amphibious operations.⁴⁸

e. Artillery support is required at the earliest possible time to support the assault phase.⁴⁹ The artillery used during Torch was not effective against tanks.⁵⁰ Tanks should be included in amphibious operations at an early stage to exploit their mobility and firepower to expand the beachhead. In addition, an airfield in the area of operations should be secured early to facilitate land based air support for air superiority and a faster system for acquiring air support should be developed.⁵¹

5. SHORE OPERATIONS:

a. Movement of supplies was a very significant problem during Operation Torch. Bulldozers and other tracked vehicles are needed on the beach early for moving supplies. Supplies which can, should be packed for one man portability. Balanced packs of supplies should be landed early.⁵² Woven nets or mats should be used by the shore party to provide traction to vehicles as they cross the loose sand of the beach.⁵³ Light vehicles should be off

loaded quickly to provide for reconnaissance, control of the landing and unloading areas, and transportation of personnel and equipment around the landing area.⁵⁴

During Torch, lack of transportation caused large dumps of equipment and supplies to build up around the unloading points.⁵⁵

b. Additional service units are needed for any large amphibious landing to set up distribution points and manage the flow of supplies ashore. These service units should be scheduled for early landing.⁵⁶ Salvage crews should be used to recover stranded landing craft and damaged or discarded equipment.⁵⁷ The shore parties should have carefully designed and made beach lights and markers early during the landing operation to assist with movement control on the shore.⁵⁸ Traffic and straggler control is the key to keeping the beachhead organized and for facilitating future operations.⁵⁹

c. Shore parties should dig in to defend against enemy counter attacks and enemy air attacks.⁶⁰ Automatic antiaircraft weapons should be landed early with sufficient mobility so they can move inland to protect captured airfields, ports, and the beachhead.⁶¹

6. SUSTAINMENT OPERATIONS:

a. Water is needed immediately on shore and should be provided with the kitchens when they come ashore.⁶²

b. Medical personnel involved in Torch did not bring ashore sufficient supplies or equipment. Heavy equipment

such as refrigerators should be brought ashore after the initial lodgement is secure.⁶³

c. Hand tools should be carried by the mechanics and the organizational level tools should accompany the units. All maintenance units should bring additional spare parts.⁶⁴

d. Accessories, lubricants, spare parts, and ammunition should always be loaded with the equipment to which they pertain.⁶⁵

e. Organizational equipment in follow-up convoys should be distributed among the vessels in the convoy so the loss of a ship doesn't cripple the capability of a unit.⁶⁶

f. Graves Registration procedures must specify that bodies must be left with both dog tags if buried temporarily.⁶⁷

g. Award of the purple heart to wounded troops who were rejoining their units was found to be very good for unit morale.⁶⁸

h. Plans for control of the civil population must be detailed. They must provide for adequate trained administrators, set up curfew regulations, establish price controls, currency exchange rates, rear area security forces, quarters for combat troops, and control of utilities. In addition, guidance must be provided for control of hostile elements of the population and prisoners of war.⁶⁹ Sufficient interpreters must be available.⁷⁰

7. COMMUNICATIONS:

a. Commanders and staffs must be trained in communications and message preparation.⁷¹ During Torch, improper encryption, too much encrypted traffic and over classification of message traffic caused long delays in delivery of the information to the addressees.⁷²

b. Command radio nets should not have their net control station located on a fighting ship since they can't operate when the ship is engaged and the shocks from the guns damage the radios.⁷³

c. Adequate communications between the ships and the shore are essential to successful amphibious operations. During Torch, ship-to-shore communications were poor because of incomplete communications equipment and equipment that got wet during the assault and failed to operate. Spare parts and water proofing for all communications equipment are vital to maintaining the ship-to-shore links.⁷⁴

d. Operators must be well trained and experienced in communications procedures. During Torch, important traffic was lost as a result of untrained operators.

"At 2045Z of the first day there was recorded a plain language message, in French, describing much of the damage done by our force in the harbor at Casablanca, and some of the action of shore batteries during the day. It was apparently a report to higher headquarters from the French Admiralty in Casablanca. The operator did not report the unusual interception, and this valuable information was not discovered until after the armistice."⁷⁵

8. NAVY SUPPORT.

a. Naval gunfire support of landing operations should be practiced as a joint training exercise with the Army and Air Force elements that will be involved.⁷⁶

b. Smoke should be used to screen the ships from shore batteries, to protect the landing troops from observed fire, and to prevent precision bombing of vital targets ashore by enemy aircraft. Smoke should be used both day and night.⁷⁷

c. Fire support from ships should allow for large maneuvering areas at sea to permit long firing runs and to minimize maneuvering turns while delivering fire.⁷⁸

d. Radar is invaluable for maneuvering the ships and for providing fire control but the equipment used during Torch was too susceptible to shock and damage from the firing of the heavy ship guns.⁷⁹

e. Spotting planes were the most effective way of controlling accurate naval gunfire but they required fighter aircraft protection.⁸⁰

9. AIR FORCE SUPPORT.

a. Amphibious operations require close air-ground cooperation, especially in the areas of reconnaissance and aerial photography.⁸¹ Lack of good communications between air and ground units involved in Torch prevented effective use of the air assets in the close support role.⁸¹

b. Strafing of enemy positions and ships with .50 cal. machine gun fire was very effective throughout the

operation.⁸³

c. Smoke was used effectively against our aircraft to conceal targets and gave the impression of badly damaged targets which caused some aircraft not to drop additional ordinance on the targets.⁸⁴

d. Very poor visual identification training of Allied troops caused a number of friendly aircraft to be shot down by friendly troops. Good identification training is essential for effective close air support operations in all assault operations.⁸⁵

D. SUMMARY.

The significance of Operation Torch lies in its pivotal position in the events of World War II. The Allied foothold in North Africa marked the beginning of the strategic offensive in the war which was to carry the Allies to a successful invasion of Europe. Torch provided the necessary battlefield experience for Eisenhower's joint staff and taught the tactical lessons essential to the future success of amphibious operations on a far greater scale. Strategically, Torch provided the initial phase of a campaign which would eventually destroy the Axis forces in Africa and put them on the strategic defensive for the rest of the war. As Churchill was to say about the events in North Africa, "This is not the end. This is not even the beginning of the end. But it is, perhaps, the end of the beginning."⁸⁶

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63. Ibid, pages 20, 21.
64. Ibid, pages 47, 48.
65. Ibid, page 17.
66. Ibid, pages 19, 20.
67. Schaefer, page 26.
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70. Ibid, page 14.
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72. Unknown Author, Summary of Signal Communications at Casablanca (N6038), pages 6, 10, 11, 12.

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76. Torch Operation, Comments & Recommendations, page 4.
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79. Ibid, page 7.
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81. Schaefer, page 3b.
82. Patton, pages 2, 3, 4.
83. Torch Operation, Comments & Recommendations, pages 8, 9, 10.
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ANNEX A

ORGANIZATION OF OPERATION TORCH ASSAULT FORCE

WESTERN TASK FORCE

COMMANDER GROUND FORCES: MG George S. Patton
COMMANDER NAVAL ESCORT: Rear Admiral Henry K. Hewitt

UNITS: 3d Infantry Division (Reinforced)
(US) CCB plus 1 Armored Battalion, 2d Armored Division
47th RCT, 9th Infantry Division
60th RCT, 9th Infantry Division
(35,000 men in 29 ships)

NAVAL ESCORT: 3 Battleships
(US) 5 Cruisers
1 Aircraft Carrier
3 Auxiliary Carriers
1 Antiaircraft Cruiser
34 Destroyers

CENTER TASK FORCE

COMMANDER GROUND FORCES: MG Lloyd R. Fredendall
COMMANDER NAVAL ESCORT: Commodore Thomas H. Troubridge

UNITS: 1st Infantry Division
(US) CCB, 1st Armored Division
1st Ranger Battalion
Corps Troops (II Corps)
(39,000 men in 47 ships)

NAVAL ESCORT: 1 Battleship
(BRITISH) 2 Cruisers
1 Aircraft Carrier
2 Auxiliary Carriers
2 Antiaircraft Ships
13 Destroyers

EASTERN TASK FORCE

COMMANDER GROUND FORCES: MG Charles W. Ryder

COMMANDER NAVAL ESCORT: Vice Admiral Sir Harold M. Burrough

UNITS: 39th RCT, 9th Infantry Division (US)
168th RCT, 34th Infantry Division (US)
11th Brig Group, British 78th Division
36th Brig Group, British 78th Division
1st Commando Battalion*
6th Commando Battalion*
(33,000 men in 34 ships)

*Composite US and British

NAVAL ESCORT: 4 Cruisers
1 Aircraft Carrier
1 Auxiliary Carrier
3 Antiaircraft Ships
13 Destroyers

ANNEX B

ENEMY ORDER OF BATTLE

SAFI AREA

(1) SAFI

Two Co's, 2d Foreign Legion Inf
Two Btry's, 2d Foreign Legion Arty (8-75mm How)
Two Co's, 2d Moroccan Riflemen
One Btry, 410th Arty Bn (155mm)
One Plt, Light Tanks (3 Renault - type TF)
One Naval Coast Defense Btry (4 - 138mm guns)
One Naval Coast Defense Btry (2 - 75mm guns)
Det (8 men), 41st Engr Radio
Det (5 men), Air Warning Service

(2) MARRAKECH

One Bn, 2d Moroccan Riflemen
One Bn, 2d Foreign Legion Inf
Group Chasseurs d'Afrique (no tanks)
Artillery -- 100 men with 8 - 37mm guns and 3 -
75mm guns

(3) MAZAGAN and AZMMOUR

One Bn, 2d Moroccan Riflemen
One Co, Senegalese Inf

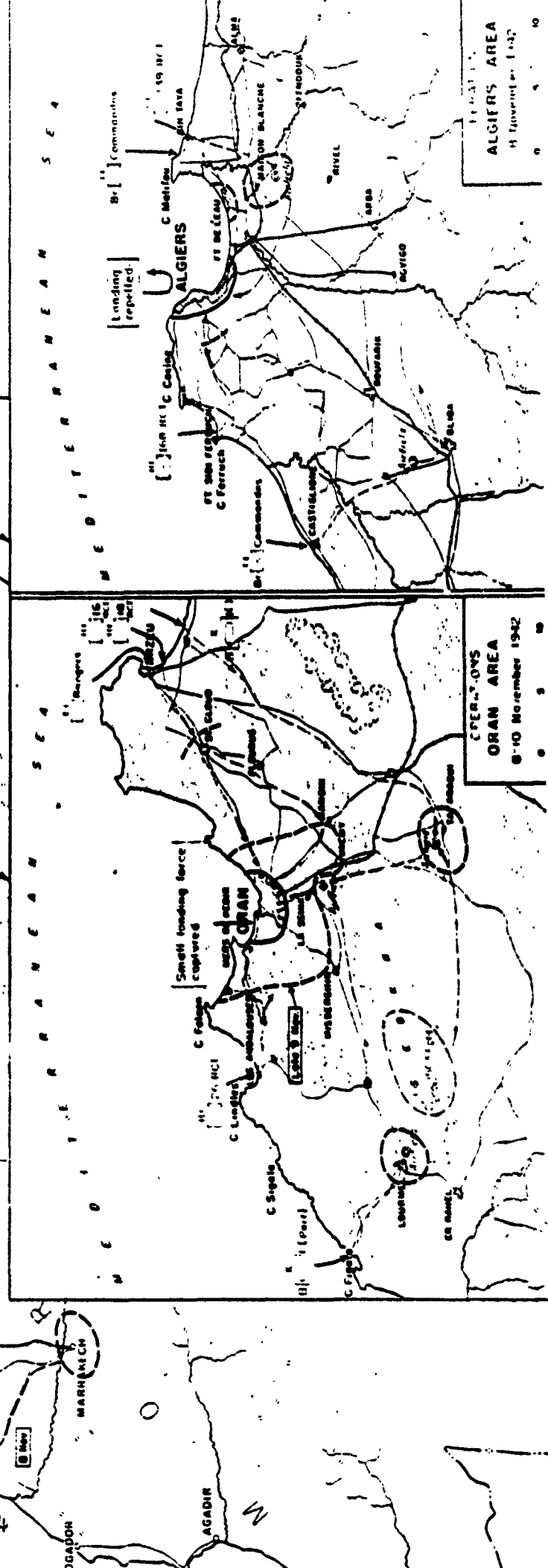
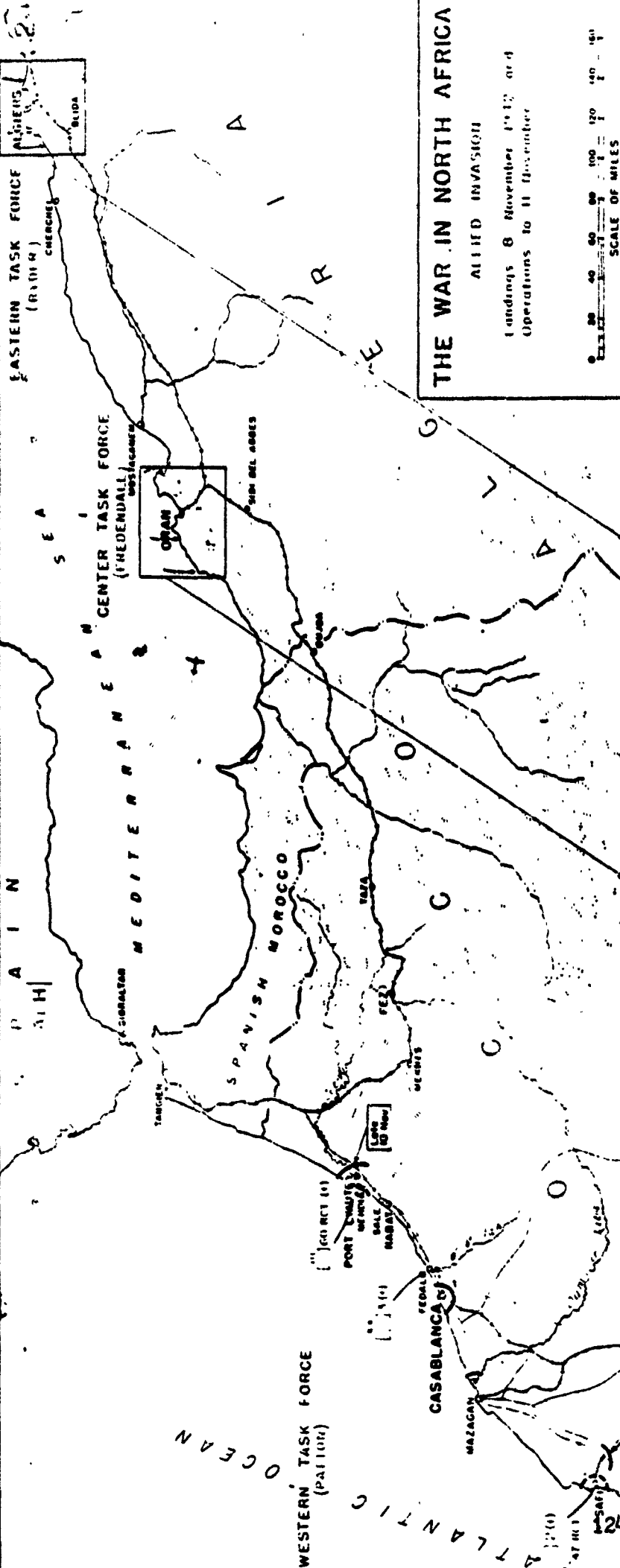
FEDALA AREA

Five Bns Inf
Two Bns Arty (24 - 75mm guns)
One Btry, 105mm How
Two Btrys, 155mm guns
Five Btrys, 75mm AT guns (10 guns)
One Btry, Coast Defense Guns (4 - 138mm)
One Btry, Coast Defense Guns (4 - 90mm)
One Naval Coast Defense Btry (2 - 75mm guns)
Three (approx) Co's tanks (total of 20 light tanks)

PORT LYAUTEY AREA

Two Bns Moroccan Inf
One Btry 410 Arty Bn (155mm)
One Btry, Foreign Legion Arty
Naval Base Garrison (Strength unknown)
LTwenty (approx) light tanks

ANNEX C
OPERATION TORCH MAP



ANNEX D (Task Organization, Sub-Task Force BRUSHWOOD)

3d Infantry Division

HQ & HQ Co, 3d Inf Div (also BRUSHWOOD HQ)
7th Inf
15th Inf
30th Inf
Co A, 756th Tank Bn
Co C, 756th Tank Bn
10th FA Bn
39th FA Bn
41st FA Bn
Battery A, 9th FA Bn
Battery B, 9th FA Bn
Battery C, 9th FA Bn
3rd Recon Tr
10th Engineer Combat Bn
3rd Signal Co
3rd Medical Bn
Det, 3rd QM Bn

2nd Armored Division Units

1st Bn, 67th Armd Regt (less Co C)
Det, Maint Co, 67th Armd Regt
Det, Med Bn, 67th Armd Regt
Co A, 41st Armd Inf
1st Plt, Co I, 41st Armd Inf
Battery A, 78th Armd FA Bn
1st Plt, Co C, 82nd Armd Recon Bn
2d Plt, Co B, 17th Armd Engr Bn
1st Plt, Co C, 17th Armd Engr Bn
1st Plt, Co D, 17th Armd Engr Bn
Det, 142nd Armd Sig Co

Air Support Command Units (No Planes)

Adv Ech, HQ XII ASO
Det, HQ Sq, 7th Fighter Wing
16th Obsn Sq
Det 68th Obsn Sq
122nd Obsn Sq
Air Support Control
Det, HQ, XII Air Service Command
Det, 41st Service Group
Det, HQ & HQ & Serv Co, 21st Engr Avn Regt
Det, Co E, 21st Engr Avn Regt
Det, 562nd Sig Bn (AWS)

Det, 927th Sig Bn
ASP's (from 3d Comm Sq)

Miscellaneous Units

36th Engr Combat Regt, less 2d Bn
436th CA Bn (AA) (AW)
1st, 2nd, & 3rd Plts, Btry A, 443d CA Bn (AA) (AW)
2nd, 3rd, & 4th Plts, Btry B, 443d CA Bn (AA) (AW)
2nd & 4th Plts, Btry C, 443d CA Bn (AA) (AW)
2nd & 4th Plts, Btry D, 443d CA Bn (AA) (AW)
204th MP Co
Det, 1st Armd Sig Bn
Det, 122nd Sig RI Co
Det, 163rd Sig Photo Co
Det, 239th Sig OPn Co
Det, Co C, 829th Sig Serv Bn
Naval Air Liaison
Navy Shore Fire Control Parties
Interpreters
Prisoner of War Interrogators

Western Task Force HQ, Reserve, & Miscellaneous Units (with Sub-Task Force BRUSHWOOD)

HQ & HQ Co, WESTERN Task Force
2nd Bn, 20th Engr Combat Regt (Task Force Reserve)
CIC Personnel
Fort Rehabilitation Unit
Civil Government Personnel

ANNEX E

FRIENDLY FORCES ORDER OF BATTLE

HEADQUARTERS, TASK FORCE BRUSHWOOD

(1) Elements of Task Force BRUSHWOOD (less Armored Landing Team)

3d Infantry Division





7th Infantry Regt
15th Infantry Regt
30th Infantry Regt
10th Field Artillery Bn
39th Field Artillery Bn
41st Field Artillery Bn
10th Engineer Bn
36th Engineer Bn
2d Bn, 20th Engineer Regt
3rd QM Bn
MP Co
Two plts, 443d Bn CA (AA AW)
436th Bn CA (AA AW)

(2) Armored Landing Team

1st Bn, 67th Armor Regt
Co A, 41st Armored Inf Regt
Btry A, 28th Armored FA Bn
Two plts, 443d Bn CA (AA AW)
Maint Sec, 78th Armored Regt
Plt, 17th Armored Eng Bn

ANNEX F

3D INFANTRY DIVISION OPERATION MAP

- III  15
- A  41
- 2  20
- I  67

FLOATING RESERVE
LAND ON CALL

