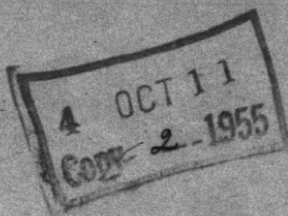


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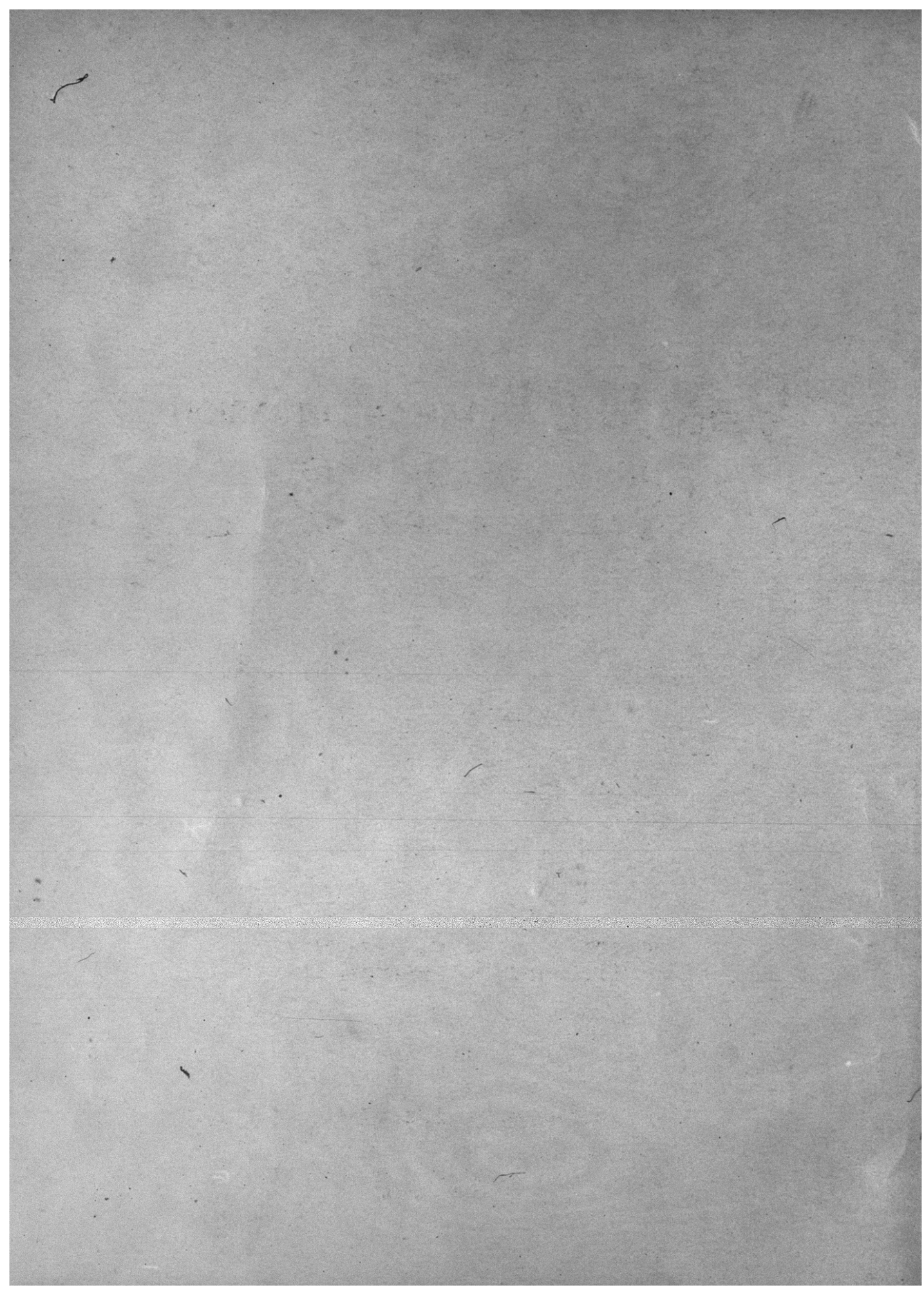
**BURMA AND ANDAMAN INVASION
NAVAL OPERATIONS
MAR 42 - APR 42**



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**JAPANESE MONOGRAPH
NO. 79**

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BURMA AND ANDAMAN INVASION NAVAL OPERATIONS

Mar 42 - Apr 42

Japanese Monograph
No 79

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Preface

Through Instructions No. 126 to the Japanese Government, 12 October 1945, subject: Institution for War Records Investigation, steps were initiated to exploit military historical records and official reports of the Japanese War Ministry and Japanese General Staff. Upon dissolution of the War Ministry and the Japanese General Staff, and the transfer of their former functions to the Demobilization Bureau, research and compilation continued and developed into a series of historical monographs.

The paucity of original orders, plans and unit journals, which are normally essential in the preparation of this type of record, most of which were lost or destroyed during field operations or bombing raids, rendered the task of compilation most difficult; particularly distressing has been the complete lack of official strength reports, normal in AG or G3 records. However, while many of the important orders, plans and estimates have been reconstructed from memory and therefore are not textually identical with the originals, they are believed to be generally accurate and reliable.

Under the supervision of the Demobilization Bureau, the basic material contained in this monograph was compiled and written in Japanese by former officers, on duty in command and staff units within major units during the period of operations. Translation was effected through the facilities of Military Intelligence Service Group, G2, Headquarters, Far East Command.

This Japanese Operational Monograph was rewritten in English by the Japanese Research Division, Military History Section, Headquarters, Army Forces Far East and is based on the translation of the Japanese original.

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The first part of the report deals with the general situation of the country and the progress of the work during the year. It is followed by a detailed account of the various projects and the results achieved. The report concludes with a summary of the work done and the plans for the future.

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FOREWORD

This monograph presents a brief record of the securing of the Andaman Islands in March 1942.

Although the title of the monograph is "Burma and Andaman Invasion Naval Operations," the Burma operation as described herein is an escort operation by the Navy of Army troops transported from Singapore to Rangoon to reinforce the 15th Army already occupying Rangoon.

This monograph is based on information supplied by Commander Sakuo Mikami, Navy Section, Imperial General Headquarters, from official documents and from his own memory of events. He was the officer in charge of planning operations in the Southwest Area during the period covered by the monograph.

Related monographs covering operations in this area are:

Title	Mono No
Sumatra Invasion and Southwest Area Naval Mopping-up Operations (Jan 42 - May 42)	79A
Burma Operations Record, Phase One	57
Task Force Operations (Nov 41 - Apr 42)	113

30 September 1953

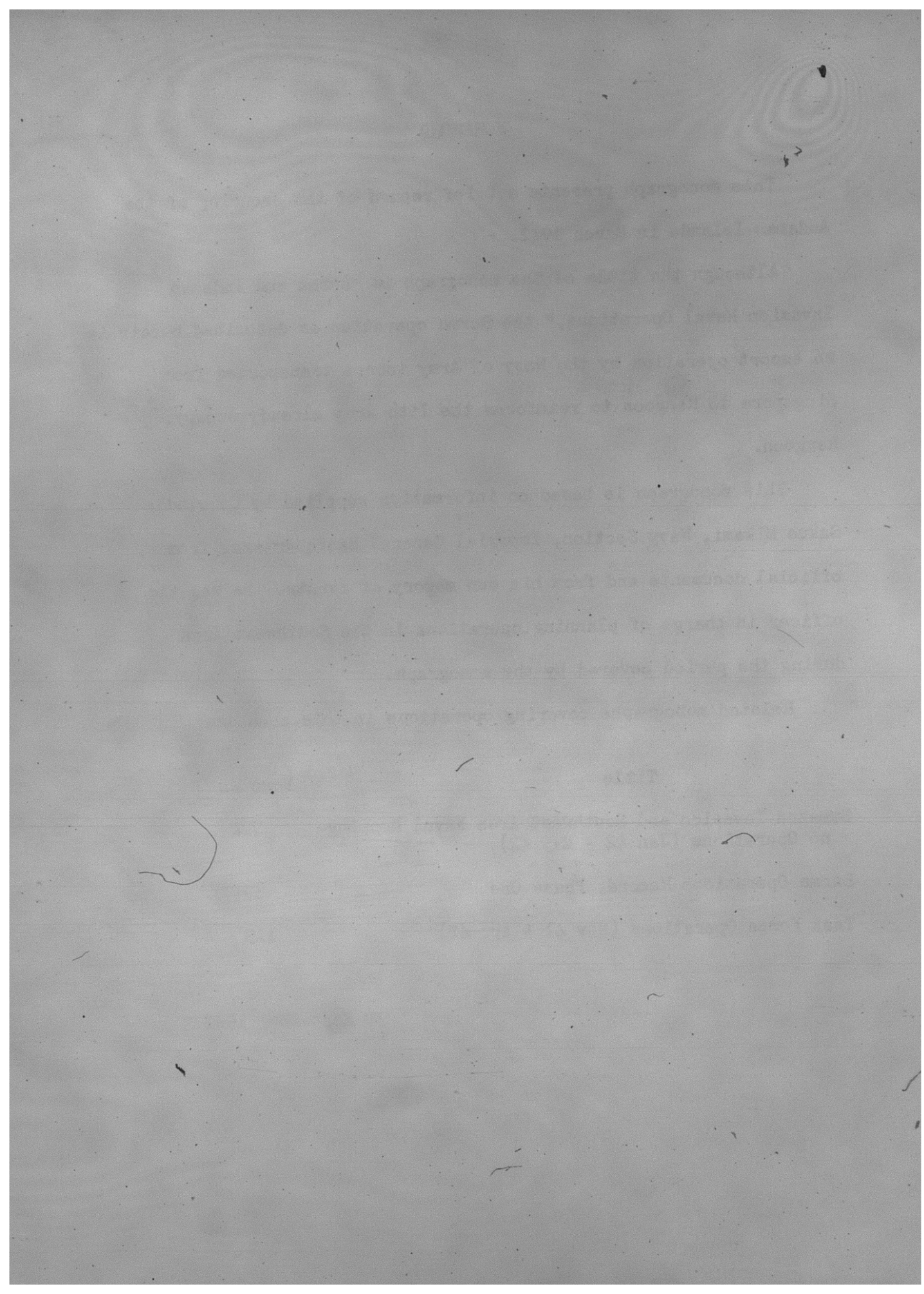


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TABLE 3

1952

Area of land irrigated

1952

Area of land irrigated

Area of land irrigated

1952

Area of land irrigated

1952

Area of land irrigated

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1952

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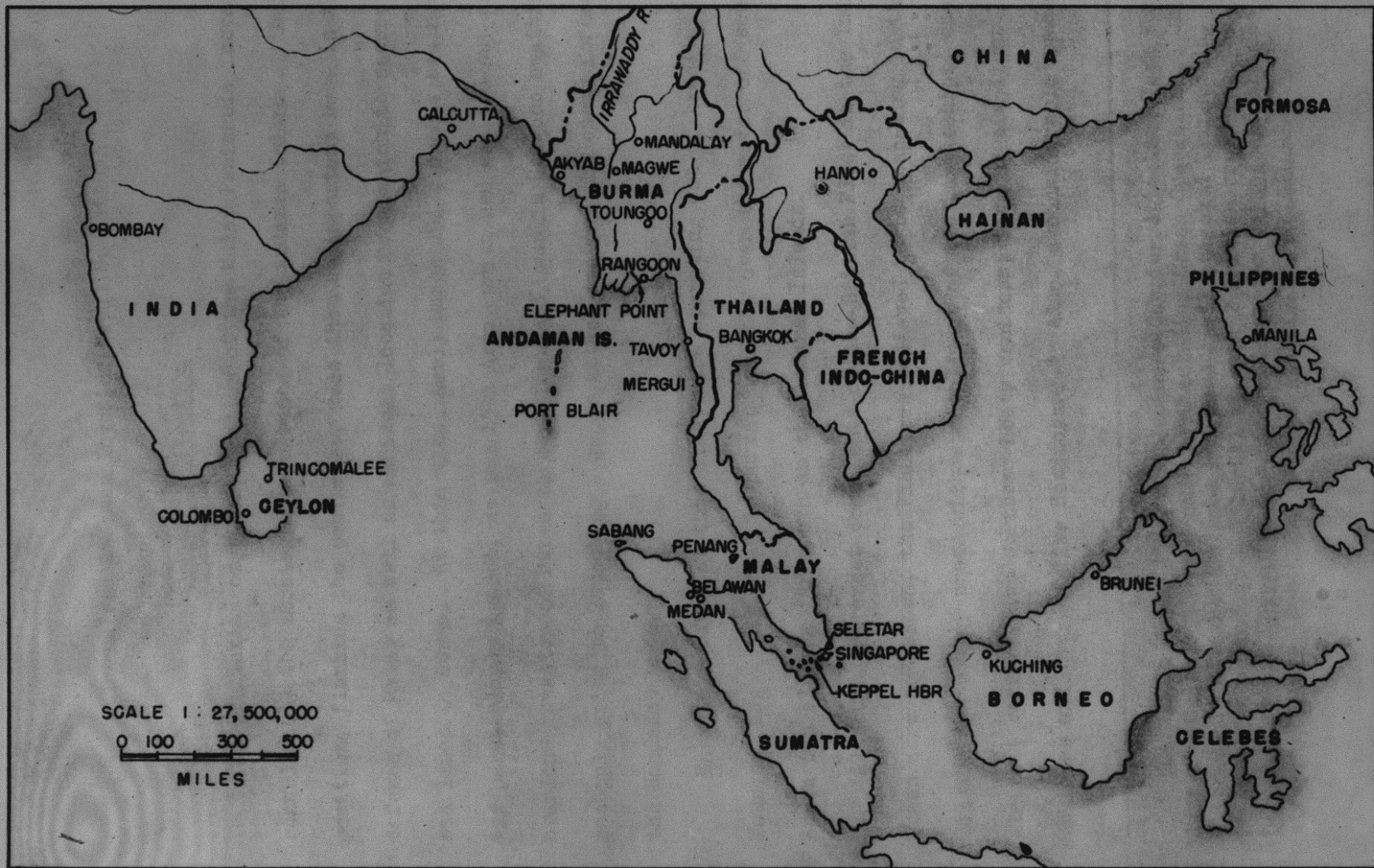
Area of land irrigated

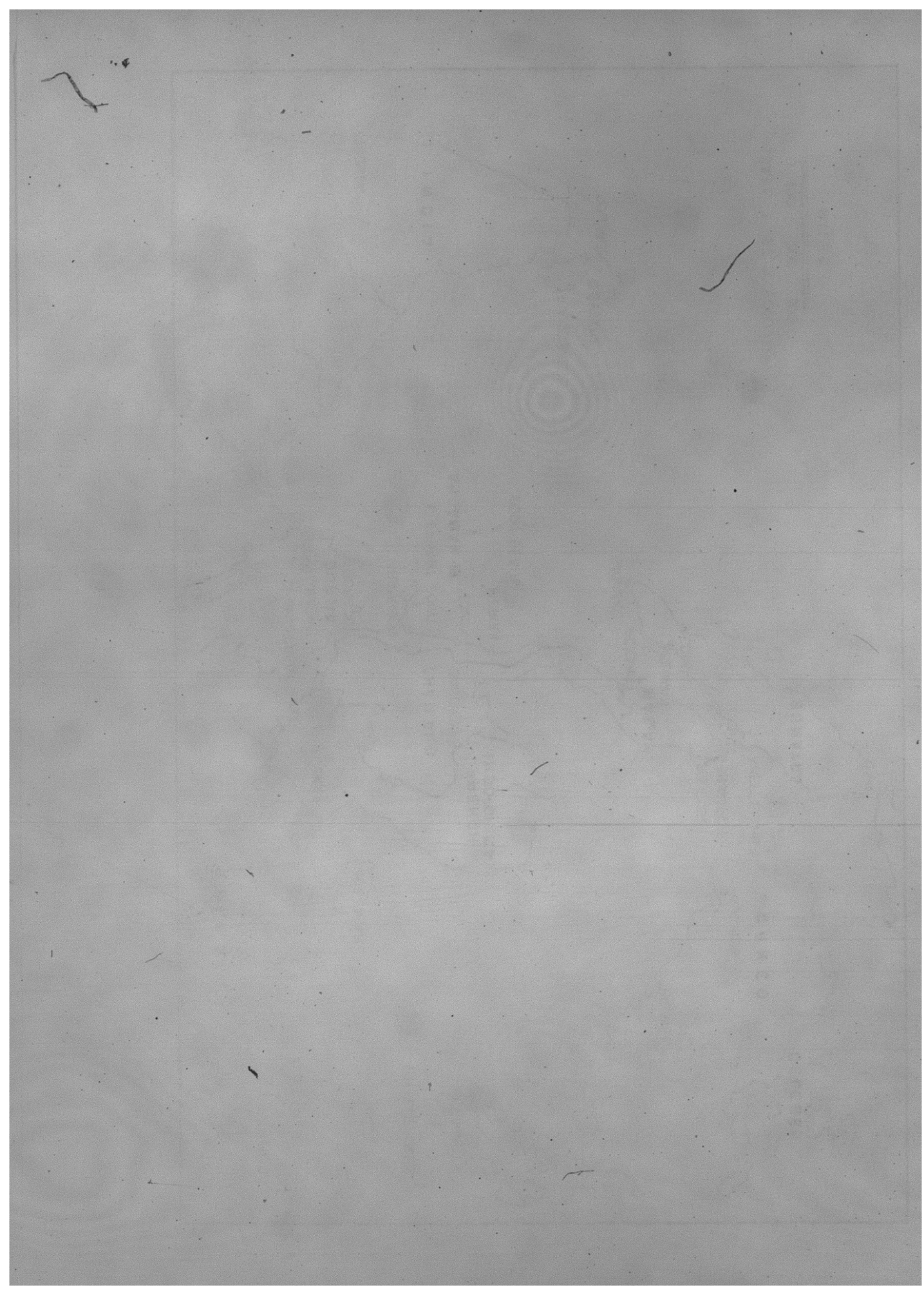
1952

Area of land irrigated

Area of land irrigated

1952





Burma and Andaman Invasion Naval Operations

Situation

The completion of the occupation of the Malay Peninsula increased considerably the strategic importance of the Andaman Islands. Their position, flanking the peninsula, made them an important base in the defense of Malay as well as an ideal location from which to secure the sea lanes to Burma. At this time, early March 1942, such a sea route was particularly needed, as the 15th Army, which had carried out an overland invasion of Burma through Thailand, was in Rangoon awaiting resupply prior to launching a major attack against the enemy forces in the Mandalay area.

Enemy aircraft, at this time, were operating out of bases at Toungoo, Magwe and Akyab in Burma, not only over the water off southern Burma but also as far south as the Andaman Islands.

Although the exact components of the British Fleet in the Indian Ocean were not known, the Fleet was believed to be operating in the Colombo and Bombay areas with a complement of two battleships, one aircraft carrier, two or three heavy cruisers, five or six light cruisers and four or five destroyers.¹ Also, a considerable number of

1. On 26 March 1942, the Japanese Carrier Attacking Task Force left the Celebes to take part in the Indian Ocean Operations. On 5 April, it attacked Colombo and on 9 April attacked Trincomala. During this period (5 - 9 April) it sank 2 British cruisers, the Dorsetshire and Cornwall, the aircraft carrier Hermes and the destroyer Vampire (Monograph No 113, Task Force Operations)

submarines had been reported in the waters of Malacca Strait.

It was felt that the aircraft operating out of Burma bases as well as the British Fleet in the Indian Ocean and the submarines in Malacca Strait offered a very definite threat to the Malay Peninsula and to the sea lanes to Burma. Under these circumstances, the securing of the Andaman Islands was of vital importance.

With these points in mind, it was decided to invade the Andaman Islands with a combined Army-Navy unit and to establish air bases there. Concurrently with the invasion, it was planned to move, via the sea route, to Rangoon the Army replacements for the Burma operation.

Outline of Plans

The Andaman Islands Invasion Operation (D Operation): A detachment of the 12th Special Base Force² and some elements of the 9th Base Force³ commanded by Captain Harumi Kawasaki, were assigned as Navy invasion units, while a battalion-sized unit commanded by Captain Hayashi of the 18th Division, 15th Army,⁴ was assigned as the Army

2. In accordance with an Imperial General Headquarters directive, on 15 February 1942, the 12th Special Base Force was activated in Singapore as a special base force for Rangoon. Upon completion of its organization, it was moved to Penang.

3. The 9th Base Force had previously been assigned to the defense of Penang. (Monograph No. 79A, Sumatra Invasion and Southwest Area Naval Mopping-up Operations. Jan 42 - May 42, Chart 4)

4. Headquarters of the 15th Army at this time was in Rangoon. (Monograph No. 57, Burma Operations Record, Phase One.)

invasion unit.

Although this was planned as a joint Army-Navy invasion operation, Navy Captain Kawasaki was placed in command of the entire landing force.⁵

The 1st Escort Force,⁶ commanded by Rear Admiral N Hashimoto, comprised mainly of the 3d Destroyer Squadron, and reinforced by the 1st Minesweeper Division, was assigned to escort the invasion units.

The Andaman Force was scheduled to leave Penang about 20 March under the direct support of the main units of the Malay Force,⁷ the first objective being Port Blair. After its capture, the islands were to be completely occupied.

The Burma Operation (15th Army's Rangoon Reinforcement Operation - U Operation):

The Army forces assigned to advance to Rangoon by sea route were the 56th Division aboard about 50 transports as the first echelon and the 18th Division and other units of the 15th Army aboard about 30 transports as the second echelon.

5. Captain Kawasaki had only recently arrived from Japan and had had no experience in either Malay or Sumatra. However, as the operation was predominately Navy, until after completion of the landing operations, he was placed in command of the Army detachment as well as the Navy invasion units.

6. The 1st Escort Force was composed of the main elements of the Sabang, Koetaradja Force which had taken part in the Northern Sumatra Operation. (Monograph No. 79A, Sumatra Invasion and Southwest Area Naval Mopping-up Operations, Jan 42 - May 42, Chart 2)

7. See page 11.

The 2d Escort Force,⁸ commanded by Rear Admiral K Hiraoka, commanding officer of the 9th Base Force, was assigned to escort these Army units. This force comprised eleven ships -- destroyers and subchasers, including the light cruiser Kashii. The 12th Special Base Force, comprising the Kari, Nojima Maru, Koshomaru, 12th Converted Gunboat Division and 41st Converted Minesweeper Division, commanded by Rear Admiral Shigeru Ishikawa and primarily organized as the Rangoon Base Force, was assigned to lead and escort the convoy while sweeping the fairway between the mouth of the Irrawaddy River and Rangoon.

The course of the convoy was plotted so as always to be within the protective cover of the base air force of the 11th Air Fleet, which was deployed on the Malay Peninsula. The 11th Air Fleet and the Army's 5th Air Group were both instructed to cooperate in this operation.

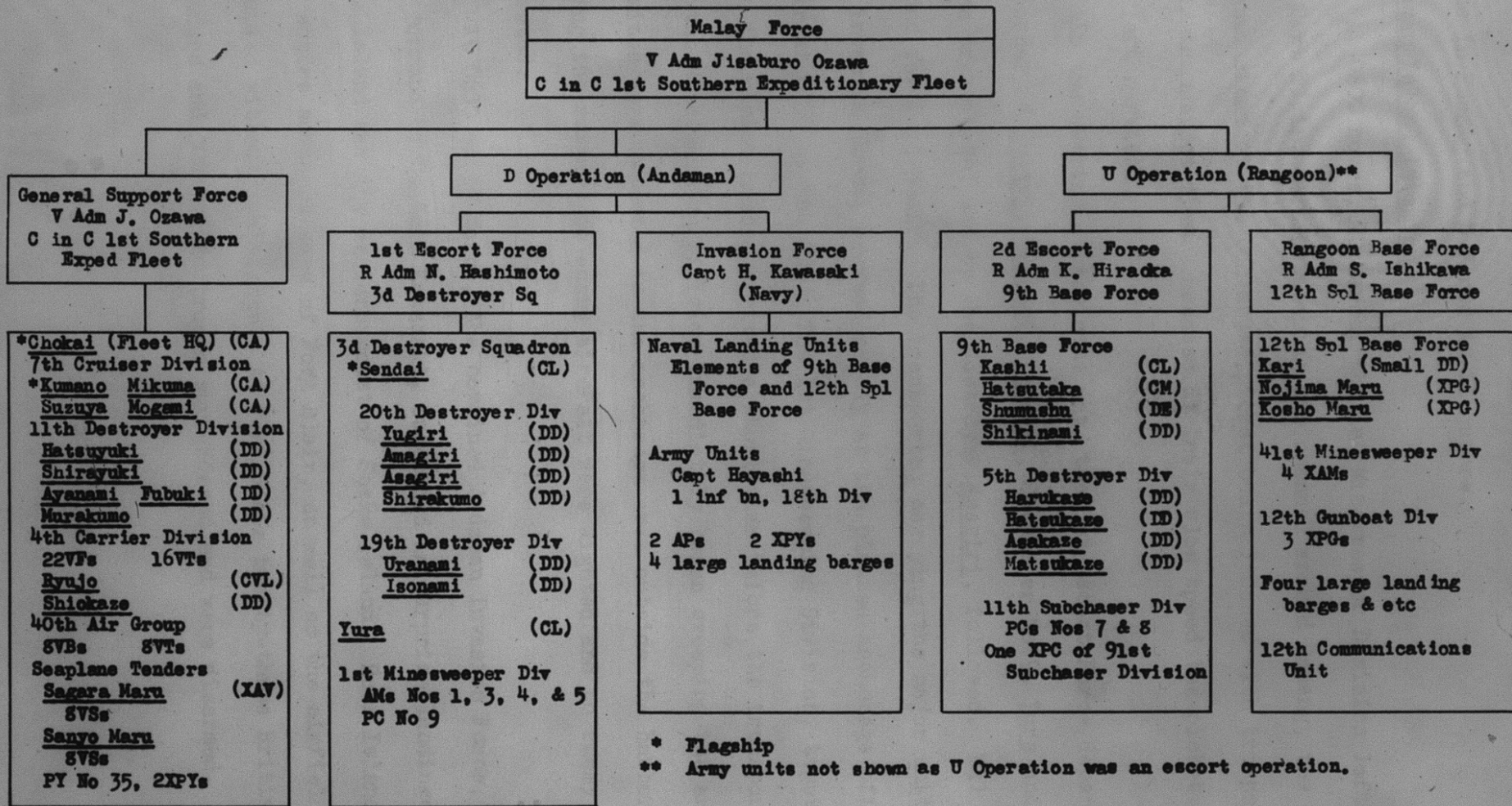
The naval units that participated in Operations D and U are shown on Chart 1.

Summary of Progress

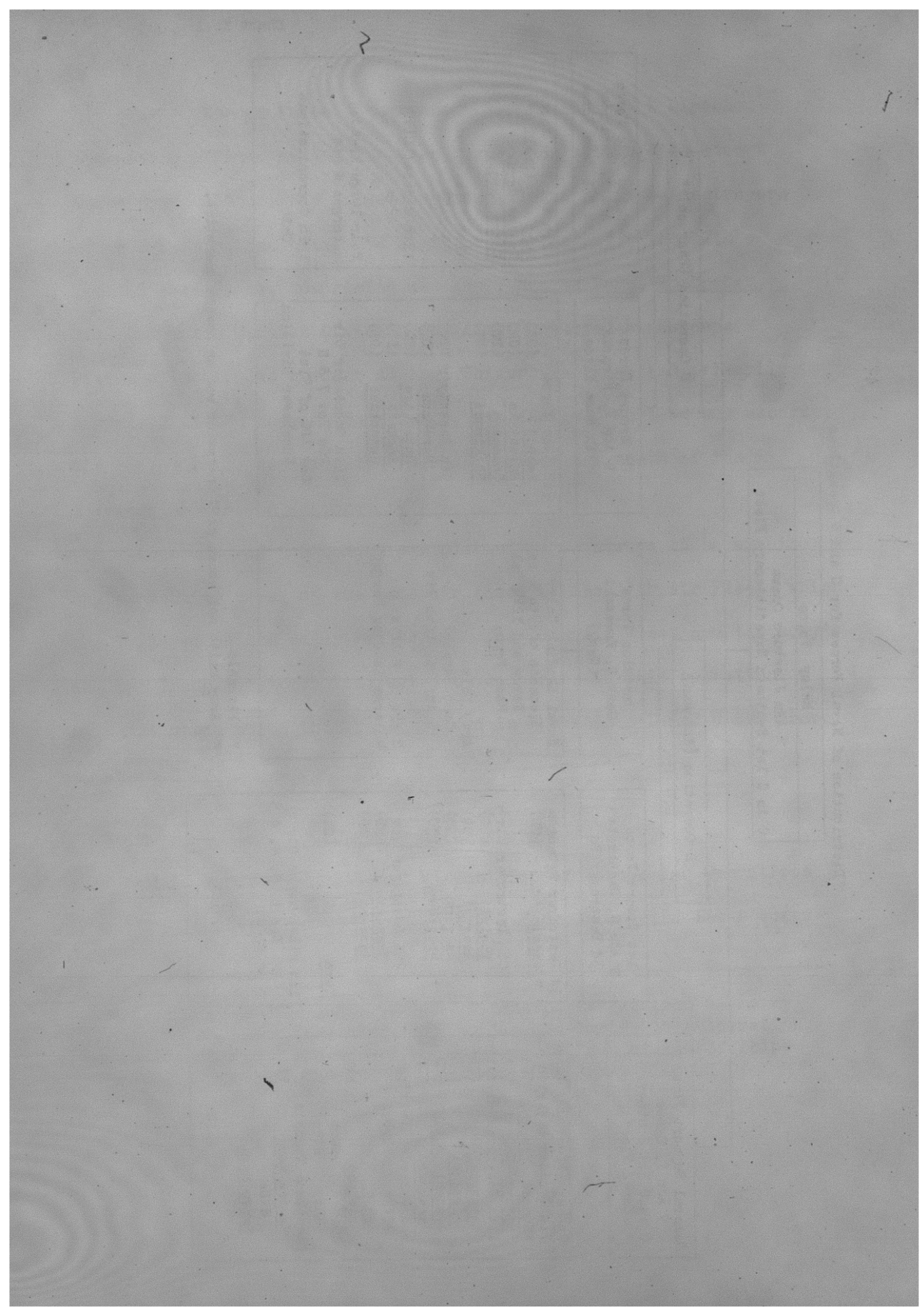
Orders for the operational disposition of forces for Operations D and U were issued on 15 March 1942. D Force completed its prepara-

8. Owing to the large number of transports required to carry troops and supplies from Singapore to Rangoon during this operation, the 2d Escort Force was organized temporarily from available ships under the command of the 1st Southern Expeditionary Fleet.

Distribution of Naval Forces for D and U Operations



* Flagship
 ** Army units not shown as U Operation was an escort operation.



tions in Penang and U Force in Singapore.

Andaman Island Invasion

At 0800 hours, 20 March, the 1st Minesweeper Division left Penang for Port Blair. After sweeping the channel around Penang, the division steamed ahead of the converted picket boats laden with troops, in order to protect them. Because of their slow speed the picket boats had left earlier.

In the evening of the same day, the 1st Escort Force departed in the order of Yugiri, Uranami, Isonami, Subchaser No 9, Yura and Sendai. Three transports, led by the destroyer Asagiri, followed. All were headed for Port Blair. The transports, carrying the major units of the invasion force, arrived safely at the planned anchorage off Port Blair at 0250 on the 23d. The 1st Minesweeping Division, together with the picket boats, arrived a short time before the transports, and the Minesweeping Division immediately began sweeping the area. No mines were detected in the anchorage area outside the harbor. During the voyage, no enemy aircraft were sighted and no enemy submarines reported.

At 0630 on 23 March, the combined Andaman Invasion Force, under the command of Captain Kawasaki, succeeded in surprise landings on Ross Island and the western coast of Snake Island. Ross Island and the entire southern area of Port Blair, as well as the airfield, were occupied without resistance. At Port Blair twenty-three British officers and 300 Indian troops surrendered and were disarmed. Prior to

the landing, however, the enemy, in accordance with their pre-arranged plan, destroyed the Port Blair power generating plant and other important facilities.

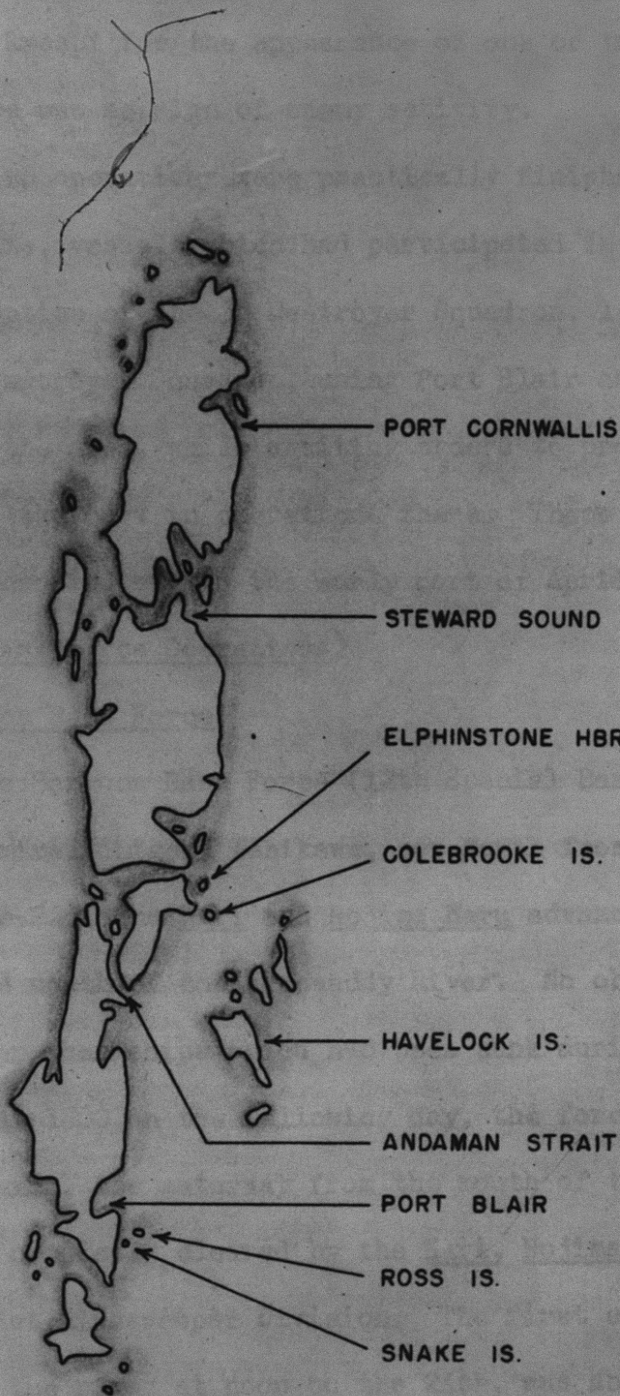
After the occupation of the Port Blair area, as the channel to Port Blair was mined, a minesweeping unit was detached from the Escort Force for minesweeping and disposing of wooden barriers. At the same time, the Invasion Force and Escort Force engaged in mopping up such vital points as Port Cornwallis, Stewart Sound and Colebrooke Island.

On 24 March, Army elements were placed aboard three large landing barges at Port Blair and, escorted by the cruiser Yura, and destroyers Uranami and Isonami, headed for Havelock Island. However, as no airfields or other evidence of foreign occupation was found, no troops were left on the island. Afterwards, the Yura, Uranami and Isonami carried out a survey of the east entrance of the Andaman Strait.

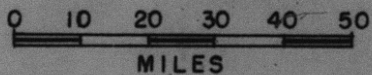
On the following day, 25 March, the Isonami escorted an Army invasion unit to a point south of Colebrooke Island and later covered the mopping-up operations on Elphinstone Island.

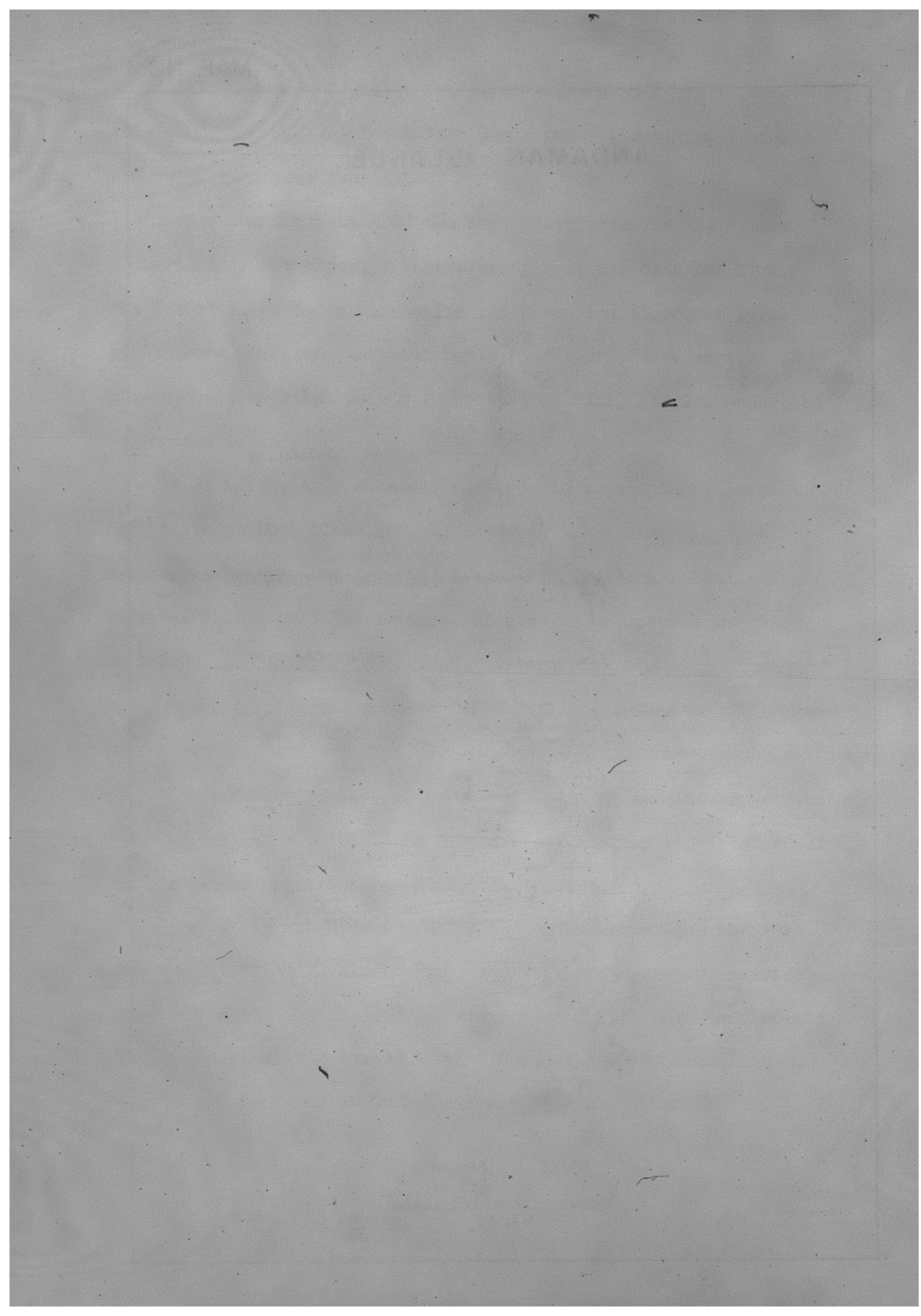
Also, on 25 March, the cruiser Sendai together with the 20th Destroyer Division (excluding Asagiri) left the anchorage outside Port Blair with a naval landing unit aboard. This unit carried out mopping-up operations around Stewart Sound and Port Cornwallis on the 26th and returned to Port Blair on the 27th. (Map 1)

ANDAMAN ISLANDS



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During this period (23 March - 27 March), an element of the First Escort Force patrolled the waters east of the Andaman Islands around Port Blair. Except for the appearance of one or two Lockheed planes each day there was no sign of enemy activity.

As the mopping-up operations were practically finished by 27 March, after that date, vessels which had participated in the operations, with the exception of the 3d Destroyer Squadron, left for Singapore. The 3d Destroyer Squadron, using Port Blair as its base, continued to patrol the area, while awaiting orders to proceed to the Indian Ocean to take part in operations there. These operations were expected to be carried out in the early part of April.

(Monograph No 113, Task Force Operations)

The Advance of Rangoon Base Force

On 20 March, the Rangoon Base Force (12th Special Base Force), commanded by Rear Admiral Shigeru Ishikawa, set forth from Penang. In the evening of the 22d, the Kari and Nojima Maru advanced to Elephant Point at the mouth of the Irrawaddy River. No obstacles were encountered other than ships which had been sunk during the taking of Rangoon. At 1800 on the following day, the force advanced to Rangoon. On 24 March, the waterway from the mouth of the Irrawaddy River to Rangoon was completely cleared by the Kari, Nojima Maru, Kosho Maru and the 41st Minesweeper Division. The first convoy, which reached the mouth of the river at noon on the 24th, was able to sail upstream to Rangoon without delay.

Thereafter, the Base Force carried out its mission to secure the waterway between the mouth of the Irrawaddy River and Rangoon, thus enabling the transport group to sail up to Rangoon without mishap.

Rangoon Landing Operation by the 15th Army

Landing and convoy operations were carried out as follows:

The preparations of the Rangoon Landing Unit were completed in Singapore. Then, escorted by units of the 2d Escort Force, the convoy went northward, selecting a route comparatively close to the Malay Peninsula, so as to be within the zone of friendly air protection. After reaching the mouth of the Irrawaddy River, it sailed upstream to Rangoon, led and escorted by the Rangoon Base Force.

Beginning with the first convoy from Singapore on 19 March, which consisted of 32 slow-speed vessels carrying the 56th Division, and ending with the arrival in Rangoon on 28 April of the fourth and last convoy the operations involved a total of 134 transports, during a period of approximately 40 days.

During this time, Army troops of two divisions, the 56th and 18th Divisions, as well as a large number of attached units of the 15th Army and large quantities of ammunition and materiel were transported without mishap. This proved of tremendous assistance to the Burma Operation.

An outline of the various convoy operations from Singapore to Rangoon, from 19 March to 28 April, are given below:

First Convoy

Schedule: Departed 19 March, arrived 24 March.

High speed vessels departed 20 March.

Transports: 43 vessels. Divided into two groups
of 32 slow speed vessels and 11 high speed
vessels

Escort: Kashii (CL), Asakaze (DD)

Matsukaze (DD), Shikinami (DD)

*Hatakaze (DD), **Harukaze (DD)

*Shumushu (DE), **Hatsutaka (CM).

Subchaser #7 (PC)

Total of 9 vessels

Second Convoy

Schedule: Departed 2 April, arrived 7 April

Transports: 45 vessels.

Escort: *Kashii (CL), **Hatsutaka (CM)

*Shikinami (DD), *Hatakaze (DD)

**Kari (Small DD), Shumushu (DE)

Subchaser #8 (PC)

Total of 7 vessels

Third Convoy

Schedule: Departed 13 April, arrived 19 April

Transport: 32 vessels

Escort: From Singapore to Penang
AM, 2XAMs, XPG, PC, Total of 5 vessels
of 10th Spl Base Force.
From Penang to Rangoon
Hatsutaka (CM), Asakaze (DD)
Akikaze (DD), Kari (Small DD)
Subchaser #7 (PC)
Subchaser #8 (PC)
Total of 6 vessels.

Fourth Convoy

Schedule: Departed 22 April, arrived 28 April

Transports: 14 vessels

Escort: From Singapore to Penang.
4XAMs of 44th Minesweeping Div
From Penang to Rangoon
Elements of 9th Base Force
(details are unknown).

Note: Vessels marked * participated in only part of
the route. (* From Singapore to around Penang)
(** To Rangoon from around Penang)

Movement of the Main Body of the Malay Force

On 21 March at 1400 hours, Vice Admiral Ozawa, Commander in Chief of the Malay Force, left Penang in command of the heavy cruiser Chokai, destroyers Ayanami and Murakumo and the seaplane tender Sagara Maru to support Operations D and U. This force was joined outside the harbor by four heavy cruisers of the 7th Cruiser Division, four major destroyers of the 11th Destroyer Division and the light carrier Ryujo of the 4th Carrier Division, which had left the Seletar naval base during the morning of the previous day. The entire force cruised to the east of Port Blair arriving about 150 miles south of Burma on 24 March. On the evening of the 25th, as the operations in the various areas had progressed satisfactorily, this force left the area and returned to Singapore via Mergui.

The 40th Air Group, consisting of sixteen small aircraft, which were based in Penang, were engaged in the protection of convoys and patrol of the Strait of Malacca during these operations.

The success of this operation, together with that of the Northern Sumatra Operation (Monograph No. 79A, Sumatra Invasion and Southwest Area Naval Mopping-up Operations, Jan 42 - May 42) and later of the Indian Ocean Operation (Monograph No. 113, Task Force Operations, Nov 41 - Apr 42) greatly strengthened the strategic defense situation of the Malay Peninsula. At the same time, it made possible a sea route to serve as a safe supply route for the Burma area, and also facilitated, to a great extent, movement of forces for the subsequent Burma

Operations (Monograph No. 57 Burma Operation Record, Phase One.)

