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0298B

24 May 1945.

HEADQUARTERS, V AMPHIBIOUS CORPS, C/O FPO, SAN FRANCISCO, CALIF.

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1st Endorsement on
4thMarDiv ltr 01971
over 156/nhb dtd
18 May 1945.

RECORDED
INDEXED
ON 9 August 1977
Unclas per [Signature]

From: The Commanding General.
To: Commandant of the Marine Corps.

- Via :
- (1) The Commanding General, Fleet Marine Force, Pacific.
 - (2) Commander, Amphibious Forces, Pacific Fleet.
 - (3) Commander, Fifth Fleet.
 - (4) Commander in Chief, U. S. Pacific Fleet and Pacific Ocean Areas.
 - (5) Commander in Chief, U. S. Fleet.

Subject: Operations Report - Iwo Jima, 19 February to 16 March, 1945.

1. Forwarded.

2. The 4th Marine Division landed in the assault on Iwo Jima on 19 February on beaches raked by enemy artillery, mortar, and small arms fire, and in spite of difficult beach and terrain conditions quickly established a beachhead in its zone of action. Thereafter, until 16 March, this Division pushed the attack against the enemy relentlessly, suffering some 8,000 casualties, including 1,731 dead.

3. The following comments are submitted concerning the comments and recommendations contained in Section V of the basic report:

a. The desirability of operating continuously with the same naval units is obvious, and where at all practicable this should be done even at the expense of minor delays.

b. It is believed that efforts should be made in future operations to neutralize antiaircraft defenses at the earliest practicable time in order to permit precise low-level bombing and the use of rockets against installations capable of interfering with the assault.

c. The necessity for deliberate destruction of blockhouses, pillboxes, weapon emplacements, and other installations interfering with the landing has been emphasized in previous correspondence.

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Operations Report - Iwo Jima, 19 February to 16
March 1945.

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d. In connection with the request for "earthquake" bombs, this Headquarters was informed by higher authority that this was not feasible, particularly in view of the late receipt of the request. It is considered, however, that the heaviest available bombs should be used against fortified areas capable of interfering with the landing and repeated requests have been made by this Headquarters for the employment of such bombs during pre-D-day and pre-H-hour attacks.

e. With the present organization of Division Artillery and in order to permit a uniform tactical loading of assault battalions to be landed in LVTs, a minimum of 23 LSTs are required for lifting the Division. An additional LST for employment as an auxiliary command ship would be highly desirable.

f. Numerous LVTs were lost in the operation and in the forward area rehearsal because of inadequate recovery arrangements. LST commanders should not only be impressed with their responsibility for the recovery of tractors in distress but provisions should be made for adequate recovery vessels down-wind from the operation areas to save LVTs and their crews. The LSD appears to be ideal for this purpose.

g. It is considered that control of LSTs and LSMs should be delegated to using agencies as far as practicable consistent with the requirement for general overall control. This can be accomplished much more easily if sufficient LSTs, LSMs, LCTs, and other landing craft are available for the needs of all TRANSDIVs and TRANSRONS. The constant shifting of assignments necessitated by an overall shortage of such vessels resulted in confusion and reduced operating efficiency.

h. The inadequacy of the training of replacement drafts furnished all Divisions of the Corps is appreciated. These units were received too late to permit the necessary integration into the Divisions with the result that when they were committed to combat they were unfamiliar with the leaders of the smaller units to which assigned, were consequently less efficient, and suffered disproportionate casualties.

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i. The inadequacy of aerial photography after the initiation of the attack has been previously pointed out by the Headquarters. It is understood that steps have been taken to provide the proper type planes and qualified personnel to permit the desired photographic coverage. This coverage is particularly important in uncovering targets well forward of the front lines, in order that they may be engaged before the assault troops get so close as to prevent the employment of naval gunfire, artillery, and aircraft bombing.

j. In connection with the need for a heavier and more powerful direct fire weapon than the Bazooka, steps have been taken to procure better weapons for this purpose. The assignment of a mortar battalion to each Division is probably not practicable at this time.

H. SCHMIDT.

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HEADQUARTERS,
FOURTH MARINE DIVISION, FLEET MARINE FORCE,
c/o FLEET POST OFFICE, SAN FRANCISCO, CALIFORNIA.

18 May, 1945.

From: The Commanding General.
To: The Commandant of the Marine Corps.
Via: (1) Commanding General, V Amphibious Corps.
(2) Commanding General, Fleet Marine Force, Pacific.
(3) Commander, Amphibious Forces, Pacific Fleet.
(4) Commander, Fifth Fleet.
(5) Commander in Chief, U. S. Pacific Fleet and Pacific Ocean Areas.
(6) Commander in Chief, U. S. Fleet.

Subject: Operations Report - Iwo Jima, 19 February to 16 March, 1945.

References: (a) PacFlt Conf ltr 1CL-45 dtd 1Jan45.
(b) FMF Pac GO 66-44 dtd 27Dec44.
(c) VAC LanFor Spl O 2-45 dtd 26Jan45.

Enclosure: (A) Subject report.

1. In accordance with the references, enclosure (A) is forwarded herewith.

2. In order to preclude the necessity of forwarding all required copies through the chain of command, an advance copy has been transmitted directly to each addressee.

C. B. GATES.

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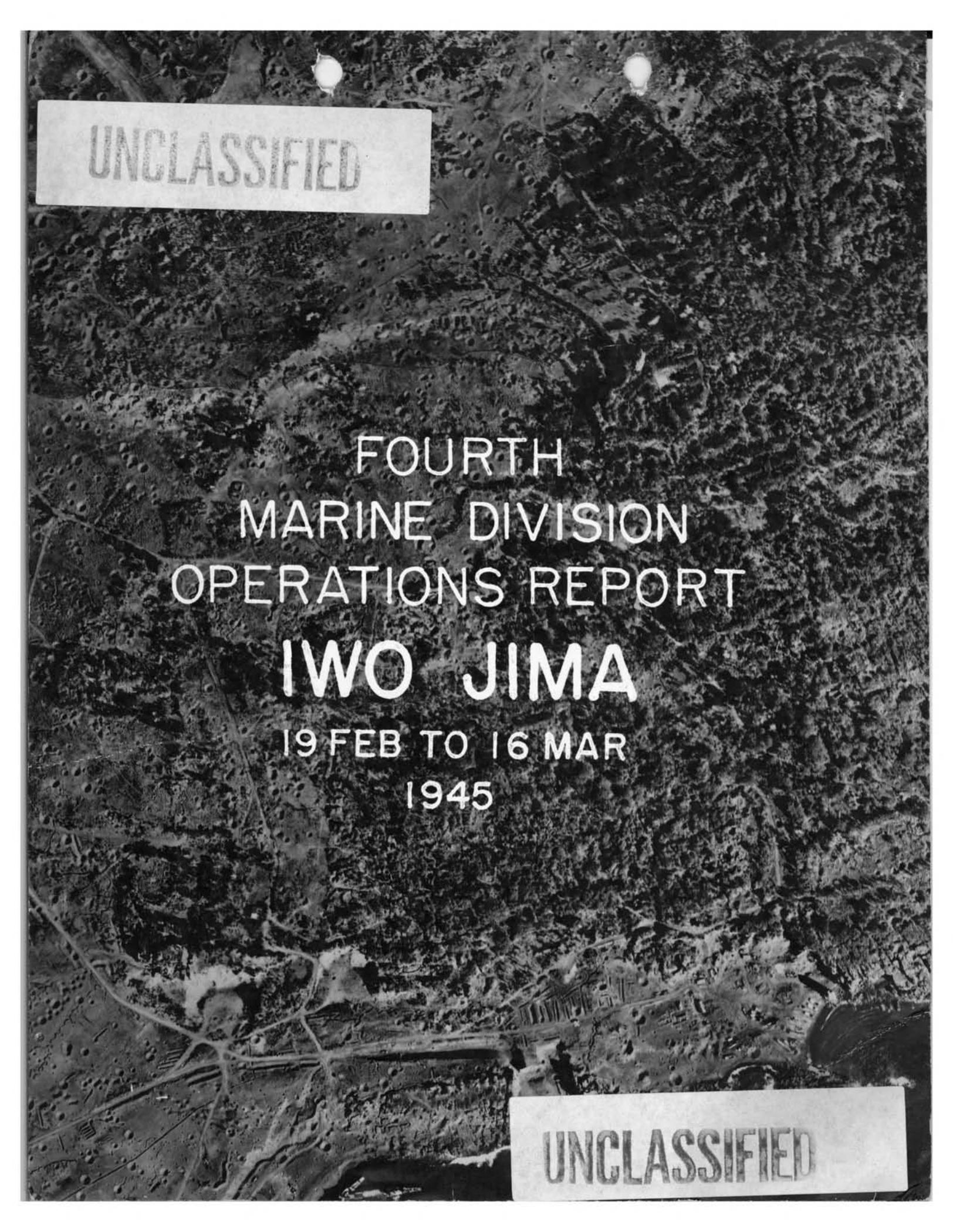
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FOURTH
MARINE DIVISION
OPERATIONS REPORT
IWO JIMA
19 FEB TO 16 MAR
1945

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T A B L E O F C O N T E N T S

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Section IV	- Narrative of Operation.
Appendix No.1	- Progress of Attack.
Section V	- Comments and Recommendations.

ANNEXES

ABLE	- Administration.
BAKER	- Intelligence.
CHARLIE	- Operation.
DOG	- Logistics.
EASY	- Communications.
* FOX	- RCT 23 Report.
* GEORGE	- RCT 24 Report.
* HOW	- RCT 25 Report.
* ITEM	- Division Artillery Report.
* JIG	- 4th Tank Battalion Report.
* KING	- 4th Engineer Battalion Report.
* LOVE	- 1st Joint Assault Signal Company Report.
* MIKE	- 2d Armored Amphibian Battalion Report.
* NAN	- 5th Amphibian Tractor Battalion Report.
* OBOE	- 10th Amphibian Tractor Battalion Report.
* Pictorial Supplement.	
* Issued Under Separate Cover.	

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B A S I C R E P O R T

TO

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MARINE DIVISION

OPERATIONS REPORT

IWO JIMA

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SECTION I

PLANNING AND PREPARATION

1. PLANNING

(a) The planning phase for the IWO JIMA Operation began with the receipt of the first tentative draft of VAC LANFOR Operation Plan 3-44 on 24 October. Prior to this time the Division had made preliminary studies of probable theaters of operations, which included the VOLCANO Islands, but since no indication of the probable nature of the next operation had been received from higher echelon, this study was superficial only. The VAC LANFOR Chief of Staff and other staff members conducted a beneficial conference with Division and major subordinate unit representatives during the latter part of October where the general plan and scheme of maneuver were presented and discussed.

(b) Based on the VAC LANFOR plan, and using a 1:5,000 map of the landing area, designated Island "X", the Division prepared a map problem which was issued on 27 October to subordinate units as a basis for preparing plans to include scheme of maneuver, boat assignment tables, landing schedules, and embarkation and loading data. This problem was classified SECRET and no connection with a prospective operation was divulged to personnel other than the major unit commanders and those members of the Division staff directly concerned with its preparation.

(c) Upon VAC LANFOR approving the Division's plan for the Island "X" operation, immediate preparation of the first tentative draft of the preferred plan for the IWO JIMA Operation was begun. By 30 November this draft was completed, except for several annexes to be issued later, and distribution was effected. Through the medium of the Island "X" problem and the first tentative draft of the operation plan, subordinate units within the Division were able to initiate early planning for the operation and materially profited thereby.

(d) On 28 October the Division was informed that loading for the operation would begin on 29 November, which required a speeding up of the training schedule and a general intensification of preparations, since 15 December previously had been set as the readiness date. Later, information was received that the target date had been postponed two weeks beyond the original date of 20 January. After an additional two weeks delay in the target date was announced, establishing it then as 19 February, loading dates for major units of the Division were firmed as 27 December and 3 January.

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SECTION I - PLANNING AND PREPARATION.

(e) The final draft of the preferred plan (Div Opn Plan 49-44), based on VAC LANFOR Opn Plan 3-44, dated 23 December, 1944, was prepared and distributed prior to completion of embarkation of major units on 3 January, 1945.

(f) The VAC LANFOR plan envisaged landing the 4th and 5th Marine Divisions abreast, 4th on the right, on the southeastern beaches of IWO JIMA. The 4th Division, landing with two (2) RCT's abreast on a frontage of 2000 yards (4 Battalion beaches), was assigned the mission of seizing objective O-1, which included the major portion of Airfield No. 1, the high ground between Airfields No. 1 and No. 2, and the rugged cliff line on the right flank. The objective varied in distance inland from 2800 yards along the Division boundary on the left to 1000 yards on the extreme right flank, necessitating a turning movement pivoting on the right after establishment of the initial beachhead. The absolute necessity for the early capture of the "Quarry" cliff line during the initial stages of the operation to protect the right flank was foreseen.

The Division was to be embarked in TRANSRON 15 (TRANS-GROUP BAKER), consisting of TRANSDIVS 43, 44, and 45, with 19 LST's, 2 LSD's, and 10 LSM's assigned. LVT's were to be used to land the four (4) assault BLT's, while the reserve BLT's and the Division Reserve (RCT 24) were to utilize LCVP's and LCM's.

(g) The VAC LANFOR plan assigned the Division four (4) battalion beaches, Yellow 1 and 2, Blue 1 and 2. Because of the proximity of Beach Blue 2 to the commanding high ground on the right, and in order to provide a safety factor in maintaining adequate neutralization fires on this high ground during the initial landing, authority was requested and granted to confine the landing of RCT 25 to Beach Blue 1. Accordingly, RCT 25 was directed to land on Beach Blue 1 and rapidly seize Beach Blue 2 in order to permit the early use of this beach for succeeding units and supplies. This decision proved sound in practice.

(h) During the early stages of the planning phase, the usual difficulties, occasioned by the assignment of a new TRANSGROUP with which the Division had never worked, were experienced. Physical separation of the Naval and Marine staffs was an initial handicap. Closer liaison between the TRANSGROUP and 4th Marine Division staffs and particularly between TRANSDIV and RCT staffs would have been preferable during this period when detailed plans were being formulated and orders written. However, in view of the comparatively early embarkation and resultant length of time aboard ship prior to the attack, opportunity was afforded to adjust and perfect coordinated plans.

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SECTION I - PLANNING AND PREPARATION.

(i) The tactical loading of assault elements in LST's was necessarily different for the IWO JIMA Operation than in previous ones in which the Division had participated. For the SAIPAN Operation, at least eight (8) LST's had been provided for each assault RCT, allowing four (4) for each assault BLT in which three (3) rifle companies, BLT support elements, and a proportional part of the LVT(A)'s were embarked. The LVT(A)'s were distributed equally throughout the sixteen (16) LST's assigned assault RCT's. Because of the limited number available to the Division for the IWO JIMA Operation, only seven (7) LST's could be allotted to each assault RCT while five (5) were assigned to the artillery regiment. Each assault RCT in turn assigned three (3) to each assault BLT and embarked the LVT(A)'s of its Armored Amphibian Company in the remaining one (a hospital LST). This plan did not provide equitable distribution of personnel, LST's embarking assault companies being overloaded beyond the capacity limit assigned by higher echelon, particularly those carrying radar and ponton barge personnel. LST's with armored amphibians were loaded to less than one-third capacity in personnel. It is believed that in the future assignment of LST's for an operation, consideration should be given to recommendations submitted by the Division which bases its requirements on the tactical plan, involving the maintenance of tactical unity, rather than upon a mathematical solution arrived at by dividing the number of LVT's and LVT(A)'s to be lifted by the capacity of an LST.

(j) Considerable difficulty was encountered in the allocation of boats to RCT's because higher echelon attempted to assign boats to specific units and tasks within TRANSDIVS. The practice of the RCT and TRANSDIV Commanders making detailed assignment within the TRANSDIV and then submitting to the TRANSGROUP Commander requests for additional boats required has been proven by past experience to be sound.

(k) Early in the planning phase higher echelon required the Division to submit a complete Division landing diagram to include all scheduled and certain call waves. In view of the fact that this data was submitted during the formative stage of the operation plans, changes and improvements in the detailed scheme of landing of subordinate units were inevitable. After the higher echelon diagrams, based on those submitted by Divisions, were prepared and distributed, considerable inertia was experienced in making modifications because approval of higher echelon was required. For instance, if a BLT Commander, basing his decision on last-minute intelligence received, wished to change the number of landing craft in his eighth wave, such change in a call wave was reflected in the plans of at least seven (7) echelons: RCT, TRANSDIV, Division, TRANSGROUP, VAC LANFOR, Naval Attack Force, and the Division.

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SECTION 1 - PLANNING AND PREPARATION.

While it is recognized that a certain amount of detailed landing data must be distributed by higher command throughout the entire force, it is believed that this data should be limited to only those scheduled waves which will be dispatched by central control, a total of five (5) waves in the IWO JIMA Operation, and the remainder left to the discretion of the RCT and TRANSDIV Commanders to be shown in Division, TRANSGROUP, and subordinate unit orders only.

(1) In providing for the landing of tanks, plans were initially made to utilize LCM's loaded in two (2) LSD's for the two tank companies attached to assault RCT's as had been the standard practice during past operations. After receipt of the M4A3 tanks, replacing the M4A2 with which the 4th Tank Battalion was formerly equipped, tests were conducted in which the new tank, with its added slope plate armor forward and lighter engines in the rear, caused the LCM to be bow-heavy and this means of landing tanks was considered unsafe for actual operations. This fact was transmitted to VAC LANFOR and resulted in additional tests being made with the resultant decision to substitute LSM's for landing all tanks of the 4th Tank Battalion.

(m) Originally, upon orders of the VAC LANFOR Commander, the two tank companies with assault RCT's were scheduled to land at H/30. After discussion and recommendation by the Division that the landing of tanks be left to the discretion of RCT Commanders under whose command they were operating, a change in the landing diagram dated 22 January, which provided that tanks be dispatched as directed by troop commanders, was promulgated by higher echelon. This revised policy proved exceedingly sound in practice.

(n) The final draft of the alternate plan for the IWO JIMA Operation (Div Opn Plan 50-44) was prepared during the MAUI-KAHOOLAWE rehearsal period and distributed during the rehabilitation period in PEARL, a tentative draft having been submitted to VAC LANFOR and distributed to major units during December. This plan was similar in all respects to the preferred plan with the exception that the landing was to be made on the west beaches, preceded by the seizure of KANGOKU ROCK (TA 230) at H-50 minutes, which mission was assigned to one reinforced company of RCT 24, the Division Reserve. The 4th Battalion, 14th Marines, (105mm Howitzer), was to be emplaced on this rock after seizure if conditions permitted.

2. TASK ORGANIZATION

(a) The Division was reinforced for the attack on IWO JIMA by attachment of the following units:

2d Armd Amph Bn (less 2 Co's and Hq Det)

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SECTION I - PLANNING AND PREPARATION.

5th Amph Trac Bn
10th Amph Trac Bn
1st JASCO
133d NC Bn (USN)
476th Amph Trk Co (Army)
7th Marine War Dog Plat
1st Prov Rocket Det
Det 8th Field Depot
Det 726th SAW Co (Army)
Det Sig Bn, VAC
442d Port Co (Army)
JICPOA Intelligence Team
24th Repln Draft
30th Repln Draft
VMO-4

(b) The 10th Amph Trac Bn, 1st JASCO, 1st Prov Rocket Det, and VMO-4 had been attached to the Division for previous amphibious operations and, along with the 7th Marine War Dog Plat, 476th Amph Trk Co (Army), 133d NC Bn (USN), and the 24th and 30th Replacement Drafts, participated in the training of the Division. The other units were assigned shortly prior to embarkation but in anticipation of their assignment to the Division for the operation the commanders of these units maintained close liaison with Division Headquarters throughout the planning phase.

3. TRAINING

(a) Upon return from the TINIAN Operation during the latter part of August, 1944, the Division initiated intensive training in accordance with an FMF PAC directive which designated 15 December, 1944, as the readiness date for the next operation. Having suffered 6,658 battle casualties in the SAIPAN and TINIAN operations, the majority being in infantry combat units, the Division initially concentrated on individual and small unit training with the objective of retraining key personnel and readying units for the absorption of large numbers of replacements.

(b) In preparing the training directive, the Division was somewhat handicapped because of a lack of sufficient knowledge as to the nature of the operation for which it was preparing. Based on a prospective operation involving large land masses and jungle-type terrain, the program proved flexible enough to be adapted to small island warfare by making only minor changes and shifting emphasis when the exact nature of the coming operation was revealed. Particular emphasis was then placed on training in the attack of fortified positions, in the detection, marking and

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SECTION 1. REHEARSING AND PREPARATION.

and in the coordination and use of supporting arms. Lessons learned and errors in technique revealed during the MARIANAS campaign were stressed in the Division training directive.

(c) By the first of September, sufficient replacements had been received to bring one infantry regiment and two battalions of another regiment up to strength in enlisted personnel, which permitted these units to reorganize and effect integrated training during the preparation period, the major obstacle then being the lack of officer replacements for these units. Not until 22 November did the remaining regiment and battalion receive assigned quotas of enlisted replacement personnel. The efficiency of the latter units as fighting teams was seriously jeopardized by the late receipt of these replacements. The shortage in junior officers, especially platoon leaders and artillery forward observers, was a distinct handicap in the reorganization and welding together of small units. Two replacement drafts consisting of approximately 2500 total personnel were received on 23 November. Authority was received on 1 December to assign approximately 70 lieutenants from these two recently arrived replacement drafts to infantry units. Thus one regiment and one battalion of another regiment embarked in assigned shipping for the IWO JIMA Operation, during the period 30 December - 3 January, having had 29 days of integrated training with all replacement personnel available. It is obvious that had the original loading date of 29 November been enforced the combat efficiency of the Division would have been seriously impaired. The one-month postponement of the loading date permitted a minimum of reorganization and training of those units which received last-minute replacements.

(d) During November, amphibious exercises consisting of five (5) days for each RCT and 2 three (3) day periods for the artillery regiment were conducted in the MAALAEA BAY area with a training TRANSDIV, composed of vessels from the TRANSGROUP in which the Division was to be embarked. A Division field exercise, based on the scheme of maneuver of the IWO JIMA Operation, was held in the MAALAEA BAY area in conjunction with the landing made at the conclusion of the final RCT amphibious exercise. Two (2) CPX's were held in the camp area using the same scheme of maneuver and designed to perfect technique in the use of supporting arms. Members of the VAC LANFOR staff participated in the second CPX.

(e) Training of the newly-activated 4th Amphibian Truck Company was seriously curtailed because of the late arrival of DUKW's. Some assistance was rendered by the 476th Company (Army) providing materiel for training until arrival of the DUKW's on 4 December. Considerable retraining of tank crews and maintenance personnel of

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the 4th Tank Battalion was occasioned by the substitution of the M4A3 tank for the M4A2, the last of the new tanks being received on 25 October. Because of this fact, infantry-tank training was not as extensive as was desirable. In November, the 1st Provisional Rocket Detachment furnished a cadre of approximately half its personnel for the formation of a new unit, and intensive training within a limited time was necessary to bring the detachment up to a satisfactory status of readiness prior to embarkation.

4. REHEARSAL

(a) Plans for rehearsal exercises in the MAUI-KAHOOLAWE Area were formulated and distributed by 21 December, 1944. Embarkation and loading of major units was accomplished during the period 27 December - 3 January, and was as complete in all details for the actual operation as conditions permitted. The rehearsal was designed to simulate, insofar as the beaches and terrain would allow, the preferred plan for the IWO JIMA Operation.

(b) Prior to the scheduled rehearsal, TRANSRON 15 conducted preliminary ship to shore exercises in the MAALAEA BAY Area during the period 6-9 January, primarily to perfect training of landing craft personnel, control personnel, and beach parties. Troops were boated once each day during the exercises, using LCVP's and LCM's exclusively.

(c) Some artificialities were introduced into the rehearsal because of the absence of the 2d Armored and 5th Amphibian Tractor Battalions, and because the 4th Tank Battalion was forced to delay its loading in LSM's until after the rehearsal. While LVT(A)'s of the 2d Armored Battalion were simulated, the 10th Amphibian Tractor Battalion provided its normal complement of service tractors for RCT 23 and in addition formed a provisional group of fifty (50) training tractors for RCT 25 in lieu of the 5th Amphibian Tractor Battalion. This LVT organization permitted RCT 23 to boat and land as scheduled, but only the left BLT of RCT 25 landed in LVT's, the right BLT landing in LCVP's representing LVT's. The six (6) LSM's assigned to lift the two assault tank companies were present during the latter stages of the rehearsal and participated by simulating landings though no tank units were embarked at this time.

(d) Exercises in the formation of boat groups and waves, where troops were embarked and waves dispatched from the line of departure but not landed, were conducted on the first day of rehearsal - 13 January. On 14 January, a landing was made with limited maneuver ashore and reembarkation was completed by 1600. The main tactical landing on MAUI was executed on 15 January with all major units participating, including simulated

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support. The Division remained ashore overnight continuing the tactical problem until reembarkation was begun at daybreak on 16 January. By 1600 all troops had been reembarked and a critique for designated officers was held aboard the AUBURN, flagship of the Naval Attack Force Commander. On 17 January, a simulated landing was made on the north coast of KAHOOLAWE. Fire support ships and support aircraft supported the simulated landing with live ammunition in accordance with the preferred plan. Landing waves were dispatched and approached the beach to within 300 yards, under cover of naval gunfire and air bombardment, at which point landing craft were turned about and no troops were landed. Reembarkation was effected by 1600.

(e) Upon completion of the rehearsal, transfer of troops from LST's to APA's was made in conformity with the embarkation plan for movement from the HAWAIIAN Area, and all units proceeded to PEARL and HONOLULU for rehabilitation.

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SECTION II

MOVEMENT TO THE OBJECTIVE

1. The Division (reinforced) was rehabilitated in PEARL and HONOLULU during the period 18-27 January, 1945. Detailed orders were completed and issued during this period. Shortages of equipment and supplies were filled and all personnel were given liberty. Troops were paid and organized recreational activities were provided from recreational funds.
2. On 22 January the Tractor Flotilla departed for the forward staging area (SAIPAN-TINIAN), followed by the main body (TRANSGROUP BAKER, composed of TRANSDIVS 43, 44, 45), on 27 January. Enroute both convoys stopped at ENIWETOK for fueling and other logistics. Current intelligence information was received and distributed to units concerned, and changes incorporated in Division Operation Plan.
3. Proceeding from ENIWETOK on the 5th and 7th of February, the Tractor Flotilla and TRANSGROUP rendezvoused at the forward staging and rehearsal area (SAIPAN-TINIAN) on 11-15 February. Troops were transferred from APA's to LST's and plans completed for final rehearsal. Because of the distance involved and the limited facilities of LST's during movement to the forward staging and rehearsal area, APA's were loaded to capacity and a minimum number of troops placed aboard LST's (approximately 250 per LST). From the staging area to the objective, LST's were loaded to assigned capacity with assault troops, average load being 380, plus special radar and ponton barrage personnel.
4. Due to inclement weather and high seas the rehearsal exercises scheduled for the 12th of February were cancelled; however, shore fire control parties, which landed on the 11th, conducted communications drills with fire support ships, NGF being simulated.
5. On 13 February, in accordance with plans, the final rehearsal was conducted off the western shore of TINIAN. Troops disembarked in landing craft, boat groups and waves were formed and landings simulated (waves were run to within 300 yards of beach and returned). On this date surf conditions were again unfavorable. After debarking LVT's it was necessary to move the LST area southward to a lee south of GURGUAN POINT in order to obtain more favorable area for reembarking LVT's. This unplanned maneuver resulted in some confusion in that guides of later LCVP and LCM waves, who could not see the beaches and had used certain LST's to guide on, changed course to the southward in direction of the LST's, thereby failing to reach the LD and landing area.

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SECTION II - MOVEMENT TO THE OBJECTIVE.

6. On 15 February a conference of the Division Staff and unit commanders was held. Completed plans were discussed and clarified, latest intelligence information distributed, and final instructions issued.

7. On 16 February the Division departed for the objective, arriving and landing on D-Day at H-Hour (0900, 19 February).

8. Enroute to the objective, ship-board training was carried out as practical; tactical employment of weapons was emphasized; staff planning was continuous, and thorough briefing of all personnel, to include the individual rifleman and coxswain, was completed. Physical exercise and drill for officers and enlisted personnel was carried on daily, resulting in minimum loss of combat efficiency though some personnel were embarked approximately 54 days.

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SECTION III

SHIP TO SHORE OPERATIONS

1. LANDING PLAN

(a) General. As outlined under Section I, the major concept of the landing on IWC JIMA envisaged the landing on contiguous beaches with the 4th and 5th Marine Divisions abreast, 4th Division on the right, each to land with two (2) RCTs in assault. The beaches assigned the Division were Yellow One, Yellow Two, Blue One and Blue Two and all averaged 500 yards in width. A careful preliminary study of available intelligence material disclosed conditions which indicated the inadvisability of attempting to force a landing on Beach Blue Two. Upon representation to V Amphibious Corps, permission was obtained to land initially only on three beaches and, once ashore, the scheme of maneuver was to provide for securing the use of Beach Blue Two by the early seizure of the "Quarry" cliff line which directly dominated Blue Beaches, particularly Blue Two, on the right (North) flank. Information available indicated that beach conditions would permit the use of all types of landing craft in landing troops, equipment and supplies, but adverse weather and wind conditions during the landing could be expected to seriously effect the landing of small craft. Further, the loose volcanic sand, which formed the beach and extended inland with a series of steep ledges, would probably be impassable for wheeled vehicles (except light equipment such as "jeeps") without improvement on construction of egress roads, and could even be difficult for the operation of tracked vehicles.

(b) Division Plan of Landing. Based on the above considerations, the Division plan provided for landing two (2) RCTs abreast, RCT 23 on the left (Yellow Beaches) and RCT 25 on the right (Blue Beach One). RCT 23 was to land with two (2) BLTs abreast, 1/23 on Yellow One and 2/23 on Yellow Two, with the RCT Reserve, BLT 3/23, prepared to land on either beach as directed. RCT 25 was also to land with two (2) BLTs in assault but, due to restriction of employing only Blue One initially, the landing formation was necessarily different. BLT 1/25, assigned the left and center of Blue One, was to land with two (2) companies abreast in assault and one in reserve; BLT 3/25, assigned the right of Blue One, was to land in a column of companies, while the RCT Reserve, BLT 2/25, was assigned the use of the entire beach area when ordered to land. The Division Reserve, RCT 24, was to be prepared to land, on order, on any designated beach(es) employing either one of two plans. Plan Number One was designed to land two (2) BLTs abreast, BLT 2/24 on the left and BLT 1/24 on the right, with BLT 3/24, the RCT Reserve, to follow either leading BLT as beaching conditions or the tactical situation indicated. Plan Number Two called for the RCT to land on one beach in a column of BLTs in order - 2/24, 1/24, 3/24.

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SECRET OPERATIONS (Cont'd).

(c) Employment of Ships and Landing Craft. To implement the tactical plans, the following ships and landing craft were available:

12 APA
 4 AKA
 19 LST
 16 LSM
 34 LVT(A)
 200 LVT(2) or (4)
 100 DUKW

No serious problem concerning the loading of the APAs or the AKAs presented itself. Ample liaison and conferences between the Division and Transron 15 placed this part of the loading and the tactical use thereof on a sound footing. Allocation of remaining landing ships and craft was as follows:

(1) LSTs. Of the total 19 LSTs available five (5) were assigned the artillery and fourteen (14) to the two (2) assault RCTs. One (1) additional LST (specially fitted) was shared by the 4th and 5th Marine Divisions as an CY-1 carrier for planes that were not embarked on CVEs. The fourteen (14) LSTs for the combat teams were divided equally between the two (2) assault RCTs. There was included in this number, however, several "special" LSTs which were greatly restricted as to their usefulness to the Division. Two (2) of the number were designated as "Hospital Evacuation LSTs", and were fitted for emergency operating, sorting and dispatch of casualties to the transports. They could be used to transport troops to the Target but had to be completely unloaded of all Marine personnel and equipment prior to How-Hour. In order to comply with this restriction these two LSTs were employed to transport the two (2) companies of LVT(A)s that were attached to the assault RCTs. As each of these units went aboard with only four (4) officers and one hundred and fifteen (115) enlisted about one-third of the available troop capacity was gainfully employed. Two of the LSTs in the group assigned to RCT 23 were "Radar" ships. Considerable effort was expended towards having these units split for the assignment of one each to the assault RCTs. This could not be done. Aside from cutting down on the passenger capacity by ten (10) officers and fifty (50) enlisted, these ships had to be either in a completely loaded or a completely unloaded state (and Radars calibrated accordingly). This seriously restricted the value of these two ships to the RCT to which assigned. Nine (9) of the LSTs carried LCTs top-deck loaded. While it is recognized that the LCTs are a necessity at the objective, the loading of these craft on a large number of LSTs seriously curtails troop space aboard for a long voyage, restricts the amount of LVT maintenance equipment that can be carried, and discharge of

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SECTION III - SHIP TO SHORE OPERATIONS (Cont'd).

the LCT usually conflicts with the employment of the LST at a time when its use is desired by the Division.

(2) LSMs. The employment of the LSMs provided another problem. Originally scheduled to have ten (10) of these ships, the Division planned to use these as follows:

- 4 - To carry Shore Party equipment of the Pioneer and Naval Construction Battalion, two (2) for each assault RCT Shore Party.
- 5 - To the Division Reserve - Four (4) for tanks, and one (1) for "half-tracks".
- 1 - To the Division Signal Company - To carry heavy radio equipment, trucks pre-loaded with signal equipment and supplies, and radio "jeeps".

After detailed plans for loading had been made, and after loading had started, the Division was informed that LSM 60 (assigned Shore Party) was the Flotilla Flag and that its troop capacity must not exceed one (1) officer and seven (7) enlisted. This restriction was later modified to the extent that the Division was permitted to embark a total of one (1) officer and twenty-eight (28) enlisted from the Staging Area to the Target. Similarly, the "rated" capacity of two (2) officers and fifty-two (52) enlisted for the remainder was reduced to two (2) officers and thirty-nine (39) enlisted. During the Planning Phase, the Division discovered from tests that the LSM(3) could not carry the M4A3 tank with any degree of assurance that it could be beached and the tank landed successfully. Further tests were conducted by higher authority at Pearl and this resulted in the assignment, after the Division was completely loaded, of six (6) additional LSMs to carry the tanks of the two (2) companies assigned to the assault RCTs. This delay caused considerable confusion at the time, and some trouble later at the Target since little opportunity was had for contact with the Commander of the LSM unit with respect to the employment of these vessels, but was a wise decision as conditions at the Target would have prevented the landing of tanks in LCMs on the Division beaches.

(3) Other Craft. The LVT(A)s and LVTs were equally divided between the two (2) assault RCTs except for maintenance LVTs and four (4) LVT(4)s which were assigned to the artillery to assure the early landing of four (4) radio "jeeps". The overall assignment of the craft available was designed to land the maximum number of combatant elements in the shortest possible time and resulted in the following:

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SECTION III - SHIP TO SHORE OPERATIONS (Continued)

The leading wave was composed of 34 LVT(A)s, 17 to each assault RCT. Upon beaching these craft (except the right flank platoon on Blue One) were to proceed inland past the first terrace to positions in defilade and there to cover the landing of personnel in succeeding waves. The right flank platoon on Blue One was to echelon to the right rear to furnish protection to that flank, from positions ashore or afloat, as appropriate.

The assault waves of the BLTs were embarked in LVT(2)s and LVT(4)s. The personnel were to be disembarked generally in the lee of the first terrace. Scaling ladders were provided for ascent of this terrace if necessary. When empty, LVTs were to clear the beaches promptly by utilizing as a return route the boundaries between beaches in order not to interfere with following waves. The personnel LVTs were to re-embark on their parent LSTs, except those from the "rajar" ships which were assigned for return to certain designated artillery LSTs and other infantry LSTs, and immediately start loading high priority supplies from the preloads for landing on order.

All Support Groups, the Reserve BLTs of the assault RCTs, and the Division Reserve (RCT 24) were boated in LCVPs and LCMs.

The Division Shore Party had its advance elements embarked in LVTs, all of its heavy and most of its light equipment on the four (4) LSMs assigned, and with the bulk of the personnel and the remainder of the light equipment embarked in boats with the various Support Groups.

All combatant vehicles of the Tank Battalion were embarked in LSMs. The companies attached to the assault RCTs were originally scheduled to land as a "timed" wave, the 7th, but the landing schedule was changed to allow this wave to be dispatched as an "on call" wave by the RCT Commanders. The tanks attached to the Division Reserve were to be prepared to land on Division order to reinforce those with the assault RCTs, or if not so employed they were to be landed "on call" by the Division Reserve Commander.

The Artillery Battalions were embarked in four (4) LSTs with their weapons, essential equipment, and about 2/3 of a Unit of Fire of ammunition preloaded in DUKWs. The fifth LST assigned to the artillery carried the bulk of the Regimental H&S Battery plus additional ammunition preloaded in DUKWs. Four (4) radio "jeeps" were carried preloaded in LVT(4)s. Landing was to be effected by battalions in a column of batteries (batteries in column) at ten (10) minute intervals. DUKWs were to be launched and units landed on Division order with the two (2) battalions assigned to direct support of the assault RCTs landing first, RCT 24

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SECTION III SHIP TO SHORE OPERATIONS (Cont'd).

on Blue One and 2/14 on Yellow One. The remaining battalions were to land on Yellow One on Division order. Battalion reconnaissance parties were to land with the rear elements of the assault BLTs to determine the exact positions in the pre-selected areas. Upon landing all DUKWs, except those fitted with "A" frames, were to return immediately to their parent LSTs to continue landing additional personnel and ammunition.

For details of landing, including special landing instruction and assignment of landing craft, see Annex KING to Division Operation Plan Number 49-44.

2. CONTROL PLAN

(a) General. In general, the control for the operation was carried out as outlined in Chapter 9, Transport Doctrine, Amphibious Force, Pacific. Control was to be effected by a series of Control Vessels carrying both Naval and Troop Control Officers to coordinate and control all movement to and from the beaches.

(b) Brief of Plan. The following craft and personnel were employed to effect control of the landing:

(1) Over-all control was centralized in a "Central Control Vessel". This vessel, a PC(E), carried the Senior Naval Control Officer; the VAC LANFOR tactical, logistical, LVT and Shore Party Officers. This party controlled the dispatching of the first five (5) scheduled assault waves of both Divisions. After the dispatch of these waves this vessel became a "free boat" and exercised such general supervisory control as was necessary.

(2) Each Division had a "Transron Control Vessel" for the coordination of the landing of the various elements of the Division. This vessel, a PC(S), exercised general over-all control of Yellow and Blue Beaches for this Division. It carried the Transron Control Officer (Naval - representative of Commander Transport Squadron 15) and the tactical, logistical, artillery, Shore Party, and LVT Officers representing this Division. Control of the first five (5) scheduled waves was funneled through this vessel and, by plan, passed direct control of all remaining waves directly to the "Beach Control Vessels" operating under it. This vessel, like the "Central Control Vessel" became a "free boat" after the dispatch of the first five (5) waves but in general maintained a position in the center of and seaward of the LD to provide a landmark for elements coming in to land. After the landing of the assault echelons, this vessel dispatched elements for landing to either Yellow or Blue Beach Controls, depending on surf and beach conditions.

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(3) Operating under the Transron Control were two (2) "Beach Control Vessels", one for Yellow and one for Blue Beaches. These vessels, PCs, were to maintain position on the center of their respective sections of the LD and controlled the actual dispatching of all scheduled and "on call" waves. They also controlled the actual dispatching of all other elements as directed by the Transron Control Vessel. This vessel carried the TransDiv Control Officer (Naval) and initially the RCT Commander and his staff. When the RCT Commander landed, he left logistical and LVT officers aboard to act as his representatives.

(4) The Control Plan for this landing was essentially the same as that used for the Marianas Operation with respect to craft employed with the following exceptions:

SCs, designated as "LD Marker Vessels", were employed to mark the division of the colored beaches on the LD. They maintained position on the "Beach Control Vessels" and, although they were without control personnel, were equipped with flags and communication equipment in order to take over control functions in event any control vessel became a casualty.

As in previous landings, LCP(L)s were employed to guide assault waves into the beach. However, in previous landings the initial wave guide was an LCC which, after guiding in the leading wave, took station about 300 yards offshore to serve as traffic control boat for control of the movement of craft to and from the beach as directed by "Beach Control Vessel". In this landing, LCP(L)s were used instead of LCCs for guiding the initial wave and as traffic control boats. The Division protested this change but were overruled by higher authority.

3. THE LANDING

(a) D-Day (19 February, 1945).

(1) The transports entered the Transport Area about 0630. The Division and RCT control personnel were located and dispatched to their respective control vessels. By 0730 all control vessels were in position and the LD had been established. By 0810 all control personnel were reported embarked in their respective control vessels. The Assistant Division Commander and party were embarked in PC(S)-1455 as a roving observer for the Division Commander. A member from the Underwater Demolition Teams, that had surveyed the island's beaches prior to D-Day, was aboard Transron, Yellow and Blue Beach Control Vessels to give the late information on the beaches. An interview with the representative

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TO SHORE OPERATIONS (Cont'd).

aboard the Transcon Control Vessel revealed no information not previously received aboard the USS BAYFIELD on D minus 1.

(2) The Division tactical air observer was on station at 0810. Radio reception aboard the Transcon Control Vessel, ranging from poor to unreadable, seriously compromised the value of the observers reports.

(3) The weather was favorable for the landing, the sky clear, visibility unlimited, except for the smoke and dust, resulting from NGF bombardment, carried by an 8 to 12 knot northerly wind obscuring the beaches. The sea was calm with slight swells of 2 to 3 feet, and, because of the wind direction, the surf conditions were ideal. During the NGF bombardment no enemy fire fell on the LD or in the Transport and LST Areas.

(4) The LSTs closed the LST Area in good order and immediately began launching LVTs. By 0807 all LSTs had launched their amphibious vehicles for the assault waves and at 0815 the first three waves were formed and waiting in position in rear of the LD. The remaining waves were forming up and it was now apparent that How-Hour could be met.

(5) During the pre-How-Hour air strike the smoke and dust cleared from the beaches and some enemy fire, of small caliber (probably anti-aircraft misses) fell in the vicinity of the LD but with no apparent effect.

(6) Preceded by LCS(L)s (the LCI(G)s were unable to participate in the assault due to heavy damage received in preliminary operations prior to D-Day), and on signal from Central Control, the first assault wave crossed the LD for all beaches at 0830 on time. The next four assault waves followed on schedule and were dispatched as planned by Central Control. Beach Control Vessels then took over and the dispatching progressed without incident through the scheduled waves to and including 6 Able. Only a small amount of gunfire was observed in the boat lanes during the approach to the beaches and no serious damage or casualties were reported.

(7) The first and second waves were approximately one (1) minute late in landing on all beaches. At this time only light small arms fire and moderate mortar fire fell on the beach area. The LVT(A)s were able to cross the first terrace by access routes cut in the ledges by NGF and bombing and take positions to cover the landing of the personnel wave. The right flank platoon on Beach Blue One operated as planned. The personnel LVTs of the initial waves were rapidly unloaded and retracted and this resulted in few casualties to tractor personnel and equipment.

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SECTION III SHIP TO SHORE OPERATIONS (Cont'd).

The anticipated flooding of the beach areas did not materialize. Enemy fire was relatively light until the lifting of the NGF. This lifting approximately coincided with the landing of the BLT Reserve elements and as succeeding waves came into the beach, the effect of large caliber mortar and artillery fire began to exact a heavy toll in personnel and equipment.

(8) Having discharged their LVT(A)s, LSTs 930 and 931 (Hospital Evacuation LSTs) launched one (1) pontoon barge each and took station 300 yards in rear of their respective Beach Control Vessels. They were on station, prepared to receive casualties by 0940.

(9) As a result of heavy mortar fire on and adjacent to the beaches it was necessary to delay the "call" waves of the assault battalions somewhat to permit clearing the beaches by the assault troops and tanks. Progress up the steep slope from the waters edge to the edge of the airfield was slow. During this time casualties to reconnaissance, liaison, advance Beach and Shore Parties were high. Boat crews and boats were hard hit. Casualties to LVTs and personnel were surprisingly light. The remaining waves of the assault BLTs were sent in as beaching conditions permitted and by 1200 all elements, except two (2) LCMs of BLT 2/23, (carrying 37mm guns) had been dispatched to the beaches.

(10) The preliminary reconnaissance by tank liaison personnel indicated the feasibility of employing tanks in support of the assault waves and this information was passed back to the RCT Commanders. RCT 23 dispatched its tank LSMs to Yellow Beaches at 0930 and RCT 25 dispatched theirs at 1005 to land on Blue One. The LSMs hit Yellow Beaches about 0940 and were immediately taken under heavy enemy mortar and artillery fire. Those landing on Blue One hit the beach about 1020 and came under the same type of intense enemy fire. Four (4) of the six (6) LSMs were hit, two (2) seriously. All succeeded in discharging their tanks except LSM 216. This ship initially beached on Yellow Two and one (1) tank was discharged, but it bogged down at the mouth of the ramp. After a half hour's efforts failed to move the tank, the LSM retracted and beached again about 1100 on Yellow One but again beach conditions prevented the landing of any tanks. By this time it had been hit repeatedly and again withdrew and proceeded to the Evacuation LST 930 to discharge its casualties. The tanks aboard had not been seriously damaged. At 1245 it again beached on another portion of Yellow One and succeeded in discharging its tanks by 1300. The Division would like to comment on the high degree of courage and tenacity shown by these ships in beaching and accomplishing the landing of this vital equipment in the face of the heaviest enemy mortar and artillery

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SECTION III - SHIP TO SHORE OPERATIONS (Cont'd).

fire yet seen in any operation. On the request of assault RCT Commanders, Division authorized the landing of the tanks attached to the Division Reserve to reinforce the Tank Companies attached to the assault RCTs. The first elements of this unit were landed from an LSM on Yellow One at 1155 and consisted of two (2) tank retrievers and an armored dozer. At 1255 another LSM landed a Tank Platoon on Blue One for attachment to the Tank Company operating with RCT 25 and this was followed by two (2) other platoons which also landed on Blue One and were completely ashore by 1330. The remaining Tank Platoon was landed on Yellow One about 1400 and was attached to the Company operating with RCT 23. These LSMs also were subject to enemy artillery and mortar fire but it was neither as accurate or as intense and no serious damage resulted.

(11) The reserve BLTs of the assault RCTs commenced landing at 1233 when the first wave of BLT 2/25 was dispatched to Blue One. The last elements of this unit, except some vehicles in LCMs completed landing by 1327. The first wave of BLT 3/23, RCT 23 Reserve, crossed the LD at 1313 and the last elements of this unit were ashore by 1358.

(12) In addition to the destroyed enemy craft that blocked portions of the Division's landing beaches, partial reports received by 1230 indicated that there were at least five (5) LVTs, one (1) medium tank and an undisclosed number of LCVP-LCMs blocking the beaches. Moderate enemy mortar and artillery fire continued on the Division beaches and water areas adjacent thereto. Beached boats with no crews, because of casualties resulting from enemy fire, had broached, filled with sand and water, and, because of the excess weight, could not be retracted by the LCP(R) salvage boats of the Beachmasters. This condition became progressively worse and by late afternoon the beaches were so cluttered with wrecked craft that strict traffic control was necessary to effect any unloading. This condition seriously restricted the landing of the Support Groups of the assault RCTs.

(13) Advance elements of the Shore and Beach Party landed with the reserve units of the assault BLTs on all beaches. The four (4) LSMs carrying heavy Shore Party equipment were on station in rear of the LD by 1000 ready to land on order. Due to the congested condition on the beaches, restricted landing areas for LSMs, and the necessity of favoring the landing of LSMs with tanks, the landing of Shore Party equipment embarked in LSMs was considerably delayed. This resulted in the bulk of the Shore and Beach Party, landing with the BLT Support Group (boated in LCVPs and some equipment boated in LCMs), having little essential equipment to work with on the beaches. Furthermore, some of these units landed on the wrong beaches, the bulk of the Shore Party for

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SHORE OPERATIONS (Cont'd)

Yellow One landing on the north half of Red Two. Also, casualties to Shore and Beach Parties were extremely heavy, particularly in officers, and this further added to the difficulty of establishing control on the beaches. It was not until 1400 that CPs and communication facilities were firmly established on all beaches. By 1730 Regimental Shore Party CPs were established and sufficient equipment had been landed from Shore Party LSMs to start effective clearance of the beach areas and the construction of access roads.

(14) Beginning about 1300 various elements of the BLT and RCT Support Groups of the assault RCTs were landed as the situation ashore and the beach conditions permitted. Practically all the BLT Support Groups were landed except some vehicular elements which could obviously not be moved off the beach. A larger proportion of the RCT Support Groups was not landed but the bulk of the more essential elements were ashore by darkness. Both RCTs had advance CPs established ashore about 1600 and both CPs completely established by 1700.

(15) The artillery LSTs were in position and ready to launch DUKWs, on order, by How-Hour. At this time, Battalion Reconnaissance Parties embarked in LCVPs and reported to the Division Artillery Officer who was with the Control Party on the Transon Control Vessel. By 1200 information from the assault RCT Commanders indicated that the front lines were still about 200 yards short of Airfield #1 and that in general, conditions ashore were not favorable for the landing of artillery. It was decided however, to land the Reconnaissance Parties and the Party from 1/14 landed on Blue One about 1240. The Party from 2/14 landed on Yellow One about 1340 and this was followed by 3/14 and 4/14, the latter landing about 1430. Division ordered the landing of the two direct support battalions at 1400. These were launched without incident, proceeded to their respective Beach Control Vessels and commenced landing about 1500. 1/14 (75mm Pk How) moved into position off Beach Blue One without too much trouble and was emplaced, registered, and firing direct support missions at 1740. 2/14 (105mm How), landing on Beach Yellow One had an extremely difficult time getting into position. Each piece had to be unloaded from the DUKW just above the water line and then dragged across the beach and into position by an angledozer. This Battalion was in position, registered, and firing direct support missions by 2130. The landing and emplacement of these units was accomplished under heavy artillery and mortar fire and was an extremely difficult operation. Both units were emplaced close to the beach areas, which facilitated ammunition supply but further complicated the already congested condition of this area. 3/14 was launched about 1530 but on the receipt of further information from shore was ordered to re-embark as was the Regimental Reconnaissance Party which had started ashore about 1610.

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No attempt was made to land 4/14 on D-Day. DUKWs which landed the two direct support battalions, returned to their parent LSTs and commenced loading additional personnel and ammunition.

(16) Division ordered two BLTs of the Division Reserve (RCT 24) boated at 1404. BLT 1/24 was ordered to report to Blue Beach Control Vessel and BLT 2/24 to Yellow Beach Control Vessel. At 1500 Division ordered the landing of these two BLTs and, effective upon landing, 1/24 was attached to RCT 25 and 2/24 attached to RCT 23. However, the Division specified that these BLTs were not to be committed without Division authority. Beginning at 1615 the first wave of 1/24 crossed the LD for Beach Blue One and was followed at five (5) minute intervals by the remaining waves and all were ashore by 1700. The first wave of 2/24 was dispatched for landing on Yellow Two at 1620 and was followed by its remaining waves at five (5) minute intervals and this unit was completely ashore by 1650. At 1509 Division ordered the landing of the remainder of the Division Reserve on Blue One. By 1800 BLT 3/24 and the Regimental Support Group, including the Regimental Headquarters, was in position behind the LD off Blue One. The first wave of 3/24 crossed the LD for landing at 1820. The remaining waves followed at five minute intervals and these in turn were followed by the waves of the Support Group. Part of the Regimental Weapons Company and the attached sections of the War Dog Platoon were not landed. By 2030 RCT 24 (less 1/24, 2/24, and the elements noted above) was completely ashore, in Division Reserve, in an assembly area in TA 166 F.

(17) By darkness on D-Day the situation in general was that the Division had three (3) RCTs (less some Support Group elements), two (2) Battalions of artillery, and a fair amount of heavy Shore Party equipment ashore. It held the line which included the eastern edge of Airfield #1 and was of sufficient depth inland from Blue Beaches to guarantee the successful holding of the beachhead. It had firm contact with the 5th Marine Division on the left and sufficient supplies of water, ammunition and rations were ashore to support the continuation of operations in the morning. Although surf and sea conditions had been favorable for the landing of all types of landing craft, beach conditions and the continuous mortar and artillery fire had seriously hampered the actual landing of troops and equipment. This fire had disabled heavy equipment, LVTs, and landing craft on the beach and in the surf to such an extent that only by prompt salvage could the beaches be prepared for the next days operation. It was apparent at this time that the equipment available to the Beachmasters was not sufficiently heavy to either salvage or junk the wrecked craft on the Division beaches. Night retirement of Transports and LSTs was conducted in accordance with plans. Certain APAs, including ~~CONFIDENTIAL~~ this unit in

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designated LSTs and all Control Craft remained in the area. The LSMs also remained in the area and certain of these commenced unloading of priority supplies and equipment from the APAs which remained in the area.

(b) D plus 1-Day (20 February, 1945).

(1) During the hours of darkness of D/D plus 1 every effort was made to improve the condition of the beaches, both at the waters edge and inland. Intermittent enemy harassing fire fell in the beach areas all night and interfered with this activity but some progress was made in clearing the beaches by using LVTs, a certain number of which had been retained ashore, to carry supplies and equipment forward to the front line units. No appreciable progress was made in clearing the beaches of wrecked landing craft except for the landing of a few LVTs with emergency supplies, particularly 81mm mortar ammunition, no unloading was accomplished during the night. Information was received that bad weather could be expected in the morning with the wind shifting to the south and east.

(2) At 0800, Transron Control was informed that RCT 21 (3rd Mar Div - VAC LANFCR Reserve) had been ordered to boat and report to it for landing. This RCT was to be landed on Division beaches as directed by Corps order. Since the exact landing area of this unit was not known, it was decided to rendezvous one (1) BLT in the vicinity of Yellow Beach Control Vessel, a second in the vicinity of Blue Beach Control Vessel, and a third BLT plus the Regimental Headquarters Group in the vicinity of the Transron Control Vessel. This was done, in order, as the boat groups arrived. The Regimental Commander with some of his staff and the Naval Officer in charge of the Boat Groups, were brought aboard the Transron Control Vessel. Effective control was maintained in this manner and the RCT could have been landed on any beach or beaches as desired. However, as the situation developed ashore during the day, it became apparent that they could not be utilized successfully ashore and were re-embarked on their parent APAs late in the afternoon.

(3) The expected bad weather developed, and by mid-morning the landing of LCVPs and LCMs became extremely hazardous due to surf conditions on beaches and more of these craft were wrecked. Progress in clearing the beaches of wrecked craft was poor. Higher Naval control finally managed to get some empty LSMs close-in to assist in clearing wrecked craft from the beach and landed UDT personnel to begin blasting wrecks where they could not be towed off. By noon it was decided to confine the landing of additional troops, supplies and equipment to LSMs though some Beach Controls managed to land a

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lee of the larger vessels while they were beached. During the day additional Support Group elements including additional Shore Party equipment were gotten ashore and by late afternoon some progress had been made in clearing the areas inland of the beaches and some egress roads had been started.

(4) The remainder of the Division artillery was landed. 3/14 commenced landing on Yellow One at 1500 and was in position, registered in firing missions by 1730. Considerable difficulty was experienced in landing 4/14. The LST in which it was embarked could not be found for several hours and it was finally located in an outer area endeavoring to recover an LCT launching cradle. It was finally brought in and commenced launching DUKWs about 1600. By this time sea conditions were very rough and, while the launched DUKWs were being assembled for movement to the LD for landing, seven (7) of them swamped and sank, including five (5) carrying artillery pieces. The remainder of 4/14 commenced landing on Yellow One at 1735 and was in position ready to fire by midnight. The Regimental Command Group landed on Yellow One at 1705 and the advance CP was established ashore at 1715.

(5) Throughout the day, other than LSMs, all supplies were landed in LVTs and DUKWs which operated continuously in unloading the pre-loads on the LSTs. The beaches and adjacent water areas continued to receive intermittent enemy artillery and mortar fire which varied in intensity from moderate to heavy. Casualties remained heavy and the facilities of the Evacuation LSTs were stretched to the limit. The rough seas seriously hampered the transfer of casualties from LVTs and DUKWs, which were evacuating them from the beaches, to the pontoon barge rigged alongside each LST. The Division Shore Party Group landed about 1500 on Blue One and the Division Shore Party CP opened just off the left flank of this beach at 1530.

(6) By darkness the situation ashore had cleared considerably and the Division in conjunction with the 5th Marine Division on the left held all of Airfield #1 and some gains had been made on the right. Although the supply of some items, principally mortar ammunition became critical, sufficient supplies had been built up ashore to support all elements during the night and assure the continuation of the attack in the morning. Night retirement of ships with the same exception as for the night of D-Day was again executed.

(c) D plus 2-Day (21 February, 1945).

(1) During the hours of darkness efforts continued in the clearance of the areas inland from the beaches.

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SECTION III - SHIP TO SHORE OPERATIONS (Cont'd).

and the few "Weasels" that were available continued to be the only effective means of moving supplies inland. Some progress had been made in establishing beach dumps. Intermittent enemy fire on the beaches continued during the night but had lessened in intensity.

(2) RCT 21 was again boated and reported to Transron Control for landing under the same conditions as prevailed on D plus 1. The Regimental Control Party reported aboard the Transron Control Vessel about 1030. About 1100 orders were received to land this unit on Yellow Beaches. An advance Regimental CP was landed on Yellow One at 1200 and the CP established at 1225 in the vicinity of TA 148 D. The leading BLT commenced landing on Yellow One and Two at 1335 and was followed by the remaining BLTs at half hour intervals. By 1720 all elements were ashore and in an assembly area in TA 148 D, H, I. At 1800 RCT 21 was attached to the Division by VAC order.

(3) The landing of the remaining elements of the RCT Support Groups continued throughout the day as beach conditions permitted. Weather conditions remained bad with rough seas and high surf. Enemy fire remained fairly heavy on all beaches. LCS(L)s were employed during the day in an effort to clear wrecked craft from beaches and though some progress was made the effort was only partially successful. Additional Beach Parties were landed and conditions inland from the beaches began to improve. A few LSTs were beached and succeeded unloading badly needed supplies. The landing of other supplies was confined to the use of LSMs, LVTs and DUKWs. In the case of LVTs and DUKWs, refueling began to become a major problem as the supplies on LSTs became exhausted. Priority was given to landing gasoline in LSMs for establishment of dumps ashore. The ADC came aboard the Transron Control Vessel about 1200 and was landed on Blue One at 1255. He established himself initially at the CP of our CT 24, the Division Reserve. It had been planned to land the advance Division CP about 1400 but an LSM could not be obtained to land the necessary communication and other equipment. Evacuation of casualties through the Evacuation LSTs continued adequate but the difficulties increased as the continual battering of the pontoon transfer barge by landing craft resulted in damage to some of the pontoon sections and they filled with water. This caused a bad list and for a time it was thought that one barge might sink. Additional barges were launched but proved unmanageable in the high winds and rough seas. Several of these finally drifted ashore and further blocked the beach area. By darkness the Division had achieved further advances, particularly on the right, and the supply situation ashore remained essentially the same. Additional LSTs and APAs were kept in the area over night to facilitate unloading of

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SECTION III - BEACH TO SHORE OPERATIONS (Cont'd).

essential supplies. Remaining ships executed night retirement as usual.

(d) D plus 3-Day to D plus 4-Day (22 - 23 February, 1945).

(1) During this period the remaining elements of the Division, except some Motor Transport and Medical, were landed. Weather conditions remained unfavorable and even LVTs and DUKWs had difficulty. Intermittent enemy artillery and mortar fire continued on all beach areas. Unloading was confined principally to the use of LSMs, LCTs and a few remaining operational LCMs that could be beached in the lee of the larger craft. An increasing number of LSTs were beached and unloading was greatly increased but remained "selective" from APAs and AKAs. Beach conditions began to improve rapidly as additional Shore Party equipment and personnel was landed.

(2) The advance Division CP was landed on Yellow One in an LSM at 1500 D plus 3 and was established and opened at 1600 in TA 164 Y. The Commanding General with the bulk of the Division CP landed on Yellow Two by LSM about 1100 on D plus 4. The Division CP closed on the USS BAYFIELD (APA-33) at 0930 and opened ashore at the advance CP location at the same time. The Division Chief of Staff with a small party remained on the BAYFIELD to act as liaison with the Commander of Transron 15 and he and his party landed early in the morning of D plus 7. All elements of the Division were ashore by D plus 7 and general unloading started at that time. With the landing of the Commanding General, the Tactical Control Officer on the Transron Control Vessel also landed but Logistical and LVT Control Officers remained aboard until unloading was completed.

(3) For complete details of the landing of the various elements of the Division during this period, see Section IV and the various reports of the organizations concerned, which are appended as Annexes to this Report.

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SECTION III - SHIP TO SHORE OPERATIONS (Cont'd).

4. COMMENTS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

(a) The number of LSTs made available to the Division for this operation was insufficient, particularly in view of the restrictions placed on the "special" types (Evacuation Control and Radar). It is considered that a minimum of eight (8) LSTs should be assigned to each assault RCT as anything less than this number will not permit adequate tactical loading and landing of two assault BLTs. The presence of one LST, specially fitted for casualty evacuation control, in such a group would not be a serious interference as their use is deemed essential. However the present practice of embarking numbers of Naval personnel, both officers and men, who are concerned with the launching and operation of pontoon barges and causeways and of LCTs should be stopped. These personnel should be carried to the target in other shipping and transferred to the LSTs after the assault troops have been landed. If any "radar" LSTs are required in future operations they should be in addition to those assigned assault echelons.

(b) Although cooperation and coordination by the LST Flotilla Commander was excellent throughout the operation and the initial operation of the LSTs was highly satisfactory, considerable difficulty was encountered with Group Commanders and, in particular, with individual Ship Commanders in the days following the initial landing. This trouble had to do principally with effecting movement as desired, and required by the difficult unloading conditions on the beaches, and with the old complaint of failure of individual LSTs to retrieve LVTs for necessary fueling and servicing. In connection with moving LSTs, a great deal of the difficulty encountered was caused by the refusal of Commander Transron 15 to delegate the necessary authority to his Transron Control Officer and his insistence on the personal issuance of such orders. In connection with the failure of certain LSTs to retrieve LVTs, particularly at night and under bad sea conditions, the Captains of these ships should have had impressed upon them the responsibility they bear in accomplishing this task when engaged in operation with these vehicles. A number of LVTs were lost during this operation due to the refusal of LSTs to take them aboard.

(c) As with the LSTs, the initial operations of the LSMs were very satisfactory but the same difficulty in obtaining their movement, loading, and beaching prevailed and to even a greater extent than with the LSTs. Some of this difficulty can be attributed to the fact that uncertainty of loading plans and the existence

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SECTION III - SHIP TO SHORE OPERATIONS (Cont'd).

until the initial Rehearsal in MAALAEA BAY had been completed. Further, these ships sailed in early echelons with the tractor groups and this prevented Division officers holding conferences with the Flotilla and Group Commanders in order to coordinate and explain the plans of the Division for their use. However, as in the case of the LSTs, the major factor with respect to these ships was the refusal of Commander Transron 15 to delegate authority for their control to the Transron Control Officers.

(1) The landing control for this operation, although it accomplished the task, was neither as satisfactory nor as efficient as for the Marianas Operation. In addition to the remarks noted in paragraphs (b) and (c) above, there was a tendency to centralize control in the higher echelons. There is no question that the dispatch of the initial assault waves should be a direct function of "Central Control". However, it is believed that this control should not extend beyond the first three waves and that thereafter the dispatching of all waves and all traffic to and from the beach should be a direct function of the "Beach Control" (TransDiv Control Officer). The function of the "Transron Control", and of the "Central Control" after the dispatch of the initial waves, should be supervisory in character. This system was employed with great success in the SAIPAN and TINIAN Operations. Another change which seriously hampered control of landing operations was the substitution of LCP(L)s for LCCs as traffic control boats off the individual beaches. These craft had inadequate communication and were too small. To the coxswains and drivers of boats and landing vehicles they looked just like another salvage boat cruising around off the beaches. At no time were these craft able to exercise effective control over traffic to and from the beaches. LCP(L)s are excellent as tenders for all Control Ships and their use should be confined to this duty.

(1) Control communications, with the exception of the LCP(L)s used as traffic control boats, were excellent. The greatest improvement was noted in the communication channels set up for control of LVTs which worked better than any previous operation.

(e) Refueling of LVTs developed into a major problem during the first four days of the operation. During the critical unloading period, from D plus 1 to D plus 4, considerable delay resulted from inadequate arrangements for refueling. Although the Division had recommended that each LST carry from 80 to 100 drums of gasoline this was cut to twenty (20) drums by the Navy. This small

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SHIP TO SHORE OPERATIONS (Cont'd).

quantity of fuel was quickly consumed and by D plus 1 little if any remained on the LSTs. The use of LCVPs and LCMs as Bowser boats became difficult during the bad weather condition which developed beginning with D plus 1. The plan to use pontoon barges, anchored close in shore, as refueling points failed as these craft proved unmanageable in the high wind and rough sea. The problem was partially solved by transferring large quantities of gasoline from APAs and AKAs to LSTs. This was a slow expedient and could have been obviated by the initial loading of adequate fuel on LSTs at the Staging Area. The problem was not finally solved until, by the use of LSMs, adequate dumps were established ashore.

(f) The use of specially fitted LSTs for Casualty Evacuation Control was highly satisfactory and a great improvement over the methods used in previous operations. From a control standpoint, the only difficulty encountered was with the pontoon barges, which were secured alongside the LST and were used for casualty transfer stations. The continual pounding of these barges in the rough sea by LVTs, DUKWs and landing craft, punctured some of the pontoon sections and caused them to fill with water. This caused the barges to list and made the transfer of casualties very difficult. It is recommended that these barges be well protected by fenders in the future. Some difficulty was experienced in keeping these LSTs on proper station but on the whole their performance was excellent.

(g) One of the most serious, and largest problems encountered during the landing operation was the clearance of wrecked landing craft and equipment from the beaches. The use of LCP(R)s to salvage wrecked craft from beaches proved wholly inadequate and in future operations where similar conditions are anticipated, a heavier type craft, specially fitted and manned by trained personnel will be necessary. Also Beach and Shore Parties will have to receive more training in the clearance of wrecked landing vehicles and equipment from beach areas.

(h) The initial operations of Beach and Shore Parties were badly disorganized. The main contributing factors to this condition were as follows:

Practically all of the Beach Parties and the great majority of the Shore Party were composed of "green" personnel and lacked training and experience. In the case of the Shore Parties, the bulk was composed of Naval Construction Battalion and Marine Replacement Draft personnel who had no previous experience and had been attached to the Division a very short time prior to the operation.

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SHORE OPERATIONS (Cont'd).

Heavy casualties, particularly on D and D plus 1, which in some cases amounted to 80% of the officers and 50% of the men. This resulted in a loss of control and seriously retarded the initial organization of the beaches.

The inability, due to the extremely difficult landing conditions, of getting sufficient heavy Shore Party equipment ashore early.

Conditions began to improve on D plus 2 with the landing of Replacement Beach Parties and additional Shore Party personnel and equipment. Thereafter progress in beach organization was rapid and by the afternoon of D plus 3 was well under control. By D plus 5 the Division beaches were in an excellent state of organization and continued so, though landing conditions remained bad and the beach areas remained under intermittent enemy fire for many days.

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