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THE
FIFTH AIR FORCE
IN THE
HUON PENINSULA CAMPAIGN

JANUARY TO OCTOBER 1945

PREPARED BY
AAF HISTORICAL OFFICE
HEADQUARTERS, ARMY AIR FORCES

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Prepared by
AAF Historical Office
Headquarters, Army Air Forces
January 1946
FOREWORD

This study, fourth in a series of six covering the activities of the Fifth Air Force and its predecessors from 1942 through January 1944, was written by Maj. Richard L. Watson, Jr., of the Southwest Pacific Branch, Operational History Division, USAF Historical Office. A fifth study is projected to carry the narrative down to February 1944 and thus complete the Huon Peninsula Campaign. The sixth is to be a detailed treatment of air operations in the Bismarck Archipelago from November 1943 to March 1944. Like others in the series, the present study is subject to revision as additional information becomes available.
CONTENTS

I THE SOUTHWEST PACIFIC IN JANUARY 1943 .......................... 1
II PLANS AND ALLOCATIONS, JANUARY-APRIL 1943 ............... 19
III THE AIR SERVICE COMMAND ........................................ 43
IV THE ALLIED AIR Blockade OF LAE; THE BISMARK SEA ACTION OF MARCH .................... 69
V PRELIMINARY OFFENSIVE OPERATIONS, MARCH-MAY ............ 102
VI PROBLEMS OF MEN AND MATERIAL, MAY-SEPTEMBER .......... 136
VII LAUNCHING THE OFFENSIVE, JUNE-AUGUST ....................... 167
VIII SALAMAU TO POMAIC, 1 SEPTEMBER-2 OCTOBER ............. 202
IX CONCLUSIONS .......................................................... 226
GLOSSARY ................................................................. 241
NOTES ...................................................................... 242
BIBLIOGRAPHICAL NOTE ................................................ 283

APPENDICES

1. Location of Combat Units, 1943 ................................. 285
2. Fighter Escort of Transports to Lae, 24 January-1 February 1943 .................. 287
4. Status Reports, 1943 ................................................. 295
5. Flights in Commission, 1943 ...................................... 300
6. Estimated Enemy Air Strength ..................................... 302
7. Fifth Air Force Sorties, 1943 ..................................... 305
8. Tons of Bombs Dropped by Fifth Air Force, 1943 ................ 304
9. Enemy Aircraft Destroyed in the Air by Fifth Air Force Planes, 1943 ................ 305
10. Enemy Aircraft Destroyed on the Ground ...................... 305
11. AAF Officer Casualties in the Southwest Pacific, 1943 ............. 306

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ILLUSTRATIONS

New Guinea and Related Areas ........................ Frontispiece

Australia .............................................. 8
The Rabaul Area ......................................... 74
Scene of the Bismarck Sea Action ..................... 86
Northeast New Guinea and Papua ....................... 172
Japanese Supply and Reinforcement Routes to
Lae-Salamaua ............................................. 183
54th Troop Carrier Wing, Tons of Cargo Delivered .. 231
Eight Japanese Combat Aircraft ......................... 302
The Fifth Air Force in the Huon Peninsula Campaign

January to October 1943
Chapter I
THE SOUTHWEST PACIFIC IN JANUARY 1943

On 23 January 1943 the Papuan Campaign was officially considered at an end. Allied air units and Australian infantry, taking advantage of the enemy's overextended supply lines, had driven back a Japanese force which by late summer of 1942 had pushed over the Owen Stanley mountains to points within 30 miles of Port Moresby. With the aid of elements of the American 32d Division which the Fifth Air Force had flown across the towering ranges, the Japanese had been compressed into the Buna-Gona area, where in December they were virtually annihilated. Only scattered remnants had slipped along the swampy coast line to join well-established garrisons in the Salamaua area and at Lae, 150 miles to the northwest.

Though this victory had come as a result of offensive action, the Papuan Campaign was essentially a defensive operation forced upon the Allies by Jap initiative. With the Japanese driven from Papua, however, the Allies were in a position to undertake a full-fledged offensive for the reconquest of New Guinea as a springboard for the return to the Philippines. The first phase of this offensive was an arduous campaign ending in the capture of Lae and Salamaua on the Huon Gulf by October 1943. In the accomplishment of this task, Australian troops fought their way across towering mountains and through steaming swamps in an indescribably difficult overland operation based on Wau, a point about 30 miles inland from Salamaua. Other ground units, both American and Australian, reached...
their goal by a series of amphibious landings along the coast of North-east New Guinea.

Without the continuous cooperation of the Allied Air Forces, however, the campaign could not have succeeded. Using tactics learned the hard way in earlier Pacific fighting, American and Australian flyers maintained the aerial superiority over New Guinea gained in the Pauan Campaign. Hardworking engineers constructed advanced airfields giving fighters and even bombers new bases from which to cover the enemy's lines of communication through the Bismarck Sea. Unarmed transport planes, usually protected by friendly fighters, defied tropical storms and enemy interception to supply otherwise isolated outposts. At the same time, service units and ground crews "sweated out" what seemed to be a thankless job of moving supplies and keeping planes ready to fly.

During the campaign for the Buna Gulf, Allied forces were confronted with perhaps even more difficult problems of terrain then in the earlier Pauan fighting, and by equally enervating weather and an enemy resistance no less fanatical. It was a small campaign, at least as far as the forces in immediate contact with the enemy were concerned, but other factors made this and succeeding campaigns in the Pacific among the most complicated operations in military history. In addition to great distances, uncooperative weather, and almost uncharted water and land areas, delicate problems of command were chronic in a situation where the air, land, and naval forces of two nations had to be welded together, and where at the outset a certain confusion existed as to the geographical limits of the commander's responsibility.
The choice of General MacArthur in March 1942 as Commanding General of the Southwest Pacific Area had placed in command one who was fully capable of dealing with the broad strategic problems of an area which included not only Australia, New Guinea, the Solomons, and most of the Netherlands East Indies but significantly, the Philippines as well. The original definition of the Pacific areas in May 1942 had given all of the Solomons to the Southwest Pacific but prior to the American landing on Guadalcanal in August, the eastern boundary of MacArthur's command was shifted to follow the 159th meridian south from the equator. Thus the South Pacific forces, primarily a naval command, were given clear-cut authority over Guadalcanal and Tulagi, while MacArthur retained control over the upper Solomons.

Though this presented little difficulty during the operations of 1942, it was clear that activities of converging air and naval forces would soon begin to overlap with resulting complications. Accordingly, the Operations Division of the War Department General Staff prepared a paper for the Joint Staff Planners in September of 1942 which attempted to establish a more satisfactory delineation of responsibilities. The paper remained on the agenda until March 1943 while a subcommittee appointed to study the matter vainly attempted to agree on a report. There was a definite feeling on the part of some of the planners that "for coordination in planning and operations, it is essential that there be unity of command in the Solomon Islands-British New Guinea-Bismarck Islands Theater of Operations." It was difficult, however, to come to an agreement as to how such a unified command could be established, and in the end the setup remained unchanged. The boundary between the South and Southwest Pacific remained the 159th meridian.
Decisions on over-all command and general strategy probably had little effect upon the immediate problems facing the infantry and the airmen whose assignment was to drive the Japs from British New Guinea. More important to them was the organization within the theater itself. The Finsen Campaign had shown that General MacArthur had devised a command flexible enough for jungle combat. With some modifications it was to be retained during the next operation. MacArthur's headquarters was at Brisbane, but he himself spent frequent periods at an advanced headquarters in Port Moresby or, on occasion, even in the forward areas. The Allied Land Forces continued under the command of Australian General Sir Thomas Blamey, under whom Lt. Gen. E. F. Herring, another Australian, commanded in January 1943 the New Guinea Force.

At the conclusion of the Finsen Campaign, General MacArthur did not consider his ground forces prepared for an immediate continuation of the offensive. He had available for combat two U. S. Army, one Marine, and three Australian divisions. Of these the U. S. 39th Division, battered by the Finsen fighting, was being transferred to Australia for rehabilitation and replaced by the 61st Division. The First Marine Division after being withdrawn from Guadalcanal had been sent to the Melbourne area and, according to naval authorities, would not be ready for combat for six months. Jungle combat had also been hard on the Australian 6th and 7th Divisions, and these too were to be reconstituted in Australia. Furthermore MacArthur expected that the 9th Australian, which was returning from the Middle East, would have to be completely re-equipped.

Although the ground forces in New Guinea were largely under the control of Australian leaders in January 1943, the air force commanders...
were principally American. True, the air organization which paralleled
the Allied Land Forces was the Allied Air Forces and was staffed by both
Australian and American officers. But of the two units which composed
the Allied Air Forces, the RAAF and the American Fifth Air Force, only
the Fifth was adequately equipped for offensive action. The RAAF, how-
ever, was gradually building up a considerable force, and several of its
squadrons equipped with Beaufighters, Beauforts, P-40's, L-20's, and
PB4Y's had already contributed much to the New Guinea fighting while at-
tached to the Fifth Air Force.

Lt. Gen. George C. Kenney, commander of both the Allied Air Forces
and the Fifth Air Force, reserved his primary interest for the Fifth, the
"Best Damn Air Force in this or any other army." Kenney had perhaps an
exaggerated concept of the potentialities of air power, but he possessed
a combination of unbounded energy, dislike of red tape, and willingness to
experiment, together with a real understanding of both engineering and
flying problems, which inspired confidence. His permanent headquarters
was at Brisbane where he was in close contact with General MacArthur. 7

His channel to New Guinea was through the Fifth Air Force Advanced Echelon,
located at Port Moresby and commanded by Brig. Gen. Emnis C. Whitehead. Whitehead,
in turn, was in a position to direct the activities of the V Fighter
Kenneth Walker lost over Rabaul early in January. The only other organi-
ization at the command level, the Air Service Command under Brig. Gen.
Carl Connell, was located at Brisbane with an advanced echelon at Towns-
ville. There was at this time no troop carrier command. Of the two

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troop carrier groups in the Southwest Pacific, the veteran 374th Group
was under the operational control of the Fifth Air Force Advanced
Headquarters and the newly arrived 517th Group remained in Australia under
the Directorate of Air Transport, Allied Air Forces. 8

The air force organization was still in its formative stage, having
developed after the activation of the Fifth Air Force in September 1942.
But though the organization was new, most of its constituent units were
veterans in the theater, several having left the United States within
two months of the attack on Pearl Harbor. All units, moreover, had become
so exhausted during the Papuan Campaign that both General MacArthur and
General Kenney believed the air forces, like the ground forces, were not
ready to participate in a prolonged offensive. 9

At the conclusion of the Papuan Campaign, the Bomber Command con-
sisted of two heavy groups, two medium groups, and one light group. The
B-17's of the 43d Bombardment Group (H) had seen hard service for six
months. Of the 55 B-17's and P's on hand, approximately 30 at all times
were undergoing depot overhaul. Perhaps 50 per cent of the remainder
were in daily combat commission, and a quarter of these were regularly
used for reconnaissance flights, leaving no more than 14 for a striking
force. The other heavy group, the 90th, was equipped with B-24's. The
last combat group to arrive in the theater, it had made an slow start in
November and December, but in January 1943, it began to take over a
major share of heavy-bomber operations. In addition to its reconnaissance
and long-range bombing missions, it ran up an impressive record of enemy
planes shot down. By April it had been credited with 121 "kills."

Maintenance problems, however, were if anything more difficult than with
the B-17, and of 60 B-24's on hand, no more than 15 could be counted on at any one time for a striking force. In 1940, it had been customary, owing to the danger of enemy air attack, for bomb squadrons to be based in Australia, and to use Farnborough only as an advanced base "to top off" before performing a mission. But by 1 February, Allied flyers had won sufficient control of the air over Egypt to permit the bringing of five heavy squadrons on Fort Lonesome fields.

General Kenney's medium bombardment was even weaker than his heavy-bomber strength. On paper he had two groups, the 38th and the 22d. But two squadrons of the 38th Group had never reached Australia and were operating in the South Pacific; and while the other two squadrons were based at Fort Lonesome with their B-25's, they had only 27 aircraft on hand and were thus about 10 short of their normal complement. These two units, however, were more nearly ready for combat than the four squadrons of the 22d Bombardment Group (!!). One of the first B-26 units to see combat, this organization had been in action since April 1942. During the spring of that year it had carried out long-range missions against Tobruk until sufficient heavy bombers had arrived to keep that important point under surveillance. From then on it had concentrated on other targets within the New Guinea area. It had suffered heavy losses, over 30 planes from June through November 1942, and had received only eight replacements. By January 1943 the remaining 28 aircraft were in extremely bad condition, and the entire group was withdrawn from combat and sent to Australia for recuperation.

The light-bomber unit in the 5 Bomber Command was the 3d Group. Officially listed as a dive-bomber unit, it had had a varied history.
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The original planes assigned to the group, including dive bombers, had been taken out of active duty in August, shortly after a disastrous mission at Buna from which six out of seven planes had failed to return. Since then the group had flown both B-20's and B-25's with consistent success. But since June 1943, some 15 B-20's had been lost and only four replacements received. By January 1945, according to Zumwalt, the B-20's available had been reduced to a point where the 8th and 89th Squadrons had been "combined to operate what amounts to one squadron." These and the other two squadrons of the 5th Group, equipped with B-25's, were based at Port Moresby, but operations of the latter were limited by intensive training for employment of B-25's as low-level attack planes.

The three fighter groups (the 5th, 35th, and 49th) were all veteran units, having left the United States for the Southwest Pacific in January and February of 1943. At the conclusion of the Bismarck Campaign, all nine squadrons were based in New Guinea and, on paper at least, were well equipped since there were some 370 fighters on hand. But 74 of these were rickety P-40C aircraft, all of which had arrived in Australia in the spring of 1942, and only the EF-24's were of type suitable for the low-range, high-altitude missions necessary in Pacific operations. Furthermore, the flyers of the 8th Group, which had been based in the sweltering Milne Bay area since the loss of September, were ridden with malaria and were soon to be transferred to Australia for recuperation.

In January 1943 the aircraft of the Allied Air Forces were operating from airfields the majority of which had not existed much longer than six months. Of seven airfields within an area of 30 miles from Port Moresby,
six were in constant use and necessitated extensive taxiways and dispersal areas. Conditions still were not completely satisfactory, however, on some of these airfields. The 9th Squadron of the 49th Fighter Group, for example, complained that Schulmeier airfield had rough taxiways and inadequate parking areas. Even so, Port Moresby was far better established than the other major New Guinea base, Milne Bay, but there too, great progress had been made. Liberty ships made routine trips to the harbor, and two of three airfields originally constructed were in constant use. Other than the standard complaints of little recreation and poor food, the chief problem was rough and muddy landing strips. 14

Although Port Moresby and Milne Bay were the principal bases available to the Allies in New Guinea, transport planes made routine flights to a number of other points to deposit supplies and reinforcements. Chief among these were the landing strips in the Dobodura area just inland from Bune to which large quantities of supplies and probably the equivalent of an infantry division had been flown during the Finschhafen Campaign. Of almost equal importance was an airfield at Seul, about 20 miles south of Salamaua and virtually inaccessible by any other means of transportation.

Without air transport of supplies and men, the early operations in New Guinea could probably not have succeeded. The 574th Troop Carrier Group, together with planes of the Directorate of Air Transport (DA) had performed all the air transport missions in 1942. By the end of the year, the 574th Group was flying a motley collection of worn-out aircraft. In January badly needed reinforcements arrived with the air echelon of the 317th Troop Carrier Group, which flew 52 new C-47's from California to Australia. The new planes were immediately transferred to the veteran
374th, much to the disgust of the newly arrived flyers, and the 317th
found itself presented with the old planes, 19 C-47's, 7 C-49's, 10
C-50's, 2 EB-30's, 1 B-17C, and 1 B-17D. Many of the new pilots, however,
were soon attached to squadrons of the 374th Group and as co-pilots gained
esential experience in difficult New Guinea flying. 15

Flying transport planes were hazardous not only because of the danger
from tropical storms and lofty mountain ranges but also because of the
threat of lurking enemy fighters. Although the V Fighter Command could
rightly claim that it had won aerial superiority over New Guinea, it could
not prevent fairly frequent Japanese air raids flown from Rabaul, or oc-
casional ones from airfields at Lae. Generally these did little damage,
owing to the increased effectiveness of the aircraft warning system. In
the summer of 1942, Port Moresby had been almost entirely dependent for
warning of air attack upon "the poor man's radar" — Australian coast
watchers and spotters located in the mountains with binoculars and radio.
Not until September did the first American aircraft warning unit, the
565th Signal AW Battalion, arrive, but within two months at least four
radar installations were providing a screen for this important military
area. Milne Bay was equally well protected. Coast watchers maintained
a constant vigil from points along the New Guinea coast and from islands
as far to the northeast as Kirivina, and radars were located at Milne Bay,
at Tufi Point (125 miles to the northwest), and on Normanby and Goodenough
Islands. 16

Raids on Port Moresby during January were particularly ineffective.
Between 14 and 31 January at least eight raids occurred. The attacks
were usually carried out by no more than three or four planes, and Allied
fighters and antiaircraft had sufficient warning to force most of the
enemy planes to withdraw. Nevertheless during this period one B-17 and
one other aircraft were destroyed on the ground. 17

At the same time, Milne Bay was subjected to frequent air attacks.
The most disastrous occurred on 17 January, when shortly after noon,
warning was received of the approach of enemy aircraft. Four P-39's of
the 80th Fighter Squadron "were scrambled directly over the field at
maximum altitude." Fifteen minutes later all remaining planes were ordered
off the ground, but before they could get off, more than 20 bombers es-
serted by Zero fighters were overhead. The enemy aircraft dropped approxi-
mately 150 fragmentation bombs, destroying 2 B-17's, 1 B-24, 2 P-39's,
and 1 RAAF Hudson as well as 6 vehicles and 6 fuel dumps. Interception
was unsuccessful. The fear of attacks on this relatively exposed base,
particularly at night, persuaded the Fighter Command to send a P-39 from
Port Moresby as a night fighter. In its first trial on 22 January, the
controller directed it by radio after it left the field. At one time it
was on the tail of an enemy bomber, but no real success was achieved. 18

Destructive Japanese raids were the exception rather than the rule.
Indeed that of 17 January was probably the most successful raid ever made
by the Japanese on Milne Bay. Nevertheless they were an ever-present
danger, and although there were many examples of heroism beyond the call
of duty when a raid actually occurred, the continued threat had the effect
of making the men "nervous and jumpy." From 17 to 34 January, for example,
there were 11 raids on Milne Bay; as a result many of the personnel were
"groggy" from lack of sleep, and several were transferred to the hos-
pital and put under observation for possible psychoneurosis. 19
conditions were undoubtedly worse at Milne Bay in January 1943 than at any of the other permanent air bases in the Southwest Pacific.

In general, the fighting spirit of the Fifth Air Force was good. One competent observer, for example, stated that the morale at Port Moresby was "tops." There were, however, a number of underlying problems which were threatening to become serious. One of the most pressing difficulties was the question of replacements for personnel. Many of the Fifth Air Force flyers had been in continual combat for as much as 10 months. Back-breaking labor which frequently continued from 12 to 18 hours a day, and occasionally more, wore down ground crews and personnel in service units and depots. To these weary veterans, in the absence of a definite policy of rotation, there seemed little prospect of relief. Only one combat group in the Southwest Pacific, the 19th Bombardment Group (H), had been replaced as a unit since the United States entered the war. After its extended operations in the Philippines, the Netherlands East Indies, and Australia, this group was replaced by the 90th Group in October and November of 1942. By that time, according to flight surgeons, 45 to 60 per cent of the flyers were suffering from combat fatigue owing to constant operations with irregularly spaced missions, the existence of poor living conditions without suitable recreational facilities, and the slackness of promotions.

By January other units had been overseas for almost as long as had the 19th Group, but they were not relieved. The 22d Group, with 10 months of brilliantly executed combat missions, was showing signs of combat fatigue, and the majority were "becoming irritable, short-tempered and lackadaisical." The commanding officer of the 8th Squadron, 49th Fighter
Group, reported that 15 of his pilots had had a year's service in the combat zone, and that their "ability, aggressiveness and morale were becoming very low."

The writer of the unit history of a quartermaster company stated that although these conditions affected work little, the troops were discontented. After months of "continual strenuous physical labor," they simply wanted to go home.

An equally serious problem was the lack of a balanced diet in isolated areas of Australia and in New Guinea. Those units located near the cities and towns of Australia generally received adequate rations. This was hardly the case, however, in New Guinea. All food had to come from Australia, and the inadequacy of shipping facilities, refrigeration, and air transport limited the quantity and variety of the foods which could be provided. As a consequence, troops in New Guinea ate out of cans. The contents usually satisfied medical requirements, but they were almost invariably of Australian manufacture, and the men found that even American canned foods soon lost their flavor. In Port Moresby, the commanding officer of the 8th Fighter Squadron reported that the food was bad and without variety. The 35th Fighter Control Squadron thought the food problem more serious than air raids, explaining that the Australian Army regularly supplied its mess with bully beef and rice, except on Christmas Day when they had rice and bully beef. The Christmas dinner served to the 80th Fighter Squadron at Milne Bay was an outstanding exception to the rule--"ham, sweet potatoes, mashed potatoes, several vegetables, three kinds of desert, and three kinds of beverages. Nothing was dehydrated!"

A third problem which was reaching alarming proportions by January 1943 was the increasing incidence of illness. At this time the three...
principal diseases were malaria, dengue, and diarrhea. Although there was little malaria in Australia, the incidence in New Guinea was high. Col. Bascom L. Wilson, surgeon of the Fifth Air Force, concluded that all natives were infected and thus provided a constant source of the infection. The problem was especially acute at Milne Bay where it was almost a foregone conclusion that everyone would sooner or later be afflicted. During December, for example, there were 100 new cases in the 8th Fighter Group alone, and 150 more were reported during January. The troops at Port Moresby, on the other hand, had a much smaller percentage of malarial cases, but were plagued by diarrhea which seemed to be endemic to the locality.

Authorities both in the theater and in the War Department were fully aware of these problems, and were making some progress toward a solution. The need of a personnel rotation policy was recognized, but it was difficult to establish a satisfactory balance between the demands of the theater for replacements and the realities of the training program. It was a question whether it was wiser to leave tired veterans in the theater or to replace them with untrained newcomers. The return of the 19th Group to the United States was the first indication that those who had been in an area of combat operations for a long time might have an opportunity to go home. This together with the arrival of more replacements restored some hope to the war-weary veterans. Actually, however, it was impossible to count on regular replacements in the desired numbers; so a number of expedients had to be employed in the theater. The 32d Bomber Group, for example, had some opportunity for relaxation while its B-26's were in depot, and at the same time it was able to send a "first batch of combat personnel"
home." By the first of February the malaria-ridden 8th Fighter Group was withdrawn from Milne Bay, sent to Australia, and provided with an abundance of fresh eggs, meat, milk, and vegetables. While in Australia, pilots and ground officers received regular leaves to Sydney, enlisted men were granted furloughs to Brisbane, and others received passes to near-by towns. There was beer in the camp during the evening, but little liquor of any kind could be found in the towns, and that at exorbitant prices. Some felt that it was more satisfactory to stay in camp where the PX was well stocked with beer and soft drinks, or to go to the dances occasionally arranged by the Red Cross. 24

The War Department's attempts to solve the replacement problem introduced a new difficulty. Frequently, high-ranking officers and enlisted men, arriving fresh from the United States and without a combat record, required considerable instruction from experienced men of lesser rank. To the men in the theater this was intolerable. Kenney himself championed the cause of his "kids" and was constantly urging (1) that no high-ranking officers should be sent to his theater unless specifically requested, and (2) that he might be authorized to promote deserving men regardless of the table of organization. On one occasion when a major and 10 first lieutenants arrived in Australia from Hawaii, he requested permission to send them back, urging that only second lieutenants be sent in the future. The request was granted. On another occasion, he was allotted 200 vacancies for first lieutenants above the T/O of the Fifth Air Force, and was promised that consideration would be given to a similar provision for the promotion of first lieutenants and captains. 25 In spite of such expedients, the problem of replacement and rotation had not been solved by January 1943.
Equally bothersome was the question of how to improve the health of the personnel. Unquestionably an unbalanced diet and the peculiarities of a tropical climate contributed much to a general lowering of resistance to illness. These factors also account for the fact that troops living in New Guinea might expect to lose from 15 to 20 pounds in weight. But there is little doubt that each individual soldier was in part responsible for the high incidence of tropical diseases. While in the "malarious areas," he was supposed to wear slacks and long-sleeved shirts, to sleep under mosquito bars, to use mosquito repellents, and to take 10 grains of quinine sulphate daily before the evening meal or 0.1 grain of atabrine six days a week. But until the following of such precautions became instinctive, until each member of a command gave wholehearted support to preventive measures, satisfactory results could not be achieved. The average American soldier was not mentally prepared for tropical warfare in 1942. 26

Under the circumstances, the medical organization of the air force had heavy responsibilities. By 1943, this organization had expanded considerably since the medical section of the United States Air Forces in Australia had been established on 6 March 1942. With the activation of the Fifth Air Force, Colonel Wilson had been designated as Air Force Surgeon, and other officers had been assigned to the Advanced Headquarters at Port Moresby, and to the subordinate commands. These officers directed the activities of the medical detachments of groups and component squadrons. Air Force medical officers were dependent upon the Army Services of Supply to some extent, since both hospitals and medical depots were under SOS control. Cooperation between the two branches of the service was good.
Until June 1942 there were no American hospitals in New Guinea, but within six months thereafter three had been established in Port Moresby with a total of more than 2,000 beds, and two more at Milne Bay with 350 beds. Evacuation from the forward areas to hospitals in New Guinea or Australia was difficult and would have been virtually impossible had it not been for the growing reliance upon air transport. After fields had been made satisfactory for transport planes at Wam and Dobodura, it became possible to evacuate patients from these forward areas to Port Moresby, usually in less than an hour. In the Fagenan Campaign alone between 25 November and 31 December 1943, 7,631 sick and wounded were flown from the Dobodura area to Port Moresby. 27

One of the most important duties of medical officers was to inspect living quarters of officers and men in their camp areas. It occasionally was said that only a general officer was privileged to live in screened-in tents, but actually the well-established camp areas, such as some of those at Port Moresby, were not uncomfortable. In some cases the ingenuity of the soldiers who built the mess halls, the incinerators, and the latrines made the camps as comfortable as many similar areas in the United States. Tents with gravel floors were the rule for living quarters, however, although officers living three or four to a tent occasionally enjoyed wooden flooring. Mess halls were normally of wood, with screens, and occasionally with concrete floors. According to custom, the officers usually had a separate mess. Water was almost invariably a problem since there was no central supply system. Each unit had to lay its own pipes and maintain its own tank, or use water points established by the engineers.
All drinking water, of course, had to be chlorinated. Some units had shower booths. Each squadron of the 23rd Bombardment Group (H.), for example, had from six to nine individual shower heads, while sinks, constructed of half- gasoline drums, were available for washing clothing.

In an area where diarrhea was prevalent, greater efforts than usual were taken to improve sanitation facilities. All units had devices for washing mess kits. The V Bomber Command boasted an unusually ingenious one which had two fire boxes fueled by a double oil line, over which barrels of water could be brought to a boil in 35 minutes. Sewage pits with grease traps for liquid garbage which could be burned out periodically were usually provided, while solids were disposed of in incinerators. Latrines followed a usual "quartermaster type" pattern. The 43d Group Headquarters, for example, had a standard "eightholer" with hinged lids and fly-proofed pits.

The experiences of the veterans of the Southwest Pacific theater during 1942 provided a useful background for the campaign which was to begin where the Burma Campaign left off. General King, Arthur in organizing his theater and directing its strategy and General Kenney in employing his air forces, together with subordinate commanders, had provided a leadership which promised further victories.
Chapter II
PLANS AND ALLOCATIONS, JANUARY-APRIL 1943

The role of air power in Southwest Pacific operations had been established before the conclusion of the Bismarck Campaign as essentially that of a tactical air force, although in contrast to the later tactical air force the Fifth contained heavy bombardment units. General Kenney considered the defeat of the Japanese air force his first priority. Fighters were to destroy enemy planes attempting to raid Allied bases, and bombers were to seek out the Japanese air bases and neutralize them. The second priority was the destruction of Japanese communications and supplies. Strategic objectives, with the possible exception of Rabaul and Balikpapan, were out of the range of Allied planes based in the Southwest Pacific, but rewarding substitutes were available along the sea lanes running from Japan's inner line of defenses to her advanced garrisons. Finally, Kenney employed his air units in direct cooperation with ground troops, or as FM 100-20 later put it, in the destruction of selected objectives in the battle area. ¹

In a theater as large as the Southwest Pacific, it would have been particularly easy to fritter away the limited air strength available in numerous small attacks upon widely separated objectives. Actually such attacks had been necessary in the period before July 1942 when General MacArthur was struggling to put the defenses of Australia in order behind the Great Barrier Reef. But even before this purely
defensive period drew to a close, he was considering a plan which would employ both air and ground forces in a coordinated offensive.

The purpose of this offensive was to recapture Japan's most important conquest in the Australian Mandate, Rabaul on New Britain Island. 3

The choice of Rabaul as the objective was in accord with the global strategy early envisaged by the Combined and Joint Chiefs of Staff. It had been clearly established by August 1942 that the Pacific theater was to be subordinated to the European. Shortly thereafter the Joint Chiefs of Staff listed 10 general objectives of Allied strategy. They placed in number 6 position the general aim of securing Australia, New Zealand, Hawaii, and Alaska, and in number 7 that of carrying out limited offensive operations with amphibious forces in the Pacific. 3

In the early summer of 1942, MacArthur suggested that Rabaul should be the object of an offensive in conformance with this strategy. His suggestion was not at first supported by the Navy because it was believed that such a move would be too hazardous unless preceded by the capture of Tulagi in the Solomons. MacArthur answered these objections in a radio message of 24 June 1942. He admitted that it would be impracticable to attempt a direct assault on Rabaul supported by the limited land-based aviation then available. But he pointed out that the capture of Rabaul was not the immediate but the ultimate goal of the proposed offensive. His plan would require first "a progressive movement involving primary action against the Solomons and the north coast of New Guinea in order to protect Naval Surface Forces and to secure airfields." 4

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This was essentially the plan that was finally agreed upon. The operation was to consist of three phases: (1) the occupation of the Solomons, (2) the occupation of British New Guinea, and (3) the occupation of the Bismarck Islands including Rabaul. The first phase, contrary to MacArthur's desire, was to be conducted by Admiral Ghormley, the commander of the South Pacific Area. MacArthur was to direct the second and third phases. At first the dates of the operations were left indefinite pending the deployment of sufficient American forces, but Japanese advances, including the occupation of Tulagi in April and of Guadalcanal early in July, together with their landing in Papua late in the same month, forced a speeding up of counteroperations. The first phase was, therefore, scheduled for 1 August or as soon thereafter as possible in order to thwart further enemy moves in the South Pacific.

At the same time General MacArthur was faced with the necessity of defending the Papuan peninsula, an area from which he had hoped to launch his original assaults.

These developments did not change the basic strategy with regard to the Pacific, but they did stimulate discussions on aircraft allocations. Dispatches from both the South and Southwest Pacific theaters to the War Department urged a reconsideration of earlier decisions by the Joint Chiefs of Staff. General MacArthur radioed on 31 August that he comprehended a strategy which assigned "present missions as holding ones to enable concentrations to be made elsewhere," but that "holding areas must have sufficient forces actually to hold," and that "the strength of holding forces can be determined only by a constantly changing accurate appraisal of the enemy's power."
Naval authorities also favored a reconsideration of the needs of the Pacific areas. Admiral Nimitz believed that there was insufficient carrier strength available to support two important operations at the same time. Task 1, the Guadalcanal operation, was already under way, and Nimitz pointed out that amphibious operations would also be necessary for the reconquest of eastern New Guinea. This would require the cooperation of aircraft, but Nimitz feared that the proximity of enemy submarines and land-based planes made the employment of the few remaining American carriers far too dangerous. He therefore urged that more land-based aircraft be sent to General MacArthur. 7

These demands from the Pacific theater highlighted a subject which had been discussed frequently since early in July. At that time the decision to abandon the project for an invasion of continental Europe in 1942 had brought suggestions that aircraft might be diverted from BOLERO. 8 On 24 July, these suggestions received some official sanction in a decision "that over and above the U.S. forces required from Bolero for operations in North and Northwest Africa," a "readjustment of present U. S. commitments to Bolero will be made for the purpose of furthering offensive operations in the Pacific." This readjustment envisaged the transfer of 15 air groups to the South and Southwest Pacific, with the majority being sent to the latter theater. 9

Although there was a measure of agreement on the deployment of these aircraft among the Joint Planners, Army and Navy members disagreed as to the order of priority of the various theaters. The Army listed the priorities thus: TORCH (North Africa), Middle East, United Kingdom,
and the Pacific. The Navy put the Pacific before the United Kingdom.

The arguments advanced by Admiral King and General Arnold demonstrated the opposing points of view. Admiral King asserted that the Pacific air forces were inadequate, that he understood the high priority of TORCH and the Middle East but to put the Pacific theater last was not in accord with actual need, and that suitable authorization for diversion of aircraft to the Pacific existed in an earlier decision. General Arnold just returned from a brief visit to the Pacific theaters, disagreed with this view. He insisted that the earlier decision "to conduct the strategic offensive with maximum forces in the Atlantic-western European Theater at the earliest possible date, and to maintain the strategic defensive in other areas" still held. Furthermore, he argued that the invasion of North Africa, ordered by the President and the Prime Minister, required not only air cooperation for the operation itself but an intensive air assault from the United Kingdom as well.

On the specific point of issue Arnold quoted General Marshall as having said that the transfer of the 15 groups from COMEPRO "had been recorded only as an agreement for transfer of planes from one jurisdiction to another, and that priority of allocation, once commitments to the special operation and possibly the Middle East had been fulfilled, should be made in accordance with strategic necessity as the planes should become available." 10

By the middle of October 1942 when this debate approached its climax, the tactical situation had considerably changed. The Jap was retreating in Papua, where the Fifth Air Force had won air superiority.
On the other hand, in the Solomons, the Marines were maintaining a rather precarious foothold in the face of severe enemy counterattacks by land, sea, and air. Clearly the immediate danger was there rather than in Australia. 11

The Planners believed that there were available in the Southwest Pacific sufficient aircraft to defend the area and to carry out a limited offensive. This had been General Arnold's contention prior to his trip to the Pacific; he reasserted the same views after his return; and repeated them in a letter to General Kenney on 6 December 1943.

Furthermore, by the time that Kenney had typed a new letter to General Arnold renewing his requests for more air power and pointing out weaknesses in the units already available, the Joint Planners had considered the same problem and had submitted the following statistics to the Joint Chiefs of Staff:

Deficiencies and Surpluses of Aircraft Compared to the Commitments in the Southwest Pacific

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Air</th>
<th>Commitments</th>
<th>1 Jan. 1943</th>
<th>28 Feb. 1943</th>
<th>Deficiencies or surplus to exist on 29 Feb.</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>B(B)</td>
<td>110</td>
<td>128</td>
<td>126</td>
<td>+16</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>B(W)</td>
<td>132</td>
<td>95</td>
<td>99</td>
<td>-33</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>B(L)</td>
<td>97</td>
<td>35</td>
<td>31</td>
<td>-66</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Photo</td>
<td>16</td>
<td>12</td>
<td>12</td>
<td>-4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Obsn</td>
<td>80</td>
<td>9</td>
<td>9</td>
<td>-71</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Fighter</td>
<td>338</td>
<td>372</td>
<td>332</td>
<td>-6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Transport</td>
<td>---</td>
<td>56</td>
<td>112</td>
<td>4112</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Navy</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>VP</td>
<td>24</td>
<td>22</td>
<td>24</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>VOS</td>
<td>--</td>
<td>7</td>
<td>7</td>
<td>+7</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Estimate of Japanese Strength

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Area</th>
<th>VTB</th>
<th>VTR</th>
<th>Land</th>
<th>Seaplanes</th>
<th>VPB</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Sumatra</td>
<td>18</td>
<td>18</td>
<td>12</td>
<td>(t)</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Java</td>
<td>18</td>
<td>(t)</td>
<td>18</td>
<td>(t)</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Timor</td>
<td>21</td>
<td>24</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Borneo</td>
<td>31</td>
<td>36</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>25</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Celebes</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Melanesia</td>
<td>153</td>
<td>117</td>
<td>30</td>
<td>9</td>
<td>18</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Caroline</td>
<td>81</td>
<td>118</td>
<td></td>
<td>22</td>
<td>36</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

In addition to the above-listed Japanese strength, the JPS pointed out that the enemy could probably withdraw some 400 additional aircraft from other theaters and make them available in the Pacific together with approximately 600 ship-based aircraft. However, they concluded that, although the Allied aircraft available did not meet the theater commander's estimate, there was a sufficient number to continue the offensive operations contemplated in the Southwest Pacific.

During the months of the Papuan Campaign, MacArthur had not lost sight of the objectives of the offensive planned in the summer of 1942. Early in January 1943, he outlined his conception of the execution of that plan. His tactics were to be largely based upon two principles, which, with some modification, were to lead to an unbroken series of victories in the Southwest Pacific. His experiences in the first year of the war had clearly demonstrated the value of air power. One major tactical principle, therefore, was that air echelons should move forward progressively in such a way as to provide fighter and bomber cover.
for "all surface elements." A second major principle was that in the course of these progressive movements, the objective should be isolated prior to a final assault. Again air power was to be the principal reliance for this process of isolation in a theater where great distances and difficult jungle country made rapid movement of land and sea forces difficult. 13

A suggestion of Admiral King that the Admiralty Islands would be a logical objective for initial action brought a further exposition of MacArthur's views. The latter opposed King's suggestion because it would have advanced surface operations beyond the range of land-based aviation. He envisaged the campaign as a series of steps each of which would be protected by aircraft flying from newly acquired bases. He did not believe that success could be achieved if the elimination of any preliminary step should result in a movement into Japanese territory where air advantage was entirely on the enemy's side. In the South Pacific, for example, he urged an energetic effort to clear Guadalcanal and to establish air bases there, followed by a movement against other enemy bases including Aunda, Funi, and Buka. These points having been captured, land-based aviation could provide protection for surface elements, and it would be feasible for "the fleet to operate offensively with the destruction of the enemy's fleet as its primary mission." 14

The Joint Chiefs of Staff were in substantial agreement as to the necessity for a limited offensive in the Pacific. Within the Combined Chiefs of Staff, however, there was some disagreement. Though the Pacific was an area of American strategic responsibility, the British expressed concern over the extent of the plans for Pacific operations.
It was feared that the decision to make the main strategic effort in
Europe might be forgotten. It was admitted that pressure had to be
maintained upon Japan and that operations in Burma were important. But
the British warned that Allied resources in Europe might be drained into
the Pacific, and urged that movements in the direction of Truk after
the Rabaul campaign should be postponed. 15

The U. S. Chiefs of Staff took the position that there had been no
violation of the concept which put the main effort in Europe. General
Marshall pointed out that America had been compelled to use offensive
efforts in Papua in order to prevent the capture of Port Moresby. To
support these offensive efforts it had been necessary to employ every
device for reinforcing the Allied troops in New Guinea. Furthermore,
the crisis had arisen at a time when large forces were idle in the
United Kingdom. If a disaster had occurred in the Pacific, a huge
diversion of effort to the Pacific would have been unavoidable. As it
was, heavy bombers allocated to the United Kingdom had been diverted
to the South Pacific; the United States had nearly been forced to
abandon TORCH; and only by a"courageous" decision by Admiral King, had
necessary naval forces for that operation been sent from the Pacific.
The Navy through Admiral King argued against the setting of definite
limits to Pacific operations. After Rabaul was captured, the same forces
might well be in a position to continue the offensive in the Marshalls.
At all events, assurance was needed that forces already allocated to
the Pacific would not be withdrawn. 16

The decision, which was incorporated in a report to the President
and the Prime Minister before the end of January, permitted a continuation
of plans for a limited offensive. In general, it was decided that Allied offensive measures against Japan in 1943 would consist of efforts to destroy enemy ships and shipping, of interdiction of Japanese communications by this and other means, and attacks upon enemy ground, sea, and air forces. More specifically, Allied forces were to maintain the Midway-Fascil line, secure communications to Australia and New Zealand, and block enemy approaches to Australia. In addition to these purely defensive efforts, the Pacific forces were considered capable of a number of offensive actions. Of these, the most important were: to advance along the line Bango-Jaluit, to undertake a limited rush against the Malay Barrier, possibly to Elles, and to move from Midway towards the Truk-Guam line. The capture of Rabaul was apparently considered a foregone conclusion, for it was decided to refrain from an advance from the Rabaul area towards the Truk-Guam line until sufficient forces were available to carry through and follow up such an offensive. 17

No action on the part of the Joint and Combined Chiefs of Staff changed the plan to make Rabaul the first objective. By the end of February, General MacArthur had incorporated his tactical principles into a basic strategic plan, known as the Elkton Plan. In outline, the Elkton Plan followed that of its predecessors, with initial movements into the Solomons as Task 1. Task 2 would involve seizure of the remainder of the Solomons and points on the northeast coast of New Guinea. The seizure and occupation of Rabaul was Task 3. 18

With Task 1 virtually completed through the Guadalcanal operation, the Elkton Plan outlined the deployment of forces in Tasks 2 and 3 in
detail. Air bases were to be seized and developed along two general axes of advance: on the west through New Guinea to New Britain, and on the east through the Solomons to the same goal. The initial operations along the western axis would result in seizure of airfieldes on the Huon Peninsula of New Guinea. Following this, points on New Georgia along the eastern axis would be similarly occupied. In the final stages of the operations, airfields in New Britain in the west and on Bougainville in the east would provide convenient bases for the isolation of Rabaul. It was felt that the eastern flank of these operations was relatively safe, since the sea and land areas south of a line from Buna to Guadalcanal were under Allied control. On the other hand, the Jap forces poised in the Netherlands East Indies offered a constant threat to the western flank. MacArthur believed, however, that Buna in southwestern New Guinea could be occupied as an air base and that a holding force could be concentrated along a line from there across Torres Strait to Darwin.

As Commander in Chief of the Southwest Pacific Area, MacArthur placed himself in supreme command of the general offensive. In its earlier phases, he would serve in actual command of the western axis, and as coordinator of the operations of the South Pacific Forces. His command would include the following elements:
In this command setup, each force was assigned certain general tasks. The Naval Striking Force was to cover operations and to seek decisive action with the enemy fleet. The Allied Air Forces were to destroy hostile aviation throughout the areas of operations, to attack enemy naval forces and shipping, to support operations of Allied task forces, to defend forward bases and Torres Strait, and to provide transport aviation. The Allied Naval Forces, composed of two task forces together with PT boat squadrons and escort vessels, were to give naval support, to defend forward bases and Torres Strait, and to protect lines of communication. The West Force, a self-contained task force equipped for ground and shore-to-shore operations, was to capture Lae and Madang and secure the Huon Peninsula-Markham River valley areas in order to acquire air bases. The Center Force, organized primarily for airborne and
overater operations, was to consolidate airfields behind the general line Guadalcanal—Tulagi in New Britain and to capture Rabaul. The list would be carried out in conjunction with the South Pacific Forces following the seizure of New Georgia, Bougainville, and probably New Ireland. All these operations, of course, would be supported by the Southwest Pacific Amphibious Force with its transport vessels and landing craft, and by the supply services which would provide logistic support from an intermediate base in the Milne Bay area.

The first objective specified under this general plan was Lae on the Buin Gulf in Northeast New Guinea. The attack against Lae was to be a combined operation, involving both Australian and American troops. An airborne force, based at Port Moresby and supported by overland and airborne ships, was to operate east through the Markham Valley. At the same time, small craft supported by light naval vessels would carry out a series of "shore-to-shore overater" movements along the coast, bypassing Salamaua and landing in the vicinity of L. A. With the acquisition of new bases in the Markham Valley, new airborne and shore-to-shore operations would converge on Irang, 120 miles across the Panam Peninsula on Astrolabe Bay, overrunning intermediate objectives such as Finschhafen in the process.

MacArthur intended to leave detailed planning for the South Pacific phase of the plan to that command, reserving for himself authority to initiate the actual operations. This reservation was made because of his conception of the necessity for securing several advanced bases in order to provide air cooperation for amphibious advances. In this case,
he believed that the line of Japanese airfields at Kavieng, Rabaul, Fuka, and Hout should be neutralized by use of bases in the Vitiqai Strait area of New Guinea prior to an American invasion of the New Georgia group. Specifically, MacArthur recommended the acquisition of bases on the Huon Peninsula before a landing by the South Pacific Forces in New Georgia.

The next operation was to consist of simultaneous landings by both South and Southwest Pacific forces. Again the purpose of the operation was to acquire new airfields in western New Britain and southern Bougainville. preceded by heavy air attacks on Rabaul and Kavieng, Southwest Pacific forces were to seize Cape Gloucester and Arawe, followed by Gasmata and probably Talasea. At the same time, South Pacific forces would land on Bougainville.

The final objectives were Kavieng and Rabaul. The Miltn Plan left the capture of Kavieng to the South Pacific command, but indicated that MacArthur would decide whether Rabaul or Kavieng should be assaulted first. The main landing against Rabaul was to be made by the Southwest Pacific forces landing southeast of the town. The South Pacific troops, meanwhile, were to make a secondary landing at Alalikikun or Talili Bay.

General MacArthur believed that the execution of this rather elaborate plan required additional air units. In the Fifth Air Force he had the equivalent of 2 heavy bombardment, 2 medium bombardment, 3 fighter, and 2 troop carrier groups, together with 2 light bombardment and 1 photo reconnaissance squadrons. In addition the RAAF could probably spare from mainland defense 5 medium bombardment, 4 light bombardment, and 6 fighter squadrons, equipped with relatively modern aircraft.
Although MacArthur did not suggest an increase of RAAF strength at this time, he did estimate that he would need the following additional American units for the Buna Peninsula campaign: 2 heavy, 2 medium, and 2½ light bombardment groups together with 3 fighter, 1 observation, and 2 troop carrier groups. In addition to these units, he considered the following essential for the New Britain operation: 1 medium and 2 heavy bomb groups, 1 fighter and 3 troop carrier groups. 21

There were several problems introduced by the Elkton Plan which required action by the Joint Chiefs of Staff. Perhaps of most importance was the necessity to confirm or reject MacArthur's suggestions as to command of the operations. On 27 March General Marshall submitted for consideration a directive which would establish command responsibilities for certain future operations, including the establishment of airfields on Kiriwina and Woodlark islands, the seizure of the Lae-Salamaua-Finschaven-Madang area and western New Britain, and the occupation of Bougainville. He recommended that these operations should be conducted under the Supreme Commander, Southwest Pacific Area; that the operations in the Solomons should be under the direct control of the Commander, South Pacific Area (COMSOPAC) operating under general directives of the Supreme Commander, Southwest Pacific; and that "naval units of the Pacific Fleet assigned as task forces engaged in these operations remain under the control of the Commander in Chief, Pacific." 22

The principal objections to Marshall's proposed directive came from Admiral King. In his official memorandum commenting on the directive, it was stated that while the importance of a unified control was
recognized, it was felt that it would be impossible to separate operations carried out by forces of the Pacific Ocean Areas in the Solomon Islands from the remainder of the Pacific Ocean Areas. He, therefore, recommended that when such forces were to act in conjunction with forces of the Southwest Pacific, they should do so under the command of the Commander in Chief, Pacific Ocean Areas. MacArthur would control the operations in his theater, while those in the Solomons would be under the direct command of COMSOFA subject to the general directives of General MacArthur. Admiral King also urged that something should be said in the directive regarding the timing of the operations. He objected to MacArthur's thesis which delayed the renewal of operations in the South Pacific until after the completion of the earlier phases of those in the Southwest Pacific. 23

Differences on this subject were soon ironed out. Marshall admitted that the wording of the directive "skirted" the matter of unity of command, and that he had desired to avoid a situation where a large naval force would be controlled by an Army officer. He believed, however, that the operations should be coordinated by a single commander. King pointed out that from the beginning they had tried to prevent a situation where differences of opinion between MacArthur and Nimitz might arise. At this time, however, there was some doubt as to where the Japanese planned to strike next, and King believed that it was necessary to maintain the control of the fleet in a fluid state in order to meet any enemy thrust. He suggested therefore a rewording of one paragraph in the directive to meet this requirement. 24 Basically,
the directive as proposed originally by General Marshall was accepted. The operations were to be conducted under the Supreme Commander, Southwest Pacific Area, but the crucial paragraph, changed in accordance with the Navy's desires, was made to read: "Units of the Pacific Ocean Areas, other than those assigned by the Joint Chiefs of Staff to task forces engaged in these operations, will remain under the control of the Commander in Chief, Pacific Ocean Areas." 25

Almost as important as the matter of the command for the proposed operations was the question of additional allocations required under the Elon Plan. The general policy of the Joint Chiefs of Staff was to honor the requests of a theater commander insofar as was possible. On the other hand, they were faced with the perennial problem of an insufficient number of aircraft to fill the needs of all commanders.

Under these circumstances, shortages had to be divided among the theaters. 26 It was impossible at this time for the Joint Chiefs of Staff to give General MacArthur any assurances that they could meet his final estimate. They did expect, however, to meet his needs for the Huon Peninsula phase of the campaign before the end of the year. Of some significance, for example, was the Joint Planners' decision late in 1942 to equip a Dutch squadron with 26 B-25's by April 1943, and a reaffirmation in January of a CGS decision to equip 45 RAFF squadrons before the end of the year. 27

The most important decision, however, as to new units for the Allied Air Forces was yet to be made. The Joint Planners in a memorandum of 18 March carefully considered two schedules for air reinforcement.
In their recommendations, they discarded the more ambitious schedule on the ground that sending additional aircraft to the Pacific would prevent an implementation of the bomber offensive from the United Kingdom. They believed that the Eighth Air Force should be brought to a minimum strength of 1,200 heavy day bombers together with appropriate supporting aircraft as soon as possible. The relative needs of the various theaters were, now as always, the determining factor. At this time, Maj. Gen. Ira Eaker, worried over the slowness with which his heavy-bomber strength was being built up, wrote in a letter to General Arnold: "I hope that you will not let that fellow George Kenney, or that other fellow Toosey Spaatz, steal any of our heavy bombers." This letter could have been no more than received when General Stratemeyer informed Eaker that "as a result of a lot of brass hats that are here from the South and Southwest Pacific, you are going to lose another heavy group."

Apparently the Joint Chiefs of Staff believed that the Southwest Pacific merited more reinforcement than the Joint Planners had recommended. They selected, therefore, a second and more ambitious schedule which allocated the following units to the Fifth Air Force, two of which, a medium and a heavy group, had previously been intended for General Eaker:

SECURITY INFORMATION CONFIDENTIAL
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Unit</th>
<th>Present or Planned Initial Equipment Strength</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Bomb Gp. (C)</td>
<td>2 109</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2 Sq.</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Bomb Gp. (P)</td>
<td>1 62</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4 Sq.</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Fltr. Gp.</td>
<td>3 325</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3 Sq.</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Fltr. Gp. Fltr.</td>
<td>2 24</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>T/O Gp.</td>
<td>2 100</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4 Sqa.</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Obsv. Gp.</td>
<td>35 50</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4 Ssa.</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Photo Gp.</td>
<td>2 16</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

This schedule together with the promise of one additional infantry division for the Southwest Pacific in the second quarter of 1943 and another in the third quarter was dispatched to representatives of the Southwest, South, and Central Pacific commands, then conferring on future strategy. Within a day, the Pacific conferences informed the Joint Chiefs of Staff that with these reinforcements, the forces of the South and Southwest Pacific in 1943 would be able to push along the New Guinea coast, capturing strategic points to include Rabaul, and could be able to land on the southeast portion of Bupainville Island, on Cape Gloucester, and on Kiriwina and Woodlark islands.

These allocations were a long way toward filling the requirements of the theater as far as new units were concerned. General Kenney's immediate problem, however, was to maintain those already in the theater at authorized strength. In a letter of 23 January 1943 to General Arnold, he had pointed out that in November he received 64 combat aircraft and lost

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55; in December he received 37 and lost 48; and from 1 to 21 January he received 16 fighters and lost 20, no light bombers and lost 3, no medium bombers and lost 8, and 2 heavy bombers and lost 12. During February the situation was little better: 5 C-47's, 3 B-25's, and 21 P-38's reached the Southwest Pacific, while 2 B-17's and 1 C-47 were destroyed, 2 B-24's were missing in combat, and 9 fighters, 5 bombers, and 1 transport were lost in accidents. 33

War Department policy on allocation of replacements was not entirely clear. General Arnold, in commenting to General Stratemeyer on Kenney's predicament, stated that "in some instances it is quite apparent that Kenney is calling 'Wolf, Wolf,'" but added that in other instances, he had a "justifiable kick." Arnold pointed out that according to his records "the highest loss Kenney had in fighters in any one month was 43 per cent, and the lowest, 11 per cent, an average of around 21 per cent. The highest loss in bombers in any one month was 25 per cent, and the lowest about 15 per cent." Arnold emphasized that a solution of the problem was essential, and that he did not "want this matter to go so far that we will be in as deep as we were in North Africa." 34

The Joint Chiefs of Staff incorporated a decision on this matter in the same memorandum which assigned additional units to the Southwest Pacific. Their plan was to maintain a 25 per cent depot reserve in the theater, a flow of 20 per cent of the initial equipment per month as attrition aircraft for combat units, and an actual plane-for-plane replacement of transport losses. General Arnold qualified this to some extent, however, in a personal letter of 30 March which informed Kenney...
that the 25 per cent reserve for all units was to be furnished "as soon as availability of airplanes" would permit, and that the attrition rate would be 20 per cent "if losses justify." 35

This decision though clear enough as far as it went, did not solve a bothersome problem as to what type of aircraft the replacements would be. So far as heavy and medium bombers were concerned, a definite policy had been established late in 1942. Kenney had been informed, somewhat to his sorrow, that only B-24's and B-26's were to be allocated to the Pacific areas, and no B-26's or B-17's had arrived in the theater since November. 36 No policy, however, had been established as to the type of light bombardment to be furnished the Fifth Air Force. Kenney wanted A-20G's, but the situation was rather confused as to the number of this type which would be available from production early in 1943. Furthermore, the Twelfth Air Force was being given priority in A-20's, and a project to convert A-20's into P-70 night fighters was taking others. Consequently there was some thought of sending the Fifth Air Force either A-36's or A-25's as light-bomber replacements. In January Kenney radioed that he preferred the A-25 if it could be made available immediately, or if not he requested more B-25's. On 23 March General Arnold initiated a series of R&R comments on this subject, suggesting that the light-bomber problem might be solved by "some sort of swap" between General Spaatz and General Kenney. This R&R was circulated through a number of offices in Headquarters, AAF. By 4 May the merits of A-20's, A-25's, and P-39's had been discussed; and Allocations and Programs Division of OCAP had recommended the allocation of P-40's "to implement..."
the dive bombardment program in the Fifth Air Force." The final com-
ment on the A-20's was written on 5 May and stated that any A-20's
which were not needed by the Twelfth Air Force would be allocated to
General Kenney. 37

The policy with regard to fighter allocations was no clearer than
that of light bombers. The requirements of the theater suggested a
high-altitude, maneuverable fighter capable of combating the Japanese
Zero, and with a range sufficient to provide cover for transports and
bombers. P-40's and P-39's had already run up an impressive record of
victories in the Southwest Pacific. From 14 November 1942 until 20 March
1943 in 61 P-39 sorties, 22 enemy fighters and 9 Japanese bombers were
destroyed with only 1 P-39 lost. During the same period, 6 P-40's were
lost on 99 sorties in which 54 Japanese fighters and 5 bombers were shot
down. 38

Nevertheless by March of 1943, the need for a base interceptor had
almost entirely disappeared, and many felt that the P-39's and P-40's did
not have the qualities necessary for other fighter operations. Even the
Curtiss-Wright factory representative in Australia indicated that, although
the P-40 had done a good job, something more was needed than the types
previously available. The Bell Aircraft representative also reported
adverse comments on the P-39. After flying a P-39H1 for the first time,
Col. Richard A. Legg, commander of the 35th Fighter Group, declared that
"after a year of combat I find for a Christmas present the Army has
purchased a plane and sent it over to us in combat area, which is at least
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20 m.p.h. slower than the original plane which we have been fighting
the war with. If this is called progress, I would like to know that
Bell Aircraft has been doing.”

Kerney wanted P-38's, but production schedules and the demands of
other theaters necessitated careful weighing of the needs of each. In
January, Kerney was informed that his fighter allocations were based on
1 P-39, 1 P-40, and 1 P-35 group, and that his replacements would arrive
according to the following schedule: 15 P-39's a month beginning in
January, 15 P-39's in March, none in April, and 15 a month thereafter;
no P-40's were allocated until April when 70 P-40R1's were to be sent,
followed by 15 in May and June, and 30 in July. By the end of February,
however, the schedule had been changed. The situation in North Africa was
critical, and all available P-39's were being sent there since attrition
was high. Kerney was informed that after receiving only eight P-39's of
his January allocations, he would receive no more until June or July.
The P-40 schedule was also changed, and the first 40 P-40's were now de-
layed until June with no more than enough thereafter to maintain authorized
strength.

Kerney could hardly be satisfied with the unreliable nature of his
aircraft-replacement schedule, but in general the situation in the South-
west Pacific could be considered fairly promising by the end of March. A
plan for future operations had been proposed, discussed, and generally ac-
depted. A fairly flexible command structure had been authorized, and a
promise had been made of more liberal reinforcements than had earlier
seemed possible. Indeed even General Kerney would probably have been in

SECURITY INFORMATION
partial agreement with General Arnold when he wrote that "an analysis of your requirements and the enemy opposition . . . , compared with the additional forces you are now scheduled to receive, make it appear that you are no longer the forgotten man." 41
Chapter III

THE AIR SERVICE COMMAND

In submitting the Elkton Plan to the Joint Chiefs of Staff and with their acceptance of its basic proposals, General MacArthur was committed to a fairly definite offensive program. By the end of March he had obtained a promise of what was considered a sufficient number of additional air units for operations envisaged for 1943. But the first of these reinforcements were not scheduled for arrival in the theater until June or July; the schedule of replacement could not be completely relied upon; and attrition, about which General Kenney had expressed so much anxiety, was continuing. Indeed the situation might have become disastrous had it not been that the Fifth Air Force had developed a particularly efficient and skillful air service command.

Functions of supply and maintenance were unusually complicated in the Southwest Pacific. In addition to normal attrition expected in air operations, the climate of New Guinea, which so handicapped flyers in combat, made equally difficult the duties of service units. There was so much moisture in the atmosphere, for example, that electrical equipment soon acquired a corroding fungus growth, any metal surface was subject to almost immediate corrosion, and ordinary lubricating oils applied as a preventive seemed either to evaporate or to run off in the hot temperature. 1

Countless problems also confronted those responsible for keeping combat and service units supplied. In general the three basic difficulties were: the distance from the main supply area in Australia to the...
principal source of supply in the United States, the inadequacy of shipping and air transport, and the need for balancing the demands of the various theaters with American production. Within the theater itself there were other and more specific complications. Units were usually widely separated, and transportation was difficult. In the early days, furthermore, some of the service and supply personnel were inexperienced, records were poorly kept, and sometimes it was difficult to persuade responsible officers in depots to send parts forward to advanced points where they could be used more easily. It seemed almost that every nut and bolt presented a problem, and otherwise minor needs often required major efforts.

In many cases the solution of the maintenance problem depended upon the solution of that of the supply. In January and February 1943, for example, there was a need for additional engines of the R-1830 series. A request in November indicated that B-24's would soon be grounded if a number of R-1830-43 engines were not received; in January, the R-1830-92 type for transports were urgently requested; and a month later a series of messages repeated the requests and added that the execution of the vital air transport mission would be jeopardized if more engines were not received, and if certain piston rings necessary to overhaul engines already on hand were not supplied.

Lapses on the part of responsible authorities in the United States occasionally increased the difficulties of the service command in the theater. Particularly annoying was the necessity for de-winterizing many of the combat aircraft which arrived in Australia from the
United States. With few exceptions, all C-47’s, B-25’s, and B-24’s made the long flight to a theater, predominantly tropical, equipped with de-icing and engine-winterization equipment. From January through September 1943, the engineering section of the 30th Service Squadron alone de-winterized at least 22 C-47’s (most of these in January), 107 B-25’s, and 43 B-24’s. Since this task was only one of many which included 50 and 100-hour inspections together with normal repair and maintenance activities, it frequently overtaxed the facilities and delayed delivery of new aircraft to combat units. As a result of complaints from the theater, OC&R informed General Kenney on 14 May that winterization items either had been or would be deleted from all bombardment aircraft sent to his theater. Two months later, however, approximately half of the B-25’s still reached Australia with winter equipment and in August a message from Kenney indicated that the same was true of C-47’s. 4

These and other maintenance and supply problems were the subject of a large proportion of radio messages between the theater and Headquarters. Indeed the impression was perhaps intentionally given that if a certain shipment of propellers, of turrets, of aircraft casings and tubes, of valves, or of any number of other spare parts did not arrive, the success of Fifth Air Force operations would be threatened. Actually, although immediate operations were on occasion dependent upon the arrival of some part or piece of equipment, the principal danger was rather that a safety margin of reserves might become exhausted. Usually, supplies arrived regularly enough to satisfy the needs of the theater. In August a message signed by General Kenney assured General Arnold that supplies
had been furnished "within allowances," that on cabled requisitions to
Patterson Field there was an average lapse of 26 days, and that delays
were the result of unavailability of material or difficulties in trans-
portation. Moreover several months earlier Marshall and Arnold had
congratulated Kenney upon his keeping 80 per cent of his aircraft in
commission "day in and day out," a feat which surpassed "other theaters
in average performance." 5

This superior record of supply and maintenance can be attributed
to a number of factors. One of these was an increase in Australian
productive capacity. From the beginning of the war with Japan, the War
Department had urged the Pacific commanders to make as much use of
Australian facilities as possible. In 1942, although their production
of war materials was comparatively insignificant, a number of commercial
aircraft companies and airlines were capable of providing needed main-
tenance facilities. The Australian National Airways and the Ansett
Airways at Melbourne, the Commonwealth Aircraft Company and the Australian
National Airways at Sydney, and the Quantas Airlines at Brisbane were
among those called on for aid by American air units. By 1943, extensive
repair and manufacturing agencies had been established in the large
east-coast cities to produce critical parts, in some cases the machines
and tools used in these shops having been themselves manufactured by
hand. Indeed, by this time too, Australian manufacturers, already pro-
ducing such planes as the Beaufort and the Boomerang, were contemplat-
ing the production of American models like the C-47 or the P-47. 6

Another reason for the success of the Fifth Air Force's service
function was the presence in Australia of a number of extremely capable
filling a government bomber contract, and held a number of engineering
posts at McCook Field. After several years as an instructor in the Air
Corps Tactical School at Langley Field and in the Infantry School at
Fort Benning, he went to Wright Field in 1939 as commanding officer of
a tactical unit. Within a few months, however, at a critical period
in aircraft development, he was appointed chief of the Production
Engineering Section of the Air Corps Materiel Division. After the out-
break of war in Europe, he was sent as assistant military attaché to
Paris where he was tireless in visiting aircraft factories, observing
the fighting qualities of French units, and interviewing the officers
themselves. He returned to the United States well liked and respected
by the French and with information which, according to General Arnold,
helped to bring "our production and performance dope up-to-date." 8

Kenney thus had a real interest in developing an efficient service
command, one which was capable of providing immediate service to combat
units at advanced bases as well as third and fourth echelon maintenance
and major modifications at depots in relatively secure rear areas.
Furthermore, in order to support an Allied offensive in which air units
were to play a vital part, the service command had to be flexible
enough to keep up with the advance and able to send its units forward
as fast, and in some cases faster, than combat units. This was in con-
trast with the defensive needs of early 1942. Then it had been planned
that an air base group should be responsible for service in each of
seven geographical areas within Australia, all under the general supervi-
sion of the U. S. Army Air Services. 9
With the formal constitution of the Fifth Air Force on 3 September 1942, the existing service organization, the U. S. Army Air Services, had been "closed." It was replaced on 27 September by the Air Service Command, Fifth Air Force, under Maj. Gen. Rush B. Lincoln until 18 October when he was succeeded by Brig. Gen. Carl Connell. Even more significant was a change in the theory of employment of service units as indicated by their general movement forward during the fall. In July 1942 the 8th Air Base Group officially in the Sydney area had sent most of its units north to Port Moresby, the 22d Air Base Group was located near Brisbane, the 35th in the Townsville-Charters Towers area, the 36th at Tocumwal near Melbourne and at Laverton inland from Perth, the 45th at Charleville, and most of the 45th at Daly Waters over three hundred miles south of Darwin. At the same time, the 4th Air Depot Group was at Tocumwal and the 81st was divided between there and Brisbane. Of all the service groups, therefore, only the 8th Air Base Group had reached New Guinea, and many were still 2,000 miles away in southern Australia.

Within six months, major changes in location had taken place. By November the air base groups, now redesignated as service groups were located as follows: the 8th at Port Moresby, the 22d near Brisbane, the 35th at Charters Towers, the 36th divided between Port Moresby and Milne Bay, the 45th between Charleville and Port Moresby, and the 46th at Mareeba near Cairns. The 4th Air Depot Group at the same time had moved to Townsville; the 81st and a new arrival, the 27th, were at or near Brisbane. Clearly the center of service activity had moved north.
Three months later virtually the entire 46th as well as detachments of
the 23d and 35th Service Groups had moved to Port Moresby together with
the 27th Air Depot Group. By February 1943 then the great majority of
service units were concentrated in New Guinea and in the Brisbane or
Townsville areas in Australia.

One of the most significant developments of late 1942 and early
1943 was the opening of Depot No. 2 at Townsville, "an installation un-
matched in size and production potential anywhere outside of the United
States and England." A decision in the summer of 1942 to make Townsville
the center of major supply and maintenance activities was in keeping
with an offensive strategy. Townsville at that time was almost in the
forward area and suffered occasional air attacks, but the advantages of
a central depot within 700 miles of Port Moresby were immeasurable.
Furthermore Townsville had the advantages of an excellent airport, a
"creditable" harbor and jetty, and railroad connections. On 7 August
1942 General Kenney appointed Col. Donald W. Benner as officer in charge
of Townsville Branch, Supply and Maintenance Section, U. S. Army Air
Services, and a month later he assigned Lt. Col. Victor E. Bertrandias,
a former vice president of Douglas Aircraft, to the 4th Air Depot Group
with the specific task of building the depot. 12

During September 1942 Bertrandias was confronted by numerous
problems, chief among which were the acquisition of building materials
and the finding of a labor supply. The depot, according to the original
concept, was to include six 170 x 200-feet and five 100 x 200-feet
wooden arch hangars for repair and five more for warehousing, together
with a camp for 600 officers and men. This was a formidable task, and although Bertrandias had the complete support of both Generals Kenney and Connell, he found that delivery of building materials could be promised only for some uncertain future date, and that hiring of a sufficient number of civilian laborers was virtually impossible. The few Australian civilians available were members of the Civilian Construction Corps, well organized and quite independent. The Americans complained that these civilians refused to work Sundays and more than an eight-hour day, that they insisted on time out for tea, and that "rain was always a signal to seek shelter." 13

This situation made it clear that the principal reliance for construction of the new depot would have to be upon American military personnel. The 4th Air Depot Group, chosen to construct and operate the depot, had already had considerable construction experience in the theater, having arrived in Australia the February before. In the ensuing months its units had been scattered throughout southern Australia, but its chief activity had been to construct a large repair depot at Townsville near Melbourne. The first of the 4th Air Depot Group's units arrived in Townsville in early October. At that time little construction had been done on the new depot, and its site outside of the town, was merely a vast area of some 1,630 acres covered with trees. It was calculated that it would take civilian labor at least six months to complete the construction work, but a two-month dead line was set in order that the major work could be completed before the beginning of the rainy season. Bertrandias insisted that more than the 1,000 enlisted
men assigned to the group would be required to meet that deadline, and
he acquired an additional 370 men from the 11th AC Replacement Control
Depot, a unit at first made up of unorganized casualties, but later desig-
nated the 83d Depot Repair Squadron and assigned to the group. 14

The work was difficult and the hours long. One compensating
feature of a 12- to 18-hour working day was that the men at first were
thereby kept from realizing that they were no longer near the southern
cities where life was easier and recreational facilities many. By
December 30 percent of the original project was complete, and the men
could take time out occasionally to listen to the group's newly formed
dance orchestra and to wish that the special service officers would bring
them some recreational equipment. Their principal Christmas present was
an official commendation from General Kenney praising the 4th Air Depot
Group, the 11th AC Replacement Control Depot, and the two signal com-
panies for completing the project in record time and for their "loyalty,
diligence, and efficiency." 15

Meanwhile Colonel Bertrandias had received added responsibilities.
On 20 October 1942 he replaced Colonel Benner as Air Service Command
Representative for the Townsville Area, and with the establishment of
the Advance Echelon, Air Service Command, Fifth Air Force at Townsville
on 26 January 1943, he became its commander. Within this broader organ-
ization were not only the 4th Air Depot Group, but also the other service
units in northern Queensland. In late 1942 these included service units
for the 19th and later the 43d Bombardment Groups at Mareeba, the 3d at
Charters Towers, and the 22d at Woodstock. By the first of 1943 all

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combat units except the 90th Bombardment Group (H) had pushed forward to New Guinea, and thus the installations at Townsville, now known unofficially as the "Fourth Air Depot," were the principal responsibility of the Advance Echelon, Air Service Command. 16

Since April 1942 service units had been performing front-line maintenance and supply for fighter planes and for bombers which used Port Moresby as an advanced base. In September the activities of these few units were coordinated by the establishment at Port Moresby of the Advance Headquarters, U. S. Army Air Services, and later of the Air Service Command, Fifth Air Force. The duties of the Advance Headquarters, under the command of Lt. Col. Henry A. Sebastian, were many and varied. It was to be a "clearing house for all Air Corps supplies on the island, for petrol, for salvage, for aircraft returning to the Australian mainland, for all the at ceteras from requisition to crash boats, from personnel to the allocation of equipment and parts." 17

A good example of the experiences of a service unit in New Guinea during the fall of 1942 is that of the 6th Service Group. This unit, at that time the only complete service group in the Port Moresby area, had arrived there in July; in November it consisted of 54 officers and 1,100 enlisted men. During these months it was the mainstay of numerous combat units. In the first place it was responsible for manning Jackson airfield and for controlling all base operations there. This control involved both night and day flights of 1 fighter, 1 medium bombardment, and 3 heavy bombardment squadrons, all of which from time to time operated from the airfield. In the second place, it operated the Arcadia...
Transient Camp, which housed and fed combat crews as they passed through Port Moresby. This responsibility required the service command to provide a permanent kitchen staff in addition to a detachment of an officer and 50 men. Furthermore, the 8th Group operated an air depot for both the Port Moresby and the Milne Bay areas and was responsible for salvaging damaged aircraft on five Port Moresby airfields, on nearby islands, and along the coast for 80 miles. Finally, it performed first, second, and third echelon maintenance on transient aircraft, third echelon maintenance on all fighters using four airfields from August through November; third echelon maintenance on attack aircraft using two airfields in September and October; and first, second, and third echelon maintenance on transports using three airfields.

The general movement forward of ground echelons to Port Moresby provided some relief for the overburdened 8th Service Group. Of equal importance was the arrival early in December 1942 of the 27th Air Depot from Brisbane. Unfortunately, the depot group could not at once assume its expected responsibilities. It first had to construct work shops and a camp area. Upon disembarking from the ships at Port Moresby harbor, the men piled into Australian trucks and were carried for seven miles into the New Guinea wilderness between two ranges of hills separating Wards from Jackson airfields. There the 900 or more found themselves in a desolate area where "every inch of ground was covered by the mosquito laden tough fibrous waist-high Kunai grass." At first they had only their barracks bags and field packs. Other supplies and equipment had to be brought from the ships and uncrated before such essentials
as field kitchens could be set up. Some source of water had to be found as the men soon drained their canteens and lyster bags, the only water immediately available. They soon found, moreover, that the table of basic allowances hardly sufficed to meet such a situation. A depot repair squadron, for example, was allotted one carpenter kit, and with this its personnel had to clear the area and build tents as well as any other buildings necessary.

As soon as the camp had been established, the men turned to duties for which they had been trained. Welding, sheet metal, and machine shops were set up, usually by throwing a 30 x 60-foot canvas over a wooden framework. Unfortunately canvas was scarce, and some of the precious machinery left unprotected was ruined during the rainy season. But the group kept functioning. Machine lathes were busy, in many cases making needed parts for the repair of fighter planes which by the latter part of December were being brought to the shops. Adequate work could not be done, however, until a real depot was available. Since there were no engineers at that time for construction, 40 per cent of the group's personnel were instructed to build the depot for themselves on a site which rain had reduced to thick mud. Heavy machinery bogged down and 1,400 yards of cable were broken in hauling it out, but the job was done.

By February 1943, the supply and maintenance situation at Port Moresby perhaps for the first time could be described as well in hand. All ground echelons of the bombardment units which regularly used Port Moresby had arrived and had taken over first and second echelon main-
tenance. Service units, therefore, could devote themselves more to
third echelon maintenance with the 27th Air Depot Group doing fourth echelon maintenance. Some of the pressure had also been relieved by several War Department decisions. On 16 January General MacArthur had been informed that he was authorized an additional repair squadron for each depot group, and that those for the 37th and 81st Air Depot Groups would be sent from the United States. In addition, Kenney learned that ordnance sections, consisting of one captain and three enlisted technicians were to be supplied to each fighter and bombardment group headquarters.

By the spring of 1943 a general maintenance policy had been established. Fighters were to be repaired in New Guinea, and bombers, if they could fly, were to be sent back to the better-established depots in Australia. These facilities on the mainland were then capable of almost mass production methods. For example, in January Kenney informed Patterson Field that facilities in Australia would soon be capable of manufacturing sufficient belly tanks for all his fighter aircraft. This amounted to 1,200 tanks a month. In April he asserted that all engines could be overhauled locally, and three months later added that his theater would be equipped to handle all propeller overhaul and replacement of blades.

The duties of the busy centers at Townsville and Brisbane were becoming more and more diversified. The Aircraft Repair and Overhaul Section had the following subsections: paint, fabric, and dope shop, brake repair, hydraulic, and rubber repair. In the machine shop were the machine, sheet metal, electrical maintenance, heat treating, plexiglass, welding, radiator, woodworking, regulator, electro-plating.
supercharger, pump overhaul, and photographic sections. In addition the group included a propeller shop, an instrument overhaul shop, a gas section, an enormous supply section, and a signal company responsible for the operation of telephones, switchboards, radios, and of a signal supply depot. 23

These duties were almost overwhelming, but others were added to them. In January it was decided that more buildings were needed to house the many supplies then being kept in boxes in the open fields. Again the 4th Air Depot Group furnished construction personnel, and by the last of April "the group had succeeded with the assistance of Australian labor in constructing a total of (16) warehouses and seven repair hangars." Only by 24-hour days and seven-day weeks could the demands of the theater be met, and not until early summer was a part of the burden lifted with the arrival of two new depot groups, the 12th and the 15th. In a period running roughly from December 1942 to June 1943, the 4th Group had repaired 224 aircraft and erected 55 others, overhauled 136 engines, completed 1,343 work orders of 5,390 received, completed 499 propellers, packed and inspected 910 parachutes, completed 2,821 fabrication units, 947 control surfaces, 335 brake assemblies, 191 landing gears, 161 hydraulic units, and 114 self-sealing fuel cells. In its supply depot the group had received 5,465,633 pounds of goods and shipped 1,654,941 by truck, rail, air, and ship. 24

These feats of workmanship were accomplished in a monotonous routine of labor covering long hours day after day. More spectacular perhaps were the achievements of service and depot units in modifying aircraft. Every theater had its own particular problems. In many cases
standard types of aircraft, of armaments, of bombers, and of countless other items were unsuited to tactics employed. Furthermore there was a lapse of time between design and delivery which prevented modifications carried out at the factory from keeping up with specifications required in the field. This was particularly true in a Pacific theater where combat units were meeting conditions unforeseen when material was first designed. As a result, every flyer had his ideas of how a weapon should be modified, and "there was hardly a tactical or service squadron which was not busily engaged in hanging more guns or armour on Army Air Forces airplanes." This tendency could have had disastrous results, since an individual's ideas when implemented led frequently to "stresses and strains, weights and balances, undreamed of by the manufacturers." 25

But the Fifth Air Force encouraged modification through the agencies of the Air Service Command. General Kenney persuaded the War Department in the spring of 1943 that aircraft should generally be flown to the Southwest Pacific unmodified in order to save time in delivery. 26 By the summer of 1943 modification projects were under way in New Guinea, in Townsville, and in Brisbane. Prior to that time most of this work was carried out at or near Brisbane.

Since mid-1942 the 22d Service Group and the 81st Air Depot Group had been located in the Archerfield—Amberley—Eagle Farms—Brisbane area. There, directed by such officers as Col. Ralph L. Fry and Col. William H. Monay, commanding officer and executive respectively of the 81st Air Depot Group, they had performed feats of supply and maintenance similar to those of the Townsville units. A famous "character" of this area,
whose reputation had spread to other Pacific areas, was Maj. Paul
"Pappy" Gunn, materiel officer of the 3d Bombardment Group. Perhaps as
much as any other single individual he should be given credit for the
success of major modifications. He not only was a veteran flyer but
a designer who had the reputation of being "exacting in efficiency and
ability" and able to do things with aircraft which others would not
attempt. 27

In the summer of 1942, Gunn had supervised a major modification on
the A-20. Originally the A-20 was armed with only four .30-cal. machine
guns, and its short range made a flight over the lofty Owen Stanley
mountains extremely dangerous. After a considerable amount of experimen-
tation the 30th Repair Squadron together with some members of the 81st
Depot Repair Squadron attached four .50-cal. guns to the nose and added
two 450-gal. bomb bay tanks. The A-20 then became a potent weapon which
General Whitehead's advanced combat echelon employed continuously during
the Papuan Campaign. 28

The success with the A-20 undoubtedly stimulated General Kenney's
interest in attack aviation. More than 10 years before he had taught
"attack" courses in the Air Corps Tactical School at Langley Field.
Perhaps he was following his own teachings when he developed in 1942 a
theory of low-level bombing and strafing attacks carried out by planes
having sufficient forward firepower to overwhelm antiaircraft op-
position. During the fall of 1942, the 81st Depot Repair Squadron was
creating an even more powerful weapon than the A-20 for use as an at-
tack plane. With the blessing of General Kenney and supervised once

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more by Major Gunn, they began experiments on the sturdy B-25 medium
bomber. They took off the lower turrets and the tail gun and added
forward-firing machine guns until four bristled from the nose and four
more from blisters attached on either side. The result was a plane
which was capable of carrying 60 small fragmentation bombs together with
6 x 100-lb. demolition bombs, and which had an upper turret with two
50-cal. machine guns in addition to the eight firing forward. 29

In December, a three-man crew consisting of Major Gunn as pilot,
Jack Fox, North American factory representative as co-pilot, and an
enlisted turret operator, carried out several experimental runs. Al-
though several minor corrections had to be made, the modification was
approved, and within three months approximately 30 B-25's had been so
modified. 30

According to theater reports the new "strafer," with a crew of
three men, had a number of advantages over the A-20. In addition to a
longer range, a heavier bomb load, and heavier fire power including
upper-turret protection, it carried a co-pilot and had instruments for
flying in stormy weather or darkness, extremely comforting factors for
the flyers. There were, of course, a number of disadvantages. Having
a cruising speed of some 200 m.p.h., it was slightly slower than the
A-20, and its speed of 250 m.p.h. while crossing the target was from
10 to 20 miles per hour slower. It made a large target, and the A-20
was more maneuverable, but maneuverability was not considered particu-
larly important while flying at a 150-foot altitude. With 2,000 rounds
of ammunition for the forward-firing guns, it was subject to nose-heaviness,
but pilots could soon accustom themselves to this flight characteristic.
The advantages, therefore, clearly outweighed the disadvantages. Indeed
Jack Fox declared that having two pilots in the B-25 alone made that
plane preferable to the A-30 as a strafer. 31

The successful modification of the A-30 and the B-25 did not in
itself spell success for low-level attack theories. The planes were
available, armed with the requisite forward fire power. But the theory
of attack aviation included the use of bombs dropped from an altitude
which rendered a miss unlikely. Without the use of a bomb armed with a
suitable delayed-action fuze, however, this presented the possibility
that the attack plane would be destroyed by its own bombs. As early as
the summer of 1942, General Kenney had sponsored experiments with fuzes
in order to develop one with a five-second delayed action. A partially
satisfactory result was achieved by modifying the standard M-106 tail
fuze. A new detonator housing was constructed, and standard RAAF de-to-
nators with one-, five-, eight-, or eleven-second delay inserted. In
carrying out low-level attacks on shipping, these fuzes were extensively
used. It was soon discovered, however, that many bombs so fused failed
to detonate, and were by no means so satisfactory as the standard M113
fuze. Kenney early in January requested 1,000 fuzes of the latter type,
and later calculated that he needed 2,000 M113's a month. Little could
be done with these requests in the United States since the fuzes were
still undergoing extensive tests and were not in mass production. Within
two months, however, the tests were almost completed. They had shown
that less than one-half of 1 per cent of the M113 fuzes were duds, and
Gen. H. K. Ramey, Y Bomber commander, was assured that so far as the fuze situation was concerned "we are about to get out of the woods." 32

Bombs armed with the M13 fuze were to be of use principally against shipping. There was an equal need for bombs which could be dropped with safety against land targets. General Kenney again had initiated a solution to this problem. A parachute was added to the small 23-lb. fragmentation bomb armed with an instantaneous fuze. These were carried in a sort of honey-comb rack which could be fastened in the bomb bay. Forty or more bombs could be loaded in an A-20 depending upon the number of extra fuel tanks carried. The first real test of the parafraigs occurred in September 1942 when an attack coordinated with medium-altitude bombers achieved so much success in destroying marked enemy planes that the morale of the whole command soared, an unusual experience in 1942. 33

The use of these bombs, however, was limited by the available supply. Parafraigs developed in the United States were being manufactured by January 1943 in fairly large quantities. But they were being turned out in clusters. Since both the A-20 and the B-25 were equipped with racks suitable only for individual bombs, modification had to be performed by General Connell's service command. This was a difficult task. The clusters had to be torn apart, and end cover plates and vertical suspension wires added. Kenney could not understand why it was not "just as easy to do the job right back home." Further experiments were being carried out in the United States, and early in May Arnold assured Kenney that a new vertically suspended parafraz, the M-72, was in production.
and would be dispatched to the Southwest Pacific as soon as they were
"physically" available. 34

Parafreggs proved to have a vicious effect when dropped by low-
level attack planes. Fifth Air Force designers were also experiment-
ing with antipersonnel bombs to be dropped from high-and medium-altitude
bombers, an effort probably inspired by a "daisy-cutter" employed by the
Japanese with devastating results in many of their 1942 raids on Allied
airfields. Soon the Fifth Air Force's flyers were dropping 100-, 250-, 500-,
and 1,000-lb. bombs with two layers of one-eighth inch wire wrapped
tightly around the outside. Iron rods one-fourth inch thick were also
placed lengthwise around a 100-lb. bomb. They were bound in place with
wire. A time fuse was then attached to provide an air burst. In spite
of the apparent effectiveness of this and the other wire-wrapped bombs,
they were all in an experimental stage until the summer of 1942, and
tests were being constantly conducted by the Fifth Air Force to discover
dispersion, density, weight, and quantity of fragments. 35

Experiments with fuses, with bombs, and with other offensive equip-
ment for all types of aircraft were continuous in a theater where a
limited number of aircraft made every improvement significant. The
principal modifications of a defensive nature were carried out on the
heavy bombers. B-17's had been used in the Southwest Pacific since they
first reached the Philippines in September 1941. Then the B-17C and D
were the only models available. The first B-17E's were used in Java six
months later, and by the summer of 1942 the F model was arriving in
Australia. In general, each succeeding model was an improvement over
the preceding, but in at least one respect, the B-17E was preferred to
the F. Flyers of 43d Group, the only B-17 organization in Australia
after November 1942, did not like the new plexiglass nose. They as-
serted that vision was impaired because of distortion, and that in
case of accident, the B-17E nose, made in sections, was easier to
repair. They pointed out furthermore that forward-firing machine guns
to meet frontal attacks could not be satisfactorily mounted in plexiglass.
Early experiments by B-17 squadrons led to more widespread modifications,
and by January 1943 the service command was adding two .50-cal. machine
guns to the B-17E nose and substituting it in the B-17F. 36

By this time, however, the majority of heavy-bomber operations were
being carried out by the B-24. Although the 90th Group, equipped with
the Liberator, was running up an impressive score of enemy aircraft shot
down, from the beginning there had been a general feeling that the plane
was not well defended. At first General Kenney considered the lack of
the ball turret as the chief defensive weakness, but he soon became
convinced that the lack of forward fire power was more important. 37

This weakness was generally admitted. Kenney was advised from AAF
Headquarters that the B-24 nose-gun installation was being redesigned
for greater upward fire, and that for the time being he could cut away
the floor from under the present gun to increase the field of fire.
Meanwhile General Connell had turned his men loose on the problem.
Numerous expedients were tried. Jack Fox and Major Gunn worked for a
30-hour stretch trying to install into the nose of a B-24 a lower Bendix
turret removed from a B-25 strafar. Another idea was to install a nose
turret and to have the bombardier lie on a platform above the gunner.

The B-24 squadrons objected to this and suggested that the gun installation should be above the bombardier. The acceptable solution was finally worked out at Archerfield where a Consolidated tail turret was installed in the nose. Kenney informed General Arnold of this early in January. He requested that 35 tail turrets be delivered to him immediately for the B-24's already on hand, and that the Hawaiian Air Depot be instructed to make a similar installation on all future deliveries. The turrets, shipped by water, did not arrive in Australia until late in March. On 1 May Kenney requested an additional 36 turrets to equip the remainder of his B-24's and reported that the installation had "greatly increased combat efficiency of this type airplane by improvement of both the morale of the men and the tactical value of the airplane." 38

The problem of inadequate frontal fire power was thus satisfactorily solved, but new questions arose as to the value of the tail and the ball turret. By May General Kenney had decided in his own mind upon the most desirable armament for the B-24. At that time he received the backing of General Arnold when he informed General Emons in Hawaii that "I am not interested in standardization with other theaters and unless modifications are made in my way we will do the work in Southwest Pacific Area." 39 Kenney was informed that the following modifications were to be carried out by the Hawaiian depot: removal of the tail turret, its installation in the nose position, and installation of flexible guns in the tail and of a retractable ball turret in the belly. These changes were desired by both the Hawaiian Department and the South Pacific theater. But
although Kenney approved of the nose turret, he definitely did not want the other changes. On 13 May he informed the War Department that he wished to retain the tail turret and to substitute manually operated twin .50's for the ball turret. After an exchange of a number of messages, he listed on 16 July his objections to the ball turret: the danger of the turret jamming in the down position and thus causing a serious landing accident, the extra weight and "extreme aft CG location," and the suitability of lower twin .50's for the type of attack met in his theater.

The reply to this message argued that there were provisions in the plane for retracting the turret by the bomb-hoisting mechanism in case of damage to the hydraulic system, and that the installation of the nose turret gave a satisfactory center of gravity location. Furthermore Kenney was informed that other theaters wanted the ball turret, that the B-24 would therefore come off the production line equipped with them, and that he should give them a further trial.

A month's trial did not alter General Kenney's conception of the proper armament for the B-24. On 26 August he signed a message which reasserted the value of the nose turret in improving both the morale of the crews and the tactical value of the airplane, and requested 50 additional turrets, which together with the 149 that had either arrived or were on order would equip all his B-24's. Two weeks later, he repeated his dislike for the ball turret, and stated that the twin .50's would be installed either in Australia or in Hawaii if facilities were not available at modification centers in the United States.

This radio message brought two replies on 14 September. The first was signed by General Arnold and originated in the office of the Chief
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of the Air Staff. It stated that in the past "this Headquarters" had always attempted to comply with the desires of the theater commander and would continue to do so. It continued: "I recognize the fact that we can and should be able to accomplish installations and modifications on airplanes with considerable less trouble and less of time than the theater, but you must also accept the fact that when we initiate a change as a result of a theater requirement, this change is incorporated either in a factory line or else in a modification production line and major changes cannot be made without slowing up production." The message continued that all other theaters wanted the ball turret, that it had therefore become "a factory production line installation," and that in order to comply with Kenney's desire, it would have to be installed in the factory and then removed in the modification center, a most inefficient operation." The message, however, concluded: "We will remove the turret if you do not want them. Your decision at this time will be final for your theater." The second message, also signed by General Arnold, originated in AO/AS, CG&R, and read: "Ball turrets retractable are to be removed from all B-24 airplanes destined your theater . . . . Ring mount manual operated twin caliber 50 belly guns will be installed here." Kenney replied on 18 September that both these messages had arrived at the same time, and that the action indicated in the one from CG&R "is desired for all B-24's destined for here."  

In the late spring of 1943 many of the problems which faced the Fifth Air Force had not been solved. There was still a lack of supplies. Spare parts and pieces of equipment sometimes were slow in arriving. A satisfactory airburst fuze had not been developed. Experiments were
continuing on various types of fragmentation bombs, and not until the late summer had the last word been said on B-24 modification. Otherwise, however, the accomplishments of the service and depot units can hardly be exaggerated. In a report of an official inspection of the Pacific Areas during March 1943 it was said: "The 5th Air Force is a well-organized, efficiently run and very effective unit with high morale. One reason for its effectiveness is that it includes a well-organized and conducted Air Service Command." 44 Depots and service units were not only carrying out normal supply and maintenance tasks, but they were building camp areas, constructing shops and warehouses, and using their ingenuity to develop modifications for combat aircraft. By March 1943 some of these modifications, notably the development of the B-25 attack plane, were already paying dividends. Indeed, it is doubtful if many of the victories won by the Fifth Air Force could have been achieved without the type of bombing made possible by these technical developments.
Chapter IV

THE ALLIED AIR BLOCKADE OF JAP
THE DISMARCX SHEA ACTION OF MARCH

In January 1943 the Allied forces were unprepared for large-scale offensive operations. The Joint Chiefs of Staff had not yet had an opportunity to consider the Elkton Plan. The decisions on future allocations for the Southwest Pacific had not been made. At least two of General Kenney's combat groups, the 8th Fighter and the 22d Medium Bomber, were out of action and many of the bomber squadrons, particularly those equipped with B-25's, were devoting much of their time to training in low-level bombing techniques. Other Allied air units, however, kept the pressure on the enemy. Theirs was the primary responsibility in interdicting the sea lanes, mapping future combat areas, bombing Rabaul and other centers of enemy supply, and otherwise harassing the Jap wherever he could be found.

When the last organized Japanese resistance in Papua ended on 23 January 1943, Allied ground forces were facing the enemy in only one tiny sector of the Southwest Pacific. This was in an almost inaccessible area of Northeast New Guinea between Wau and Mube, inland from Salamaua. Here a small Australian force, based on Wau, had been fighting a miniature land campaign with the Japanese for nearly a year, during which time they had been supplied almost entirely by air.

In fact, the economic development of the area since discovery of a valuable gold deposit there in 1926 had been almost entirely dependent
upon the use of commercial and privately owned aircraft. Over the

course of 17 years no road had been constructed from the coast inland
to the mines. There were a few trails which wound through a maze of
mountains and jungle and over razorback ridges and swamps infested with
poisonous insects and disease, but they provided no adequate communica-
tions with the outside world. The town of Wau itself, approximately
the size of Port Moresby, had been built under circumstances in which
every "nail, sheet of iron, weatherboard, spot of paint, pane of glass,
crock, wire, or sheet of paper was carried in by air—at freight rates
varying between 4 d. and 1/2 d. per pound. . . . The billiard tables
at the hotels were brought in by air. Easy chairs, refrigerators, bath
 tubs, stoves, dynamos, linoleum, carpets, garden statuary, even great
mining dredges, bulldozers and power shovels—all were brought in by
air."

As soon as the Japanese had established themselves at Lae in March
1942, they pushed inland toward this rich area. Wau was an enticing
military objective not only because of its gold, but because of its well
developed airfield. Lying within 150 miles of Port Moresby, it could
be used by transports, fighters, and in an emergency even by bombers. To
defend this region in the late spring of 1942, the Allies could count
only on a "raggle-taggle army of miners, foresters, and civil servants
called to the colors on the day of Pearl Harbor." Described as the
New Guinea Volunteer Rifles, they were joined early in July by a specially
trained commando party of 55 men. This unit had come overland, a trip
which involved moving west along the coast from Port Moresby to the
Lakekamu River, up the river to Bull Dog, along the Elos River valley for a few miles, and then through heavy jungles to Wau. The rigors of the march are well enough indicated by the fact that when the commando party reached its destination 47 of the 55 men required hospitalization. Of the 800 white men in the area at that time no more than 300 were in condition to fight.

Their plight was made worse by the difficulties of transporting supplies to that area. Little more than three tons of cargo a week came over the difficult land and water route, while air deliveries were, under the urgent demands of the moment, both inadequate and uncertain. According to one observer, as much as eight weeks passed on one occasion without a single air delivery. Yet with a shortage of ammunition and on a diet of rice and canned beef, these Australians by "superb jungle craft" denied control of the area to the numerically superior enemy forces, and maintained for the benefit of Port Moresby an effective observance of Japanese plane movements from enemy-held fields in the Markham valley.

While this uneven contest continued through the months of the more dangerous Japanese thrust in Papua, the Allied Air Forces gave all possible aid. By January transport pilots were becoming accustomed to the 3,000-foot runway with a 12 per cent grade heading directly at Kainde Mountain. The pilots, some of them sergeants, had learned to maneuver the clumsy C-47's like fighter planes while flying under clouds through dangerous passes, "dodging a peak here and a cloud there," and landing at unbelievably high speeds. Of several exploits one merits special
mention. When a transport was forced down with a damaged wing at the remote landing field of Bena Bena, between Lae and Madang, an extra wing was flown in on another C-47 by Maj. H. L. Imparate. The Douglas factory representative, Harry Booth, and Capt. John Boyle of the 37th Air Depot Group, with the assistance of some 75 natives, bolted on the wing, and the repaired plane was returned to Fort Moresby under its own power.

By late December, the ultimate purpose of the majority of Allied air strikes was to isolate the enemy troops in the Hubo-Lae-Salamau area. By that time the Japanese, finding it increasingly difficult to send convoys to Buna and Gona, were apparently shifting their attention from Fampa to Northeast New Guinea. The Allies suspected that submarines were regularly bringing supplies to Lae. Occasionally convoys too attempted to slip through, and Allied air units were maintained on the alert against such an attempt. Single B-24's, 3-17's, and RAAF Catalinas flew over the sea lanes. F-4's from the 8th Photo Squadron continuously mapped the area.

By the first of January, signs pointed toward a new attempt to send a convoy to New Guinea. On 30 December, enemy shipping concentrations were the largest ever sighted at Rabaul. The 91 vessels counted included 21 warships and some 300,000 tons of merchant ships. Although a portion of this shipping could have been merely routine traffic to and from an important base, it seemed clear that something out of the ordinary was being planned. Furthermore, float planes had been sighted in the vicinity of Lae, an indication usually interpreted to mean antisubmarine patrol in advance of shipping, and there was renewed air activity on nearby landing fields.
On 6 January reconnaissance reported a convoy consisting of two light cruisers, four destroyers, and four medium transports off the south central coast of New Britain heading west-southwest. B-17's, B-24's, and B-25's, covered by P-38's, sought it out and dropped their bombs through low broken clouds. They were soon heavily engaged by the enemy fighter escort. On the following day RAAF Catalinas and Hudsons with American B-25's and P-40's joined the attack. On 8 January the convoy, now reported as consisting of one light cruiser, three destroyers, and three transports, had reached Lae, where it unloaded despite continued interference from the Allied Air Forces. Early on the following morning the enemy ships were observed withdrawing to the east, leaving one beached transport behind. For the next two days bombers continued their assaults until the ships were out of range. 6

The result of this anti-convoy action is difficult to ascertain. The Japanese succeeded in their major objective, which was to reinforce Lae, and the Allied Land Forces Headquarters estimated that better than 4,000 troops had reached shore. But at least two transports, probably more, were sunk, while American fighters in their engagements with the enemy's fighter cover had had a field day. The veteran 49th Group scored its greatest success in almost a year of combat. Several of its P-40's dropped two 300-lb. bombs in divebombing attacks, and Lts. A. T. House, Jr., and Claude S. Burtnette claimed one of the transports. Others shot down 28 enemy planes. One P-40 was lost, and the pilot, who had bailed out and landed in the ocean, was last seen swimming toward shore. Lt. Richard I. Bong of the same group, flying a P-38, begged three planes
in the engagement, thus raising his total score to five. Other P-38's
were flown by Capt. Thomas J. Lynch's 39th Fighter Squadron. The pilots
of eight of these relatively new planes attempted to carry out dive-
bombing attacks with little success; their gunnery, however, was good.
This one squadron accounted for at least 13 enemy planes, bringing the
total of enemy aircraft destroyed to well over 50 with no more than 10
Allied planes lost.

General Whitehead had thrown all available bombers and fighters
against the Lae convoy, which necessarily limited operations against
Rabaul. That important port, however, remained the principal supply
reservoir for the Japanese forces in Northeast New Guinea, and although
the amount of traffic in the harbor declined somewhat during the month
of January, lucrative shipping targets still remained. The enemy was
also expanding Rabaul's air facilities by improving the two important
airdromes of Vanakenau and Lekunai, and by rushing a third, known as
Repopo, to completion. The Fifth Air Force, in spite of the limited
number of heavy bombers available, carried out a number of harassing
missions against shipping, the airfields, and the town. About 10 days
after the first sighting of the Lae convoy, rather sharp attacks were
began again at fairly regular intervals. Exclusive of the raids by
lone bombers on armed reconnaissance missions, B-17's and B-24's hit
the Rabaul area on 13 nights in January. Never in formations of more
than 12, the total number of planes on these missions amounted to over
100 B-17's and approximately 12 B-24's. The weather was generally bad,
the equatorial front treacherous, searchlight and antiaircraft activity
more than annoying, but only two B-17's failed to return from these 1,400-mile flights.

The results of the bombing could not be exactly reported. Most of the missions were carried out at night when darkness or the glare from searchlights prevented accurate observation. But bombs usually fell in the target area, and causing large fires. Results, however, in some instances were more definite. Perhaps the most destructive mission of the month was carried out on 5 January by two squadrons of heavy bombers. Forty 500-lb. demolition bombs and 24 x 1,000-pounders were dropped from 8,500 feet. The official report read: "nine vessels estimated over fifty thousand tons including one thousand pound bomb hit on destroyer tender with destroyer along side destroyed or left burning." Antiaircraft fire was heavy, and fighter attack by rather inexperienced pilots continuous. Two B-17's were shot down, and the crew of one including Brig. Gen. Kenneth Walker, V Bomber commander, was lost.

The heavy bombers usually dropped their bombs from a medium altitude of from 5,000 to 9,000 feet. All bombardment squadrons, however, had had some training in ship bombing, and the 63d, whose former commander, Maj. "Bill" Benn, had pioneered in low-level attack, was adept at it. Three of its crews gave an example of their skill early in the morning of 21 January. Led by Maj. Edward W. Scott, Jr., they swept over Rabaul harbor at 250 feet. Scott skipped three 500-lb. bombs with a five-second delayed-action fuze against a 6,000-ton transport. It was observed lifting out of the water and rocking violently. He missed...
a second ship with two other bombs, and finally dropped three more on an airfield from 1,600 feet. Meanwhile Lt. James T. Murphy released his first two bombs from a ship-bombing altitude without results, circled over land at the same altitude, and came back over water to drop a string of six 500-lb. demolition bombs against a 2,000-ton merchant vessel. The ship was at least severely damaged.

Attacks against convoys and the airfields, harbor, and town of Rabaul were among the principal responsibilities of the Fifth Air Force. Not always so rewarding were attacks carried out to relieve pressure on ground forces. Nevertheless this type of air cooperation, used with some success in the Papuan Campaign, continued to be a definite responsibility of light and medium bombers and of fighters. In January and February their attention was concentrated on the Morobe district of Northeast New Guinea. They bombed the buildings and airfields of Lae and Salamaua; they patrolled the tracks which ran from the coast to Komiatum and Mubo, and the "Black Cat" trail or the "Crystal Creek" route to Wau; they strafed everything that moved in specified areas, sprinkled frags and parafrags along the tracks; and bombed points of resistance as requested by the Australians.

The landing of additional Japanese forces at Lae early in January had led to renewed activity along the tracks. Enemy forces were moving toward Mubo, and were assembling there for another assault upon Wau. On 29 January the 300 Australian defenders of Wau repulsed a sharp patrol attack, but within a few hours an enemy regiment began to infiltrate toward the airfield. Transports were on runways ready to carry
reinforcements to Wau, but the weather conspired against the Allies. Heavy thunderstorms over the mountain ranges shut out the passes, and only a few of the planes that took off were able to find the airfield. For a time it seemed that it would be necessary to abandon the beleaguered garrison, but then the weather shifted. Australian reinforcements boarded some of the 317th Group's new C-47's, manned chiefly by veterans of the 374th; food, equipment, ammunition, and some artillery were loaded on others; and the transports took off, followed by P-39's, P-400's, P-40's, and P-39's of the 35th and 49th Groups to furnish a fighter escort. In two days, 29 and 30 January, over 2,000 troops were flown in to reinforce the hard pressed Wau defenders. By that time the Japs had reached one end of the airfield and were lobbing mortar shells onto the 3,000-foot runway. The Australians soon landing came out of the planes with guns firing. In some cases, transports circled the field until the Diggers on the ground had "grenaded" Japanese soldiers back into the jungle. By noon of 30 January, the enemy was defeated and was beginning to withdraw, leaving behind 250 dead. 11

During this last serious attempt of the Japanese to capture the Wau airdrome, enemy air action had been sporadic. The principal opposition to the American troop carriers and the accompanying fighters was the weather. For some reason, the Japanese provided no air support for their ground troops. It may be that they were surprised at the speed with which reinforcements could be flown in from Port Moresby; possibly they had been weakened by the Allied attack on the Ice convoy. At all events with the exception of one or two daily sorties over Port Moresby
and a heavy attack of 17 January on Milne Bay. Japanese aircraft were conspicuous by their absence over New Guinea. Indeed this fact caused Allied intelligence officers considerable speculation. Their sources showed that over 50 bombers and anywhere from 50 to 150 fighters were regularly based in the New Britain-New Ireland area. So far as could be determined, however, the bombers, Sallies and Lilies for the most part, were rarely being used.

Rather belatedly, the Japanese did call for air support, but it did not arrive until six days after their defeat at the edge of the Wau airfield on 30 January. Meanwhile Allied transports had continued to carry supplies to the Australian troops. On 6 February, eight P-39's of the 40th Fighter Squadron were patrolling at 12,000 feet over Wau while providing cover for a routine cargo flight of five C-47's. Shortly before 1100 they sighted 18 Zekes and suddenly discovered that six others were approaching from another direction. Capt. Thomas H. Winturn led the P-39's in a sharp dive into the larger formation. They knocked down at least 11 Zekes and one Sally and claimed five other probable kills. No P-39's were lost. At the same time, eight P-40's of the 7th Squadron on a similar escort mission sighted 12 aircraft which they mistook for Australian Beauforts because of red and blue markings on the fuselage. They soon discovered, however, that three of these "Beauforts" were bombing the Allied airfield. The transports turned back toward Port Moresby, and the P-40's engaged 12 Lilies and 12 escorting Zekes and Hamps. The enemy soon broke formation, and two Lilies.

* See Chapter I.
four Zeke's, and one Hamp were destroyed.

Meanwhile General Whitehead's headquarters had been informed of the enemy raid on Wau, and had "scrambled" three more fighter squadrons. Thirteen P-39's of the 39th squadron, which took off from Schimmer air
drome at 1110, intercepted 12 Zeke's and Hamps over Wau at 10,000 to 18,000 feet. At least one Zeke was shot down. Fifteen minutes later, the 9th Squadron, only recently equipped with P-39's, destroyed another enemy fighter. At approximately the same time I-39's and P-400's of the 41st Squadron diving out of the sun surprised six Zeke's, shot down three of them, and probably destroyed the remainder. Thus in this enemy attempt to support his ground forces, the Jap lost 21 fighters and three bombers without doing appreciable damage to the Wau airfield and without destroying a single American plane. 14

This Japanese setback in the air over New Guinea coincided with an enemy admission of a much more serious defeat on Guadalcanal. Although Allied Intelligence during the last week in January had concluded that the Japanese apparently had no intention of giving up that island, the Tokyo radio a few days later officially announced that it had been abandoned. This, the first major reverse admitted by Tokyo, was announced in such a way as to disguise the magnitude of the defeat. The point emphasized was that they had developed Guadalcanal only as a diversion while building up bases in the rear, and therefore their withdrawal was not forced upon them but was carried out according to plan. To the Allied forces in the South and Southwest Pacific, however, the expulsion of the enemy from the lower Solomons definitely changed the strategic
picture. It meant that the threat to the line of communications running from the Fijis to the New Hebrides and New Caledonia had virtually been removed, and that the central and northern Solomons could now be considered principally as "outer perimeter defences" for Rabaul. 15

Although this was of great strategic significance, it had little immediate effect upon the operations of the Fifth Air Force. The Elston Plan called for continued coordination of tactical operations between the South and Southwest Pacific theaters of the sort already made familiar during the Guadalcanal campaign. Since the preceding occurrences the Fifth Air Force heavy bombers had repeatedly cooperated with South Pacific Army and Navy forces by hitting Buka, Buin, Faisi, and Rabaul. Their heaviest raids were on the latter base, from which aircraft and ships could move with equal facility either to the Solomons or to New Guinea. 16 Clearly the Japanese defeat in Guadalcanal would not decrease the importance of these same air, sea, and supply bases. Indeed there were indications during February that some of the energy which the Japanese had previously directed through these points to the Solomons was now to be funneled toward New Guinea. Intelligence reports constantly emphasized the increasing activity of Japanese engineers from Fobo, in the extreme northwest of New Guinea to points as far east as Lae. They were building a 1,400-yard landing strip on Wakde Island and a 1,300-yard strip inland from Hollandia Bay, as well as roads at Madang and Alexander, and at Wewak a real airstrip with 77 dispersal bays. 17

Submarines, small boats, and air transports were apparently the principal means of supplying these widely dispersed points in New Guinea.
It was obvious, however, that if the enemy planned either to control the area or to launch any serious offensive from it, more ambitious efforts would be necessary to provide troops, equipment, and supplies. Furthermore, a Japanese effort to save face might demand such a move after the debacle in the Solomons. The attention of the V Bomber Command during February, therefore, continued to be focused upon an attempt to isolate New Guinea, particularly the northeastern part, from the Japanese-controlled islands to the north.

Medium and light bombers concentrated principally upon the supply lines in the Lae area. They struck at points in the forward areas around Mubo where the Japanese had retreated after their repulse at Wau, bombed and strafed airfields at Lae and at the near-by Malahang field, and swept the coast from Finschaven to Madang. During February RAAF and Fifth Air Force planes harassed the area daily except when "cyclonic disturbances" interfered. A-20's carried out at least 105 tree-scraping sorties; B-25's, 84; and RAAF Beaufighters, 43. Perhaps the best-coordinated mission occurred on 15 February against the Malahang dump area. At 0830, 7 B-25's of the 405th Squadron based at Durand, 5 B-25's of the 13th Squadron based at Schwimmer, and 6 A-20's of the 89th Squadron from Kila Kila took off for the mission. Ten minutes later 13 P-39's of the 89th Squadron roared across the Schwimmer runway and headed across the ranges to provide top cover. Promptly at 1000 the B-25's crossed the target. The 405th Squadron loosed its bombs from 2,200 feet, putting 50 x 300-pounders in the target area, while the 13th recorded 40 hits from 4,000 feet. Five minutes later, the A-20's with all machine
guns blazing swept Malahang from 200 feet. As they reached the target they dropped 48 x 100-lb. demolition bombs armed with an 11-second delayed-action fuze. Three hours after the take-off, all aircraft had returned. They could not claim specific results. But all bombs were classed as hits and large fires had been started. 18

Heavy bombers and patrol bombers, meanwhile, were reconnoitering the sea lanes and carrying out occasional strikes against Rabaul. A handful of RAAF PBY's, flying out of Cairns in northern Queensland, hovered over Vitiaz Strait, St. Georges Channel, and Duke Passage in the Solomons. Single B-24's principally of the 320th and 331st Squadrons and by now based in Port Moresby, did the same while the 400th Squadron from Batchelor and Fenton fields near Darwin flew its reconnaissance missions to western New Guinea and even penetrated the Netherlands East Indies. The B-17's of the 43d Group carried out most of the harassing attacks on the New Britain area. During February B-17's were over Rabaul on an average of every other night, at times singly, usually in flights of six. Ruin in the Solomons was also a fruitful target, and on 19 and 20 February, B-17's and PBY's coordinated their attacks on shipping and the airfields in that area. Two vessels of 7,000 and 9,000 tons were left burning and others were damaged. 19

The most ambitious missions of the month, however, occurred on 14 and 15 February against the Rabaul township and waterfront areas. Before dawn of the first day 13 B-17's of Major Scott's 63d Squadron led the way with the group commander, Col. J. M. Ramsey, as a passenger. The weather was unfavorable, but 12 aircraft flew through electrical storms
to scatter wire-wrapped 100-pounders, 300-lb. demolition bombs, incendiaries, and 20-lb. frags over the target. Succeeding waves of 8 B-17's, 4 B-24's, and 10 B-17's continued the attack until 98,000 pounds of bombs and some 3,700 incendiaries had been dropped from an altitude of 4,000 to 9,000 feet. Searchlights were destroyed and large fires were started. During the following night 17 more B-17's were over the same target carrying out a series of medium-altitude attacks. No B-17's were lost in these missions. During the month, however, the V Bomber Command lost from enemy action two B-17B's, two B-24's (recorded as missing), and one B-25. 20

The air attacks carried out by the Bomber Command during February were important in maintaining pressure upon the Japanese both in New Guinea and in New Britain. No illusions, however, could have existed as to the effectiveness of these missions. There simply were not enough aircraft in the Southwest Pacific both to neutralize important bases completely and to maintain an air blockade of the New Guinea coasts. Only by careful husbending of strength and by the strenuous efforts of ground crews and service units could an average of 75 bombers and 140 fighters of the Fifth Air Force be kept in commission. The general policy was to rotate squadrons so that approximately one-third was occupied in training and maintenance, one-third flying on combat missions, and the remainder held constantly on the alert. In this way at least two-thirds of the available air units could be marshaled for an emergency. 21

During late January and February 1943, the training program of the Allied Air Forces was devoted primarily to increasing the effectiveness
of the emergency striking force. The results of medium-altitude bombing against shipping had been less than satisfactory. During 1942 bombers attacking convoys, although increasingly effective, had scored a large number of misses. Experiments at Eglin Field together with those of Major Bem's 63d Squadron of B-17's in its operations against the Japanese had proved the superiority of low-level attack against shipping. Heavy bombers flying at 200 feet, however, were vulnerable to anti-aircraft fire, and could be used only at night with any assurance of success. The newly modified B-25's had been designed to accomplish what was too costly for B-17's: low-level attacks in daylight supported by their own forward fire power.

The training was particularly intensive for the 90th Squadron of the 3d Group, recently equipped with these modified planes (B-25C1's). The majority of the pilots of this unit were accustomed to medium-altitude bombing with a bombardier. Now they were to carry out masthead attacks without a bombardier. Week after week they trained using an old wreck off Port Moresby as a target. Experiments had shown that skip bombing was less accurate than aiming directly at the sides of the ship. Accordingly each pilot dropped 30 to 40 bombs from mast height, trying to hit the wreck itself by using a reference point on the nose of the aircraft as a bombsight. The runs were realistic since bombs were actually armed with the modified delayed-action fuse—so realistic, in fact, that one B-25 with its crew was lost when the planes hit the mast of the wreck, and two others were damaged by flying debris when bombs exploded instantaneously upon hitting the target. 22
By the end of February, coordinated rehearsals were being staged employing almost every type of bombardment aircraft. B-25's approached the target at high speed dropping from a medium altitude to an altitude of from 1,000 to 1,500 feet when they were within three miles of their objective. There they took "violent evasive action at full throttle losing altitude to about 500 feet at 1,500 yards from the target." They attacked in pairs, one plane strafing the vessel from stern to stern, firing "continuously from 1,200 yards with a full-throttle straight beam approach." The other plane "strafed the vessel as it came in on its beam and bombed it" from between 500 feet and masthead height. Australian flyers also participated in these complicated dress rehearsals using the Beaufighter, a twin-engine, two-man aircraft carrying four cannon in the nose and six machine guns in the wings; and A-20 crews, whose plane had already proved itself potent in overland attack, were trained in similar antishipping tactics.

During this period of intensive training, the Bomber Command had little opportunity to prove the effectiveness of the new techniques. One convoy was sighted off Geamata on 30 February. RAAF Beauforts, the only torpedo-carrying land plane in the Southwest Pacific, B-17's, and the 90th Squadron's B-25C's were dispatched to intercept it. But the 90th Squadron had no opportunity to test its new weapon since only the Australians found the convoy, and their torpedoes were released without effect. Six days later another convoy was reported north of New Britain, but B-24's and B-17's failed to find it. By this time, however, it was definitely known that the expected effort to reinforce the New Guinea garrisons was imminent. Alert Allied Intelligence had intercepted
Japanese radio messages which clearly indicated that a convoy would soon attempt to run the air blockade, probably either to Lae or to Madang. Accordingly, the Bomber Command prepared three different operational plans. The first assumed that the convoy would head for Lae, in which case it would come within reach of virtually all aircraft of the Allied Air Forces. If the ships should separate north of the Dampier Strait area, however, a second plan called for the heavies to concentrate on that portion of the convoy heading toward Madang, while light and medium bombers were to intercept the remainder of the vessels if they came within range. Finally, the entire convoy might follow a course toward Madang out of range of all but heavy air units, and the third plan was drafted accordingly. Thus were plans laid which were to lead to the brilliant and much publicized Allied air victory in the Bismarck Sea.

The plans of the enemy, who had determined to reinforce his troops in the Lae area at all costs, were also carefully drawn. The reinforcements were to consist principally of the 51st Infantry Division together with supporting units, equipment, and supplies. It was planned that a convoy, consisting originally of seven merchant vessels and eight destroyers, should be loaded in the Rabaul area beginning on 23 February. The loading was to be completed on 27 February, and the convoy was to leave at 2300 of the following night. Detailed instructions were prepared as to speed, formation, and evasive tactics. Air support was to be furnished by both army and naval aircraft according to a definite schedule. Approximately 40 naval planes and 60 army planes were to be made available. The convoy was to reach Lae on 3 March, and after being unloaded was to depart on 5 March for Rabaul where it was scheduled to arrive approximately three days later.
At first it seemed that the weather was conspiring with the Japanese in their plan to rush this convoy through. On 27 February southeastern New Guinea and adjacent islands were shrouded in low clouds, and the sky over New Britain was stormy. On the following day flying conditions were fair to good, but on 1 March storms were prevalent in both the New Britain and New Guinea areas.

Nevertheless, the B-24's of the 320th and 321st Squadrons maintained a continual search over the sea lanes. Two B-24's of the 321st Squadron patrolled the routes along the north and south coasts of New Britain during the morning of 1 March. They found that the weather had cleared, but otherwise reported nothing of importance. At 1130, a third B-24 was sent on a similar mission. At approximately 1500, its crew sighted 14 ships escorted by Zeros on a westerly course 40 miles northwest of Ubili. Two hours later another B-24 was sent out to shadow the convoy, but visibility by this time was rapidly decreasing. At about the same time seven B-17's of the 63rd Squadron followed a few hours later by a single B-17 of the 65th Squadron tried unsuccessfully to find it.

By this time the Advanced Echelon (ADVON) was fully alerted and ready to send its planes into action. Few missions had been flown during the past two days, and as a result a maximum number of aircraft were in commission. Of the units assigned to ADVON and prepared to participate in a convoy attack, the following aircraft were ready for action: 43 P-40's and 18 P-39's of the 49th Fighter Group; 17 P-38's of the 35th Fighter Group; 17 P-40's of the RAAF 75 Squadron; 6 B-250's and D's of the 13th Squadron; 11 B-25C1's of the 90th Squadron, and 15
A-20's of the 89th Squadron, all of the 3d Bombardment Group; 11 B-250's and D's of the 38th Group; 28 B-17's of the 43d Group; 9 B-24's of the 90th Group; and 6 Bostons, 13 Beaufighters, and 13 Beauforts of the RAAF 9 Operational Group. In the Allied Air Forces on 1 March there were a total of 154 fighters, 34 light bombers, 41 medium bombers, and 39 heavy bombers ready for combat.

On 2 March the convoy was still too distant for coordinated strikes by all types of aircraft. Consequently the burden of the attack rested upon the heavy bombers protected by long-range P-39 fighters. The first mission, however, was designed to hammer Japanese fighter opposition by neutralizing the Lee airfield. Six RAAF A-20's took off from their Fort McRae base before dawn, bombed the field from both medium and tree-scraping altitudes, and liberally strafed the runway and dispersal areas. Meanwhile a B-24 of the 320th Squadron searched the Bismarck Sea for the convoy. Visibility was still bad, but by mid-morning the convoy had been located, and a series of attacks initiated by the Bomber Command.

The first significant strike was carried out by eight B-17's of the 63d Squadron. The bombing attack was scheduled to be escorted by 12 P-39's of the 9th Squadron, but the fighters failed to reach the rendezvous point on time, and the bombers were left to face fierce enemy fighter attack without protection. Shortly before 1000 they carried out their attack from 6,500 feet against a convoy which they reported as containing one light cruiser, five destroyers, and eight merchant vessels. Thousand-pound demolition bombs were dropped. Major Scott and Lieutenant Murphy were each credited with a merchant vessel, one of which was...
described as breaking in half and sinking in two minutes.

Within an hour of this attack, 20 more heavy bombers were over the target. According to plan, these planes were to be escorted to the target by 16 P-38's of the 39th Squadron which had taken off at 0740, but there was a considerable amount of confusion and the fighters seem to have accompanied an earlier bombing mission, that of the 63d Squadron, a part of the distance to the convoy. Thus the attack which followed were carried out without top cover. The weather was undoubtedly in part responsible for this miss-use. Low broken clouds and heavy intermittent thunder showers forced the attacking squadrons to break formation in order to search for their targets. The convoy, apparently taking advantage of the weather, was scattering so that individual ships could take cover in rain squalls. These conditions hampered the attacks, which were carried out principally by 18 B-17's of the 65th and 64th Squadrons. One report of this action, however, described a 6,000- to 8,000-ton transport as "burning and exploding," and a 5,000-ton ship as "burning," while another report stated that a large cargo vessel was "smoking and burning amidships." The 64th Squadron counted three destroyers, two light cruisers, one 750-ton gunboat, and eight or nine cargo vessels of various sizes. Of these it reported that one 6,000- to 7,000-ton cargo vessel was "seen to explode," and that another slightly larger was "in a sinking condition." This damage must have been caused largely by the earlier attack of the 63d Squadron, however, since of the 63 x 1,000-lb. bombs dropped, the 64th and 65th Squadrons claimed only two direct hits and four near misses.
During the afternoon of 2 March, the convoy was still out of range of anything but heavy bombers. A B-17 from the 65th Squadron on a shadowing mission reported that "two possible GL's left convoy" at 1730, and that two unidentified ships had been added between 1530 and 1600. Approximately three hours after this, the final attack of the day was made by 11 B-17's off Koke Island at the entrance to Vitiaz Strait. Their observers counted 16 vessels, two of which were on fire. Enemy fighters, though not particularly persistent, were numerous, and one was shot down. They caused little damage to the bombers, but a heavy burst of antiaircraft struck the bomb bay of a B-17. Fire broke out, and only after a 25-minute fight, were the co-pilot, engineer, and radio operator able to quench the blaze. Meanwhile 43 x 1,000-lb. bombs were dropped, which according to the report, scored two direct hits amidships of a 5,000- to 6,000-ton cargo vessel which "was left sinking." An RAAF PBY maintained contact with the convoy during the night, and at 0545 of the following morning a B-17 picked it up, now off the Huon Peninsula and within reach of medium and light bombers.

The first attack of 3 March was carried out by the RAAF 100 Squadron equipped with Beauforts and based at Milne Bay. A weather front off Cape Nelson and the failure of flares to illuminate the ships thwarted the mission, however, and only one torpedo was released. But the threat of torpedoes was very real to the Japanese and when, a short time later, RAAF Beaufighters carried out their attacks, the enemy, mistaking them for the similar Beaufort, maneuvered their ships to decrease the possibility of torpedo hits.
The powerful Beaufighters of the 30 Squadron were ordered off the ground at 0700. They were to assemble over Cane Ward Hunt and follow tactics tested against the Moresby wreck only three days before. This involved low-level attacks coordinated with those of B-17's, B-25's, and A-20's bombing and strafing from low and medium altitudes under protection of a P-38 top cover. By 0930 all planes had reached the assembly area. A half an hour later the attack was on. Thirteen Beaufighters "went into the target with flights in line astern." By the time they were within AA range of the destroyers, they were at 500 feet. "They then lost height rapidly and using roated power attacked in line abreast at a speed of 220 knots." The attack was beautifully timed. Just as the Beaufighters began their sweep toward the by-now widely separated convoy, 13 B-17's of the 64th, 65th, and 403d Squadrons began to drop their bombs from 7,000 to 9,000 feet. Zokes and Oscars intercepted fiercely, and perhaps a dozen were shot down. Bombing was good, and five direct hits were reported to have resulted in the sinking of one 4,000-ton cargo vessel and the probable sinking of another slightly larger in size. Closely following the B-17's but just after the Beaufighters' first run were seven B-25's of the 71st Squadron and six more from the 13th also attacking from medium altitude. Their bombing, however, met with mixed success. The 71st Squadron reported: "One destroyer hit bad. Believe sunk." But the 13th could claim no more then near misses on a transport and a cargo vessel.
Any accurate appraisal of individual scores was becoming increasingly difficult, for within 15 minutes, the air seemingly had become full of rapidly maneuvering aircraft. The Beaufighters were over the convoy for 90 minutes concentrating their heavy fire power on the decks, setting fire to cargo, killing some members of the gun crews, and forcing others to take cover.

The 90th Squadron's B-25's in their introduction to combat were even more successful. Twelve of these modified Mitchells roared down to 500 feet, then broke formation, each pilot seeking his own target. Although this occasionally caused some confusion when two pilots chose the same ship, the results were overwhelming. The forward-firing .50's beat down opposing AA, and 500-lb. bombs struck ship after ship. Of 37 x 500-lb. bombs dropped, 17 direct hits were claimed. According to the report of ADMON, there were 11 vessels in the group as the B-25's approached. After this attack, the following results were listed: an 8,000-ton transport was "badly damaged," a destroyer "rolled on its side and sank," a 4,000- to 5,000-ton cargo vessel "burst into flames and sank," an 8,000-ton transport was left "burning violently," a 4,000- to 5,000-ton cargo vessel stopped and "began to settle," a 5,000-ton cargo vessel "appeared sinking," a 6,000- to 8,000-ton transport was "sinking," a destroyer and a 3,000-ton cargo vessel were left smoking after three direct hits, and a 5,000- to 8,000-ton cargo vessel was left burning after another direct hit.

The 90th Squadron created this havoc in approximately 20 minutes. At the same time six B-25's of the 405th Squadron and A-20's of the
89th were scoring comparable successes. The A-20's, two flights of six planes each, came in at mastheight, dropped 20 x 500-lb. bombs, and claimed 11 direct hits. The 405th, dropping 35 x 500-pounders from less than 200 feet, claimed four direct hits.

Four Allied aircraft were shot down during these relentless morning assaults. The only bomber lost was from a four-plane formation of the 63d Squadron which arrived over the target after most of the medium bombers had completed their attacks. They dropped 16 bombs with no observed results. Enemy interception was fierce and from all sides. Fifteen Japanese were counted and at least five shot down. But one evaded all P-38 fighter cover and came in under the wing of Lt. Woodrow W. Moore's plane. Bullets penetrated a wing and the radio compartment of the B-17, starting a fire. Moore pulled out of formation and salvaged his bombs. But the plane went into a "crazy dive." One after another the crew members tumbled out of the plane which disintegrated before plummeting into the sea. Seven bailed out, but all were strafed as they floated toward the water 6,000 to 7,000 feet below. These men and the pilots of three P-38's were lost. But the fighter pilots more than held their own as the 23 P-38's, which were providing cover, shot down at least 16 enemy fighters. 42

After these morning assaults the remaining Japanese ships received no more than a very brief respite. Shortly after 1500, they were hit again and again in another series of carefully coordinated missions. Allied units received their orders shortly after noon, and almost immediately the planes were roaring off the Moreeby dromes and heading
toward Le. The instructions issued to the RAAF 22 Squadron outlined
the plan of attack:

All available Boston s to carry out coordinated attack on enemy
convoys last reported position 0705 South, 148.30 East widely
scattered at 1220/3 March (.). Aircraft rendezvous at Cape Ward
Hunt at 0000 feet (.). Set course for rendezvous at 1400 hours
1/3 March, remaining in visual contact during approach to
target (.). Rally Point Cape Varls (. sig). Primary targets trans-
port first alternative warships, second alternative Le air-
drome (.). Order of assembly and approach to target one squadron
of B17's at 5000 feet, one squadron B25's 8000 feet, one squadron
B25's 7000 feet, one squadron Beaufighters 6000 feet, one squadron
B-25's 5500 feet, one squadron B25-GI's 5000 feet, one squadron
A20's 4500 feet, one squadron Bostons 4000 feet (.). Order of at-
tack (.). First Beaufighters strafing, then B25's, then B25's-GI,
followed by A-20 and Boston s all masthead - then B17's from
7000 feet to 10,000 feet, followed by one squadron B25's 3000 to
6000 feet (.). Bombs medium bombers 500 lb. demolition and in-
stantaneous fuse, high bombers 1000 lb. demolition instantaneous
fuse, masthead attack 500 and 250 lb, 5 second delay (.). Fighter
cover will have sets of 4905 Kcs (-). Bomber Flight Leaders will
identify and locate themselves relative to target when calling
for Fighters in any emergency (-). Enemy convoy protected by
fighters (-).

The strikes did not go according to plan. The weather over the
ranges was less cooperative than in the morning. None of the Beaufight-
ers crossed the mountains, 12 A-20's of the reliable 89th Squadron
"could not climb above or find a hole in the weather," and of the
29 B-25's which set out, six failed to reach the target.* Those that
did found only four or five badly damaged merchant vessels and two or
three destroyers still afloat. For a period of approximately half an
hour (between 1505 and 1535), the attack continued with no let-up. So
complicated were the maneuverings that the Jap defenses, or what was
left of them, were completely confused. Apparently the final assault
was carried out more rapidly than had been planned since RAAF Bostons
"were almost bombing through strafing B-25's, and the B-17's were bomb-
ing from medium height through both."

* One because of mechanical failure.
Again the Japanese were overwhelmed. Ten B-39's of the 39th Squadron and eight of the 9th Squadron provided protection against the 10 to 20 Zeke's and Oscars which vainly tried to cover the remaining ships. Meanwhile Allied bombers were relentlessly striking at the vessels and strafing the Japanese survivors struggling in the water or trying to escape in small boats. The first of the afternoon attacks of 3 March occurred at 1513. A B-17 of the 63d Squadron reported five vessels in flames and claimed two direct hits on a large destroyer which "stopped and burned." Then the B-25's struck. Within five minutes, the 90th Squadron's eight B-25C's had left a large destroyer "definitely sinking" after four direct hits from mast height, another probably sinking after four more hits, and two merchant vessels badly damaged (one of which was claimed as sunk). 42 At 1517 nine more B-25's from the 405th and 71st Squadrons, dropping a part of their bombs from medium altitude and the remainder from 200 feet, watched six 500-pounders strike home. In one case a destroyer was left burning and exploding, and in another a "ship disintegrated." Five minutes later the crews of the 13th Squadron flying six B-35's dropped 25 x 500-lb. bombs from 5,500 feet. Four of them crashed into a "light cruiser" which was "left in a sinking condition." Almost simultaneously 15 B-17's commenced their attack. Generally runs were made in flights of three planes, with each bombardier releasing a bomb every 75 feet. The bombing was also successful. A direct hit was scored on a merchant vessel which was left "sinking," and other hits were claimed on two destroyers. Japanese fighters failed to halt the bombardment, and seven were shot down.
Before the B-17's had finished their bomb run, five RAAF Bostons had virtually surrounded a destroyer. The Australian flyers formed a circle around the harassed ship, and made numerous strikes in quick succession. They claimed at least two direct hits, which, with numerous near misses, were considered sufficient to have caused another sinking.

Thus ended the last coordinated series of missions against the Java convoy. Back at Port Moresby there was a feeling of festivity as a result of the already decisive victory. General Kenney's reaction was typical: "Tell the whole gang that I am so proud of them I am about to blow a fuse." But reconnaissance flyers were still busy searching the scene of action, and trying to assure themselves that none of the burning hulks were in a condition to get away during the night. It was known that one destroyer at least was still afloat, and that numerous survivors were in the water or trying to escape in barges and launches. For days, therefore, mopping-up activity continued. In the night of 3-4 March, five motor torpedo boats assigned to the Seventh Fleet and based at Tufi reached the scene of floating wreckage and dispatched one vessel. During the following morning at least one other badly damaged destroyer was sunk by B-17's and B-2501's. Beachfighters, A-30's, and B-25's secured the scene and strafed survivors headed for New Guinea and other islands as far away as Goodenough and Kirinina to the east.

This Allied victory, which General MacArthur after the Japanese surrender in August 1945 called "the decisive aerial engagement" in his theater of war, so discouraged the enemy that they made few if any further attempts to run a convoy into the Java area. This in itself was of
tremendous significance. Kenney's flyers had accomplished as much in
three days as in similar operations extending through the entire Papua
Campaign, when only toward the end was Buna blocked off from incoming
shipping. Now the enemy troops in the Lae-Salamaua-Hubo areas were to
be dependent for supplies and reinforcements on submarines, air trans-
port, or barges which either cut across Vitiaz Strait from Cape Gloucester
or moved down the coast from Nadeng or Wewak.

Of perhaps equal importance with this cutting of an enemy supply
line was the successful employment of new tactics. Above all the Bismarck
Sea victory was one of coordination, made possible by careful prepara-
tion and an accurate evaluation of intelligence. General MacArthur
emphasized these points when he cabled on 11 March that the success of
the Bismarck Sea action was provided by two main factors: "complete anti-
cipatory diagnosis" of enemy plans and intentions and "careful prepara-
tion for and exact execution of coordinated medium and low altitude
bombing." These carefully rehearsed tactics, however, would not have
been possible without the remarkable technical developments accomplished
in the theater—the A-20 attack plane, the powerful B-25CJ, and the modi-
fied M106 fuse which had been further modified in New Guinea 24 hours
before the attack. 46 Nevertheless, it is doubtful if the low-flying
B-25's, A-20's, and B-25's could have bombed so destructively had
it not been for the careful coordination of a wide variety of attacks;
B-17's and B-24's confused the defenders by the accuracy of their bomb-
ing from medium altitudes, and F-58's provided top cover which diverted
a large share of defending enemy fighters.
The statistics serve only to emphasize the magnitude of the victory. During the course of a two-week period ending with 14 March, Allied aircraft carried out a total of over 4,000 sorties connected with the Bismarck Sea action of which 76 per cent reached their objective. A total of 571 bombs (426,000 pounds) were dropped on the ships of the convoy. According to the record, the B-17's scored 9 per cent hits, the medium-altitude B-25's 14 per cent hits, the B-26C's 43 per cent hits, the American A-20's 50 per cent hits, and the RA F A-20's bombing from above 1,000 feet, 10 per cent hits. During their sorties, bombers and escorting fighters encountered a total of over 350 enemy aircraft, of which from 50 to 80 were destroyed and from 25 to 40 probably destroyed. At the same time one B-25 was lost in a landing accident, and three P-39's and one B-17 were shot down in combat.

Figures as to the number of enemy aircraft shot down must necessarily be approximate in view of the complicated nature of the action. It is equally difficult to assess exactly the damage done to enemy shipping. During at least a part of the battle of the Bismarck Sea, conditions did not favor accurate observation. Intervening clouds and turbulence on 2 March and a part of the following day interfered with the bombers attacking from medium altitude. Observation must also have been difficult, as is evidenced by the inconsistent nature of the reports. Moreover the speed and maneuvering necessary in low-level attack was not conducive to accurate appraisal of results.

The score as to the number of ships sunk depends to a large extent upon the number of ships in the convoy. Enemy documents, supported to
probably badly damaged. The evidence is not so clear with regard to the merchant vessels. The eight in the original convoy were certainly sunk. It is possible that others joined that formation at some time during the afternoon of 2 March or during the night. If so, they may also have been sunk. But the evidence from photographs or from sightings is not conclusive that additional ships did join the convoy.

Furthermore, no captured documents, diaries, or prisoner of war interrogations clearly identify any vessels other than the original 16. On the basis of this and other evidence available to them, the Joint Army and Navy Assessment Commission has concluded that there was a total of 16 vessels in the convoy, and that 13 of them were sunk.

Even though the smaller figure be accepted, it was a victory which merited the commendations which were immediately radioed to the theater from both General Marshall and General Arnold. It was a victory won, however, by concentrating virtually all available air power against the enemy. It would have been difficult to repeat such an attack if other convoys had immediately renewed the reinforcement attempt. It certainly could not yet be assumed that Allied positions in New Guinea were secure. Indeed there was perhaps a need to fight against overconfidence engendered by the tremendous surge in morale following the Bismarck Sea victory. According to Kerlin Spencer, Associated Press correspondent, both MacArthur and Kenney were aware of the danger of overoptimism.

Spencer paraphrased MacArthur's views given at a press conference as follows: "We are waging a holding war in this area. Nothing more. We have hardly enough even to do that. The Japs at sea are punchdrunk but..."
we don't have sufficient troops or equipment to deal the knock out blow." Later Zenney confirmed MacArthur's opinion, according to Spencer, by stating that if "he were in the Japs place he could take out the entire 5th Air Force. The Japs would have to pay plenty for it but it could be done."
Chapter V
PRELIMINARY OFFENSIVE OPERATIONS, MARCH-MAY

In the months following the Bismarck Sea action, there were some indications that the Japanese were actually planning, in Kenney's phrase, to "take out the entire 5th Air Force." It was obvious that the enemy did not intend to abandon either the upper Solomons or New Guinea. Indeed in New Guinea their strength was, if anything, greater than at any time since the Allied victory at Ironside Ridge, 30 miles from Port Moresby, in September 1942. The development of Hollandia, Wewak, Hansa Bay, and Nadan were not interrupted by the disaster in the Bismarck Sea. Shipping of all kinds, safe from any but heavy-bomber attacks, continued to reach these areas, and it was clear to Allied Intelligence that northwestern New Guinea was destined in enemy planning to assume almost as important a place as New Britain and New Ireland. At the same time the latter areas were steadily reinforced. Aerial photographs and other intelligence sources showed a gradual increase in the number of enemy aircraft based on fields at Rabaul, at Kavieng, and in the Solomons. The estimated enemy order of battle for 17 March reported 159 aircraft on New Britain, 60 on New Ireland, and 145 in the Solomons; that for 18 March showed for the three Rabaul airbases alone — Lekunel, Vunakanau, and Eapopo— 30 medium bombers, 52 light bombers, and 101 fighters. 1

These aircraft threatened Allied Southwest Pacific bases. Planes from Rabaul could hit points either in New Guinea or in the Solomons.
with equal facility. The enemy had already demonstrated a discouraging flexibility in deploying his air units and in replacing lost aircraft by others brought in from Yon, Truk, the Palaus, and other bases to the north.  

The Allies, meanwhile, had received few if any air reinforcements. In March, as had been the case for the past five months, the total number of aircraft lost outnumbered those received. The monthly status report showed that the following aircraft reached Australia during that month: 13 B-25's, 3 B-34's, 1 C-47, 8 P-38's, and 4 P-51's. At the same time 4 P-38's, 2 B-17's, 1 B-25, 1 P-400, and 1 A-20 were either lost or reported missing after enemy action; 3 P-38's were destroyed on the ground; and 11 fighters, 7 bombers, 9 transports, and 1 P-4 were wrecked in accidents.  

This difficult situation was eased to some extent by improved training facilities, in the theater and by the return of one fighter squadron to combat. In February the first steps had been taken to establish a replacement center at Charters Towers. Actually this was a school rather than a replacement center having for its purpose speeding the assignment of newly arrived personnel to the fighter and bomber commands. This involved a considerable amount of specialized training which had previously been accomplished by tactical units in addition to their combat duties. Officially made the responsibility of the 35th Service Group in April, the replacement center consisted of two camp areas with mess halls, administration buildings, tents with concrete floors, barracks, a link trainer building, two skeet ranges, and a bombing range. The
school was important in preparation for future operations, but more
significant for immediate problems of combat was the return of the 30th
Squadron of the 8th Fighter Group to duty. Since the middle of February,
when it had been evacuated to the mainland from Milne Bay, this unit had
been recuperating from its almost 100 per cent incidence of malaria and
at the same time training on newly acquired P-38's. On 21 March an
advanced echelon with nine of the twin-engine fighters landed at Kila
airdrome near Port Moresby and began to carry out escort missions and to
stand its share of alerts. The arrival of these new aircraft was
welcome at a time when many of the other fighters, particularly the P-40's,
were nearing a point where they might literally be expected to fall apart
at any time. By the end of March, for example, of the 25 P-40's as-
signed to the 8th Fighter Squadron, five were credited with 400 or more
hours, seven with 300 or more, and the remainder with 200 or more. 4

Fighter units, therefore, were little better equipped, except in
experience, than they had been in the fall of 1942. The same was true
of the bombardment units. The 403d Squadron of the 43d Bombardment Group
(E) never had more than five aircraft on hand from March through May.
The entire 22d Bombardment Group (M) through this same period remained
out of combat because of its lack of aircraft. The same was true of the
8th Squadron of the 3d Bombardment Group, while the 13th Squadron with
seven B-25's on hand in March and April could report no more than three
in May. 5

Thus the official tabulation of two heavy, two medium, and one
light bombardment group, three fighter groups, and two troop carrier
grounds hardly gave a true picture of the strength of the Fifth Air Force. Actually during this period (March through May), there were seven heavy squadrons ready for combat, and of these one was based in Darwin. There were three squadrons which could be counted on for medium-bombardment operations and another equipped with A-20s. There were seven fighter squadrons, at least five of which had many out-dated aircraft; and one of the two troop carrier groups, the 317th, was operating with the Directorate of Air Transport in Australia.

This dark picture was brightened somewhat by the prospect of receiving large-scale reinforcements. By the middle of March, MacArthur and Kenney had learned of the recent JCS decision to reinforce the Fifth Air Force.* But only the beginning of the promised allocations were to arrive within the next two months. On 28 March Kenney was authorized to activate two medium bombardment squadrons, the 822d and the 823d, and to assign them to the 33d Group. This was carried out on 20 April, but only sufficient personnel were available to organize the new units on a "skeleton basis," and it was clear that personnel and aircraft could not be prepared for operations before the end of June, at the earliest. By that time, the 345th Bombardment Group (N) and the 360th Bombardment Group (E), diverted from the United Kingdom, would have arrived, since aircraft for these units were being ferried to Australia by the end of April. This promised a considerable increase in the striking power of the Fifth Air Force.

* See Chapter II.
The outlook for an increase of fighters by the end of June was less promising. True OPD had decided by the end of March that the 348th Fighter Group equipped with P-47's would be diverted to the Fifth Air Force from the United Kingdom. The flight and ground echelons were ready to depart by the middle of May, but the aircraft were not, since the P-47D-1's had operational bugs which had to be removed before being committed to a combat theater.

For the present, therefore, General Kenney had to content himself with the arrival late in March of six P-70's of the 6th Night Fighter Squadron. MacArthur had first requested night fighters in October 1942. He repeated the request four months later, but delivery was delayed until an agreement was reached with the British in regard to night fighter protection in North Africa "where the political situation and the possibility of concentrated night bombing made the matter one of paramount importance." Even then the P-70 proved unsatisfactory. Tests soon showed that it took 23 to 25 minutes to climb to 20,000 feet at full power, and another 16 minutes to reach 25,000 feet. It had hand fuel pumps, and "the pilot would be having a hell of a time "warming" and at the same time trying to fly. When it finally reached that altitude, "maneuverability was nil, and it was impossible to get to any overtaking speed."

The Service Command then took over. After some experimentation in Australia, the 37th Depot Repair Squadron at Port Moresby added a number of improvements. Boosters were installed behind engine-driven pumps to maintain constant fuel pressure at the highest altitudes; the P-17 paddle-type propellers replaced the original blades; a part of the air...
scoop was cut off to make room for the new propeller when feathered; the planes were relieved of all unnecessary weight by removing the bomb bay tank, the .30-cal. guns in the rear, a .50-cal. flexible gun, and much of the armor plate; but two .50-cal. guns were attached firing forward. These modifications increased the fighting ceiling about 5,000 feet and the speed almost 60 miles an hour. The fighter command, however, still wanted a better night fighter; but until another was available, the six P-70's, known as Detachment A, served as an integral part of the defenses of Port Moresby.

The problem of reinforcement was one of the most pressing facing those responsible for planning operations in the Southwest Pacific. Of perhaps equal significance both to immediate and to future operations was the first great forward leap of air units since the development of Port Moresby and Milne Bay as advanced bases. This was the movement across the Owen Stanleys to Dobodura, a base which had played a vital part in the winning of the Fuganu Campaign. Its air strips, cleared and improved by the combined efforts of natives, infantry men, detachments of the 114th Engineer Battalion, and the 43d Engineer Regiment had received transport planes by the end of November. But its further development in the fall of 1942 was handicapped not only by the presence of Japanese forces in the area but by difficulty in moving supplies from the coast to the base. It was planned to build a road from Oro Bay to Dobodura by the middle of January, but work was not actually begun on this project until the first of February and had not progressed far enough to be considered open for traffic until 13 May.
Long before this date, however, the base had been considerably improved. Wharves were constructed in Oro Bay, combat personnel unloaded the small boats that moved along the coast from Milne Bay, and equipment and supplies were carried by jeep or native carriers over improved tracks to Dobodura. Meanwhile the troop carriers continued to pour men and materiel onto the air strips. With 5,000 pounds to a plane, the average lift during a period of six weeks in March and April was 600,000 to 672,000 pounds a day. 11

By March a number of service units had arrived to organize the routine of an established air base. A detachment of the 305th Quartermaster Company had been flown to Dobodura shortly after the fall of Buna and Gona in December of 1942. For a time it was the only quartermaster unit there, and with four jeeps and quarter-ton trailers, it was responsible for supplying all units in the area. At times this meant supplying approximately 6,000 men. On 1 January 1943, a C-47 brought a detachment of two officers and 45 men of the 490th Service Squadron from Wards Drome to repair, service, and salvage aircraft in the area. Communications were improved after a platoon of the 440th Signal Battalion had arrived in February. Aircraft warning facilities also became far more reliable. The first radar in the Buna area, an Australian set which had arrived by air transport in December, had never been particularly satisfactory, and in February units of the 565th Signal Aircraft Warning Battalion began to arrive in Oro Bay. By the first of March, reporting platoons were located at Oro Bay itself, Tufi, McLaren Harbor, and at Isonada. Two weeks later these initial service and signal units were
joined by the 46th Service Group. Carried by troop carriers over the
Owen Stanleys, it was the first group of its kind at this advanced base.

Until March no combat group had been based at Dobodura. By
December 1943 fighters were occasionally using the strips there as
emergency landing fields, but transports and a few Australian Wirraways
had been the only planes landing there regularly. Two months later,
however, it was decided to post flights of the 49th Fighter Group on
alert at Dobodura during the day. Accordingly in February a small
detachment of ground personnel was stationed there, and aircraft would
fly to Dobodura each morning and return to their Moresby base in the
evening. By this means, not only was the area north of the Owen
Stanleys given greater protection against enemy aircraft, but the area
in which fighters could provide cover for bombers and transports was
considerably extended. In fact, the existence of the Dobodura strips
with servicing and refueling facilities had been a vital factor in
maintaining fighter cover for the bombers in the Bismarck Sea action.

Meanwhile arrangements were being made for the transfer of the
entire 49th Group to the advanced base. On 26 February Lt. Col. Robert L.
Morrissey, group commander, arrived to inspect new camp sites for his
headquarters and for the combat squadrons. By the middle of March the
headquarters together with the 8th and 9th Squadrons flying P-40's and
P-39's had joined their group commander, leaving only the 7th Squadron
to follow about a month later.

The movement into the forward areas brought with it the difficulties
inherent in such a change. Servicing of the aircraft was at first
not good. Refueling facilities were particularly unsatisfactory, and high-pressure portable units were needed. Simply dumps seemed inaccessible, in part owing to the lack of transportion equipment on the field. Even more than at Port Moresby, spare parts were at a premium. Shortly after arriving at Dobodura, for example, the 9th Squadron reported that P-39's out of commission were "being stripped to keep 16 for the daily alert." Furthermore, there were the usual complaints when combat personnel, with their own hands, had to build their camp sites where conveniences were few and insects many. The incidence of malaria was high, probably the case of the 46th Service Group being typical. Until the latter part of June, when improved sanitation measures began to take effect, from 15 to 20 per cent of its personnel were regularly incapacitated from malaria and dengue fever. By the time the camp site with the usual tents, mess halls, latrines, and garbage-disposal facilities had been established, living conditions were probably no worse than in the Port Moresby area. In fact some of "the boys" of the 46th Group preferred their new camp site. There was a swift little stream adjacent to the camp areas which solved the water problem, and at the same time, was an excellent place for swimming. The Special Service Section directed by Lt. Harold H. Peterson arranged for movies, a baseball league, a lending library, an orchestra, post office facilities, and regular cable service. On 31 March Lieutenant Peterson opened a new canteen "chock full of supplies" in a corner of the mess hall. It offered for sale, in addition to the usual lines of food stuff, canvas wash basins complete with stands. Visiting shows occasionally...
reached Dobodura. On 31 March a USO unit arrived consisting of an accordion player, a violinist, a juggler, and "several boys that sang old songs which were popular when our Kows and Pows were young." They were well received as were Joe E. Brown who arrived two weeks later at Morenda, one of the principal Dobodura domes. He was greeted by the band of the American 41st Division and in spite of scorching heat put on a "swell program." 16

One of the principal operational disadvantages at Dobodura was the lack of reliable communications with AUWHO at Port Moresby. It was necessary to rely principally upon radio, but the peculiar conditions caused by towering mountains and tropical weather frequently interrupted reception. To those acquainted with the razor-back ridges, the gorges, and the corroding jungle country, a telephone line strung across the 180 miles from Port Moresby must have seemed a next-to-impossible job. Yet such a plan was conceived, and by May the project was under way. Signal Corps personnel began to work from both terminals, stringing bare copper wire on poles. On 18 May a detachment of the 440th Signal Battalion was flown to Koko and started to work from that half-way point. In the almost impenetrable jungle, use of poles was impossible, and a "native locomotive" led the way, clearing some of the jungle growth so that the viros could be attached to suitable trees. On 34 June the job was done. It had taken 250 natives and 100 American and an equal number of Australian signal corps troops, supplied principally by dropping from air transports, a little more than a month. 17

Communication problems in the Southwest Pacific were not solved by the herculean job of stringing a telephone line across the Owen Stanley
Page. The constant dampness in New Guinea rotted poles and corroded wires, and frequent storms grounded newly strung lines. Moreover, the move to Dobodura was only the first of many leaps which took combat units, service units, and troop carrier units hundreds of miles ahead of bases that had been established only a few months or even weeks before. In such circumstances, it was impossible to establish reliable communications between the advanced bases and those to the rear. Even in the case of Dobodura, wire connections were not established with Port Moresby until six months after the Fagen Campaign had ended.

Under the circumstances it was clear that if authorization for every strike by aircraft based on the north side of the Owen Stanleys were required from Port Moresby or Brisbane, operations would be disastrously delayed.

The organization which existed at the end of the Fagen Campaign was not capable of coping with this situation. General Kenney's Fifth Air Force Headquarters had to be retained in Brisbane where it could coordinate its activities with General MacArthur's GHQ, the headquarters of the Allied Air Forces, and various Australian headquarters. ADVG at Port Moresby still had administrative responsibilities too complicated to permit a forward movement of this headquarters. A new headquarters was thus considered necessary to exercise operational control over the units based at Dobodura.

General Kenney's answer to this problem was the creation in March 1943 of the First Air Task Force, at first known as the Fagen Air Task Force. This new organization was to consist of fighter, bomber, and
troop carrier units which could be attached for an indefinite period or for a particular operation only. When a fighter unit was attached to the task force, the Fighter Command retained administrative control, but operational control went to the task force. The same applied to bomber units in their relationship with the Bomber Command. Theoretically General Whitehead as commander of ADVGN retained authority for direction of the operations of all combat units in Northeast New Guinea. Actually, however, the commander of the task force could assume, when necessary, the responsibility of dispatching his own units on combat missions, including fighter sorties in defense of the area, missions requested by Allied ground troops, and attacks on emergency targets such as convoys.

There was some difficulty in completing the organization of the task force because of a feeling in Washington that the Southwest Pacific was requesting too many headquarters personnel in higher grades. General Kenney insisted that three headquarters for the Fifth Air Force were necessary, and wrote that "G-3 has no idea of the details of the problem out here and has no conception of the number of officers required to run the show in three echelons." The task force, however, was never officially authorized by the War Department, and personnel had to be taken from other organizations for task force headquarters. To the important post of commander, General Kenney appointed Col. Frederick H. Smith Jr. who continued to be listed on official rosters as deputy chief of staff of the Fifth Air Force. This administrative slight-of-hand had to be performed for all of Smith's staff. His A-3,
Maj. W. F. Coleman, for example, was officially an assistant chief of staff, A-3, at Fifth Air Force Headquarters. 20

At the beginning the only combat unit attached to the task force was the 49th Fighter Group. But by the middle of April the personnel of the 8th Squadron of the 3d Bombardment Group had been flown across the Owen Stanley. Within a month the remainder of the 3d Group and the RAAF 30 Squadron had arrived, and new B-25s were being tested by the crews of the 3d Squadron. By the end of June the First Air Task Force was a balanced organization. In addition to service units, it consisted of the following squadrons: one P-39, two P-40, one Beaufighter, one A-20, one B-25C-1, and one unmodified B-25. 21

Although the principal function of the First Air Task Force was to maintain control of the sea approaches to the Bismarck and Bougainville, a secondary function was to provide aircraft for ground-cooperation missions. In this the task force concept replaced that of an air support command which had been suggested by Headquarters AAF in Washington. In January, 10 officers, trained in "air-support" technique, had arrived in Australia and had become a part of the A-3 section of the Fifth Air Force, with an advanced echelon at Fort Knox. By 1 February General Kenney had decided that "the theory of an Air Support Command does not fit the picture in this theater." With the consent of General Arnold, he determined to return several of the high ranking "air-support" officers to the United States, leaving those of low enough grade to serve as assistants to "relatively junior heads of A-3 sections." Among those who remained were Maj. Earl A. Field, who was appointed to head the Support Section at Fifth Air Force Headquarters, Maj. Richard N. Marshall
at ADWON, and Capt. Spencer Shroshire, who became liaison officer at
Ven. Early in March Shroshire was relieved by another officer and
returned to Port Moresby where he became liaison officer with combat
squadrons, responsible for briefing squadron and group A-2's. The
functions of an air support command, therefore, were merged with those
of the various operations sections, at Port Moresby if the missions
in question were the responsibility of ADWON, or at Dobodura if that of
the First Air Task Force.

The creation of the First Air Task Force and the merging of air
support officers into A-3 sections was generally successful in increasing
the flexibility of combat units in the forward areas. Of lesser
importance was another new organization which was being planned
for troop carrier units to provide a headquarters on the same echelon
as the commands for fighter and bomber groups. In the middle of January
General MacArthur had requested permission to activate a headquarters
and headquarters squadron of a "transport wing" in order "to insure
proper coordination of increased air transport activities." Before the
end of the month CPH had authorized the activation of a troop carrier
wing and had suggested that trained personnel be sent from the United
States for the new headquarters under the command of Col. Harold Clark,
a man with "excellent qualifications and long experience." In general
this suggestion was satisfactory to Kenney, but it ran directly con-
trary to his usual policy of keeping in key posts men with experience
in the theater. Consequently he radioed the War Department that although
there was no objection to Colonel Clark, "it was necessary in the
interest of efficiency to continue in troop carrier work and particularly in command positions officers familiar with problems peculiar to this area." "For this reason and to avoid degradation of promotion problem," he added, "it is requested that officers with Wing Headquarters be not above grade of major." It was finally decided not to send the trained troop-carrier personnel. A wing headquarters was constituted on 26 February, however, and MacArthur was informed that personnel were to be drawn largely from the theater. 23

For the next three months, the troop carrier wing was chiefly an administrative problem. On 13 March 1943, the Headquarters and Headquarters Squadron of the 36th Troop Carrier Wing was activated "pursuant to General Orders No. 2, Headquarters, USAFFE ... and assigned to the Fifth Air Force effective March 1, 1943." Its initial strength was one officer and one enlisted man whose official duties were to keep a morning report. On 3 May it was directed to move from Brisbane to Port Moresby "less personnel and equipment." The wing then functioned without personnel until 29 May 1943 when eight officers were assigned to it under the command of Col. Paul H. Frentiss, former commander of the 374th Troop Carrier Group. Actually this new headquarters could hardly have increased the efficiency of operations for the next three months since the only troop carrier group assigned to it was the 374th, and Colonel Frentiss's entire staff, with one or two exceptions, was taken from that group. Thus the function of the wing became "merely to act as an added channel, in A-2, for operational orders from Fifth Air Force." 24
This might seem at first glance merely another example of building
an empire of headquarters personnel. Certainly so long as the 37th
was the only troop carrier group in New Guinea, there was little excuse
for a wing headquarters. But it will be recalled that Kenney had been
promised an additional group and a half by the end of the second quarter
of 1943. These, together with the 317th Group still under the Directorate
of Air Transport in Australia in May, made a total of three and a half
groups, a number which probably justified a wing organization. Further-
more Kenney envisaged rapidly increasing duties for his troop carrier
units. Of first importance was supplying Dobodura where Japanese air
attacks were creating "a constantly decreasing enthusiasm on the part
of the shipping people and the Navy about running supplies even as far
north as Oro Bay." Almost equally vital was the maintaining of more
than 6,000 troops in the New Guinea, even these activities, particularly
the support of the Wau force, Kenney believed, were little more than
preliminary to a main effort of troop carrier units which would later be
necessary in the planned Lee-Salamau operation.

Kenney's confidence in the potentialities of air transport were ap-
parently not shared by at least some of his colleagues in the ground
forces. In any case, it was not intended that the Australians at Wau
should remain dependent entirely upon supply by air. In December 1942
several Australian engineers had laid the ground work for a road from
Bull Dog to Wau. In the middle of February two companies of Royal
Australian Engineers undertook the task in earnest. Equipment was
flown in to the northern terminus at Wau and carried in by water to
the southern terminus. Mudslides, heavy rains, and the shortage of
native labor made progress slow, but by the end of July jeeps could
move along the road for 14 miles at each end, and a month later they
could traverse the entire route. 27

Every measure to insure an adequate flow of supplies to this jungle-
bound force was justified in view of the part it was to play in the
coming operations as one prong of the pincers closing on the Japanese
forces in the Salamaua area. In March 1943, Kanga Force, as the New
garrison was called, consisted principally of the Australian 17th
Brigade. Its functions were to infiltrate the enemy positions in the
Lubo area, to force the abandonment of these forward strong-points, and
to prevent the Japanese from withdrawing troops in sufficient strength
to oppose American jumps along the coast. 28

The first of the ambitious moves was to be carried out under the
general supervision of the Australian New Guinea Force. The principal
American unit involved was the 41st Infantry Division commanded by
Maj. Gen. H. H. Fuller. In February various elements of that division
arrived in the Buna-Gona area. By the middle of March, the 162d Combat
Team, recently flown in to Dobodura, replaced the 163d Regiment which
had participated in the Finspan Campaign. At the same time one bat-
talion moved along the coast toward the mouth of the Mambera River in
order to deny the use of that area to the Japanese. The 162d Regi-
ment had little more than reached this point when intelligence was
received which indicated that the enemy had withdrawn to a line north
of Morobe some 75 miles farther up the coast. Such a move on the part
of the Japanese was not only an indication of weakness, but it invited further Allied advance into the harbor at Morobe itself and to the air strip at Dona, a few miles to the south and suitable for emergency landings and for regular use by liaison planes. Accordingly the Mackenzie Force, consisting primarily of the 1st Battalion of the 163rd Regiment, was activated on 23 March and specifically directed to secure these points. By 6 April it had carried out a relatively simple conquest. It had begun its move by small boats on 21 March, landed at the mouth of the Waria River and at Dona, and on 7 April other elements had splashed ashore in Morobe harbor. Three days later Col. Mackenzie, the force commander, could report that his men were in control of the harbor, that it was preparing to maintain Dona air strip as an emergency landing field, and that patrols had found no signs of the enemy south of Salana, 10 miles northwest of Morobe harbor.

This important advance which brought American forces within 75 miles of Salamaua was accomplished against little or no enemy opposition. Thus direct cooperation from air units was unnecessary. Nevertheless in spite of little ground opposition to the Allied forces except in the Wau-Waba area, the continuation of Japanese activity at other points was sufficient indication that the enemy still intended to maintain himself in New Guinea. Allied Intelligence reports during March, April, and May constantly described the construction of airfields at Hollandia, Wewak, Wewak, and a number of other places, and the building of a network of roads centering at Hedan, together with what seemed to be a continual flow of shipping into Wewak. In addition Japanese submarines...
made frequent forays off the Australian coast, and the threat of enemy air attacks was ever present. In such circumstances, the functions of General Whitehead’s Advanced Poston and Colonel Smith’s First Air Task Force were many and varied. They included photo and armed reconnaissance, anti-submarine patrol, convoy, troop carrier, and bomber escort, together with the conventional tactical functions of destroying the enemy air force, isolating the forward areas, and destroying selected objectives on the battlefield itself.

During the months of March, April, and May, enemy air attacks against Allied bases, though by no means continuous, were frequent. On 9 March, Mau was hit by approximately 36 bombers and 21 fighters; little damage resulted. Two days later an equally large force bombarded Horseshoe Airdrome at Dobodura. Personnel were taken by surprise when the bombs started dropping. Two enlisted men were killed by flying shrapnel and three aircraft were destroyed on the ground. Four flights of the 49th Group joined another already on local patrol in a savage attack on the raiders. Lieutenant Hoge shot down two of the nine Zeros which were officially listed as destroyed. Lt. William F. Haring, Jr., shot down one enemy fighter, badly damaged another, and crashed head-on into a third. He succeeded in bailing out of the plane, and was later rescued from the sea by an Australian tug. Again on Oro Bay, 15 more bombers damaged waterfront installations and set a small fuel dump on fire during the night of the 14th. Three days later 13 bombers escorted by 32 fighters bombed Forlock Harbor at midday causing some damage. The most destructive raid of the month, however, occurred on the 23rd when approximately...
25 medium bombers and 10 to 15 dive bombers escorted by a large formation of fighters eg in a strafe at Cro Bay. The local fighter sector "picked up a large enemy plot and sounded the red alert at 1117."

Sixteen P-40's and 15 P-39's took off and, in the ensuing fight, destroyed six Zekes, five Zero's, and two Vals. One P-40 and pilot Lt. Cecil J. Dewees were lost, and enemy bombs crashed into a new wharf, sank two small ships, and killed numerous personnel.

Following the 25 March raid on Cro Bay, there was a lull in enemy activity over New Guinea. Japanese attention seemed to have been diverted to the east where aircraft were striking repeatedly at Allied bases in the Solomon-New Georgia area. Allied intelligence prophesied, however, that the Japanese would soon turn eastward toward New Guinea, and documented this assertion by figures indicating the presence of the largest air force ever assembled by the enemy in the Southwest Pacific Area.

The following was the estimated enemy air order of battle during the first week in April:

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* Totals on these dates.
The Allies, therefore, had reason to believe that the Japanese were planning a large-scale air offensive. The only question was whether its objective would be Guadalcanal or Allied bases in New Guinea since the enemy had frequently demonstrated great flexibility in the employment of his air units against Allied positions in the Solomons and New Guinea. This occasion proved to be no exception. On 7 April, a large force of enemy bombers and fighters hit Guadalcanal.

Four days later, "45 enemy dive bombers and fighters" were intercepted off Cro Bay by 50 P-40's and P-38's of the 49th Group. Led by Lt. E. A. Herris, who shot down two Zekes and a Val, and Capt. W. Wright who destroyed three Zekes, the American fighters were credited with 17 enemy planes. Meanwhile the bombers had scored two direct hits on a 2,000-ton Allied merchant vessel, and other hits on a corvette and a small supply ship.

On 12 April an even larger enemy force returned to New Guinea. This time Port Moresby was its objective. The 4th Fighter Sector plotted the formation as it approached the Port Moresby area. Three P-39's of the 30th Squadron, taking off when the red alert was sounded, found themselves playing hide-and-seek with some 45 Zekes and an even larger number of escorting fighters. Many of the enemy planes were flying at 30,000 feet and concealed as tiny specks to personnel below, some of whom were crouching in slit trenches. Meanwhile, fighter controllers had put all available aircraft of the 36th Fighter Group into the air, and its P-39's and P-40's were trying to reach "an advantageous altitude." At the same time, five P-39's from the 9th Squadron roared off a Dabobura strip to participate in the scramble. Although at a disadvantage because of inferior climbing characteristics, the P-39's were...
surprisingly successful. Fifteen enemy bombers and 9 or 10 fighters were destroyed with the loss of 5 American fighters.

The Japanese, however, scored heavily on ground targets in this, Fort Hare's 106th air raid of the war. Two damaged or destroyed the following aircraft: four A-20's "slightly damaged"; one Beaufighter burned and two "badly damaged"; one P-39 "badly damaged"; two B-25's "burned," one damaged beyond repair," two "badly damaged," and two "slightly damaged." and two C-47's "badly damaged" and two "slightly damaged." Bombs hit runways of "arms, Berry, and Schimmele drones," and set fire to a fuel dump at Kila. Australian and American A&R crews working at the dump were burned to death, and their screams were a nerve-shattering experience to those awaiting within earshot in rain-filled slit trenches. The damage to planes had been heavy in part because of inadequate revetments for parked planes. A study by their engineer at ADVN Headquarters indicated that damage would have been reduced by 50 per cent had proper side protection been available. The engineer's report was endorsed at Fifth Air Force Headquarters with a recommendation addressed to the Commanding General 1 AF that two "combination drag-line and clamshell gasoline driven tractors" and two B-6 bulldozers be furnished each engineer aviation battalion for revetment construction.

On 14 April, the last of this series of heavy attacks occurred when enemy aircraft hit Halsey Bay for the 34th time since its establishment as an Allied base. Thirty-six Sallies and 10 to 20 Vels escorted by some 20 fighters damaged one Allied merchant vessel so that it had to be beached and score: direct hits on two other ships. Fighters of
the Dobodura-based 9th squadron took to the air and together with
Australian fighters and antiaircraft gunners shot down at least 10
bombers and from three to five fighters. The Allied fighters were
lost. Exclusive of this last raid, the Japanese had carried out ap-
proximately 240 sorties against the principal Allied bases in New
Guinea and the Solomon's within a week, and had lost almost 150 aircraft.
These heavy losses, approximately 10 times those suffered by the Allies,
must have discouraged the Japanese command. Photo reconnaissance showed
that on 16 April there were still 340 aircraft, exclusive of medium
bombers probably concealed in dispersal areas at Vunakanau, on the
Rabaul airfield. But one month following the 14 April attack on
Milne Bay there were only light raids on New Guinea bases. In May
Allied intelligence recorded a decline in the number of enemy aircraft
based in the northeastern area from 611 on 7 April to 465 on 4 May and
cautiously hazarded the prophecy that this indicated a diminished threat
of aerial attacks in the theater.

For a time it seemed that the Japanese had indeed given up their at-
tacks on New Guinea. Fighter squadrons became almost bored in perform-
ing routine patrol duty, ground alert, and transport- and bomber-escort
missions. At Dobodura, the ingenious Lieutenant Peterson introduced
Bingo parties to the men of the 49th Group and rigged up a loudspeaker
system so that enlisted men could have "musical programs dish up with their
show." Farewell parties were held for the first large group of "49ers"
to be returned to the United States after a year of coast. Early in
May, 100 bags of Christmas cards and packages arrived just in time to
help enliven a program put on by the enlisted men to commemorate Mother's Day. Indeed, storms were more disturbing than Japanese raids to the almost peaceful routine during this period. Tropical winds and rain rotted tents, soakcd beds, and blew down trees. Only a partial solution was an order to raise all tents in the area at least three feet off the ground, which was constantly damp and crawling with insects.

At Morotai, too, there was a period of relative quiet in which the 35th Fighter Group celebrated "Over the Hump" week in honor of its first year of combat service in New Guinea.

Although "Over the Hump" week with its ball games and special shows provided a relatively peaceful interlude for the 35th Group flyers, for other fighter squadrons "business" began picking up early in May. The first indication of this occurred in the North-western Area on 2 May with a heavy air raid on Darwin by twenty-one medium bombers escorted by a large number of fighters. Thirty-two Spitfires intercepted and shot down from three to five fighters and probably one bomber. Little damage was done to Allied installations on the ground, but 13 Spitfires were lost.

Eleven days later, the suggestion of Allied Intelligence, that there was a "diminished threat of aerial warfare in the North-western theater," was proved wrong. A new series of attacks began on 13 May with harmless night raids "while a brilliant half-moon shined down over all the coast sites." On the following day, more than 30 bombers and 25 fighters hit Dobodura and destroyed a bitumen dump and a gasoline barge. The 49th Group put 43 P-43's and P-38's into the air and shot down 7 to 9
enemy bombers and 9 to 11 fighters. One P-38 was lost, and the pilot was last seen swimming about 20 miles off shore in shark-infested waters. The Japanese returned during the night of 13 May and again on the following night, but with little effect other than to interrupt a "swell stage show" being put on by men of the 41st Infantry Division. 41

Meanwhile, other enemy formations attacked Wau four times in a week employing particularly clever tactics. Sallys and Betty's generally protected by Zeke's or Huracanes swept in over the mountains at such low altitudes that Allied signal units had little chance to give warning; at the same time Japanese pilots sabotaged the efforts of Allied controllers by maintaining constant chatter on fighter radio frequencies. The heaviest raid occurred on 17 May when 25 or more Betty's destroyed the headquarters, signal office, and operations office of the 17th Australian Brigade. They also smashed a small board shack known as the "American Embassy," which housed all the radio equipment of the American Air Support party at Australian headquarters. The Japs in this case, however, were too late to do any real damage. Two hours before the raid, the Australians had moved out of Wau, and the Americans had shifted their radio equipment to a dugout. The enemy returned on the following day, and again three days later. In this last raid, "they sailed their own way." Twelve P-39's of the Koresby-based 80th Fighter Squadron had taken off to escort a flight of C-47's toward Wau, but the fighter controller immediately after the take-off switched their mission to a scramble over Salamaua. There they intercepted more than 15 Oscars, Zeke's, and Huracanes. In a brief series of dogfights, seven of the enemy fighters were shot down. No American planes were lost. 42
These attacks against Guadalcanal were no longer merely isolated raids. They were almost daily occurrences, and when considered together with other attacks against the Morobe, Kambera, Douglas Harbor, and Salamaua-Bula areas, it seemed clear that the Japanese were beginning to render a measure of direct support to their ground troops. Furthermore, the enemy had apparently developed the bases in northern New Guinea, particularly at Gasmata, to such a point that they were now in regular use. Supplies were still flowing from New Britain and other northern islands into Hollandia, Hansa Bay, and Vunakanau; roads and airfields were still being built; and Sally's, Betty's, and Lily's were using these fields in their increasingly frequent attacks on Allied bases and on troops in the forward areas.

While Allied fighters were engaged in intercepting the Japanese attacks (in addition to routing escort and petrol activities), Allied bombers during March, April, and May were carrying out a variety of missions. Their principal functions, of course, were to strike at enemy strategic bases, to isolate the battlefield by intercepting convoys, and to cooperate with Allied ground forces in the forward areas. Nevertheless other types of operations frequently took priority over these. The great majority of heavy-bomber missions, for example, were the long, lonely reconnaissance flights carried out by B-17's, B-24's, and the photo B-4's or F-5's. One squadron of B-24's based in Darwin brought back important information as to enemy activities in the Netherlands East Indies. The heavies from Port Moresby frequently "topped-off" at Dobodura, patrolled the usual sea lanes in the
Bismarck Sea area; Moreton-based F-4's of the 8th Photo Squadron continued to photograph New Guinea as far to the northwest as Ueak as well as most of New Britain, including Rabaul; and in May the longer-ranged F-5's began to reach Kavieng. B-25's performed more than their share of patrol and escort missions. Indeed with a few notable exceptions, the 13th, 71st, and Bomberdment Squadrons (11) were engaged entirely in short reconnaissance missions, submarine patrol, and convoy escort. This meant that the majority of the combat missions were carried out by the 90th Squadron equipped with B-25G's by the 38th with its A-20's, and by B-17's and B-24's not assigned to reconnaissance. In addition, General Kenney could depend upon the reliable RAAF A-20, Beaufighter, and Beaufort Squadrons.

It is remarkable in the light of the relative weakness of its air units that the Fifth Air Force was able to do any more than hold its own during this period. It succeeded, however, in keeping the enemy off balance by concentrating its offensive power on a few vital enemy installations. The great majority of heavy-bombardment attacks were carried out against Rabaul, Kavieng, and Ueak. The upper Solomons were left to RAAF Catalinas making almost nightly visitations and to the flyers from the South Pacific. However, B-24's and B-17's, exclusive of numerous attacks by single planes on armed reconnaissance missions, were over Rabaul at least 5 nights in March, 2 in April, and 10 in May. These missions, chiefly against the airfields, consisted of approximately 96 B-17 and 35 B-24 sorties usually carried out in formations of from four to seven aircraft. The heaviest attack on this
vital Jap base occurred during the night of 22-23 March when all squadrons of the 43d Group sent out 37 B-17's against Wusakama, Lakaunai, and Rarokpo. Incendiaries and frags were scattered "all over the land." Wire-wrapped demolition bombs, 500-lb. bombs with 12-hour delayed-action fuzes, and others with advanced fuzes set to explode 300 feet above the ground were aimed at runways, shops, and dispersal areas. One pilot even carried out a little experiment by dropping 2,000-lb. bombs into Rabotana crater. Unfortunately, they failed to explode. Anti-aircraft fire was heavy, but no B-17's were lost, and although most bombs fell in the target area, poor visibility prevented an exact assessment of damage.

Few if any of the attacks against Rabotana were carried out against shipping, perhaps because the Japanese were now making greater use of the more distant harbor at Kavieng. Certainly the most devastating anti-convoys blow of April and May was directed against one which had been tracked to Kavieng. In a period of four days beginning on 1 April, 21 B-17's and nine B-24's harassed the ships at anchor in Kavieng harbor. The B-24's dropped 500-lb. bombs from 5,000 feet and observed large explosions. Some of the B-17's also attacked from medium altitude, but Fortresses skin bombing from 75 to 250 feet caused the greatest damage. The official reports declared that a 6,000-ton vessel was "left settling," a light cruiser "sank bow first," a heavy cruiser "blew up and sank," while two to four destroyers were severely damaged.

Allied air units had little real success in intercepting Japanese convoys actually on the move. They did maintain their blockade of the
Hun Gulf area, but the shipping continually moving into Wewak harbor and into Hansa Bay was out of range of any but heavy units. Only four convoys, two heading for Finschhafen, one in the Madang area, and the other off Arawe in New Britain, were located within range of light and medium units from March through May. B-26's as well as heavy bombers were sent out but were unsuccessful because of particularly unfavorable weather conditions.

The heavies did have some success, however, in attacks on enemy vessels which had already arrived at their destination. For example, 38 B-17 and 26 B-24 sorties were carried out against shipping and harbor installations at Wewak from March through May, not including attacks by single bombers. The official reports list the following results after bombing attacks: on 13 March a 7,000- to 8,000-ton vessel exploded and burst into flames and a tanker was believed sunk; a week later a merchant vessel was badly damaged; on 10 April a 1,000-ton vessel was "destroyed"; five days later an 8,000-ton cargo ship was "sunk," a gun boat was "beached," and an 8,000-ton vessel was "left listing" and another "possibly sunk"; on 26 April a 6,000-tonner was "left blazing fiercely," and on 4 May 4 B-24's left a medium-sized merchant vessel "listing." One of the heaviest attacks of the three-month period was carried out on a convoy unloading in Hansa Bay from 12 to 14 April. Bombs dropped by six B-24's scored four hits, according to the 320th Squadron's report; and resulted in a 10,000-ton vessel "burning from stem to stern," and an 8,000-tonner catching "on fire amidships," according to the official reports, six B-17's had
little success in a follow-up att'c., but one of six B-17's scored
three dip-bombing hits during the following night which left one
vessel "sinking." 49

Airfields and supply dumps at Wewak, Liapang, and Gusmat were
also important objectives. Wewak's airfields, Degue, Boram, and Fug, were hit by heavy bombers usually as alternatives when shipping could
not be found. Medium bombers, however, could reach Kedona, and Beaufighters and B-25's, occasionally escorted by B-38's, carried out
several vicious striking assaults on that area. In one case, on 9 May,
B-25's sank two small merchant vessels. Meanwhile, Allied Intel-
ligence was devoting considerable attention to enemy activity in
Southern New Britain, particularly Gusmat and Cape Gloucester. These
points, only rarely attacked in previous months but now within less
than 250 miles of the Dobodura-based First Air Task Force, were proba-
bly attacked more than any other objective during May. Allied bombers
were over Gusmat on at least 15 different days during that month and
over Cape Gloucester on three days. B-25's carried out at least 62
sorties, Beaufighters 18, A-20's 17, Beauforts 15, B-17's 7, and B-24's
15.

The attacks of heavy and medium bombers, sporadic as they were in
this three-month period, did have a harassing effect on enemy activities.
In a small way they were serving a conventional tactical purpose of
isolating the battlefield. During this same period, cooperation with
the ground forces was performed principally by A-20's, B-25's, and
Beaufighters of the First Air Task Force, by Moreby-based RAF A-20's,
and by Beauforts from Milne Bay. The objectives of these missions were concentrated primarily within a semicircle having a radius of approximately 25 miles and a center at Salamaua. After the Bismarck Sea action in March, Allied aircraft hit points in this area in flights of more than three planes on 16 days in March, on 16 days in April, and on 13 days in May. These attacks included at least 125 sorties by the 89th Squadron's A-20's, 85 by RAAF A-20's, 40 by Beaufighters, 65 by B-25's, 12 by Beauforts, and 6 by B-17's. Favorite targets were the airfields at Lee and near-by Kalahng, town and shore positions at both Lee and Salamaua, and the tracks connecting these towns with forward areas in the vicinity of Milne.

The Japanese, holding strong positions on the ridges which controlled the area, faced the Australians at points along the Bitoi River in the Guadalcanal-Mubo area. But other Australians had filtered through these enemy positions and were heading toward Salamaua. On 29 April, a change in ground force organization took place with the 3d Australian Division assuming control in place of the commander of the Xana Force. The latter organization reverted "to its permanent status of 17th Australian Infantry Brigade." At the same time the Allies increased their activities in the Salamaua area. Infiltrating patrols reached Komietum 10 miles to the south of the town, and on 5 May actually entered the village of Bobdabi no more than five miles from Salamaua. Communication was still the greatest handicapping factor. Food and many supplies had to be dropped by aircraft. Other types of supplies, such as artillery shells, were brought in by native carriers. This was
heartbreaking labor since it took three days for a native to bring two rounds from Leu. At this time, the Australians had only two 3.8-inch mountain guns, and these were of limited use in jungle country where even mortars frequently could not be used against targets 50 yards distant.

Each of the work normally left to artillery, therefore, had to be carried out by aircraft. For this reason the closest liaison was maintained between the air forces and the Australians. Headquarters for the air support party was near that of the 17th Australian Brigade, and the air support officer ate at the brigade commander's mess where plans for future operations were discussed. With the establishment of the 5th Division Headquarters at Bulolo in April, requests for air attacks had to be approved there. Otherwise the procedure was the same as before. Requests went to ADVCN at Port Moresby which either sent an attack mission out itself or relayed the request to the First Air Task Force. Targets were located sometimes by smoke shells lobbed into the desired target area and at other times by a grid system using identical oblique aerial photographs in the possession of both ground troops and air units.

By the end of May, then, the Japanese were feeling growing pressure from both Allied air and land forces. American troops of the 162d Regiment were securely ensconced on the coast at Koriobe. Australian patrols were gradually eliminating Japanese pockets of resistance between Kuru and Salamaua. The Allied Air Forces were awaiting the arrival of additional aircraft before mounting a real offensive. In the meantime, however, Allied fighters were beating back enemy air attacks;
reconnaissance planes were maintaining a constant alert against enemy attempts to strengthen the Ike garrison, and bomber units were keeping up at least token assaults on important enemy supply points.

The results of these Allied air attacks are somewhat difficult to evaluate. The official reports very frequently state that results were not observed. This was particularly true of attacks at night against distant bases and of bombing and strafing missions in cooperation with ground forces. There are indeed some indications that strafing missions were less advantageous to the Allied cause. In several instances, for example, missions carried out by B-25's were directed against villages "to drive away natives siding Japs." The results of these attacks were the destruction of numerous villages. If the natives actually were siding the Japanese, such missions were no doubt justified. However, the reports of a patrol sent out in April by the 162d Regiment indicated that in the Solomon area the native hatred for the Japanese "bastards" was being tempered by their greater hatred for Allied aircraft which fired their villages. The same patrol in another case reported: "Our own air force bombed an island just northeast of Fais-Awa 13 April. Needless to say the island hasn't got a damn thing on it." 54 On the other hand, there is evidence that many of the air attacks were definitely helpful. Those carried out against shipping, particularly by ship bombing, at Kavieng, Newuk, and Buna Bay were successful, and the Air Support party at "au asserted that "A-20's and Beauforts became practically airborne artillery and did the job with very nearly the same amount of accuracy." 55
By the end of May the air forces were in a position to contribute more to offensive operations. Their potentialities had been increased by the development of Dobodura as a base ranking with Port Moresby and Milne Bay. The organization of the First Air Task Force gave promise of a flexibility of air action in northern New Guinea hitherto impossible. Moreover, aircraft were beginning to reach Australia in larger numbers. In April the following aircraft arrived prior to the 24th of the month: 25 B-24's, 13 B-25's, 6 P-70's, and 6 C-47's. During the same period, 2 P-38's, 2 P-40's, and 1 P-400 were lost in combat; 1 A-20, 1 B-25, 1 B-17, and 7 B-34's were missing; 3 B-25's were destroyed on the ground; and 21 fighters, 11 bombers, and 2 transports were lost in accidents. In May the status report showed that 94 B-25's, 31 B-24's, 16 P-39's, and 17 C-47's arrived to offset the following losses: 1 B-25, 5 B-17's, and 3 B-24's missing in action; and 25 fighters, 9 bombers, and 2 transports lost from accidents. Thus, although defensive fighter strength had received little or no increase since the first of the year, it was clear that the offensive power of task force and bomber command would be far greater in June than in previous months.
Chapter VI
PROBLEMS OF NEW AND EASTERN, MAY-SEPTEMBER

In the three months following the Bismarck Sea action the strength of the Fifth Air Force had declined to such an extent that its scale of effort was probably less than it had been during the fall of 1942. In such circumstances, General MacArthur and General Kenney were unable to plan future operations with confidence. True the Combined Chiefs of Staff continued to emphasize that the defeat of the Axis in Europe took priority over the campaigns against Japan. At the same time, however, they committed forces of the United States, in conjunction with those of other Pacific powers, to maintain unremitting pressure against the Japanese. The over-all strategic concept with regard to the Pacific was clearly expressed in a memorandum of 14 May by the Joint Chiefs of Staff as follows: "Upon defeat of the Axis in Europe, in cooperation with other Pacific Powers, and, if possible with Russia, to direct the full resources of the United States and Great Britain to force the unconditional surrender of Japan. If, however, conditions develop which indicate that the war as a whole can be brought more quickly to a successful conclusion by the earlier mounting of a major offensive against Japan, the strategical concept set forth herein may be reversed." 1

In spite of the second place held by the Pacific phase of the war in over-all planning, tremendous efforts on the part of the United Nations were essential to carry out that part of the strategic concept.

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These efforts were to include retaining China as a base for operations against Japan, attacking Japanese lines of communication, increasing the pressure upon enemy military forces in order to prevent their consolidation, and securing positions for full-scale operations to be undertaken later. Specifically a number of operations were projected for 1943 and 1944. In the Far Eastern theater there were to be air operations in and from China and a ground campaign in Burma. In the Pacific there were to be operations in the Solomons and Bismarck Archipelago in order to maintain the initiative and to continue the defense of Australia; operations in New Guinea not only to serve the same purposes as the Solomons and Bismarck campaigns but to facilitate opening a line of communications to the Celebes Sea; a push into the Netherlands Indies limited to seizure of islands necessary for the capture of New Guinea; and operations in the Marshalls in order to shorten communications to the Southwest Pacific and to the Celebes Sea. These were envisaged as limited offensives, carried out primarily by naval forces. Accordingly the United States naval forces in the Pacific were to be increased to a maximum consistent with minimum requirements in the Atlantic and with due regard to the main effort in Europe. Air and ground forces provided were to facilitate joint action and to make possible optimum use of the United States naval forces. 2

Specifically the operations contemplated in May by the Combined Chiefs for the South and Southwest Pacific forces remained much the same as those outlined in the Milken Plan as modified by a JCS directive of 28 March 1943. These were to establish airfields on Kievina and
Woodlark Islands, to seize the Ie-Sa-mana-Finschhafen-Hadong area, to occupy western New Britain, and to continue operations in the Solomons, with Bougainville as a prime objective. By the middle of May, General MacArthur had set 15 June as the target date for commencing operations whose ultimate objective was the capture of Rabaul. The initial landings, however, were to be on Kiriwina and Woodlark Islands. The Joint Planners assumed that MacArthur, charged with overall strategic direction of the campaign, would have established positions in western New Britain and southern Bougainville by 1 December 1943, and that it would take at least another two months before he would be able to launch his attack against the Rabaul area itself and by 1 April 1944 at the earliest before the operation could be completed. 3

The Joint Planners believed that sufficient forces would be available in the Pacific by the time scheduled for the initiation of the various phases of the campaign. They estimated that 14 "offensive divisions" and 2,106 combat aircraft would be in the South and Southwest Pacific by 1 July 1943. These, together with the naval forces in the area, they considered adequate for the initial moves. MacArthur estimated, however, that he would need seven infantry divisions, of which five were to be committed for the reduction of Kavieng and Rabaul alone. The Joint Planners held, on the other hand, that "with effective air neutralization," this number could be reduced to a total of five infantry divisions, and that these could be provided by 1 January 1944. According to their calculations too, the 2,577 combat aircraft allocated to the RAAF, the NZAF, and the Army and Navy in the South and

SECURITY INFORMATION
the Southwest Pacific areas would be sufficient at this time for the campaigns on the Bismarck Archipelago. 4

In addition to the campaigns to be carried out under the direction of General MacArthur, decisions made at the Trident Conference in Washington during May authorized operations in the Gilbert and Marshall islands. By 15 June, the Joint Chiefs of Staff had concluded that naval strength in the Pacific made such operations feasible. Their tentative plans involved the employment of the second Marine Division and the major part of the South Pacific naval forces together with the first Marine Division from the Southwest Pacific. These units were to launch their attack in November from bases either at Pearl Harbor or in the South Pacific.

Five days after learning of these tentative plans, General MacArthur radioed General Marshall, strongly expressing his disapproval. He pointed out that the objective of both South and Southwest Pacific operations was the capture of Rabaul, and that preliminary operations were designed "to provide a base of departure for converging attack and adequate air support and flank protection" for obtaining this objective. He had scheduled the first Marine Division, his only amphibious organization, to make the attack on New Britain, and he believed that if this unit were transferred, the action would be precluded. He admitted that a campaign in the Marshalls might be a sufficient diversion to assist the operation planned for his own forces, but he argued that the troops for the diversionary effort should be brought from the United States rather than subtracted from the force available for the main attack. 6
Actually, General MacArthur did not favor the movement into the mandated islands. He argued that "from a broad strategic viewpoint" the best plan for an offensive in the Pacific was one based on Australia and aimed at Mindanao by way of New Guinea. He favored this course because of his belief both that it would more quickly cut the enemy lines of communication with the conquered territory to the south and that it would be the only course which could assure the support of land-based air power. He saw the movement through the Mandates, on the other hand, as a series of amphibious attacks supported by American carrier-based planes against objectives defended by Japanese land-based aircraft. Such assaults, he asserted, would be hazardous and would result in the capture of no "strategic objective" until Mindanao was reached. 7

In this exchange of views, neither MacArthur nor G-2D had mentioned the function of Southwest Pacific air units in connection with the proposed Marshall Island offensive. On 22 June, however, Assistant Chief of Air Staff, Plans informed MacArthur's headquarters that the plan involved the use of a heavy and a medium bomber group in addition to the naval air forces reported available. MacArthur was reminded of the effect that Central Pacific operations would have in diverting enemy air strength, and was requested to express his views as to the effect on air operations in the South and Southwest Pacific if the two groups were withdrawn from either of these theaters. 8

MacArthur's reply was clear and explicit, and concurred in by General Harmon of the South Pacific. The campaign against Rabaul
should be the main effort; troops and equipment for operations under consideration in Washington should be drawn from rear areas; the nature of operations in the South and Southwest Pacific demanded more than "air superiority" requiring in fact "air supremacy"; and while a heavy and medium bombardment group might not represent appreciable air strength in other theaters, in the Southwest Pacific it represented one-third of the heavy bombardment and one-half of existing or one-third the projected strength in mediums. The withdrawal of the two groups would cause a collapse of the projected offensives.  

It was indeed true that offensive moves along the coast of New Guinea had been delayed by the lack of sufficient air strength to perform all the tasks allotted to the Fifth Air Force. By May an early improvement in the situation was expected, since two of the additional units allotted to the Southwest Pacific by the Joint Chiefs of Staff, the 345th Bombardment Group (H) and the 390th Bombardment Group (R), were already on the way, and other units were scheduled for early shipment. Operations, Commitments, and Requirements had recommended to CFD in April that two night fighter squadrons be shipped in August and October and one and one-half troop carrier groups in June plus another in the third quarter, and that three fighter groups be added in May, July, and October, the second of these to be activated in the theater. The JCS had also promised General Kenney two light bombardment groups, but C&ER informed CFD that none would be available in 1943.  

Shortly after this memo was circulated in the War Department, Kenney listed for CFD the units upon which he based his future plans.
These corresponded in general with the recommendations of GG&ER. The principal differences concerned the fighter reinforcements. GG&ER listed a P-47 group (the 348th) for May shipment, a P-40N group (the 475th) to be activated in July, and a P-39 group to be committed in October. Kenney was planning on a group of P-47's to be shipped in May, another in June, and a P-39 group to leave the United States in August. He emphasized the need for P-39's as their range and two engines, so comforting on long, overwater flights, made that type particularly suitable to the Southwest Pacific. He asserted on the other hand that the P-47, probably a good fighter "in spite of some of the adverse comments from England," did not have a speedy enough rate of climb to intercept a Zero, with less than a half-hour's warning. 11

Confusion continued for a time as to the type of aircraft to be provided with the first two reinforcing fighter groups. Kenney was authorized early in May to activate a fighter group to be equipped by the third quarter with P-40N aircraft. This disturbed Kenney as he had expected a P-47 group. He pointed out, in a message of 6 May, that the Japanese had some 250 fighters and 150 bombers within range of Port Moresby, and that, with less than 200 fighters in the combat squadrons, his fighter situation was critical. He emphasized, furthermore, that the success of planned operations depended on the arrival of new and efficient air units. General Marshall replied on the same day that a P-47 group had been released following an engine adjustment, and on the following day GG&ER radioed additional details. There were still certain operational difficulties, such as piston and ignition failures, potential
fire hazards, and radio noises, but P-47 fighters for the 348th Group
were to be made completely operational and ready for shipment by 12 June.
Flight and ground echelons were to depart as originally scheduled early
in May. In addition, Kenney was authorized to activate the 475th Fighter
Group (EE) in the theater, and was assured that P-38's would be available
for this group in June. 12

These assurances did not mean that the two fighter groups could be
used in combat by the dates indicated. Kenney wrote to General Arnold
late in June that "the P-38's are expected to start arriving any minute
now and I think I will meet the boat with a band to welcome them." By
3 July 79 P-38's and 59 P-47's, and a month later 36 additional P-38's
and 56 more P-47's, had arrived. The personnel of the 348th Group
reached Australia on 14 June, and waited in Brisbane a month for their
aircraft. A month later, the first P-47's landed on a Port Moresby
field, and within 10 days three squadrons with 86 aircraft led by Lt.
Col. Neal E. Kearby, group commander, had made the 1,200-mile flight
from Brisbane. Only two were damaged en route. For a time the 348th
Group was to remain at Port Moresby, where aircraft warning units were
giving "almost an hour's warning" of enemy attacks. As Kenney said:
"No matter what objections there are to the P-47, it has eight guns and
is faster than the Zero at any altitude so I will use it and gladly take
all I can get." 13

The 475th Group, the first all-P-38 group to see action in the
Southwest Pacific, was not ready for combat until the middle of August.
It had been activated by the Fifth Air Force on 14 May, but problems of
personnel and equipment caused delay. On 17 June, the first of a contingent from New Guinea, "shivering in the winter chill of Australia," reported to Amberly Field as cadre personnel for the new organization. Within three weeks "fillers" had arrived from the United States, as well as additional veterans from the forward areas. "Inevitable red tape" clogged the supply channels, but by the end of July, it was announced that the group, commanded by Lt. Col. George W. Prentice, former 39th Squadron commander, would move to Dobodura. Adequate supplies were supposed at the camp site, but an advance detail cascaded back that little in the way of screening, burlap, cement, lumber, and piping was there. Meanwhile, P-38's were arriving from the Eagle Farm assembly line at Brisbane, and ground crews were readying them for combat, a routine which was upset by the transfer of 33 of the planes to V Fighter Command. Movement orders were confusing during the next few weeks. The ground echelon reached Dobodura by water on 14 August. But the flying and 433d echelons of the 431st Squadron were held at Port Moresby, and after a number of P-33's of the 433d Squadron had flown a combat mission from Dobodura on 15 August, that unit too was transferred back to Moresby. Three days later, however, it again joined the First Air Task Force at Dobodura.

Kenney expected in May that he would receive another P-38 group in the fall. As early as 29 June, however, he was informed that the 58th Fighter Group with P-47's was to be substituted for the P-38-equipped 55th Group scheduled to arrive in October. Nevertheless, a week later Kenney urgently requested the latter type saying that...
"the P-38 is the only fighter capable of offensive action or useful for convoy of troop carrier or day bombardment operations in this theater." At this time, however, his request was refused on the ground that P-38's were being diverted for modification to the P-5 photo plane, a type in great demand in "overseas theaters." Kenney repeated his plea on 31 August asking for twin-engine fighters not only to equip the next group allocated to his air force but to re-equip two squadrons of the 49th group. Again his request was refused, this time because of difficulties and delays in production which would not permit any change in the "presently planned flow to your theater." 15

In spite of Kenney's inability to obtain the most desirable type of plane, his offensive fighter strength was to be more than doubled by the fall of 1943. By that time, too, bombardment strength was to be substantially increased. The 350th Group, based in the Northern Territory was to take over heavy-bomber operations against enemy bases in the Netherlands East Indies by the middle of July. The 345th, a medium group, would also be flying combat missions from Port Moresby by that time, and General Arnold had informed Kenney in May that sufficient B-25's to bring the 38th Group up to strength were en route.

Two squadrons of the latter group, the newly activated 921st and 922d, were at that time lacking both personnel and equipment, and not until the fall were aircraft assigned. In the meantime their personnel were engaged during the summer either in training or in flying missions while attached to other squadrons. 16

There was no question as to the need for B-25's in the Southwest Pacific. There was, however, some discussion as to the type of that
versatile bomber most needed. Kenney had decided that approximately
70 per cent were to be strafers, modified in his own air depot, and
in June he was debating the value of the new B-25G equipped with a
75-mm. gun in the nose. Since it had not been tested in the Southwest
Pacific, he tentatively decided to try several of them in the new
222d squadron of the 38th Group. OSS had planned to send 63 of the
planes to Kenney, more than enough for one squadron; so they suggested
that he accept that number, and modify the planes if unsatisfactory
for New Guinea operations. 16

During this same period, another decision as to the type of B-25
for future delivery had to be made. In July, the B-25H and B-25J were
projected for early dispatch to the theaters, and it was planned to
exchange these new models for the O's and D's already in combat.
Kenney agreed only in part with this suggestion. He had no desire to
substitute new models for those already proved satisfactory, but he was
willing to accept them as normal replacements, the B-25H for his strafers
and the J for his medium altitude bombers. The armament of the B-25H,
according to an early announcement, was to include the 75-mm. gun and
four .50-cal. machine guns in the nose, four fixed .50's in blisters,
together with an upper turret, two flexible waist guns, and twin flexi-
bile tail guns. By September, however, the design was changed. Two
blister guns on the left side of the fuselage were eliminated to make
room for a cabin heater, and Kenney was informed that provisions for
a co-pilot had been removed. 17

General Kenney disapproved of both of these changes. He informed
General Arnold that his strafing planes, which rarely reached 1,000 feet
did not require a cabin heater and did require the other two machine
guns. He was even more emphatic about the lack of provision for a
copilot, pointing out that in an attack while the pilot flew the
planes and fired the guns, the copilot was necessary to open and
close the bombbay doors, release the bombs, and operate the cameras.
Moreover the safety factor too, he argued, demanded the extra pilot.
Flying at too high an altitude, the pilot could easily be killed by a stray
bullet. If a copilot were at his controls, he could immediately take
over. Otherwise the plane would be lost, and the crew killed. 18

The problem of allocations was if anything more difficult with
respect to light-bomber reinforcements. This question had been under
discussion since General Kenney's visit to the United States, shortly
after the Bismarck Sea action in March. He continued to favor more
A-20's, but a number of factors prevented his receiving any. Pro-
duction had not reached the numbers anticipated, and the demands of
other theaters, particularly "the necessity of having all A-20 air-
craft destined for Russia under Lend-Lease out of the country by June
30th," delayed deliveries. 19 With certain definite reservations
General MacArthur approved War Department suggestions that would main-
tain the 3d Group with modified B-25's until A-20's became available,
that would dispatch 1 fighter-bomber group equipped with P-40N's in
September, and that would fill his fourth quarter allocation with an
A-20 group in January 1944. He urged, however, that the P-40 group
arrive in July, that he receive an allotment of 80 additional B-25's,
and that the A-20 group scheduled for January delivery be replaced by
a B-25 group in October. Within a week, MacArthur, probably inspired by Kenney, repeated these requests, saying that present plans for the New Guinea campaign called for the availability of one light bomber group by July, another in the third quarter, and a third in the fourth quarter. The War Department modified each of these suggestions. In July Kenney was assured that the 317th Bombardment Group (D), equipped with P-40's, would depart for the Southwest Pacific in September, and that an A-20 group, the 409th, would depart in December.

These allocations of new units together with the prospect of the 22d Bombardment Group's return to duty meant that the offensive strength of the bomber units as well as the fighter units was to be doubled before the end of the year. Plans for additional troop carrier units were even more promising. JCS allocations amounted to an additional two and one-half groups. The first of these units to arrive was the 376th. The air echelons of the four squadrons landed on Port Moresby dromes during the first week in July, apparently much to the surprise of local personnel since little or nothing had been done to prepare for their arrival. But the new flyers were soon attached to veteran troop carrier units for orientation, and within a month the group had moved to Dobodura to operate with the First Air Task Force. At about the same time, the 65th and 67th Troop Carrier Squadrons reached New Guinea, but the headquarters together with the other two squadrons of the 403d Group went to the South Pacific. Thus only one more group was scheduled for the Fifth Air Force during 1942, and Kenney was informed late in July that the 433d with 52 C-47's would depart within...
a month. By September, the 54th Troop Carrier Wing was responsible for both operations and administration of 10 squadrons stationed at Fort Moresby, while the 375th Group, although assigned to the wing for administrative control, was operating with the First Air Task Force.

The arrival of these units, fighter, bomber, and troop carrier, was a decisive factor in the scheduling of operations for the summer and fall of 1942. As Kenney wrote on 23 June: "If any more delays occur in the arrivals of aircraft or personnel out here, we may as well start our planning all over again, as timing will be all wrong and job reactions and movements in the meantime will completely change the picture." On paper, the virtual doubling of the combat units in the Fifth Air Force seemed to promise so much as could be expected. But even the actual arrival of units allocated by the Joint Chiefs of Staff did not settle a continuously bothersome problem of attrition and replacement in both personnel and crews.

In trying to satisfy the frequent requests of General Kenney for allowance of higher rates of attrition and a larger number of reserve aircraft, the War Department had the thankless job of trying to balance the needs of many different theaters. At this time, many air units in all combat areas were still operating at reduced T/O strength in both aircraft and crews. The general policy as expressed on 6 June was to bring these units to full T/O strength only after airplanes and combat crews were available "in suitable numbers to man and sustain all units of the current Army Air Forces program at reduced T/O strength." For
active theaters, it was planned to provide replacement personnel up to 15 per cent a month of reduced T/C strength. This policy depended to some extent, however, upon priorities, and by August 1943, the United Kingdom held top priority, particularly in heavy bombardment personnel and aircraft, and the Fifth and the Twelfth Air Forces followed in that order. So far as the specific schedule for the Fifth Air Force was concerned, CGA informed General Kenney on 7 June of the following objectives for combat aircraft: two heavy bomb groups to have unit strength of 49, a third to have a unit strength of 75, and all to have a 50 per cent reserve; medium, light, and fighter bombardment groups to have a unit strength of 37 and a 50 per cent reserve; fighter groups to have a unit strength of 75 with a 50 per cent reserve; night fighter squadrons, a unit strength of 12 with a 50 per cent reserve; and troop carrier groups, 35 plus a 10 per cent reserve.

The attempt to build up the heavy bomber groups to their allotted strength proved to be a particularly frustrating one. On 7 May General Arnold signed a message to Kenney which announced that War Department policy permitted a total of 197 heavy bombers in the Southwest Pacific, noted that at the time there was a shortage of 55, and promised that "this deficit will be made up not later than July 1." During May and June, 41 B-24's arrived, and 5 were lost. On 9 July another radio message signed by General Arnold stated that the 65 B-24's being prepared for ferrying would bring the heavy bomber strength of the Fifth Air Force to 197 by approximately 15 August.

Delay in dispatching reinforcements introduced complications. Kenney pointed out that by 15 August a new situation would exist.
first place it would be necessary to anticipate two months' attrition
prior to the arrival of the new planes; this would amount to 26 B-24's.

Secondly, he argued that in order to replace losses as they occurred,
13 additional aircraft for September attrition should be provided. And
finally by September the B-17's remaining in the theater suitable for
combat would be fewer than 12, less than enough for one squadron, and
therefore should be replaced by B-24's. On 14 July a new message with
General Arnold's signature gave assurance that sufficient aircraft would
be "in pipeline" to maintain an actual strength of 197 heavy bombers on
head with every consideration given to anticipated losses. But by
1 August, when this goal was to have been reached, the date had been
pushed forward to 15 September. 23

General Kenney had an equally difficult problem in bringing his
medium and light bombardment units up to strength. On 23 July, for
example, he claimed a shortage of 115 medium bombers. On 9 August, CGCR
informed him that his authorized strength was 273 B-25's and D's and
42 B-25G's, that the shipment of A-20's had been delayed by engine trouble,
and that no more than two squadrons of the 3d Group could be equipped
with B-25's and these without a 50 per cent reserve. Five days later
Kenney replied that his total requirement, calculated on the basis of
four groups of 57 planes a group and a 50 per cent reserve, was 342 and
that he had only 213 on hand. CGCR, in turn, pointed out that previous
figures had not included the number of A-20's either in the theater or
allocated, and that specifically the medium- and light-bomber figures
included 273 B-25's on hand, 86 on route, 3 preparing for early departure.
and 22 on order for September, together with 19 A-20's on hand, 3 on route, 51 preparing for departure, and 39 more on order for September. This totaled 440 aircraft, and according to CCI should "more than meet your requirement of 342." 26

The assumption brought a quick rejoinder from General Kenney. He pointed out that, based on commitments made by Headquarters AAF, the Fifth Air Force had obligated itself to tactical action already in progress and which had to continue. He asserted that an approximate average of 30 days occurred between the departure of a plane from San Francisco and "its effective use in the combat zone," and gave as an example several A-20C's which had left San Francisco in May, and which on 27 August were "still in depots awaiting bomb shackles to render them operational." At this time, the Fifth Air Force actually had on hand 281 medium and light bombers, but when those under repair or in depots for modification were deducted there remained only 69 B-25's, 6 A-20's, and 9 B-26's. Some agreement was finally reached by 3 September when Kenney was assured that the strength of 342 aircraft could be maintained, and that the authorized TEB plus a 50 per cent reserve would be delivered together with attrition up to 20 per cent if necessary. 27

A detail of this radio exchange well illustrates the misunderstandings which could develop when interested headquarters were 10,000 miles apart. In his message of 27 August, General Kenney stated that he was not considering the A-20A's and A-20C's in calculating his authorized strength. Two days later, one sentence in a long reply signed by General Arnold read: "No reason is apparent why the A-20A's should not
be considered against commitments." Kenney's rejoinder to this, also
long and detailed, concluded with the sentence: "For your information,
it will be necessary to deliver all A-20A's and G's to the RAAF upon
arrival of A-20G's..." This brought the following comment from the
Commanding General, IAF: "For your information A-20C aircraft have been
charged against meeting strength of the 3rd Light Bombardment Group and
A-20G's are not available to replace those to be transferred.

In all cases of bombardment, therefore, Kenney had been unsuccessful
in obtaining authorized strength. In this respect, the V Fighter Command
was somewhat better equipped than the Bomber Command, at least so far as
numbers were concerned. For five weeks, Brig. Gen. Paul R. Hartsmith,
the fighter Commander, had in the theater 595 aircraft at the end of
July and 593 at the end of August. On paper, therefore, this amounted to
the allotted unit strength plus 50 per cent reserve. These fighters
however, included approximately 70 P-38's, 30 P-400's, and 118 P-40's,
more than half of which were in the depots for overhaul, and of which few
could be depended upon for combat. On 4 July John H. Gibson, a technical
representative of Bell Aircraft, reported to General Kenney that the
P-38's and P-400's averaged approximately 200 hours of combat flying, that
they all needed a complete overhaul and replacement of accessories, that
"prevailing conditions and the lack of new accessory replacements made
the necessary overhaul impractical," and that new aircraft should there-
fore replace them. A few days later Paul V. Kefarana of Curtiss Wright
rendered a similar report asserting that the P-40's had "anywhere from
three to five hundred operational hours on them, which is equivalent to

SECURITY INFORMATION
about two thousand normal operating hours." He added that all should be given a general depot overhaul and "retired to the mainland where they can be used for training purposes or be held ready for emergency defense squadrons."  

Kenney felt very strongly that the replacement policy of the War Department was letting his air force down. As he wrote to General Arnold, "With the possible exception of Chennault, I do not believe anyone else is flying stuff as old and worn out as these youngsters out here are . . . Every time I visit an outfit I have to listen to the same old question: 'How much longer do we have to push these old crows around?'" Kenney added that he supposed he need not worry since "the newspapers back home" believe that "Hitler . . . will throw in the sponge this year," and that "the Nips are . . . out of boats and airplanes and will be a pushover." His personal reactions he expressed somewhat differently:

I have never read of any nation which was not hungry and [which] still [had] three hundred divisions suiting cold but maybe the Germans are going to be different, maybe they will throw down their arms and allow the mobs of Czechs, Poles, Slavs, Belgians, Jews and so on massacre the whole nation. If I were a German I would figure myself better off at war until my opponents got tired enough to offer me acceptable terms. As for the Nip, I have quit arguing but insist that this fighting out here will keep us busy until 1948. In the meantime I would sure like enough people and planes to get the job done that soon.

To General Kenney, who had an equal interest in his "youngsters" and in the materiel necessary for combat, the problem of replacement personnel was of as great importance as that of replacement aircraft. In planning for his future needs, he estimated in June on the basis of past experience that by the fall he would require 650 combat crew
members per month. This estimate was based first on the belief that "everyone who saws in three hundred combat hours should be sent home," and secondly on loss-ca. He assumed that in his three heavy groups seven crews/month would be killed or missing, 12 would reach 300 combat hours, and three would be counted out because of wounds, sickness, or war weariness before reaching the 300-hour mark. This amounted to 22 crews. In like manner he calculated 20 crews for four medium groups, and 33 pilots for three fighter or 53 for five fighter groups. 31

Since these figures agreed almost exactly with replacements calculated on the basis of 15 per cent of the assigned strength, they were concurred in by the War Department. 32 It soon developed, however, that there were several questions concerning personnel which were not answered in this agreement. On 14 June, a message had been sent to all air forces stating that ODU personnel planned for new units after July would be diverted to replacement crews only in order to bring crew strength to two and a half crews for each heavy and medium bomber and two crews for each light bomber, fighter, and transport plane. AAF commanders were, therefore, requested to report immediately the crew requirements necessary to reach this level. The problem was, however, not quite so simple as this. There were limits to the number of trained personnel available, and there were special commitments to certain air forces. These two facts proved irreconcilable with the proposal to furnish two and a half crews each for all heavy and medium bombers and two crews each for all other combat aircraft. If this plan were carried out, according to General Arnold, no additional combat
units could be turned out between 15 August 1943 and January 1944.

Accordingly, a change in policy seemed called for, "one of the most serious decisions that we have had to make," and General Arnold requested carefully considered recommendations for the replacements "that you must have on hand for each type of combat airplane."

Kenney's estimates submitted on 9 July were not acceptable to the planners in the War Department. His general requirements were two crews per airplane in all tactical units, including troop carrier, with a minimum of 15 per cent a month replacement. After considering the requests of the various theaters together with established commitments and priorities, Kenney was informed that for the next year he would receive a replacement flow of no more than 7½ per cent a month for troop carrier units and 15 per cent a month for other units. Furthermore, he was told that any increase of combat crews to more than one crew per aircraft would have to be accomplished by using these authorized replacements as no others could be furnished.

General Kenney did not accept this decision as final. He did not believe that he could carry out his part in the offensive already getting into high gear without a more generous replacement policy, and he based further arguments on the theory that the War Department did not comprehend his particular problem. So far as quality of replacements was concerned, he was satisfied. In fact he reported to General Arnold that "the 345th Medium Group" and the 475th Fighter Group were the best he had seen. But he declared that if the replacement program as set up by the Air Staff were carried out, "I am sunk." He insisted that the
15 per cent replacement flow with only one crew per combat aircraft was not sufficient for heavy bombers, and that it would be as inadequate for medium bombers as soon as his service command had increased their fuel capacity and their losses began to approach that of the heavies. 25

He was particularly emetic about the need for additional troop carrier crews. The transports were flying almost constantly with little rest except when unusually bad weather grounded the planes. The 317th Troop Carrier Group, for example, carried 4,244 tons of supplies in June and flew 1,233,131 miles. Its airplanes, including those in and out of commission, averaged 183 flying hours in June, and its pilots, including squadron commanders and operations officers (all 141 pilots assigned in other words), averaged 130 hours for that month. 26 Kenney assured the War Department that the situation demanded 74 additional pilots and 37 radio operators immediately and for emphasis wrote the following:

In the case of troop carriers, I figure I can get five hundred hours of New Guinea operation out of them. It is taking a lot, for the figures show that between weather and miss a man lives longer in a P-39 than he does in a C-47 flying the troop carrier supply runs in New Guinea. These kids get a hundred hours a month, so that if I replace them at the five hundred hour mark I will need twenty percent per month for that reason alone, instead of the seven and one-half percent your staff has promised me. The replacement rate per month for troop carriers should be twenty-five per cent. The troop carrier group working between Australia and New Guinea is averaging over one hundred hours per month per crew. The great part of their haul is over the 730 mile over water hop from Townsville to Horsby on schedule - which they keep regardless of weather. I don't know how much of the grid they can take but with a replacement rate of seven and one half percent I cannot think of sending them home before fifteen hundred hours.
These vigorous arguments apparently persuaded General Arnold that certain exceptions could be made in general War Department policy. He admitted that, although the replacement problem had been solved in North Africa and England, it remained in the South and Southwest Pacific. Perhaps General Arnold's interest in the matter might have had something to do with a change of heart on the part of OCMH. By 17 August 1945, Gen. E. A. Crisp, AG/AS, OCMH informed the chief of the Air Staff that "it now appears possible to furnish sufficient replacement crews in excess of the 105 during the months of January and February 1945 to bring the heavy units in the Fifth Air Force to a status of two crews per US airplane," that 56 medium bombardment crews in addition to the authorized flow were to be dispatched during July and August, and that the specific personnel for troop carrier units requested by Kenney would be furnished. General Arnold approved these decisions, but emphasized that they were exceptions to established War Department policy. He assured Kenney that every attempt was being made to speed up the training program to meet the demand for two crews per airplane, that this need could not be met overnight, and that the additional personnel for troop carrier units had been provided by withdrawing them "from other important requirements of our program." 28

The problems of personnel and materiel were not solved merely by the signing of the papers in Washington or even by the arrival of executed aircraft or combat crew replacements in the theaters. A considerable program of preparation for combat was necessary. The training of both air and ground personnel had so improved in the United States in
the early months of 1943 that this was becoming less of a problem in the theater, but the need for extensive modification and improvement of the interior and equipment in the lighter ships had been during the previous year. One of the most important tasks of the Service Command, for example, continued to be the modification of the 3-25.

It will be recalled that General Kenney was basing much of his offensive planning upon the effectiveness of low-level bombing supported by overwhelming forward fire cover. Indeed he was so convinced of the superiority of that type of attack that he was rather critical of other theater commanders who did not employ it. For example he said of certain operations in the European theater:

One last argument about attack aviation and I will quit. If Ike's B-24's were lost by ground fire it was because he violated the basic principle of attack: you must have lots of forward fire cover to beat down the enemy ground fire in order to get in close enough to do your bombing; if Kenney had to show me his B-25's up to 8,500 feet it was because he did not have the eight forward fifty calibre firing guns that I have which are prove sufficient to silence the whole anti-aircraft deck gun installation of a Jap destroyer or light carrier so thoroughly that they have yet to lose a B-25 taking out a surface vessel. Of course you must cover these low altitude boys with your fighters so that they can work. Taking them up to 6,500 feet merely makes them more vulnerable to hostile fighters which can work at them from underneath as well as from above. Unless bombers are equipped with a mass of forward firing guns they do not belong in this minimum altitude stuff where there is surface fire to be encountered. This is an attack job done by specially equipped attack planes flown by personnel who are trained in attack work and who would not work a damn at high or even medium altitudes. The sight is different, the type of told is different, the tactics are different and there is a perpetual mission of this kind exciting the attack commander. In spite of the fact that they have not reached enough guns forward, the Russians have done pretty well at this type of operation and the advance from Egypt to Tunisia is full of examples. Last height bombing has turned out pretty well too, so that I would not
say that there is no such animal as Attack Aviation. The low altitude striking approach, followed by the parachute fragmentation bomb or the delay fuse bomb, is standard practice here for three groups of B-25's and A-20's. The R.A.A.F. and the Dutch are following along and whether you like the work or not I have an attack outfit which is making the majority of the headline material for this theater.

Kennedy planned to have at least 70 per cent of his medium bombardment strength equipped with the modified B-25. Such a program kept the depot busy. During July, August, and September, for example, the depot at Townsville added the eight forward-firing machine guns to 172 B-25G's and D's. The arrival of the first B-25G aircraft in July presented new difficulties. According to an early announcement, regarding this plane, it was to have two .50-cal. machine guns and a 75-mm cannon in the nose, four blister .50's firing forward, two .50-cal. waist guns, and a .50-cal. tail gun. When it arrived, however, it did not have the four blister guns, and thus lacked the forward fire cover which Kennedy considered essential for low-level attack.

It was, however, given an immediate trial. On 10 July Colonel Gunn, the modification expert, delivered the plane to the V Bomber Command, and for the remainder of the month, trial missions were flown with pilots of the 2d and 22d Groups. Attacks were made on antiaircraft positions, Japanese barges, and other shipping, with considerable success. In one of these, shots from the cannon silenced all antiaircraft fire from the stern and aft of the bridge of a large destroyer. The accuracy of the cannon pleased Gunn, but he at once had many ideas as to how the plane could be modified. He particularly recommended that four additional forward-firing machine guns be attached, a change which he felt would result in "one of the most destructive weapons used in combat."
Thus in the late summer and early fall, the Service Command attempted a number of modifications. In the first place, package guns were installed following Gunn's recommendations. With the armament already in the nose, it was necessary to maintain proper balance by attaching the new guns at stations even with the bomb bay. This modification was unsuccessful. After 300 to 400 rounds had been fired, "the skin began to ripple and tear loose at the bomb bay, the leading edge of the wing crunched between nacelles and fuselage, the blast was affecting the adjacent primary structure, and the shell ejection chutes were too short, causing the empty shells to jam." 42

Engineers of the 4th Air Depot at Townsville set to work on plans to remedy these faults, and by September further modifications were under way. More changes were performed on each side of the fuselage which aimed at "beefing" the structure at critical points. Angle stiffeners, fittings, 'T' channels, formers, and brackets were installed on wing sections between nacelles and fuselage, wing inspection panels and interior sides of the nacelles. The work required the addition of 97 separate items, 25 of which were fabricated at Townsville. Between 25 September and 8 October, the depot there transformed 28 B-25s into functionally satisfactory aircraft. 43

This was only one of many projects performed by the Service Command on combatant aircraft in the spring and fall of 1943. Actually the B-25G with the 75-mm. cannon never satisfied the tacticians of the Fifth Air Force, but other developments more than fulfilled expectations, and continued to be carried out at Townsville, Brisbane, Sydney, and...
Fort McHenry. The new standard nose installation of the B-25C1 and D, the modifications increasing the offensive and defensive strength of the B-24, and the attachment of A-20A vertical and fragmentation bomb racks in the A-20C occasioned the query in the United States at least once: "Why can't we do what Kenney is doing?" 44

Among his other modification projects, Kenney's interests still turned to the development of more deadly munitions, particularly bombs. For some time (at least since April), his engineers had been working on a fuze which would detonate standard bombs at certain elevations above the ground. They had experimented with the Mill fuze seated in the M105 fuze body, apparently a modification of the fuze used in the parachute phosphoric flare. But results were inconclusive. The bombs exploded anywhere from contact with the ground to a thousand feet in the air. It was thought, however, that the solution had been found in the Navy Mk. 32 44 AA fuze. Kenney described this as an "influence" fuze which caused an antiaircraft shell to explode "magnetically sixty feet from an airplane or the ground or water if it misses an airplane." Navy Department restrictions would not permit local efforts to adopt this fuze for bombs, but Kenney stated that his experts would make the attempt if Headquarters AAF could obtain the release of those fuzes already in the theater. In a letter to General Arnold of 23 July he said that he understood the item was in full production, so please have your ordnance men get them out to me instead of waiting until the Army gets through inventing a better one." 45

SECURITY INFORMATION
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In this case seems to have stumbled upon a first-class mystery. Within a few hours of a radical request for information on the fuse, the War Department replied, refusing to release any details, and stated that the fuses were highly secret and still in an experimental stage. A month later, Kenney, learning indirectly that the Joint Chiefs of Staff were holding up the release of the fuse, hastened the request that the delay was owing to a desire to accumulate a sufficient number so that they could be released in all theaters at once. He added: "It sounds as though someone wanted to give Zeppy sports and Ike Baker a good sporting chance with me so that I would not get ahead of them." He warned General Arnold, however, that "if my college professor down in Sydney, who is working on the problem, is right in his claims," he would soon have one of his own capable of breaking an airplane in movements and killing Jews under the coconut trees.

The actual explanation of the secrecy seems to have been far more significant than Kenney had assumed. The Joint Chiefs of Staff were withholding the use of the fuse except in special overwater missions where there was no chance of recovery. They knew that the Germans were perfecting an proximity fuse, and they could visualize what rockets armed with such fuses could do to the large formations of Eighth and Twelfth Air Force bombers. Rockets with time fuses had already created enough havoc; the expected use of rocket-propelled gliders might create more; and the Joint Chiefs were determined that no clue as to American developments would be provided to the Germans, at least until fighters could accompany the bombers all the way to their objectives.
In addition to service Command activities in making bombers more effective, other service units and experts in design were erecting, repairing, modifying, and otherwise improving both the fighters that had been in the theater for many months and those that had just arrived. Major modification projects were initiated on the old P-39 and P-40 aircraft. On the P-40's new Allison, V-1710-61 engines were installed; and inspection ports, main landing-gear spindles, fuel lines and fuel-vent lines among other things were modified. Many of the Bell aircraft, approximately 30 old P-39's and 20 P-40's, were converted into the relatively modern P-39N. New Allison engines with a 9.3 to 1 blower and a 1 to 1 propeller ratio were installed. Two .50-cal. machine guns were exchanged for the two .40's normally in each 'in', adding a total of six .50's and either a 20- or a 27-mm. cannon. In addition the installment of a "Fifth Air Force leak-proof tank" gave from 15 to 30 gallons "more integral fuel capacity." By the middle of August this project was well under way, and within a month Henry had instituted a production line at Sidney which reconditioned all spares wings to replace those on aircraft in the squadrons.

Perhaps of even more importance in increasing the efficiency of the fighter command was the development of a belly tank for the P-47. Henry insisted that this aircraft had less range than the P-40, and that the "engineers back home" were developing planes with no "more range than is needed to defend London or to make a fighter sweep across a ditch no bigger than Chesapeake Bay." The obvious was the use of a belly tank. Gone had accompanied the P-47's when they arrived, however, and
it was discovered that a 270-gallon tank shown in the Materiel Command's data sheet had been abandoned because of the tail buffeting which it caused. During the first week in July, the 37th Depot Repair Squadron at Fort Moresby was given a rush job of designing a suitable belly tank with a reliable release mechanism. The first plan was to modify the flat, oval-shaped, 110-gallon tank used in P-39's and P-40's, and Kenney requested that Patterson Field send him 100 kits to make this modification. The Service Command at Patterson Field replied that demands of other theaters together with the realities of production would permit no more than 10 kits to be sent each week, a rate which seemed ridiculous to Kenney since it would mean that the 348th Group would not have sufficient tanks to enter combat for two months.

Meanwhile, men in both Fort Moresby and Brisbane were working on the project. Using tools and equipment on hand, the 37th Depot Repair Squadron was working 24-hour days each consisting of three 8-hour shifts, with some of the more skilled technicians working from 12 to 16 hours. Soon they were attaching the modified tanks on P-47's at the rate of seven a day, and something over 100 planes were so equipped. By the first of August, however, a 200-gallon belly tank had been designed at Brisbane, and tests proved that it was far superior to the 100-gallon tank and others developed in the United States. This model, therefore, became standard in the Southwest Pacific, and the 37th Repair Squadron began to install the new tank rather than the older model, not a difficult change since there were only a few differences in the installation of necessary booster pumps and motors.
The accomplishments of the Service Command were probably as important in enabling possible the fruition of the planning for the Southwest Pacific offensives as those of the crews who were actually flying the planes into combat. In spite of the large reinforcements which were arriving by the summer of 1943, ADWCH and the air task forces simply could not have accomplished their job without the facilities provided by service units and depots. General Arnold commented in regard to the development of the belly tanks: ". . . there is no reason in God's world why General Kenney should have to develop his own belly tanks. If he can develop one over there in two months, we should certainly be able to develop one here in the United States in one month." 61 The fact remained that Kenney's organization did develop and produce certain items of equipment more rapidly than it could be done in the United States where the demands of every theater had to be considered. Some of these items were even being supplied to the Thirteenth Air Force, and in July the War Department suggested that the Fifth Air Force Service Command provide fourth echelon maintenance including engine overhaul for the Thirteenth. The suggestion progressed as far as conferences between personnel of both air forces where it was discussed owing to the lack of greater transport facilities between the two theaters. MacArthur, however, made the following recommendations: that the present cooperation between the two air forces continue, that the Fifth Air Force lend every aid by supplying Australian fabricated parts and equipment to the Thirteenth Air Force, that the Thirteenth continue the existing system of supply procedure, and that present engine overhaul facilities be retained until the two air forces could be more closely merged. 62
Chapter VII

LAUNCHING THE OFFENSIVE, JUNE-AUGUST

The period from May through September 1943 witnessed not only the building up of the Fifth Air Force in men and material but also offensive operations on a larger scale than any yet undertaken by the Allied forces in either the South or the Southwest Pacific theaters. The reduction of Rabaul remained the ultimate goal of the forces operating both from New Guinea and the Solomons. The immediate objective was to bring the Fifth and Thirteenth Air Forces into position for the culmination of the campaign against that enemy-held stronghold. And so while the forces of the South Pacific headed up from the lower Solomons through New Georgia toward Bougainville, those of the Southwest Pacific, using well-established bases at Port Moresby, Milne Bay, Goodenough Island, and Dobodura, had secured the Morobe area and were preparing to establish themselves on the Huon Peninsula as a necessary preliminary to moves against New Ireland and New Britain. While the real offensive got under way during the summer of 1943, therefore, the Allied Air Forces struck with increasing frequency at targets along the northern New Guinea coast from Lae to Wewak, and along the southern New Britain coast from Gasmata around Cape Gloucester to Talasea. In evidence of a high concentration of effort, it may be noted that though air operations in general were rapidly increased through this period, heavy attacks against such formerly favored targets as Rabaul, Kavieng, and the Solomons were few and far between.
Rabaul nevertheless was not entirely omitted from the list of objectives. B-17's and B-24's on reconnaissance paid periodic visits not only to Rabaul but to Kavieng as well. Even the heavy bombers, however, concentrated almost entirely upon the sea lanes leading directly to the Huon Gulf, to Hansa Bay, or to Wewak. P-4's and P-5's of the 9th Photo Squadron were perhaps more active than the bombers in recording activity in harbors and on airfields of New Britain, New Ireland, and the upper Solomons, but photo-mapping was hampered greatly by weather which the camera eye could not pierce. During June planes of the 9th Photo Squadron were over Rabaul on at least 25 different occasions, but of these missions 12 were abortive because of poor weather conditions. In July no photos were taken in seven flights; in August three out of four missions were fruitless; and in September six out of eight. To the uncooperative weather were added the hazards arising from the Photo plane's lack of defense against interception. In June two of the squadron's most skillful flyers were shot down over Rabaul. One of these, Capt. Arthur L. Post, who bailed out of his plane in the vicinity of Wide Bay on 20 June, was rescued three months later. The other, Lt. Kenneth J. Murphy, was less fortunate. He carried out six reconnaissance missions over Rabaul, Buka, Madang, and the Malahang area during June. Owing to the shortage of trained pilots, he volunteered for more flights than would ordinarily have been necessary, and on 26 June, he failed to return from his last mission over Rabaul.

During the four-month period under discussion, the heaviest concentration of bombing attacks fell in June. In that month heavy
bombers struck at Vunakana, Lakunai, and Rabofo on eight different nights in formations of three or more planes, performing approximately 60 B-17 and 62 B-24 sorties. The number declined in July to five attacks comprising 26 B-17 and 46 B-24 sorties, while in August and September only one mission was carried out against Rabofo, that of 11 RAAF Catalinas on the night of 3-4 September.

It was impossible to evaluate accurately the results of these missions. The lack of aerial photographs made it necessary to depend upon observations by bomber crews, and these could not be exact. They usually reported that their bombs, varying from four-lb. incendiary to 1,000-lb. general purpose bombs, had hit the target area and that large fires and explosions had resulted. Although weather conditions were probably more disturbing to the attacking American planes than Japanese interception, there seemed to be a growing coordination of enemy defenses. Not only was there an obvious liaison between the always annoying searchlights and antiaircraft batteries, but enemy night fighters resembling the twin-engine Dinah began to put in an appearance. The ineffective interception, however, is demonstrated by the lack of air battles over Rabofo. From June through September no enemy aircraft was shot down over that target by Fifth Air Force planes, and of the five B-17's and two B-24's lost none was definitely shot down in fighter attacks, one was listed as missing in action; one was shot down by antiaircraft fire; and the remainder were listed as having been lost from "other causes."

In the Northwestern Area, of the Southwest Pacific, meanwhile, preparations were being made to strike at what was perhaps the most
important strategic objective in the Southwest Pacific area, Balikpapan in Borneo. Until the last of June, the 318th Squadron of the 90th Group continued to fly missions out of the Darwin area into the Netherlands East Indies. It had struck sharp blows at numerous points including Ambon on the island of Amboina, Koe Pang in Timor, and even Makassar and Kendari in Celebes. By the first week in July, however, it was transferred to Wards Drome near Port Moresby where it joined the other components of the group. The recently arrived 380th Bombardment Group took its place at Darwin, and the B-24's of this new organization continued the operations against the enemy in the Netherlands East Indies.

Sensational strikes were planned for this group. The Japanese received what was perhaps a first warning of new penetrations into their empire on 23 July. At approximately 0245, six B-24's of the 529th and Headquarters Squadrons glided in over the port of Soerabaja after more than a 1,200-mile flight from Darwin. They scattered 646 small incendiaries and 26 x 500-lb. demolition bombs from an altitude of 10,500 feet. After 14 hours of continuous flying all six planes safely returned to base.

Even longer missions, in terms of time elapsed at least, occurred almost a month later. At 1730 on 13 August, 11 B-24's, carrying 69 x 500-lb. bombs, took off from Fenton and Mariballo fields and headed out across the Timor Sea through generally cloudy and turbulent weather toward Balikpapan. One aircraft was forced to turn back, and another failed to find the target, but between midnight and 0145, nine planes
bombed their objectives, oil refineries, tanks, and harbor installations. They dropped their bombs from between 5,000 and 8,500 feet and claimed 46 "hits." As the last plane turned for the long flight back to base, two refinery areas and one medium-sized vessel were afire and seven large oil tanks were exploding. In just under 17 hours from the take-off, eight of the nine aircraft had returned; the ninth, short of fuel, had crash-landed but all crew members were safe. The refineries had not been destroyed, as two reconnaissance B-24's returning in daylight two days later noted, but a second mission carried out on 17 August hit only at shipping targets. Again nine out of 11 B-24's starting reached the target, and swept in for a low-level attack. The bombardiers released 500-lb. delayed-action bombs and watched them crash into at least six ships, "destroying or setting on fire" four of them.

These attacks on strategic targets were token raids rather than part of a bombing offensive. The aircraft based at Darwin (Australian Beaufighters, Hudsons, and Spitfires for the most part, together with Batch B-25's and American B-24's) continued to maintain a vigil designed to harass the enemy within range of their bombers and to deny Torres Strait and other sea routes to the enemy. The objectives, therefore, were primarily tactical and the missions defensive. At the same time in the Northeastern Area, the attacks upon any bases which might conceivably be called strategic were subordinated to the plan for an offensive designed to secure advance bases in forward areas.

By the middle of June plans had been virtually completed for a three-pronged advance toward the principal objective, Rabaul. These
plans involved simultaneous landings by South Pacific Forces at Rendova in the New Georgia group and at other points in the upper Solomons, and by Southwest Pacific forces on Kiwiwina and Woodlark islands and at Nassau Bay, 50 miles up the coast from Morobe harbor in New Guinea. South Pacific naval forces in addition to their part in the New Georgia operation, were to reconnoitre an area north of 10° north latitude in order to detect enemy forces coming south from Truk and to perform a similar function northeast of New Ireland and Buka passage and east of 155° east longitude. The Southwest Pacific air and sea forces, meanwhile, were to provide defensive reconnaissance over the Solomons and Bismarck Sea areas west of the 155° longitude line and southwest of New Ireland and Buka passage, and were to support a seizure of Woodlark and Kiwiwina by attacks on such targets of opportunity as aircraft and ships.

On the New Guinea mainland, Allied land forces had worked out a "master plan." Australian troops of the 15th Brigade were to seize Bobdubi Ridge, which dominated the Japanese supply line to Hubo; American troops, landing at Nassau Bay were to push inland and along the coast destroying the Japanese forces near Hubo in conjunction with the Australians and pushing those near Komatom back to Salamana. Meanwhile outposts further north and in the interior, notably at Bena Bena, 100 miles northwest of Lae, were to be built up as intelligence centers and to attract the attention of the enemy away from activities at more vital Allied bases.

The Japanese, fully aware of potential Allied threats, were continuing to strengthen their forces in Northeast New Guinea. Shipping
continued to flow into Wewak and Hansa Bay; barge traffic moved across Vitiaz Strait from New Britain and along the New Guinea coast; and ground troops gradually moved into the Ramu River valley making contact with Allied patrols working out from the Bena Bena area inevitable. The Japanese also struck at Allied land forces from the air. Oro Bay, Dobodura, Wau, and above all Bena Bena were hit a number of times in June. Several of these raids were in some force. For example, the Bena Bena area was attacked by 27 medium bombers and 30 fighters on 15 June, by 6 bombers and 6 fighters and 18 bombers and 22 fighters on the following day, by 8 "aircraft" two days later, and by an "unknown number" of planes which dropped 49 bombs on 19 June. 12

Damage from these air raids was negligible, but not always because of Allied interception. Fighters, which during June were concentrating upon the escort of bombers and transports, made contact with enemy planes no more than three times during the month. Three enemy fighters were destroyed in scrambles in which 1 P-38 was lost. Many of the raids on Bena Bena were not intercepted, probably because no Allied fighters were based there, and attacks on other bases which did have fighter protection were usually small and carried out at night. These raids did little damage but they were a nuisance at times, as when a performance of the motion picture Arsenic and Old Lace was interrupted at Dobodura on 12 June. 13

During June the principal function of the bombers was to soften up the enemy defenses in the Lee-Salamaua area. Even Wewak, with its four airfields and recognized as perhaps the most potentially dangerous base
in New Guinea, was hit on only three occasions. These attacks, on 2, 4, and 7 June, consisted of 16 B-17 and 13 B-24 sorties, in which all types of bombs from four-lb. incendiaries to 1,000-lb. general purpose and including 1,000-lb. and 300-lb. wire-wrapped "daisy cutters" were dropped. On 16 June, medium and light bombers began a steady if not an overwhelming pounding of the Lae-Salamaua area. For the next 13 days, RAAF Bostons made approximately 37 sorties, A-20's 27, and B-25's 55. The Bostons in formations of from four to six planes paid almost daily visits to the area. B-25's and A-20's sweeping the tree-tops in minimum-altitude attacks dropped delayed-action bombs on the airfields at Lae, Salamaua, and Malahang and strafed buildings in the villages and barges in hideouts along the coast. The heaviest of these attacks occurred on 24 June when 17 B-25's hit Salamaua and on the 25th when 20 B-25's struck at Lae and eight at Salamaua. In this latter attack, 130 x 100-lb. wire-wrapped daisy cutters together with 104 clusters of three 23-lb. parasfregas were dropped. The planes then strafed the airfields through thick smoke which arose from the bomb craters and a hail of antiaircraft fire thrown up by Japanese batteries. Visibility was bad, but later intelligence indicated that the runways had been rendered at least temporarily unserviceable.

These strikes at the airfields at Lae and Salamaua were only preliminary to other missions designed to simplify the Allied landings now imminent. Reconnaissance and photo aircraft had surveyed Woodlark and Kiriwina. Plans had been completed and D-day set for 30 June. Actually little preliminary softening up of the designated landing
beaches was necessary. On 23 June six B-25's hit enemy positions
south of Salamaua, and the 89th Squadron scattered 76 x 100-lb. bombs
in a Japanese camp south of Nassau Bay. Meanwhile, 13 P-38's and 100
enlisted men of the 80th Fighter Squadron had moved to Vivanddi strip
on Goodenough Island to cover the invasion of Kirwina and Woodlark.
But Allied troops landed there without interference and within a few
days Army engineers and Seabees were converting the hard coral islands
into air bases without having experienced either a land or an air at-
tack. By 5 July the Allied strength on Kirwina was 5,200 men and on
Woodlark 1,500. Two weeks later General MacArthur could report that
his men had cleared an air strip on Kirwines, that on Woodlark 153's
were in position, and that a runway would be ready for fighters by
23 July. 15

The landing at Nassau Bay proved to be more difficult. The prin-
cipal organization involved was the MacKechnie Force which two months
before had secured the Morobe harbor area. Beginning on 26 June, this
force, consisting principally of the 1st Battalion of the 163d Regiment,
moved by boat to a staging area at Mageri Point, 15 miles northwest of
Morobe, and three days later embarked for their destination. The maneuver
had not been particularly well planned. Landing craft were not assembled
until the day before the operation started, and when the time came for
embarkation only 28 LCV's, 1 damaged LCM, 2 Japanese barges, and 3 PT
boats were to be found. Little specific information, moreover, was
available on the nature of the landing beach, which seems to indicate
poor liaison somewhere in view of the large number of aerial photographs
which had been taken of other areas. Indeed Colonel MacKechnie had made
efforts to secure suitable photographs as long as five weeks before
the landing, but with little success. One series of photos was received,
but these covered only half the landing beach area; rotogravure photo-
graphs were available but were unsatisfactory; and usually there was
only one copy of any photograph so that the lower unit commanders rarely
received any. In the case of Nassau beach, an Australian officer had
made a cursory reconnaissance of the landing area, and plans had to be
based largely upon his report. 16

The troops embarked at 1900 on 29 June. It was raining; the seas
were rough with surf at least 10 feet high; according to some natives
the worst that they had ever seen. Eight or 10 boats never reached their
initial rendezvous and were forced to turn back. An Australian patrol,
which was to mark the beach, was late in arriving; consequently the boats
which were to land in three waves became confused, and the first two
waves landed at the same time. Owing to the surf, the PT boats which
comprised the third wave were unable to land at all, probably not a
misfortune since all craft which did reach the shore, 17 or 18 LCT's and
1 LCI, were destroyed by the high seas. Fortunately the 740 men aboard
the latter vessels landed without loss of life, but mortars, radios, and
much ammunition were lost, and no artillery and few antiaircraft guns
could be brought to the shore. 17

The situation on the beach was naturally confused. American troops
were soon in contact with the enemy but a number of factors were hinder-
ing their advance. For one thing they had no artillery or antiaircraft
protection; moreover since little or no provision had been made for the

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replacement of the losses in landing craft, the arrival of more supplies was uncertain. Consequently, the MacKeehnie force ferred to venture too far from its defense perimeter established close to the beach. In such circumstances the danger of air attack was great. The situation had been made even more serious by a loss of virtually all radio equipment upon which liaison with the Fifth Air Force depended. Fortunately, the air support officer at Bulolo had suggested that a telephone line be strung from his station to the beachhead, and by this means a precarious and roundabout communication was established. The first request, sent by Captain Shropshire, air liaison officer with the MacKeehnie Force, early in the morning of 30 June, was that a fighter cover be provided until the beach was cleared. But although several squadrons were not otherwise occupied, no cover was provided. 18

Perhaps the most important efforts the Fifth Air Force carried out in conjunction with the Allied landings in New Georgia, on Kiriwina and Woodlark, and at Nassau Bay were a number of heavy attacks upon airfields both in the Loe-Salemaa area and at Rabaul. On 31 June 8 B-17's and 3 B-24's struck at Vunakanau; during the following night, 10 B-24's hit Lakunai and Rapopo; Vunakanau and Rapopo were the targets for 11 B-17's and 7 B-24's on 2 July, and all three airfields were bombed by 13 B-24's a day later. In spite of weather which made even reaching the target a hazardous effort, and in spite of fierce antiaircraft fire and night fighter interception, only one B-17 was lost in the four-day assault, and almost 100 tons of bombs of all types were dropped. Meanwhile from 30 June to 2 July, B-25's had carried out 58 sorties and A-20's 11 against
airfields and supply points in the Lae-Salamaua area. On 1 July the ground troops had also received some aid from the 89th Squadron, six of whose A-20's roared over Japanese installations at Dau Li on Nassau Bay, dropping 31 x 100-lb. bombs in the target area from 1,000 feet, and then returning to make 32 strafing passes from treetop level. These cooperative bombing missions apparently had some effect. In early July the Japanese were able to throw considerable air strength against the American landings in the upper Solomons and New Georgia, but they could not muster sufficient air strength to threaten both the landings there and the Allied operations at Nassau Bay. During the South Pacific landing operations, the Japanese lost more than 100 planes while the Allies were losing 17, and the enemy continued to attack Rendova daily. The first attack on the Nassau Bay beachhead, on the other hand, did not occur until 3 July when 10 medium bombers made three bombing and five strafing runs over Allied positions. Although the American fighter sector at Dobodura had ordered several sweeps over the area during the day, the fighters failed to intercept these enemy planes. On the following day, however, the first fighter combat of the month occurred. Various squadrons of both Moreby- and Dobodura-based fighters had carried out periodic patrols over Lae and Salamaua. In the afternoon 14 P-40's of the 7th Squadron were returning to Dobodura after a routine escort mission to Hubo. Shortly after 1600 they saw six or eight bombers (probably Dinahs), escorted by Zekes attacking Allied positions. The P-40 flight leaders changed their course, the flyers dropped belly tanks, and within a few minutes the fight was on. At least one Dinah and four Zekes were
shot down, a victory suitably celebrated with "jungle juice" on an
otherwise-quiet Fourth of July.

These two enemy air attacks were sufficient to do little more than
harass the American force establishing itself at Nasuan Bay. Other
obstacles, however, kept the Americans from immediately pressing in-
land to join the Australians in the Kubo area and from pushing farther
up the coast toward Salamaua. The command situation, in the first place,
was temporarily unsatisfactory, and conflicting orders were received from
the 17th Brigade, the 3d Australian, and the 41st American divisions.

Furthermore, the troops, for the most part without combat experience, were
at first jittery and would not volunteer to go out on all-important
combat patrols. Some had not learned to hold their fire until sure of
a target and perhaps 50 per cent of the first American casualties were
caused by other American troops. Intelligence was faulty, and little
was known of the enemy strength in the area.

The principal problem, however, was that of supply. The possibility
of the initial loss of landing craft had apparently not been foreseen.
For the first few days, therefore, supplies were slow in arriving. By
15 July additional craft were allocated to the force, and the situation
was somewhat relieved. The additional craft, however, did not get sup-
plies to those troops already penetrating jungle country where it took
10 men eight hours to evacuate one casualty to the aid station on the
beach. A road was to be built to accelerate the forwarding of sup-
plies, but on 6 July only 160 Americans were available for construction pur-
poses together with some 100 natives who were to serve as carriers.
Moreover the only bulldozer was disabled, and the only tractor was buried in the mud. 23

In these circumstances, the ground forces working inland were almost entirely dependent upon transport aircraft for their food and munitions. Arrangements were made, therefore, with the 17th Brigade for supply-dropping, never a completely satisfactory expedient. At first only B rations were dropped. These required cooking, but the troops were unable to carry kitchens with them, and canned heat was not available. In one instance New Guinea Force authorized the dropping of rations at a certain point inland from Nassau Bay, known as Dry Creek Bed. Numerous supplies, many perishable, were dropped at a time when no troops were in the vicinity to pick them up. This action was explained by saying that the food would be more useful there than at Port Moresby, and that sooner or later a battalion of men would be available to salvage it. Some of these supplies were saved, but much of the food littering the creek bed had to be cleared away and buried. This was an isolated instance, however, and although supply-dropping was expensive, it did succeed in maintaining a flow of nourishment to the fighting troops. Troop carrier units took pride in this "biscuit bombing" and watched the percentage of foods recovered rise from 50 per cent during the Papuan Campaign to 85 and 90 per cent by the fall of 1943. Moreover when rations and ammunition were lost, the transports would load up and return again and again, so long as weather and visibility permitted. 24

In spite of these problems of supply, and in spite of the Japanese soldier's ability to make an ally out of the terrain, the Allies gradually pushed forward toward Salamaua. By 13 July elements of the 162d Regiment
had joined the Australians who had been fighting the Japanese in the
Wau-Kabu area for months. This juncture cut enemy communications run-
ing from Koneitam to Kabu and led to the final capture of the latter
stronghold. Meanwhile, American troops were forcing their way up the
coast, and by 30 July had secured a beachhead on Tamba Bay, little
more than five miles from Salamaua. These forward elements were joined
during the night by other units which had boarded landing craft at
Nessui Bay. Within a week batteries of the 41st Division's field artil-
leroy were firing shells into Salamaua itself. 25

During this advance through most difficult terrain, the Allied Air
Forces were working in complete cooperation with ground troops. In
addition to troop carrier missions, fighters and bombers were carrying
out an unprecedented number of offensive and defensive sorties. The
primary responsibility of the fighters, of course, was but defensive
missions implied not only what the 67th Fighter Squadron called
"FAPSOAPing (Fifth AF Sitting on ASS policy) otherwise known as ground
alert," but transport and bomber escort together with routine scrambles
or patrols. Most of these proved uneventful, at least so far as mak-
ing contact with the enemy was concerned, but there were many more
interceptions in July than in the previous month. From the 3 July
interception at Salamaua to the end of the month, Japanese aircraft
made sorties over Allied positions, chiefly in the Bena Bena and Salamaua
areas, on at least 11 days. During this same period Allied fighter
squadrons shot down no less than 58 Japanese fighters and 4 bombers, and
lost 5 P-38s and 1 P-40 together with 3 pilots. 25
Several of the enemy raids during July were not intercepted. Only one of those against Bomu Beni, for example, resulted in combat when the 9th Squadron shot down one or possibly two enemy fighters. An attack of 13 July by 10 bombers and 15 fighters and another of 20 July by 30 fighters, however, were not intercepted. The principal air battles occurred either in the Kupu-Salamaua area or on routine escort missions. P-38's of the 39th Fighter Squadron "got into 'em" three times between 18 and 23 July to destroy a total of 19 enemy fighters. Their "big day" was on the 21st when 50 enemy fighters jumped 15 P-38's which were escorting B-25's on a bombing mission to Bogadjim near Madang. In the ensuing combat, 1 P-38 was lost, but 12 enemy fighters and probably 4 more were shot down. The 30th Squadron also contributed 11 fighters to the escort of this mission, and these P-38's shot down 10 or 11 more Japanese interceptors while losing only 1 of their own. Five days later the Dobodura-based 9th Squadron shot down at least 10 Japanese fighters over Salamaua. Lt. Richard I. Bong, who together with Capt. James A. Watkins was credited with eight planes in this engagement, submitted the following account:

I was leader of Blue Flight when we were scrambled to the Salamaua Dropping Area at 1230/K. We went up there and made a circle over Lee, came down to Salamaua, and then went down to the Markham Valley just back of Lee at 15,000 feet.

On our way there I called in airplanes at 12 o'clock and we were intercepted at 1350/K over the Markham Valley. There were about twenty fighters; ten inline-engine fighters and ten Zeros. I dropped my tanks and shot at an inline job and missed.

I dove out and shot at a Zeke head-on, and he burst into flames. I shot at an inline job 45 degrees from behind and above, and knocked pieces off his fuselage. I shot at another inline job and he burst into flames. I shot at another Zero head-on and knocked pieces out of his canopy and engine cowling or engine.

I shot at one more inline job and missed. I left the area at 1410/K and returned to base and landed.
To this report the squadron historian added the comment that such a brief report by a pilot who had riddled four enemy aircraft in one engagement was typical of Bond's reticence: "He would describe a major engagement in the same amount of space another man would take to tell of drinking three beers." 27

The increased activity of the fighter units was more than duplicated by the bombers. Indeed the month of July probably witnessed more of a sustained bombing effort against enemy ground positions in the battle area than any previous month in Southwest Pacific fighting. Some missions were carried out against points outside the principal battle zone. For example Madang was an important target because intelligence reports indicated that supplies were being collected there and sent overland to the southward. This belief was confirmed by aerial photographs and reported on 19 July. These showed extensive road and bridge construction work south of Bogadjin. Two days later the first in a series of three heavy raids on the Madang area occurred. Between 20 and 23 July, B-25's, performing "the deepest penetration by attack bombers into enemy territory" to that date, carried out from 100 to 120 sorties; and at the same time B-24's performed 12 and B-17's 13 against that important port on Astrolabe Bay. The heavy bombers alone dropped over 60 tons of bombs on buildings and installations in the Bogadjin area, and caused large fires. 28

Attacks against shipping during this same period were limited almost entirely to interfering with the enemy barge traffic. Barges continued to reach New Guinea from New Britain, and supplies still moved
along the coast in the same manner. During the last week in July at least 22 A-20, 14 E-25, and 70 B-25 bombing and strafing sorties were carried out against these targets. Perhaps the most damaging series of attacks on shipping, however, occurred on 23 and 29 July. It had been reported that several destroyers and at least one merchant vessel were in the Bismarck Sea south of Cape St. George and Cape Gloucester. On 23 July, 15 B-25's including one B-25G of the 3d Attack Group pounced on two destroyers. They swept in at mast height, strafing with their heavy forward fire power, dropped 100-1 and 500-1b. delayed-action bombs, scored 14 hits, and left one destroyer on fire. The same number of planes performed a similar attack on the following day, this time with a P-38 cover. Debris was found which seemed to confirm the sinking of a destroyer on the day before, and more hits were scored both by bombs and 75-mm. shells on another already beached, causing "the vessel to explode." 29

The heaviest concentration of bombs, however, was not dropped on shipping but on points in the Lae-Salamaua area in direct cooperation with the ground forces. After 5 July, bombers were over this area almost every day. Weather blocked out the objectives for only two full days, although a number of individual missions were prevented on other occasions, and the month's total of sorties included approximately 400 by B-25's, 100 by B-24's, 45 by PAAF Bostons, 35 by A-20's, 30 by B-17's, and 7 by B-26's. The largest number of aircraft went out on 11 July when the air force was requested to eliminate an enemy strong-point outlined with mortar smoke bombs in the old Bobdubi area. For this
mission the two veteran squadrons of the 36th Group teamed up with the new 345th Group covered by an escort consisting of P-39's, P-39's, and P-400's. Thirty-two B-25's reached the target, 22 of these dropping from 60 to 70 x 1,000-lb. instantaneous and delayed-action bombs from between 3,500 and 8,000 feet. The 10 B-25's of the 405th Squadron swept over the smoking pinpoint at from 25 to 150 feet, dropped 20 x 1,000-lb. delayed-action bombs in the area, and claimed 19 hits. Meanwhile 29 other Mitchells and 16 A-20's were strafing villages, airfields, and tracks in the general area. Japanese fighters made several passes at the bombers, but had little effect. The American fighter escort, on the other hand, suffered two losses while shooting down at least five of the enemy. 31

By July the bombers of the Fifth Air Force were carrying out spectacular strikes against Japanese forces. Clearly, however, it was not fulfilling what was probably its primary function, the destruction of the opposing air force. American fighter pilots were knocking down Japanese planes at the rate of about 10 for every one of their own losses, whenever they encountered Japanese planes. But the Japanese seemed unwilling to do more than make token interceptions of Allied bombing attacks in New Guinea, and consequently were able to preserve a substantial air force intact. This can be demonstrated by the fact that from 1 June to 30 July Allied flyers in the Solomons claimed 529 Japanese aircraft destroyed while General Kenney's 'kids' made a score of only 165 in the entire Southwest Pacific. If, as was probable, the enemy was throwing more airplanes into the defense of the Solomons than into New Guinea, this would in part account for the difference
in scores. But Allied Intelligence, based on aerial photographs, reconnaissance, and the reports of patrols ever on the move behind the Japanese forward areas, indicated that the enemy had the strength, and that he was preserving it for use at some future date.

The Fifth Air Force had demonstrated by missions of 21 to 23 July that its medium and heavy bombers could carry out sustained attacks on an objective as distant as Madang. But the enemy's principal stronghold on the New Guinea mainland was Wewak, more than 200 miles farther along the coast. It was necessary to eliminate the Japanese fighter and bomber strength based on the Wewak dromes in order to destroy the potential threat that these aircraft posed to an Allied ground advance toward Lae and Salamaua. Before an air offensive against Wewak could be carried out, however, it was necessary to possess bases far enough advanced to permit fighters to accompany bombers over the objective, and extensive enough to base fighters and transports and to provide refueling facilities for medium bombers if necessary. The Fifth Air Force had been considering the possibilities of acquiring such advanced bases for several months. In general their plan was to determine the most suitable of the numerous air strips which had been scattered throughout Northeast New Guinea prior to the war, and with the help of the Australian New Guinea Administrative Unit (ANGAUC), Australian patrols, and native labor, to develop them into bases.

To carry out this plan, Lt. Everette E. Frazier had been relieved from his duties as executive officer of the 857th Engineer Aviation Battalion (Negro) early in May and transferred to the Fifth Air Force.
His orders read that he was "to locate one operational or staging fighter drome forward of Vau." Frazier had been a construction engineer with the Shell Oil Company of Texas prior to the war, and was thus well prepared to carry out such a mission. Soon after receiving his orders, he was flown to Bulolo, then the headquarters of the 3rd Australian Division. From there he carried out his first reconnaissance patrol in the company of a number of other officers trained in airfield construction, from whom he learned valuable tricks of the trade. This penetration of enemy territory carried him from Sunshine, 14 miles north of Bulolo, almost to Salamaus, but without success. On 31 May, therefore, he repeated the attempt in another direction with an Australian officer and several natives. This new trek took him through the densest jungle and rain forests, along the 1,000-foot deep Watut River Gorge, and across the treacherous Sako River. About a week later he reached Marilinan on the Watut River, less than 50 miles from both Lae and Salamaus. The air approaches to this point from one end were blocked off by mountains, but the site of an old drome was considered adequate for transports, with a possibility that it could be improved for fighters. The local ANGAU officer with natives recruited from a nearby village immediately began to clear and camouflage the prospective field. The tall Kunai grass was burned off, and in spite of the smoke, the Japanese were not alarmed, since natives started numerous fires on any occasion. According to Frazier, "natives like a good fire even if it is their own hut."

The natives were indispensable in the work of preparing the air-drome. Directed by ANGAU or by a native police boy, they were soon
able to decide what trees needed cutting in order to clear a satisfactory approach. In some cases they needed little guidance at all. Sometimes too they contributed important intelligence which had been passed from village to village by conch-shell signals, by the beating of drums, or by a courier service run by "monkies" as they aptly called their small boys. Less useful but more entertaining were formal native ceremonies, known as "sing sings," at least one of which was given in Frazier's honor while Marilinan strip was being built.

Frazier had expected to be flown back to Fort Moreby from Marilinan. When the plane failed to arrive as anticipated, however, he determined on 9 June to make the return trip to Sunshine on foot. This was a great disappointment to the friendly inhabitants of Marilinan who had hoped to see a plane land on the field which they had prepared. When Frazier left, they lined up and saluted him while a spokesman said: "Master him go now, behind him come back, along in big baloose(plane); him bring plenty kai-kai (food), plenty bong twist (tobacco) and altogether something promised boy." 24

It was an arduous overland hike to Sunshine. But from there it was a relatively easy trip to Waq where C-47's took off regularly for Fort Moreby. In this way Frazier arrived at ADVON Headquarters within a week of his departure from Marilinan. In two hours he was in conference with General Kenney, who was temporarily acting as ADVON commander while General Whitehead was in Australia, and a number of his top advisers. The question at issue was vital: where could an advanced air base be located for operations against Wewak and Lae? The
alternatives were in the Marilinan area or in the vicinity of Bena. Frazier assured Kenney that a base near Marilinan, which itself was not completely satisfactory, would be adequate for proposed operations until the heavy September rains began, but that all equipment would have to be evacuated by then or else be left until the rainy season had ended. This put the question to Kenney: would another and more suitable forward area for all-weather airstrips be in Allied possession by September? Kenney and his advisers concluded that the offensive would have by then reached Nadzab, an area chosen by Australians familiar with New Guinea as an ideal site for a permanent base.

By split-second timing, Nadzab could be captured, air strips prepared, and all equipment transported there from the Marilinan area before rains made that move impossible. Shortly after the conference, General Wurtsmith, V Fighter commander, and several officers flew to Marilinan in an A-24 and a P-40. They conferred with Maj. Herman G. Cox of the V Bomber Command and Capt. Everett W. King of the V Fighter Command who had reached Marilinan by foot before Frazier's departure. At this time, it was decided that Tsili Tsili, five miles southwest of Marilinan, would be a more suitable site for the new base.

Under the direction of Col. Ward T. Abbott, air engineer for the Fifth Air Force, the job was begun. Frazier, who had returned to Marilinan by transport, reached Tsili Tsili about 20 June. Again the clearing of new strips and the locating of dispersal areas, taxiways, and camp sites began. By July, C-47's were landing on the transport drome. Within 10 days, they had ferried in Company C of Lt. Col. Harry G. Woodbury's 371st Airborne Engineers equipped with specially
designed miniature bulldozers, graders, carryalls, and grass cutters.

This first engineer contingent, although quite inexperienced, had equipment and some training, and with the advice and assistance of the men on hand, graded a 4,800-foot runway for transports and begun another of 7,000 feet. Weather prevented the remainder of the engineer battalion from being flown into the field for 10 days, but by that time the new base could handle 60 to 150 C-47's a day. 35

For many weeks, the existence of this field was successfully hidden from the enemy. Transports would fly through a pass to Hau and then glide down the valley to the Taili Taili landing field. In this way, they were hidden from the principal Japanese troop concentrations. The well-camouflaged field was protected on the ground by an Australian infantry battalion flown in to guard the land approaches and by an American automotive weapons battery which provided antiaircraft protection. To prevent the Japanese learning about the activity at Taili Taili from the native telegraph, moreover, W/C Peter Ryan, an Australian ANGAU officer, and Frazier ventured into the enemy-patrolled Markham valley. They spent several weeks there trying to influence the natives against the Japanese, reconnoitering enemy strong-points, and learning as much as possible about new enemy penetrations into the hinterland.

Meanwhile, Taili Taili had become a base of rustling activity. By 1 August units of the Second Air Task Force, which was to operate out of Taili Taili just as the First Air Task Force operated from Dobodura, had begun to arrive. The 35th Fighter Group had received movement orders late in July. On 1 August, the 35th Fighter Control Squadron and a plotting platoon of the 565th Aircraft Warning Battalion made an
uneventful flight across the Owen Stanley's in C-47's and landed at Tsili Tsili an hour and a half after the take-off. Two days later a quartermaster platoon arrived and was joined within a few days by the 119th Quartermaster Bakery. By 11 August a signal detachment to install communications for the Second Air Task Force, and the 4th Airdrome Squadron to assist the 432d Service Squadron, had also made the almost routine flight to the new base. Thus by the middle of August, a fighter control sector and radar sets had been established, 40 miles of buried rubber cable had been dug in for local communications, a message center and radio station were in operation, and an ordnance dump and quartermaster supply room were serving more than 3,000 troops already in the area. 36

With the base well established, the next arrivals were to be the headquarters and ground echelons of the 40th and 41st Fighter Squadrons. On 15 August, the headquarters of both squadrons set out from Port MoreSBY in two flights of C-47's escorted by P-39's of the 40th and 41st Squadrons. The first flight had no more than landed at Tsili Tsili when 12 Sallys escorted by perhaps an equal number of fighters (probably Oscars) roared in through passes flanked by mountains high enough to nullify the efforts of Allied aircraft warning units. Soon bombs were falling on the new field, and the incoming troop carriers were under attack. Japanese shells riddled one C-47, killed the pilot, and severely wounded others in the plane. It crashed, killing all occupants. Another transport vanished into the surrounding mountains and was never heard from again, while the remainder of the second flight turned back to Port MoreSBY. The unarmed C-47's, skillfully scraping the treetops...
in making a getaway, still might have been at the mercy of the swift Oscars, had not P-39's of the 41st Squadron together with a few of the 40th pounced upon the Mi 10 planes. Four P-39's and one pilot were lost, but the Japanese bomber force was annihilated. At least 11 Sallys and 2 or 3 of the fighter escort were shot down. 37

The Japanese were no more persistent in their attacks on Allied ground positions during August than in previous months. They followed up the 15 August raid on Tseli Tseli with another on the following day, but the 431st Fighter Squadron and two squadrons of the 438th Group discouraged them on this occasion by knocking down approximately 15 of the strafing fighters. P-47's of the 348th Group in one of their first engagements providing low cover for transports, destroyed four of the enemy planes and lost one of their own. Meanwhile P-39's from the vantage point of a top-cover position had a field day in shooting down the remainder. The only complaint of the P-39 pilots was that the P-47 looked too much like the Zero. Except for these two attacks on Tseli Tseli, Japanese air raids on Allied ground positions in August were limited to little more than a few bombs dropped on the new bases on Kiridina and Woodlark islands. Of these probably the most serious was one of 11 August against Woodlark, then protected by the 67th Fighter Squadron, a veteran unit from Guadalcanal. In this raid five enemy aircraft dropped 18 bombs, destroying one P-39 and damaging three others. 38

Meanwhile the Allied Air Forces seemed to be studiously avoiding the rapidly developing base at Wewak. Actually the attack upon that...
point was to be sudden and overwhelming. It was not to occur until
medium bombers could join the heavies in more than 1,000 missions, until
Tsili Tsili was sufficiently developed and stocked with fuel to provide
a top-up-off base for fighters and an emergency landing field for
bombers, and until the Japanese had concentrated enough aircraft on the
four Aewak dromes to make a full-scale air offensive worth while. Not
until the middle of August was the stage properly set. By that time
the Fifth Air Force Service Command had completed modification projects
on sufficient B-25's to equip five medium bombardment squadrons; the
engineers had done a remarkable job in constructing the mountain-bound
Tsili Tsili base and the troop carrier units in supplying it; and
intelligence reports showed that more and more enemy aircraft were being
brought into Borem, But, Dagma, and Aewak.

During the first half of the month the 7 Bomber Command and the
First Air Task Force threw their bombers against barge movements and
enemy ground positions not far from Lae and Salamaan. Between 24 July
and 3 August, for example, at least 94 enemy barges were destroyed and
60 others damaged. A-2 calculated that the number of barges destroyed
represented a means of transporting a division of men or from 5,000 to
7,000 tons of supplies. Important as this destruction was, however, it
represented only a fraction of the total enemy barge strength in the
Southwest Pacific. Aerial photo spods and reports of observers between
2 and 5 August had shown 250 barges, luggers, and lighters at Fabelal,
26 at Borger Bay, 65 in Hansa Bay, and 35 to 40 in the Alexisafen-
Mading area. Allied planes, therefore continued to seek out and blast
the barge hideouts, carrying out in the next 10 days at least 69 B-25
and 12 A-20 sorties against these objectives. 39

The strikes against barge hideouts comprised only a fraction of
the total number of bombing attacks during the same period. A few planes
struck at points in New Britain such as Gasmata and at others against
the Madang area. The greatest concentration of bombs, however, was drop-
ped against enemy positions which the Allied ground troops in the
vicinity of Salamaua were finding increasingly difficult to crack. 40

Between 1 and 17 August the Fifth Air Force carried out at least 46 B-25,
9 B-26, 42 B-17, and 164 B-24 sorties on objectives in these forward
areas. In four raids the heavy bombers alone dropped over 500 tons of
bombs. 41

The results of these attacks were generally satisfactory. Anti-
aircraft positions were silenced; buildings, supply points, and munition
dumps were destroyed. Some of the official reports of results, however,
must be used with caution. For example, on 13 August 35 B-24's and 13
B-17's carried out a coordinated attack on the Salamaua area and in con-
junction with 9 B-26's dropped 178 tons of bombs. The official report
reads that the attack "caused large explosions and numerous fires,
photographs show 3/4's of buildings on isthmus destroyed; airstrome also
attacked, hangar destroyed, grounded bomber damaged." 42 The reports of
the squadrons, however, show that the mission was not completely suc-
cessful. In the first place, the designated targets on Koniataum Ridge
were closed in by clouds. The lead pilot failed to establish contact
with his colleagues, and some confusion resulted in designating a
secondary target, thus most bombs were salvaged in the water. The
64th squadron, now flying B-24's, had better luck. It could not locate
its primary target, but four B-24's dropped 32 x 1,000-lb. bombs in the
neighborhood of Salamaea, and some landed in the dump areas. But "no
damage from any of these thirty-two bombs was reported from visual
observation." A fifth B-24 dropped eight bombs; two fell in the water;
the others struck the Salamaea Isthmus and resulted in "one medium
explosion" and a demolished house. A three-plane element of the 65th
Squadron succeeded in "destroying buildings and starting fires," but a
second element had no success. The 403d Squadron attacked with equal
accuracy. One flight in dropping its bombs made "an overcorrection to
the left," and all bombs fell into the water. The other flight, however,
was quite successful in hitting Kela township and obtaining satisfactory
explosions.

Meanwhile the Japanese were building up their strength at Newak.
Aerial photographs on 30 July had shown only 19 light bombers on the
airfield at But. Improvements on the dumps, however, seemed to indicate
its future use by heavy aircraft. Four days later, there were 20
fighters and several light and medium bombers at Newak, 18 light bombers
and 5 fighters at But, and a total of 56 aircraft at Dugua including the
Army Type 100 medium bomber (Helen), a plane which had hitherto not
appeared in the Northeastern Area. This gradual build-up continued, and
on 13 August 8 medium bombers, 31 light bombers, and 69 fighters were
counted at Boram and Newak, and 34 mediums, 34 light bombers, and 23
fighters at But and Dugua.
By the middle of August therefore, a fruitful target existed in
the Newak drones. What is more, General Kenney had both the aircraft
and the bases necessary to make a series of heavy strikes against those
points. On 15 August, the two heavy bombardment groups in the North-
eastern Area, the 43d and the 90th, had 12 B-17's and 52 B-24's in com-
mision. At the same time the 38th Group (H) and the 3d Atack
Group had ready for combat 58 B-2501's and M1's, types capable of making
better than a 1,000-mile round trip. By this time too, the Telli
Telli drone was developed sufficiently to permit fighters (and bombers
in an emergency) to top off there.

The stage was set for the most decisive series of air strikes
carried out by the Fifth Air Force since the Bismarck Sea action. On
the afternoon of 16 August final plans were made. This was to be a
coordinated offensive by heavy and medium bombers. Eight squadrons of
heavies were to open the assault with night attacks on the four Newak
airdromes. After this preliminary softening, five squadrons of vicious
B-25 strafers, covered by a strong fighter escort, were to come in at
minimum altitude to bomb and strafe every plane still on the ground.

Between 2100 and midnight of 16 August, 12 B-17's and 38 B-24's
of the eight heavy bomber squadrons took off from Wards and Jackson
drones near Port Moresby. The weather was generally good, although there
were some clouds, and all aircraft reached the target except for two
B-24's which turned back because of mechanical difficulties. Shortly
after midnight, the first heavy bombers crossed the target; then
until after 0300 the attack continued with the 53d, 64th, and a part of
the 65th Squadrons hitting Dug; the remainder of the 65th and the
403d hitting But; the 319th, 31st, and a part of the 400th, Boram; and the 320th and the remainder of the 400th, Wewak drone. According to the plan, several of the leading planes were to drop incendiary bombs in order to illuminate the target for the remaining formations. Actually the attack did not conform exactly to the plan, and incendiaries and frag clusters littered the fields rather indiscriminately. Searchlights were annoying, antiaircraft fire was intense, and several night fighters attempted interception, but only three aircraft were lost, and these apparently not from enemy action.

Specific results from this mission cannot be determined. Photographs taken of Wewak, Boram, and Dagua prior to the next attack showed some 204 aircraft of which "at least 18 were unserviceable." But the chief mission of the heavy bombers had been to keep the Niu aircraft grounded and at the mercy of a morning B-25 strike, and this was accomplished. Between 0600 and 0630, the 8th, 13th, and 90th Squadrons took off from Dobodura, and the 71st and 405th Squadrons from Durand in Port Moresby. The Moresby-based B-25's met with a number of difficulties in making the 500-mile flight to Wewak, the deepest penetration of medium bombers into enemy-held New Guinea to that date. Of the 26 B-25's which started out from Port Moresby, only three reached the targets. The 71st Squadron with But as an objective, failed to make rendezvous with other Allied formations and turned back. Ten planes of the 405th Squadron were also forced back leaving only three to penetrate a bad weather front and hit Dagua. These three aircraft, however, were brilliantly successful. They scattered 105 x 25-lb. warheads which smashed at least 17 aircraft on the ground, fired over
5,000 rounds of .50-cal. ammunition, and shot down one of 15 intercepting Oscars. Meanwhile, 29 Dobodura-based strafer (out of 37 which set out) were smashing at Borem and Nenak. They dropped 736 x 23-lb. parafrags and claimed 736 hits. At Nenak the 90th Squadron rather conservatively claimed about 15 aircraft destroyed or damaged. More sweeping were the reports of the other two squadrons of the 5th Group. The 9th Squadron announced that at Borem of 40 to 60 aircraft at least 15 had been totally destroyed and 25 to 30 left burning. And the 13th Squadron, which was over the same airstrip at the same time as the 9th, reported that of the 70 to 80 enemy aircraft on the Borem runway, "all were believed destroyed or severely damaged." 49

Except for one fighter attack, which the B-25's themselves broke up, Japanese resistance was limited to fairly heavy antiaircraft fire. The success of the heavy bombers in keeping aircraft grounded was undoubtedly in part responsible for the lack of interception, but the superiority of the Fifth Air Force's escort might also have been discouraging enough to the Hiko interceptors to keep them at a distance. Almost every available P-38 contributed to make up perhaps the most powerful fighter cover yet furnished to bomber units in the Southwest Pacific. All P-38 units, the veteran 9th, 30th, and 39th Squadrons together with the 5 squadrons of the new 475th Group, participated. On 16 August, there were 127 of the twin-engine fighters in commission. Shortly after 0600 of the 17th, 99 of these planes took off from Dobodura and Noresby to form the escort. Of these, 16 planes turned back because of mechanical difficulties. The remainder, with the
comforting knowledge of adequate refueling facilities at Tsili Tsili, approximately halfway to the target, completed what to them was an uneventful flight with "nil" interceptions.\(^{50}\)

On the following day, Hwak was hit again. The weather on this occasion, however, proved less cooperative, and thwarted the efforts of some of the heavy bombers. Nine B-24's of the 64th Squadron, for example, dropped only one bomb, and the 65th, although releasing more bombs, had little success in hitting a vital objective. Only 26 out of 49 heavy bombers which set out for this daylight attack reached the target at all. The B-25's, however, were more successful. Sixty-two of these planes took off only a few minutes after the B-17's and B-24's. Fifty-three reached the target. Antiaircraft fire was heavy, and Japanese fighters reappeared and savagely attacked the low-flying strafers. Ten to 15 Zekes and Oscars intercepted a flight of the 405th Squadron led by Maj. Ralph Cheli, an ace B-25 pilot. An Oscar riddled one B-25, damaging the left engine nacelle, the fuselage, the left wing, and the right propeller blade, but the plane returned safely to base. The same Oscar then attacked Cheli's plane and scored numerous hits. With flames bursting out of his right engine and wing, Cheli led his flight across Dagua dome, strafed a row of from 15 to 20 enemy aircraft, instructed his wingmen to take over, and then crashed into the sea. Meanwhile, the American fighter cover of 74 P-38's had shot down 15 enemy fighters while losing 2 of their own.\(^{51}\)

During the remainder of the month, the offensive continued. B-24's carried out 102 more sorties, and B-25's an additional 21 against land...
targets in the 'ewak area. '2th objectives there seriously bothered, other heavy strikes were carried out against important enemy supply centers at 'enase Bay and 'alexishafen. On 25 and 28 August, over 70 B-25's, 30 B-24's, and 10 B-17's hit the 'enase Bay area, and on 29 August 48 B-25's struck at 'alexishafen. ' Luggers, launchas, and barges in the harbors were destroyed. Munition and fuel dumps were left in flames. From the first 'ewak raid on 17 August until the end of the month American flyers ran up an impressive score: B-25 gunners shot down 22 enemy aircraft while 2 Mitchells were lost in combat and 3 from other causes; B-24 gunners knocked down at least 35 enemy aircraft while 3 B-24's were destroyed in combat and 1 in an accident; American fighters in the Northwestern Area shot down 69 enemy planes while 6 P-35's were lost in combat and 3 P-38's and 4 P-47's from other causes. These well-substantiated figures, moreover, were dwarfed by Allied claims of Japanese planes destroyed on the ground at 'ewak. The official claims are that well over 200 aircraft were destroyed on the ground. It is obviously impossible to arrive at any definite conclusion as to the accuracy of this figure, but it has been revised somewhat by calculations of statisticians at AAF Headquarters. Their figure for the total number of aircraft destroyed on the ground in the Southwest Pacific Area during August is 175. In view of the fact that the largest total in previous months was six, the record for August is impressive indeed.

By the end of August, therefore, operations both by air, land, and sea were approaching a climax. Allied land forces were overcoming
strong Japanese defenses and were ready for a final push into Salamaua. An Allied naval force, the Seventh Amphibious Force, commanded by Vice Adm. Daniel Barbey, was ready for action, and several destroyers had already made a foray into the Russel Gulf to bombard a number of enemy shore positions there. The Allied Air Forces during July and August had increased their scale of effort to such an extent that in the latter month, they had performed more than twice the number of sorties carried out in June, and in so doing had softened up enemy land positions and virtually eliminated the threat from New Guinea-based Japanese air power. 53
Chapter VIII
SALAMANIA TO FLINSCHAEVEN,
1 SEPTEMBER-2 OCTOBER

The series of small but significant victories won by the Allied land forces following the Japanese repulse at Wau in February had brought both Australian and American units within sight of Salamaus. Indeed, with the exception of the activities of numerous, small Australian patrols, all Allied efforts seemed bent upon the capture of that enemy base. This obvious intent of the ground forces was actually a part of the "master plan." It was hoped that the Japanese would pour men and equipment into that vulnerable peninsula in order to meet the Allied threat. To some extent at least, the enemy did just that, and a considerable number of troops were drained from the garrison at Lae into the Salamaus area. 1

Actually the Allied offensive was not aimed at an initial capture of Salamaus. In fact, the Elkton Plan had originally envisaged an airborne force operating overland through the Markham River valley in conjunction with a shore-to-shore overwater movement leading to the capture of Lae. In this scheme of operations Salamaus was to be bypassed. 2 As the slow campaign from Wau, Morobe, and Nassau Bay toward Salamaus developed, however, original plans were modified. By the middle of August, it had been decided that the Seventh Amphibious Force, a part of MacArthur's naval strength, should land the 9th Australian Division east of Lae, that the major drive should then
commence against Lae itself, and that a subsidiary movement should
strike east toward Hopoi Mission and Finschaven. Meanwhile American
paratroops were to land at Nadzab, a flat, grass-covered area suitable
for transport landings on the Markham River 15 miles inland. When the
paratroops had secured this area, troop carrier units were to ferry in
the 7th Australian Division for a second drive on Lae. 3

For several months rehearsals had been held for the landings. By
the first week in August supplies and troops were pouring into Milne
Bay. On 20 August, all troops which were to land up to 6-hour plus 6
began to rehearse landing operations on the south coast of Normanby
Island. The 503d Paratroop Regiment, ready for combat at Port Moresby,
had already undergone extensive drills. Between 21 April and 6 May it
had practiced paratroop dropping missions with planes of the A7th
Troop Carrier Group near Cairns in Queensland. In June more rehearsals
were held prior to the regiment's departure for Port Moresby. 4

Final tactical decisions were made at Milne Bay, some of them
shortly before the actual embarkation of the amphibious force. In
general, plans were completed to the satisfaction of all concerned,
but there were a number of minor disagreements between representatives
of the Navy and of the Fifth Air Force. For example, there were dif-
fferences of opinion as to the method of providing air protection for
the convoy and as to the need for pre-invasion strafing. "Senior
Officers" of ADVON were at Milne Bay on several occasions to discuss
these and other problems, but according to the official Navy report,
did not have sufficient authority and were slow in making definite
decisions. 5
The final plan was not approved until shortly before D-day. On
the subject of air escort, Admiral at first favored convoy protection
by planes on ground alert, but was willing to compromise with those
who desired an "air umbrella." Ultimately it was decided to provide
a 32-plane cover as continuously as possible by day in addition to
squadrons on constant ground alert. The solution to the thorny problem
of whether or not to provide pre-invasion air and naval bombardment was
also a compromise. The land forces wished to approach in darkness with
the actual landing at 0515, approximately one hour before sunrise. The
Navy, on the other hand, insisted that because of inadequate means of
beach identification 24-hour would have to be after sunrise and set it
for 0630. Since this eliminated the possibility of tactical surprise,
a naval bombardment and air strafing attacks on shore positions were
considered desirable. However, strafers of the Fifth Air Force would
be unable to reach the objective much before 0700, and so it was decided
to resort only to a bombardment by five destroyers and to forego the
benefits of strafing. 6

Although decisions had thus been made on two general tactical pro-
blems, certain details for implementing them still remained. For
example, the determination to provide a continuous air umbrella over
the convoy did not specify how fighters maintained on ground alert
would be coordinated with those participating in the escort. There were
two fighter control sectors on the north coast of New Guinea, one at
Labodura and the other at Tulli Tulli. But the radar coverage of the
seas through which the convoy was to proceed was far from complete.
Sets were located in the Dobodura area and at Cape Ward Hunt, Morobe, Bulolo, Tauli Tauli, and Bena Bena. At this time, however, the set at Morobe was inoperative, and the towering mountains limited the range of the others. The set at Cape Ward Hunt gave some sea coverage, but did not reach Lae; consequently Japanese aircraft from Newak or Madang, could fly behind the mountains toward Lae; others from New Britain could swing across Vitiaz Strait; and neither could be picked up until it was too late for the available radar to provide adequate warning.

A more effective means of providing warning and fighter control was necessary. A suggestion from an Australian wing commander furnished a novel solution to the problem. He pointed out that a destroyer, posted between Lae and Finschaven, might serve as a floating radar station and provide far better coverage of the approaches to the beachheads than any available ground station. The suggestion met with immediate approval, and the destroyer Reid, serving also as a part of the anti-submarine patrol from Buna to Lae, was ordered to proceed for the purpose to a point approximately 45 miles southeast of Finschaven.

The fighter control network thus became a rather complicated one. On the destroyer were two controllers and two signal corps enlisted men armed with radar and radio sets, two loudspeakers, two voice receivers, two voice transmitters, and two 305-188 receivers. With this equipment the controllers were in a position to monitor the normal radio channels of the fighter sectors, including the one which transmitted information to "the General's Board at Moresby." In this way, they would be warned of the approach of aircraft picked up by radar sets in addition to those on the destroyer. Then with grease pencils they could record all
suspicious plots on gridded areas covered with pledgless. In addition to the party on the destroyer and the control squadrons at the various sectors, the 5th Tactical Air Communications Squadron furnished several parties to serve as air liaison units with the landing forces. T/Sgt. Edwin L. Lewis, for example, arrived at Tambu Bar on 28 August and immediately established radio communications with ADVON at Port Moresby. Another party, that of T/Sgt. James F. Birks, became more intimately connected with the amphibious operations when it was attached to the 9th Australian Division and placed under the command of an air liaison officer, Capt. George D. Ferrell. On 28 August, Birks’s detachment boarded an LST at Milne Bay which joined the convoy bound for the landing at Lae. 9

On the days immediately preceding the landing, the air force carried out heavy attacks on airfields, shipping, and supply points in both New Guinea and New Britain. The missions were generally protected by long-range P-39’s, but P-39’s and P-40’s were being pushed forward in preparation for an all-out offensive. By the middle of August the air echelons of the 40th and 41st Squadrons had joined their ground crews at Taiul Tauli, and by the end of the month the 8th Squadron, now equipped with new P-40X’s in place of the decrepit F’s, had made the flight to that isolated base. 10

The bombers opened their September attack on the 1st when 12 B-26’s, 12 B-25’s, and 5 B-26’s struck at barges, fuel dumps, and other supply points along the southwestern coast of New Britain; on the same day more than 40 B-25’s and approximately 20 B-24’s started
large fires in fuel and ammunition dumps at Alexishafen, more than
30 B-24's attacked the Kadong area, and 6 B-17's struck Lelu Island,
a strategic warning point near Lea. 11 B-25's, B-26's, and B-17's
returned to the Kadong targets on the following day, while B-25's
of the 71st and 405th Squadrons carried out an even heavier attack on
Wewak. These low-level strafers swept over the harbor at from 50 to
150 feet, under a cover of approximately 40 P-39's. They aimed 29
1,000-lb. delayed-action bombs at several small ships, and claimed 15
hits. Photos taken by the 405th Squadron, which had led the way to the
objective, showed "that 1 Fox Tare Able, 1 Fox Tere Baker, 1 Suger
Baker, and one P G (gun boat) were directly hit and destroyed or sunk.
2 or 3 smaller craft and one lugger were left burning." The 71st
Squadron, which attacked perhaps two minutes later claimed "2 Fox Bakers
believed sunk and many small vessels sunk or damaged." 12

These attacks were bitterly resisted. When 11 fighters intercepted
B-17's over Cape Gloucester, the bombers shot down two of the enemy,
and a P-39 cover destroyed at least five; as B-17 was lost. At least
25 fighters were still able to swarm off the much-bombed Wewak fields
to intercept the B-25 attacks, and enemy AA was heavy and accurate. The
40 P-39's, which were providing top cover, shot down at least six enemy
fighters and the B-25's shot down six more, while three B-25's and two
P-39's were lost. 13

While the largest Allied amphibious force yet to see action in
the Southwest Pacific was gathering off Buna on 3 September, the bombers
continued their strikes. Twelve Baeufighters, 18 B-25's, and 9 B-26's,
struck at Gesamte, Borgen Bay, and Cape Gloucester; 21 B-24's and 2
3-17's heavily bombed points in the Loe defense area, 9 B-25's strafed
machine gun emplacements "above Loe," and 11 RAAF Catalinas littered
Vunakanau and Labane with 500- and 1,000-lb. demolition bombs and
20-lb. frags in an attempt to keep Rabaul-based planes on the ground.

In the early morning of 4 September, while this last operation was
still in progress, the convoy neared its destination. Shortly after
0500, the destroyer Reid swirled off to take up its position as an air-
craft warning lookout off Finnschaven; the Cunningham moved ahead to
identify the beaches, and the landing craft began to find their assigned
positions. By 0630 the beaches, "Red Beach," about 14 miles east of
Loe near the Buse River, and "Yellow Beach," three miles east of "Red
Beach," had been identified. At 0615, the destroyers began to pour
hundreds of rounds of shell into the tiny beach area, and by 0630, the
first Australians had touched the shore. Within a few minutes 560 as-

dault troops had landed, and by 1030, LCP's, LCI's, LCT's, and LST's
had landed 7,800 men together with vehicles, guns, and stores.

Half an hour before the first wave of landing craft had touched
the shore, Allied aircraft took off from fields at Tulli Tulli, Dobodura,
and Port Moreby to participate in the operation. A few minutes later
the ground troops crouching in their landing vessels, were comforted
to see the first fighter formations, 16 P-38's from Tulli Tulli followed
by 14 P-38's of the Dobodura-based 485th Squadron roaring over the land-
ing area. At 0705 the air liaison party, preparing to land in the
fifth wave, saw what they thought were more Allied planes as three
twin-engine bombers dived rapidly out of a cloud. Suddenly the approaching planes turned toward the landing craft and opened up with forward guns; they were Vals (possibly Bettys) closely covered by six Zeke's. "Our reaction to this our first enemy fire was one of first, indignation, then bewilderment, not fear, that came a little later," wrote one member of the party. "We fell to the deck along with the Aussies and watched tracers bounce around us. Then the Nips released their bombs, we watched them almost curiously (we didn't know enough to be thoroughly frightened then) the bombs struck all about us, straddled our ship and one fell off the stern. A near miss on the LCI next to us blew a great hole in its port side and she broached... Then it was all over; the bombers had flown off to the east with a pack of P-38's on their tails." Three naval personnel were killed and nine wounded.

Allied bombing attacks began approximately an hour later. Just after 0800, 9 B-25's of the 13th Attack Squadron scattered 300-lb. demolition bombs from minimum altitude on the Hopoi landing ground near the beachheads. An hour later 24 B-24's dropped 96 tons of bombs on gun emplacements, buildings, and trucks on the Lee airfield. The barge hideouts and airfields of southern New Britain, too, were neutralized as B-24's and IAF Beauforts, Beaufighters, and A-20's hit the Gasmata airfield and points in the Cape Gloucester area.

Meanwhile the landing continued according to plan. By early afternoon the convoy was preparing to withdraw. Except for the early morning attack, there had been little enemy air interference, although
about 20 Japanese planes had dropped bombs sporadically around

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corvettes and destroyers along the coast. But at 1400, the radar on

the Reid picked up a large formation of bogies* approaching from a

point southwest of Gusmae and less than 100 miles away. At this time

Capt. W. H. Bell, fighter controller on the Reid, did not know the

exact position of the American fighters in the area. He did know

however, that one squadron was escorting landing craft already returning
to Buna, and that another was hovering over the land forces at Lae.

Every fighter pilot carried a grid map of the area in his cockpit
and was constantly tuned in to the radio frequency of his fighter con-
troller. Thus by sending the grid reference of the bogies over the
fighter frequencies every minute to the fighter sectors at Dobodura and

Tsili Tsili the Reid could trace the course of the incoming enemy, and
this information could be plotted by each fighter pilot. 17

Ball continued to watch the radar scope until it appeared that

the planes would soon be close enough to observe visually. He step-
ped out on the Reid's deck "and sure enough there they were, about 60

of them." The destroyer at that time, without fighter cover and 45
miles from land, would have made a relatively easy target for 60 enemy
craft. According to Ball, "that was a nasty moment for us" but after
an apparent hesitation, the formation turned and headed toward Morobe. 18

The radio operators on the Reid, meanwhile, were keeping a record
of the plots flowing to the fighter sectors. Capt. David Earle, con-
troller at Dobodura, ordered the 433d Squadron, still on ground alert,

* Unidentified aircraft.

**Flight Information**

* Unidentified aircraft.
to join the 30th which then was patrolling the Lae area. At the same
time, the 29th Squadron, which had moved from Schwimer to Taili Taili
for the Lee operation, was scrambled, and the 349th Squadron took off
from Wards Drome. Guided by information from the Reid, at least 40
P-39's and 20 P-47's were able to intercept the Japanese attack and
destroy at least 15 Zekes and 4 Betty's, the 30th Squadron alone ac-
counting for 11 Zekes. One P-39 was shot down. 19

This victory, however, came too late to prevent enemy bombers
from causing considerable damage to the shipping off Lae. Dive bombers
scored a near miss on the destroyer Convingham, scattering shrapnel on
the ship and wounding one man. Others attacked the destroyers Lassen,
Davyton, and Lucford, causing superficial damage to the first-named,
and scored a hit on an LST in which 26 Australians were wounded, and
one naval officer and six men killed. Twelve enemy torpedo planes also
skimmed over the water at an altitude of 50 feet, loosed torpedoes when
1,500 yards distant, and scored one hit on another LST. Forty-two men
were killed and 30 wounded; two of the torpedo planes were shot down.

At the time of this raid, troops and supplies were jammed on the
beach, and had bombs struck there, great damage might have resulted.
A sharp attack by an unspecified number of planes three hours later
fired an ammunition dump, killed two men, wounded 10 others, and damaged
two beached LCI's. By this time, however, the congestion on the beach
had been somewhat relieved. Engineers had pushed something resembling
a road through to Espoi village, 400 yards distant, and priorities of
travel from the beach to established positions inland were being as-
signed. 20
The air liaison party had been caught in the red tape of priorities.

It seemed for a while as if that small but essential party would be delayed on the beach indefinitely. However, Captain Ferrell, the ranking liaison officer, finally convinced Australian IPI's that there could be no requests for air cooperation until his party reached headquarters.

This brought immediate results, and it appeared that the Aussies were now "so anxious that we get in operation that if our vehicles had become mired, as a great many others did, they would have picked us up bodily and carried us to headquarters." Actually there was little need for air cooperation at this time. Australian forward elements were pushing forward so rapidly and meeting with such light resistance that no "Air support targets" were at that time available.

On 4 September, therefore, one phase of the attack upon Lae was going well and according to plan. To complete the pincer movement and to cut off the Japanese at Lae and in the Salamaua area from escape routes, Allied troops were scheduled to capture Naidzab, 20 miles northwest of Lae and a key to the Morobe River valley. Already a company or two of Australian troops together with some members of a Fijian infantry battalion, some of whom had come overland from Wau while others had floated down the Wempit River from Tseli Tseli, were almost within gunshot of this objective. Since these few hardy jungle fighters could not have dealt with an enemy counterattack in force, it had been planned to coordinate their arrival with a spectacular paratroop assault, the first combat drop in the Southwest Pacific.
The 54th Troop Carrier Wing, charged with the transport of the
paratroopers, was alerted early in the morning of 5 September. Eighty-
four of its C-47's, flying from wards and Jackson dromes, were to drop
the 505th Paratroop Regiment on the Kmai grass plains of Nadzab. For
a time the take-off was delayed owing to the failure of the radio on a
weather plane which had gone out in advance. But at 0825 the first
C-47's began to roll off the field. Within 15 minutes three flights
of 79 planes were in the air, the first flight consisting of the 65th
and 66th Squadrons; the second, of planes from the 375th Group; and
the third, of the 41st and 46th Squadrons. Over 30-Mile Airdrome, the
unarmed transports met part of their fighter cover which was to consist
of almost 100 planes—F-29's, P-47's, and P-38's. From there the C-47's
flew across the ranges at 9,000 feet "in 3-ship elements, in trail, on
top of the broken clouds." At Marilinan they maneuvered into "6-plane
elements in step-up right echelon, all three flights abreast," and
dropped from 3,500 feet to between 400 and 500 feet. At 0945 the para-
troopers were alerted and 21 minutes later were given the red light.
At 1022 the first paratrooper made his jump.

Two days later, General Kenney in a letter to General Arnold
described the entire coordinated assault as follows: "You already know
by this time the news on the preliminary moves to take out Iaen but I
will tell you about the show on the 5th September, when we took Nadzab
with 1,700 paratroopers and with General MacArthur in a B-17 over the
area watching the show and jumping up and down like a kid. I was fly-
ing number two in the same flight with him and the operation really
was a magnificent spectacle. I truly don't believe that another air
force in the world today could have put this over as perfectly as the 5th Air Force did. Three hundred and two air planes in all, taking off from eight different fields in the Koree and Jobodura areas, made a rendezvous right on the nose over Karilinin, flying through clouds, presses in the mountains and over the top. Not a single squadron did any circling or stalling around but all slid into place like clockwork and proceeded on the final flight down the Wajut Valley, turned to the right down the Yoricham and went directly to the target. Going north down the valley of the Wajut from Karilinin, this was the picture: heading the parade at one thousand feet were six squadrons of P-25 straffers with the eight .50 calibre guns in the nose and sixty frag bombs in each bomb bay; immediately behind and about five hundred feet above were six A-20's flying in pairs-three pairs abreast-to lay smoke as the last frag bomb exploded. At about two thousand feet and directly behind the A-20's came ninety six 0.47's carrying paratroops, supplies and some artillery. The 0.47's flew in three columns of three plane elements, each column carrying a battalion set up for a particular battalion dropping ground. On each side along the column of transports and about one thousand feet above them were the close cover fighters. Another group of fighters sat at seven thousand feet and up in the sun, staggered from fifteen to twenty thousand, was another group of 0.47's. Following the transports came five B-17's, racks loaded with three hundred pound packages with parachutes, to be dropped to the paratroopers on call by radio signals as they needed them. This mobile supply unit stayed over Nadzab practically all day serving the paratroops below, dropping a total of fifteen tons of supplies in this
manner. Following the echelon to the right and just behind the five supply B-17's was a group of twenty-four B-24's and four B-17's which left the column just before the junction of the Watut and the Marikham to take out the Jem defensive position at Heath's Plantation, about half way between Hedzab and Lee. Five weather ships were used prior to and during the show along the route and over the passes to keep the units straight on weather to be encountered during their flights to the rendezvous. The brass hats flight of three B-17's above the centre of the transport column completed the set up.

"The straffers checked in on the target at exactly the time set just prior to take-off. They straffed and frag bombed the whole area in which the jumps were to be made and then as the last bombs exploded the smoke layers went to work. As the streams of smoke were built up, the three columns of transports slid into place and in one minute and ten seconds from the time the first parachute opened the last of 1700 paratroopers had dropped. During the operation, including the bombing of Heath's, a total of ninety-two tons of high explosive bombs were dropped, thirty-two tons of fragmentation bombs and 42,580 rounds of calibre .50 \( \int_{0}^{a} \) and 5,150 rounds of calibre .30 ammunition were expended. At the same time nine B-25's and sixteen P-38's attacked the Jem refuelling airstrip at Gove Gloucester. One medium bomber and one fighter on the ground were burned and three medium bombers and one fighter destroyed. Two ackack positions were out of action and several supply and fuel dumps set on fire. Between five and a half and six tons of parafreggs were dropped and 19,000 rounds of calibre .50
ammunition fired. Simultaneously also, ten Beauforts, five A-20's and seven P-40's from the RAAF put the Jap refuelling field at Gemate out of action. No air interception was made by the Japs on any of the three missions. Our only losses were two Beauforts shot down by ack-ack at Gemate.

By 1204 all transports had returned safely to Port Moresby. Only one plane, whose cargo door had blown off in the flight, failed to complete its mission. The paratroopers, most of whom had landed in the tall Kunai grass, at first met slight resistance except for some sniper and machine-gun fire which temporarily pinned down a squad on its way to a predesignated assembly point. Soon, however, liaison had been effected with the Australians who had already reached the area by crossing the Markham River on a pontoon bridge, and by nightfall the Allies were ready to withstand a rather determined and noisy counterattack by small groups of Japanese troops. Within 24 hours Nadzab was secured.

Before this first day's fighting had ceased, engineers and communications personnel had joined the paratroopers. Colonel Woodbury, whose 671st Airborne Engineer Battalion had been in part responsible for the development of Talili Talili, was one of the first to land a plane. He flew in with a sniper cub, and under his directions some Australians and natives began clearing away the Kunai grass. On 7 September Company A of the 871st Engineers landed on the new strip, followed on the next morning by Company B and shortly thereafter by the remainder of the battalion. In one of the first transports to land on the primitive strip was an air liaison party whose leader, 2/Sgt. Kenneth E. Payton, was assigned to
establish communications with cooperating air units. In spite of a delay of three hours caused by a landing accident which had damaged the only radio set and the party's jeep into the fuselage of a C-47, its radio station was on the air five hours after the party landed. Within a week of the original parachute operation, the engineers had completed two parallel strips with one dispersal loop, and by 14 September Hedde had acquired two parallel runways of 100 x 6,000 feet and a dispersal area capable of handling 36 transports simultaneously.

By this time, the ground campaign against Lee and Salamaa was rapidly and unexpectedly reaching its climax. Troops of the 7th Australian Division had begun to pour into Hedde by means of air transport as soon as a landing was possible, and strong elements had driven down the Narikina valley toward Lee. The enemy offered strong resistance from prepared positions, but the skillful Australian troops swiftly broke them, and it was soon a race between the 7th Division and 9th Division, advancing from the east, to see which would reach Lee first. Meanwhile the American and Australian forces outside of Salamaa were relentlessly pressing toward their goal, some advancing along the coast, and others down the Francisco River. On 11 September they had reached the Salamaa airfield, and within a few hours it, the town area, isthmus, and nearby Kele Village were under a final assault.

The successes on the ground during September were particularly decisive when compared with the agonizing yard-by-yard advance of the previous months. They were accomplished after long preparation by the development of clever overall strategy climaxing by the overwhelming...
blows of 4 and 5 September. The Allied Air Forces during September contributed their share in delivering the knockout. Indeed, the spectacular paratroop drop and the successful ferrying of the 7th Australian Division was only a part of their contribution. Fighters were constantly on either patrol, escort, interception missions, or ground alert. Bombers, in addition to heavy strikes against airfields and barge hideouts in New Britain, renewed their attack on the Newak drones, and carried out 431 sorties in which approximately 800 tons of bombs were dropped "in support of" the Lae ground operations. 29

The capture of Salamaua on 13 September and of Lae three days later, although decisive triumphs, did not end the threat of an enemy counterattack in that area. Moreover, these objectives were only the first of a long series which were to carry MacArthur's men far along the New Guinea coast. Japanese forces were still located at points up the Markham River valley. These forces were to be eliminated by the 7th Australian Division, transported and supplied by troop carriers. An immediate need, therefore, was for airfields which could be used by the Australians in making relatively easy hops over terrain which was almost impossible to penetrate on the ground. Again Capt. Everette Frerier was called upon to reconnoiter the area and to choose suitable sites for drones. He immediately set out from Nadzab in a cub plane, and a few minutes later landed on a "long-level burned off place" on the Leron River a few miles from Jap-held Kaisuit. The latter village was the objective of an Australian Independent Company which was being ferried to the Leron River strip in C-47's. By 26 September the Australians, aided by Peashen infantry, had rooted the enemy out of their defense positions and had
assisted Frazier in improving the old airstrip. Soon transports were flying in more troops and supplies and evacuating the wounded. Frazier pushed on with the Australians to a point on the Markham River near Sagerac. Here some of the Diggers succeeded in pulling themselves across the river by a rope, but the crossing was slow and exceedingly difficult. According to an Australian officer, an airstrip across the river at Sagerac would be worth a battalion. By 25 September a field was located, and transports were again "leap-frogging the 7th Airborne Division" forward.

This process of gaining control of airfields in the Markham and Romu River valleys was a prelude to further operations to be carried out against Madang and other points to the west. The success of these operations would secure for the Allies the land approaches to the Huon Peninsula. Meanwhile, however, the capture of Lee and Salemaua, accomplished much sooner than expected, led to a change of plans so far as amphibious operations were concerned. The original schedule had included a landing near Finschhafen approximately four weeks after the fall of Lee. This point, strategically located on the Huon Gulf and approximately 64 miles beyond Lee, was to be developed as a concentration point and staging area for future advances and as a forward base for aircraft and light surface ships. The weakness that the Japanese had displayed in the area, however, encouraged the officers of the Seventh Amphibious Force and of the First Australian Corps to reconsider on 17 September a possible acceleration of the timetable. Three days later, General MacArthur approved plans which scheduled the Finschhafen landing for 23 September.
Less than five days, therefore, elapsed between the decision to stage the operation and F-hour. Obviously there was no time for a rehearsal, but the Lee operation had provided the necessary experience. Troops flushed with victory were at near-by Lee, and landing craft and destroyers had had a field day of unquiet at Milne Bay. The air force too had profited by its contribution in the capture of Lee. As the landing craft moved from Bune to Lee for the new amphibious venture and as the troops and equipment were loaded there, the Fifth Air Force provided almost continuous fighter cover at two levels, and the destroyer Reid again acted as a fighter-control ship. On this occasion, however, the Reid remained constantly with the convoy. It was believed that since a large force of fighters were to provide a constant escort, better contact could be provided there rather than from a point 30 to 70 miles away. 32

Meanwhile, Allied bomber units carried out attacks on Japanese airfields, supply dumps, and reinforcement routes to Finschhafen. On 20 September, 12 B-24's started "large fuel fires" on Newak and Dorem air-dromes; and 47 B-25's, 8 B-17's, and 2 F-39's struck at bridges, trucks, and barges in the Kondung area. On the following day, 16 B-25's followed up that attack, destroying four bridges and strafing crops and villages, while Beauforts and RAF A-20's hit Cassete and 33 B-24's bombed bivouac areas and supply dumps at Cape Gloucester. 33

During the night of 21-22 September the convoy, which had been loaded at Lee, moved east along the coast and rounded the tip of the Huon Peninsula. The landing was to take place at "Scarlet" Beach near the Song River. Although the beach had been carefully chosen, the information...
available to the amphibious force on its characteristics left much to be
desired. A small party had scouted the shore from 11 to 14 September,
but Japanese activity in the area had thwarted efforts to obtain informa-
tion. Useful photographs also were lacking. Only one set of obliques
was available to the Seventh Amphibious Force on 17 September, although
special low obliques and verticals had previously been requested. Several
sets of low verticals were taken and delivered during the night of 19
September, but the set of black and white prints, which was furnished, in-
cluded unfortunately only one corner of the beach, and according to the
naval report, "were useless for beach information." A photograph in
color covered the beach and the shallow water on the southern half of the
beach. This, together with photographic interpretation previously seen by
naval officers at Port Moresby, resulted in a decision to beach only 3
LSIs simultaneously.

The landing which occurred at 0445 on 22 September was preceded
by a sharp naval bombardment. There was no pre-invasion strafing of the
beaches, but long before dawn the air assault commenced against other
spots. Twenty-one B-26s of the 34th and 3021 Squadrons began to strafe...
passage, with the result that "all buildings were destroyed." The B-25's also hit some buildings, but the weather was cloudy and their results were generally unobserved. 35

Meanwhile, the Australians were making rapid progress. After consolidating the beachhead, and breaking through newly prepared positions near-by, they pushed forward toward the air strip. An air liaison party under the command of Captain Ferrell had landed with the first waves, but at first there was little need for direct air co-operation. The landing was virtually unopposed, and within seven hours 5,300 troops, 180 vehicles, 32 guns (Australian 25-pounders and 40-mm. AA), and 350 tons of supplies and equipment had been landed. 36

Shortly before noon the ships in the convoy weighed anchor, and started back toward Buna. Until now the amphibious force had met little or no air opposition. Less than an hour after the departure from the Finschhafen area, however, the fighter controller on the Reid began to chart a formidable series of plots coming from New Britain and within less than 70 miles of the destroyers. Obviously, their objective was the convoy, but the Japanese had chosen an inopportune time, from their point of view, for this attack. At least three American squadrons, the 341st with P-47's, the 26th with P-40F's, and the 29th with P-39's, had been patrolling the Lae-Finschhafen area for several hours. They were scheduled for relief within a very few minutes, but they had sufficient fuel left for perhaps an hour of combat flying. The relieving squadrons, the 9th and the 432d, were preparing to take off shortly before noon for their scheduled patrol. Thus at least five fighter squadrons were available for interception. 37
Captain Bell and his crew on the Reid at once directed the five squadrons of fighters to take positions above the convoy. One squadron claimed that the controllers reported the enemy at the wrong altitude, but Bell had tried to provide against this contingency by staggering flights of fighters at altitudes from 14,000 to 20,000 feet. The Japanese planes, from 20 to 30 bombers and from 30 to 40 fighters, flew unhesitatingly into the trap. In less than an hour the American fighters had shot down from 10 to 14 bombers and 39 fighters. The destroyers' antiaircraft, meanwhile, had knocked out nine of 10 torpedo planes which had swooped in at such a low altitude that the radar had failed to detect them. No damage was done to the Allied convoy in this attack, and out of three P-38's shot down at least one pilot was saved. 38

Hinscheven, in the meantime, was becoming the objective for another pincer operation. In addition to the Australians landed on Scarlet Beach, others were working up from their earlier landings at Hopi village. This latter advance at first made only slow progress, but by 23 September the main force had captured one of the Hinscheven air strips, and an air liaison party had established its radio set at the south end. The campaign, although going according to plan, was difficult. Strong ground positions south of the swiftly flowing Buni River had to be knocked out one by one, and Japanese air attack occasionally hampered the advance. On 24 September, for example, nine enemy bombers attacked the air liaison party's headquarters. The first warning was given by "the roar of strafing runs." Then came the frag bombs. The radio set was knocked out, and three of the party including Captain Ferrell, its commander, were killed. 39
The scale of Japanese effort, however, was insignificant when compared with that of the Fifth Air Force. Routine attacks were continued on airfields at Cape Gloucester and Sar迫使, on barge hideouts in New Britain and New Guinea, and on communications in the Madang area; but the heaviest attacks, as in the previous month, were against the air and shipping facilities at Newak. For these missions, some of the fighters which provided the escort used servicing and refueling facilities at an advanced airfield approximately three miles from the much-bombed Australian post at Buna Buna. A detachment of the 478th Service Squadron consisting of 14 enlisted men and commanded by Lt. William J. Porter had landed on that remote field, known as New Garouka, on 31 August. Within a few hours they had dispersed fuel drums, oxygen cylinders, and their miscellaneous equipment around the strip and prepared a campsite near-by. For the next few weeks, they had waited for the projected Newak strikes, meanwhile enjoying an occasional softball game with the "Australian Independents" who patrolled that area. On 25 September, the Americans were instructed to prepare for servicing and refueling. By 0530 of the following day the first planes had arrived, and within a short time 42 fighters were being serviced on the strip.

Thus the stage was again set for an overwhelming attack against the most important Japanese base in New Guinea. On 26 September 11 B-24's protected by 15 P-38's dropped approximately 35 tons of bombs on But and Degue airdromes; on the following day 17 B-24's, followed an hour later by 90 to 100 B-25's, swept over airfields and harbor installations, dropping more than 160 tons of bombs. Three B-25's were shot down by antiaircraft.
but according to the official report the 3-25's "left 3 tankers afire and
sinking, sank or probably destroyed 4 x 1000/5000-ton merchant vessels,
destroyed or severely damaged 9 barges, 5 launches, 10/14 barges." In
addition, there was an "estimated total \( \int \) of \( 50 \) grounded aircraft
destroyed" on the airfields. In the meantime, an overwhelming cover of
121 Allied fighters shot down eight of 20 Japanese interceptors that
ventured into the air. On 28 September, just before noon, 40 2-34's
again with strong fighter protection, hit supply dumps in Wewak town and
on the airstrips. Almost 150 tons of bombs were dropped, and according
to the official report the main ammunition and fuel dumps were "considered
destroyed." 41

The town of Finschaven fell to the Australian veterans of the 9th
Division on 3 October, 10 days after the amphibious landing. The last
days of the campaign were marked by stiff enemy resistance overcome only
by hand-to-hand fighting and by close cooperation of air units including
a squadron of RAAF Vengee dive bombers. Other Australians moving rapidly
along the coast from their positions at Koki arrived in time to cut off
the escape to the south of many of the Japanese garrison.

The capture of Finschaven by no means ended the campaign. A part
of the garrison had escaped northward to Sattelberg, and many other
Japanese strongholds in New Guinea had not yet been touched. Even Wewak
had only been neutralized. The offensive had just begun. 42
IX

CONCLUSIONS

The campaign ending with the capture of Hinscheven had not only established an Allied control of the Huon Gulf area, but had already given promise of further successes which were to lead eventually to the reconquest of the Philippines. The offensive pattern outlined by General MacArthur months before, in which land and naval forces were to seize points for the progressive advance of air bases, was being proved strategically and tactically sound. This required the use of air, land, and sea forces in a close coordination in which the role of land forces was to assist in pushing air units forward. But if the role of the infantrymen expressed in these terms was a subordinate one, it was certainly the toughest of all assignments. Theirs was the task of rooting the Jep out of his cleverly constructed cave or of performing nerve-wracking jungle patrols, and of living in constant contact with jungle insects and disease. In a theater considered secondary in importance, they had little prospect of relief. So far as the ground units immediately involved were concerned, this first great offensive campaign was primarily an Australian show. Australian independent companies, militia units, and Pacific infantry commanded by AIF officers had fought an unbelievably heroic campaign in the isolated Gau, Hula, and Beni Beno areas, and the veteran 7th and 9th Australian Divisions had captured Lee and Hinscheven. But some American ground units had also contributed their share. The 163d Regiment, for
example, between 23 June and 1 September had been in almost constant
contact with the enemy, some for as much as 30 days without relief.
Actually with the exigencies of the campaign, no rotation or relief was
possible. The regiment had suffered the following casualties: 5 officers
and 82 enlisted men killed, 46 officers and 343 enlisted men wounded. The
E/O strength for the regiment was 160 officers and 3,374 enlisted men. The
effective combat strength as of 9 September was 71 officers and 1,094 men.

Although land action had been primarily in Australian hands from June
through Hinschoven, the air operations, at least in the northeastern area,
were predominately American. The RA F, to be sure, contributed at least
one B-24 Liberator, one B-25, one A-20, and two or three P-40 Squadrons
to the offensive, but these played a subordinate role to that of the Fifth
Air Force, to which the Australian units were attached for operational
purposes. Throughout the Huon Peninsula Campaign, from January to October,
the functions of the Fifth Air Force remained chiefly those of a tactical
air force: to defeat the enemy air force, to isolate the battlefield, and
to carry out sorties in direct cooperation with the ground forces.

From January through June 1943, the Fifth Air Force had more than it
could do in performing these functions. Its combat units were little more
numerous than they had been throughout the fall of 1942—two heavy, one
and one-half medium, and one light bombardment groups, three fighter groups,
and two troop carrier groups. Moreover, many of these units were equipped
with worn-out aircraft and were manned by war-weary personnel; the flow of
replacements, both in equipment and personnel, could not be relied upon;
and even those units ready for combat frequently had to be used for other

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then true combat missions. The vast majority of heavy-bombardment sorties, for example, were for reconnaissance purposes, usually flown singly. Such flights were vital, but nevertheless reduced to the number of B-17's and B-24's available to carry out bombardment missions. Medium bombers too were used for other than combat purposes. Some B-25's were employed to convey supplies, others carried out antisubmarine patrols, courier flights, and even supply-dropping missions. Indeed in April and May, of all bomb units, there were frequently only two squadrons, one of B-30's and the other of B-25's, used entirely for combat operations.

Under these circumstances, it was fortunate that General Kenney had available a competent and adequately efficient service command. The depots at Brisbane, Townsville, and later at Fort States, performed wonders in erecting and maintaining the equipment which constantly flowed through the numerous ships. By skillful workmanship, their engineers and 'wineges' contributed to the efficiency of the relatively for combat units. Moreover their ingenuity in modification added armor and fuel tanks which increased the range and the general effectiveness of bombers and fighters and thereby aided in the perfection of new combat tactics.

By midsummer the situation had rapidly improved. There was some promise of a regular flow of attrition personnel to the Southwest Pacific, and of the replacement of outdated aircraft by new models more heavily armored and longer ranged. Numerous reinforcements too had arrived by the fall. The combat units had increased to three heavy, three medium, and one light bombardment groups, five fighter groups, and four and one-half troop carrier groups; the Service Command to five air depot groups, eight
Thus the Fifth Air Force was rapidly becoming strong enough to carry out its tactical functions. Particularly successful were its efforts in performing that was perhaps its task of highest priority: the defeat of the enemy air force. Bombers and fighters contributed equally in establishing air superiority over Northeast New Guinea and New Britain. Fighters in defending Allied bases and in escorting bombers and transports ran up an impressive score maintaining close to a 10 to 1 ratio of wins over losses. Bombers, generally successful in defending themselves against Japanese fighters, won perhaps their greatest victories of the campaign in August and September when they were officially credited with destroying over 250 planes on the ground, most of these at Wewak. Indeed the Japanese air force in the area had been so completely cowed that from January to September 1943, they carried out no more than an average of one sortie per bomber per month, according to Allied Intelligence estimates.  

In isolating the battlefield, the Fifth Air Force met with mixed success. Following the enemy's disastrous defeat in the Bismarck Sea action of March, few if any Japanese convoys attempted to penetrate the Huon Gulf. For a time, however, all kinds of shipping poured into Hanse Bay, Wewak harbor, Hollandia, and other points in New Guinea further to the northwest. Heavy bombers carried out numerous strikes with some success against these concentrations, but not until August did medium bombers begin to sweep over Hanse Bay and Wewak at masthead level and thus threaten to establish a serious blockade of that portion of the coast. As it became increasingly
difficult for their cargo vessels to reach New Guinea, the Japanese began to rely more and more upon barges, submarines, and destroyers. The Fifth Air Force, therefore, increased the number of sorties against rivers and lagoons where small vessels could take refuge. But enemy barges were numerous and elusive, and the traffic was never entirely eliminated. With bombing efforts concentrated upon objectives in New Guinea and in Southern New Britain, other targets of importance such as Rabaul, Kavieng, and Buka received less attention from the Fifth Air Force in the summer than in previous months. Even then results had frequently been described as unobserved, although the harassing effect of the January, February, and some of the later raids must have been considerable. An entry for 5 February in a captured Japanese diary, for example, stated that "During the stay in Rabaul there was a raid every night. Allied planes usually bombed about 6 to 7,000 feet at night. During one raid two Japanese fighters and one bomber were destroyed. On another occasion between February 5 and 10, a single bomber (Fortress) glided in with engines cut, at very low altitude and bombed a line of fighters on Lekunai strip. Several caught fire and, aided by the wind, 30 or 31 fighters and 3 bombers were destroyed." 4

Definite results of sorties carried out in direct cooperation with ground troops were also difficult to determine. Jungle country was not suited to such operations, and most bombings had to be carried out beyond a bomb line, at a safe distance from friendly troops. Liaison parties, however, were convinced of the success of many of the air attacks upon carefully selected strong-points, and there is little doubt that the constant hemming of tracks, supply points, and airfields in the Lae-Salama area contributed much to its speedy conquest when the offensive
51st TROOP CARRIER WING
TONS OF CARGO DELIVERED
YEAR OF 1943

Grand Total
OF TONS
DELIVERED
139,917

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374 E. TROOP CARRIER GROUP ONLY

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really got under way in September. The strafing of native villages, however, was possibly overdone. It is highly probable that the natives objected to it, and hostile natives multiplied the difficulties of rooting out the Jap. Moreover, it is not always clear that villages attacked were harboring the enemy. On the other hand, AECAN officers and the Americans who patrolled in native territory had some success in explaining to the natives the reasons for Allied attacks. These explanations were frequently accompanied by assurances that if the natives cooperated in expelling the Jap, air attacks would cease. The official report of the 1626th Regiment on its operations from Buna to Salamaua had this to say about the general effect of air cooperation:

Close ground support by air support planes was found to be almost impossible not only because of the difficulty in designating friendly front lines and indicating the target to pilots, but the friendly troops had to be not less than 500 yards from the target. Bombing and strafing of rear areas and supply lines however was very successful as was the long range bombing program against Jap bases and fields. Air superiority is a marvelous help to ground troops.

One form of air cooperation, particularly important in the Southwest Pacific where overland transportation was so difficult, was carried out by troop carrier units. Their performance in the Hedzab operation was a spectacular success, but perhaps less significant than the routine, day-by-day transport of freight and personnel by DAT in Australia and by the troop carrier units on their supply missions to Wew, Wubo, Bens Bena, and particularly to Teili Teili, a base entirely dependent upon air transport for its existence. When landing strips were available, air supply, although somewhat dependent upon the whim of the weather, was highly satisfactory. This was particularly true when the troop carriers could
complement their freight-carrying activities by evacuating the sick and wounded. But when ground forces were dependent upon "biscuit-bombing," difficulties multiplied. Colonel Mackenzie, analyzing the results of supply-dropping to units of the 162d Regiment, concluded that it was both undependable and wasteful of both supplies and manpower and should be resorted to only in the greatest emergency. He stated that pilots had difficulty in locating dropping grounds and in dropping supplies on them, that recovering of supplies dropped without parachutes varied from 40 to 75 per cent, but that ammunition parachuted to the ground averaged from 85 to 95 per cent recovery. It was also wasteful of personnel, according to Mackenzie, since provisions had to be made to recover the supplies, establish dumps, and distribute the rations and ammunition to the troops. But even in this rather unfavorable report, Mackenzie admitted that one infantry battalion and one battery of 75-mm. howitzers had been supplied entirely by dropping for a period of five weeks.  

Another form of cooperation in which the Fifth Air Force was generally successful was in coordination with the landings carried out by the Seventh Amphibious Force. This was a new experience and required the testing of new methods of fighter cover and of supplementary bombing and strafing attacks. The planning staffs worked well together as the success of the Elsakan operation, planned and carried out in little more than five days, demonstrated. Moreover official Navy reports indicated an appreciation of the difficulties of providing continuous fighter cover, and commended the efforts of the Fifth Air Force in this regard, particularly those of the fighter controllers aboard the Reid.  

CONFIDENTIAL

SECURITY INFORMATION
The principal complaint directed against the air command by those participating in amphibious landings was the lack of aerial photographs. For example, infantry battalions or companies seldom had any aerial photos, and what is more, even the 162d Regiment on several occasions had no pictures of important areas of operation. The Navy, also, believed that this function of the Fifth Air Force was being neglected. Following the Naples attack, a naval report stated that beach photography which should have been one of the first air force responsibilities in a joint operation had not yet been afforded the priority or technical study necessary, and that the Fifth Air Force had insufficient means to produce suitable pictures in time for proper study of an objective. This report pointed out that the only unit in the Southwest Pacific trained and equipped to make photographs useful for amphibious planning was the 8th Photo Squadron, that its commitments in other fields of photo reconnaissance permitted the furnishing of only a small fraction of the pictures necessary for planning, and that it had only one plane equipped for taking beach pictures.

These and other minor complaints, however, were insignificant when compared with the Allied victories on Iwo Jima. The successes had made possible what General MacArthur considered the chief purpose of his offensives: the creation of advanced bases for land-based air power. With the cooperation of engineer troops, AMC officers, Australian patrols, natives, and other scouts who ventured into territory sometimes within gunshot of the enemy, an entirely new series of bases was established on New Guinea and near-by islands. ADMCN still retained its headquarters at
Fort Haresby; Milne Bay was still an important staging base; but neither of these points could be considered in the forward areas. From Milne Bay a series of Allied bases at Goodenough, Kiriwina, and Woodlark islands extended into the Solomon Sea in the direction of Japanese-held New Britain. From Fort Haresby the main channel of communication went to Dobodura. But even that extensive and rapidly developed headquarters of the First Air Task Force, with its three airfields* and seven runways, had fallen behind the line of advance. One hundred and fifty miles to the northwest, Tsili Tsili, headquarters of the Second Air Task Force, had been hastily constructed for the express purpose of contributing to operations necessary for the capture of Buna. It was a dry-weather base, and had to be evacuated before the rainy season, but fortunately the campaign progressed rapidly enough so that when the September rains began, the units at Tsili Tsili could move forward, this time to Nadzab. Thus by the first of October, engineers again were improving runways and building taxiways and dispersal facilities to develop Nadzab as the new base for the Second Air Task Force. Others, meanwhile, were pushing up the Markham Valley first to Kavieng and then to Gueru, destined to become the base of units attached to still another air task force.

Living conditions at these bases naturally varied with the length of time that units had been in the area. Life at Tsili Tsili, for example, was described as "rugged," but at Dobodura, there had been numerous changes for the better. Tents which at first were on the ground had been raised at least three feet; mess halls were built with cement floors; and permanent dispenseries and water towers were constructed. The incidence of

* Fornds, Borio, and Foki.
disease, which early in the year had been rather high, rapidly decreased during the summer. More emphasis on control methods contributed to this improvement. The 13th Malaria Control Unit, after its arrival at Dobodura in August 1943, drained mosquito-breeding areas, gave lectures and demonstrations, and formed antimalaria units within each organization. Recreational facilities at Dobodura were also improved. There was a softball league supplemented by provisions for volleyball and badminton. Movies were generally held three times weekly, and occasional USO shows provided highly acceptable entertainment. For example, late in August, the 49th Group enjoyed the third USO show in its "Zambogie" theater. Harry Ross, a former night-club master of ceremonies, the Peese Brothers, and Hal Gustavison, an accordion player, entertained about 3,000 soldiers for an hour. There were some complaints when it was learned that Metropolitan Opera stars were to provide the next USO entertainment on 17 September, but Lenny Heatfield, base baritone, and Adlin MacArthur, conductor, pianist, and accordion player, electrified the audience with their first number. To entertainment at the "Zambogie," according to the unit history, was more appreciated or met with more enthusiasm.

Not only at Dobodura, but throughout the theater living conditions had improved. The delivery of mail, if properly addressed, was superior, and V-mail was received at most units in New Guinea within 10 to 14 days of its posting. The men were paid promptly, although money was of such slight importance in the forward areas that it was usually not drawn more than once every three or four months. By late summer, the all-important subject of food was viewed with more enjoyment. Food and nutrition...
officers had worked wonders. They organized mess-management teams, and succeeded in providing fresh meats and vegetables in increasing amounts. Fresh milk, however, was not provided in the forward areas, and there still was almost universal complaining about dehydrated foods.

The health of officers and men of the Fifth Air Force varied between the two extremes, generally depending upon the length of time spent in New Guinea. Medical records showed that between 1 June and 31 August an average of 13.24 patients a day were admitted to sick report per 1,000 officers and men in the Fifth Air Force. There was a daily average of 62.07 patients in hospitals (1.1 per 1,000 men in the air force) and an average of three men a day were evacuated to the United States for medical reasons.

In spite of medical precautions, and the general reduction of the incidence of malaria, dengue, and the diarrheas, the resistance of men to disease in some of the units was low. Extended service in the tropics was probably in part responsible for this. For example, the average loss of weight of those transferred to the tropics was 10 pounds. Unit medical reports were particularly disturbing. The surgeon of the 46th Service Group stated: "The health of this command is now approaching a problem status. On occasions I have noted lower blood pressure anemia in about twenty-one per cent, and poor heart muscle tone in thirty per cent. These symptoms are not due in my opinion to specific diseases, but living over a considerable period under adverse and difficult conditions. This in time leads to carelessness with consequent innumerable accidents, bruises, lacerations, contusions, abrasions of parts of the body that cause loss of
a considerable number of men days. They simply do not care what happens being in a state of mental fatigue." 18

This condition, generally known as combat fatigue, was one of the most critical personnel problems in the Southwest Pacific. It was apparently caused by any number of factors, including considerations of food, recreation, and physical condition. The morale of combat crews, for example, was improved when new and better equipment began to flow with some regularity to the theater, when they were given a portion of whiskey upon returning from combat, and when they were assured of awards for participating in a certain number of missions. But more important, perhaps, than any of these factors was homesickness together with the absence of a definite rotation policy. Without a set goal combat crews who flew in a torrid climate characterized by frequent rains and poor visibility became nervous and depressed. With the inconsistent replacement policy of the previous spring and early summer, General Kenney had no other resort than to keep some crews flying until they had burned out no matter how many combat hours they had flown. The crews, however, did get periodic leaves to Austria, and with the assurances of more replacement personnel, conditions improved. There was even some hope of reaching the goal which Kenney had set of sending his crews home when they had flown 300 combat hours. 14

The state of mind of air crew was far better than that of ground and service personnel. General Kenney frequently warned the War Department of the dangers of leaving men too long in the tropics. Late in July, he pointed out that with a ground crew replacement rate of 1% per month, he
could not maintain unit strength, and added that the men who had been
in New Guinea for a year were becoming tired and listless. Actually the
10 per cent replacement rate was calculated to meet losses, replacements
only, and there had been no provision made for a rotation policy. Furth-
more, little hope was held out for an early improvement. General Arnold
informed Kenney on 31 August that "the manpower situation is so critical
that industrial progress is threatened and increase in troop basis will
be most difficult to obtain." 15

"The lack of a rotation policy was reflected on 23 July in the following
extract from a directive signed by General MacArthur: "The necessity for
an indefinite period for using all available shipping for the transporta-
tion to this theater of additional units and of replacements to maintain
the strength of the command will operate to prevent the return of indi-
viduals or units to the United States under any rotation policy or at the
end of any specified period of duty. Except for the physically unfit, for
air crew personnel returned under a special policy, and for personnel
definitely unqualified for duty in the command, personnel can be returned
only under the most exceptional circumstances." 16 This directive was a
depressing blow to the many ground and service personnel who had been in a
combat theater for more than a year. A medical report of the 585th Aircr-
ect Forwarding Battalion showed that the number of men on sick call in-
creased 50 per cent after learning of the content of the directive, and
in general throughout the theater "the personal outlook of the men was very
exceedingly depressing, and their morale low." 17

Since there seemed little immediate chance of providing definite
rotation, various efforts were made to alleviate the situation in the

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SECURITY INFORMATION
The most important of these was the adoption of a policy which permitted enlisted men to have a furlough in Australia. This policy varied from time to time, but in general, one week's furlough (exclusive of travel) was allowed for every six months in New Guinea. The existence of this policy, however, did not necessarily mean that all enlisted men would automatically obtain a furlough. The military situation and the lack of transportation were inconvenient obstacles. Indeed, it was so difficult to obtain transportation from New Guinea to Australia that a member of a ground crew or a service unit could rarely expect his seven days until he had served for 10 months in New Guinea. Even then, he could go only to certain specified areas, patrolled by PLAs. Sydney was a favorite furlough area, but few could obtain transportation to that distant city. Another leave area was at Camp Jockey in northern Queensland. This camp had been constructed purposefully for recreation and was well stocked with food and beer, but its construction was received with little more than moderate enthusiasm by enlisted men, principally because of the scarcity of girls.

War weariness among ground crews and service personnel was probably the most serious weakness within the Fifth Air Force. In general, however, General Kenney's organization was a well-commanded, smoothly running team. Indeed, Kenney believed that even war-weary veterans, who worked about half as hard as when they had first arrived in New Guinea, were accomplishing as much as before because with time they did fewer things wrong. Experience and ingenuity, together with the infusion of new blood and the arrival of new equipment, had multiplied the effectiveness of the air force in the course of a few months, and by July these factors had
began to take effect. In June the Fifth Air Force had carried out 2,703 sorties, dropped 752 tons of bombs, and destroyed 1 plane on the ground and 36 in the air. In September it carried out 10,377 sorties, dropped 2,296 tons of bombs, and destroyed 83 planes on the ground and 223 in the air. From January through September, it suffered in casualties 319 officers and 759 enlisted men killed, 160 officers and 192 enlisted men missing, and 24 officers and 52 enlisted men wounded.* Lea, Salama, and Mischoven, points which had been captured by the Japanese in March of 1942, had been recaptured by the coordinated efforts of all forces in the Southwest Pacific. These were only three important bases of many held by the Japanese in New Guinea, New Britain, and the Netherlands East Indies. But with their capture, and with the forward advance of air units, there seemed little reason to doubt that such successes could be repeated. In the words of General Arnold: "The sledge hammer blows of air power were impressive examples of how enemy bases can be pulverized and target areas reduced to a shambles cutting sharply the cost of victory in lives and time." 19

* Officers in these casualty figures include members of combat crews only.
**GLOSSARY**

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<td>ALFSAT</td>
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<td>AFAAP</td>
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<td>AFACG</td>
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<td>APADS</td>
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**SECURITY INFORMATION**

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Chapter I


2. "Japanese Intentions in the Pacific," a report prepared by members of the JFS shortly after the 35th meeting, 16 Sep. 1942, in AP 370.5 Pacific Theater (9-5-42); extracts from minutes, JFS 33rd and 66th Vcts., 7 Oct. 1942 and 24 Mar. 1943, and Notes on JFS 35th Brg., 6 July 1943, in AP 650.98 (10-5-42). The AAF staff planners disapproved of the removal of the CFD paper from the agenda in March stating that the Navy had held up a decision on the paper. "Common Boundaries of Various Strategic Areas," memo from Staff Planners Sec., RG AAF, 24 Mar. 1943, ibid. When General Marshall suggested that General MacArthur be given operational control of the entire campaign to regain control of British New Guinea, Admiral King countered with a proposal placing MacArthur in operational control but with Admiral Nimitz in command of the entire Pacific including the Southwest. Notes on JFS 34th Brg., 13 Jan. 1943, in AP 370.5 Pacific Theater (9-5-42). The following are brief versions of messages received by the War Department from the Southwest Pacific. The originals were not available: "That visit to installation S & SW Pacific, that Navy control of Army operations unsound. That Kenney doing good job but that Hurnon is handicapped. Navy builds roads, naval bases and neglect build up air power. Air installations at Canton is national disgrace. Recommend that Kenney be appointed CG of Air in Pacific and direct 5, 6, 7, 8, 12, 13 Air Forces," OK-IN-4047 8-9-43, by Lindsey, #1555, in Super Duper. "In short Farlco to be CIA Pacific. Nimitz to be under CIA. Hurnon and Emmons to be under and responsible to CIA. Halsey remain same as now for US fleet to 25 Pacific. Kenney to be CG of air and as air and as air commander heve 5, 6, 7, 8, 12, 13 AF under CIA. Lindsey states above frame work of command was approved at ANPA by JCS," OK-IN-4020 8-9-43, Lindsey and MacArthur to Marshall, #15740, in Super Duper file, AAF Message Center.

7. A subcommittee of the Joint Planners was appointed in March 1943 to draw up a chart showing "the currently agreed areas" of strategic responsibility. After a number of revisions the results was finally accepted by the JCS in July 1943, the boundary between the South and the Southwest Pacific remaining at the 150th meridian. Notes on
CGS 35th Ltr., 6 July 1943, and JCS 333/1, 10 Sep. 1943, in AP 600.93 (10-5-43).


5. CG-4514 (1-10-42), British to JCS, 4102, 10 Jan. 43, in Super Duper.


9. CG-4514 (10 Jan. 43), Brisbane to JCS, 10 Jan. 43, in Super Duper; ltr., Kenney to Arnold, 31 Jan. 1943, in AAG 33.1-2, Ops. Ltrs.


12. See n. 11 above; Form 24 for January 1943.


16. Gen. James C. Van Ingen, "Communications in New Guinea," in JCS Intelligence Reports, 415, Oct. 1942; interview with Maj. J. Van Slyck. The first aircraft carrier unit to arrive was the 8th Recording Plooton which arrived at Port Moresby on 9 September 1942 and was stationed in the area on the coast about 50 miles northeast of Port Moresby. It had a SOR 618 with a maximum range of about 90 miles. The 4th Recording Plooton arrived on 7 October without a carrier. It arrived on short-range SOR 323 which was modified to meet the requirements of a medium-range set and in about a month moved to Cape Redbank, on the coast about 100 miles east of Port Moresby. The 8th Recording Plooten also arrived on 7 October and was sent to Broken Point, 50 miles southeast of Port Moresby. The 7th Recording
Platoon, equipped with a modified SCR 268 (MAKO), arrived at Fort Knox on 13 October and was sent 70 miles northwest to Yule Island. (563rd Signal BN., hist.) The first radar set in the Buna area was an Australian one flown in during December. It was not particularly useful, but was employed to direct fighters. Lt. E. J. Wood, "Radar in New Guinea," in AFSAT Intel. Rept., #22, Feb. 1944.


18. The figures for planes destroyed are taken from the official operations report. CL-IN-4229 (19 Jan. 43), Brisbane to WAR, -0189, 19 Jan. 43. Form 24 states that one P-17E and two P-17F's of the 403rd Sq., 43d Group were destroyed. The unit history of the 30th Fighter Squadron, 10 Jan. 1942-21 Jan. 1943 states that only one P-39 was destroyed.

19. Ibid; 8th Fighter Control Sq. history.

20. Interview with Maj. Van Slyke.


22. Ibid; Form 24, 8th Fighter Sq., 17 to 23 Jan. 1943; En. and En. Sq., 27th Air Depot Co., hist, 5 Feb. 1942; 25th Fighter Control Sq. hist, 50th Fighter Sq., hist, Chaps. 1-4.

23. Regulations which were published in the 30th Fighter Squadron were probably expected to refer to all units at Milne Bay, "ordering all pilots returning from hospital after a siege of malaria to remain off flying status for one month, produce three negative blood smear, and pass a form 64." Ibid, 8th Fighter Co. History to 1 Feb. 1944; ltr., Wilson to the Air Surgeon, 1 Mar. 1943.

24. Ibid: The Kenney, a book about the 22d Bomb Crown; 30th Fighter sq. hist; General Kenney's policy was to rotate his units between New Guinea and Australia as frequently as was strategically possible. ltr., Kenney to Arnold, 23 Jan. 1943, in AAF 5121-B, Cons. Ltrs. 8th Fighter Control Sq. hist for 1943.

25. CL-IN-4507 (9 Feb. 43), Brisbane to CG AAF, -4226, 9 Feb. 43; memo to Dr. Mil. Pers., by Lt. Col. Roger L. Shearer, Office of Cable Sec.
10 Feb. 1943, attached to above cable; A/CUT-4777 (14 Feb. 43), Eo. A/C, ATAF to CLC SPA, 4143, 13 Feb. 43; A/CUT-6007 (17 Feb. 43), Eo. A/C, A-1 to CLC SPA, 17 Feb. 43. MacArthur had been given permission to promote some of the second lieutenants of the 19th Group above the 2/C in the fall of 1942. Air Action in the South China Sea, n. 13, p. 158. Almost all unit histories of this period, both of combat and service units, contain of the promotion and leave policy or lack of policy. The following plan was proposed to MacArthur as a continuance of his policy for relief of war-weary crew; to send 10 trained A-20 crews in February and 10 in March to replace an equal number in the theater. A/CUT-10413, CPD to CI-1 SPA, #41, 29 Jan. 43. MacArthur realized that only 13 A-20 crews could be released in February and March, but that 10 should be sent from the United States in February and 5 in March. CI-2719 (7 Feb. 43), Brisbane to A/C, #370, 7 Feb. 43.


27. Ltr. Wilson to the Air Surgeon, 1 Mar. 1943; Remarks of Wiltby by the 7th Bomb Co. to Jervis during 1942, in AAC 723.1 Bulk, Reports of the Air Surgeon.

Chapter II


2. General H. W. Arthur later stated that this plan had been outlined in his radio CS/01 to the War Department, dated 8 July 1942. C. 0-L-4574 (1–10–43), Brisbane to AFSW, #029, 10 June 42, in Service Records.


4. C-0-L-4574 (3 June 42) G/2 to 0/L, #038, 1 June 42; C-0-L-4575 (24 June 42), G/2 to AFSW, #041, 24 June 42. For the details of a plan prepared by AG/AS Plans in June 1942 for the capture of Rabaul, see Air Action in the Solomons, n. 5, p. 164.

5. The Landing in the Solomons, pp. 1–15; "Japanese Intentions in the Pacific," a report prepared by members of the OSS shortly after the 26th meeting, 16 Sep., 1942; Air Action in the Solomons, n. 6, p. 16–17.


7. JOS 97/5, 15 Sep. 1942, in AP 370.5 Pacific Theater (9–5–42).

8. The AAF in the South Pacific to October 1942, p. 107 ff., prepared by AAF Historical Office. EOC/AD was the project to build up the United Kingdom as a base for the continental assault.

9. JOS 94, 25 July 1942, in AP 331 (6–20–42). The following was the suggested number of air bases to be transferred according to JOS 48, 23 Aug. 1942, in AP 370.5, Pacific Theater, (9–5–42):

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11. See The AAF in the South Pacific to October 1942.
12. Ltr., Arnold to Kenney, 6 Dec. 1942, in AAG SM 1-A, Cons. Ltrs.;
   Ltr., Kenney to Arnold, 23 Jan. 1943, in AAG SM 1-B, Cons. Ltrs.;
   JCS 27/6, 5 Jan. 1943, in AP 370.6, Pacific War Iss. (9-3-42).

13. C.L.—577 (10 Jan. 43), Brisbane to Ltr., JCS 22, 10 Jan. 43, in Sugar
   Ducer.

14. Ibid.

15. JCS 54th Ltr., 11 Jan. 1943; JCS 56th Ltr., 11 Jan. 1943; JCS 60th
   Ltr., 1 Jan. 1943.

16. Ibid. Admiral King indicated that Fuchu might possibly fall in May.

17. JCS 155, 16 Jan. 1943; JCS 165, 20 Jan. 1943; JCS 170/1 and 170/2,
   22 Jan. 1943.


19. Ibid.

20. Estimated enemy air strength as of 15 March 1943: New Britain—61
   fighters, 72 bombers, 3 flying boats, 8 float planes, 6 transport
   and observation planes; New Ireland—9 fighters, 41 bombers, 4 float
   planes, 6 observation and transport; New Guinea—9 fighters, 5
   bombers; Solomons—75 fighters, 72 bombers, 1 flying boat, 20
   float planes, 4 observation and transport planes; New Guinea—55 fighters,
   20 bombers, 3 float planes, 4 observation and transport planes;
   Ambon—13 fighters, 9 bombers, 2 flying boats; Celebes—55 fighters,
   41 bombers, 12 float planes, 12 transport and observation planes.
   C.L.—197 (10 Feb. 43), Brisbane to Ltr., JCS 40, 10 Mar. 43.

21. Generl Kenney had already urged that the additional units requested
   by MacArthur for the Bismarck area be sent to his air force.

22. JCS 222/4, 28 Mar. 1943.

23. Ibid.

   King's objection to the omission of his reference to timing by saying
   that MacArthur feared that large-scale operations in the Solomons
   might require sending some of his own air forces for offensive when
   they could not be spared. Marshall said, however, that the commander
   on the ground should take every opportunity to push forward when JCS
   resistance was weak. He called King's attention to the telegram just
   received from Palmer which indicated that the latter had no intention
   of remaining idle, that he would continue to exert pressure by land
   based aviation, and would be prepared to move into Iwo Jima; and
   Bougainville if the enemy forces were weakened sufficiently so that a
   major operation would not be necessary. Ibid.
26. Extract from limited JCS 54th ..tr., 17 Jn. 1943, in AP 273.5 Pacific Theater (9-5-43).

27. JCS 233/1, 16 Dec. 1943. Future deliveries to the RAF were to be 5 B-25's each in May, July, cn. September, 10 in November, and 11 in December. These were to be attrition replacements since no planes for new RAF units, it was decided, could be provided. Australia had planned to expand the RAAF to 71 squadrons. She accepted the decision as to 43 squadrons by 31 December 1943, but complained that she had not been given any indication of long-range planes, and that allocations of aircraft were made on availability rather than on any scheme of building up the RAAF to a balanced force. JCS 14/1, 21 Jan. 1944, in AP 473 (4-3-44); JCS 233/1, 28 July 1943, in AP 473 (10-2-43) Sec. 2.

28. JCS 233/1, 13 Mar. 1943.


30. JCS 233/3, 21 Mar. 1943. This was also referred to Harkins. The Pacific forces were to be reinforced as follows: increase both heavy groups to 2 squadrons, 12 planes each; increase medium group to 57 planes; 2 troop carrier squadrons would have 18 planes each, and 1 photo squadron 18 planes, all in the second quarter. In the third quarter, the night fighter detachment would be increased to a squadron of 12 planes, and an observation squadron of 11 planes would be added. In the fourth quarter, the fighter groups would be increased 1 squadron, 26 planes each, and 1 photo squadron of 17 planes would be added. C-001-575 (28 Mar. 43), JCS to Brisbane, 28 Mar. 43, in Super Order.

31. Ltr, Arnold to Kenney, 29 Mar. 1943, in AG 313.1-2, Cons. Ltrs. The heavy groups were to be equipped with 43 planes each; the medium and light groups, 57 planes each; the fighter groups, 76 planes; and the troop carrier groups, 75 planes. The group force reinforcements were to consist of the 1st B-24y Division in the second quarter, and an infantry division in the third quarter. C-001-575 (28 Mar. 43), JCS to Brisbane, 28 Mar. 48, in Super Order.

32. Ltr., Stretzeneyer to Naker, 6 Apr. 1943, in AG 313.1-2, Cons. Ltrs. Among those participating in this Pacific Conference were Maj. Gen. R. E. Sisler, 9th of the SPA, Rear Adm. R. A. Swenson, 6/3 and Gen. SIMS, and Capt. Miles W. Browning (USAF), 6/3 C.O. COPAC, JCS 233/3, 21 Mar. 1943. This statement of the Pacific conference was actually an assurance that portions of the original directive of the JCS, dated 2 July 1943, were being carried out.
CONFIDENTIAL

249

   C-IN-828 (11 Dec. 42), Brisbane to OAS A-2, #7510, 3 Mar. 43.

   452,1 X, Sec. II.

25. C-IN-CUT-8733 (23 Mar. 42), JOS to Brisbane, 23 Mar. 1943, in Super
   Ltrs.

   AFDCF to AFDCF, 20 Jan. 1943; A-2 to Dec. OAS, 6 Jan. 1943, in AG
   452,1 H, Bombs; Members of the 33rd Group objected to the E-25's as
   replacements; "The real rub here is the question of at least
   90% of the personnel here asked me, 'Why and when do we get some more
   ships.' The maintenance crew order to work on E-25's and the flying
   personnel swear by them. Yet they are being wasted on E-25's;
   These crews, both maintenance and flying, have come in with the ships
   and know all the tricks of maintaining, and flying them . . . to
   the last gun they want E-25's;" Report by Thomas E. McInerney, of the
   Engineer's Office, 70th Bomb Sq., 3 May 1943, in AFESC files, Factory
   Representative, d. 5223.

27. R.E., A-3 Div., Alloc Sec., to Dir. of War Orgn. and Movmt.,
   3 Jan. 1943 in AG 368,1 Bombs; C-IN-8732 (13 Jan. 43), Brisbane
   to WAC, 3109, 13 Jan. 43; C-IN-CUT-8219 (9 Feb. 43), WAC to CIC
   WAC, 9 Feb. 43; RER Alloc's, 3r. to Theater Div., AG/AS
   CC. R., 1 Apr. 1943 in AG 368,1 G Bombs, RER's 3rd Group to Sec.
   Secretariat, 23 Mar. 1943; Arnold to Stratemeyer, 29 Mar. 1943;
   Comment 14 reads: "In order that the matter may be a little
   more concluded, is it possible to get a single answer to General Arnold's
   single original query namely: 'Is there a possibility of a swap
   whereby General Kenney can get A-200's for the people in North Africa
   do not particularly desire?'" RER, Dep. O/AS to AG/AS CC. 
   Allocations and Programs Div., 4 May 1947. The reply in Comment 14 was
   "Certain allocation of A-200 aircraft, previously set up to the
   12th Air Force, may be unnecessary due to the number of this type
   aircraft in or en route to that theater. However, it also may appear
   that not all the aircraft so allocated will be available in the months
   previously indicated. Such portion of these aircraft as do become
   available can and will be allocated to General Kenney." RER, 
   Allocations and Programs, AG/AS CC. to Dec. O/AS, 5 May 1947, in AG
   452,1 O Airplanes.

28. Combat Analysis Study #5, "Japanese Aircraft vs. U.S. Aircraft in
   Aerial Combats, Southwest Pacific Theater," 5 June 1943.

   "4-1943; Report 1 by H. E. J. McInerny, 31 Mar. 1943,
   in Factory Rep. 4-227.

SECURITY INFORMATION
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THIS PAGE Declassified IAW EO12958
40. In the original schedule P-38's were to be sent while P-33F's thereafter. CIL-CUJ-3205 (16 Jan. 43), ADV to CILG SFA, 3390, 15 Jan. 43; CIL-CUJ-3862 (11 Jan. 43), ADV to CILQ SFA, 3289, 10 Jan. 43; CIL-FL-7236 (16 Jan. 43), Brisbane to AAF, 679, 15 Jan. 43; CIL-CUJ-4868 (19 Jan. 43), ADV to CILG SFA, 425, 15 Jan. 43; 1st Ind. (Ltr. missing) Ho, AAF, Washington, D.C., 26 Jan. 43. Str temeyer to CG 5th AF, 2 Ltr. 1943, in Air AG SAS 452.1 X, Sec. II. Kenney already had two twin-engine squadrons. He wanted to form another with the P-33's promised at this time, but he was warned that replacements for only two twin-engine squadrons could be sent. CIL-CUJ-3262 (17 Feb. 43), BDD to CILQ SFA, 41651, 17 Feb. 43; CIL-CUJ-9929 (15 Feb. 43), CDD to CILQ SFA, 121491, 24 Feb. 43. P-33's could now be ferried to the Southwest Pacific. The first to reach Austra in this manner (prob'ly in January 1943) went by way of Kweil, Hilo, Christmas, Canton, Saipan, Truk, Caledonia. Report by AIC to Brig. Gen. C. J. Hanley Jr., Dep. G/S, 4 Feb. 1943, in Air AG, SAS 452.1 X, Sec. II.

Chapter III


2. Interview with Lt. C. W. Diehl, 9 July 1943; and with Mr. Clarence F. Barnett.

3. C.I.-IT-887 (1-2-43), Brisbane to AEC, #X18319, 2 Jan. 43; C.I.-CE-4933 (14 Feb. 43), #X13161, 12 Feb. 43; C.I.-IT-5542 (27 Feb. 43), Brisbane to AEC #X18319, 13 Feb. 43; C.I.-IT-6868 (13 Feb. 43), Brisbane to AEC #X14281, 17 Feb. 43; C.I.-IT-5550 (27 Feb. 43), Brisbane to AEC #X15835, 13 Feb. 43; C.I.-IT-8076 (19 Feb. 43), Brisbane to AEC #X15181, 19 Feb. 43; C.I.-IT-10106 (20 Feb. 43), Brisbane to AEC #X15181, 19 Feb. 43.

4. 58th Service Sq. history: C.I.-IT-5004 (3 May 43), Brisbane to AEC #X13161, 15 May 43; C.I.-IT-6211 (14 May 43), AEC/AS #X13161 to C.I.-IT-5004; C.I.-IT-4214, 14 May 43; C.I.-IT-6217, Brisbane to AEC #X13161, 3 July 43. On the last message, Arnold had noted, "You take action to correct," and Stretzel had added, "Correct this immediately." AEC replied that every effort was being made to remove winterization equipment from bombers, but that the decision factor had been Kenney's earlier request that demobilization should not take place in the United States if such work could delay delivery. C.I.-IT-4587 (7 July 43), AEC #X13161 to Brisbane, 666, 7 July 43. The reply to the request on removal of winterization equipment from C-47's was that "upon arrival in your theater, the planes should have removed such winterization parts as deemed necessary by you and you should place the parts in proper storage." C.I.-IT-506 (1 Aug. 43), Brisbane to AEC #X13161, 1 Aug. 43; C.I.-IT-4587 (13 Aug. 43), AEC/AS CIC to C.I.-IT-5004, 15 Aug. 43.

5. C.I.-IT-15240 (20 Aug. 43), Brisbane to CG AAF, #X1550, 20 Aug. 43; C.I.-IT-6239 (1 May 43), CG AAF to C.I.-IT-5004 for Kenney from Arnold and Marshall, #X13161, 1 May 43.

6. Ltr., Brig. Gen. T. J. Henley, Jr., AEC/AS A-4 to CG AEC, 13 Sep. 1942; 1st Ind., AEC to CG AAF (AFADS), 15 Oct. 1942, in AEC 452.1, Repair-Maintenance of Aircraft Overseas, Material Div., Memo Report #217, 30 Apr. 1943, in A-2 lib. The Australians were seriously considering the manufacture of C-47's. Kenney did not believe that any plane that could be flown across the Pacific should be manufactured in Australia. He argued that it would be "a serious mistake to split machine tools and raw materials between the two countries and expect maximum rates of production in both places." He preferred the idea of manufacturing C-47's in Australia since it would save much shipping space. Ltr., Kenney to Arnold, 27 Jan. 1943, in AEC 452.1, B Pursuits. Arnold replied that he feared it would be impossible to get any combat aircraft in production in Australia within six months. Ltr.,
Arnold to Kenney, 19 Feb. 1942, in A&G 452.1 B, Pursuits.


8. AAF COI files, Kenney.


10. Ibid; Station List, 14 July 1942; 4th Air Depot Op. history.


13. Ibid.


15. Ibid; 60 75s, En, 5th AF, 24 Dec. 1942, in V Air Service Area Cond. history, Incl. 7.

16. 4th Air Depot Op history; V Air Service Area Cond. history. There were other service activities of importance on the mainland during this period. The 81st Air Depot Group in November 1942 was designated as the acting control depot for the Fifth Air Force. Its duties were to provide many of the supplies for the entire theater. As Depot No. 1, it was gradually relieved of some of its control functions in September 1943, but still was subject to the increasing demands of the Engineering and Production Control Section. Moreover, many accessories and parts overhauled by the Production Control Section were requisitioned by other depots. 81st Depot Supply Sq. history. In September 1942, furthermore, an instrument shop was established at Melbourne for third echelon maintenance and factory overhaul of Norden bombsights. This shop was under the direct control of the Air Service Command Headquarters. Memo for Dir. of Bombardment by Maj. A. W. Schmitt, AAF Material Cond., Armament Div., Wright Plfd., 14 Mar. 1943, in A&G 450-A, Australia.

17. History of the Fifth Air Force Service Cond. in New Guinea.


19. 27th Depot Repair Sq. history.

20. Ibid.
21. History of the Fifth Air Force Service Cond. in New Guinea; CT-IN-5907 (13 Jan. 43), Brisbane to WAR, #0108, 12 Jan. 1943; CT-OUT-6290 (19 Jan. 43), WCPD to COINTC SPA, #424, 13 Jan. 43. The ordinance sections had been requested by Kenney in October 1942.
CT-OUT-2403 (7 Jan. 43), AERCH to CT-IND SFA, #175, 7 Jan. 43; CT-OUT-4566 (10 Apr. 43), WA, AAF, AFGR to CT-IND SFA, #1913, 12 Apr. 43.

22. CT-ILL-12425 (27 Jan. 43), Brisbane to ASC PFO, #X1961, 26 Jan. 43; CT-ILL-22461 (4 Apr. 43), Brisbane to WAR, #7694, 5 Apr. 43; CT-ILL-6131 (9 July 43), Brisbane to CO AIF, #X16343, 9 July 43.

23. 4th Air Depot Co. History.

24. Ibid.

25. War Service Area Comd. History.

26. EIR, Arnold to Heyser, 23 Mar. 1942, in Air AC 41541 X, Sec. II.


30. Ibid; CT-ILL-5373 (9 Apr. 43), Brisbane to ASC PFO, #X1213, 9 Apr. 43.

31. Ltr., Jack Fox to North American Aviation, 15 Mar. 1943, in Factory Rep. #2591. Fox said that fragmentation bomb racks were removed because there were insufficient frag bombs available, not that they were unsatisfactory. Demolition bombs of various weights were to be carried. Report by Jack Fox to Field Service Depot, North American Aviation, 4 Mar. 1943, in Factory Rep. #2443.

32. Air Action in the Pusan Campaign, p. 93; CT-ILL-07906 (19 Oct. 43), Brisbane to WAR, #A813, 19 Oct. 43; Report by Ordnance Officer, 5th AF AIMC, 23 Jan. 1943, in AIM 4004-A, Australia; CT-ILL-10329 (24 Jan. 43), Brisbane to WAR, #A119, 24 Jan. 43; CT-ILL-11259 (25 Feb. 43), Brisbane to CO AIF, #A8092, 25 Feb. 47. Attracted to this message was a memo to the Director of Base Services by Lt. Col. Roger L. Shearer quoting General Stratemeyer as having said: "Col. Copeland, get out ready to this message. Let's get these forces to Kenney - rush." Ltr., Emb in H. S. Pricey, 3rd Bomber Comd., 2 Mar. 43, in AAF 3121 E, Comm. Ltrc; CT-OUT-2781 (11 Mar. 43), Fo. AAF, AFIBS to CT-C SFA #599, 11 Mar. 43.
33. Air Action in the Burma Campaign, p. 45; unrecorded interview with Col. William E. Finn, Nov. 1945; interview with Col. John Devier, 2 Dec. 1942; G-10, 15 SWA, 15 Oct. 1942. Kenney received a purple heart for his part in the development and employment of paratroops. Ibid.

34. CL-CU-568 (2 Feb. 43), En, AAF, ARFAS to CO's SPA, #802, 2 Feb. 43; CL-IN-2148 (5 Feb. 43), Brisbane to CO AAF, #1905, 4 Feb. 43; CL-CU-2623 (6 Feb. 43), En, AAF, ARFAS to CO's SPA, #846, 6 Feb. 43; CL-IN-8244 (2 Feb. 44), Brisbane to VAF, #1516, 8 Feb. 44; CL-IN-12618 (21 Apr. 44), Brisbane to VAF, #1563, 21 Apr. 44; CL-CU-9328 (24 Apr. 44), Eq, AAF, CCF to CO's SPA, #2157, 22 Apr. 44; ltr., Kenney to Col. William L. Mitchie, CFF, 14 Apr. 1944, and ltr., Arnold to Kenney, [1] May 1944, in AAC 32.1-13, Ops Ltr. Kenney insisted that the individually suspended bombs provided the following advantages over clusters: dispersion could be more accurately controlled; about 50 per cent more bombs could be carried in both the A-20 and the B-24; the vertically suspended bomb required less steel, labor, and shipping space. CL-IN-1745 (21 Apr. 44), Brisbane to VAF egd. Kenney, #2044, 21 Apr. 44.

35. Report of Army Inspection of South Pacific Area during March 1943, in AAC 38.1-12, Inspections; ltr., Brig. Gen. B. E. Keyes, Dep. AG/ASN HFD, 21 Apr. 1943, in AAC 40C-A, Australia; interview with Col. C. G. Diehl, 4th V Bomber Comd., 8 July 1943; CL-IN-6277 (10 May 43), Brisbane to CO AAF, #823, 10 May 43.


38. Ltr., Walter Illsley to Richard Gordon, Bendix Aviation Corp., 30 Jan. 1943, in Factery Rep., #519; Report #30 by Walter Illsley to P. O. Gordon, Bendix Aviation Corp., 5 Mar. 1943, in Factery Rep., #6424; ltr., Fred Sweeney to P. O. Gordon, 6 Mar. 1943, in Factery Rep., #619; Material Div., Memo Report #217, 20 Apr. 1943, in A-2 11b; CL-IN-5797 (3 Jun. 43), APRB to CL-CU SPA, #801, 4 Jun. 42; CL-IN-5589 (11 Feb. 43), Brisbane to ASG FFO, #31532, 10 Feb. 43; CL-IN-5793 (21 Feb. 43), Eq, AAF, APRB to CL-CU SPA, #5582, 20 Feb. 43; CL-IN-12765 (25 Feb. 43), Brisbane to CO AAF, #32318, 24 Feb. 43; CL-IN-5792 (11 Mar. 43), Brisbane to ASG FFO, #38524, 11 Mar. 43; CL-CU-5431 (16 Mar. 43), CO ASG to CO SPA, #30597, 13 Mar. 43; CL-IN-5665 (2 Apr. 43), Brisbane to ASG FFO, #31270, 1 Apr. 43.
39. Interview with Clarence L. Barnes. He reported that "the Executive officer or someone of the 90th Group" objected to the ball turret because he claimed that it would change the flying attitudes of the B-24. He had convinced Kenney of this. According to Barnes, two squadrons of the 452d Group, later equipped with B-24's, "were crying their eyes out because they didn't have ball turrets." CL-OUT-1705 (4 May 42), Hq, AAF, CINCL to CG, SWPA, #4119, 4 May 42; CL-OUT-2504 (5 May 42), Brisbane to CG AAF, #4114, 5 May 42. Attached to this cable, which quoted Kenney's statement to Barnes, is the following statement: "Kenney is right. Arnold."

40. C.-IN-5726 (9 May 42), ASC FPO to Brisbane, #807747, 9 May 42; C.-IN-8406 (12 May 42), Brisbane to ASC FPO, #804917, 12 May 42; C.-OUT-10280 (24 May 42), Hq, AAF, AS/AS CG to CG SWPA, #44584, 24 May 42. memo for Gen. Arnold by Maj. Gen. Bernard L. Giles, 26 May 1942, in AAF 218,1-4, Opns. Ltr.s.; CL-OUT-2427 (7 June 42), Brisbane to CG AAF, #40285, 7 June 42; C.-IN-11706 (17 July 42), Brisbane to ASC FPO, #805521, 16 July 42; CL-OUT-9421 (21 July 42), Hq, AAF, AS/AS CG to CG SWPA, #80580, 20 July 42.

41. C.-IN-18780 (23 Aug. 42), Brisbane to CG AAF, #801682, 23 Aug. 42; C.-IN-9470 (11 Sep. 42), Brisbane to CG AAF, #800774, 11 Sep. 42. The Thirteenth Air Force retained the ball turret, but obtained the proper center of gravity location by sacrificing the trailing turret and mounting it in a twin flexible installation. The Fifth Air Force considered the ball turret indispensable. ASG interview with Capt. J. F. Donnelly, Armament Br., 4 Cst. 1943.

42. C.-OUT-7948 (15 Sep. 42), CG/ACS to CG SWPA, frd. Arnold to MacArthur for Kenney, #7228, 14 Sep. 42; CL-OUT-7170 (15 Sep. 42), Hq, AAF, CG/ACS to CG SWPA, sgd. Arnold, #7311, 14 Sep. 42.

43. C.-IN-15523 (15 Sep. 42), Brisbane to AAF, sgd. Kenney, #81748, 15 Sep. 42.

44. Report of Army Inspection of the South Pacific Area during March 1942, in ASG 333,1-5, Inspections.
Chapter IV

1. Colonel White, Green Army, p. 16, 147.

2. Ibid., 85, 141-149.

3. Ibid.


6. OI-42-2926 (7 Jan. 43), Australia to War, #250, 7 Jan. 43; OI-42-2448 (9 Jan. 42), Port Horesby to WAR, #287, 3 Jan. 42; OI-42-4711 (11 Jan. 43), Brisbane to WAR, #271, 9 Jan. 43.

7. Allied Air Forces, S.E.A., "The History of the Lee-Salamaa Garrison," in Corps, Br. ASC (3477) 91-32, 49th Fighter Group history, 49th Fighter Group, history, 1945. The figure of "approximately 50 planes" as given in Air Action in the Parnawa Campaign, p. 62, is probably conservative, but it seems to be an accurate figure as a compilation of the cable communication. On the other hand, a general summary of the action claims that 69 aircraft were destroyed, 33 probably destroyed, and 40 damaged. Intel. Sum., #88, 12 Jan. 1943. For a good summary of all the convoy actions during the fall and early spring see The Bismarck Sea Action, pp. 22 ff., processed by AAF Historical Office.

8. Operations reports in S.E.A. cables. In addition to the 100 B-17's, there were two squadrons of "heavy bombers" which carried out the mission of 5 January. Intel. Sum., #72, 26 Jan. 1943.

9. At least one of these squadrons was the 64th of the 434 Bomb Group. OI-42-86, Eq. 6th AF, 12 Nov. 1943. OI-42-2854 (6 Jan. 43), Brisbane to WAR, #256, 6 Jan. 43.

10. Combat Diary of the 83d Sq.

11. Allied Air Forces, S.E.A., "The History of the Lee-Salamaa Garrison," in Corps, Br. ASC (3477) 91-32, 49th; interview with Maj. Van Slyck, 26 Jan. 1943. Some of the flyers of the 34th Group were flying as co-ordinate with observers with the 374th Group at this time. 40th Troop Carrier Sq., history, OI-42-61 (1 Feb. 43), Brisbane to WAR, #287, 31 Jan. 43; OI-42-1426 (30 Jan. 43), Brisbane to WAR, #231, 31 Jan. 43.
12. See entry order of battle reports from the cables and the Intelligence Summary for January 1943.

13. 75th Fighter Group, history, 1943; 40th Fighter Group, history, 1943; Form 34 for 7th Fighter Squadron, 40th Fighter Group, and 45th Squadron, 35th Fighter Group, 31 Jan.-6 Feb. 1943; 03 #74 of 73 ANR; 05 #10 of 1 May, and 05 #106 of 29 May 1943, 85th AF; Intel. Sum. #76, 9 Feb. 1943; CIL-T-753 (9 Feb. 43); Brisbane to WAR, #371, 7 Feb. 43.


16. Unrecorded interview by author with Colonel Koons. The Fifth Air Force received specific directions from Washington to give all possible cooperation to the Guadalcanal operation. Ibid; Air Action in the Solomon Islands, 180 p. 116; The Landing in the Solomons, 13 ff.

17. Intel. Sum. #74, 2 Feb.; #76, 9 Feb.; #77, 12 Feb.; #78, 16 Feb.; and #81, 27 Feb. 1943.

18. Cons. rots. in Feb. 1943 cables; Form 26 for the 405th Squadron, 38th Bomb Group (A); 13th and 39th Squadrons, 3d Bomb Group (D).

19. Cons. rots. in cables.

20. Combat Diary of the 67th Squadron; CIL-T-7755 (15 Feb. 43); Brisbane to WAR; #355, 16 Feb. 43; CIL-T-7950 (16 Feb. 43); Brisbane to WAR; #416, 15 Feb. 43; CIL-T-793 (17 Feb. 43); Brisbane to WAR; #465, 16 Feb. 43. In addition to those planes lost in combat, the following bombers were lost in accidents: 1 B-29, 2 B-25's, 1 B-36, CIL-T-888 (19 Nov. 43); Brisbane to C 04 AF; A338, 2 May 43. During this period, some bombing attacks were being carried out in the Netherlands East Indies. Australian F-24's, Dutch B-25's, and American B-24's covered the Timor-Ambon-southern Celebes area. Newell was receiving considerable attention. 70 Cecil E. Rigsby, 8th Photo Squadron, is credited with having secured on 23 February the "first operational photographs of Newell harbor and airstrip." 00 #172, Ex. 5th AF, 10 Aug. 1943. Three days later 6 B-17's carried out a ship-bombing attack on a 5,000-ton cargo vessel, scoring a direct hit and burning the airfield with demolition and fragmentation bombs. CIL-T-14093 (27 Feb. 43); Brisbane to WAR, #6593, 27 Feb. 43.


22. Advance Dobson Report, IX, VI, var. 3, as quoted in ibid, p. 200.

23. 9 Operational Group operations order, as quoted in ibid, p. 158; "Hatshepsut Attacks Against Shipping," in AFGE Bulletin 13 (July 1943), pp. 20-26.
24. G1/IN-11103 (21 Feb. 43), Brisbane to WAR, #5516, 21 Feb. 43; Form 24, 30th Sq., 3d Bomb Gp., 14 Feb. 1942-20 Feb. 1943; G1/IN-14093 (27 Feb. 43), Brisbane to WAR, #5593, 27 Feb. 43; The Bismarck Sea Action, pp. 101-2.

25. A large amount of enemy information is available for the study of this action. Detailed operational orders and other documents were captured on Goodenough Island with the shipwreck of the Teivo Hara, sunk in the engagement. These and others have been collected by the Allied Translator and Interpreter Section, SWA and published as "Current Translations," as the Bismarck Sea Operations in Enemy Publications No. 7 Parts 1 and 2, and as Interrogation Reports. These documents are analyzed in detail in The Bismarck Sea Action, pp. 59 ff.

26. Merchant vessels: Kusakari Maru—6493 tons; Akio Maru—2746 tons; Hida Maru—9215 tons; Giza Maru—6493 tons; Shina Maru—3793 tons; Jitsukawa Maru—2683 tons; Teiyo Maru—3999 tons; Kamu Maru—953 tons. Destroys: Asashio, Asashio, Iokouchi, Yukikaze, Agekura, Shirayuki, Furen, Shikinami.

27. According to enemy documents described in note 25.

28. Cwvs. rotas. in cabled.

29. The narrative of the action on the Bismarck Sea convoy is a synthesis of information taken from many documents. The following were the principal sources: the daily cable operations reports sent from General Keyes' headquarters to the War Department; Form 24; V Bomber Command, Office of A-2, "Tactical Reports of Attacks on Bismarck Sea Convoy," Advance Echelon Headquarters, Fifth Air Force, "Report on Destruction of Japanese Convoy in Bismarck Sea," 6 Apr. 1943; ADWON Report; 49th Fighter Group history; 36th Fighter Group history; Combat Diary of the 55th Squadron. The Bismarck Sea Action contains a careful mission by mission account of the attacks on the convoy in much more detail than the present summary.

30. The Bismarck Sea Action, Chart 10. Totals exclude planes on reconnaissance or escort duty.

31. Fighters at this time could use Doolittle to "too off" before going into action over the Bismarck Sea.

32. There were no cruisers in the convoy although sightings frequently mistook the large destroyers for cruisers.

33. ADWON Report.

24. Coincident with these morning B-17 attacks, two B-24's bombed the convoy northeast of the 1400-1700, 1 x 10,000-ton AL, 1 x 2,000-ton AL. One AL was reported as sinking and another on fire.
Another B-24 recommitted the convoy a few minutes later (shortly before 1100) and counted 3 CL, 4 DD, and 7 AK. ADVON Report.

25. This report stated that the remainder of the convoy was composed of 4 DD, 3 possible CL, 9 L/V. ADVON Report.

26. The geographical coordinator were 0540 S by 14720 W. At least six of these B-17’s had participated in the morning attack. Ibid.

27. Tactical Reports.


29. The latter was also hit by B-25’s. Ibid. The following reports were made in Form 24 by the 56th, 65th, and 403d Squadrons: "Hits on AK & 1 DD seen sinking"; "Shore left burning—Exact number of hits unknown—At least 6 near misses observed"; "Due to interception results were not observed."

30. Form 24.

31. ADVON Report. Form 24 gives the following summary of the 90th Squadron’s attack: Hits on 11 ships—1 cruiser and 1 transport sunk, 2 destroyers damaged, 7 transports and corvette ships damaged.

32. After these attacks, the 7th and 8th P-38 squadrons covered by nine B-25’s of the 9th sort out on a dive-bombing mission shortly after noon. Unable to locate the convoy, they hit the Loe and Soldier area. ADVON Report.

33. Tactical Reports.

34. Form 26 states: 4 hits on destroyer, 4 on cruiser and 1 each on 2 transports, "all left in sinking condition."


36. GL-11428 (Nov, 45), Brisbane to HAR, 0700, 9 Apr, 45; GL-3703 (11 Apr, 45), Brisbane to TAR, 0338, 11 Apr, 45.


38. GL-1403, Brisbane to TAR, 0520, 3 May, 45.

39. It will be recalled that a 2-17 from the 82d Squadron reported that the unidentified ships joined the convoy between 1200 and 1600. The ADVON Report further states: "It is interesting to recall that 7 L/V were sighted near Tasman on February 26, and that captured documents prove that the 7 L/V in the "area did not leave Rabaul until March 1."
50. Also quoted in "Atlantic Sec Action, vol. 237, 8.

51. Assessment on 16 Apr. 1945 by JAMA.

52. Prisoner of war interrogations specifically identify 17 ships in the original convoy as listed in the captured documents. A fragmentary disarranged list captured with other Bismarck Sea documents lists three additional vessels. This is called "Supplement to Operational Order 157, but there is no definite connection between this and the Bismarck Sea convoy except that it was captured with the Bismarck Sea documents, and that it has a similar number to 157 Operational Order which definitely refers to the Bismarck Sea convoy. Allied Translator and Interpreter Sect., SHAEF 7, pt. I, p. 756."

53. The Allied Land Forces in its 'History of the Battle of the Bismarck Sea', based largely upon captured documents, states that the convoy consisted of 7 army transport, 1 naval transport, and 6 destroyers, and that 6,012 troops aboard, 1,300 succeeded in reaching Iwo and Okinawa. (In "N.Y. Times" Apr 30 1945). The figure of 13 merchant vessels sunk is too extreme corroborated in the ABDC Report which states that "only 17 or 18 ships were actually situated sinking or in obviously desperate condition." Maj. William P. Hoover, former C-in-C of the Y Bomber Command, stated in an interview that, in this battle, ship after ship was sunk. "Finally there were 17 down and only one to go. A reconnaissance plane sank that one." (In JICA Int. Interv. 17 Oct. 1947) On the other hand, both General MacArthur and General Nimitz have insisted that the figure of 28 ships sunk is correct. In a message of 7 September, MacArthur declared that the official reports from air headquarters were the basis for the official NCA reports. Information acquired later from captured documents, ships, and other data, he said, made minor changes in the original figures, but those changes increased rather than diminished the 78 losses. He states that his headquarters had actual losses for 28 ships sunk and named the following: Kikugawa Maru, Shinyo Maru, Atago Maru, Ashigara, Hikawa Maru, Atago Maru, Asashio, Asagumo, Nokato Maru, Nokato Maru, Asagumo, Nokato Maru, Soto Maru, Nord Maru, Atago Maru, Atago Maru, Atago Maru, Atago Maru, Atago Maru. In his interview, MacArthur was the twenty-first since that ship had actually been identified by his headquarters. The difference in spelling of some of these ships cannot be explained by typists in transmitted. The message concluded: "I request that any report emanating from the Office of the Commanding General, Army Air Forces challenging the integrity of my operations reports of which the Chief of Staff is taking cognizance be referred to me officially in order that I may take appropriate steps including action against those responsible if circumstances warrant." G-EO 3 (7 Sep. 45), Intelligence to JCS, 3430, 7 Sep. 43, in Super Duper. Following the Japanese surrender General I. MacArthur restated the claim of 28 ships sunk in an interview: "Some people have doubt that these figures in that battle. Did we have the names of every ship sunk." Quoted in "Washington Post", 4 Sep. 1945.
54. Excerpts from a diary kept by Marvin Spencer, AP correspondent, in A-3 lib. A later release by the Associated Press does not clarify the confusion on this subject: "Yokohama, Sept. 7 (AP). - The battle of the Bismarck Sea, when allied planes sank an entire convoy of at least 10 warships and 17 transport-cargo ships with 15,000 troops aboard, was the greatest shock of the war to the Japanese navy, Rear Admiral Toshitane Taketa said today.

"He said of the historic March 7-8, 1943, action near Lee, New Guinea: "You underestimated when you guessed 12 ships were sunk there. I don't know the exact number, but I think it was between 20 and 40. None escaped.'"

"... Maj. Gen. Paul D. Hume, commander of the Thirteenth Air Force, told the Japanese no torpedoes were used by the 135 Allied planes, although some bombs were dropped, possibly leading the Japs to think of torpedoes." Washington Post, 8 Sep. 1945."
1. CH-LN-6197 (12 Mar. 43), Brisbane to WAR, #385, 12 Mar. 43. See Situation Reviews in Intel. Sums. for March and following months.

2. Ibid.

3. CH-LN-16285 (30 Mar. 43), Brisbane to WAR, #4521, 30 Mar. 43.

4. 39th Service Co. history. The school was not officially activated until 18 Apr. 1943. Go #14, Eq. Allied Air Forces, Ibid; 80th Fighter Sq. history; Form #4, 38th Fighter Sq., 49th Co., 21-27 Mar. 1943.

5. See Ibid for bombardment squadrons, March through May 1943.

6. CH-LN-11061 (28 Mar. 43), ANF to CLC SWPA, #3402, 28 Mar. 43; 1tr., ENO to CLC SWPA, 28 Mar. 1943, in AAG CE12.1-M, AGO Ltrs.; CH-LN-12836 (21 Apr. 43), Brisbane to WAR, #01800, 21 Apr. 43; CH-LN-12858 (25 Apr. 43), Brisbane to WAR, #11997, 25 Apr. 43; memo to CPD by Col. O. F. Jeyland, Allocations and Programs Div., AG/AS CCR, 6 Apr. 1943, in AAG 452.1 C, Airplanes; CH-LN-1334 (5 May 43), AG/AS ARTH to CINC SWPA, #3423, 5 May 43.


9. Ibid.

10. Unrecorded interview with Maj. John Trotter, 26 May 1944; Engineer Construction in the Southwest Pacific Area, GEI SWPA, Off. of the Chief Engineer, 1 Yr. 1944, p. 24. /Engineer Construction/.

11. Interview with Col. Frederick Smith, Den. 0/S 5th AF, 11 May 1943.


13. Ibid; 49th Fighter Co. history.
14. Ibid; Form 34 for the 7th, 6th, and 9th Squadrons of the 49th Gp.


16. Ibid.


20. Ibid; Coleman interview; Johansen, "Our Air Task Force."

21. Form 34; interview with Col. Frederick Smith, 11 May 1943; 8th Bomb Sq. history, April 1944.

22. OIL-CUT-3073 (9 Feb. 43), OPD to CINC SWPA, 9 Feb. 43; OIL-IN-269 (1 Mar. 43), Brisbane to WAR #3640, 1 Mar. 43; ltrs., Kenney to Arnold, 23 Feb. and Arnold to Kenney 16 Mar. 1943, in AAG 312.1 B Cons. Ltrs.; 8th Tactical Air Communications Sq. history.

23. OIL-IN-2328 (21 Jan. 43), Brisbane to WAR, #2136, 20 Jan. 43; OIL-CUT-7885 (22 Jan. 43), WD to CINC SWPA, #541, 22 Jan. 43; OIL-IN-3015 (6 Feb. 43), Australia to WAR, #2365, 6 Feb. 43; OIL-CUT-2743 (8 Feb. 43), OPD to CINC SWPA, #1004, 8 Feb. 43; OIL-IN-2509 (17 Feb. 43), Brisbane to WAR, #2321, 18 Feb. 43; OIL-CUT-2599 (19 Feb. 43), OPD to CINC SWPA, #1515, 18 Feb. 43; ltr., TAG to CINC SWPA, 26 Feb. 1943, in AAG 312.1J, AOG 1 ltrs.; OIL-CUT-2323 (26 Feb. 43); TAG to CINC SWPA, #1524, 26 Feb. 43.

24. 54th Troop Carrier Wing history.

25. Ltr., Kenney to Ritchie, 14 Apr. 1943, in AAG 312.1 B Cons. Ltrs.

26. Ibid.


30 Mar. and
31. See Situation Reviews in Intel. Sums. for March, April, and May.

32. CL-IX-3928 (10 Mar. 43), Brisbane to War, #SP20, 10 Mar. 43; CL-IX-6277 (17 Mar. 43), Brisbane to War, #SP108, 12 Mar. 43; CL-IX-3832 (17 Mar. 42), Brisbane to War, #SP20, 1 Mar. 42; CL-IX-10577 (20 Mar. 42), Brisbane to War, #1048, 70 Mar. 43; Intel. Sums.

33. Intel. Sums. 90, 91 and 92, 3 and 7 Apr. 1943.

34. Ibid. 92, 10 Apr. 43; CL-IX-7238 (13 Apr. 43), Brisbane to War, #SP156, 13 Apr. 43; 49th Fighter Gr. history.

35. Ibid.; 33rd Fighter Control Sq. history; CL-IX-7859 (13 Apr. 43), Brisbane to War, #SP388, 12 Apr. 43; Form 34 for the 9th, 39th, 49th, and 41st Fighter Sqs., 11 to 17 Apr. 1943; 39th Fighter Sq. history.


37. Intel. Sums. 94 and 95, 14 and 17 Apr. 1943; CL-IX-3938 (16 Apr. 43), Brisbane to War, #SP174, 16 Apr. 43.

38. Intel. Sums. 95, 97, and 100, dit., 17 and 24 Apr., and 5 May 1943.

39. 49th Fighter Gr. history; 35th Fighter Sq. history.

40. Ibid.; Intel. Sums. #100, 5 May 1943; CL-IX-1691 (5 May 43), Brisbane to War, #SP159, 5 May 43; of the 49th Fighter Sq. history.

41. Ibid.

42. Ibid.; 90th Fighter Sq. history; 5th Continental Air Communications Sq.; Form 34 for 25th Fighter Gr., 16 to 2 May 1943; Intel. Sums. #104, 19 May 1943.

43. Ibid.; #100, 104, 105, and 107, dit., 5, 19, 22 and 29 May 1943.

44. Form 34; 9th Photo Sq. history.

45. These figures do not pretend to be exact. They are, however, a fairly accurate approximation taken from cable operations reports and Form 34. See also Combat Diary of the 63d Squadron.
46. C.I.-IN-1736 (3 Apr., '47), Brisbane to WAR, #01407, 7 Apr., '43; C.I.-
    IN-2636 (5 Apr., '47), Brisbane to WAR, #01443, 4 Apr., '47; C.I.-IN-2118
    (6 Apr., '43), Brisbane to WAR, #01468, 6 Apr., '43. The squadron
    reports in Form 34 are not quite so sweeping as the official operations
    reports. The following are the pertinent extracts: for the
    628 Subordon on 1 April, a "S/6000 cargo damaged," on 4 April, 17
    hits were claimed with a 5/6,000 ton cargo "skin bombed," "one
    hit on world cruiser ... one hit on destroyer, one hit on cargo
    vessel"; for the 648 Subordon on 4 April, "three direct hits on
    either C.I. or O.A." "A.A. or O.A. sink in five minutes. /There
    is no indication as to whether this is the same C.I. or O.A.
    mentioned above/" "two direct hits on a destroyer."
Chapter VI

1. Memo by the JCS, 14 May 1943, COS 220, circulated 19 May to the COS and approved in 90th Mtg. as a basis for a combined study and elaboration for future plans.

2. COS 239 considered by COS on 20 May 1943. Approved in COS 92d Mtg. subject to amendments which appear in 239/1.

3. Ibid.

4. Ibid.

5. CI-019-6095 (15 June 43), CFD, Strategy and Policy Group, to G-0 SWPA, G-0 SFC, and G-0 Hawaiian Dept., 24768 (14 June 43), in Super Duper.

6. CI-019-15146 (21 June 43), Brisbane to WAR (Marshall from LeCaine), 24209, 20 June 43, in Super Duper.

7. LeCaine pointed to the battle of Midway as an example of the hazards of amphibious operations such as the campaign against the landfield.

8. CI-019-2340, 3891 (23 June 43), AO/AS Plans to G-0 SWPA and G-0 SFC, 5011, 22 June 43, in Super Duper.

9. CI-019-15013 (24 June 43), Brisbane to WAR, 03413, 24 June 43, in Super Duper.


12. CI-019-228 (3 May 43), AO/AS COAR to G-0 SWPA, 3420, 2 May 43; CI-019-3287 (6 May 43), Brisbane to WAR, 3409, 5 May 43; CI-019-2526 (6 May 43), Sec. WDS (supd. Marshall) to G-0 SWPA, 3433, 5 May 43; CI-019-3102 (7 May 43), AO/AS COAR to CO-0 SFA, 3102, 7 May 43; CI-019-10146 (10 Mar. 43), Brisbane to WAR, 34430, 10 May 43.

13. CI-019-3379 (5 July 43), Brisbane to GG AAF, 512h (5 July 43); CI-019-2911 (5 Aug. 43), Brisbane to GG AAF, 1413, 6 Aug. 43; extract from ltr., Hayman to Arnold, 29 June 43, in AAG 321.1 C, Cons. Ltrs.; memo for Colonel Burgess by 54th Fighter Group, 7 Feb. 1944, in Col. L. H. Burgess Report, AAG 321.1 Bulk, Inspections, filed under an RCR dated 3 Aug. 1943.
14. 45th Fighter Command. The 43d and 45th Squadrons arrived at
Bordeaux on 1 October and 1 September respectively. T.D. 14.

15. O.C.U.-10674 (29 June 43), AG/AS CG/2 to CLG SFA, #5777, 29 June 43;
O.C.U.-1194 (1 July 43), in 45th AAF, #1629, 1 July 43; O.C.U.-
1410 (1 July 43), AG/AS CG/2 to CLG SFA, #5683, 10 July 43; memo
for CR by Lt. Col. H. C. Wright, CG&IR, 15 July 1945, in AG 392, C,
Group; O.II-28692 (12 Aug. 43), Brigade to 45th AAF, #1675 (21 Aug.
43); O.C.U.-1194 (1 July 43), AG/AS CG/2 to CLG SFA, #5683, 1 July 43.

16. Form 51 for July and August, 29th Bomb Gp. (F), 345th Bomb Gp. (C),
and 34th Bomb Gp. (C).

17. O.II-5315 (9 June 43), Brisbane to 45th AAF, #1059, 9 June 43; O.C.U.-
5627 (12 June 43), AG/AS CG/2 to CLG SFA, #793, 12 June 43. This
month for delivery of the E-25s was 32420. General Kenney,
O.II-18877 (26 June 43), Brisbane to 45th AAF, #1436, 26 June 43.

18. O.C.U.-10677 (27 July 43), En. AAF, CG&IR to CLG SFA, #7169, 27 July
43; O.II-1333 (2 Aug. 43), Brisbane to 45th AAF, #1415, 2 Aug. 43;
O.C.U.-10677 (27 July 43), AG/AS CG/2 to CLG SFA, #5717, 2 Aug. 43.

Arnold made the following reply to Kenney's objections: "With
reference to the E-25s, the first three hundred airframes will have
four .50 caliber guns in the nose, plus the .75mm cannon, and two .50
caliber guns on the right side of the fuselage... After the three
hundred 75s, all subsequent airframes will have an additional
cannon on the left side of the fuselage, making a total of eight
fixed forward firing guns in addition to the cannon..."

As regards the cabin heater, we were unsuccessful in getting all
other theaters to concur in removing it, and it will, of necessity,
remain in ca production item. At present, modification centers
are unusually busy, but we will arrange for an Air Service Command
direct to remove the heater from your airframes... We
regard the elimination of the cockpit from the E-25s, this
airframe, as designed for tactical use principally as an attack bomber...
other bombardment airframes with a similar mission are flown
by one pilot, and single pilot operations was considered in making
plans for the E-25S.

Before building the airframe without cockpit provision, the
advantages and disadvantages were carefully weighed. The elimination
of the cockpit was strongly indicated, for the following reasons:

(1) The new cockpit added a total of 1,000 lb. of weight to the case.
Any possible reduction of weight forward of the cockpit was impossible.
A saving of over 750 lb. was possible through the elimination of the
cockpit's seat, armor plate, and controls.

(2) The airframe improved defensive armament, consisting of
.50 caliber guns and two turrett, cancelled the shifting of the upper turrett
to maintain proper balance. Having the upper turrett forward to the
former navigator's compartment not only solved the balance problem but provided a better forward location. Formerly, with the installation, even the addition of the camera equipment and camera loading provisions in this compartment, no room for the navigator was available. It was possible to provide a jump seat and a navigator's table at the co-pilot's position. Placed here, the navigator could be effectively positioned to function as a navigator on low altitude missions and to assist the pilot in many possible ways as well as acting as gunner.

(2) Since in this airplane the co-pilot does the bombing, it was necessary to locate all bombing equipment in the cockpit. Also the radio center was removed from the former navigator's compartment and placed in the cockpit. These installations led to the elimination of the co-pilot's provisions unadvised.

(3) Because of the active mission of the airplane, it was important to give the pilot more armor protection. To have provided a co-pilot's position with a thinner metal armor plate out of the question, again from the weight standpoint.

(4) If possible to eliminate the co-pilot, the consequent elimination of training personnel would be of considerable value.

(5) A test was conducted at Ellin Field to determine the need for a co-pilot in the B-25. The conclusions reached as a result of the test were that the airplane could be handled satisfactorily in combat without a co-pilot; that it could be flown in all positions of close formation and close echelon formation day or night; that evasive action could be taken; that leading and taking aim day or night could be accomplished satisfactorily, and that cannon and machine guns could be fired efficiently. The test report recommended elimination of the co-pilot from a non-bomber B-25. The single-engine concept resulting from this test was to the effect that pilot fatigue is greatly increased by single pilot operation especially when flying formation.

(6) A cable was sent 17 February 1943 to all theaters scheduled to receive B-25's with the following statement: In this we set out the idea for using B-25's alone and the airplane, prepared in these war planes, including the fact that there would be but one pilot. Theaters were asked to submit their recommendation for the elimination of these airplanes. In direct reply to the cable, all theaters agreed that the airplanes, giving their recommendations for the non-bomber B-25. In some of these replies was an objection raised to the elimination of the co-pilot.

Decision was made to proceed with production was made after consideration of the above projects.

Ellin Field states that it is possible to produce co-pilots in B-25's now, and many of these with consequent saving, and so far as the result to be satisfactory. It is desired to make an effort directed to the field, although this too would be the time, and the same problems would be encountered there.

By people have felt that a influence in the demand for co-pilots as the first two B-25's leave army in co-pilots. The B-25 is different in many respects from earlier B-25's, and it is believed that the
theretoes should try the simpessa as it is being built." Ltr.,
Arnold to Kenney, "G Sec. 10;" in AAG 512.1 C Cons. Ltr.s.

20. Ltr., Arnold to Kenney, sent 13 May 1943, in AAG 512.1 R Cons.
Ltr.; Memo for the CG AAF by Col. F. W. Smith Jr., 3 May 1943, in
CG 455.1 C, Airplanes.

21. C-IN-65313 (16 May 42), CGED to CINC SWPA, F3764, 13 May 43; C-IN-
10861 (1 July 43), Brisbane to TAR, F3764, 13 May 43; C-CU-29252
(11 May 43), CGED to CINC SWPA, F3764, 21 May 43; C-IN-17288
(11 May 43), Brisbane to TAR, F3764, 21 May 43; C-CU-412 (1 June
42), 40/45 AAF to CINC SWPA, F3764, 1 June 43; ltr., Arnold to
Kenney, 7 July 1943, in Air AG SAS 370.2, South Pacific; C-L-6920
(11 May 43), Brisbane to TAR, F3764, 11 May 43; C-CU-4102 (10 May
43), CGED to CINC SWPA, 10 May 43.

22. Extract from ltr., Kenney to Arnold, in MCR, Arnold to Giles, 29 June
1943, in AAG Misc., Australia.

23. Ltr., TAG to CG AAF etc., 6 June 1943, in AAG 512.1 S, A60 Ltr.s.;
C-CU-3185 (6 June 43), CGED to CINC SWPA, F3764, 6 June 43; memo
for Gen. Giles by Col. O. P. Weyland, 7 July 1943, in AAG Misc.,
Australia; notes on a staff meeting with Gen. Arnold, in memo for
Col. Gross, etc. by Brig. Gen. E. A. Craig, 11 Aug. 1943, in AAG
377.7 Conference.

24. C-IN-19933 (31 May 43), Brisbane to CG AAF, 31 May 43; C-IN-2379
(31 May 43), Brisbane to CINC SWPA, F3764, 31 May 43; C-CU-2002
(7 May 43), AFRAL to CINC SWPA (from Arnold for Kenney), F3764,
7 May 43; C-CU-2381 (9 May 43), CGED to CINC SWPA, 9 May 43.

25. C-L-2450 (14 July 42), Brisbane to TAR, F3764, 14 July 42; C-CU-
5639 (14 July 42), CGED to CINC SWPA (AFRAL to McCrabb for
Kenney, c/o Arnold), F3764, 14 July 42; ltr., Kenney to Arnold, 14
July 42; ltr., Arnold to Kenney, 24 July 42; and Arnold to Kenney, 21
Aug. 1943, in AAG 512.1 D, Cons. Ltr.s.

26. Ibid.; C-CU-2381 (9 Aug. 43), CGED to CINC SWPA (c/o Arnold), F3764,
9 Aug. 43; C-IN-10966 (14 Aug. 43), Brisbane to CG AAF (c/o Kenney),
F3764, 14 Aug. 43; C-CU-2381 (17 Aug. 43), CGED to CINC SWPA
(c/o Arnold), F3764, 17 Aug. 43.
27. C.-II-23-76 (27 Aug. 43), Brisbane to 06 AAF (sgd. Kennedy), Malet, 27 Aug., 43; C.-II-12379 (29 Aug. 43), En, AAF to CHIC SFA (sgd. Arnold), 7 Aug., 43; C.-II-298 (1 Sec. 45), Brisbane to 11 AAF (sgd. Kennedy), Malet, 1 Sec. 45; C.-II-1378 (5 Sec. 45), En, AAF to CIJO SFA (sgd. Arnold), 7 Sec. 45.

28. See n. 27 above.

29. C.-II-2611 (5 Aug. 43), Brisbane to 07 AAF, A161, 3 Aug. 43; C.-II-698 (5 Aug. 43), Brisbane to 07 AAF, A1602, 31 Aug. 43; Reports to Gen. Kennedy by John H. Gibson, 4 July 1943 and by Paul V. Beeser, 3 July 1943, incl. to ltr., Kennedy to Arnold, 23 July 1943, in AC 312.1 D, Cons. Ltrs.

30. Ltr., Kennedy to Arnold, 23 July 1943, in AC 312.1 D Cons. Ltrs. It is interesting to note that on 10 December 1942, CAA reported that if the P-40s and F-28s were not counted in Kennedy's fighter strength, he was 129 fighters short for the same number of units that he had in July. R.R. 20/AS CAA to AFSAS, 10 Dec. 1942, in AC 337 J, Conferences.


32. The memo for General Giles by Col. C. P. Wylde, Chief of Allocations and Programs Div., AOF/SOS, 1 July 1943, in AC 312.1 D Cons., Australia, as cited in note 31 above, was incorporated in a letter from Arnold to Kennedy 5 July 1943, in Air AAF SAG 370.2, South Pacific.

33. C.-II-2579 (15 June 43), GC/AS to CHIC SFA, #1748, 14 June 43; C.-II-2566 (20 June 43), GC/AS to CHIC SFA (for Kennedy from Arnold), 1938, 30 June 43.

34. C.-II-14260 (23 June 43), Brisbane to 06 AAF, A1623, 23 June 43; C.-II-887 (14 July 43), En, AAF to CHIC SFA (to MacArthur for Kennedy sgd. Arnold), 7 Aug., 43; C.-II-5961 (8 July 43), Brisbane to 06 AAF, A1623, 3 July 43.

35. Ltr., Kennedy to Arnold, 23 July 1943, in AC 312.1 D Cons. Ltrs.

36. C.-II-14060 (20 July 43), Brisbane to 10 AAF, A1216, 20 July 43.

37. Ltr., Kennedy to Arnold, 23 July 1943.


40. C-III-2215 (2 June 43), Brisbane to 03 AAF, 9157, 9 June 43; V Air Service Area Command, History; C-III-1216 (9 Sep. 43), Brisbane to War, 9157, 9 Sep. 43.


42. V Air Service Area Command, History.

43. Ibid. The modification was described in a cable message as follows: two fixed .50 caliber machine guns installed in blister on each side of aircraft between stations numbers 276 and 225 with concussion plate backed with rubber shockpad installed from station number 276 to approximately 2 inches in front of station 196. Each gun has blast tube similar to those installed on F-40 aircraft. Guns are manually charged individually from pilots cockpit. Ammunition cans are mounted in aft of bomb bay between stations numbers 230 and 204. Concussion plate with rubber shockpad are installed on bomb bay doors; this necessary so guns can be fired without damage to bomb bay doors than even necessitates reinstallation of greater number of stringers between front and rear station number 294 and station 256.521 and another additional layer of .040 30 skin over original skin to prevent skin failure. C-III-1216 (9 Sep. 43), Brisbane to AAF, 9157, 9 Sep. 43.

44. C-III-12175 (28 Aug. 43), Brisbane to 02 AAF, 9157, 28 Aug. 43. A note attached to this message currently by Colonel Ferrin is addressed to Major Krick of the Air Service Command: "Krick - Why can't we do what Kenney is doing?"

45. C-III-12442 (16 Apr. 43), Brisbane to War, 9157, 16 Apr. 43; C-III-1504 (1 Jul. 43), Brisbane to 09 AAF, 91615, 1 Jul. 43; ltr., Kenney to Arnold, 23 July 1943, in AAF 312.1 D, Cons. Ltrs.

46. C-III-2269 (3 Apr. 43), Mt. AIF, 92/93 Hldo to 07.3 321, 3 Apr. 43; ltr., Kenney to Arnold, 7 Sep. 1943, in AAF 312.1 D Cons. Ltrs.

47. Arnold to Kenney, 26 Jan. 1943, ibid.

48. ltr., Kenney to Arnold, 7 Sep. 1943, ibid.; C-III-11914 (16 July 43), Brisbane to 03 AAF, 91669, 16 July 43; C-III-12009 (23 July 43), Brisbane to 03 AAF, 91703, 23 July 43; 7th Service Command History.

49. 7th Air Service Command 3rd AAF, History; C-III-12891 (15 July 43), Brisbane to 02 AAF, 91668, 15 July 43; C-III-12924 (6 July 43), Brisbane to 03 AAF, 91264, 6 July 43; C-III-12930 (15 July 43), Brisbane to 03 AAF, 91263, 15 July 43; C-III-11803 (17 July 43), 7th APO to Brisbane, 1232, 17 July 43; C-III-12976 (11 July 43), 7th APO to Brisbane, 2042, 11 July 43; C-III-20373 (11 July 43), 7th APO to 09 SRA, 2042, 11 July 43; ltr., Kenney to Arnold, 22 July 1943, in AAF 312.1 D, Cons. Ltrs.

SECURITY INFORMATION

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50. Ibid.; 27th Depot Repair Sq. history; G-11-17719 (29 July 43),
Brisbane to G-11-17719, 29 July 43; G-11-515 (1 Aug. 43),
Brisbane to RS M/19, 1 Aug. 43; G-11-048/1 (1 Aug. 43),
Brisbane to RS M/19, 1 Aug. 43; G-11; 048/1, 1 Aug. 43. Lack of certain other parts,
such as tail-wheel caging and tubing were also delaying the entrance
of the B-47 into combat. Kenney's request for a rush shipment of
these items resulted in authorization for Patterson Field "to alter
B-47 equipment priorities on shipments to U.S. sufficiently to pre-
vent the grounding of aircrews in Australia, due to the lack of spare
parts, tires and maintenance equipment. Lt. Col. L. J. Kerecond,
W&O to G-11-3, Patterson Field, 14 Aug. 1943, in ARM-4521 D, Pursuits.

51. Gen. Arnold's comment in his, 10/43 to 10/43 CINCPAC, 10 Oct. 1943, in
ARM 4521 D, Gen. Li.ets.

52. G-11-282 (12 July 43), 28/43 L & D to G-11-282 (sgd. Marshall), H/392,
3 July 43; G-11-282 (17 July 43), Brisbane to VAF (sgd. W. E. Arthur),
30/7/43, 3 July 43; G-11-282 (7 Sep. 43), Brisbane to VAF, 30/7/43,
7 Sep. 43; G-11-282 (10 Sep. 43), VAF, AAC, 11/8/43 to 11/8/43 W & D.
1. This operation was to be the outgrowth of the Milston Plan covered by the code word CARIBBEAN. South Pacific forces were to carry out the operations on the eastern axis in two phases: Phase 1—Operations leading to the control of New Georgia; Phase 2—enveloping operations leading to landings in areas Augustus Bay on Bougainville. Southwest Pacific forces were to carry out the operations on the western axis; Phase 1—landings on Goodenough, Goodwin's, and Bassa Bay, the last as a preliminary to an advance movement against Salamaua; Phase 2—an ambitious landing near Lae, followed by a airborne drop at Tougah, and movements along the coast toward Minsinker and through the Raba Valley toward Buka Bay; Phase 3—landings on Cape Gloucester and near Gezata in New Britain. OCS 400, 4 Dec, 1943.

2. See Sec for 4th Photo Se., June-September 1944; 8th Photo Se. history.

3. A photo one of the 8th Squadron first photographed Buka on 5 June 1943. Ibid. By 4 July two P-38's were on loan for escort purposes from the 80th Fighter Squadron; by the end of the month P-38 was assigned from the 80th Fighter Squadron, and by 12 September six P-38's were also assigned. See also GO 48, No. 3, 22 Aug, 1943.

4. Intel. Augs., 110, 9 June 1943, thru 147, 2 Sep. 1943; for September statistics, see operations reports from the aces. Figures from Form 54 differ slightly from those used in the text, probably because of differences in the reports of aircraft which failed to reach the target owing to weather or mechanical difficulties.

5. Intel. Augs. see in n. 4 above.

6. Ibid., 111, 12 June 1943; statistics from Form 54.

7. Ibid.

8. Form 54, 18-24 July 1943, Po. 20th Se. and 50th Se., 730th Co.

9. Ibid., 8-14 and 15-21 Aug. 1943, 523th, 529th, 530th, 571st and Po. 20th Se., 730th Co., "The mission was well in excess of 3,500 statute miles and called for the aircraft to be airborne for 22 hours on the average. Airplanes on take off carried in excess of 63,000 lbs. which is believed to be the minimum safe flying load, if not in excess of it. It is not known that any other mission has encountered the same conditions of distance and weight," Account of Mission Fenton, 11 on 15 Aug. 1943, 730th Bomb Co. (B)."

12. Brisbane to MOR; CI-1-10010 (16 June 43); Q5214, 16 June 43; CI-IN-10622 (17 June 43), Q5249 (17 June 43); CI-IN-11228 (13 June 43), Q5268 CI-IN-12748 (21 June 43); Q5270, 20 June 43; CI-IN-12205 (21 June 43), Q5280, 21 June 43.

13. Form 24 for June, 3th, 33th, and 49th Fighter Sq.; 49th Fighter Co. History. Note that while only 1 fighter was lost from enemy action, 14 fighters were lost in accidents. CI-IN-23799 (5 July 43), Brisbane to MOR, 14218, 5 July 43.

14. Form 24 for June; Intel. Summ. for June; once, it is, in cables, June 1943.

15. Intel. Summ., 118, 7 July 1943; Form 24, 27 June-3 July 1943, 8th, 17th, and 69th Ssgs.; OMI Weekly II, 97, (7 July 1943), no. 1922-22. 49th Fighter Sq. History; Brisbane to MOR; CI-IN-23800 (6 July 43), Q5725, 6 July 43; CI-11-12873 (19 July 43), Q5735, 19 July 43.


18. MacKenzie, Notes on Operations—Lorobe, Massau B'y Ares; Reg., Regtl. 3 to 43rd Div., 20 June 1943, in 195th Regtl. A/Journal; Form 24 for 27 June-7 July 1943, all records of 48th, 25th, and 49th Sgns. It unassumingly could have been impossible to keep a fighter cover over the beach at all times, and it may have been the only to keep the fighters on the ground until running units acid up hostile plots. There reportedly were no Japanese attacks on the Massau Beach on 20 July. 5th Tactical Air Communications Sq. History; 48th Fighter Sq. History.

19. Intel. Summ., 119 and 119, and 10 July 1943; Cus. note, in cables; Cus. Army of the 27th; Form 24 for 27 June-3 July 1943, 29th Sq.

20. Intel. Summ., 118 and 120, 7 and 7 July 1943; Reg., Regtl. 3 to 8-3 41st Div., 7 July 1943, in 195th Regtl. A/Journal, in Cus. Br. AGO, 1951-3-241-72.3; 49th Fighter Sq. History; Form 24 for 27 June-7 July 1943, 7th Fighter Sq.

21. During these operations the 15th Regiment was attached to and under the operational control of the 2nd and 3rd Australian Division which operated under command of the New Guinea Force with headquarters at Port MoreSB. 15th Regt. Report of Operations, 20 June to 12 Jan. 1943, in (1932) 341-70.3, Cus. Br. AGO.
22. In the United States, reports on operations.


26. 67th Sq. History; Form 34 for July, all fighter squadrons; Ops. reten. in cables.

27. Ibid.; 35th and 49th Fighter Sq. histories; 46th Fighter Sq. History; Form 34 for July, all fighter squadrons.

28. Brisbane to 2AP; C.LII-15506 (10 July 43), 36550, 13 July 43; C.II-19572 (19 July 43) 30765, 19 July 43; 8th Bomb Sq. History; C.LI Weekly, II, 19 and 20 (23 and 24 July 1943); Intel. Sun., and Gns. notes in cables for July.

29. Ibid.; Form 24, 25-31 July 1943, for 28th, 17th, and 20th sqs.

30. Intel. Sun., for July. These figures are approximate. There are some differences between these and the figures derived from Form 34. In case of obvious error, the Intelligence Section figures have been adjusted.

31. Ibid.; Form 24, 11-17 July 1943, for 21st, 23rd, 39th, 40th, 43rd, and 9th Gns.; C.LII-15506 (10 July 43), Brisbane to 2AP, 36550, 17 July 43; C.II-19572 (19 July 43), Brisbane to 2AP, 30765, 19 July 43.

32. Intel. Sun., 153 and 163, for 28 and 29 July 1943. For example, on 29 July 43 fighters and 57 bombers were reported on New's drones. Intel. Sun., 163, 24 July 1943.

A considerable amount of space is devoted to England's adventures here; it is not entirely the "hit and run" nature of those experienced by the service command and other American and Australian organizations. This contribution to the war to spend little advertised effort in even months within the enemy's forward areas.

II. Faced.


IV. History of the 47th Fighter Training Group, 343d Air Division, 75th Fighter Training School, 340th Fighter Interceptor Command, 340th Fighter Interceptor Command, 340th Fighter Interceptor Group, 340th Fighter Interceptor Command, 340th Fighter Interceptor Command.

V. 47th Fighter Group, history; Form 54, 12-31 Jan. 1943, 31st, 32nd, and 33rd Fighter Squadrons, cable copy, mimeo., for August.

VI. C-121A-1054 (4 Aug. 45), Airplan to NAS, 23478, (4 Aug. 45); Intel. Sec., 1377, 7 Aug. 1945.

VII. Account of Mission 7/20-45 on 11 Aug. 1945, 40th Bomb Group (B), 340th Bomb Group (B).


IX. C-121A-1054 (13 Aug. 45), Field use to NAS, 3276, 14 Aug. 45.

X. Account of Mission 6, 224-7 on 17 Aug. 1945, 6th, 6th, 58th, and 40th Bomb Groups (B). Mission reports for 14 Aug. (103-7), for the 322d, 324th, and 404th Bomb Groups which also participated in the 224-7, and it is possible that they achieved better results. Form 54, however, simply says that the target was located.


XII. Form 54. The cable status report gives 16 B-17's and 95 B-24's.

XIII. Cable status report given 61 B-24's and 11 B-17's. The 345th Bomb Group had, only a few days before, sent their B-24's to Formosa to be modified into the B14, and consequently had only 11 B-25's in commission, while the 345th Bomb Group had 18 B-24's and 11 B-25's and 11 B-26's.
47. Account of Section No. 22-1 on 16 June 1943, 61st, 66th, 68th, 69th, and 6821st Bomb Divs.

51. Ibid.; Form 21, 17-21 Jun 1943, 61st, 66th, 68th, 69th, 70th, 71st, 72nd, and 73rd Bns.

52. Ibid.; 7th, 17th, 71st, 72nd, and 73rd Bns.

59. Ibid.; 8th, 17th, 68th, 69th, 70th, 71st, 72nd, and 73rd Bns. For unit histories, with the exception of that of the 175th Group, are very inaccurate concerning this escort mission. See also: IPR and SS-1110 (17 Jun, 43), 1347, 13 Aug 43, re: 34 IN-12497 (17 Jun, 43), 1347 (17 Aug, 43).

51. Form 21; 1st Allied Air Forces, SFA, Narrative Mission Reports 5, 62, and 63.

52. Form 21; Intel Form; cable ops. rota; diary of Operational Statistics, 21st, 1st Allied Air Forces, 1 Aug 1943, in Office of Statistical Control.

57. O-IN-13108 (17 Jun, 43), Transferred to ATR, 670371; diary of Operational Statistics, 21st, 14th of Allied Air Forces, portion in office of Statistical Control.
1. Australian Army Directors of Public Relations, "Tiles of the Division."

2. In Clinton Allen, 27 Oct. 1943. see also n. 1, Chart VII.

3. Australian Army Directors of Public Relations, Air Australia Army Air Int.


5. Ibid.

6. Ibid.


8. Ibid.

9. Ibid.; 5th Tactical Air Communications Sq. History.

10. Form 84, 36th, 47th, and 41st Squadrons; 50th and 49th Fighter Sq. Histories.

11. CO-IN-1231 (Oct. 42), Brisbane to US, CIA, 2 Sep. 43; Form 84.

12. Ibid.; 23 Aug. to 4 Sep. 43, 71st and 454th Sqz.

13. 0-I-5923 (2 Sep. 43), Port Loresby to US, 3 Sep. 1942; 30th Fighter Sq. History.

14. "Lac Operation": 5th Tactical Air Communications Sq. History.

15. Ibid.; Form 84, 23 Aug. to Sep. 1942, 40th and 43rd Sqz.; "Lac Operation."


17. "Amphibious Control."

18. Ibid.

22. "Ambitious Control."

35. Form 34, 19-26 Nov. 1943, 36th, 404th, 5th, 15th, 28th, and 90th Sq.; C-11-193922 (22 Sep. 42), Port Moresby to W.A., 16 Sep. 42, 32 Sep. 42. Twelve R.A.F. P-40s recently bombed Japanese on the 3rd: also. Ibid.

36. Operation Eminish.

37. Form 34, 19-26 Nov. 1947 for all fighter sqs.; Amphiibious Control.

38. Ibid.; Form 34, 19-24 Nov. 1947, 6th, 25th, 50th, 341st, and 422nd Sq.; C-11-183752 (23 Nov. 43), Port Moresby to M.B. 24, 9 Mar. 42; C-1-183752 (27 Nov. 42), Brisbane to W.A., 28 Nov. 42, 27 Nov. 42.

39. CEN Weekly, II, 40 (23 Nov. 1943); 5th Tactical Air Communications Sq. History.

40. These "Australian Independents," had had a stream of history. They had formed the garrison of Moresby when the island was captured by the Japanese in the spring of 1942. They had lost miraculously released to Australia several months latter, and after a brief rest, had been sent to Base: Base, 478th Service Sq. History.

41. Form 34, 20 Sep.-2 Oct. 1943, all bomber sqs.; CEN Weekly for bomb losses; Brisbane to W.A.; C-11-191886 (27 Sep. 43), 95103, 27 Sep. 43; C-11-19287 (28 Sep. 43), 96140, 28 Sep. 43; C-11-19550 (29 Sep. 43), 96183, 29 Sep. 43.

42. CEN Monthly, II, 40 (5 Oct. 1943).

2. Office of Statistical Control, Listing of Air Force and AS Arms and Services Organizations Overseas by Theater, as of 30 Sep. 1943.


4. Ibid., 707, 29 May 1943.

5. The natives were at the mercy of the side which had the most powerful forces in their vicinity; moreover they were fully aware of this fact. On one occasion, for example, a formal delegation of natives came to Capt. M. R. F. W. who was reconnoitering in the vicinity and politely requested him to leave that area unless he could produce forces which were more powerful than the nearby Japanese. Unrecorded interview with Capt. Everett Frazier.


7. Ibid.

8. Operation District.


10. History of the 45th Service Co., 18th Material Control Unit, 46th Fighter Co., and the 5th, 57th, and 59th Troop Carrier Sqs.


12. Ibid.


17. 440th Sig Bn, Hq. History; Fighter and bomber crews received the air medal for 50 and the DFC for 70 additional missions. If they chose not to take the "air" medal they would receive the DFC at the completion of the first 50. Troop Carrier pilots received the DFC at the completion of 50 combat missions, a cluster for each 50 additional, while the medal was awarded to the crews for 50 missions. (Baker Report.) "The morale of the ground echelon of this squadron is very low, due to the fact that there are no prospects of their being returned to the states, after twenty (20) months in foreign service. "To keep up the morale and combat spirit, various counsels of comfort by the Commanding General, Col. Davis, have been held."


This study is based upon documents located in repositories at Headquarters, AAF, together with those sent in by AAF historians from the Southwest Pacific theater. These sources give satisfactory coverage for a narrative of operations, although reports on bombardment operations are surprisingly incomplete. It the time of the preparation of this study, for example, no bombardment unit had submitted a history covering the period, and narrative mission reports on operations before August 1943 had not been received. But cable and radio messages, intelligence summaries, statistical reports, and several good fighter group histories provided the essential details.

The sources used for the planning and policy portions of the study were also incomplete. Documents in the office of AC/AS-5 gave good coverage of the over-all planning at headquarters, but other material in Operations Division of the War Department General Staff was not made available. The principal weakness, however, was in the dearth of information on policy-making in the theater. Records of staff meetings, operations instructions, and correspondence among staff officers within the theater have been for the most part unavailable for the period before late 1943.

In this study, the notes generally give the location of the document cited. The following are the principal collections or repositories used:

AC/AS-5 files

AAF Office of Statistical Control: Combat analysis studies, operational and personnel statistics.

Air Adjutant General
Mail and Records Division, Classified Records Section: Collections of letters, memos, AIR's, etc., filed under the decimal system and cited ACS with decimal.

Administrative Services Division: A collection similar to the above and cited AIR AS with decimal.

The Adjutant General, Operations and Training Division, Operations Branch: Records of the 41st Infantry Division.

Cable and radio messages in the office of the AAF Cable Secretary and AFSCO.
AC/AS-2, Air Information Division, Library Branch: Interviews, intelligence summaries, and miscellaneous reports, cited A-2 Library.

AIA Historical Office, Archives: Cable messages, unit histories, correspondence from factory representatives, special studies, and other miscellaneous documents received from the theater.
### Appendix 1: Location of Combat Units 1942

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Unit</th>
<th>16 Feb</th>
<th>1 June</th>
<th>30 Sep</th>
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</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>317th Troop Carrier Co</td>
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<tr>
<td>En</td>
<td>Garbutt</td>
<td>Garbutt</td>
<td>Garbutt</td>
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<tr>
<td>39th Sq</td>
<td>Archerfield</td>
<td>Archerfield</td>
<td>Archerfield</td>
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<tr>
<td>40th</td>
<td>Garbutt</td>
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<td>41st</td>
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<td>46th</td>
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<tr>
<td>374th Troop Carrier Co</td>
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<td>Eq</td>
<td>Wards with Det at Townsville</td>
<td>Wards</td>
<td>Wards</td>
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<tr>
<td>6th Sq</td>
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</tr>
<tr>
<td>21st</td>
<td>Archerfield</td>
<td></td>
<td>Jackson</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>22d</td>
<td>Port Moresby</td>
<td></td>
<td>Wards</td>
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<tr>
<td>23d</td>
<td>Wards</td>
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<td>Wards</td>
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<tr>
<td>375th Troop Carrier Co</td>
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<tr>
<td>Eq</td>
<td>On 12 July 1943, Dobodura</td>
<td>375th Groups</td>
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<tr>
<td>55th Sq</td>
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<td>56th</td>
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<td>57th</td>
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<td>53rd</td>
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<tr>
<td>403rd Troop Carrier Co</td>
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<tr>
<td>Eq</td>
<td>Assigned to South Pacific Area</td>
<td>On 13 August 1943, Jackson***</td>
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<tr>
<td>65th Sq</td>
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<tr>
<td>66th</td>
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</table>

* Station List, 16 Feb 1943; Form 34; History of the 54th Troop Carrier Wing.
** On detached service with 374th Group, 26 August-5 September.
*** Air echelons at Taile Taile.
### Appendix 1 (Cont'd)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Unit</th>
<th>15 Feb</th>
<th>1 June</th>
<th>20 Sep</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>422d Troop Carrier Co</td>
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<td>70th</td>
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<td>On 1 September, Jackson</td>
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<td>67th Sq</td>
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<td>70th</td>
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<tr>
<td>Keresby and re-assigned to 54th TO Wing</td>
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| 3d Bombardment Gp (D) |        |        |        |
| Hq |        |        |        |
| 3rd Sq |        |        |        |
| 12th |        |        |        |
| 88th |        |        |        |
| 90th |        |        |        |
| Fort Keresby |        |        |        |
| Kila |        |        |        |
| Durand |        |        |        |
| Dobodura |        |        |        |
| Dobodura |        |        |        |

| 3rd Bombardment Gp (K) |        |        |        |
| Hq |        |        |        |
| 24th Sq |        |        |        |
| 19th |        |        |        |
| 34th |        |        |        |
| 40th |        |        |        |
| Reid River |        |        |        |
| Reid River |        |        |        |
| Reed stock |        |        |        |
| Reid River |        |        |        |

| 33th Bombardment Gp (L) |        |        |        |
| Hq |        |        |        |
| 71st Sq |        |        |        |
| 405th |        |        |        |
| 82nd |        |        |        |
| 872d |        |        |        |
| Durand |        |        |        |
| Durand |        |        |        |
| Durand |        |        |        |
| Initial reports made from Durand on 26 June. No aircraft assigned. |        |        |        |

| 345th Bombardment Gp (M) |        |        |        |
| Hq |        |        |        |
| 496th Sq |        |        |        |
| 499th |        |        |        |
| 500th |        |        |        |
| 501st |        |        |        |
| Woodstock |        |        |        |
| Reid River |        |        |        |
| Woodstock |        |        |        |
| Reid River |        |        |        |
| (6 June) |        |        |        |
| Jackson |        |        |        |
| Schwimmer |        |        |        |
| Jackson |        |        |        |
| Schwimmer |        |        |        |
### Appendix 1 (Contd)

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<td>9th</td>
<td>Schwimmer</td>
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**Security Information**

*CONFIDENTIAL*
### Appendix 1 (Cont'd)

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<thead>
<tr>
<th>Unit</th>
<th>16 Feb</th>
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<th>30 Sep</th>
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<tr>
<td>49th Fighter Group</td>
<td>Durand</td>
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<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Eq 340th Sq</td>
<td>Group arrived Brisbane on 14 June 1943, and flew to Port Moreby from 14 to 24 July.</td>
<td>Schwimmer</td>
<td>Jackson</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>341st</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Durand</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>342d</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Wards</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>475th Fighter Group (II)</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Eq 431st Sq</td>
<td>Group activated on 14 May, 1943. Organized and trained in Australia until August.</td>
<td>Dobodura</td>
<td>Dobodura: Take-off from Berry</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>432d</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>&quot;</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>433d</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>&quot;</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Det &quot;A&quot; Night Fighter</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Berry; Take-offs from Jackson and Morenda</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>67th Fighter Sq</td>
<td>Kila</td>
<td>Wards</td>
<td>Woodlark</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>8th Photo Sq</td>
<td>Schwimmer</td>
<td>Schwimmer</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
# Appendix 2

**Fighter Escort of Transports to Iwo**

24 January-1 February 1943

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Date</th>
<th>Time</th>
<th>Base</th>
<th>Squadron</th>
<th>Flights</th>
<th>Remarks</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>24</td>
<td>0800</td>
<td>Schwimmer</td>
<td>39th</td>
<td>2 P-38</td>
<td>&quot;Contacted transports at Iwo.&quot;</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>0910</td>
<td>&quot;</td>
<td>Kila</td>
<td>8th</td>
<td>3 P-40</td>
<td>&quot;    &quot;</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1045</td>
<td>&quot;</td>
<td>Durand</td>
<td>7th</td>
<td>2 P-40</td>
<td>&quot;    &quot;</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1120</td>
<td>&quot;</td>
<td>Berry</td>
<td>40th</td>
<td>3 P-39</td>
<td>&quot;Bad weather. No visual or radio contact made with transports.&quot;</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1250</td>
<td>&quot;</td>
<td>Jackson</td>
<td>41st</td>
<td>5 P-40</td>
<td>&quot;    &quot;</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>&quot;</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>3 P-39</td>
<td>&quot;    &quot;</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1410</td>
<td>&quot;</td>
<td>Durand</td>
<td>7th</td>
<td>3 P-40</td>
<td>Incomplete, weather.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1425</td>
<td>&quot;</td>
<td>&quot;</td>
<td></td>
<td>4 P-40</td>
<td>&quot;    &quot;</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>25</td>
<td>1254</td>
<td>Schwimmer</td>
<td>9th</td>
<td>2 P-38</td>
<td>&quot;    &quot;</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>26</td>
<td>0730</td>
<td>&quot;</td>
<td></td>
<td>3 P-38</td>
<td>&quot;    &quot;</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>0820</td>
<td>&quot;</td>
<td></td>
<td>4 P-38</td>
<td>&quot;Area south of Iwo.&quot;</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>0725</td>
<td>&quot;</td>
<td></td>
<td>6 P-38</td>
<td>&quot;    &quot;</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>27</td>
<td>0825</td>
<td>&quot;</td>
<td></td>
<td>3 P-38</td>
<td>&quot;    &quot;</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>0935</td>
<td>&quot;</td>
<td>Kila</td>
<td>8th</td>
<td>3 P-40</td>
<td>Transports failed to wait at rendezvous point.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>&quot;</td>
<td>Durand</td>
<td>7th</td>
<td>3 P-40</td>
<td>Visibility, poor.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1025</td>
<td>&quot;</td>
<td>Berry</td>
<td>40th</td>
<td>6 P-39</td>
<td>Turbulence, rough.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1105</td>
<td>&quot;</td>
<td>Jackson</td>
<td>41st</td>
<td>6 P-40</td>
<td>Contact made with transports.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>28</td>
<td>0745</td>
<td>Schwimmer</td>
<td>39th</td>
<td>3 P-38</td>
<td>4 DC-3's.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>29</td>
<td>0700</td>
<td>&quot;</td>
<td></td>
<td>2 P-38</td>
<td>&quot;Spotting weather for next mission.&quot;</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>0845</td>
<td>&quot;</td>
<td>&quot;</td>
<td></td>
<td>7 P-38</td>
<td>&quot;    &quot;</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>0955</td>
<td>&quot;</td>
<td>Durand</td>
<td>7th</td>
<td>3 P-40</td>
<td>Transports failed to wait at rendezvous point.</td>
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<tr>
<td>1035</td>
<td>&quot;</td>
<td>Berry</td>
<td>40th</td>
<td>3 P-39</td>
<td>1 fighter lost, &quot;other causes.&quot;</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1150</td>
<td>&quot;</td>
<td>Kila</td>
<td>8th</td>
<td>3 P-40</td>
<td>&quot;    &quot;</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1200</td>
<td>&quot;</td>
<td>Jackson</td>
<td>41st</td>
<td>1 P-33, 7 P-40</td>
<td>&quot;    &quot;</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1330</td>
<td>&quot;</td>
<td>Durand</td>
<td>7th</td>
<td>3 P-40</td>
<td>&quot;    &quot;</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1420</td>
<td>&quot;</td>
<td>Berry</td>
<td>40th</td>
<td>7 P-39</td>
<td>Visibility, clear. Turbulence, rough.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1500</td>
<td>&quot;</td>
<td>Schwimmer</td>
<td>9th</td>
<td>7 P-39</td>
<td>Incomplete, weather.</td>
</tr>
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</table>

*Although 13 fighters were forced back to base because of mechanical difficulties, only 1 was lost from accident, and no enemy opposition was encountered. All information from Form 24.*
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Date</th>
<th>Time</th>
<th>Base</th>
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<th>Remarks</th>
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<tr>
<td>30</td>
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<td>8 P-33</td>
<td>12 DC-3's.</td>
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<tr>
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<td>Durand</td>
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<td>8 P-40</td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td>0820</td>
<td>Jackson</td>
<td>41st</td>
<td>7 P-400</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
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<td>0855</td>
<td>Kila</td>
<td>8th</td>
<td>8 P-39</td>
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<tr>
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<td>0900</td>
<td>Berry</td>
<td>40th</td>
<td>8 P-39</td>
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</tr>
<tr>
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<td>7th</td>
<td>8 P-40</td>
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</tr>
<tr>
<td>1225</td>
<td></td>
<td>Berry</td>
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<td>6 P-39</td>
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<tr>
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<td>1415</td>
<td>Berry</td>
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<tr>
<td>31</td>
<td>0715</td>
<td>Schwimmer</td>
<td>39th</td>
<td>8 P-38</td>
<td>Flight did not contact transports until after arrival at Wau.</td>
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<tr>
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<td>0748</td>
<td>Kila</td>
<td>8th</td>
<td>8 P-40</td>
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<td>Berry</td>
<td>40th</td>
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<td>1000</td>
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</tr>
<tr>
<td>1055</td>
<td></td>
<td>Kila</td>
<td>8th</td>
<td>8 P-40</td>
<td>Lost transports in clouds. Contact at Wau. Covered landing and take-off.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1115</td>
<td></td>
<td>Berry</td>
<td>40th</td>
<td>6 P-39</td>
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<tr>
<td>1155</td>
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<td>Durand</td>
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<td>Berry</td>
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<td>5th</td>
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<td></td>
<td>Jackson</td>
<td>41st</td>
<td>5 P-400</td>
<td></td>
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<td>1450</td>
<td>Schwimmer</td>
<td>9th</td>
<td>8 P-39</td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>1 Feb</td>
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<td>Schwimmer</td>
<td>39th</td>
<td>8 P-38</td>
<td>Incomplete, weather.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>0748</td>
<td>Kila</td>
<td>8th</td>
<td>8 P-40</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>0825</td>
<td>Berry</td>
<td>40th</td>
<td>8 P-39</td>
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<td>1005</td>
<td>Jackson</td>
<td>41st</td>
<td>8 P-400</td>
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<td>Kila</td>
<td>8th</td>
<td>8 P-40</td>
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<td>1100</td>
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<td>8 P-40</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
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<td>1125</td>
<td></td>
<td>Berry</td>
<td>40th</td>
<td>6 P-39</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
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<td>1205</td>
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<td>Durand</td>
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<td>8 P-40</td>
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<td>Berry</td>
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<td>8 P-39</td>
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<td>1400</td>
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<td>8th</td>
<td>8 P-40</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1430</td>
<td></td>
<td>Jackson</td>
<td>41st</td>
<td>5 P-400</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
| 1500 |      | Schwimmer | 9th      | 8 P-29   | "Cu clouds to 25,000' over pass. Trans returned due weather."

This page declassified IAW EO12958
Appendix 3

Summary of Bombardment
Operations in Support of Lee
Ground Operations, 3-16 Sept 1943

Sorties by Type

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Type</th>
<th>Sorties</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>B-24</td>
<td>132</td>
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<tr>
<td>B-17</td>
<td>64</td>
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<tr>
<td>B-25</td>
<td>163</td>
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<tr>
<td>B-26</td>
<td>94</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>A-20</td>
<td>16</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total</td>
<td>421</td>
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Sorties by Unit

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Unit</th>
<th>Sorties</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>90th Bomb Go (E)</td>
<td>94 B-24</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>42d &quot; &quot; &quot;</td>
<td>55 B-24, 54 B-17</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>345th &quot; &quot; (M)</td>
<td>126 B-25</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>33th &quot; &quot; &quot;</td>
<td>30 B-25</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>23d &quot; &quot; &quot;</td>
<td>24 B-26</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3d At t Go (A)</td>
<td>25 B-25, 16 A-20</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Total Tonnage
1,597,942 lbs = about 799 tons

Average Tonnage
57.1 tons per day

Bombardment
267,960 x .50 cal
39,900 x .30 cal

Aircraft Losses
1 B-17 missing. No enemy interception on any missions.

* Intelligence Reports of Operations, Lee Area, Fifth Air Force Bu., 16 Sept 1943
### Appendix 3 (Contd)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Date</th>
<th>Unit</th>
<th>Aircraft</th>
<th>Time</th>
<th>Altitude</th>
<th>Lobs</th>
<th>A/A</th>
<th>Results</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>3 Sept</td>
<td>90th Gp</td>
<td>B-24</td>
<td>1040-</td>
<td>12000-</td>
<td>161 x 1000 A</td>
<td>Intense, accurate</td>
<td>57 bombs in target area. All buildings believed destroyed. Smoke over target.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>1046</td>
<td>15000'</td>
<td>16 x 1000 B</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
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<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Target: Lee Terrace</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3 Sept</td>
<td>498th Sq</td>
<td>B-25D1</td>
<td>1040-</td>
<td>1000-</td>
<td>106 x 150 G</td>
<td>Nil</td>
<td>Native huts strafed. Church at Garmatung &quot;which held many supplies&quot; destroyed.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>1145</td>
<td>2000'</td>
<td></td>
<td>Target: Garmatung, Norakapor, Yalu</td>
<td></td>
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<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>0916</td>
<td>15000'</td>
<td>96 x 1000 B</td>
<td></td>
<td>Target: Webb's at Lee</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4 Sept</td>
<td>13th Sq</td>
<td>B-25D1</td>
<td>0755-</td>
<td>Minimum</td>
<td>60 x 300 B</td>
<td>Nil</td>
<td>Thoroughly strafed.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>0830</td>
<td>to 300'</td>
<td></td>
<td>Target: East bank of Buhem River, Hapoi landing ground &amp; mission</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Date</td>
<td>Unit</td>
<td>Aircraft</td>
<td>K/Tone</td>
<td>Altitude</td>
<td>Bombs</td>
<td>Results</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>------------</td>
<td>-----------------------</td>
<td>----------</td>
<td>--------</td>
<td>----------</td>
<td>------------------------------</td>
<td>----------------------------------------------</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5 Sept</td>
<td>9th x 43d Gps</td>
<td>24 B-24</td>
<td>1029-</td>
<td>7500</td>
<td>148 x 1000 A + Mixed</td>
<td>158 bombs on target, radiation house obliterated, guns silenced.</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5 Sept</td>
<td>3rd x 6th, 64 B-25</td>
<td>1-2-17</td>
<td>1117</td>
<td>14000</td>
<td>148 x 1000 B</td>
<td>Slight, 28 x 305 tanks of smoke dropped around Nadzab prior to parachute dropping supplies, motor pool, buildings, motor pool, supplies, buildings.</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5 Sept</td>
<td>35th Gps 7 A-20</td>
<td></td>
<td>1018-</td>
<td>1500</td>
<td>524 x 20 C</td>
<td>Inaccurate</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6 Sept</td>
<td>43rd Gp 16 B-24</td>
<td>1100-</td>
<td>1520</td>
<td>1500</td>
<td>524 x 1000 A</td>
<td>Mixed to target, direct hits on building.</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6 Sept</td>
<td>43rd Gp 1100-1520</td>
<td>1100-</td>
<td>1500</td>
<td>1500</td>
<td>235 bombs on target, direct hits on buildings.</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Target: Nadzab-Narokegor (archim Valley)-Valley Road

Target: Jocobson's (Lae)

Target: Malahang
## Appendix 3 (Contd)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Date</th>
<th>Unit</th>
<th>Aircraft</th>
<th>A Time</th>
<th>Altitude</th>
<th>Bombs</th>
<th>A/A</th>
<th>Results</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>7 Sept</td>
<td>90th Gp</td>
<td>B-24</td>
<td>0940-</td>
<td>12000'</td>
<td>120 x 1000 A</td>
<td>Mixed of a</td>
<td>Little assessment of damage because of heavy smoke. One AA position apparently silenced.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>1020</td>
<td></td>
<td>15000'</td>
<td>72 x 1000 B</td>
<td>barrage type</td>
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<tr>
<td>Target:</td>
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<tr>
<td>7 Sept</td>
<td>22d Gp</td>
<td>B-25</td>
<td>0947-</td>
<td>4000-</td>
<td>54 x 500 A</td>
<td>Slight, inaccurate</td>
<td>No bombs on target. Large fire, but clouds obscured result.</td>
</tr>
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<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>1015</td>
<td>10600'</td>
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<td>Target:</td>
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<tr>
<td>7 Sept</td>
<td>38th Gp</td>
<td>B-25D1</td>
<td>0802-</td>
<td>Minimum</td>
<td>72 x 23 G</td>
<td>Mil</td>
<td>Bombs on roadway, other results unobserved.</td>
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<td>0821</td>
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<tr>
<td>7 Sept</td>
<td>3d Gp</td>
<td>B-25D1</td>
<td>1320-</td>
<td>Minimum to</td>
<td>80 clusters</td>
<td>Mil</td>
<td>Grass &amp; huts on fire. Heath's reported as being destroyed. Results otherwise unobserved.</td>
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<tr>
<td>8 Sept</td>
<td>43d Gp</td>
<td>B-17</td>
<td>1025-</td>
<td>9800-</td>
<td>12 x 1000 A</td>
<td>Mixed to heavy</td>
<td>35 bombs in target. Two large explosions, buildings destroyed. Smoke &amp; clouds obscured damage.</td>
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<td>1040</td>
<td>11700'</td>
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Target: Lai Terrace

Target: Diddyman's Bridge

Target: Markham Valley Road

Target: Markham Road (Nadzab-Heath's)
### Appendix 3 (Contd)

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<tr>
<th>Date</th>
<th>Unit</th>
<th>Aircraft</th>
<th>K Time</th>
<th>Altitude</th>
<th>Bombs</th>
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<th>Results</th>
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<td>38th Gp</td>
<td>12 B-25D1</td>
<td>1045-1105</td>
<td>50-200'</td>
<td>28 x 300 D</td>
<td>Mixed to medium</td>
<td>Generally unobserved. Bridge in Seath's place blown up. AA on Lac wreck silenced by strafing.</td>
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<td>12 x 500 D</td>
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<td>40 Clusters G</td>
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<td>12 hour delay</td>
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**Target:** Markham Valley Road

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<th>Bombs</th>
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<tr>
<td>8 Sept</td>
<td>43d Gp</td>
<td>15 B-24</td>
<td>1036-1132</td>
<td>12500-15000'</td>
<td>162 x 500 A</td>
<td>Mixed to intense</td>
<td>100 bombs concentrated on runway. AA battery ceased firing. Clouds obscured results.</td>
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<td></td>
<td>4 x 1000 B</td>
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**Target:** Lee Area

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<tr>
<td>8 Sept</td>
<td>22d Gp</td>
<td>7 B-26</td>
<td>1120</td>
<td>7500'</td>
<td>42 x 500 A</td>
<td>Mixed</td>
<td>28 bombs in target, smoke rising to 1500'. Direct hit on AA.</td>
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**Target:** ebb's & Chinatown (Lee)

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<td>10 B-24</td>
<td>0958-1030</td>
<td>8000-12000'</td>
<td>70 x 1000 A</td>
<td>Mixed to intense</td>
<td>House demolished, 1 AA hit, bridge at Diddymen's destroyed, area well covered.</td>
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<td>12000'</td>
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<td>48 x 1000 B</td>
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**Target:** Mary's & Diddymen's (Lee) Defense Area #4
### Appendix 3 (Contd)

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<th>Results</th>
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<td>13 Sept</td>
<td>345th Gp</td>
<td>B-25 1</td>
<td>1545–1600</td>
<td>Minimum</td>
<td>72 x 300</td>
<td>Medium and inaccurate</td>
<td>Tari village in flames, thorough strafing.</td>
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<tr>
<td>14 Sept</td>
<td>345th Gp</td>
<td>B-25 1</td>
<td>1220–1230</td>
<td>50–150</td>
<td>67 x 300</td>
<td>Mixed, 2 aircraft holed</td>
<td>58 bombs on Jacobsens plantation, other results unobserved.</td>
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<td>3 returned to base</td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Edward's and Jacobson's Plantations at Lae</td>
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<td>15 Sept</td>
<td>43d Gp</td>
<td>B-17</td>
<td>1020–1055</td>
<td>7000–8200</td>
<td>32 x 1000</td>
<td>Mixed</td>
<td>21 bombs on target, AA silenced, 1 B-17 unreported.</td>
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<td>16 Sept</td>
<td>43d Gp</td>
<td>B-17</td>
<td>1044–1100</td>
<td>4750–6500</td>
<td>48 x 1000</td>
<td>Mil</td>
<td>41 bombs on target, explosions = fires, target probably destroyed.</td>
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<td>B-26</td>
<td>0910</td>
<td>3500’</td>
<td>9 x 500</td>
<td>Mil</td>
<td>12 bombs on target, explosions.</td>
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Appendix 3 (Contd)

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<th>Altitude</th>
<th>Bombs</th>
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<td>1150</td>
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<td>1159-</td>
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Note: The above table is a simplified representation of the events that occurred. The actual events and times may vary.
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Note: Figures are approximate and based on intelligence reports.
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* Diary of Operational Statistics, Part I.
Appendix 3

Tons of Bombs Dropped* by
Fifth Air Force, 1943

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* Diary of Operational Statistics, Part I.
### Appendix 9

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by Fifth Air Force Fliers, 1943*

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### Appendix 10

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* Diary of Operational Statistics, Part III A. Total number of enemy planes destroyed in air in 1942 was 235.
## Appendix II

**AIP Officer Casualties in the Southwest Pacific, 1945**

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* Tribulation of Overseas Casualties of AIP Personnel, Personnel Statistics, 24 Jan 1945. These casualties are combat crew members only.
Appendix 12

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* A Study of Bombing Activities from 1 June 1943 to 31 Mar. 1944, Report by 2d Operations Analysis Sec. to Kenney, 2 May 1944.
### CONFIDENTIAL

#### Appendix 13 (cont'd)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Month</th>
<th>Sorties</th>
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#### A-20's

<table>
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<th>Month</th>
<th>Sorties</th>
<th>Bombs Dropped</th>
<th>Tons of Bombs</th>
<th>Curt Losses</th>
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</tr>
<tr>
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<tr>
<td>July</td>
<td>78</td>
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<td>Aug</td>
<td>51</td>
<td>326</td>
<td>16.8</td>
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<tr>
<td>Sep</td>
<td>59</td>
<td>1078</td>
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<tr>
<td>Oct</td>
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<td>16.4</td>
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<tr>
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This Page Declassified IAW EO12958
## Appendix 14

### Bomber Utilization*

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<th>Month</th>
<th>Assigned to</th>
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<th>BOM/ERS EXPLOD</th>
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<th>Utilization (1 mission in 2 days = 100%)</th>
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<tr>
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<td>93</td>
<td>61</td>
<td>20</td>
<td>22</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Mar</td>
<td>135</td>
<td>80</td>
<td>59</td>
<td>23</td>
<td>29</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Apr</td>
<td>120</td>
<td>84</td>
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<td>16</td>
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<tr>
<td>May</td>
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<td>103</td>
<td>58</td>
<td>22</td>
<td>20</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Jun</td>
<td>211</td>
<td>142</td>
<td>67</td>
<td>29</td>
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<td>309</td>
<td>82</td>
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<td>Nov</td>
<td>331</td>
<td>292</td>
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<td>502</td>
<td>413</td>
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* "Bomber Utilization," 2d Coerstions Analysis Sec., FEAP, Report #11, 18 June 1944.
## Appendix 14 (contd)

<table>
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<tr>
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<th>Crews, Mission, and Time Data, Jan thru April 1945</th>
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<tr>
<td>Bombers</td>
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</tr>
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<td>Jan</td>
<td>67</td>
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<tr>
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<td>Mar</td>
<td>144</td>
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<td>166</td>
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<tr>
<td>Total</td>
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<tr>
<td>Medium</td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>Bombers</td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
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<td>147</td>
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<tr>
<td>Total</td>
<td>576</td>
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<tr>
<td>Heavy</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Bombers</td>
<td></td>
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<td>Jan</td>
<td>151</td>
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<td>Mar</td>
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<tr>
<td>Apr</td>
<td>188</td>
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<tr>
<td>Total</td>
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</table>
(c) Anticipated close support missions will include strafing of tracks leading to both landing areas.

(c) Bombardment of enemy forces in areas of

1. Air support

(1) Destruction of enemy forces engaged in en-route traffic.

(2) Bombing and strafing of enemy overland routes of advance, supply, and troop concentrations are discovered.

(3) Attack on all enemy naval movements which may threaten the area concerned.

(4) The scale of effort is in accordance to the targets and forces available.

2. Parachute (c): There are ten trooped carrier squadrons permanently stationed in New Guinea. During the period of these operations trooped carrier squadrons will be despatched to New Guinea from the Australian mainland making a total of 11 squadrons available. The total effort of these trooped carrier squadrons is devoted to the maintenance of fighter squadrons in NAM and support of the ASUSM operation. Preliminary plans for the movement of land force troops are being developed together with the maintenance of existing parachutists that have already been committed. These schedules are not included hereafter since they are subject to change according to the progress of preliminary operations in the storage of NAM and the forces in the TAN-DIGAN area.

3. Parachute (c): Anti-submarine patrol will be supplied to 'strengthen' the fleet of GHOTI, GHOTV, ALAPAV, and JUUS. The method of forming this patrol for anti-submarine work will proceed as usual upon the request of the respective naval headquarters. Air protection by fighter cover for overwater convoys have been covered in some detail by the Infringement to your Headquarters, 19 August 1943, in connection with letter of Commander, Allied Naval Forces, 16 August 1943, concerning air support during the FOSTER operation; copy is attached.

4. General support missions in the KODJIS for supply during daylight raids on targets in that area. These will be developed by suitable fighter bases in western and central AUSM.

5. General support missions in the Northern - KODJIS and eastern KODJIS areas follow:

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<thead>
<tr>
<th>Date</th>
<th>Mission</th>
<th>Remarks</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>10 Jul 43</td>
<td>1st Bomber -</td>
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</tr>
<tr>
<td>11 Jul 43</td>
<td>1st Bomber -</td>
<td>1st Bomber -</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>12 Jul 43</td>
<td>1st Bomber -</td>
<td>1st Bomber -</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>13 Jul 43</td>
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<td>1st Bomber -</td>
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<td>18 Jul 43</td>
<td>1st Bomber -</td>
<td>1st Bomber -</td>
</tr>
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<td>19 Jul 43</td>
<td>1st Bomber -</td>
<td>1st Bomber -</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>20 Jul 43</td>
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<td>22 Jul 43</td>
<td>1st Bomber -</td>
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<td>1st Bomber -</td>
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(1) It is now planned to commence large scale attacks against hostile air and naval forces in the eastern NEIBIO area on about 15 October, 1943. This date is dependent upon completion of airfield facilities at BURDEK.** CET - Minimum of three (3) runways and one (1) crash landing strip required on BURDEK in order that one hundred (100) to one hundred twenty (120) P-38's can land quickly. These planes will be on fuel after or before over Eastern NEIBIO.

(a) Duration of all out effort about one week.
(b) All bombardment (except B-24 and B-26) and twin engine fighter squadrons available will be utilized.
(c) Single-engine fighter based on BURDEK and LEATHEROCK** will be utilized within the limits of their operational range (Zone can reach NORTH or eastern NEIBIO).

(2) Targets in northern NEIBIO are well within the range of EAPG air elements. It is therefore felt that targets in eastern NEIBIO must be considered secondary objectives for Allied Air Forces, NEIBIO. Since the main enemy air concentrations are in the eastern NEIBIO area, EAPG's operations against enemy airfields in northern NEIBIO should be co-ordinated with Fifth Air Force attacks on eastern NEIBIO airfields.

(3) Detailed plans for the attacks on eastern NEIBIO are now in process of formulation.

2. General supporting missions in the Northern NEIBIO area are as follows:

Attacks to be carried out through a period of from two (2) to three (3) days starting 15 August, 1943 and three (3) to five (5) days prior to D Day, will commence with a one-day strike of heavy bombers on the main fighter airfields.

(1) First day: Five (5) strafe squadrons escorted by five (5) squadrons of P-38's, bomb and strafe grounded airfields at the four (4) airfields.

(2) Second day: Eight (8) heavy bomber squadrons and two (2) to five (5) squadrons escorted by suitable force of P-38's, bomb and strafe grounded airfields and enemy concentrations in the town and dock area.

(3) Third day: So much of bomber and fighter force as is required to complete destruction of lucrative targets in NEIBIO area.
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Appendix 13 (contd)

(4) In the event it is decided to commence this series of attacks five (5) days prior to D day, an additional attack using four (4) heavy bomber squadrons will be run on the fourth day and an attack using four (4) squadrons of strafers will be run on the fifth day. Both missions will be escorted by fighters.

(5) Inactive targets in area between PIFSQUAK and EQUILIBRIUM will be destroyed as soon as possible after (1), (2), and (3) are completed. The EQUILIBRIUM area will likewise be destroyed if weather conditions permit the required continuity of air force operations.

b. Aerial reconnaissance is now being undertaken by this air force as described in a report which was forwarded to you by 2nd Indorsement referred to above. The scale of effort in this reconnaissance is as follows:

(1) Daily Every Three Days Weekly

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>B-24s</th>
<th>Beaufort</th>
<th>B-24</th>
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<tr>
<td>2</td>
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<td>8</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>F-4</td>
<td>Catalina</td>
<td>F-51s</td>
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<td>1</td>
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</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

(2) Anti-submarine patrol and special reconnaissance missions are additional to the above and involve the use of ten (10) airplanes per day on an average.

1. Anti-aircraft plans for these operations have been under study by staff members of your headquarters in conjunction with our requirements. A revised list of anti-aircraft units made available to this air force has been received by your G-3 Section and is to be issued in the immediate future.

2. During all these operations no cessation of effort will occur in the Northwestern and Eastern Areas of the mainland of Australia.

G. A. M. VELLEY
Lieutenant General, Commander.
B-25G, 151, 160-61, 162
B-25H, 146
B-25J, 146
B-26, 7, 14, 39, 73, 152, 159,
183, 194, 206-07
Babo, 80
Balikpapan, 19, 170
Ball, Capt. C. F., 210, 223
Barr, Vice Admiral Daniel,
201
Batchelor Field, 82
Beaufighter a/c, 5, 81, 85,
88, 90-92, 94, 96-97, 114,
123, 128, 130-31, 171, 206-07,
209, 227
Beaufort a/c, 5, 46, 78, 85,
88, 90, 128, 131-32, 134,
209, 216, 220, 227
Bell Aircraft, 40-41, 153
Bena Bena, 72, 172-73, 181-82,
189, 205, 224, 225, 231
Benn, Maj. "Bill", 75, 84
Benner, Col. Donald W., 50, 52
Berry airdrome, 123
Bertrandia, Lt. Col. Victor S.,
50-52
Betty a/c, 126-27, 209, 211
Birks, T/Sgt. James F., 206
Bismarck Archipelago, 21, 137,
139
Bismarck Sea, 2, 86, 88, 97-99,
102, 109, 128, 136, 147, 184,
196, 229
"Black Cat" trail, 76
Blaney, Gen. Sir Thomas, 4
Bobbidi, 132, 172, 184
Bogadjina, 182-83
BOLO, 22-23
Bong, Lt. Richard I., 73, 120,
182
Boomerang a/c, 146
Booth, Harry, 72
Boran, 131, 193, 195, 197, 220
Borgen Bay, 193, 203
Borro, 234
Borneo, 25, 170
Boston a/c, 88, 94, 96, 194
Bougainville, 29, 31-33, 37,
138, 167
Boyle, Capt. John, 72
Brisbane, 4-5, 15, 46, 49-50,
54, 56, 112, 116, 140-44,
161, 165, 228
Buin, 26, 32, 80
Buka, 26, 32, 80, 168, 172, 230
Buka passage, 82
Bul lago, 71, 117
Bulolo, 127, 133, 177, 187, 205
Bunai River, 223
Buna, 1, 8-9, 29, 72, 97, 108,
115, 205, 207, 210, 220, 222,
227, 231
Buna Air Task Force, 112
Burma, 29, 137
Burtetone, Lt. Claude S., 73
But, 131, 193, 195, 197, 224

C
C-47, 19, 38, 45-56, 72, 77-78,
103, 108, 123, 126, 135, 148,
157, 188-91, 213-14, 217-18
C-49, 10
C-58, 10
Cairns, 49, 52, 203
Camp Mackay, 239
Cape Gloucester, 32, 37, 97,
131, 167, 184, 207-09, 215,
220-21, 224
Cape Nelson, 90
Cape St. George, 184
Cape Ward Hunt, 91, 94, 205
Cape Waria, 94
Carolines, 25
Catalina a/c, 72-73, 125, 169,
203
Celebes, 25, 170
Celebes Sea, 137
Charleville, 49
Charters Towers area, 49, 52,
103
Cheli, Maj. Ralph, 199
Chesapeake Bay, 164
China, 137
Churchill, Prime Minister, 23, 27
Civilian Construction Corps, 51
Clark, Col. Harold, 115
Coleman, Maj. "C", 114
Combined Chiefs of Staff, 20,
25-26, 136-37
Commonwealth Aircraft Co., 46
Connel, Brig. Gen. Carl, 5, 49,
51, 62, 64
Covington, 208, 211
Cox, Maj. Harman G., 182

CONFIDENTIAL

THIS PAGE Declassified IAW EO12958
CONFIDENTIAL

Craig, Brig. Gen. H. A., 158
"Crystal Creek" route, 76

D

Dagua, 131, 131, 193, 195-97, 199,
223
Daly Waters, 89
Dampier Strait area, 86
Darwin, 29, 49, 82, 105, 125,
127, 170-71
Dewees, Lt. Cecil D., 121
Dinah a/c, 169, 178
Directorate of Air Transport,
Allied AF, 6, 9, 105, 117,
231
Dobodura area, 9, 17, 107-109,
112, 115, 117, 120, 122-23,
125, 127, 131, 135, 144,
148, 167, 173, 178, 190,
197-98, 202-205, 208, 210,
214, 234-35
Dona, 119
Douglas a/c, 50
Douglas Harbor, 127
Dryas, 211
Dry Creek Bed, 160
Dunari, 178
Durand, 61, 197

E

8th Air Base Gp., 49
8th Air Frce, 36, 163
8th Bomb Gp., 8, 104, 114,
197-98, 221
8th Fighter Gp., 8, 12-15, 69,
104
8th Fighter Sq., 12-13, 104,
109, 178, 206
8th Photo Sq., 72, 128, 168
8th Service Gp., 49, 53-54
11th AC Replacement Control
Depot, 52
80th Fighter Sq., 11, 13, 104,
122, 126, 175, 182, 198, 211
81st Air Depot Gp., 49, 53, 58
81st Depot Repair Sq., 59
83d Depot Repair Sq., 52
89th Bomb Gp., 8, 81, 82, 93-94,
128, 175, 178, 221
821st Bomb Gp., 145
822d Bomb Gp., 105, 145-46
823d Bomb Gp., 105
857th Eng Rng. Bn. (Negro), 186
871st Airborne Engineers, 189,
216
Eagle Farms, 53, 144
Eagle, Maj. Gen. Ira, 36, 159, 163
Elgin Field, 84
Eldon Plant, 28, 32-33, 35, 43,
60, 80, 137, 202
Eloa River valley, 71
Embri, 234
Emmons, Gen. 65

F

1st Air Task Force, 112, 114-15,
120, 131, 133, 135, 144, 146-49,
190, 193, 234
1st Australian Corps, 219
1st Marine Division, 4, 139
"4th Air Depot," 53, 161
4th Air Depot Gp., 49-52, 57
4th Airborne Gp., 191
4th Fighter Aesc, 122
5th Air Force Service Command,
See Air Service Command.
5th Bomber Command, 5, 7, 18, 81,
83, 85-86, 88, 113, 160, 193
5th Fighter Command, 5, 10-11, 107,
113, 114, 153
5th Tactical Air Communications
Squadron, 226
15th Air Depot Gp., 57
15th Brigade (Australian), 172
40th Fighter Gp., 78, 191-92, 206
41st Division, 1, 111, 112, 126,
179, 181
41st Fighter Gp., 79, 191-92, 206
41st Troop Carrier Gp., 213
43d Bomb Gp. (H), 6, 18, 52, 64,
82, 88, 104, 129, 196
43d Engineer Pkts., 107
45th Air Base Gp., 49
45th Service Gp., 49
46th Air Base Gp., 49
46th Service Gp., 17-50, 109-10, 236
CONFIDENTIAL

16th Troop Carrier Sq., 213
49th Fighter Cpt., 2-9, 12, 7, 77, 87, 102, 116, 117, 124, 145
51st Infantry Division, 86
58th Troop Carrier Sqn., 116, 119, 213
55th Fighter Cpt., 114
58th Fighter Cpt., 114
409th Bomb Sq., 22, 177
403d Troop Carrier Cpt., 93, 104, 195, 197, 221
403d Troop Carrier Cpt., 148
405th Bomb Sq., 93, 99-93, 95, 135, 197, 199, 207
409th Bomb Cpt., 148
431st Fighter Cpt., 114, 192
432d Fighter Cpt., 222
433d Fighter Sq., 114, 208, 219
433d Troop Carrier Cpt., 148
432d Fighter Cpt., 192
440th Signal Bn., 103, 111
175th Fighter Cpt., 142-53, 156, 198
487th Service Sq., 224
487th Service Sq., 112
503d Paratroop Bn., 203, 213
528th Bomb Sq., 170
565th Signal Bn., 10, 108, 193, 238
F-4, 72, 103, 124-25, 168
F-5, 124-25, 145, 168
F-5k, 103
Faisi, 80
Fenton Field, 22, 170
Forrell, Capt. George D., 205, 212, 222-23
Field, Maj. Earl H., 111
Fiji Is., 80
Flaschoven, 31, 33, 81, 130, 138, 203, 205, 208, 219-23, 225-27, 232-33, 240
Fort Denning, 48
Fox, Jack, 60-61, 64
Francisco River, 217
Frazier, Capt. Evert E., 196, 198-98, 218-19
Fry, Col. Ralph L., 58
Fuller, Maj. Gen. H. H., 111

G
Gasmata, 31-32, 85, 131, 167, 194, 203-10, 216, 220, 224
Gholson, Capt., 21
Gibson, John M., 153
Gilbert Is., 139
Gona, 57, 132, 138
Goodenough, 10, 96, 167, 234
Guadalcanal, 3-4, 21, 56, 28-29, 79-80, 192
Guam, 28
 Gunn, Maj. Peul ("Tappo"), 59-60, 64, 160-61
Gusap, 234

H
Hamp a/c, 79, 93, 121, 126
Hanska Burg, 102, 127, 130, 134, 169, 173, 193, 200, 229
Harbour, Capt. David, 210
Harlow, Lt. Col. P. Jr., 120
Harmon, Gen., 140
Harris, Lt. L. H., 122
Hawaii, 15, 20, 28, 64-66
Hawaiian Air Depot, 65
Hal AAF, 39, 45, 64, 111, 152, 154, 200
Heath's Plantation, 215
Helen a/c, 195
Herring, Lt. Col. E. F., 4
Hollandia, 102, 119, 127, 229
Hollandia Bay, 80
Horop, 203, 209, 211, 223, 225
Hornando air, 111, 123, 234
House, Lt. A. T., 73
Hudson a/c, 11, 73, 171
Huon Gulf, 1-2, 31, 115, 130, 169, 201, 217, 226, 229
Huon Peninsula, 28-29, 53, 90, 167, 219, 220, 227

I
Imparate, Maj. E. L., 72
Ioanda, 108
CONFIDENTIAL

Iorabaiwa Ridge, 102

Jackson airdrome, 53-54, 196, 213

Jaluit, 28

Java, 25, 63

Joint Army Navy Assessment Commission, 99-100

Joint Chiefs of Staff, 20-21, 24, 26-28, 33, 35, 37-38, 43, 69, 105, 136-37, 139, 141, 148-49, 163

Joint Staff Planners, 3, 22, 24, 35, 138

K

Kaiapit, 218, 234

Kainde Mountain, 71

Kanga Force, 118

Kavieng, 29, 31-32, 102, 128-29, 134, 138, 167-68, 230

Kearby, Lt. Col. Heel E., 143

Kela, 195, 217

Kendari, 170

Kenney, Lt. Gen. George C., 5-6,

Kila airdrome, 104, 123

Kila Kila, 81

King, Admiral, 23, 26-27, 33-34

King, Capt. Everett . . ., 189

Kirivina L., 10, 33, 37, 96, 137-38, 172, 175, 177, 192, 234

Kokoda, 111

Koe Pang, 170

Komatuma, 76, 132, 172, 181, 194

L

LB-30, 10

Labu I., 207

Lae, 1, 10, 30-31, 33, 70, 72-74, 76, 81, 85, 96-97, 100, 117, 134, 138, 167, 172-74, 177-78, 182, 184, 186-88, 193, 202-03, 205, 207-13, 215, 217-20, 222, 230, 234, 240

Lakekamu River, 71

Lakunai airdrome, 74, 102, 128, 169, 177, 208, 230

Lamson, 211

Langley Field, 48, 59

Laverton I., 49

Legg, Col. Richard A., 40

Leron River, 218

Lewis, T/Sgt. Edwin L., 206

Liberty ships, 9

Lily a/c, 78, 127

Lincoln, Rush B., 49

London, 164

Lynch, Capt. Thomas J., 74

M

MacArthur, Gen. Douglas, 3-4,

Mackechnie, Col., 119, 175, 232

Mackechnie Force, 119, 175, 177

McCook Field, 48

McLaren Harbor, 108

McNamara, Paul V., 153


Mageri Point, 175

Mal Ama, 119

Makassar, 170

Malahang Field, 81-82, 168

Malaria, 8, 14, 16, 104, 110, 235-36

Mambare River, 118, 127

Marembe, 49, 52

Maribulho Field, 170

Marinina, 187-89, 213-14

Marines, 24

Markham River valley, 30-31, 71, 182, 202-03, 212, 214-19, 234

THIS PAGE Declassified IAW EO12958
Marshall, Gen., 23, 27, 33, 35, 46, 100, 139, 142
Marshall, Maj. Richard M., 114
Marshall, Maj., 25, 27, 137, 139-40
Material Division, 48
Medical Section of USAF in Australia, 16
Melanesia, 25
Melbourne (area), 4, 46, 49, 51
Meru, 29
Middle East, 4, 22-23
Midway, 28
Milne Bay, 8-15, 17, 49, 54, 78, 90, 104, 107-08, 123, 132, 135, 161, 203, 206, 220, 234
Mindanao, 140
Monroe, Col. W. H., 58
Moore, Lt. Woodrow A., 93
Morobe, 76, 118-19, 127, 133, 167, 172, 175, 202, 205
Morrissey, Lt. Col. Robert L., 109
Nubia, 69, 72, 76, 97, 118-19, 172, 176-79, 181-82, 226, 231
Nugent, 211
Funda, 26
Murphy, Lt. Kenneth J., 168
Murphy, Lt. James T., 76, 89

N

9th Division (Australian), 4, 202, 206, 217, 225-26
9th Fighter Sq., 9, 79, 82, 95, 109-10, 122, 124, 182, 198, 222
9th Operational Grp. (MAAF), 88
19th Bomb Grp. (H), 12, 14, 52
90th Bomb Grp. (H), 6, 12, 53, 64, 88, 170, 196
90th Bomb Sq., 84-85, 87, 92, 95, 128, 177, 231
Nadzab, 189, 203, 212-18, 231, 234
Nakano, Lt. Gen., 99
Nassau Bay, 172, 175-76, 179-81, 202
Navy, 20, 22-23, 27, 35, 117, 139, 162, 203-04, 233
Netherlands East Indies, 3, 12, 29, 82, 127, 137, 145, 170, 240
New Caledonia, 80
New Carlotta, 224
New Georgia, 29, 31-32, 121, 167, 172, 177-78
New Guinea Volunteer Rifles, 70
New Hebrides, 80
New Ireland, 78, 102, 121, 167-68, 172
New Zealand, 20, 28
Nimitz, Adm., 22, 34
Normandy I., 10, 203
North Africa, 22-23, 32, 158

O

OCAR, 45, 57, 141-42, 146, 151-52, 158
100th Sq. (MAAF), 90
114th Engineer Bn., 107
119th Quartermaster Bkry, 191
159th Meridian, 3
162d Regt., 118-19, 133, 175, 180, 226, 231-33
163d Regt., 118
CPD, 106, 115, 140-41
Oro Bay, 107, 117, 120-21, 173
Oscar at 91, 95, 126, 191-92, 193-99
OTU, 155
Owen Stanley Mountains, 1, 59, 107, 109, 111-12, 114, 191

P

P-38, 8, 11, 38, 40-41, 73, 77, 79, 81, 87-89, 91, 93, 95, 97-98, 103-04, 109-10, 114, 121, 125-26, 131, 135, 142-45, 175, 182, 186-85, 192, 198-200, 206-09, 211, 213, 215, 222-24
P-39K, 40
P-39N, 164
P-40, 5, 40-41, 73, 77, 87, 104, 109, 111, 121, 125, 135, 148, 153, 164-65, 178, 189, 206, 216, 227
P-40B, 206
P-40N, 142, 147, 206, 222
P-40N1, 41
P-47, 4-5, 106, 142-44, 164-65, 192, 200, 211, 213-14, 222
P-47DL, 106
P-70, 39, 106-07, 135
P-400, 8, 77, 79, 103, 122, 135, 153, 164, 185
FBY, 5, 82, 90
Palau, 134
Palau, 103
Papua, 1, 7, 21, 23, 27, 69, 71-72
Papuan Campaign, 1-2, 4, 6, 8-9, 17-19, 25, 76, 97, 107, 112, 118, 180
Patterson Field, 46, 56, 165
Payton, 1st Sgt. Kenneth H., 216
Pearl Harbor, 6, 139
Perth, 49
Peterson, Lt. Harold H., 110, 124
Philippines, 1, 3, 12, 63, 226
Porlock Harbor, 120
Porter, Lt. G., 224
Port Moresby, 1, 4-5, 7-14, 16-17, 21, 31, 49-50, 53-55, 70-71, 77, 82, 84, 88, 93, 96, 102, 104, 106-07, 110-12, 115-16, 122, 125, 127, 133, 135, 142-43, 148-49, 157, 162, 165, 167, 170, 178, 180, 184, 191, 196-98, 203, 205-06, 208, 214, 216, 222, 228, 234
Post, Capt. Arthur L., 168
Prentice, Col. George W., 144
Prentiss, Col. Paul H., 116
Psychoneuroses, 11

Q

Quantas Airlines, 46
Queensland, 52, 82, 203, 239

R

RAAF, 5, 32-33, 35, 88, 138, 153, 160, 227
Rabatana Crater, 129
Ramey, Brig. Gen. Howard, 5, 62
Ramey, Col. R. H., 82
Samu River valley, 173, 219
Sapopo, 74, 102, 128, 169, 177
"Red Beach," 208
Red Cross, 15
Reid, 205, 208, 210-11, 220, 222-23, 232
Kenda, 172, 178
KZAF, 138
Roko I., 90
Roosevelt, Pres., 23, 27
Russia, 136, 147, 159
Ryan, Peter, 190

S

2d Air Task Force, 190-91, 234
2d Marine Division, 139
6th Division (Australian), 4
6th Night Fighter Sq., 106
7th Amphibious Force, 201-02, 219, 221, 232
7th Division (Australian), 4, 203, 217-19, 226
7th Fighter Sq., 109
17th Australian Brigade, 126, 133, 179-80
63d BombSq., 75, 82-83, 87-90, 93, 95, 196, 199
64th Bomb Sq., 89, 91, 195-96, 199, 221
65th Bomb Sq., 87, 89, 91, 195-96
66th Marine CARRIER Sq., 144, 213
66th Troop Carrier Sq., 213
67th Fighter Sq., 181, 192
67th Troop Carrier Sq., 148
71st Bomb Sq., 91, 95, 128, 197, 207
75th Sq. (RAAF), 87
Sagarac, 219
St. Geoges Channel, 82
CONFIDENTIAL


Sally a/c, 76, 122-23, 126-27, 191-92

Samoa, 23

San Francisco, 152

Sattelberg, 225

"Scarlet" Beach, 220, 223

Schwimmere airdrome, 9, 79, 81, 123, 211

Scott, Maj. Edward H. Jr., 75, 82, 88

Sebastine, Lt. Col. Harry A., 53

Seventh Fleet, 96

Shinkami, 99

Shropshire, Capt. Spencer, 115, 177

Smith, Col. Frederick H. Jr., 113, 120

Soerabaja, 170

Snake River, 187

Solomons, 3, 20-21, 24, 29-29, 34, 80, 82, 102, 121, 124, 128, 137-38, 169-68, 172, 176, 185, 234

Song River, 220

Spaatz, Gen., 36, 39, 159, 163

Spencer, Marshall, 100-01

Spitfire a/c, 171

Stratmeyer, Gen., 36, 38

Sumatra, 25

Sunshine, 187, 188

Sydney, 15, 46, 49, 161, 163-64, 239

T

3d Bomb Gp. (I), 7-8, 59, 84, 88, 104, 114, 147, 151, 159, 184, 190, 198

3d Division (Australian), 179, 178

12th Air Depot Gp., 57

12th Air Force, 39-40, 163

13th Air Force, 166-67

13th Bomb sq., 81, 87, 91, 95, 104, 128, 197-98, 209, 221

13th Huleral Control Unit, 235

22d Air base Gp., 49

22d Bomb Gp. (I), 7, 12, 14, 69, 104, 148

22d Service Gp., 49-50, 58

22d Sq. (RAAF), 94

27th Air Depot Gp., 49-50, 54, 56, 72

27th Depot Repair Sq., 106, 165

30th Depot Repair Sq., 59

30th Service Sq., 45

30th Sq. (RAAF), 91, 114

30-mile airdrome, 213

32d Division, 1, 4

35th Air Base Gp., 49

35th Fighter Control Sq., 13, 190

35th Fighter Gp., 8, 40, 77, 87, 122, 125, 190

35th Fighter Sq., 122

35th Service Gp., 49-50, 103

36th Air Base Gp., 49

36th Service Gp., 49

38th Bomb Gp. (I), 7, 14, 82, 105, 116, 185, 196

39th Fighter Sq., 74, 79, 81, 89, 95, 144, 182, 198, 211, 222

20th Quartermaster Co., 108

312th Bomb Gp., 448

317th Troop Carrier Gp., 6, 9-10, 77, 105, 117, 157, 203

319th Bomb Gp., 170, 197

320th Bomb Sq., 82, 87-88, 130, 197

321st Bomb Sq., 82, 87, 197

341st Fighter Sq., 222

345th Bomb Gp., 105, 141, 145, 156, 185

348th Fighter Gp., 106, 142-43, 165

349th Fighter Sq., 211

374th Troop Carrier Gp., 6, 9-10, 77, 116-17

375th Troop Carrier Gp., 148-49, 213

380th Bomb Gp., 105, 141, 145, 170

Talasea, 30, 32, 167

Tulili Bay, 32

CONFIDENTIAL

THIS PAGE Declassified IAW EO12958

SECURITY INFORMATION
CONFIDENTIAL

Tambu Bay, 181, 206
Tiror, 25, 28, 170
Tiror Sea, 170
Toomwal, 49, 51
Tongatapu, 22-23, 27
Torres Strait, 29-30, 171
Townsville, 5, 49-51, 53, 56, 58, 157, 160-71, 228
Trident Conference, 139
Truk, 27-28, 103, 172
Tsili Tsili, 189-92, 196, 199, 204-06, 208, 210-12, 216, 231, 234
Tufi, 96, 108
Tufi Point, 10
Tulagi, 3, 20-21

U

Ubili, 87
United Kingdom, 22-23, 27, 105-06, 150
Uranami, 99
U.S. Army Air Services, Advance Ho, 53

V

Val, 121-23, 209
Vengeance a/c, 225
Vitiaz Strait, 32, 52, 90, 97, 173, 205
Vivigani strip, 175
Vunanaau aerodrome, 74, 102, 124, 128, 169, 177, 203

W

Wakde I, 80, 119
Walker, Brig. Gen. Kenneth, 5, 75
Wampit River, 212
War Department, 14-15, 21, 38, 46, 55, 56, 115, 141, 147-50, 155-56, 163, 165, 237
War Department General Staff, Operations Division, 3
Ward (Drome), 5h, 123, 170, 196, 211, 213
Warai River, 119
Watkins, Capt. James A., 182
Watut River Gorge, 187
Watut Valley, 214-16
Way, 1, 9, 17, 69-72, 76-79, 81, 115, 117, 119-22, 126, 133, 173, 183, 193, 190, 202, 212, 226, 231
Wayne, 134
Whitehead, Brig. Gen. Evans C., 5, 59, 74, 79, 113-14, 188
Wicks Bay, 168
Wilcox, Col. Bascom L., 14, 16
Ainburn, Capt. Thomas H., 78
Warrambool a/c, 109
Woodbury, Lt. Col. Larry G., 189, 216
Woodlark I., 33, 37, 138, 172, 175, 177, 192, 234
Woodstock, 52
Wright, Capt. A., 122
Wright Field, 4F
Wright, Brig. Gen. Paul D., 5, 152, 189

Y

Y, 103
"Yellow Beach," 208
Yukikaze, 99

Z

Zeke a/c, 78-79, 91, 95, 121-22, 126, 172, 182, 192, 209, 211
Zerka a/c, 11, 40, 87, 143, 183, 192

CONFIDENTIAL

SECURITY INFORMATION