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THE FIFTH AIR FORCE IN THE HUON PENINSULA CAMPAIGN

OCTOBER 1943 TO FEBRUARY 1944

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THE FIFTH AIR FORCE IN THE HUON PENINSULA CAMPAIGN

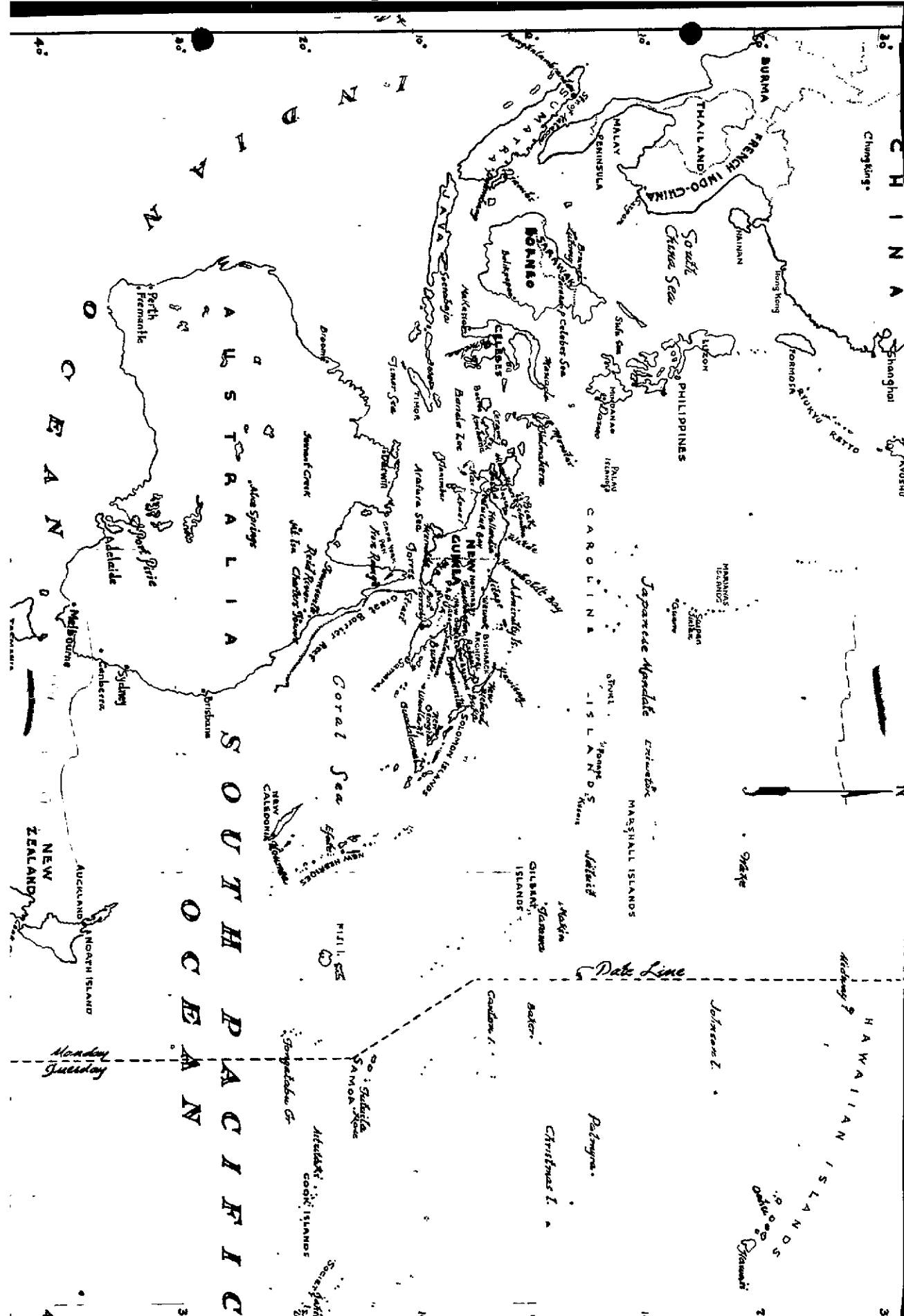
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FOREWORD

This monograph is the fourth in a series on air action in the Southwest Pacific written by Maj. Richard L. Watson, Jr. The history immediately preceding this one is titled The Fifth Air Force in the Huon Peninsula Campaign, January to October 1943 (AAFRH-13), and the two earlier ones were Army Air Action in the Philippines and Netherlands East Indies, 1941-1942 (AAFRH-11), with accompanying summary of operation, and AAF Historical Studies: No. 17, Air Action in the Papuan Campaign, 21 July 1942 to 23 January 1943. Another early study, AAF Historical Studies: No. 9, The AAF in Australia to the Summer of 1942, also furnishes background, while current operations are narrated in AAF Historical Studies: No. 43, The Fifth Air Force in the Conquest of the Bismarck Archipelago, November 1943 to March 1944.

The Huon Peninsula, on the northeastern coast of New Guinea, is a cape directly across the strait from the southwest end of New Britain. Although by October 1943 the Allies had captured Finschhafen and had outflanked enemy positions in the Madang area, at either extremity of the peninsula, it was still necessary to expel the Japanese from strong positions along the coast, particularly at Saidor, in order to implement the northward drive back through the Philippines. In the present study, the over-all plans are outlined, the problems of service and supply are described, and the air offensives against Rabaul and in aid to the landings on New Britain and at Saidor are recounted.

Like other Air Historical Office studies, this history is subject to revision, and additional information or suggested corrections will be welcomed.

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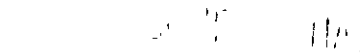

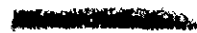
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The Fifth Air Force in the Huon Peninsula Campaign
October 1943 to February 1944

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Chapter I

THE SOUTHERN PACIFIC, OCTOBER 1943

The capture of Finschhafen assured our complete control of the Huon Gulf. A simultaneous air and ground movement of 200 miles from Port Moresby up the Markham Valley through the center of inland New Guinea gives us control of the entire New Guinea Peninsula. It has outflanked and contained all enemy centers between Finschhafen and Madang and has rendered practically useless his numerous positions and installations along the coast. . . . In his official communique of 7 October 1943, General MacArthur thus described the strategy which had culminated in the capture of Finschhafen and the occupation of the lower Finsch and upper Ferau valleys. These had been operations well conceived and in their execution efficiently executed. With their successful completion, the Allied surface commander could with justification claim the strategic control of the Huon Peninsula. But the outflanked Japanese troops, fanatic and well armed, still held strong positions on the peninsula in typically difficult New Guinea terrain; other enemy forces in the vicinity posed an ever-present threat to the Allied bases in the Southwest and Northeast New Guinea; and Japanese activity in constructing an installation from Madang west along the coast indicated a determination to hold what remained to them.

Not until the Allied capture of Sio, on the north coast of the Huon Peninsula, four months after Finschhafen had fallen, could the Huon Peninsula campaign actually be considered at an end. During this period, from October 1943 to February 1944, Australian infantry units drove the Japanese out of foxholes and dugouts from Sattelberg, to Sio. Other Australians continued

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the drive through the Iaru valley and by February 1944 were in a position to launch an assault against Ladang. By that time, too, American amphibious forces had secured new footholds with landings on New Britain at Arawe on 15 December 1943 and on Cape Gloucester 11 days later, and at Saidor in New Guinea on 2 January 1944.*

In this campaign, a climax to the second year's operations in the Southwest Pacific, Allied air units played a decisive role. In order to destroy the enemy air force and to disrupt his communications, all types of bombers preyed upon Japanese shipping and carried out attacks against important enemy bases including the heaviest Bakuul raid of the war. In direct cooperation with the ground troops, bombing planes hit centers of supply in the forward areas, strafed tracks and other lines of communication, and wiped out strong-points holding up the Allied advance. Fighters for the most part flew defensive missions such as escort for bombers and transport planes, patrol of the forward areas, and routine defense of Allied bases, but frequently took the offensive themselves in low-level attacks. Troop carrier units continued to provide an insurance against isolation of ground troops by "biscuit bombing" advanced Allied outposts, transporting men and supplies from one Allied base to another, and evacuating the sick and wounded to rear areas. These and other operations of the air force, including sea and land rescue flights, long-range reconnaissance and photo missions, antisubmarine patrol, ship-convoy escort, and courier missions, made the role of the Allied air forces ever a vital one.

* For details on the Cape Gloucester and Arawe operations see AF Historical Studies: No. 43, The Fifth Air Force in the Campaign of the Biscuits Archipelago, November 1943 to March 1944.

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The variety of missions to be performed served to emphasize the tremendous task still faced by General MacArthur's forces in October 1942. Previous operations had eliminated the Japanese from no more than a tiny sector of the vast Southwest Pacific theater. The Papuan Peninsula had been cleared, and a handful of enemy supply points, Dobo, Lae, Salamaua, Milnehafen, and Milapit, had been captured. However, these did not include a single major air or sea base. The outer defenses of the new Japanese empire had not been breached at a single point. By utilizing interior defense lines, the enemy could bring air reinforcements to threatened areas by at least three different routes, from the Burma-Myanmar area through the Netherlands East Indies, from the Philippines via the Palauans, and from the Carolines directly south.

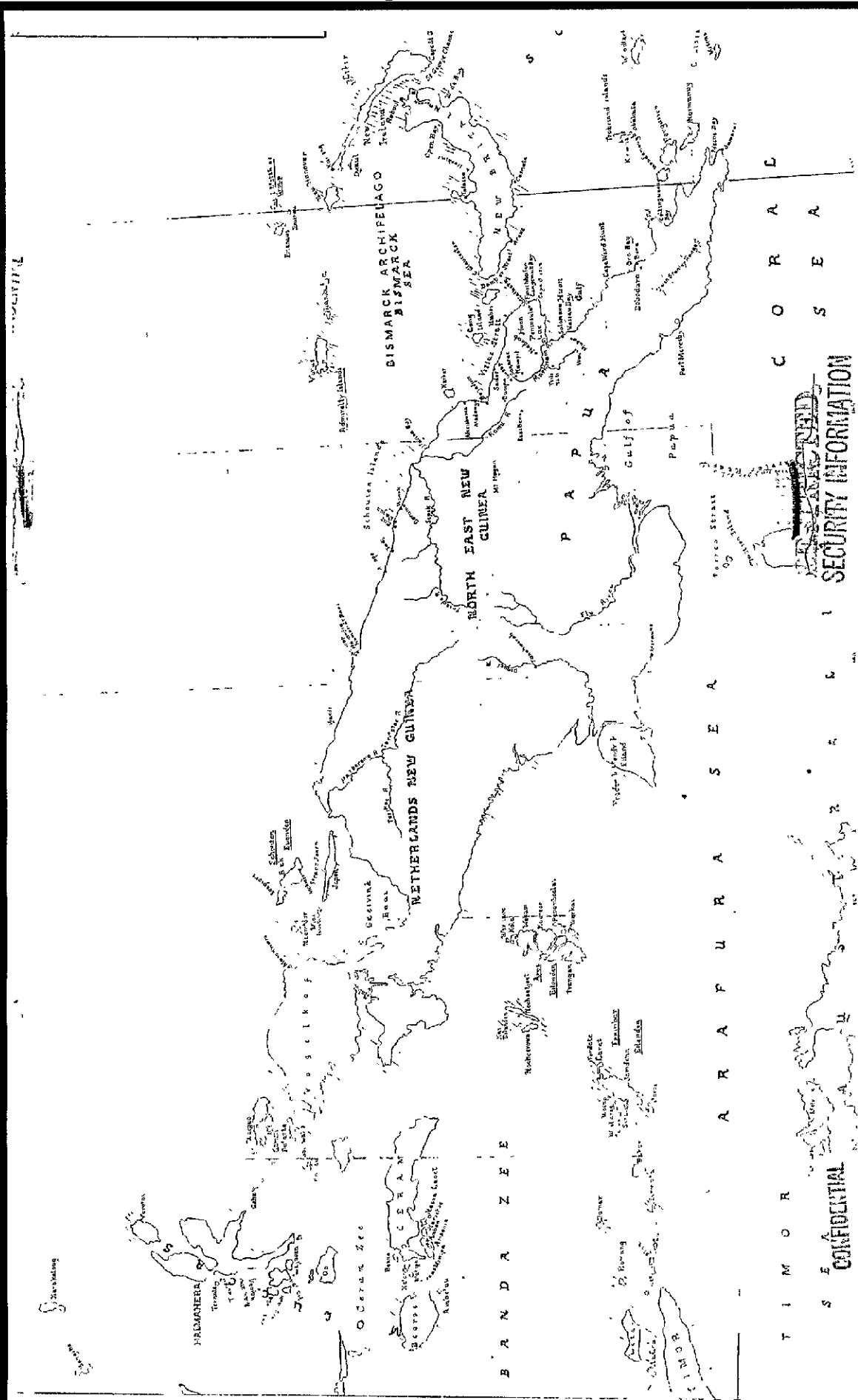
Tabaul in New Britain remains the greatest enemy bastion in the Southwest Pacific. Strategically located between the Solomons and New Guinea, it provided bases from which its aircraft could fly with equal facility to those two battle areas. Supplies were usually transported to Tabaul in cargo vessels which came into Simpson Harbor under naval convoy. Thereafter, they could be either transhipped to the Solomons or transferred to submarines or barges and sent to New Guinea. The Allied advance along the New Guinea coast and continual air attacks on the cargo traffic interfered with the enemy line to New Guinea, but they did not appreciably reduce the flow of shipping into Tabaul. Aerial photographs taken of the anchorage on 1 October, for example, showed 21 transport or auxiliaries and some 25 merchant vessels estimated at a total of 137,000 tons.

The Japanese apparently considered Tabaul predominantly a naval base,* as is demonstrated by the fact that the air units at Tabaul are almost

*It was a sphere of naval control but served as an advance supply and staging base for both Army and Navy operations and as the defensive strong-point essential for continued protection ~~of the area~~

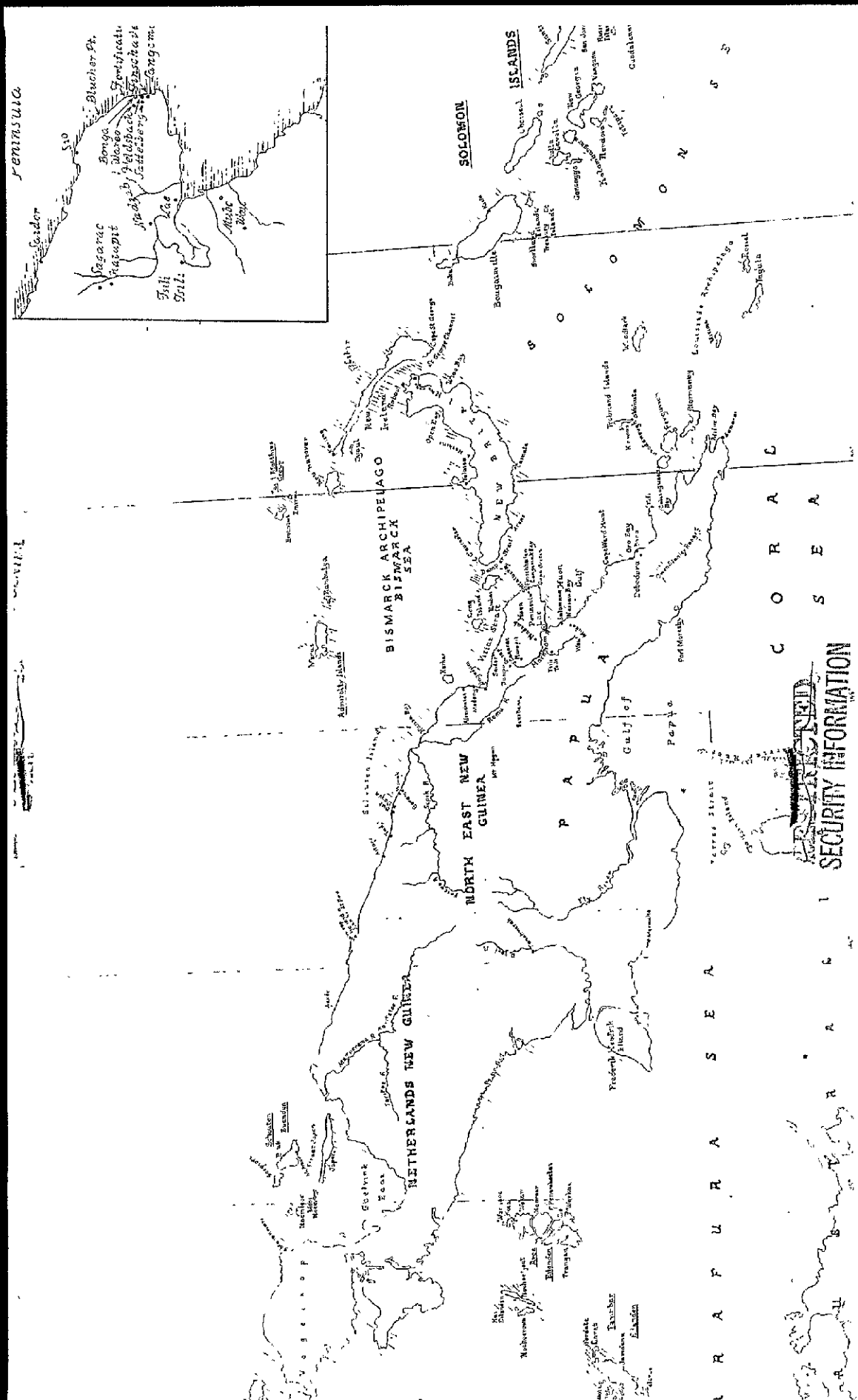
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entirely drawn from the Japanese Naval Air Service. Nevertheless air facilities were probably as extensive as those for shipping. By October there were at least five airdromes in the area. In addition to the much-used trio of Lakunai, Munakanau, and Iaporo, Tobera was already being fighters and was being rapidly built up with nearly 50 revetments, while construction at Aenavat was proceeding at a leisurely pace. The official estimate of 1 October showed 116 fighters, 151 bombers, and a miscellaneous assortment of some 30 other planes based on the five airdromes.

In addition to the airdromes at Rabaul, a number of other fields scattered throughout the Bismarck Archipelago were used for dispersal. There were several small strips on New Britain itself such as those at Gusrata and Cape Gloucester; on New Ireland, Kavieng had a large airdrome which from time to time had been extensively improved; and in the Admiralties aerial reconnaissance of Los Angeles on 23 September revealed a new airdrome, with a 7,000-foot runway and 12 bomber revetments, under construction at the north end of Pomote Plantation.

The Japanese could reinforce the Bismarck Archipelago by sending aircraft along a chain of bases which linked New Britain and the colonies to the Philippine Islands. One of these was an airbase where reconnaissance B-24's discovered, in the middle of October, that at least four strips had been constructed. Palrahera, 500 miles from Cebu, was less than half that distance from Netherlands New Guinea where Japanese bases had been discovered by Allied Intelligence at Jeffrey and Lakde in addition to the rather extensive developments at Hollandia, some 600 miles from the nearest Allied base.

During the fall of 1943, Allied planes rarely reached Netherlands New Guinea, the Allied command being more concerned with nearer Japanese installations.

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Chief among these was ~~evak~~, within 350 miles of Allied bases in the New Britain and New Guinea valleys and next to Rabaul the greatest Japanese stronghold in the Southwest Pacific. Within a coastal area some 40 miles long were the four large airbases of Tagul, But, Newak, and Koran. These, together with harbor installations and supply dumps in and near the town, had already been objectives for the Fifth Air Force's heaviest air attacks of the war. Other points farther to the southeast served both to cushion Newak against a possible Allied land drive and to provide supply centers for Japanese garrisons and patrols which had fanned out through the area. One hundred miles southeast of ~~evak~~ was the village of Lubia on Hance Bay where supplies could be brought directly by cargo vessels or, as was normal in the days of increasingly powerful air attacks, by barges from ~~evak~~. Between Lubia and Madang ran a network of tracks and good motor roads, some of which had been in use for many months. In the middle of October, a road from Cape Gouardon to Palae, suitable for heavy motor vehicles, was being surfaced with crushed coral. Well-built bridges were being thrown across the streams; and other motor roads were being constructed from Cape Croisilles into Alexishafen. There were several airbases in this area, and those near Alexishafen were soon to be of considerable importance. On 1 October, however, Allied Intelligence located enemy aircraft only at ~~evak~~ where 53 bombers and 91 fighters were discovered.⁵

Opposing the Japanese, firmly established in bases from Rabaul in New Britain to Morabaja in Java, was the same Allied team which had already completed a number of successful, although relatively minor, offensives against the Japanese. Since August 1942 Lt. Gen. George C. Kenney had been

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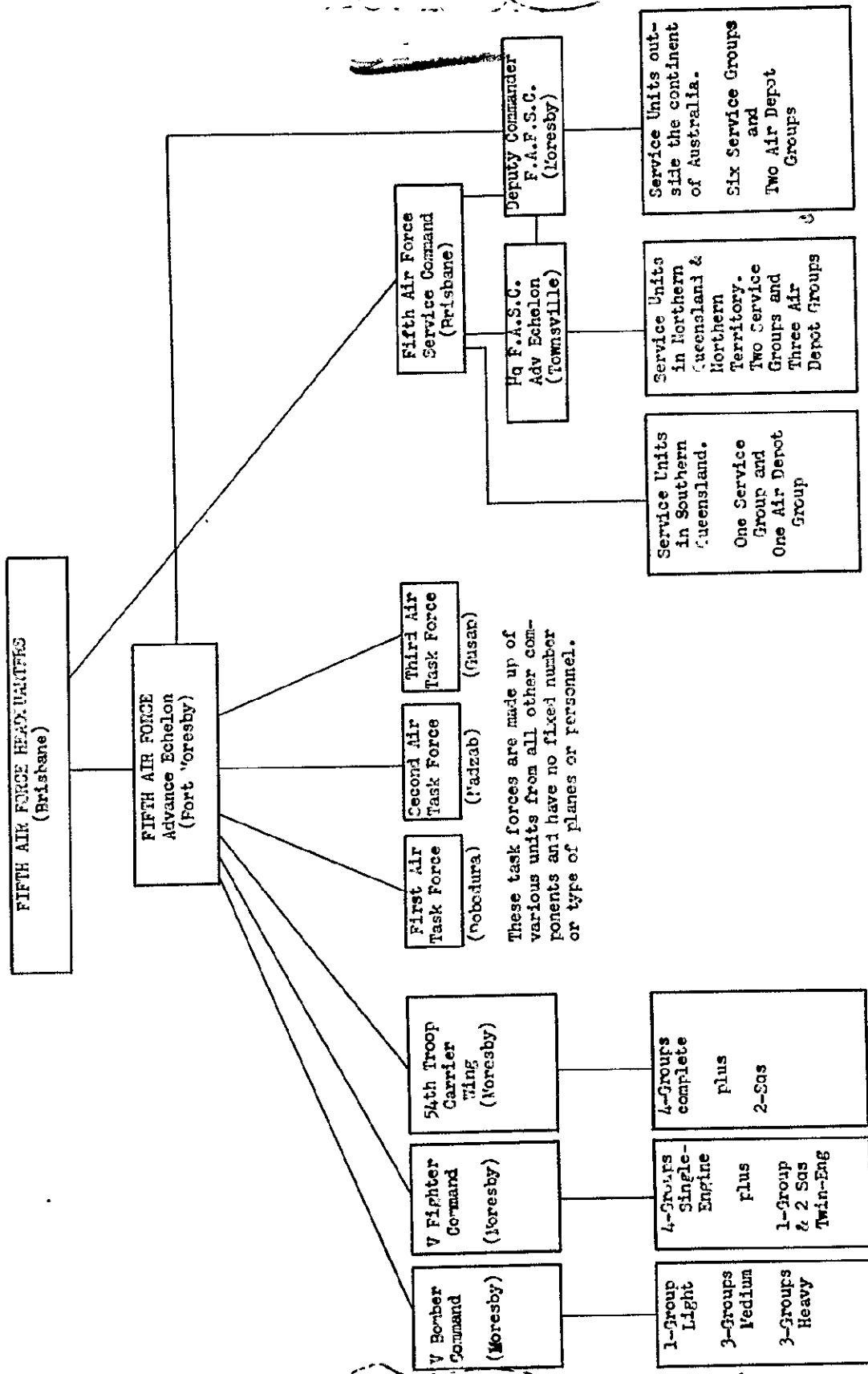
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in command of the Allied Air Forces, with headquarters at Brisbane. Here he was in close contact with the supreme commander, Gen. Douglas MacArthur, with Allied naval commanders, and with the representatives of the Royal Australian Air Forces. The RAAF, commanded by Air Vice Marshal W. Bostock, was responsible for the air defense of the Australian continent and for offensive operations in the Northeastern Area, which included the Netherlands East Indies and the western portion of Netherlands New Guinea. The American Fifth Air Force, which Kenney also commanded, was assigned the principal offensive role in New Guinea. General Kenney's headquarters at Brisbane was concerned primarily with over-all problems of strategy, logistics, and liaison. Of the subordinate commands, only the Fifth Air Force Service Command under Col. Welch G. Brownfield was directly responsible to him. Combat operations were the responsibility of Kenney's Deputy, Maj. Gen. Innis C. Whitener, with headquarters, known as the Advanced Echelon Fifth Air Force or ADVOR, at Port Moresby. The command echelons, also located at Port Moresby, were directly subject to General Whitener and were commanded by experienced veterans of Pacific operations: Brig. Gen. Paul B. Curtis, formerly commanding officer of the 49th Fighter Group, had commanded the V Fighter Command since its organization in the fall of 1942; Brig. Gen. Roger M. Kenney, former commanding officer of the 478th Bombardment Group (B), had succeeded to the V Bomber Command following the loss of Brig. Gen. Howard K. Kenney in March of 1943; and Brig. Gen. Paul Prentiss had become commander of the 84th Troop Carrier Wing at its activation in May of the same year.

Each command normally maintained operational control over the units assigned to it. However this was a flexible principle, and when other designated

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commanders were given a military objective, they were likewise given operational control over air units allotted to that task. Officially all combat units were assigned to either the fighter or the bomber commands. Actually, however, General Kenney had created three organizations known as air task forces which were designed to permit a greater flexibility of operations as the forward areas moved farther away from established bases. Although the First Air Task Force had been established in March 1943, the War Department, feeling that the Fifth Air Force was becoming too-heavy with its headquarters personnel, had never authorized that type of organization. Both Kenney and MacArthur insisted, however, that each headquarters was necessary, and by November 1943 the War Department assured them that they were to be authorized three bomber wing and two fighter wing headquarters.

Until February 1944, however, the three air task forces remained unauthorized, but extremely active organizations. In October 1943 the First Air Task Force commanded by Brig. Gen. Frederick M. Smith, Jr., was located at Dobo-Gura and the Second under Col. David M. ("Photo") Hutchison, later under Col. Jarred Crabb, was just being established at Madzab after operating for two months at Isili Isili. Meanwhile General Mitchell had announced the organization of the Third Air Task Force at Fort Loreby on 21 September, and on the following day had officially appointed Col. Donald M. ("Ligater") Hutchison as its commander. By the middle of October an advanced echelon had moved to Suva to prepare for the arrival of the remainder of the organization, and within a month the headquarters was well established at that advanced base.

The Third Air Task Force (3ATF) was organized to function in much the same manner as the other two. Officer and noncommissioned officer personnel

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were generally on detached service from ADVCON or Headquarters, 7 Fighter Command, and the commanding generals of ADVCON and the fighter and bomber commands were assigned deputy commanders to serve on the staff. The commanding officer of MACV was to exercise in his area of responsibility the same command functions as those of General Whitehead in the New Guinea area and was to be subject only to Whitehead in the chain of command. Normally decisions on strike missions would be made by Whitehead, but the commander of MACV was to assume operational control for independent strikes or defense missions whenever he deemed an immediate decision necessary to do maximum damage to the enemy or to protect the safety of his commands. "The authority, responsibility, and decision when to assume operational control of all or any air force units in his area is his alone." Administrative questions concerning matters such as personnel strength and aircraft distribution which affected the operational efficiency of the task force were to be routed from the subordinate unit involved through the task force commanders. Otherwise administration was to be direct between the subordinate unit and the command which normally would exercise administrative control.

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By October 1943 the Fifth Air Force, with a total of 5,355 officers, 150 warrant officers, 207 flight officers, and 49,808 enlisted men, was approximately two-thirds larger than it had been six months before. It had three heavy bombardment groups, the veteran 43d and 90th and the 380th. The last group, in less than six months of operations, had flown some of the heaviest heavy bomber missions of the war over the Netherlands East Indies. Although on 9 October there were 191 B-24's and 50 B-17's on hand, the number in commission totaled far below ~~the number of B-24's and B-17's~~ at that time, the 42d Group had

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33 B-24's and 16 B-17's ready for combat; the 90th Group had 45; and the 380th, a week later, no more than 20 B-24's. ¹¹ In medium bombers, the Fifth Air Force had three groups, the 22d, 38th, and 345th. In addition, however, three squadrons of the 3d Bombardment Group (L) were equipped with the locally modified B-25C1's and D1's armed with eight forward-firing .50-cal. machine guns. As in the case of heavy bombers, there was a large discrepancy between the medium and the light bombers on hand and those ready for combat. On 9 October there were 157 B-25C1's and D1's, 54 B-25G's, 42 B-25C's and D's, 61 A-20A's and G's, and perhaps 25 B-26's in the theater. But the 22d Group, a veteran B-26 organization, was undergoing transition to B-25's after almost eight months of inaction, and only one squadron, the 19th with 17 aircraft ready for combat, was still flying B-26's. The remainder of the group had 31 B-25C's and D's in commission, but was flying principally weather reconnaissance missions. The 38th Group too was by no means an adequately equipped combat organization. Two of its squadrons, the 71st and 405th, had 33 B-25C1's and D1's ready for combat; but by 9 October the other two squadrons, the 822d and the 823d, had just begun to receive their aircraft, the 75-mm. cannon-equipped B-25G, and their crews were in training and would not enter combat for another week. Of the medium groups, the 345th had arrived most recently and had 63 B-25C1's and D1's in commission. The veteran 3d Group, on the other hand, was less well equipped, with 42 strafers in three squadrons and 11 A-20's in the fourth ¹² ready for combat.

The need for a strong force of long-range fighters was great in a theater with many widely scattered bases where the requirements for bomber and transport escort were almost continuous. Although there was a total of about 600 fighters in the Southwest Pacific on 9 October, only 187 of these were P-38's; there were still 117 of the relatively unsatisfactory P-39's in

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in addition to 143 P-40N's and 129 P-47's which needed considerable modification before suiting General Kenney's taste for a Fifth Air Force fighter. These aircraft were allocated to the five fighter groups in the theater but, as with the bombardment aircraft, those in commission were far fewer than those on hand. On 9 October, for example, there was a total of 721 fighters ready for combat: the 8th Fighter Group with 85 P-40N's, 25 P-47's, and 13 assorted P-38's; the 35th Group with 15 P-38's and 47 P-39N's and P-40's; the 49th with 79 P-40N's and 19 P-47's; the 748th with 82 P-47's; and the 475th with 66 P-38's. In addition, the 67th Fighter Squadron on loan from the Thirteenth Air Force had 18 P-39's and 1 P-40 in commission on Woodlark Island; the 8th Photo Squadron had 3 P-40's, 3 P-38's, 4 P-38's, and 1 B-17; and Detachment A Night Fighter had 5 P-70's ready for combat.

Although the Southwest Pacific was predominantly an army theater, there were a few American naval units which contributed a share to air operations. As early as the spring of 1942, survivors of Fighting 10, who had fought brilliantly in the Philippines and the Netherlands East Indies, were flying PBY's on patrol mission from Tenth on the southwest coast of Australia. In the summer of 1942, when there was a prospect of considerable reinforcement, the Navy favored leaving routine patrol to RAAF units and moving the PBY's forward. Accordingly plans were made for a repair base at Palm Island near Townsville and an advanced base at Samarai south of the entrance to Milne Bay. By the end of July the base at Samarai was sufficiently advanced to commence operations, and on 7 August the Navy planes began two standard night searches in the Solomon Sea to the south and east of New Britain and in the southwestern Piazarch Sea. In addition to the "Task Group" at Samarai, a squadron of PBY's was based at Fort Moresby after the middle of September and was used for air-sea rescue, convoy cover, and transportation of men and

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supplier to otherwise inaccessible spots.

The role of the PBY's in transportation of equipment and supplies was relatively insignificant, but the problem of intertheater supply itself was one of the most complicated and difficult in the Pacific theater. It had been serious enough in 1942 when bases were concentrated in Australia, and when Milne Bay and Port Moresby were the only advanced bases in New Guinea. By the fall of 1943, it was increasing in complexity. Although several of the smaller American bases in Australia such as those at Iron Range and Reid River were being closed, others were even busier than in the earlier periods. One of the principal air supply and service depots was at Brisbane, the nerve center of all Southwest Pacific operations. There the 81st Air Depot Group, elements of the 22d Service Group, and a number of miscellaneous units were still located. Six hundred miles to the north at Townsville was another great service center. Under the command of Col. Victor Bertrand, the mechanics and specialists of the 4th, 12th, and 15th Air Depot Groups and the 75th Service Group erected, modified, and serviced aircraft and ran a large quartermaster supply depot. Lear-by Charters Towers was a center of activity. Since April 1943 it had been the location of the V Fighter and V Bomber Command Replacement and Training Center. There the acquisition and distribution of newly arrived aircraft from the United States was controlled and pilots and crews received refresher courses and instruction both for training and for determining their capabilities before joining combat units.

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The only portion of the Australian mainland that was still subject to air attack was the Darwin area, in the Northern Territory. Prior to the war, the town of Darwin, 1,800 miles from Brisbane, had been virtually isolated from the more settled portions of Australia. In February 1942 savage

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Japanese air attacks had wrecked harbor installations and driven almost all civilians out of the area. By October 1943 progress had been made in reconstruction. Transportation from other parts of the country, however, was still unsatisfactory. A single-track railway ran southeast from Darwin for 320 miles and ended in the desert. Another ran from Finsch in southern Australia for about 800 miles to Alice Springs, where a truck road connected with the railway line to Darwin 601 miles away. Mt. Isa, in eastern Queensland, was the terminus of another railway from Townsville over 600 miles to the east, and a road from Mt. Isa, 417 miles long, joined the north and south road at Tennant Creek. By using 7,500 men on the truck route, approximately 12,000 tons of supplies a month reached Darwin by truck and rail. This was about 6,000 tons a month less than water deliveries, which were gradually increasing in spite of poor harbor facilities not yet repaired after the February 1942 air raids.

Darwin was strategically important not for its intrinsic value of the town, but because of the ever-present possibility of a Japanese landing in that remote station and because of its value as a base if an Allied offensive were to be launched toward the Netherlands East Indies. Its defense was primarily in the hands of the Australians. The Australian commanding officer had under his control approximately 38,000 army and 12,000 air force personnel. In this force, American military personnel, comparatively few in number, comprised several small independent units consisting of some 1,000 men, one heavy bombardment group, and a few overworked service organizations. Australians manned all anti-aircraft batteries and aircraft warning facilities, which consisted principally of 12 radars each with a range of

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120 miles. The air units in the North eastern Area were allied in the
 broad sense. There were 4 Spitfire squadrons, 3 manned by RAF and 1 by
 ANZ personnel, 1 squadron of RAF fighters, 1 squadron of B-25's flown
 by ^{at P.O.} ~~catch~~ crews, 1 squadron of RAF Hudsons, and the American 350th Group of
 B-24's. The four fighter squadrons operated on fields about 35 miles south-
 east of Darwin, the B-24's at Ranton Field over 100 miles inland, while
 others located in between these points made a total of some 20 fields within
 100 miles of the town.

The Darwin area was much more subject to Japanese air attack during the
 fall of 1943 than were even Port Moresby or Milne Bay, the two bases from
 which the Allies had launched their first New Guinea offensive. But the
 principal Allied air and land efforts were still in the Northeastern Area,
 and Port Moresby as advanced headquarters continued to be, next to Brisbane,
 the most important link in the command chain. ADWCH was, as before, the
 middleman for operations in New Guinea with messages flowing in and out from
 Australia on the one hand and from the forward areas on the other. By the
 end of August 1943, the 715th Signal Company operated numerous communication
 circuits for ADWCH: "There were two point-to-point circuits with Headquarters, Fifth
 Air Force at Brisbane; one net with the Sixth Army at Milne Bay (which also
 included HQI and GHO, at Port Moresby), one net which included the First Air
 Task Force, the First Air Support Party at Bulolo, an Australian infantry
 division station, and a station at Milne Bay; one point to point circuit with
 the Second Air Task Force at Taili Taili; and one net with the Navy." In
 September, ADWCH established communication with Ley and Pedrab, in October
 with Linschoten and Gosap; and in November it opened communication with

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Dumca, far up the Taru Valley, and established ^{at} ~~not~~ with Brisbane. 13

Theoretically all the Guirca operations were directed from Fort Moresby because the V Bomber Command, the V Fighter Command, and the 54th Troop Carrier Wing were located there. Actually, however, the air task forces had complete control over the units based in the forward areas. Nevertheless, in October Fort Moresby was still an extremely active base. Only Tororo airdrome, 30 miles from the town, had been almost entirely closed down, although several American fighter units at Derry Downs had recently been transferred, leaving only a night fighter or two there. Kila airdrome, with only the American fighter squadrons, was also no longer so active as it had been a few months earlier. The remaining four airdromes were built in:

Jackson with the 73d Bombardment Group (M), three squadrons of the 375th Bombardment Group (M), and the 340th Fighter Squadron; and with the 60th Group of Liaison and Observer squadrons; Schwimmer with the 39th Fighter Squadron, the 799th Bombardment Squadron (M), and the 8th Photo Squadron; and Durand with the 38th Bombardment Group (M) and the 341st Fighter Squadron. 19

By October 1943 the Allied base at Milne Bay figured far less prominently than Fort Moresby in the plans for future air operations, and at that time there were no American air units based at Milne. It remained, however, an important supply center. Liberty ships sailed directly to that point without docking either in Australia or at Fort Moresby. From there, too, transport planes, most of which were assigned to the Directorate of Air Transport (DAT), carried goods to the island garrisons in the Solomon Sea. Both Milne Bay and Goodenough Island, 75 miles to the north, served as supply and training bases for Sixth Army units, but of all the American air force units based at these

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points earlier in the year, only a few signal aircraft-warning detachments and a fighter control squadron on Goodenough remained. A number of RAAF squadrons continued to use Vivagani airfield on Goodenough, and several Beaufort squadrons were based there to carry out numerous attacks on points in the Bismarck Archipelago. One hundred and fifty miles east of Goodenough was Woodlark Island, no longer of any great strategic value except as a watching post against a sneak Jap attack around the eastern Allied flank. Far more important was Kiriwina Island, 80 miles northeast of Goodenough and approximately 325 miles from Rabaul. In the latter fact lay Kiriwina's tactical importance, for by utilizing its fields (by 15 October 2 strips with 4 alert areas, parallel taxiways, and 107 dispersed hard-standings had been completed) P-38's could accompany bombers over the Nip's most important Southwest Pacific bastion.

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The principal base for operations against Rabaul was Dobodura, 120 miles across the Owen Stanley mountains from Port Moresby. By the fall of 1943 Liberty ships were making use of harbor facilities at Cro Bay where roads led to the air base, consisting of at least three fields and seven runways. Living conditions here were still far from good, and mud in rainy weather and dust in dry weather plagued the men assigned to the area. Nevertheless the camps were generally well planned and comfortably laid out and even the transients in the staging area enjoyed the hospitality of "The Soupac Sea View Hotel: 1000 rooms and baths." The air units at Dobodura were under the immediate control of the First Air Task Force whose ultimate objective was the reduction of Rabaul. This unofficial organization in October consisted of the 22d Group with medium-altitude B-25's and B-26's, the 3d Attack Group with one squadron of A-20's and three of B-25 strafers, the 475th Fighter Group with P-38's, and elements of the 49th Fighter Group also

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with P-38's, but plans were already being implemented for ^{the last-named} /group. to spear-
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head new advances in New Guinea.

Before the end of June 1943, General MacArthur had authorized the future establishment of powerful bases on the Huon Peninsula. This program was to include the construction at Lae of a port to accommodate Liberty ships at the rate of 3,000 shiptons per 24 hours and base facilities to service 20,000 American ground troops. The airfields at Lae, near-by Malahang, and Maczab were to be rehabilitated and eight new runways with revetted dispersal areas for 494 aircraft were to be constructed. By the time these points were in Allied hands, the program had been considerably expanded. Five additional all-weather runways with dispersal areas for 13 squadrons and staging facilities for 17 squadrons were to be added, while a supply base and an airdrome of major proportions were scheduled for construction at Finschhafen.
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This program was to be carried out under indescribably difficult conditions. The Huon Peninsula was over 200 miles from the nearest Allied base of any size; the water routes were continually threatened by Japanese attack; and the air route to Port Moresby, almost 250 miles away, crossed the Owen Stanley mountains, some of whose peaks rose to 12,000 feet. Although there were a number of kunai ^{grass} areas suitable for airfields, they were surrounded by jungles with thick forests spotted by malarial swamps and cut by numerous streams of various sizes, the rainfall averaging close to 200 inches a year. Engineers estimated that with the few construction units assigned, the project could not be completed before February 1945.
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Although air units were to benefit most from these new bases, their construction was the responsibility of the U. S. Army Services of Supply (USASOS STPA). The primary interest of the air force was recognized, however, by the appointment of Brig. Gen. Carl W. Connell as commander of the operation.

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Connell, previously commander of the Fifth Air Force Service Command, was relieved from that duty on 29 August and assigned on detached service to the 23d Port Headquarters which was to be established at Lae. Somewhat similar to Generals Kenney and Whitehead in his impatience with administrative detail, he contributed a drive and an engineering and mechanical know-how which were decisive in pressing the task to a conclusion. He was constantly "building a fire" under rear echelons of USASOS, of the air force, and of CHQ S.M.F.A, as he requested more and better supplies and equipment. Indeed his persistence in this was little less than that of General Kenney in the latter's continuous fight with the War Department for more personnel and more aircraft.²⁴

On 20 September engineer troops landed at Lae, and the 23d Port Headquarters was established there. At that time harbor facilities were nonexistent, and the cove was full of sunken barges. An immediate need was a 30-ton floating crane and divers to clear a channel for small cargo vessels. Progress was delayed by the lack of personnel, and many of those available were inexperienced. By the end of September, for example, only one company of a port battalion was at Lae. In spite of these handicaps, however, gasoline and oil in drums were arriving at Lae by sea and air before the end of September, and were being transshipped in transport planes to air units up the Markham valley. Work progressed rapidly in developing the harbor facilities, and on 20 October, a "mechanical cube dock" received its first Liberty ship.²⁵

Just as Oro Bay was used as the source of supply for the extensive Dobodura establishment, Lae was to serve as a depot for the air installations in the Markham and Ramu valleys. Of these, the most important was to be the base of the Second Air Task Force at Nadzab, situated on the Markham River and 20 miles from Lae. Within a few hours after that area had been overrun

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by American paratroopers on 5 September, engineers were feverishly working to clear air strips. A day later transport planes were bringing in Australian ground troops. The first air unit, the 376th Service Squadron, landed 17 days after the paratroopers, and within a few days most units of the 636 Service Group, including several Negro truck companies, were establishing the essentials of an air base. Meanwhile a number of combat organizations were preparing to move to Nadzab. On 5 October Headquarters Squadron of the 35th Fighter Group made the short jump from the temporary base Tili Tili; before the end of the month the F-39's of the 70th and 41st Squadrons were providing a fighter defence for the new base; and by mid-November, four airbases were in use by combat and transport planes. Living conditions at Nadzab were at first exceedingly primitive. Camp sites were located in thick jungle groves, and it was necessary to clear away much of the tree and shrub growth in order to facilitate mosquito elimination. Although General Connell had immediately begun to push a road through the swamps and jungle separating Ise and Nadzab, it was not to be completed until mid-December, and until then the base was entirely dependent upon air transport for supplies.

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In the plans for future operations in New Guinea, Nadzab was envisaged as the principal base. But an essential part of the campaign to isolate the Huon Peninsula was the thrust of the 7th Australian Division through the Iamu valley, known as the ORANGINIEB operation. This campaign, in which the ground forces were to be partially airborne, was to be carried out with the cooperation of the Third Air Task Force based at some suitable spot in the valley. Kiaspit, captured on 19 September, had at first been selected, and a detachment of the 372d Airborne Engineer Battalion was

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flown there on 24 September to improve the strip. Before the end of the month two companies of engineers had completed two landing strips and had made a preliminary survey for a 6,000-foot runway, a 6,000-foot taxiway, and 12 miles of dispersal area. On 4 October a detachment of the 110th Signal Battalion landed at Kaiapit and began to run a cable back toward the Ieron River, 15 miles away, and at the same time another detachment was installing a cable from Iec to make a junction at the Ieron.

Meanwhile the Australians had advanced further through the valley. As they were completely dependent upon air transport for their rations and supplies, engineering parties accompanied them to stake out strips where troop carrier planes could land. Lt. Everette Frazier had accompanied the Australians and had located numerous strips from the Ieron River to Sagrac. At the same time, Colonel Woodbury, Colonel Hutchinson, both of the Third Air Force Task Force, and Australian General Vasey of the 7th Division made numerous reconnaissance flights over the area in cub planes. Before the end of the month the advance had progressed as far as the junction of the Gusap and Ramu rivers. The valley in this area seemed so admirably suited to airfield construction that Woodbury and Hutchinson decided to limit the establishment at the swampy and malarial Kaiapit location and build the base for the Third Air Task Force at a point which they chose to call Surao. This proved to be the most pleasant, in climate at least, of any of the advanced bases so far established in the Southwest Pacific. It was bounded entirely by jungle and mountains, with the Finisterre and Bismarck ranges rising at points to 14,000 feet to the north and to the south. The prevailing winds ran parallel with the valley; the soil was well drained; and the Ramu River was wide, shallow, and swift-flowing.

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The first transport plane landed at Gusap on 1 October. Under Frazier's direction, a platoon of Australian engineers aided by natives had hacked out a primitive strip using knives, bayonets, sticks, and a few shovels. On 2 October an advanced party consisting of 40 officers and men of the 372d Airborne Engineers and a survey party from the 371st arrived to begin airfield construction. The plans now called for all-weather facilities for 2 fighter groups, 1 medium bombardment group, and 1 tactical reconnaissance squadron, together with complete servicing facilities and strips capable of handling 200 transport planes daily. The original strip was soon abandoned, and several other transport and fighter strips were laid out. Strip No. 2 had a dirt runway 6,000 feet long and 500 feet wide and was used by C-47's, P-40's, and P-47's for the first two months of operations in the area. Two others were cleared in the near vicinity to relieve congestion on No. 2. The all-weather runway, No. 5, was not completed until January 1944 after months of work on a 3-shift, 24-hour day basis, and by that time three additional fair-weather strips were in operation.

Heavy rains delayed airfield construction, and consequently the transfer of air units to the new location was postponed. The first air unit to reach Gusap after the engineers was the 66th Service Squadron which arrived on 20 and 21 October in 37 transport planes. The men of this organization experienced much that was unpleasant in their first days at the new base. Not only was there much grubbing labor to be done, but they were almost washed out of their original camp when torrential rains flooded the near-by river. They were well established on higher ground a week later, however, when the 8th Fighter Squadron was moved to Gusap from Tsili Tsili. This squadron immediately began flying its P-40's on seven to eight patrol missions a day

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until the 7th Squadron arrived on 20 November. Meanwhile a signal crew had effected a junction with the line laid to the Loren River from Misipi, and on 7 November the 100-mile distance from Lae to Gusap was connected by cable.
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By 1 November, then, air units were established on a string of bases stretching from Gusap, through Madrab, Iae, BokoSura, Hiriwina, Goddenough, and Milne Bay to Port Moresby in the New Guinea area, and from Darwin in the northwest to Brisbane on the east coast of Australia. The distances alone between these bases were formidable. From Brisbane to Port Moresby is more than 1,200 miles, and it is over 1,100 from Darwin to Port Moresby. In New Guinea the bases fell roughly within a radius of 300 miles from Port Moresby. Other factors, however, were more discouraging than distance. Even in Australia overland transportation was unsatisfactory because motor roads and railroads were few. In New Guinea overland transportation was virtually nonexistent. Movement of personnel, equipment, and supplies in the forward areas was almost entirely dependent upon sea and air transport. Sea transport was vital. The great bulk of supplies was carried by sea from Australia and from the United States to Port Moresby, to Milne Bay, and, as the "bomb line" was advanced, to Cro Bay and Lae. But sea transport was slow and hazardous; the submarine menace was ever present; and harbor facilities and sea routes had to be secured before the Liberty ships could venture into them. In such circumstances air transport was the principal reliance. Not only did it supplement shipping in carrying troops and emergency supplies to points where they were needed, but it was the only means by which many troops and some bases in the forward areas could be reached. Gusap and, for three months, even Madrab were entirely manned and supplied by air.

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It is clear then that the success of the advance was in part dependent upon the efficiency of the air transport system. In the Southwest Pacific in October 1943, two organizations, the Directorate of Air Transport (DAT) and the 54th Troop Carrier Wing, were primarily responsible for carrying personnel and supplies by air. DAT, under Col. Ray T. Blomere, was the APO of the Allied Air Force. It was made up of virtually all transport and commercial aircraft on the Australian continent, and from time to time attached American troop carrier units. Between January and September 1943, for example, the 317th Troop Carrier Group had been flying with DAT. During the last week in September, however, the 374th Group, after almost monopolizing transport operations in New Guinea since the autumn of 1942, took over the 317th Group's routes. Although DAT planes flew to Milne Bay, Kiriwina, and Goodenough, the general policy was for its planes to operate no farther than the combat zone. Thus all air shipments from Australia into the forward areas had to be transhipped into troop carrier planes at Port Moresby. This on occasion caused considerable delay as it was then necessary to re-establish priorities. According to General Connell a delay of a week to 10 days in shipments to the Lae area was not unusual.

The 54th Troop Carrier Wing, which carried on where DAT left off, was on the echelon level of a command within the Fifth Air Force. By September 1943, 14 troop carrier squadrons were operating in New Guinea. From September 1943 to January 1944, however, only the units of the 317th Group and the 63th and 69th Squadrons of the 433d Group were continuously under both administrative and operational control of the 54th Wing and based at Port Moresby. From August 1943 to the middle of December, the 375th Group was assigned to the First Air Task Force at Dobodura where its C-47's used a primitive dirt

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strip and when its headquarters was "on the line." The 65th and 66th squadrons moved to the temporary base at Talli Talli in September and followed the Second Air Task Force to Madras early in October. The first troop carrier squadron to be based at Madras was the 70th which had arrived on 9 October from Port Moresby.

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The 54th Wing, commanded by Brig. Gen. Paul Frontier, had administrative control over all troop carrier squadrons in New Guinea. Its primary objective was to carry out the operational instructions of ADCOM, but in general it was recognized both by the wing and by ADCOM that the number of units available would normally correspond with the number of units stationed in the Moresby area. A typical 24-hour period of wing operations began in the late afternoon when the daily fragmentary field order arrived from ADCOM. This announced the number of troop carrier units required for the following day's operations and served as an official authorization. Shortly thereafter a telephone call from the ADCOM A-3 gave specific information as to destination and number of aircraft for the mission, the amount and type of fighter cover, and the radio call signs to be used. The wing operations duty officer recorded this information, allocated missions to different groups, and caused the daily wing field order to be published. Between 1900 and 2100, the group operations officers and their clerks came to wing headquarters, recorded information which was to be passed on to the squadrons, and submitted the field numbers of the planes which were to perform the missions.

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It was not unusual for a number of changes to be made in the original schedule during the evening. In such cases the duty officer relayed these changes to the groups, and the groups in turn to the squadrons. By midnight,

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however, when all changes had been made, the duty officer, theoretically on duty for 24 hours, generally left his deck, and only the enlisted man in charge of traffic remained in the operations office. Before sunrise the weather ship of the wing, an armed E-25, took off and covered the routes to be followed that day by all wing transport planes. By 0530 the duty officer had returned to his deck and was checking weather information which would continue to come from the weather ship so long as flights were scheduled. When the weather reports were satisfactory, the C-47's took off, and the times of departure were recorded on the wing operation board. For the remainder of the day, the duty officer supervised all flights, exercised his judgment as to recalling them because of weather, received reports on accidents, and maintained a check on fighter cover and enemy activity. At 1730 he was relieved by the next day's duty officer who checked in all aircraft and followed the same routine as his predecessor.³⁴

Intelligence officers of troop carrier units were perhaps not so continuously occupied as the operations officers, but they performed almost an essential task. The wing A-2 maintained close relations with other intelligence sections, particularly those of the ground forces which could supply topographical and other special information to aid the troop carrier crews in locating their objectives. This information was relayed to unit intelligence officers who were supposed to maintain up-to-date information on the position of enemy and friendly ground forces. Briefing of all airplane crews was to be "continuous." Among numerous items to be covered were the nature of the terrain surrounding the objective, a description of the growing target, the way in which the target was to be identified (whether by smoke, panel, or otherwise), and the position of enemy troops and antiaircraft defenses.³⁵

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By the fall of 1943, therefore, the routine of troop carrier operations from Port Moresby was established and well organized. At Dobodura, too, air transport was almost equally routine. This was not so true, however, of the operations from the new bases on the Fugu Peninsula. The first few weeks of such operations at Madzab, for example, were "confusion to say the least." According to the account of one of the troop carrier units, "air flights of planes would come in at all levels in the world, and cut each other out of pattern and otherwise make life miserable for brother pilots.

When the ships were on the ground, either landing or taking off, it was impossible to see much of anything because of the dirt and dust." Unloading was a problem. In those days the transport had to have fighter cover, and oftentimes half a flight would get unloaded and away with the fighters, while the others were waiting for half or three quarters of an hour to get the material off the ships.

Early in October the arrival of better-trained personnel began to relieve the earlier confusion. Air-freight forwarding squadrons had arrived at both Lae and Madzab to take over the loading and unloading details previously performed by natives. A number of Negro truck companies were also flown in to assist in this job until the arrival of their trucks. The 2039th (C) Truck Company made an impressive record in this unfamiliar task, and claimed that over a period of several months it maintained an average unloading time of 12 minutes per aircraft. On 23 September the ground echelon of the 70th Troop Carrier Squadron, and less than two weeks later the air echelon, arrived at Madzab. The principal task of this unit was to fly air force supplies, largely steel mauling and gasoline, from Lae to Madzab. It was seen four flying as

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enemy aircraft were ever-present, and the short flights meant numerous landings on rough fields. Some of the men flew as many as 15 trips a day. At first the crews complained continually about their difficult assignment, but complaints became fewer as a growing spirit of competition was created among the pilots by posting the crews' records of freight delivered. It was considered a poor day when the squadron did not haul over 350,000 pounds. Its record haul was 512,000 pounds, while the individual record, set by Lt. Robert L. Smith, was 67,000 pounds.³⁷

More nearly less important than the function of the troop carrier units in transporting men and supplies forward was their assignment of evacuating sick and wounded to hospitals in the rear areas or on the mainland. This had been accomplished regularly and with success during the campaigns in Papua and in Northeast New Guinea in 1942 and 1943. Not until the summer of 1943, however, did the first trained air evacuation unit, the 80th Medical Air Evacuation Squadron, arrive in Australia. At first the squadron was assigned to USMACS rather than to the air force, a fact which perhaps accounted for more administrative problems than might otherwise have been necessary, as the squadron had to work in close cooperation with troop carrier units. In September the unit initiated its activities by accompanying evacuation planes from Fort Moresby to Townsville. On 29 September the first patients left Dokokura accompanied by evacuation personnel, and on 4 October one flight of the squadron transferred from Moresby to Kagzab. Its task was somewhat simplified 10 days later when the squadron, less the nurses who remained assigned to USMACS, was transferred to the Fifth Air Force.³⁸

Shortly after this organizational change a regulation was issued from Fifth Air Force Headquarters to govern air evacuation. It pointed out that

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evacuation was the reverse of supply and thus could be performed only as a result of supply conditions. Since air supply was dependent upon the weather, the tactical situation, and the availability of aircraft, a flexible system was necessary. Accordingly, tactical troop carrier units were instructed to make available aircraft which had been sent forward with supplies in tactical operations. If air evacuation were desired by organizations supplied by other means than air, the responsible air force commander in the area was to prescribe priorities. The area commander of the service requiring air evacuation, furthermore, was responsible for collecting evacuees and providing shelter and medical treatment at the point of embarking and debarking. Sick and wounded being evacuated from forward supply points to the point of first hospitalization as an emergency measure automatically received first priority, but from a point of hospitalization to rear areas, they received fourth priority. The medical air evacuation squadron was directed to provide necessary medical personnel and equipment for proper care in flight, and was to provide liaison between the air transport agency and the organizations requiring evacuation.

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By October 1943, then, the stage was set for the operations which would complete the conquest of the Huon Peninsula and would initiate the isolation and neutralization of Lae. The Japanese were still established in powerful positions, but they were no stronger than they had been 12 months before. The Allies, on the other hand, had improved their position. Their land and air forces were larger and more experienced; they had advanced the bomb line by building advanced bases much nearer to the enemy's outer defense line; and by an ingenious combination of air and sea transport, they were overcoming one of the toughest problems of all--that of transportation and supply in an island-studded and mountainous tropical theater.

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Chapter II

PLANS AND ALLOCATIONS

By October 1943 the over-all plan for operations, known as the Eltton Plan and submitted by General MacArthur to the Joint Chiefs of Staff, was well under way toward a successful completion as the CARTWHEEL Operation. This plan, as originally drafted in February 1943, had envisaged a carefully coordinated offensive by South and Southwest Pacific forces under the strategic direction of General MacArthur. The South Pacific force was to move from bases in the lower Solomons through the New Georgia-Bougainville area toward Rabaul and Kavieng. The Southwest Pacific forces were to gain control of the Huon Peninsula with the capture of Lae, Finschhafen, and Madang, land on the New Britain coast at Cape Gloucester, Arave, and Casrata, and prepare for the final conquest of Rabaul.

Early in 1943, hope had been expressed in Washington that these operations would be completed by the end of the year. But handicapped by a lack of means, the Pacific forces were somewhat delayed in reaching their objectives. By October, however, Southwest Pacific forces had captured Lae, Salamaua, Madzob, and Finschhafen; while those of the South Pacific had acquired a string of bases from Guadalcanal through the Russell Islands, Munda, and Ondonga, as far north as Vella Lavella. By these advances the air forces of both theaters were in a position to begin persistent attacks upon Rabaul.

Before all these bases had been secured, however, the Combined and Joint Chiefs of Staff were considering changes in Pacific strategy which resulted in significant decisions at the Quadrant conference in August 1943.

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One question upon which there never had been a complete agreement was the proper division of men and material between the Pacific and European theaters. On this occasion, Admiral King, asserting that the slowness of the advance in the Pacific was caused by a lack of means, expressed an opinion that this shortage of material indicated a failure on the part of planners to view the war against all three axis powers as a whole. Neither General Marshall nor General Arnold gave any comment on this remark, but later Marshall joined King in defending the scope of Pacific operations then underway. Several of the British chiefs had expressed the fear that undue emphasis upon the Pacific might delay an invasion of continental Europe.³

Comparatively minor disagreements, however, did not prevent unanimity when the Combined Chiefs submitted their progress report to the President and the Prime Minister on 27 August 1943. This report concluded that in order to destroy the Japanese capacity to resist, it would be necessary to destroy the enemy fleet and air force, to carry out "heavy and sustained air bombardment of Japan proper," and possibly to invade the home islands. The air offensive, it was felt, would "almost certainly" require the use of either Chinese or Formosan bases for low-range bombers and of Chinese ports, notably Hong Kong, for supplying the air bases. The report added that this would entail a control of the South Japan and South China seas and recommended as the best routes of advance one from the west through the Strait of Malacca and another from the east through the mandated islands either toward the Celebes and Sulu seas or to the north of Luzon. Air attacks were to be concentrated against Japan's weaknesses: her shortage of aircraft, of warships and other shipping, and of oil. Extensive land campaigns were to be avoided. According to the

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Combined Chiefs, "wherever possible we should, in fact, aim at leaving Japanese land forces in possession of outlying territory, in order that they may continue to be a liability to Japanese shipping, air and naval forces."

The earlier phases of the thrust from the east were envisaged clearly, if in general terms, by the Combined Chiefs. The main effort was to be through the mandated islands, but, until preparations were completed for this main effort, the Allies were to maintain increasing pressure on the Japanese in the Solomons-New Guinea area and in the Aleutians. These, however, were to become subsidiary once the main advance began and were to be continued only if necessary for the success of the main effort.⁵

After the projected advance through the Mandates, the report suggested a number of alternative moves. The first suggestion was for the drive to proceed either to the north or to the south of the Philippines and thence toward the China coast or Formosa. Hong Kong was the first choice for a port, but if its capture would prove impracticable, the Combined Chiefs recommended that Formosa or Luzon were to be invaded. Hainan and "one of the Ryukus" were other alternatives, or if these were impracticable, operations to obtain control of the southern Philippines and the Celebes and Sulu seas were to be intensified, followed by an attempt to capture a port in China or Formosa.⁶

Although the move through the Mandates was thus considered the ultimate Pacific campaign, specific objectives for the Southwest Pacific forces were to be submitted to General MacArthur. The first of these proposed by the Combined Chiefs of Staff at Quadrant was "the seizure or neutralization of

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eastern New Guinea and including the Admiralty Islands and Sismarek Archipelago." Such a series of operations logically followed the GILBERT operations then leading toward a climax. There was, however, one important change in earlier plans. Although Lae and Haining were to be seized by Allied forces, it was specifically suggested that Lae be neutralized rather than captured. In spite of this change, however, it was assumed that this portion of the campaign would last from December 1943 to September 1944, and that a total of 1,473 aircraft would be required.

With the completion of the "Mevak-Kavieng" operation the advance was to proceed more rapidly along the New Guinea coast. This was to continue in "step by step airborne waterborne advances" as far west as Vogelkop and was to be completed by 31 December 1944. It was estimated that 1,379 aircraft of all types would be necessary for the capture of Hollandia, 1,071 for Lae, 2,054 for the Japan-Schouten Islands, and 1,904 for Manokvari on the Vogelkop. Whether sufficient air strength would be available at the time planned for each advance was a question dependent upon the European situation. It was not contemplated that sufficient heavy bombardment could be deployed to satisfy the Pacific requirements until Germany was defeated.

The plans made at Quadrant were couched in general terms and depended upon the theater commanders for detailed development. In the Pacific, the forces of the South and the Southwest Pacific were heading toward the same objective. The over-all direction of the operations was in the hands of General MacArthur, but Admiral Halsey retained operational control of the South Pacific forces. On occasion, this rather complicated command setup resulted in some confusion. An example of this occurred after the Quadrant conference. One of the timetables considered at Lae had scheduled an attack in the Lae-Laici area

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for 15 October and another on Niuta-Luta for 1 December, both by South Pacific forces. In the meantime, General MacArthur, planning for an invasion of New Britain in December 1943 was counting on support from South Pacific air units. He therefore requested Admiral Halsey to survey the situation with a view to obtaining air fields in Bougainville from which fighter escorts could operate against the island in December.

Admiral Halsey's planning was temporarily upset, however, by a communication from Admiral King indicating that he expected the Twin and the Luta operations to proceed on schedule. This would have precluded the seizure of sites near Enogae Augusta Bay on Bougainville which Halsey considered the most satisfactory point for the next landing, and it would have meant that only night strikes or day strikes protected by the "most extreme range fighters" would have been possible against the island during MacArthur's Cape Gloucester operations. Halsey felt that the confusion resulting from King's communication threatened the teamwork for which he had been striving, and on 16 September he requested from MacArthur a clarification of his own responsibilities.

General MacArthur believed that the Joint Chiefs of Staff had given explicit orders unifying "the command direction" of the campaign. He realized, however, that Halsey was in an embarrassing position, and made arrangements to discuss the problem with Lt. Gen. H. H. Harron of the South Pacific staff (COMSOPAC). On 17 September, the conference took place, and a number of operational plans were discussed. General MacArthur favored the development of a base at Bougainville and stated that this would comply with the intent of the JCS directive. But he released Halsey from any requirement of supporting

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the operations of the Southwest Pacific forces in New Britain. Halsey was to develop his plan independently, and submit it to MacArthur only to coordinate the timing of joint efforts.¹¹

Actually plans worked out in a mid-September conference in Australia between representatives of CCAF and CMA were generally followed. In order to cover the Southwest Pacific forces in operations against Cape Gloucester and Sidor, it was planned that South Pacific air forces would neutralize Rabaul. This required a foothold on Bougainville from which fighter-protected missions could be flown by Halsey's air units against the New Britain stronghold. Offensive moves of the two theaters were thus closely integrated and necessitated an approximate coherence to the following timetable:

15 October to 1 November: CMA air forces operating fighters from Milneba to attack airfields and shipping at Rabaul.

20 to 25 October: CCAF forces to establish radar and II bases on Treasury and selected positions on Choiseul islands.

1 to 6 November: CMA air forces to continue attacks on Rabaul and to assist CCAF air units in neutralizing enemy operations from Buka.

On or about 1 November: CCAF forces to land at points on August Bay with the objective of establishing an airbase from which daylight attacks against Rabaul could be protected by fighters.

25 December 1943 to 1 January 1944: CMA forces to obtain control of Vitiaz Strait by seizing the Sidor and Cape Gloucester areas and establishing airbase facilities for neutralizing Kavieng. CCAF to continue attacks on Rabaul assisted by CMA.¹²

General MacArthur was thus subject to the directives of the Joint Chiefs of Staff, but within that general framework his plans were developed independently.

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In the Southwest Pacific, his usual policy was to call in the three K's (Kenney, Krueger, and Kinkaid) who with the aid of members of his own staff worked with him on operational instructions and basic plans. From time to time War Department planners requested detailed information on future moves, of which those outlined in the "Liton Plan, submitted in March 1943, had been most significant. The Quadrant decision of August necessitated the preparation of new plans for "maintaining unrelenting pressure" against Japan by seizing points in the Bismarck archipelago and on the north coast of New Guinea as far west as Vogelkop. ^{the War Department} But on 2 October / urged MacArthur to go beyond the Quadrant authorization, and suggested that after Vogelkop, Mindanao was the logical objective. He was advised that this thrust might be made from the Central Pacific through the Bonins, but that with the present Allied advantage in naval strength, every effort was to be made to find the most fruitful area for an attack. MacArthur was urged, therefore, to perfect plans for a return to the Philippines based on two assumptions: that the Southwest Pacific theater would continue to be built up in men and material, and that the main effort would be in that area.

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By 20 October General MacArthur had submitted LMO III, a plan of operations in the Southwest Pacific area for reconquest of the southern Philippines. This plan was conceived with a general strategic objective: to isolate Japan from the Malay-Netherlands East Indies area. It was based upon a scheme of maneuver which gave the predominant offensive role to land-based air power. The "land-based bomber line" was to be advanced rapidly westward along the land masses of New Guinea to the Philippines, by-passing and neutralizing by air action hostile forces wherever practicable in order to avoid costly and time-consuming operations; the Allied flanks were to be

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protected "essentially by air operations"; and the necessary advanced naval bases were to be established under the protection of land-based aviation. Air attacks were to be employed to soften up and gain air superiority over bases threatening each advance, hostile naval forces and shipping were to be destroyed, and ground forces were to be sent forward by water and air to seize and establish new air bases. JMO III also suggested that the length of each forward movement could be extended by employing carriers to provide close air support of landing operations and by extending the "destructive effort of bombers" by advancing the "offensive fighter line" through inland fields established and maintained by air transport.

JMO III was divided into five phases, the first of which was concerned primarily with acquiring naval bases in the Bismarck Archipelago. This was considered only a means to an end, however, as the naval bases were desired to support subsequent advances into western New Guinea. Since a direct attack on Rabaul had been rejected as dangerous and time-consuming, it was determined to isolate it from the northeast by establishing light naval forces and air elements at Kavieng and in the Admiralties. A direct attack on Newak was also considered as too costly a venture, and it was believed that establishing air bases at Hansa Bay not only would provide sufficient air protection for by-passing the Newak area but also would complete the isolation of Rabaul.

The first move was to be made against Hansa Bay beginning on 1 February 1944. Amphibious forces were to land in the area with airborne support from Southwest Pacific forces and air cooperation from the Vitiaz Strait-Iaru valley area. The north of the Sepik River was to be secured, enemy forces in the Wang-Melichafen and Newak areas contained, and advanced bases established to support subsequent operations against Humboldt Bay.

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On 1 March 1944, South Pacific forces were to open an assault on Kavieng. Heavy elements of the U.S. Pacific Fleet, air units from carriers, from western New Britain, New Guinea, the northern Solomons, Kiribati, and Woodlark were to provide a preliminary air and naval bombardment, as well as "direct air support" and "general air support." Meanwhile the Central Pacific forces were to provide protection from hostile heavy fleet elements with operations in the eastern Mandates. Following the capture of Kavieng, air and naval facilities were to be established to promote operations in the Carolines and to carry out the blockade of Lae, but not until this blockade had sufficiently reduced the defensive capacity of its garrison was Lae to be occupied.

Southwest Pacific forces were to seize points in the Admiralty Islands coincidentally with the opening of the Kavieng operation. Air units from the Vitiaz Strait area and from carriers were to provide "direct air support," while "general air support" was to come from the air bases in the Markham and Ramu valleys.

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The second phase of PLAN III was visualized primarily as an advance northwestward along the north coast of New Guinea to and Galvindi Bay. The first logical step would be to capture areas where the Japanese had already developed good air bases. But these fields were held in strength, and MacArthur favored by-passing them and seizing the partially developed sites near Humboldt Bay. This would carry the Allied air force into Netherlands New Guinea within reach of Japan's air attacks from bases in the Banda Sea. To guard against such an eventuality and to provide flank protection, a second drive in Phase II was to carry Allied troops across the Arafura Sea and into the Arce, Mai, and Tanimbar islands.

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These two operations were to begin simultaneously on 1 June 1944. A landing force from the Darwin bases to be air supported was to seize objectives in the Milne Bay area. Land-based aircraft were to cooperate in the operation by flying from bases in the Milne Bay valley, at Buna Bay, and in the Highlands. Air carrier planes were to provide close support. Inland bases were to be established in the upper Digul-Ley river section and supported by air transport, advanced bases were to be advanced near Humboldt Bay, and land forces were to infiltrate east from Milne Bay in order to overrun the small area whenever practicable. The overland drive across the Sepura Sea was to be carried out by Australian troops supported by air force elements, preceded and accompanied by air strikes from the Darwin air force, and covered by air units based on carriers and at Morauke, at Buna Bay, and on Fero Island.

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The third phase of PLAN III was the move into Geelvink Bay and the Vogelkop. Beginning on 15 August 1944, both air force and over sea landing forces were to move into Geelvink Bay, while air elements staging through Aroa-Lai-Tandibar were to neutralize the threatening enemy bases at Uabo and Uebire. Direct air support was to be provided from the Humboldt Bay area and from inland bases maintained by means of air transport. Carrier-based aircraft were to provide necessary fighter cover during the earliest stages. As soon as land-based aircraft could be established in the Geelvink Bay section (and this date was set at 1 October 1944), amphibious forces were to seize points on the western tip of Vogelkop. Once captured, these western New Guinea bases were to provide jumping-off points for the return to the Philippines, and in addition it was hoped that oil fields in the area might provide a source of bunker fuel.

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With the successful completion of Phase III, General MacArthur would have carried out the tasks assigned by the Quadrant decisions. He apparently hesitated to commit himself on further operations, but in view of the request from the General Staff, he tentatively considered two additional phases in the MILO plan. Phase IV was described as "a broadening of the front" to deploy air forces, protect flanks, and establish advanced bases prior to liberation of Mindanao. The estimated target date was 1 December 1944 when forces from Cebu would be supported by airborne elements to occupy airfields on Balabaca and/or Morotai and were at least to deny access to Celebes to the enemy. At suitable points in these new conquests Allied naval and air elements were to be established. As this operation got under way, enemy bases on Samar, the Lucena Islands, and Ambon were to be captured, and Tison neutralized by air assault, if enemy forces in the eastern Netherlands Indies threatened to interfere with Allied communications between Cebu and Mindanao. The Palau Islands east of the Philippines were also to be occupied, but the target date for this attack depended upon whether the Ambon object was deemed necessary. In any case, it would involve direct support by the United States Pacific Fleet including strong naval air elements.

18

The occupation of Mindanao, or Phase V of MILO III, was tentatively set for 1 February 1945. This was envisaged as the most elaborate operation yet planned in the southwest Pacific. It would require an attack by major land, sea, and air forces at numerous points in order to achieve surprise and disperse defensive efforts. "Air envelopment" on a major scale, the guerrilla organization to provide "terminal facilities," shipping to insure reinforcement and supplies, and an occupation of island groups to the southwest and to the north of Mindanao were considered essentials.

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The MacArthur plan for future operations against the Japanese arrived in Washington shortly before British and American military advisers left Washington for the Teheran and Cairo conferences. It arrived at a convenient time, for one of the principal tasks of these conferences was to reconsider future strategical moves in the Pacific. It was generally believed by Allied military advisers that Japan would remain on the strategic defensive unless she were convinced that Russia had decided to attack her or to grant bases to the United States. In any case, it was thought that Japan would do no more in the Southwest Pacific than to build up her local defensive forces and her naval striking force. Japan's position was recognized as one of great strength with control of Burma, Malaya, the Netherlands East Indies, parts of China, and the Pacific islands, all of which kept Allied forces at distances from Japan itself. Thus she was in a good position to build up her economic and military strength. There were weaknesses recognized by the Combined and the Joint Planners, in that her lines of communication were long, her shipping situation was becoming acute with sinkings exceeding new construction, and she was finding it difficult to replace air losses in the Melanesian area.

The Joint Staff Planners in considering specific 1944 operations for the defeat of Japan assumed, to begin with, that Ceylon would be defended in the fall of 1944, and that Russia would not enter the war against Japan. These assumptions limited the scope of the planned operations, but it was still hoped that strategic objectives could be obtained and Japan's military strength reduced to an extent that would permit the invasion of Honshu not later than the spring of 1946. Specifically the planners recommended that the advance

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along the New Guinea-Philippine axis proceed concurrently with operations for the capture of the Mandates, that a strategic bombing force be established in Guam, Tinian, and Japan, and that the air bombardment of the Netherlands East Indies and the neutralization of Rabaul be intensified.²¹

The Joint Staff Planners presented the schedule of Pacific operations, which appears on the following page, to the Joint Chiefs of Staff for planning purposes only.²²

The schedule for the Southwest Pacific corresponded almost exactly to the timetable of MEMO III and met with agreement from the Joint Chiefs. It did, however, present a number of basic questions. General Arnold introduced one of these when he suggested that conflicts over allocations might develop between the Central and Southwest Pacific commands. This point was not discussed at great length, but the Navy representatives clearly supported settling all questions of priority in favor of the Central Pacific. According to Admiral King, dividends were greater in the Central Pacific, and nothing should interfere with that campaign.²³

General Arnold was more concerned with putting on record a statement as to the part strategic bombing was to play in the defeat of Japan. He asserted that information available to him indicated that Japan had in reserve an oil supply of from one to one and a half years. Thus he believed that hitting at outlying areas could be no more than secondary to the direct bombing of Japan including steel, airplane, and other factories, as well as oil reserves and refineries. He suggested, therefore that under the date 31 December 1944 should be added the item "Initiative V.L.R. bombing of vital targets in Japanese 'Inner Zone' from bases in Marianas." One of the naval representatives, on the other hand, expressed the opinion that there was some danger in overlooking areas in the Netherlands East Indies where, he stated, was located 40 per cent of the refineries from which Japan was procuring oil. This, like Ilsest, in

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| <u>Trajectory Dates</u> | <u>Central Pacific</u> | <u>SW Pacific</u> | <u>SE Asia & China</u> |
|-------------------------|--|--|--|
| 1944 | | | |
| 1-31 Jan | Seizure of Marshalls including Eniwetok and Rongerik | Complete seizure of western New Britain, neutralization of Rabaul | |
| 15 Jan to 15 Mar | | | Luzon, Arakan Region, and China operations. Amphibious operations in SE Asia |
| 1 Feb | | Seizure of Hansa Bay area | |
| 20 Mar | | Capture of Pavieng | |
| 20 Apr | | Seizure of Manus | |
| 1 May | Seizure of Pohnpei | | |
| 1 June | | Seizure of Hollandia (Humboldt Bay) | |
| 20 July | Seizure of eastern Carolines (Iruk area) | | |
| 15 Aug | | Advance westward along north coast of New Guinea to include Vogelkop | |
| 1 Oct | Seizure of Guam and Yap L. Marianas | | |
| 1 Nov (end of monsoon) | | | Intensification of offensive in SE Asia Jap. and |
| 31 Dec | Seizure of Palau | | |

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Rumania, and a concentrated area and he urged that B-29's be used from fields in northern Australia. Although General Arnold accepted the fact that lucrative targets existed in the Indies, he opposed any VLE aircraft to that theater. He finally agreed, however, to inserting the following statement under the date 20 July 1944: "Initiate V.L.R. bombing of vital targets in III." But he agreed, only, with the understanding, that this was for planning purposes rather than an actual commitment.

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By 2 December the over-all plan for the defeat of Japan had been amended and corrected by the Combined Chiefs of Staff. The revised version of the schedule of operations showed no changes in that submitted by the Joint Chiefs, but the basic assumptions had been radically altered according to suggestions originally made by the Combined Chiefs months before at the Quadrant conference, where an appreciation for the defeat of Japan submitted by the planners had been rejected as being too conservative. "Both as to the overall time required to defeat Japan and as to failure to provide for the fullest use of modern and untried methods." Subsequent appreciations on the same subject had also been rejected for similar reasons. On 25 November the U.S. Chiefs of Staff had suggested to the Joint Planners that a new plan be drawn up based on the assumptions that actual invasion of the main Japanese islands might not be necessary, that Germany would be defeated by the spring of 1944, and that Russia would enter the war against Japan shortly after the defeat of Germany. Thereafter at least one development had encouraged more optimistic assumptions. On 28 November at Teheran Marshal Stalin had informed those present at the plenary session that the Russian forces in the Far East could be used only for defense until they were increased about three-fold, and that this could

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not take place until the capitulation of Germany. Then," he added, "by
our common front we shall win."

On 2 December, then, there was good justification for changes in the basic assumptions and the over-all concepts of earlier plans. The new assumptions admitted the possibilities that sea and air blockade and intensive air bombardment from progressively advanced bases might accomplish the defeat of Japan without actual invasion, that Germany might be defeated in the spring, and that Russia might enter the war soon afterwards. The principle was accepted that the operations in the Southwest and Central Pacific theaters should proceed concurrently and be mutually supporting. Allied naval forces were to be deployed to support successive operations in both theaters, and transfer of forces and resources from one area to another was contemplated. In case conflicts in "timing and allocation of means" should develop, priority was to be given to the needs of the Central Pacific. "Operations in the Central Pacific," it was concluded, "promise at this time a more rapid advance toward Japan and her vital lines of communication; the earlier acquisition of strategic air bases closer to the homeland; and, of greatest importance, are more likely to precipitate a decisive engagement with the Japanese fleet."

A decision to give priority to any other campaign except one through the Southwest Pacific to the Philippines ran directly counter to the views of General MacArthur. The latter had worked out WNO III with the understanding that his forces would be limited. With that premise he opposed a dispersion of effort in two Pacific theaters. In a discussion of the recent conclusions of the Combined Chiefs on 3 December, General Lutherdale, MacArthur's chief of staff, once more presented the latter's thesis: the strategic objective that would best accomplish the mission of maintaining and intensifying unrelenting pressure against Japan was the Philippines. With the securing of that

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archipelago as a base, it would be possible to mount bombing attacks against tankers, other merchant shipping, and communications and to launch an assault against the China coast. These vital targets, it was assumed, would call for an all-out air defense by the Japanese. Thus four of the enemy's major points of vulnerability would be hit: oil, naval and merchant shipping, and above all his strength in the air.

Sutherland then discussed three possible routes to the Philippines. An approach from Southeast Asia he described as a frontal attack with limited possibilities for naval action and with bases distant from the courses of supply. An attack through the Central Pacific was also opposed by Sutherland. It would necessitate a series of seaborne attacks supported by carrier-based aviation against distant points thoroughly organized for defense and supported by land-based aviation. It would thus take advantage of America's growing seapower, but would fail to make use of her powerful air strength, and so would not employ "in effective combination the three essentials of modern combat: land, sea, and air power." Sutherland further asserted that the Central Pacific operation was based on an old plan, prepared originally on the assumption that Japan had taken the Philippines but not Corneo, the IRI, Malaya, and Burma, and that Australia would not be available to base the counteroffensive. Furthermore "it was drawn without full appreciation of the power and of proper employment of modern aviation, and it proposed to disregard that power."

Sutherland urged that the campaign be mounted from the Southwest Pacific, arguing as follows: The attack would be launched from a base closest to the objective and would distance against the most lightly organized portion of the

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enemy's defenses. It could be made by a combination of airborne and sea-
borne operations, assisted by the fleet and always supported "by the full
power of land-based aviation." Almost from the start of the campaign, "a
powerful strategic effect" would be exerted on near-by and vital production
areas and shipping routes. By following the progressive phases outlined in
PLIO III, and in spite of the limited resources available, Southwest Pacific
forces would reach Mindanao by February 1945. This would be "a major stra-
tegic victory. Japan's ability to wage war would be curtailed immediately
and progressive deterioration resulting directly from that move would alone
bring about her defeat." General MacArthur emphasized the point that the
limited resources available to the Pacific forces had determined the time-
table and the scope of PLIO III. He declared, on the other hand, that if
the Pacific were receiving first priority in men and material, a two-pronged
attack, one from the Southwest and one from the Central Pacific, would be
desirable.

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Actually General MacArthur was lacking many of the requirements for a
powerful offensive. One of the most important of his needs was aircraft. The
Fifth Air Force in October of 1943 consisted of 1 light, 3 medium, and 3 heavy
bomber groups, 5 fighter groups, 4 troop carrier groups, 1 photo squadron,
and 1 night fighter detachment. In September, General MacArthur had been in-
formed that the following additional units were planned for his theater within
the next 40 days: the 312th Bombardment Group (D) with 33 B-24's already
in the theater and with 33 more en route; the 53th Fighter Group with 31 P-47's
en route and 69 others to be shipped; and the 418th Night Fighter Squadron with
12 P-70's, both of the latter units to depart in late September. It was
also understood that an additional light bomber group and a second night fighter
squadron had been allotted for early shipment.

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Perhaps the most critical need was for more fighter aircraft. At this time heavy attacks on both ~~Swak~~ and ~~Malaul~~ were being planned. These operations required fighters with "range, fire power, speed, rate of climb and maneuverability" in that order of priority. The Fifth Air Force rated the P-38 as the most desirable plane for general missions. The fire power of the P-47 made that plane popular, but its short range and its single motor detracted from its usefulness. According to General Kenney there was "a vast difference between the morale of pilots flying two-engined fighters and those flying single engined fighters over . . . long expanses of water."³¹

General Horney was not satisfied with his P-38 strength. He was authorized 276 aircraft for six twin-engine squadrons. After reaching a high of 212 P-38's in September 1943, the number declined to 150 in February 1944. He had lost 20 in August, 23 in September, and 27 in October. In addition to these losses, there were perhaps 30 others "which could not be economically repaired in depots." The arrivals had not compensated for these losses, and for the next few months gave no promise of so doing. From November through January, 55 P-38's arrived and 77 were lost. The Fifth Air Force was reduced, therefore, to a depot reserve of little more than 10 per cent instead of the authorized 50 per cent.³²

The War Department was fully cognizant of Kenney's lack of fighters. It was freed, however, with the old problem of theater priorities. The Eighth Air Force at this time was carrying out heavy raids against industrial targets in Germany. On 17 October 1943 it had hit Schweinfurt. Some 500 German fighters had met that attack and knocked down 60 American heavy bombers. The need there was for long-range fighters; consequently General Arnold informed Kenney that the War Department had decided to send all P-51's and P-38's to the United

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Kingdom during November and December, and that P-47's were to go to the Southwest Pacific as a substitute.

This meant an unprecedented flow of P-47's across the Pacific, as the War Department was already committed to sending the 58th Fighter Group equipped with 100 Thunderbolts to the Fifth Air Force. Immediately after the substitution had been decided upon, General Arnold directed that some 350 P-47's be delivered to Kenney during November and December. One message optimistically stated that 270 were to depart in November and 100 in December. This schedule was considered satisfactory by the Fifth Air Force, and it was decided to replace the P-39's, P-40's, and P-400's in eight veteran fighter squadrons before equipping the new 58th Group. Each squadron was to be assigned only 20 aircraft until all eight were brought up to that strength and sufficient additional P-47's were available to provide them with the authorized number.

The chief obstacle in the way of completing this program was the lack of shipping. Fighter aircraft were shipped deck-loaded or crated on cargo vessels, deck-loaded on tankers, and crowded into aircraft carriers. The normal delivery time for cargo vessels and tankers upon which P-47's could be shipped was approximately one month, while carriers could make the trip in less than three weeks. One carrier, the USS Copahue, which could carry approximately 60 P-47's, was scheduled for the Pacific route, but both Kenney and MacArthur urged that several others be allotted to speed deliveries. It was difficult, however, to convince OPD and the Navy of the urgency of fighter shipments at this time. The Navy argument was that no operations then in prospect justified the diversion of a carrier which would, thus, proportionately reduce striking power.

Some progress was made, however, in increasing the flow of fighter aircraft to the Pacific. Although the Navy refused to assign an additional

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carrier in December, it advanced the sailing date of one already assigned to 10 December, and agreed to allot four fast tankers, which could carry a total of perhaps 50 fighters, to the Southwest Pacific route. In addition 30 cargo vessels and 7 tankers were scheduled to sail from San Francisco between 20 November and 20 December. These would carry approximately 190 aircraft. Actually from October through December, 15 P-38's and 207 P-47's arrived in Australia.³⁶

The War Department

General Kenney was still dissatisfied with the situation. / had informed him on 16 December that his authorized 50 per cent reserve was to include those aircraft under repair and erection, and that monthly replacement would not flow at a fixed rate, but would be adjusted to actual losses. Kenney insisted that this did not meet his requirements, that his allocated strength should include only planes that were able to fly or had flown in his theater and were being repaired. Kenney won his point. P-38's, which had been scheduled for the South Pacific, were diverted to the Southwest, because, as General Arnold wrote to Lt. Gen. Millard Harmon, "You were just a little bit 'fat' and . . . Kenney was getting far behind." As a result 47 P-38's in addition to 201 P-47's were listed for departure to the Southwest Pacific between 23 December 1943 and 31 January 1944. At the same time, after a conference with General Marshall, Arnold decided to authorize the Fifth Air Force a 70 instead of a 50 per cent depot reserve in fighters.³⁷

This increased fleet, large as it was, did not appreciably increase the total number of first-line fighters in the theater. Only one new group, the 58th, was added. The remainder of the new aircraft were to replace the worn-out aircraft that had been flying since 1942. Allocations of light bombers,

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on the other hand, provided for the new groups in the Fifth Air Force. Three new units played an important part in the consideration of future operations, for together with the 3d Group, equipped entirely with A-20's by January 1944, they were scheduled to perform many close cooperation missions as the Allies drove across New Guinea. Nevertheless, by 1 February 1944 the 17th Bombardment Group, although its personnel had reached the theater, had not received its aircraft, and the 31st had been flying combat missions for only a month. The reason for this was a continued lack of A-20's, the preferred light bombers. From January to September 1943, only 13 had reached the Southwest Pacific. From then on the number increased, with 45 in September, 22 in October, 27 in November, and 35 in December. There were no more than enough to equip the 3d Group; so the 31st flew P-40's until the middle of January when sufficient A-20's are available. During the period light bomber arrivals, although slower than proposed in some of the rather vague commitments, nevertheless corresponded almost exactly to figures cited to Kenney by General Arnold in December.

Although no new medium bombardment units were allocated to the Southwest Pacific during the fall of 1943, problems still existed as to the number and type of B-25's to be allocated to the Fifth Air Force. For medium bombardment General Kenney favored low-level strafers equipped with at least eight .50-cal. machine guns firing forward, but in August the first of the new B-25's had arrived with only a 75-cal. gun and two .50's firing forward. This armament had been considered quite inadequate by the Fifth Air Force. The service command had strengthened the fuselage and attached at least four more .50's. Kenney had some hope for this "boofed-up" model, but had not changed earlier opinions about the current. He argued that that amount of weight was more valuable in

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machine guns which "throw more weight of metal in a single run," and insisted that with eight .50-cal. machine guns his strainers had little difficulty in beating down the deck fire of anything attached up to and including the Japanese light cruiser.
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By the middle of October, production of the B-25B had ceased, and future allocations were to be B-25C and J models. Hensley had vigorously complained about certain proposed characteristics of the B-25B in August and September, and it was feared that he might refuse to give it a fair trial. Accordingly General Gillis urged Army to conduct the test personally so that "his boys" would not influence the decision. The B-25B seemed an answer to at least two of Hensley's objections. It had provision for a co-pilot, which the B did not have, and for interchangeable bomb rack and eight-gun noses. The eight-gun nose was particularly desirable for low-level strafing, but it was not expected that such a model would be available before April.
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More important than the type of B-25 was the number to be allocated to the Southwest Pacific. With three medium bomb-raid groups, General Hensley was authorized a total of 257 aircraft. In September, October, and November he maintained approximately that number on hand in the theater. But the number on hand in the squadron was considerably fewer than the authorized strength. Some planes were being repaired in Australian depots, and others had not yet been assigned. On 13 November and again on 11 December, for example, there were only 182 B-25's assigned to the squadron and of these there were no more than 143 in commission.
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Hensley feared even a greater decline in medium bomb-raid strength. Modification difficulties in the United States and diversion to other theaters

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had slowed down the flow of B-25's to the Fifth Air Force to such an extent that the four squadrons of the 22d Group had no more than 35 assigned. Kenney believed, furthermore, that there was little chance for an early improvement. The 22d Group was a "medium-altitude" organization, and only one of this type bomber, the B-25D, had arrived in October, and none were expected in November. Ninety-four were scheduled to leave the United States in November, but Kenney pointed out that these might not arrive before the end of January. General Arnold was more optimistic and assured Kenney on 9 November that he expected the required strength of 252 medium bombers to be reached in December. He added six weeks later that 117 B-25's were scheduled for departure before the end of January, and that the "proposed overstrength would permit the return of older models for training in the United States." The proposed overstrength, however, was not to exist until March. Although 76 B-25's of all types arrived between October 1945 and the end of February 1946, 36 were lost, and the number on hand showed a gradual decline during these months from 265 in October to 224 in February.

The difficulty in obtaining B-25's together with a need for more heavy bombers suggested to General Kenney a plan for converting the 22d Group to a heavy bomber organization. He had been completely won over by the performance of the B-24 and considered it more flexible and efficient than the B-25 for "level bombing at both minimum and high altitude." In a letter of 6 November he pointed out to General Arnold that he had lucrative targets in the North-western Area as well as such important objectives as Hanoi and Hanoi in the Northeast. With three heavy groups, of which one was allotted only 35 planes

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in its table of organization, he found it difficult to maintain distant bombing attacks. He believed, however, that if a fourth group were added he "could hit a devastating blow at any one point over a three thousand mile arc or could maintain steady pressure on several targets depending on the needs of the situation." He calculated that the change which he had suggested would require few additional personnel from the United States, as at least 1/3 experienced crews could be made up from the 228 Group as constituted.

Kennedy's confidence in obtaining necessary personnel for a new heavy bombardment organization could not have extended to securing more aircraft. From the early summer of 1943, he had been struggling to obtain 197 heavy bombers, the number authorized for his three groups plus a 50 per cent reserve. On 2 October General Arnold advised Kennedy that while "touching plans" for 197 heavy bombers were "still echoing through this Headquarters," it appeared that the Fifth Air Force actually had 206 on hand, a proof, according to Arnold, that "we sometimes accomplish things here too." This almost jocular radio message gave Kennedy a "chuckle," since he pointed out that October figures on heavy bombers included 28 B-17's all of which had been in the theater since October 1942.

Nevertheless heavy bomber strength gradually increased during the final months of 1943 and the early months of 1944. From October through February, 70 B-24's were lost and 163 were received. The number on hand fluctuated somewhat, but by February 1944 there were 219 first-line and 40 second-line B-24's and 20 second-line B-17's on hand. At first there had been some opposition at AAF Headquarters in regard to the proposed conversion of a medium to a heavy group. The Chief of Operational Plans Division, for example, stated on 3 December that such a change was impossible within the framework of the 273

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Group Program, and asserted that the possibility of maintaining an additional heavy group in crecs and aircraft was extremely remote. Before the end of the month, there was an indication of a more generous allocation of heavy bombers when CGIA informed Kenney that the 310th Group was to be authorized a unit equipment of 48 instead of 35 B-24's. Shortly thereafter General Kenney arrived in Washington and began to press for another group. By 7 January he had made his point. The 22d Group was to be converted with a unit equipment of 48 B-24's; the first of these were to leave the United States on 12 January; and all aircraft complete with combat crews were to arrive in the theater by the end of the month.

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Not only was heavy striking power of the V Bomber Command being strengthened by the growing number of B-24's, but its effectiveness was being improved by the addition of new types of equipment. One of the most important developments was the arrival of B-24's equipped with blind-bombing equipment. The allocation of these to the Fifth Air Force was to be of distinct advantage, as the Japanese had shown considerable ability in slipping through an air blockade under cover of darkness. Although B-17's and B-24's of the 138 and 90th Groups had probably flown more reconnaissance than actual bombardment sorties, their reports of shipping were dependent entirely upon visual observation. Better equipped for armed reconnaissance missions at night were FLY's of the IAF and of naval units attached to the Fifth Air Force. These aircraft were equipped with the inferior SCR-521, the first development made in air-to-surface-vessel radar. When radar contact had been made with the surface vessel, the pilot flew out of range of the target's antiaircraft defenses long enough to determine the number of enemy ships and their speed and direction. After a target was chosen, preferably a ship that was lagging

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or out of position, the radar operator "homed" the pilot over it, and bombing was then done visually.

The PBY's made an amazing record in spite of their poor radar equipment. The crews were experienced and knew the limitations of their equipment. They usually flew three patrols a night. One report of January 1943 stated that to date there had not been a night when a "Cat" had not been out. Early in 1943, however, General Kenney had felt the need for more up-to-date equipment which could not only locate the target but bomb it without visual aid. This type of bombing had been under study before America's entry into the war both in the United States and in England, and in May Kenney had been assured that some blind-bombing attachments would be available to him in July. At this he had sent one of his most experienced heavy bomber pilots, Maj. Edward J. Scott, Jr., and a bombardier who had done considerable night bombing, Lt. Frederick O. Blair, to Washington. These men were to be assigned for training in radar bombing and were to return to the Southwest Pacific with the first B-24's equipped for these operations. The need for training was greater than at first imagined because of the specialized and untested nature of the equipment, and Kenney had been informed before the end of May that the first aircraft would not be ready for shipment until September 1943 and a complete unit probably not until October. It was finally decided that four B-24's from the Southwest Pacific's June allocations and eight more from the July were to be modified for blind bombing as soon as available. At the same time Kenney requested that they have both nose and tail turrets and "free-firing bottom guns."

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By 10 October, 13 B-24's equipped for blind bombing had reached the Southwest Pacific. They were immediately assigned to the 63d Bombardment Squadron as replacements for 13 B-17's and 1's which that veteran organization had been flying for the past 12 months. The radar equipment of the B-24's known as LRB (low altitude bombardment) consisted of the SCR-7173 Sea Search Radar (SSR), the interrogator-receiver, SCR-729, and a number of other devices including an altimeter, AN/APN-1, and a radar scope for the bombardier and a bomb-release mechanism known as AN/ABQ-5. In spite of the fact that the project had been under discussion since May, the crews that manned the B-24's were not prepared for immediate operations. The pilots had had comparatively little B-24 flying time and almost no night flying in the Liberator. The radar operators had had insufficient training in the use of their complicated equipment and had dropped no more than five practice bombs. Technicians connected with the project had not been furnished with at least two important technical reports prior to their departure, and had to spend much time in arriving at conclusions which had been established in the United States months before. According to a report from the Fifth Air Force, "the crews in general were not sold on the possibilities of the equipment and hence . . . tried all sorts of other bombing tactics while being indoctrinated."

There were, moreover, a number of disadvantages in using the new planes in combat. The radar equipment was so heavy that the bomb load was supposed to have been reduced by 1,000 pounds. Frequently, however, the 63d Squadron's B-24's still carried 6,000 pounds of bombs. The turret too was cut down, since the radar parabolic spinner replaced the belly turret. This spinner also reduced the cruising speed of the plane by five to seven miles an hour. Thus the bomb load was reduced by approximately 15 per cent, and the defensive

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51 fire power by 20 per cent.

By January 1944, however, few could question the value of the LTB project. The 63d Squadron had flown 126 sorties of which 86 per cent were completed. Of those incomplete, 2 had been because of radar failure, 12 because of weather, and 4 because of mechanical trouble. Their sorties had resulted in 52 contacts and 41 attacks in which the bombardiers scored 20 hits and 17 near misses. They claimed 3 warships and 73,000 tons of merchant shipping sunk or damaged during the period. Genney was well pleased with these results and urged that 10 more aircraft of this type be sent immediately, 4 to replace those lost, and 3 a month thereafter to take care of attrition.

The addition of a squadron of "blind bombers" and the conversion of the 22d Bombardment Group to B-24's considerably strengthened the bomber command. General Genney, however, was not satisfied merely with more heavy bombers. He had his eye on the development of the B-29. In June 1943 General H. H. Arnold's headquarters had requested all available data on that aircraft for planning purposes. At this time Genney assumed that he was to receive the first B-29 unit, and he suggested that Col. Ralph L. Hoene, former command officer of the 96th Group, command the organization and man it with "otter big ship crewmen" who had returned to the United States from the Fifth Air Force. But General Arnold refused to commit himself as to future allocations of B-29's. Production had not lived up to expectations, and he could do no more than say that "should it be decided to send B-29 units to the CBI, you will be notified sufficiently in advance of their arrival to allow for necessary preparations."

53 Three months later, General Arnold himself reintroduced the question.

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On 25 October in a radio message, General Kenney was requested to express his "personal views" on the employment of B-29's against Japan, assuring that 100 of the WLR aircraft would initiate sustained operations by mid-1944. Apparently Kenney thought that this practically guaranteed him the big planes. He called the message the best news he had heard for a long time, and within four days he had prepared a reply.

General Kenney stated that the initial assignment of the B-29 should be "to deprive Japan of the one essential commodity which she must have to carry on war--oil." He argued as follows:

Japan had no synthetic fuel facilities to amount to anything and the loss of her Netherlands East Indies oil would be a fatal blow. When her reserve stocks are gone, her navy and her merchant marine, which supply the garrisons of her far flung empire, would be locked up in her harbors unable to move. Her airplanes and trucks and everything else depending on oil fuel would be out of action. With only her reserve stocks left, Japan would immediately have to cull in her horns. She could not afford the maintenance of garrisons all over the stretch from Sumatra to the Solomons. If any of these distant areas were attacked she would think a long time before sending reinforcements or relief expeditions which would not only use up fuel for the transports, cargo vessels and escorting fleet and air units but would have to burn up still more fuel to supply these increased forces if they succeeded in getting them there. The finest way in the world to soften up Japanese positions on the route to the Philippines and Japan is to get rid of Japan's oil.

Kenney asserted, furthermore, that over 90 per cent of Japan's oil came from the Netherlands East Indies where it was both produced and refined, that "every single oil field, oil well and refinery" was within range of the B-29 carrying a minimum bomb load of 10,000 pounds and operating from existing fields between Davao and Darwin, and that bomb loads up to 20,000 pounds could be dropped on other important oil targets within the arc Sumatra, Singapore, Borneo, Mindanao, and Palau.

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Kenney added the following estimate of oil production in the Indies:

The big target is the Palembang area in southern Sumatra, where half of the crude output and over half of the refining is done. Twenty-five million barrels of crude and thirty-four million barrels of refined oil and gasoline out of a total yearly requirement of approximately fifty-two million barrels come out of the Djambi-Palembang-Soengei-Gerong area.

The other two important crude production areas are the Sarawak and Brunei fields of north Borneo, which are good for fifteen million barrels and the Kantau-Brandan fields of northern Sumatra with an annual production of twelve million barrels. Tarekan and Balikpapan in Borneo and some other fields in Java contribute, but are small and unimportant compared with the large fields mentioned above.

Balikpapan's main importance as a target lies in the fact that its refineries are working to a capacity variously estimated at from six to eighteen million barrels. A lot of crude oil from the rest of Borneo is shipped to Balikpapan to be refined. Lutong(Miri) in north Borneo refines six million barrels a year. Pangkalan-Brandan in northern Sumatra refines nine million barrels and Sourabaja, Java, five million barrels.

In General Kenney's plan for the employment of the B-29, shipping held second priority as a target. With five airdromes in northern Australia capable of handling 25 B-29's each, three at Dobodura and Port Moresby, and others under construction in the Markham valley, he asserted that "all shipping moving into or out of every port south of a line stretching from Singapore to Saigon to Manila to the Marianas to the Marshalls" could be blockaded. He added that such targets as Truk and Palau could be hit with bomb loads of 20,000 pounds per B-29.

General Kenney believed that using the B-29 against strategic targets in the Netherlands East Indies would hasten the end of the war. He pointed out that RENO III had been drawn up in accordance with expected allocations. Paralyzing Japan's ability to maintain and supply her overseas garrisons by B-29 attack would step up the timetable, he asserted, particularly if ground

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forces and shipping were available to follow through.

If you want the B-29 used efficiently and effectively where it will do the most good in the shortest time, the Southwest Pacific Area is the place and the Fifth Air Force can do the job. If the B-29 is to come out here early next year in the numbers you have indicated and the combat troops, service troops and shipping are made available, I honestly believe we can be in Mindanao in 1944. Japan may easily collapse back to her original empire by that time, due to her oil shortage alone. It is conceivable that the way to forced to sue for peace with certain overwhelming defeat staring her in the face. If not, from Mindanao the whole industrial area of Japan itself is wide open to the B-29. I can take care of her Air Force. With that gone, her naval forces and merchant marine immobilized and her industry subject to heavy bombing, the end should be reached quickly. 1945 should wind up the show.

The arguments were carefully considered by General Arnold. Just before leaving for the Teheran conference early in November, however, he decided against committing the B-29 to the Southwest Pacific. It was generally agreed that the very heavy bombers could be used with telling effect there, but Arnold was convinced that targets in the NEI were secondary to an all-out strategic bombing offensive against Japan. Hensley probably would have agreed with such a thesis. The difference of opinion lay in how best to acquire bases from which strategic bombing of Japan could be carried out. Hensley, who supported General MacArthur's concept, argued that the thrust from Australia and New Guinea to Mindanao would best accomplish this, and at the same time would provide strategic targets before Japan itself was within range. "In this way," he concluded, "we do not have to carry out a costly takeout of the mandated islands, with the going getting tougher all the way to Japan; we do not have to fire a shot at Singapore or Hong Kong and we do not have to freeze in the Aleutians or get lost and crash up in the Alaskan fogs. We can shorten the way by at least a year with its attendant expenditures of blood and treasure." General Arnold, not convinced, apparently favored the

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Central Pacific route; and on 12 November Kenney was informed that the B-29 would not be committed to his theater because of assignment elsewhere. Four days later, General Giles softened the blow by saying that he was convinced that Kenney would receive some B-29's later and urged the latter to continue his planning for their employment.

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By the end of the second year of the war with Japan, plans had thus been laid for a decisive thrust toward the Japanese home waters. General MacArthur and his aides favored a concentration of effort on an advance from New Guinea through the Philippines. The Joint Chiefs of Staff, on the other hand, clearly favored the Central Pacific route. Major operations, however, were still scheduled for the forces in the Southwest Pacific. In these operations air power was destined for a pre-eminent role. Advances were visualized primarily as a means to neutralize enemy landing fields and to establish bases for Allied air power.

The Fifth Air Force was considered strong enough for at least the early stages of the campaign. Although the lack of long-range escort for bombers was a decided weakness, fighter strength at the end of the year was greater than ever before. The arrival of hundreds of heavily armed P-57's had made it possible to replace old and dilapidated P-40's and P-39's, to provide better defense for advanced bases, and to carry out more effective offensive sweeps and short-range escort missions into enemy territory. Bomber strength too was increasing except in medium bombers, whose number, though quadrupled in 12 months, was slowly declining toward the end of the year. At the same time, heavy bomber strength had approximately doubled, and instead of one squadron of light bombers, there was a four-squadron group with two more groups soon

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to enter combat. This growing offensive strength had been demonstrated in large-scale attacks upon Lae and in pre-invasion assaults upon the Huon Peninsula in August and September. But these were little more than warm-up missions for the bombing offensives which the Fifth Air Force was soon to launch against Rabaul, Cape Gloucester, and the numerous Japanese bases from Saider to Hollandia.

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Chapter III

SERVICES AND SUPPLY

To plan a determined air assault upon Japanese-held strong-points in the Southwest Pacific theater required not merely combat crews and aircraft but proficient service personnel of all kinds and a dependable flow of supplies from factories to organizations in the field. In October 1942 ground personnel of the Fifth Air Force worked night and day to keep as many as possible of the few planes assigned in commission. The flow of new parts from the United States could not be relied upon, repair and maintenance tools were almost nonexistent, poor communications and transportation together with inexperienced personnel resulted too often in a general state of confusion. In order to send out 10 or 20 B-17's in a single attack, parts had to be scrounged together, frequently by robbing other grounded planes, and virtually all bomber operations had to come to a halt until sufficient aircraft had been wheedled into flying condition.

A year later the picture was greatly changed. Under the direction of the Fifth Air Force Service Command, Australian production had increased. Fuel cells and belly tanks, tires and tubes, engine parts, vehicles, and a variety of other supplies were flowing from local factories. Large depots, employing both military and Australian civilian personnel, were located at Brisbane, Townsville, and Port Moresby. Supplies from the United States were arriving regularly not only at ports on the Australian mainland but at Port Moresby and Milne Bay as well.

Although this increased activity was eminently desirable, in many ways it complicated rather than simplified supply and maintenance problems. There

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were more supplies to distribute, more elaborate equipment to maintain, and more units, located at points more distant from the main centers of supply, to service. In August 1943 an effort had been made to systemize the supply procedure of the air service command, and three months later the new system was reaffirmed and clarified. Previously the depot at Brisbane had been the "control depot" for the entire theater. The new directives made over-all control of supply functions the responsibility of the Supply Division of Headquarters, Fifth Air Force Service Command. Intransit warehouses, established at Brisbane, Townsville, and Port Moresby, were to requisition directly on the Supply Division and to supply all air force organizations within well-defined areas. It was the responsibility of each supply unit to maintain proper stock levels for its organization by drawing on the intransit warehouses, to recommend revisions of tables of supply, and to transfer/excess stocks to the depots. ²

The new supply procedure did not immediately solve the countless problems that had badgered every unit commander from air force down to the lowliest detachment. One of the most bothersome of these problems was to equip units satisfactorily upon their arrival in the theater. Coordination was not good between authorities at the ports of embarkation and in the theater. Issuing agencies in the United States frequently informed units that items in the table of basic allowances were to be drawn in the theater. The units arrived in the theater only to find that the items were unavailable. This resulted in weeks of inactivity. The 708th and 710th Signal Companies with a complement of 708 officers and men, for example, arrived at Doboaura without tentage and cots. For transportation the 710th had six jeeps. The 708th had no vehicles whatsoever, and what was worse, had none of its basic radio

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equipment. As General Wurtsmith put it, this was analagous to artillery arriving without guns.³

The 712th Signal Company had an even more unfortunate experience. It was authorized 15 radar sets. The equipment was shipped on approximately four different vessels, receivers and transmitters on one, antennae and towers on another, and so on. By the end of December, the company was in a staging area near Brisbane, but their radars were incomplete. They could not even carry on an adequate training program. It was finally learned that a part of their equipment had been unloaded in New Guinea "thereby scattering the organizational equipment over the entire Southwest Pacific Area with no one complete set at any one place."⁴

Numerous other units experienced examples of poor planning. The 60th Depot Repair Squadron, on board the General John Pope, docked in Brisbane. After making all preparations to debark there, the ship sailed for Townsville, "amid various and sundry comments regarding the efficiency of the Army in general." The Pope reached Townsville on 3 November, but almost immediately headed toward Milne Bay, arriving two days later. The squadron was then transferred to the Dutch steamer Van Heusen destined for Port Moresby. Two and a half days later, however, the ship had not moved, and landing barges began unloading all personnel. On 10 November, they were ordered to Moresby⁵ by air.

The 1906th Quartermaster Truck Company had an equally exasperating experience. It debarked at Sydney early in November 1943, and traveled 15 miles by rail to Camp Granville. On 15 November, it departed by rail for Brisbane, arriving there on the following day. On 24 November the supply officer went to Townsville to meet the Liberty ship Frank Norris, which contained about 80

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per cent of the unit's equipment. The equipment was then sent to Brisbane by rail, a distance of 700 miles. On 22 December the unit with its equipment left Brisbane in the Liberty ship Frank G. Newlands and arrived at Townsville three days later where it remained until the 27th before sailing for Milne Bay.⁶

The principal reason for these and other examples of confused logistics was that there had been no policy established which required the loading of personnel and equipment of the same unit on the same ship. As a result, equipment might arrive at one port and personnel at another hundreds of miles away. One installment might arrive days or weeks after the others. This lack of system had been frequently attacked by theater commanders, and on 12 October 1943 General MacArthur made a new suggestion. He requested that he be informed at an advanced date in regard to all troops destined for shipment to his theater during a given month. He would then notify the port of embarkation as to the final destination of each unit, and the port could load the troops on ships according to priorities and destination. MacArthur also urged that ships should be unit-loaded, or if this were not feasible, that organizational equipment should be preshipped to the proper destination, and that housekeeping equipment (tents, cots, mess equipment) be "loaded with troops for first out discharge."⁷

Although General MacArthur's suggestions were carefully considered at Headquarters, Army Service Forces, he received little immediate satisfaction. The idea of designating a destination in advance of troop movements was considered favorably, but MacArthur's other points were generally rejected. It was asserted that unit-loading was not practicable in all instances, that status of equipment, of training, and of type of ship required provided too many complicating factors, and that as a result unit-loading might lead to a

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delay of several months. It was suggested, however, that MacArthur submit a priority list for which unit-loading was particularly desirable. The suggestion to pre-ship organizational equipment was also turned down. It was argued that if this were done, equipment would have to be withdrawn from units 45 days prior to "personal readiness date," a move which, it was believed, would materially interfere with training. MacArthur's final request in regard to housekeeping equipment was accepted in principle, but he was reminded that such equipment could accompany the troops only if there were sufficient cargo space available on the vessel.

The procedure of supplying and equipping new units therefore showed little immediate improvement. In December 1943 General Kenney attempted to keep the ports of embarkation advised as to desired points of discharge for organizational equipment, but suggested a standard procedure of shipping all goods to Milne Bay if ports of discharge were not known. Organizational equipment, however, still arrived on several boats and at separate ports scattered from Sydney to Port Moresby. On 8 December, the Air Service Command at Patterson Field announced a partial solution. Equipment was not to be released from intransit depots and ports in the United States unless it were more than 90 per cent complete; materiel was to be released "on the first of the month preceding the month during which the organization will move to the overseas destination"; the theater was to be advised of the proposed pre-shipment and requested to name debarkation points; and if this information were not furnished, shipment was to be dispatched to Milne Bay. This policy was made more palatable by holding out some hope to General Kenney that a detachment with detailed information on a shipment might be sent by air in advance of its unit.

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Although the problem of unit-loading and of supplying units with complete organizational equipment was probably at the root of the confusion in supply which faced every air force organization in the Southwest Pacific, the difficulties of units stationed in the forward jungle areas were aggravated by corroding weather and a lack of transportation facilities. A notable example of supply difficulties was that of the signal units stationed in New Guinea in October and November of 1943. Groups of spare parts were shipped from the United States with the apparent intention of building up a nine-month supply which could then be maintained by requisition. Much of the radar equipment in the theater, however, was old and in need of overhauling. Fifteen SCR-270's and six SCR-268/516's, for example, had been in continuous operation for over a year. As a consequence, the parts were used up as they arrived, and numerous requisitions and radio follow-ups failed to produce additional parts. From hard experience, radar units had learned that their requirements in equipment far exceeded the table of basic allowances, and that duplicates were necessary in view of the uncertainty of regular supply channels.¹⁰

Combat units too were constantly afflicted with supply deficiencies. From time to time in the fall of 1943, the 35th Fighter Squadron lacked fire extinguishers; the 80th Fighter Squadron, among other things, cylinders and hoses for hand pumps on five ^{-ton} wing jacks and breaker-point assemblies for magnetos; the 432d Fighter Squadron, tools, rivets, aluminium sheets, hydraulic fluid and batteries; the 409th Bombardment Squadron, hydraulic instruments; the 500th Bombardment Squadron, plexiglas domes for the B-25 upper turret; and the 531st Bombardment Squadron, gas caps and gas-cap gaskets. The 65th Bombardment Squadron was particularly hard hit by the lack of parts. In December it reported an acute shortage of voltage regulators, generators,

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solenoid starters, radar replacement parts, and test equipment. During the first week in December it had 12 planes without tail bumper tires and tubes, 4 were operating with only 3 generators, and 2 were "affected by the short-¹¹ age of main carburetor screens for Chandler-Evans type carburetors."

Such details indicate failures in logistical planning. It is true that the problem of theater priorities complicated allocations and upset scheduled operations. In December, for example, a lack of 14 x 50-in. tail wheel casings grounded numerous Fifth Air Force P-47's. This happened to be a critical shortage in all theaters at this time, and the available supply had to be stringently rationed. But there are also clear instances of carelessness, as in the case of a shipment to Australia of belly tanks for A-20G's. The tanks were ordered in November 1943. By the first week in January 1944, 19 had arrived and the remainder were en route, but they could not be attached because necessary equipment, support flooring, brackets, clamps, lines and other fittings, together with technical data as to the installation, had not accompanied the project.¹²

But errors in supply procedure were committed in every echelon within the theater itself as well as in the United States. Requisition channels were long, tedious, and sometimes clogged with red tape. One squadron complained that an organization requisitioning engineer supplies had to acquire approving signatures at every level of command before the requisition was turned over to the actual supply agency, and that none of this paper had any bearing on the availability or final approval of the materiel. Supplies then came through channels, the requisitioning organization could not check an ordered part until it was actually received, and then it might turn out to be the wrong part. Some units received new types of aircraft without receiving suitable

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parts or technical manuals; others were moved to points where suitable parts were unavailable. On one occasion, for example, The 56th Troop Carrier Squadron was transferred from Port Moresby to Dobodura and found that only fighter parts were carried at the supply depot at its new station. Supply personnel, overworked and sometimes inefficient, frequently could not find parts even though they might have them. The 475th Fighter Group operating out of Dobodura had perhaps an unusually hard experience. Its engineering and maintenance sections were almost completely lacking in tools and technical orders for the first five or six months of operations, the only tools available being a few that "a number of high pressure hustlers were able to obtain by various methods." During the last week of October ignition failures, caused by oil leaks, harassed the mechanics. These troubles should have caused little difficulty since their repair was comparatively simple. But the proper oil seals were not on hand, and "supply" stated that none were available. "eventually the group engineering officers went to the "Air Corps supply warehouse" which had turned them away before and personally found in the storage bins the parts needed.

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A lack of supplies and technical information hamstrung the depots as well as the combat units. In December 1943 ADVON reported that stock shortages constantly recurred at the depot at Port Moresby, and that this had resulted in periodic grounding of all kinds of aircraft. Nose sections were unavailable for B-24's, B-25's, and A-20's; low-pressure brakes for C-47's; landing gear struts, 27-in. wheels, and propellers for P-40N's; escape hatches, fuel booster pumps, and a variety of other parts for P-38's; and tail wheels, tires, tubes, windshields, and canopy glass for P-47's.

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When parts did arrive, the lack of technical manuals and parts catalogs frequently delayed their being put to use. As late as December 1943, no official technical information had been received on the A-20G; for the past five months an operations handbook was the only source of information on the P-40N; the only technical information on the P-38 concerned the G model, although various others had been flying in the theater for months and the J had already begun to arrive. An electronic supercharger regulator was being installed on the newly arrived B-24J, but no parts catalog, book of instructions, or other detailed information was available for that installation.¹⁵

The smoothness with which the supply system worked obviously had a profound effect upon the solution of maintenance problems in the squadrons and in the depots. The ground crews who tended the planes, and other service personnel who repaired all types of equipment as well as performed the major overhaul of aircraft, were almost entirely dependent upon getting a part when it was needed. But adequate maintenance was also a function of the personnel themselves. During the fall of 1943, there was little criticism of the aptitude of the ground crews, but the bombardment squadrons repeatedly complained that an insufficient number of ordnance, engineering, and armament men were assigned to the squadrons. Some units were not assigned their authorized strength; others claimed the need for more. A heavy bombardment squadron, for example, recommended six or preferably seven maintenance men per airplane rather than five. The squadrons equipped with the B-25 strafers pointed out that their table of organization did not include sufficient ground personnel to care for the eight .50-cal. forward-firing machine guns.¹⁶

Maintenance men on occasion found their duties made more difficult by the inexperience and carelessness of pilots. This was perhaps not a general

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complaint but it was at least important enough to merit emphasis at regular meetings of pilots, engineering officers, and factory representatives of the 475th Fighter Group. Inexperienced pilots of this group were frequently unable to determine the cause of engine failure, and perhaps would merely inform the crew chief that the engine was "rough." With a better description of the trouble the mechanics could more quickly get to the source of the trouble and repair the planes in much less time. Flyers in releasing belly tanks sometimes failed to switch selector valves to another tank before dropping. This introduced air instead of fuel into the carburetor and caused backfiring, which in turn could result in blown-out intercoolers. In mid-October 1943 some of the crew chiefs discovered an excess of hard carbon flakes in the automatic oil filters which occasionally resulted in complete clogging of the fuel system. It was discovered that this was caused by the pilots' using high manifold pressure above war emergency power during flight. Carbon in the filters could result in unfiltered oil passing into the engine and possible injury to the bearings.

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Communications personnel were not free from criticism. In December 1943 the deficiency was particularly acute in radio and radar and to a lesser extent in wire and cryptography units. A report by the Fifth Air Force Signal Officer stated that "officers arriving in the theater with specification numbers 0110 and 0120 have been, in general, given theoretical training in the States and/or England designed to fit them for the technical responsibilities. . . . It is noted, however, that in many instances civilian background of such officers has not justified training them as radar officers." Criticism was also aimed at the specialized training of enlisted men. Radar operators,

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whose task was "probably the most important one of all at a radar section," were frequently chosen from those who could not qualify for a more technical position. Signal corps radar schools provided radar mechanics with information on circuits of specific equipment which they might be called upon to maintain, but training in emplacing high-powered stations and maintaining them at maximum operating efficiency was lacking.

Major service functions were performed by the depots at Brisbane, Townsville, and Port Moresby or by Australian concerns some of which were devoted entirely to war work. From the early months of the war, all facilities had been working at top speed, and it was recognized in late 1943 that a clear-cut definition of duties might produce greater efficiency. On 23 October Colonel Brownfield assigned certain responsibilities of his command as follows: fighter overhaul to Depot No. 3 at Port Moresby; bombardment reception and overhaul, erection of about 10 per cent of newly arrived fighters, and overhaul of transport aircraft of the 54th Troop Carrier Wing to Depot No. 2 at Townsville; erection of approximately 90 per cent of the new fighters and bombardment overhaul and modification to Archerfield near Brisbane; bombardment and transport reception to Amberley Field near Brisbane; transport overhaul to the Directorate of Air Transport at Mascot Field, Sydney; transport overhaul and conversion for DAF to Australian National Airways (ANA) at Essendon near Melbourne; and erection of a small number of fighter aircraft to Commonwealth Aircraft near Melbourne.

Meanwhile plans were being considered for concentrating in the Brisbane area the overhaul of engines by civilian firms. By October 1943 the Brisbane plan, sponsored initially by Colonel Fry of the 81st Depot Group, had developed to such an extent that it was decided to expand the overhaul facilities of the

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Ford Motor Company and General Motors located at Rocklea and those of the Quantas Empire Airways and the Australian National Airways situated at Archerfield. At that time Colonel Brownfield indicated that the Rocklea-Archerfield establishments would be the main civilian repair base for a long time, subject to the exigencies of war. It was hoped that a total of 413 engines could be overhauled there in January 1944, and that this number would be increased to 799 in June.

By the fall of 1943, in addition to the engine-overhaul program, Australian civilian concerns were manufacturing almost every conceivable type of part for the RAAF and the Fifth Air Force. Electrical accessories and equipment such as generators, magnetos, and condensers were manufactured by Technico, Ltd, a licensee of Bendix Aviation Corporation; aircraft wheels, brakes, and hydraulic activating cylinders and valves were repaired by Better Brakes, Pty., Ltd., and aircraft propellers by DeHavilland Aircraft, Pty., Ltd., both in Sydney; Goodyear Tire and Rubber Company turned out auxiliary fuel tanks and aircraft tires and tubes; and the Ford Motor Company, the shops of G. A. Fordhan, the Commonwealth Aircraft Corporation, and many others devoted much of their time and energies to production of aviation parts and supplies. In general, service command representatives considered the Australian mechanics skillful and their work satisfactory. There were, however, some complaints. From time to time the output of Goodyear was considered inadequate, and some reports indicated that Australian-overhauled engines failed to give satisfaction.

Although civilian commercial firms performed a multitude of tasks in 1943 and 1944, the principal burden still fell upon military organizations subject to the air service command. The civilian firms were established

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and fixed; the military depots and service units had to be mobile and able to follow or, in some cases, actually to accompany the advance. The depots at Brisbane, Townsville, and Port Moresby performed the same sort of tasks as those assigned to the civilian agencies. They overhauled engines and aircraft accessories, inspected, packed, and repaired parachutes, painted aircraft, filled oxygen cylinders, and installed armament. They were particularly ingenious in finding short cuts and making odd pieces of equipment from the materiel on hand. The machine shop at Townsville developed any number of new ideas in its machine, engine, and accessory overhaul shops. For example, it produced among other things special propeller tools, a jig-filing machine, an indicating apparatus for hollow-steel propellers, an electric arc welder for high-melting-point soldering on armatures, and an undercutter for removing mica between commutator bars on electric motor armatures. At Port Moresby, the parachute shop made such articles as canvas jeep tops, moving-picture screens, trailer covers, water bags, tarp covers for airplanes, flags, belts, khaki clothes, and silk panties. The sheet metal shop manufactured rain troughs, latrine funnels, and lamp shades; and the welding shop produced washing machines, a dentist drilling machine, and an aircooled oven.

More dramatic than service command activities of maintenance and repair was the development of modifications to increase the tactical efficiency of combat aircraft. These included major improvements on the A-20, B-25, B-24, and P-47. Although the various depots were turning out these modified planes almost in assembly-line numbers by the summer of 1943, modifications continued to absorb the ingenuity and energy of engineers and technicians. Perhaps the most extensive of these modification projects had been the conversion of the B-25 medium-altitude bomber into a low-level strafe. By the fall of 1943,

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the Townsville depot had converted all the B-25's assigned to the Fifth Air Force with the exception of a few flown by the 22d Group. Actually 172 B-25G's and D's had been converted. The problem was then complicated by the arrival of the B-25G, which had less than the desired eight forward-firing machine guns. The service command made a number of structural changes on about 40 of the new model, but it still proved to be tactically unsatisfactory. Kenney reported that four machine guns firing forward were insufficient to neutralize the antiaircraft fire from enemy ships, that the slow rate of fire of the 75-mm. cannon made only one or two shots possible per attack, that the necessity for accurate aiming of the cannon prevented evasive action, and that the necessity for individual sighting of the cannon made formation flying difficult.

23

The combat record of the two squadrons flying the G, the 822d and the 823d, seemed to support General Kenney's criticisms. These two squadrons carried out some very effective strafing missions but in so doing they lost six aircraft in less than three months, losses which Kenney blamed on the cannon. The other two squadrons of the 38th Group, the 71st and 405th, lost five B-25G's and D's during the same period, but three of these were shot down during a particularly dangerous raid on Rabaul on 2 November, in which the B-25G's did not participate.

24

Although initial steps had been taken in the United States to develop an eight-gun nose as an alternate for the cannon, Kenney turned the problem over to his air service command. On 20 November 1943 Colonel Bertrandias, commander of the advanced echelon at Townsville, was instructed to design a fixed .50-cal. installation to replace the cannon. In less than three weeks the engineering staff of Depot No. 2 had designed a modification which would

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place two .50-cal. machine guns between the two already in the nose and two more in the gun tunnel. In addition a stinger of twin .30's remotely controlled from the top turret was installed in each plane. Each modification, approved after a thorough service testing, required the manufacture of 99 parts, 64 of which were different, and although it took 234 man-hours per plane, 82 B-25's were completely modified in the course of five months. ²⁵

A heavy bomber modification had also been under way for many months. The Fifth Air Force insisted upon having its B-24's equipped as follows: a turret in the nose section, the navigator's compartment in the flight deck opposite the radio operator, manually operated twin .50-cal. machine guns in the belly position, a tail wheel instead of a tail skid, and a turret installed in the tail position.

Although the Fifth Air Force Service Command was fully capable of continuing to make the necessary changes, that was a task which could better be performed in modification centers farther from a combat theater. Not until October, however, did General Kenney receive some assurance that that burden on his service command would be relieved. Then it was decided that all B-24's destined for the Fifth Air Force were to be modified in Hawaii, except the new J model which was having the belly guns substituted for the ball turret in the United States. ²⁶

B-24's going through the Hawaiian depot were destined for one of three air forces, the Fifth, Seventh, or Thirteenth. Since each air force wanted different modifications, there was considerable confusion in the process of distribution, and the Fifth Air Force Service Command still found a job to do when the B-24's reached Australia. Some might have a Sperry ball turret, others a stinger installed; some might have a nose turret and a tail turret,

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and others a nose turret without a tail turret. A modification of some kind usually had to be performed, therefore, but modification kits occasionally arrived lacking essential parts. On 13 October, for example, the Townsville depot received 10 B-24 kits of which six had twin gun yokes missing. The situation was further complicated in the depots by a confusion as to model. The B-24J was not actually assigned to combat squadrons of the Fifth Air Force until early December, but they were arriving in Australia weeks before that. Just when they had begun to arrive is rather difficult to determine, probably because the people in the depots themselves did not know. The records of shipment frequently did not clarify the matter, as some of the B-24's which arrived in September, although not listed as the J, nevertheless had the loading charts of that model installed inside each plane. ²⁷

In July and August 1943, the service command had accomplished another major job of modification in designing a 200-gallon tank and attaching it to the P-47. Additional fuel on this fighter was necessary to provide the range essential for operations in the theater, and the 348th Fighter Group had thus been made available for combat in record time. But the increased flow of P-47's to the Southwest Pacific together with the fact that planned operations called for longer escort missions encouraged further experimentation. There seemed to be three possible solutions: the continued use of belly tanks, the development of wing tanks, and the increase of internal fuel capacity. The 200-gallon belly tank manufactured by the Ford Company in Australia had been used with some success by the 348th Fighter Group since its entry into combat in August. Unfortunately, Australian concerns were not able to deliver a sufficient number of these tanks. On 20 October there were no more than 418

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in New Guinea, and of these 118 were in the hands of service units for repair. In addition there were fewer than 800 either in Australia or en route to New Guinea. The monthly production was approximately 800 tanks. Since General Whitehead estimated that the consumption of belly tanks would increase fivefold in November, a radio message urgently requesting 1,000 a month from the United States was dispatched.

28

The production facilities of the United States could not supply the kind of belly tanks requested. At this time "every possible source" was being utilized to full capacity for the manufacture of standard jettisonable fuel tanks for P-38, P-47, and P-51 aircraft, and only 150-gallon wing tanks were available to fill Kenney's needs. General Arnold suggested, therefore, that the Fifth Air Force Service Command modify the P-47 for the standard wing tanks. This would require wing shackles and kits sent from the United States and approximately 300 man-hours in depot for each plane. Kenney accepted the suggestion, however, and wing adapter kits for 250 P-47's were set up for delivery beginning early in December.

29

The use of jettisonable fuel tanks of any kind was not a complete solution to the problem of range. Such tanks were usually dropped whenever danger threatened, and in such circumstances the fighter pilot was no better off than without the modification so far as the range of his aircraft was concerned. This fact decided Kenney to increase the internal fuel capacity of the P-47. He was undoubtedly inspired to some extent by learning of the P-47-escorted bomber raids carried out by the Eighth Air Force in September, which, he calculated, would have required a larger than normal internal fuel capacity. In answer to a query from Kenney on the subject, General Eaker stated, however, that his fighters used external droppable tanks with a capacity of

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from 75 to 150 gallons and reached targets at extreme range by a relay method of escort. He pointed out that after bombers and fighters had passed through an area on the way to an objective, fighters could pass over the same route a short time later with belly tanks attached in reasonable safety. Thus by assigning a group of fighters to provide escort over a segment 40 to 60 miles long, he obtained the maximum range possible with jettisonable tanks. 30

Kenney could hardly afford to provide a group or even a squadron of fighters for each 40 to 60 miles of a bomber mission; consequently his engineers continued to experiment with internal fuel capacity. A possible expedient was to install additional fuel in the ammunition storage compartments, but this was abandoned because it would have necessitated redesigning the wing structure. Another possibility was to move the IFF equipment to the top of the fuselage in front of the pilot's windshield, to install the radio normally in the rear of the pilot's armor in the cockpit on either side of the pilot's seat, and to install a leakproof tank in the place previously occupied by the radio equipment. These changes resulted in an "aft movement" of the center of gravity with consequent unsatisfactory flight characteristics, and AC/AS MM&D disapproved of the modification for this reason. Kenney believed, however, that the additional fuel capacity was the determining factor, and assigned the task of making the changes to the 81st Air Depot Group at Brisbane. 31

The project was considered so important that General Kenney himself made a personal visit to Eagle Farm to explain the needs of the fighter command. The depot at once began three eight-hour shifts a day using 450 men to a shift.

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At the most critical stage, some of the men worked 48 to 56 hours without sleep and then stowed for only a few hours of rest. Meals were served every two hours and hot chocolate, coffee, and fruit sparked the men during the night. The first plane carrying the so-called "Christmas Tree Tank" was ready for delivery to the fighter command on 4 December.

32

This modified P-47 did not prove to be a complete success. Originally General Kenney had hoped that additional internal fuel capacity would amount to 75 gallons. When finally completed, however, the extra tank in the fuselage contained no more than 41 gallons, and the pilots were rarely able to utilize even that amount from the inconveniently located tanks. Moreover, additional gas lines in the cockpit and a lack of armor for the extra tank made the plane more vulnerable to fighter attack. Another disturbing factor was the change in center of gravity. By January 1944, the plane had had a reasonably fair test; and, according to General Whitehead, experienced fighter pilots complained that in a fast climb, the P-47 tended to continue over onto its back, and that in a dive it was inclined to increase the dive. Because of these criticisms, Whitehead favored equipping no more than four squadrons with the modified P-47 while maintaining strength of other squadrons with the unmodified planes.

33

During the months in which the Fifth Air Force Service Command had been growing and expanding, there had been two conflicting developments. One of these was the establishment of extensive installations at Brisbane, Townsville, and Port Moresby, equipped with complicated machinery and capable of performing the most intricate technical work. Depot No. 2 at Townsville, for example, had 27 warehouses, 31 permanent repair buildings, 5 portable hangars, 85 enlisted men's barracks, and 10 officers' barracks by January 1944. The other

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into development was the pre-arranged transfer of the base line/area of the area distant from the established points in Australia and Papua. The conflict was one between permanence and forward movement. The need for greater flexibility of the combat units had been met by the task force organizations. Similar developments within the service command organization had been advocated for a long time, and by August 1943 a provisional reorganization had received the blessing of all the air commanders, including General Murray. The plan called for an elimination of all service group headquarters and the reassignment of the released personnel to service squadrons. General Concell, then commanding officer of the service command, ascertained that in this way each squadron could be organized into a separate task force capable of going into an advanced position and doing its own housekeeping. A second phase of the reorganization was the establishment of a wing headquarters covering a definite geographical location, and under which all service units in the vicinity were to be placed for "command and administrative control."

Before General MacArthur was willing to approve such a reorganization, he wished further amplification. Colonel Brownfield, by that time in command of the service command, replied that in the new system the issue of supplies would continue to be handled from USACOS, and explained the effect of the reorganization on the service squadrons as follows:

Quartermaster Companies (-ruck), Ordnance Companies (Supply and Maintenance) are authorized in this theater on the basis of one per Service Squadron. Quartermaster Companies (SQ) and Signal Companies (SC) are authorized on the basis of one per Service Group. Therefore, when Service Squadrons have operated independently of each other and of Service Group Headquarters, it has been necessary to attach Quartermaster and Signal personnel to the independent Service Squadron in order that proper maintenance and service be given the combat unit. Under the proposed arrangements the Quartermaster Truck Companies, Ordnance Supply and Maintenance Companies will be assigned to the Service Squadrons. The Quartermaster and Signal Companies Service Groups would be assigned to Service Squadrons and detachments therefrom attached to other Service Squadrons as at present (as of January 1944, there will be thirteen Quartermaster and Signal Companies Service Groups to provide service for thirty Service Squadrons).

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Authority existed in the theater to establish provisional setups, and it was not long before the service command was functioning under essentially the organization described above. There were disadvantages, however, in operating without benefit of proper authorization from the War Department, one of these being the lack of a table of organization. The deputy commander could function with a headquarters at Port Moresby. So long as he did so, his headquarters personnel were on detached service, could not consider themselves a part of any organization, and therefore lacked cohesion and esprit de corps. Moreover so long as Port Moresby remained the chief base for air operations in New Guinea the deputy commander had been able to control the few units available, but with an increased utilization of Milne Bay, Oro Bay, and Lae, the situation was getting out of hand.

On 5 October, General MacArthur recommended to the War Department the official activation of area commands similar to those of the Eighth and Twelfth Air Forces. Headquarters AAF concurred in MacArthur's recommendation, but it was almost a month before OGD granted its approval. This approval, however, covered only the establishment of area commands, and it was not until February 1944 that MacArthur was authorized to reassign service squadrons independently from group headquarters, to provide greater flexibility.

Finally on 9 January, reorganization was officially consummated. On that date the Headquarters and Headquarters Squadrons, IV and V Air Service Area Commands were activated, and assigned respectively to the Port Moresby and Townsville areas. On the following day, Col. Victor E. Bertrandias, who had been responsible for the Townsville service development almost from the beginning, was placed in command of that area, and Col. Carl A. Brandt, deputy service commander since 2 June 1943, continued at Port Moresby in charge of the IV Service Area.

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Colonel Bertrandias's jurisdiction included that portion of the Australian continent north of 24° south latitude and east of 138° east longitude. This did not include the Darwin area, which had been the entire responsibility of the RAAF before November 1943. But General Kenney envisaged Darwin as a point of growing importance for offensive operations. He planned to increase American air strength based there, and wished to build up a depot capable of servicing additional planes, including B-29's. By the end of December 1943, both MacArthur and RAAF authorities had granted permission for a major development there, and the air service command had completed construction plans. This could not be given a U.S. area designation without complicating relationships with the RAAF which retained control of most of the units in the Northwest Territory; consequently it was planned merely to assign to that area an air service command representative responsible to the U.S. service command, which would thus retain control of its units in the Northern Territory.

The activation of the air service area commands as accomplished in January 1944 was an official recognition of something which had existed in practice for a period of several months. This was a situation which corresponded to that of the air task forces. Both task force and area command were attempts to overcome the problems of great distances, high mountains, unpredictable weather, poor transportation, and unreliable communications. Both were calculated to provide a greater flexibility for new offensives designed to establish advanced air bases and to isolate Japanese defense areas in New Guinea and the Bismarck Archipelago. The first major offensive following the capture of Finschhafen on 2 October 1943 was entirely mounted by the air forces, and was largely the responsibility of the First Air Task Force. Its goal was the neutralization of Rabaul.

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Chapter IV

THE AIR OFFENSIVE AGAINST ENEMY BASES, OCTOBER-TO MARCH 1943

When the first Allied offensive of significance in the Southwest Pacific, the New Guinea campaign, ended in January 1943, Allied air and ground forces had been so exhausted that they had been unable to continue sustained operations. When Ise, Salamua, and Finckhofen fell to MacArthur's men eight months later, it was perhaps a sign of the increased Allied momentum that their drives both on land and in the air continued with hardly a breathing spell. On land these operations included an Australian thrust along the Esch Peninsula toward Sattelberg and another through the Dora valley toward Hufana. In the air not only were there a variety of missions carried out in cooperation with the land forces, but a number of additional operations were projected which, though a matter of direct concern to the land and sea forces, were yet air offensives in their own right. The tasks allotted to the Allied Air Forces were to support the operations of the New Guinea Force and the proposed operations of the New Britain Task Force and of the South Pacific forces, to protect naval movements, to engage enemy land, air, and sea forces, and to maintain an advance toward forward operating bases. The mission of the air units based in the Northwestern Area was to be continued as one principally of reconnaissance.

According to the accepted procedure of the Fifth Air Force, operations based on New Guinea were the responsibility of General Hitehead as commander of ADFWAF. Instructions to him, therefore, were specific and detailed. He

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was to support the advance along the coast of New Guinea on as large a scale as possible without interfering with operations in the Markham-Ramu valleys, with landings in New Britain, and with an air offensive against Rabaul.² He was to conduct "intensive neutralization attacks" against hostile air and surface forces in the Rabaul area and to be prepared to support Admiral Halsey's moves into the northern Solomons. He was to cooperate completely with the so-called "Escalator Force" in New Britain by preliminary bombardment, by missions in direct cooperation with ground troops, by providing fighter cover and aircraft warning, and by insuring air supply and evacuation. Finally he was assigned reconnaissance missions over the Bismarck Sea, the approaches to Truk, the "assembly of enemy air and naval forces" in Rabaul, Kavieng, Newak, and bases farther west, the approaches to the Torres Strait, and the Solomon Sea west of 155° east longitude and south of the line Fuka-New Ireland and the approaches to the Bismarck Sea.³

Operations in the Northwestern Area

It is clear from these operations instructions that the principal offensive thrust of General MacArthur's forces on land and in the air was to be in the direction of New Britain. There was, however, a very definite need for the type of operations carried out under the general direction of the RAAF Command in the Northwestern Area. These included photo and reconnaissance missions to gather intelligence concerning the Japanese build-up in the Netherlands East Indies; strafing and low-level bombing attacks against Timor, Tenimbar, and other near-by islands by Beaufighters and Dutch B-25's; and what might be considered a small-scale strategic bombing offensive carried out by American B-24's.

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The 380th Bombardment Group (H), with rarely more than 30 B-24's on hand during October and November 1943, could not hope to knock out any of the important strategic targets that existed in the Netherlands East Indies. Its function, like that of the medium bombardment in the same area, was primarily harassing, but performing this function meant flights occasionally of more than 2,000 miles, rarely of less than 10, and frequently of more than 14 hours' duration. In October, for example, 11 B-24's hit the dock installations and oil storage facilities of Makassar in Celebes more than 1,000 miles from Darwin; and a month later, two attacks were carried out against Soerabaja in Java requiring between 14 and 15 hours of flying. These and other similar missions probably did not result in any decisive damage, but they provided much useful information not only as to the activities of the enemy but also as to the performance of aircraft and equipment under particularly trying conditions. For example, it was discovered in the Northwestern Area that engines were limited to 350 hours flying time, that on long flights engines burning more than six quarts of oil an hour had to be changed, and that 100 to 200 hours was the expected life of tires when B-24's were operating at a gross weight of 66,000 pounds per plane, as was the custom of the 380th Group.⁴

In the assessment of actual bombing damage, a series of three strikes carried out against the important shipping and nickel-mining center of Pomelaa in Celebes was perhaps the most important in the Northwestern Area during October and November. On 23 October, 12 B-24's carrying 108 x 500-lb. demolition bombs completed a 14-hour mission against that objective. The principal target, the concentrating plant, was hit by six of the planes. Aerial photos

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showed bombs falling on and around the leaching plant, direct hits on a large settling tank and a pipe line, and many buildings destroyed. The other six planes scored numerous hits on buildings and jetties, but wasted 24 x 500-lb. bombs on shipping. Enemy antiaircraft was not particularly accurate, fighter interception was nonexistent, and the weather was good until the last lap of the return trip.

A mission against the same target four days later had a less happy outcome. Twelve B-24's again took off, but, of these, eight returned because of mechanical failure or an inability to keep up with the other planes. The remaining four dropped a number of bombs in the vicinity of the concentrating plant but were then jumped by 10 to 12 Zekes and Tonys. The attacks were coordinated and "eagerly pressed." The four B-24's were flying in a loose diamond formation for defense, but after the third enemy attack, the B-24 piloted by Capt. John A. Farrington was seen to be in serious trouble. The nose guns drooped to a downward position, and firing ceased; the left wing was hit, and one engine burst into flames. The remainder of the flight attempted to protect the damaged plane, but soon it was enveloped in flames, both wings buckled upward, and blazing debris crashed into the sea. Strafing Japanese planes kept up a relentless assault on at least seven men who bailed out of the B-24; and one by one they were seen to slump as they floated to the water below. Meanwhile the B-24 piloted by Lt. Frederick S. Hinze, Jr., was hit and separated from the other two American planes. It finally drove off the pursuing Japanese fighters, probably destroying eight of them, but one engine was knocked out, and the vertical stabilizers were damaged by trees as the plane swept over a mountain on Kabena Island. The crew threw out all jettisonable equipment including armament, and the plane sputtered along for about 450 miles. In the vicinity of Moa Island, two twin-engine

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fighters renewed the attack and flew alongside at close range riddling the now-helpless B-24. Although critically injured, the pilot and co-pilot brought the plane down on the ocean. Of the 11 members of the crew, seven went down with the plane; four succeeded in releasing life rafts and were discovered by fellow members of the 380th Group after a continuous 48-hour search. Small as these and the later raid of 1 November against Pomelaa were, they nevertheless resulted, according to Allied Intelligence, in hampering "to a very serious extent" the Japanese nickel-mining industry. ⁶

The 380th Group's attacks were indirectly related to the joint operations under way in the Northeastern Area. Obviously the enemy would hesitate to strip his defenses in the Netherlands East Indies in order to reinforce his New Guinea and New Britain garrisons so long as a potential Allied threat existed at Darwin. Furthermore, by watching the reinforcement routes which ran from Malaya through the Indies and from the Philippines south, reconnoitering B-24's could provide the Allied command with information essential to keep an up-to-date enemy order of battle in all parts of the theater.

Operations in the Sattelberg Area, 1-12 October

Such intelligence was vital in view of the offensives planned for General MacArthur's command. His forces were gradually being built up for the projected assault on New Britain, and at the same time he was maintaining pressure upon the Japanese defenses in New Guinea through which the decisive drive in the Southwest Pacific would sooner or later have to be launched. On the coast, enemy units were well established in the area around Sattelberg. They were carrying out infiltration tactics, sending small parties around Allied positions, cutting communications, and forcing back the advanced perimeter of the Australian

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II Corps. Indeed the situation on the ground was so confused for a time that the Australian commander was unable to inform Colonel Smith, of the First Air Task Force, where the Allied forward positions were. Thus General Whitehead, who was itching to send 60 or more heavy bombers with 1,000-lb. bombs against Japanese positions in that region, had to wait for more definite target information. During the first two weeks in October, Allied planes hit the Sattelberg defenses only twice in any real force. The first of these attacks was on 9 October when nine A-20's and 12 RAAF Vengeances were scheduled to hit Sattelberg. Thick clouds hid the target, however, and six of the A-20's turned back. The remainder hit an alternate target in the vicinity. Another attempt was made on the following day. This time the A-20's alone put 70 x 100-lb. bombs in the target area and carried out 29 strafing passes from tree-scraping altitude.

Troop Carrier Operations in the Ramu Valley

Whereas Australians pushing out toward Sattelberg measured their advance in yards, those fighting in the Markham and Ramu valleys were being carried forward in bounds of a day's march at a time. It was a case of the 7th Australian Division's being "married to the troop carriers" and moving rapidly from one ^{strip} grass/ to another. It had seized Kairait, Sagarac, and Gusan in September, and was thus in a good position by October to push on down the Ramu. By October it had occupied Dumpu, 35 miles south of Bogadjim, and patrols were pressing toward the road which led from Bogadjim to Madang.

The drive toward Madang, in its preliminary October and November stages, met with only sporadic resistance from Jap nose patrols. The Australians

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needed little close air cooperation, and for some time the air participation in the campaign was limited to that of the troop carriers. The importance of these units, however, could hardly be overemphasized. Not only was the advance spearheaded by airborne troops, but the C-47's transported almost all supplies and munitions to the advancing Australians, even bringing in fresh fruits and vegetables from gardens at Wau and Mount Hagen. The troop carrier planes were almost indispensable too in providing a speedy way of evacuating casualties. Immediately after the occupation of Nadzab, the Australians had begun to fly their sick and wounded to rear areas, but they were somewhat handicapped by a lack of trained personnel to accompany the patients. A detachment of trained American medics was scheduled for the Ramu valley operations, but "by the time all the red tape had been overcome," the Australian advance had reached Dumpu. On 5 October, an officer and 15 enlisted men, Flight B of the 804th Medical Air Evacuation Squadron, arrived at Nadzab. No one seemed to expect them (not an unusual circumstance in and the Southwest Pacific), they had no place to stay, only native huts were being used to shelter patients at the landing strips. Hospital facilities, however, were available with 100 patients in the 4th Portable "25-bed" hospital and with an Australian 500-bed dressing station having a capacity of 1,000. Soon a regular routine was established whereby American technicians accompanied the air cargo to Gusap, Dumpu, Kaiapit, and any other advanced air strip. Patients, of whom the great majority were malarial, were then ferried back to the hospitals at Nadzab or Lae, which in turn would make daily arrangements to transport the more serious cases to rear bases. During October, for example, 1,278 Australians and 455 Americans were evacuated to Port Moresby.

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~~RESTRICTED~~Fighter Operations over New Guinea, 1-12 October

Missions of troop carrier units were carried out in close cooperation with the fighter command and with fighter units of the air task forces. Fighter units had many and varied functions of which the escort of transports was only one. Some were maintained on ground alert; others carried out regular patrol missions; and still others were assigned to convoy shipping or to escort bombers. In performing these many tasks, however, American fighter pilots actually met Japanese planes in surprisingly few instances. There were few large-scale air raids on Allied bases. Between 1 and 12 October, although enemy aircraft attacked Finschhafen seven times, Dobodura three times, and Lae once, the raids were usually carried out at night by no more than two or three enemy planes and generally had little effect. Of these 11 raids, only one was intercepted by Allied planes.

A significant exception to this period of infrequent combat was a fighter sweep carried out on 11 October by four P-47's of the 348th Fighter Group. Led by the group commander, Col. Neel E. Kearby, one of the most capable officers in the fighter command, the flight hoped to force combat with enemy planes based on Newak fields. Kearby's plan "was to sit over Newak at altitude and then to use the Thunderbolt's tremendous diving speed to crack down on an unwary enemy aircraft taking off or landing." The flight took off from Wars Drome at 0730, an hour later landed at Tsili Tsili for refueling, and by 0930 was on its way to Newak. In a little more than half an hour, the four planes were over Boram strip, and the pilots had dropped their belly tanks in order to conserve fuel and increase speed. At 1115 a Zeke was sighted below them. The P-47 formation swooped down, and the Zeke crashed into the water as Kearby's guns found the range. At this time Maj. Raymond K. Gallagher

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left the formation and pursued a second Zeke out to sea. The other three P-47's climbed to 26,000 feet and immediately spotted an enemy formation of 26 fighters and 12 bombers approaching from the southeast. Again the three P-47's went into a steep dive toward a trailing enemy flight of four planes. Within a few minutes Kearby had shot down another Zeke and two Hanos, Capt. William D. Dunham one Tony, and Capt. John T. Moore another Tony. Kearby meanwhile had been engaged by six enemy fighters and was carrying on a brisk battle some 20 miles away. Moore roared down from 16,000 feet into this combat, destroyed one Tony with a deflection shot, and succeeded in diverting two others. At this Kearby swung around toward the remaining planes and destroyed two of them. By this time the short-ranged P-47's were decidedly low on fuel, and Kearby led his flight to the refueling facilities at Lee. At 1245 they landed at that emergency base with less than 75 gallons¹² in their tanks, and two and a half hours later returned to Port Moresby.

Preparation for the Rabaul Offensive

Such missions as these together with the building-up of air bases in the Ramu and Markham river valleys were in accord with Allied plans of September and October 1943. But these same plans gave top priority to operations for the isolation and neutralization of Rabaul. First in a carefully integrated timetable was an air offensive against Rabaul by Southwest Pacific air units to cover South Pacific landings on Treasury, Choiseul, and Bougainville islands. Halsey's air units were then to assume the major burden of the Rabaul campaign while MacArthur's forces seized Cape Gloucester and the remainder of the Huon Peninsula. By the middle of August the Allied Air Forces had prepared detailed plans for a preliminary softening of Rabaul. This was to consist of an

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"all-out effort" of about a week's duration, carried out by all types of bombardment except A-20's and B-26's, and protected by all available twin-engine fighter units. At that time General Kenney was considering 15 October as a possible date for the commencement of the air offensive, but hesitated to make any definite commitment because of a lack of a suitable staging point for fighter escorts. Dobodura, over 400 miles from Rabaul, was too distant for fighters to make the round trip if they were forced into combat over the objective. Finschhafen was perhaps 75 miles nearer, but no base satisfactory for a major force had yet been established there. The only solution seemed to be Kiriwina Island, approximately 350 miles from Rabaul and occupied on 30 June for the express purpose of constructing a staging base for escort fighters.

A complicating factor was that the escort of 100 or more P-38's might arrive over Kiriwina short of fuel and at approximately the same time on the return from the objective. Upon landing, moreover, such a concentrated force would be extremely vulnerable to enemy retaliation. Extensive facilities were, therefore, necessary for the convenience of the escorting fighters as well as for a permanent RAAF air garrison. Extensive construction activities began under the direct supervision of General Headquarters shortly after the occupation of Kiriwina. By the middle of August, MacArthur's chief engineer had indicated that three strips would be completed by 5 October, hard-standings for 48 medium bombers by 10 October, and hard-standings for 100 fighters five days later. If this schedule were met, the air planners were convinced that the opening of the Rabaul offensive could occur on 15 October. They urged, however, that MacArthur's headquarters spare no effort in completing the Kiriwina project. In the words of Kenney's chief of staff, Brig. Gen.

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Donald Wilson, "Facilities for the landing of aircraft, their maintenance, and refueling must be considered as a special tactical project and are not to be associated with the phlegmatic progress of normal bases."¹⁴

Meanwhile, the Fifth Air Force had halted even the comparatively small raids against Rabaul, which had been carried out with periodic frequency in 1942 and early 1943. During August and September planes from the Southwest Pacific had struck that Japanese base only once, and this mission was in early September and by a dozen RAAF Catalinas. By 1 October, however, the 8th Photo Squadron was sending its P-6's and P-38's over Rabaul's airdromes and harbors; and heavy bomber squadrons, particularly the 63d, were keeping a weather eye on the entire New Britain area. On 1 October, photos showed that there were 1 heavy cruiser, 1 light cruiser, 10 destroyers, 5 submarines, and 25 merchant vessels in the harbor; and 87 medium bombers, 37 light bombers, and 59 fighters on the four principal Rabaul dromes. Ten days later shipping had slightly decreased, but the numbers of medium and light bombers showed little change, and fighters had jumped to 145.¹⁵

By 10 October plans had been completed for the first strike, and General Kenney wrote as follows to General Arnold:¹⁶

By the time you get this letter you should have read some headlines about the show on Rabaul which according to our long range weather forecast will take place on October 12th. This is the beginning of what I believe is to be the most decisive action initiated so far in this theater. We are out not only to gain control of the air over New Britain and New Ireland but to make Rabaul untenable for Jap shipping and to set up an air blockade of all the Jap forces in that area. The attack will be opened by 120 B.25 strafers, each with eight forward firing fifty calibre guns and carrying approximately a ton of either parefrag or 100 pound frag bombs. The targets are the three Jap airdromes around Rabaul. Following them between 84 and 96 B.24's will

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attack the shipping in the harbor from 20,000 ft. altitude concentrating three 'plane element pattern bombing on between twenty and thirty of the largest ships. Each B.24 is loaded with six one thousand pounders. In the past we have averaged around five percent of direct hits on shipping from high altitude. Our daylight bombing during the past three months on Salamaua, Lae and Newak has improved our accuracy tremendously. I expect to sink between twenty and thirty ships in this attack. As the Jap has plenty of radar warning he should be able to put in the air between sixty and eighty fighters, so we will have between one hundred and one hundred and twenty P.38's as top cover for the show. The P.38's will take off from Dobodura and stop in at our new airdrome at Kiriwiza for refuelling after the combat. I have told the kids that in addition to the ships sunk I expect forty or fifty lines shot down in combat and a hundred or so more destroyed on the ground. You can compare these guesses with the headlines when you read them.

Following the first day's attack we will return the second day with probably sixty to seventy five heavies and about the same number of P.38's to clean out any shipping that still remains in the harbor, with the town itself as the secondary target. As soon as the shipping is sunk or driven out of Rabaul I then plan to destroy the town block by block with the heavy bombardment. Our intelligence estimates that the town, which is from three to six blocks wide around the horseshoe of the harbor, contains about three hundred thousand tons of supplies. If these are destroyed and cannot be replenished, the 25,000 to 40,000 Japanese in Rabaul should have a hard time making ends meet. It is quite conceivable that by air action we may force an evacuation of the port itself. If it does happen like that the whole campaign out here will be speeded up by nearly a year and we can start moving along the North New Guinea coast toward Mindanao a lot sooner than is now anticipated. Actually the problem should be no greater than that of Newak, where during the past two months we have destroyed on the ground and in the air between four hundred and five hundred airplanes and sunk around thirty five thousand tons of shipping. The Japs have started moving their bombers all back to Hollandia as a consequence and the total fighter strength to be encountered in the Newak area now is seldom over a squadron. Shipping activity in that area is now limited to a few luggers and barges. The distances in the Rabaul show are approximately the same as those of Newak. The numbers of aircraft involved in the Rabaul show are considerably greater than those used in the attacks on Newak. I expect the results to be comparable.

Rabaul, 12 October

Kenney's "long range weather forecast" proved correct, and on 12 October all B-25 strafe squadrons were ready to take off on the mission which promised to be the greatest since the Newak raids of the previous August. Two squadrons

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of the 38th and the entire 345th Group had joined the veteran 7d "Attack" Group at Doboŭra on the preceding day. At 0731, Lt. Col. Clinton U. True, 345th Group commander, led the 498th Squadron into the air. Other units followed until 113 B-25's had soared off the Doboŭra dromes. The three squadrons of the 35 Group assembled over the Gona wreck, a famous landmark since the Japanese landing in July 1942. There they met 21 P-38's of the 9th Fighter Squadron and a number of others organized for the occasion into the "1st Provisional." Three more squadrons of the fighter escort, units of the 475th Group, joined the bomber formation over Oro Bay. Within an hour of the take-off, the attack force was flying at 1,000 feet across the Solomon Sea toward Kiriwina Island where the bombers began decreasing altitude in order to avoid alerting enemy spotters and radar. At the mouth of the Warangoi River on the New Britain coast, the formation turned sharply inland. The 7d Group headed for Rapopo airdrome, and the other six squadrons, keeping below a range of hills, branched off toward Vunakanau.

When about 10 miles from the target, the 3d Group formed in "shallow Vs of squadrons, 12 to 15 planes wide and following each other by about one mile." Crews had been carefully briefed on the locations of antiaircraft positions, and machine guns were turned on these from long range as the 40 B-25's scraped the trees at 250 miles an hour. When they came in over their objective, the pilots began toggling off their clusters of 20-lb. parafrag bombs. Almost all were seen to fall among "real meat . . . bombers," which were dispersed throughout the target area. Immediately countless explosions caused dust and smoke to obscure the runways and dispersal areas, making damage assessment difficult. But the 3d Group claimed 15 to 25 enemy aircraft definitely destroyed on the ground in addition to three others shot down.

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Meanwhile 67 B-25's had hit Vanakanau. Tactical surprise was achieved, and antiaircraft fire was slight and inaccurate. By the time the five squadrons had littered the runways and dispersal areas with parafrags, however, a number of enemy fighters were making intercepting passes. At least six Zekes attacked the trailing 405th Squadron. One was hit and seen to crash, but at the same time the right engine of the B-25 piloted by Lt. Sidney W. Crews burst into flames. Seconds later pieces of metal flew off the right nacelle, the landing gear dropped down, and a tire fell off. The Zekes renewed the attack on the damaged plane; one Zeke was seen to crash in flames, but the last heard from the B-25 was a message from Crews to his flight leaders saying, "I'm going in."¹⁷

With the exception of this victory, the Japanese fighters had been relatively ineffective, probably because of both the element of surprise and the powerful fighter cover. Even the American fighters met little opposition. The 9th Squadron and the "1st Provisional" over Rapopo saw no enemy planes, and the 475th Group encountered only a few at 2,000 to 3,000 feet. Lt. F. E. Fogarty of the 472d Squadron shot down a Betty bomber over Rapopo, and the lead flight of the 433d Squadron tangled with four Oscars over Vanakanau and destroyed one of them. Within 10 minutes and with no further losses, the attack planes had completed their assault and were on their way back toward New Guinea. At Kiriwina the fighters and one or two damaged bombers dropped off for refueling and repair. The remainder of the B-25's landed at Dobodura shortly after 1700.¹⁸

Less than two hours after the low-level attack on the two Japanese airbases, seven squadrons of heavy bombers performed their share of the coordinated assault by striking at shipping in the Rabaul harbors. The B-24's,¹⁹

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each loaded with 2,300 gallons of gasoline and 6 x 1,000-lb. bombs, had taken off from Port Moresby dromes at approximately the same time that the B-25's had left Doboaura. The 40th Squadron of the 90th Group, which was to lead the heavies over the target, was delayed by an accident on the landing field, and the 43d Group was forced to use up precious fuel while waiting at the rendezvous point. By 0800, however, the formation consisting of 88 B-24's was on its way, flying southeast to avoid the highest peaks of the Owen Stanleys, and then heading directly for Wide Bay in New Britain. At Kiriwina two squadrons of P-38's, the 80th and the 39th, joined the formation to provide top cover, not a particularly formidable escort when compared with the 140 or more Japanese fighters based on Rabaul. At 1205 the 400th Squadron, divided into two flights of six aircraft each, led the 90th Group across Simpson Harbor from the southeast. Each squadron, briefed carefully on the location of specific ships, had been assigned a target. The leading flight made its bombing run on a destroyer tender surrounded by several destroyers and at least one submarine, dropped 36 x 1,000-lb. demolition bombs, and scored three hits. One destroyer was definitely sunk, and the tender damaged. Four planes of the second flight were forced to turn back because of mechanical difficulties. The remaining two joined the 321st Squadron. Following the 400th Squadron came the 319th, which scored five hits and left two merchant vessels in flames; the 320th, which claimed near misses and described its target, a tender, as damaged and listing; and the 321st, which reported a total of three ships sunk or badly damaged.

The pilots of the 28 P-38's which had reached the Rabaul area were rather frantically trying to provide cover for the seven squadrons of B-24's. Wherever they looked they could see heavy bombers, but they saw very few enemy planes. The 39th Squadron made no contacts, but a flight of the 80th

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Squadron spotted a number of enemy fighters and attempted an interception. Its leader, Capt. James R. Wilson, could not release one of his droppable tanks, but dove tank and all on a Hamp in order "to save face in front of the bombers." Wilson opened fire from 400 yards, but the Jap passed through his fire with no apparent injury. Being in an irritable mood, according to his own report, Wilson "held the button down" as the enemy plane went through his fire again. "This time the Hamp seemed to stop in mid-air. . . . He was smoking a little (which seemed natural) and when I was within 100 feet he began to burn furiously. . . . The pilot seemed quite oversized and frantic."

The P-38's were obviously unable to provide complete protection for the bombers. Perhaps 40 enemy fighters, Zekes for the most part, carried on a running fight with the 400th Squadron for almost 40 minutes after the bombing run. One P-24 piloted by Flight Officer McNeff was apparently shot down during this interception, but at least 10 of the Japanese fighters were destroyed by American gunners. The 321st Squadron too was severely attacked, and one of its planes was seriously damaged. The remainder of the flight attempted to provide protection, but the enemy fighters relentlessly carried home the assault until the damaged B-24 crashed in the water. Within 10 minutes it had broken in two and disappeared, leaving no signs of life anywhere in the vicinity.

With the leading flights of B-24's apparently drawing off Japanese interceptors, the three squadrons of the 43d Group bombed their objective with little or no fighter opposition. This subsequent attack occurred within 10 minutes of that of the 90th Group and found the harbor a scene of complete

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confusion. "One load of bombs was exploding midway between the Toboi wharf and Retaval. A fire had started near Sulphur Creek. Strings of bombs were landing all over the harbor, 2 vessels in the northern section were getting under way, 9 others were making circles in Keravia Bay and 5 others were approximately between Matupi Island and Vulcan heading out to sea. . . . Antiaircraft fire was heavy, intense, and inaccurate. Much of it was coming from a light cruiser and several destroyers in the harbor. Their 5-inch guns were putting out great belches of flame. . . . The sky was full of a confusion of planes flying in all directions and it appeared that the enemy decided to rely on a barrage rather than aiming at specific planes."

Considering this confused situation, the damage assessment of the 43d Group could not have been exact. The 64th Squadron reported several MV's destroyed or damaged; the 65th claimed 43 hits out of 48 bombs dropped, with the result that several ships in Simpson Harbor were believed sunk; one report of the 403d Squadron claimed only damage to a number of ships, and another stated that one merchant vessel was sunk and four others damaged.

By the time the B-24's were heading for home, their fuel was running dangerously low. One B-24 came down in the water near Kiriwina; several landed with the fighters on the Kiriwina fields; and others landed at Good-enough. All afternoon, crews were bringing the big planes down on Dobodura landing fields. They had participated in the heaviest air attack yet carried out in the Pacific theaters. Between 330 and 340 aircraft had started out for the target; 25 B-24's, 6 B-25's, and 19 P-38's had turned back because of mechanical failure; more than 500 tons of bombs had been dropped, and a quarter of a million machine gun rounds fired. Perhaps 100 Japanese aircraft had been destroyed on the ground, and at least 26 in the air. The

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Fifth Air Force had lost 1 B-25 and 4 B-24's, one of which was washed out on return. The shipping losses are more difficult to determine, but the heavies had sunk a merchant vessel and a destroyer, had probably sunk at least six others, and had seriously damaged numerous other vessels of assorted sizes.

The coordinated attack had no sooner been completed than ground crews were at work preparing the bombers and long-range fighters for follow-up attacks. Three hours after their return, 108 B-25's had been prepared for another mission, and by the following morning 70 B-24's were also ready for a take-off.

Rabaul, 13 October

The plan for the reduction of Rabaul called for a saturation of Rabaul township shortly after the first attack against airdromes and shipping. It was to be a coordinated strike protected by as many F-38's as the maintenance units at Kiriwina could service over night. By morning, however, weather reports were unfavorable, and the medium bombers were held on the ground. At approximately 0800 the same heavy units which had participated in the mission of the day before, joined by 12 B-24's of the 528th and 531st Squadrons on detached service from Darwin, put 70 heavy bombers into the air from Port Moresby. At Kiriwina service units, working feverishly on the fighters, had checked oil, carburation, and ignition systems, repaired hydraulic leaks, gas leaks, and oxygen systems, and had prepared more than 100 F-38's for the rendezvous with the heavy bomber formation. The weather rapidly became worse, and when about 150 miles from Rabaul the bombers ran into a turbulent front extending from 5,000 to 30,000 feet, with icing conditions above 15,000 feet.

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The fighter escort was forced to turn back, and was battered fiercely as it aimed for tiny Kiriwina. Three F-38's were last heard from about 40 minutes out from the landing field, and another was lost in a crash by a mechanical failure. The bombers, meanwhile, were flying on instruments in increasingly impenetrable storm clouds. One by one they turned back. None reached their primary objective although 10 bombed air facilities in the Cape Hoskins area, 5 hit Gasmeta, and 12 others the runway and dump areas of the Cape Gloucester airdrome.

Action over New Guinea, 14-18 October

Foul weather continued to hamper the air offensive and for the next few days almost completely shut out Rabaul. Accordingly Allied medium units transferred their attention to other points in New Britain and to New Guinea. On 14 October the 22d Group sent 28 B-25's coordinated with 10 B-26's and a P-47 escort against the installations which the Japanese were building up in Alexishafen. Attacking from both medium and low altitude, the medium bombers put numerous 100- and 300-lb. general purpose bombs in the designated area and started large fuel fires. At approximately the same time, 24 B-25's protected by a strong F-38 escort from the 475th Group were bombing and strafing villages, air strips, and barges along the coast of New Britain in the Cape Gloucester area. On 13 and 15 October, RAAF Boomerangs led several flights of P-39's to enemy defensive positions that were holding up the Australian advance through the Ramu valley. The targets partially shrouded in overcast and completely hidden by thick jungle foliage were unerringly identified by the Australians and then hit by 500-lb. bombs and the 37-mm. shells of the P-39's. Another mission of 15 October was flown by the B-25G's of the 38th

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Group against barge hideouts along the Huon Peninsula. One of the 38 F-25's was damaged by AA fire and crash-landed at Lae, but the remainder used their 75-mm. cannon with good effect against buildings in Sio.

The attacks on enemy-held points in New Guinea were not merely diversionary raids necessitated by the weather black-out of Rabaul. They were rather a part of an Allied attempt to thwart Japanese intentions in the New Britain-New Guinea theater. Allied Intelligence believed that an enemy plan to recapture Lae and Salamaua had been replaced by a decision to hold a line running from Rabaul along the south coast of New Britain to Arawe, across Vitiaz Strait to Sio and up the New Guinea coast to Newak. Persistent Japanese counterattacks near Sattelberg, barge movements along the coast, a few ships moving into Madang, and evidence of the Army Air Service's being built up by withdrawing aircraft from the Northwestern Area gave support to this theory.

It was quite probable that Japanese intelligence too was making an estimate of the situation on the basis of the Allied scale of effort. In view of the heavy Allied attacks carried out in spite of the disagreeable weather normally expected in October and November, the Japanese undoubtedly expected a major amphibious attack at some point in New Britain. It was logical, and therefore not unexpected, that the enemy should strike at the Allied bases most likely to be key points in such an attempt. One of these was Oro Bay, an anchorage where there were almost sure to be a considerable number of Liberty ships and many small naval craft at all times. This was the case on 15 October when, shortly before 0800, a ship's radar picked up a number of unidentified plots dangerously close to its own position in Oro Bay. Hatches and bulkheads were no more than closed and antiaircraft positions

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manned when a large formation of enemy Vals escorted by Hamps, Zekes, and Oscars roared down to the attack. Meanwhile the local fighter sector had ordered 18 P-38's of the 432d Fighter Squadron which had been on ground alert to scramble above 20,000 feet and had alerted other squadrons. Pilots tumbled from their tents and set out for the air strip riding anything on wheels. Maj. Charles H. MacDonald and Capt. William H. Ivey, from Headquarters Squadron, after setting "an unofficial jeep record" in their dash to the strip, "stole" two planes from the 433d Squadron. Within 10 minutes, the 7th and 9th Squadrons had put 8 P-40's and 8 P-38's into the air followed at 0830 by 23 P-38's of the 431st and 423d Squadrons. ²⁷

By the time the first P-38's had spotted the enemy formation, the leading Vals had dropped bombs scoring a hit on a Liberty ship. The P-38's diving down from 20,000 feet, some at more than 500 miles an hour, immediately broke up the Japanese formation and drove its individual elements out to sea. Maj. Frank D. Tomkins, leading the advanced flights, shot down a Zeke and a Val. Capt. Gerald Johnson destroyed two Vals, an Oscar, and another probable Val. MacDonald and Ivey ensconced in their "stolen" planes each accounted for two Vals. An hour and a half after the take-off, the fray was over, and all American pilots had returned to base. One P-38 had been lost, but only a few Japanese fighters had escaped out to sea. Twenty-seven Vals, the entire force of dive bombers probably manned by 54 pilots and gunners, and 20 assorted fighters had been shot down. ²⁸

Although it is probable that this attack carried out by Japanese naval aircraft was based on New Britain, there was some evidence that the Army Air Service at Newak was becoming more active. Four P-40's of the 8th Fighter Squadron had intercepted a substantial force of Zekes, Oscars, and Lilys in the neighborhood of Finschhafen shortly after the Oro Bay action, and had shot

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down six of them; and radar units on the same day reported frequent unidentified blots. The evidence of enemy air activity in New Guinea together with the fact that weather continued to make a Rabaul strike unfeasible seemed to call for another Allied air attack on northeastern New Guinea.

On 16 October Allied attack bombers were out in force. A-20's struck at Cape Gloucester. Thirty-two B-25's searched vainly for shipping reported between Cape Gloucester and Madang while two squadrons of P-38's provided top cover. Four more squadrons of B-25's escorted by two P-47 squadrons set out for Alexishafen. But bad weather, failure to make a rendezvous with the fighters, and poor coordination at the target turned a part of the formation away from Alexishafen toward a secondary objective in the Sio area. Only the B-25G squadrons hit Alexishafen with a bombing and 75-mm. strafing attack. They were intercepted, but the escorting P-47's knocked down 13 Zekes, Bombs, and Tonys.

The attacks on Alexishafen, Madang, and Sio were only moderately successful, but a third mission on the same day hit grounded aircraft in the Newak area with good results. The 345th Group, which performed this mission, took off from Fort Koresby in the early morning, met three squadrons of P-38's in the vicinity of Lena Lena, and proceeded to Newak via the Famu valley and across the Senik River. Three hours after the take-off the attack bombers reached the target area and swept across the Boram and Newak domes in line abreast, dropping 100-lb. wire-wrapped bombs and a few parafrags and thoroughly strafing the entire area. A number of Japanese fighters attempted to break up the attack formation, but the P-38 escort provided excellent cover and shot down at least five of the enemy fighters. Some

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19 Zekes and Tonys, however, severely harassed the 12 B-25's of the 500th Squadron. Turret gunners and even the forward-firing .50's were turned on the darting attackers. Nine of them were shot down, but one B-25 was so seriously damaged, probably by antiaircraft fire, that it was forced to crash-land in the water. Other B-25's hovered over the wounded plane and dropped life rafts, but a lack of fuel forced them to leave. It was reported later that all six of the crew had been observed near the life rafts. The remaining B-25's returned safely to base. They had flown a total distance of 1,015 miles, and in addition to the 14 enemy planes shot down had destroyed an estimated 32 on the ground.²⁹

The Allied air strikes in New Guinea at this time could not be considered a part of a separate New Guinea offensive. They were rather an attempt to preserve status quo in New Guinea while the main air strength was focused on Bougainville. They were helping to hold the flank which at the appropriate time would be in turn the scene of a determined drive. Occasional efforts were made by Japanese air units to break through that flank. One of those had failed on 15 October. Another occurred on 17 October. The First Air Task Force was preparing a ground cooperation mission in the Sattelberg area; fighter squadrons were on normal escort and patrol flights; and several Moresby-based medium bombardment units were being moved to Dobodura in anticipation of a major strike against Rabaul scheduled for the following day. Shortly after 1000 hours several of these medium squadrons arrived over the Dobodura landing field and were preparing to land when they received a warning of a red alert. Within a few minutes an enemy formation of Zekes and Tonys was seen coming in low over Oro Bay. The B-25's turned away from the landing field at about the same time that Allied fighters

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summoned from ground alert and patrol missions began to head off the enemy attack.
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The 433d Squadron, which had been escorting shipping off Morobe Harbor, reached the enemy first. It encountered 12 Zekes and speedily shot down 10 of them. Such lopsided victories were bound to make the American lads feel a bit cocky, and in the midst of the battle a voice over the voice radio was heard to say "Some one come on over here, I've got five of them cornered." The 431st Fighter Squadron encountered 30 Zekes and shot down 9, while other units accounted for 7 more. Even P-39's contributed to this day's victory when four intercepted a formation of enemy planes in the vicinity of Finschhafen and destroyed four Lilys and an Oscar. In the day's combat, three P-38's were lost with two pilots, Lt. Virgil F. Hagen and Edward I. Hedrick. Ace "Tommy" McGuire was credited with at least two kills before he was forced to bail out of his plane riddled by Japanese fighters and friendly AA, but the crew of a PT boat later fished him out of Oro Bay.
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Rabaul, 18 October

This Japanese air raid did little more than delay the arrival of the Fort Moresby B-25's at Dobodura, and plans for the next day's Rabaul mission continued. Eight squadrons of heavies and two of strafers were to attack Wunakansu, Lakunai, and Tobera. It was expected that these landing fields would be so badly cut up by the bombing that all airborne enemy fighters would be forced to land at Rarouo where they would be at the mercy of a later low-level strafing attack. Although the Japanese raid of the day before had not prevented the launching of the allied attack, the weather played havoc with it. Seventy-seven B-24's set out as planned shortly after 0700. They

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encountered good weather until they reached Kiriwina, three hours later, where three squadrons of P-38's joined them. At about this time, six attack squadrons took off from Doboaura, met at a rendezvous over Cro Bay, and proceeded toward Kiriwina where they in turn were joined by an escort of three more P-38 squadrons.

Meanwhile the T-24's were running into heavy weather. "Cumu-Nimbur" with tops running up to 35,000 feet had been encountered before reaching New Britain. Approximately an hour and a half out, the P-38 escort, all 55 of them, returned to Kiriwina. The B-24's turned to the west and followed a seemingly solid weather front as far as Finschhafen, which blocked off the Solomon Sea. Twelve reached Cape Hoskins and bombed the airfield there, three hit Cape Gloucester; and six others bombed Sio. The remainder returned to base after salvaging most of their bombs in the sea.

The B-25's encountered the same weather front an hour or so later. Their fighter cover too was forced to turn back, but the leaders of the attack formation determined to press on as long as it was possible. They dropped to a minimum safe altitude and slipped under the dangerous tropical clouds. One flight hampered by mechanical difficulties turned back, but after about an hour's flying, 50 B-25's emerged from the storm, and headed inland across Cape Gazelle. At this point, the 38th Group swung to the left to hit Tobera, and thanks perhaps to the protection provided by the intervening clouds, achieved complete tactical surprise. They released almost 200 x 100-lb. demolition bombs and observed at least 16 enemy planes burn or explode. In the meantime three squadrons of the 745th Group were striking at Raupo with even greater success. In the first strafing and bombing run, they destroyed an estimated 25 planes on the ground. On the return sweep approximately 60 enemy fighters darted in to attack the 26 B-25's, but after shooting

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down 10 to 12 Zekes and Hamps, all the American planes were able to evade the interceptors and return either to Kiriwina or Tobodura.

The fourth squadron of the 345th Group, the 501st, was facing a more severe test. Its attack was carried out against shipping off Wunapo. The Japanese antiaircraft defenses in this area were powerful, and according to a later radio intercept had been fully alerted by a Japanese spotter. Only six B-25's reached the objective. These formed in two flights, slightly staggered, but in line abreast, and swept toward the coast surveying all cargo and supply areas in their path with the 48 forward-firing machine guns. They broke over the coast, and one flight lined up on a 5,000-ton freighter and the other on a 6,000-ton freighter-transport. The freighter was straddled by two 1,000-lb. bombs fused with a 4/5-second delay. It overturned. "Still ruffling the water with their prop wash," the planes headed for a wildly maneuvering corvette. Two bombs hit directly ahead of this vessel and exploded just as it passed over the point of impact. The corvette was demolished. The second flight, led by Capt. Lyle E. Anacker, fired the superstructure of the freighter-transport with machine guns, then dropped five bombs near or in the vessel, thereby lifting it out of the water. Enemy fighters dove to the attack. Lt. Ralph G. Wallace's right engine began to smoke. Vibration threatened to tear it loose. Wallace feathered the prop and went on single-engine operation. The other two B-25's fell back to provide protection. Lt. Harlan H. Peterson's plane was hit; one engine burst into flames; the left wheel dropped down from the nacelle. The B-25 quickly lost speed and altitude and landed in the water, tail down. Japanese fighters swooped to strafe. The remaining two B-25's of the flight headed for home.

More enemy fighters, some 40 to 50 Zekes, Hamps, and Tonys, continued to attack over Cape Gazelle. The Japs were persistent and daring. One, a

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"a mean looking bastard and not smiling as Hollywood shows them," eased into formation between Anacker's and Wallace's B-25's and flew for more than a minute not more than 50 feet away. The gunners did not dare fire for fear of hitting the other friendly plane. Other Japanese were making frequent thrusts from above and below. Wallace's turret gunner ran out of ammunition and called for more. The engineer and radio operator were firing the waist guns, operating the radio, and in their spare time clamping their hands over a severed fuel line which was flooding the plane with gasoline and fumes. One turret gun and one waist gun were soon shot out. The three enlisted men became groggy from fumes. The co-pilot while firing his .45 at the attacking Zekes was seriously wounded in the abdomen. Meanwhile Anacker's plane was hit. It suddenly turned toward the New Britain coast and was last seen still under attack and losing altitude. Wallace continued alone, flying no more than 30 feet above the water and maneuvering so skillfully that at least four enemy planes crashed into the water while making diving attacks at the elusive B-25. In spite of having to fly more than two hours on one engine and with 41 gaping holes in his plane, Wallace brought his aircraft down on the Kiriwina landing field shortly after the three planes of the other flight.

The mission was a triumph for the attack squadrons. Fifty-five B-25's had set out. Five had failed to reach the target, and three had not returned. Perhaps 40 enemy aircraft had been destroyed on the ground, and 35 in the air. In addition the 501st Squadron had definitely sunk one Fox Tare Charlie, one Fox Tare Baker, and one corvette.

It was becoming obvious, however, that weather conditions ^{would} not permit a complete fulfillment of the plan for an early reduction of Rabaul. Indeed

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the loss of three B-24's on 18 October because of the weather together with the failure of the entire force to reach its objective had convinced General Whitehead that the use of heavy bombers should be somewhat limited. He argued that any plan which would send B-24's at night against points across the Solomon Sea such as Kavieng, Buha, and Rabaul, would result in a 15 to 30 per cent loss. His suggestion was to hit Kavieng at night with FBV's and by day with B-24's coordinated with a fighter sweep to Rabaul calculated to hold the enemy fighters there.

Operations in New Guinea, 19-22 October

Any interference with major scheduled operations complicated the entire operational routine of the air force. "The beating down of Rabaul" was the primary mission of the First Air Task Force. Thus General Whitehead had to save heavy bombers, two attack bomber groups, and the six P-38 squadrons for any possible opportunity to perform that mission. However this put a severe limitation on the fighter force available for escort and patrol missions. It meant that LCH's and other small craft carrying rations and supplies to the Australians in the Finschhafen area had to travel by night and take cover by day. The best General Whitehead could promise the Navy in the way of fighter escort to cover one convoy, for example, was two flights of P-40's from first light until 0900, two to four flights of P-47's and two flights of P-40's between 0900 and 1500, and two flights of P-40's from then until darkness. This would leave no more than one squadron of P-47's and two of P-40's on ground alert to cover the mass of shipping in Oro Bay. Whitehead prophesied that the Navy would "squawk to high heaven" at any reduction in fighter patrols, but added that he could not count on using the P-38 force "to cover shipping

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and troop carriers and also cover the mission of taking out the enemy air force at Buka, Rabaul, and Kavieng.³⁴"

The weather forecasters following the 18 October mission issued increasingly gloomy predictions. They prophesied continued bad weather which would not permit a renewal of the Rabaul offensive until 23 October at the earliest. Thus the Fifth Air Force's energies once more were turned to the west. Although there had been a number of minor strikes against the tenacious enemy in the Sattelberg area, General Whitehead was unable to plan a major attack because of a continued lack of specific information from the Australians as to a target. The lull in New Britain operations offered a good opportunity, however, and a coordinated mission was planned for 21 October. It came at an opportune time when the enemy was threatening to recover lost ground. Fifty-six B-24's dropped over 200 tons of bombs which leveled Sattelberg village. A few hours later 10 B-25's swept along supply routes and over Japanese positions in the same area dropping delayed-action bombs from a minimum altitude.³⁵

On the same day, a failure to provide properly for the fighter escort prevented the accomplishment of a scheduled strike against Newak. The plan had contemplated the use of B-25's escorted by P-47's from Port Moresby. But the P-47's would require refueling on the way both to and from the target, and it was realized, apparently too late, that this would so delay the B-25's that they would be unable to surmount the regular afternoon build-up of high cumulus clouds on top of the mountains on the way back to base. The attack was, therefore, postponed until the entire air echelon of the 348th Fighter Group could move temporarily to Isili Tali. The attack occurred on 22 October. Two squadrons of strafers escorted by almost 50 P-47's swept over But

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and Dagua airdromes, and one squadron of B-25G's hit shipping off the neighboring coast. The bombers destroyed 13 aircraft on the ground, silenced AA positions, and sank two small luggers. Antiaircraft fire was slight and inaccurate, and the F-47's provided good protection from intercepting fighters. Two of the escorting squadrons encountered approximately 18 Tonys and shot down four of them, but four of the F-47's were in turn shot down.

Rabaul, 23 October

Meanwhile B-24's sent to keep a weather eye on the routes to Rabaul were reporting more favorable weather over the Solomon Sea and New Britain. This seemed to confirm the earlier forecast of General Whitehead's weather men. Moreover, earlier intelligence reports indicated that the Japanese were replacing all losses incurred over New Britain almost as rapidly as they occurred. Photos of 19 October, for example, showed 211 aircraft on the four Rabaul airdromes. This information clinched the plan to renew the offensive on 23 October.

The schedule called for a heavy bomber attack with the 90th Group hitting Lakunai and the 43d Wunakanau. In addition the plan included a fighter sweep by three P-38 squadrons prior to the bombing attack, a fighter squadron to escort each bombardment group, and a sixth squadron to provide over-all top cover. The mission started out according to plan with 57 B-24's meeting their escort of 100 P-38's over Kiriwina. The powerful formation headed toward New Britain and reached the Rabaul area only to find that the two objectives were completely blocked out by cumulus cloud layers built up to perhaps 20,000 feet. There had been no pre-arranged decision as to a secondary target,

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but the group leaders quickly decided upon Rapopo, and announced the change on the command radio net. Some confusion was occasioned by the change and in several cases resulted in poor bomb runs, while other bombers did not drop their bombs at all. A substantial number of 100- and 500-lb. demolition bombs and small frag clusters, however, were scattered over the runways and dispersal areas. Fighter interception, though not particularly persistent, made observation of damage difficult, and most squadron narratives refused to list results. The official report, however, claimed 20 medium bombers and fighters destroyed on the ground in addition to four Zekes in combat. The P-38's had again provided excellent cover, and had shot down 13 additional enemy fighters. Only one P-38 was lost, but the pilot, Lt. Edward J. Czarnecki, succeeded in making his way to New Britain, where he lived with natives for three months before being rescued.

Rabaul, 24 October

The air offensive continued on 24 October. The First Air Task Force plan of that day called for a low-level attack on three Rabaul airdromes: the 7d Group (8th, 90th, and 13th Squadrons) against Rapopo and Tobera and the 345th Group against Vunakanau. Originally 27 strafers were assigned to hit Rapopo and Tobera, but nine of them were diverted to seek out three Japanese destroyers reported in Rein Bay and spent four hours vainly searching for them. The attack on Rabaul was scheduled for 1000, almost two hours before previous low-level attacks, in an attempt to throw the enemy fighter defenses off balance. Unfortunately, however, the take-off was delayed for over an hour; and the bombers of the 7d Group, which became somewhat separated over the Solomon Sea, lost more precious time in reassembling over New Britain. By the time the leading planes crossed the coast line, Japanese fighters were

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in the air and waiting, and more than 20 Zekes, Hamps, and Oscars attacked the leading squadron from all sides. The 8th Squadron called for fighter help, but although six squadrons of fighters were providing escort for the mission, none were in the immediate vicinity. By the time F-38's of the 80th Squadron could reach the hard-pressed bombers, one B-25 had had a portion of its wing shot off and had crashed. Several fighter pilots, by that time engaged "in the hottest battle yet encountered," swooped down toward the wrecked bomber but could see no sign of life.

The remainder of the B-25 units were well protected by their fighter escort, and experienced no persistent interception. The 13th Squadron was the first to reach its target, Tobera airdrome. Bombs were dropped across the runways and in revetments, but only four aircraft were spotted there, and no specific damage was claimed. The other squadrons had better success, and reported at least 21 aircraft destroyed at Rapopo and 27 more at Vunakanau. In addition the B-25's shot down eight enemy fighters, while the P-78 escort was accounting for 37 more. Two B-25's were lost, but the crew of one was saved after a water landing in Collingwood Bay, and two American fighters crash-landed at Kiriwina, but these pilots also escaped.

There was criticism of the 24 October mission by some of the participating bomber crews. One complaint asserted that the Japanese had been expecting the attack, and that time of attack and route to the target should have been different from previous strikes. It was also argued that coconut groves surrounding Rapopo and Tobera concealed the airdromes so well from low-flying planes that that type of attack was impracticable. In any case, the 13th Squadron was convinced that the Tobera mission had been merely a waste of effort in view of the few planes based there.

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The Rabaul offensive had not yet touched the great Japanese fighter base at Lakunai. Heavy bombers had started out for that objective on at least two occasions, but each time the weather had forced a change in plan. An attack on Lakunai was desirable primarily because it would contribute to the whittling down of the Japanese air force. This in turn would serve the secondary purpose of simplifying later attacks against other lucrative targets in the Rabaul area such as the shipping in Simpson Harbor. It was logical then that following the missions of 23 and 24 October, General Whitehead should schedule first a heavy bomber attack against Lakunai, and second a coordinated assault on shipping.

Although the weather forecasters had prophesied poor weather, heavy bombers set out for Lakunai on 25 October. The plan called for a two-group attack escorted by four squadrons of fighters and preceded by a fighter sweep of two other F-39 squadrons. The mission started out satisfactorily with 61 B-24's and 81 F-38's joining formation as usual over Ziriwina. From there on, however, the weather grew gradually worse, and in about 45 minutes the F-38 leaders announced on the command frequency that they could not continue. Apparently neither bomb group commander received the message. They went on toward the target. Seventy-three F-38's and 11 B-24's turned back, but Maj. Charles H. MacDonald with eight planes of the 472d Fighter Squadron determined to give the bombers some support. By leading his flight high enough to escape the worst of the weather front, he succeeded in reaching Rabaul. The bombers which bettered their way to Lakunai met fierce Japanese resistance. Cruisers and destroyers in the harbor sent up a hail of 5-in. antiaircraft shells which

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burst between 20,000 and 25,000 feet over the water and Lakunai drome. Land batteries located around the airfield and harbor contributed to this antiaircraft barrage. As the B-24's were making their bomb run, more than 60 Zekes, Oscars, Hornets, and Ionys began a series of harassing attacks. MacDonald had attached his eight P-38's to the leading bomb squadron hoping that "the Japs seeing us would be discouraged and perhaps figure that there were lots more of us." When enemy fighters first appeared, the little formation put on a formidable show and scared them off. MacDonald himself shot down one Zeke in flames. Otherwise the eight fighters maintained a weaving patrol over the area for some 45 minutes, avoiding combat whenever possible.

The 403d Bombardment Squadron bringing up the rear of the attack faced furious enemy fighter interception. It arrived over Lakunai to find that airfield "a seething, boiling mass of bomb dust," which obscured normal aiming points. The bombardiers, well briefed on alternates, however, put all but four of 108 bombs in the general target area. In the meantime, the gunners were trying to keep more than 30 enemy aircraft at a safe distance so that the bombers could carry out their primary mission of dropping bombs. On a number of occasions, the Japanese broke through this defense, and one bomber was soon severely damaged. With one engine completely shot out and another of little use, it could not keep up with its squadron, and two other B-24's dropped out of formation to provide a measure of escort.

Attacks on these three planes came more rapidly and from all angles. Persistent enemy fighters defied the cross fire of the two "healthy" planes in order to reach the "wounded" one. Eight enemy planes were shot down, but finally the faltering B-24 was left on its own. For 15 minutes, enemy fighters literally waited in line for their turn to make passes. They

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riddled the B-24. Its bomb bay was awash with fuel and hydraulic fluid. Only two engines were functioning. Its top turret guns had jammed. Ammunition was almost exhausted except for a few rounds in the nose turret. But one by one the Japanese planes gave up the fight until only six or seven remained. Unexpectedly these, too, turned back toward New Britain at a time when "the currry was . . . theirs for the taking." Only a few minutes after the last Japanese plane had disappeared, both remaining engines cut out, and the Liberator was brought down upon the water. The nose ducked under with a terrific impact. The top of the fuselage broke open at the bomb bay, and the five crew members on the half deck crawled out and tumbled into the ocean. The flight deck and cockpit were filled with water. The radio operator, navigator, and engineer were badly injured, but they succeeded in crawling out the escape hatch. The pilot and co-pilot were trapped in the crushed cockpit. In the meantime, a call for help had been sent from the crashed plane's flight, and approximately one hour later, a Catalina floated down on the water and rescued the surviving members of the crew.

This B-24 was the only Allied loss suffered in the Lakunai attack. The Japs, on the other hand, had lost heavily. Thirty-nine planes had been shot down in combat, and ground installations had been severely cut up. Mission reports submitted soon after the attack failed in every case to specify the damage done, but later photo intelligence indicated that at least 21 planes had been destroyed on the ground.

Rabaul, 22 October

General Whitehead's plan had called for a low-level attack upon shipping following the Lakunai mission. The First Air Task Force had every intention of carrying out this phase of the plan, but the weather continued to be an unpredictable factor. On 26 October, for example, 32 B-25's set out, but the

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equatorial front, building up in the neighborhood of Kiriwina Island, prevented the fighter cover from taking off, and all B-25's turned back. For the next four days, no larger daylight attack was dispatched across the seas to New Britain, but General Whitehead's suggestions as to night attacks on New Ireland were being put into effect. The RAAF with Beauforts, Beaufighters, and P-40's had already been carrying out numerous missions from Kiriwina against points in southern New Britain. On 26 October it began a series of assaults with Catalinas against Kavieng in New Ireland. In the first of these, three Catalinas dropped demolition, fragmentation, and incendiary bombs on the airrome; and 24 hours later five more hit Gosmeta, Kavieng, and shipping near Talasea. Night after night the slow-flying patrol planes returned, strafing antiaircraft positions, starting fires in hangars and on dispersal areas, and generally trying to persuade the Japanese that planes withdrawn from Rabaul were also vulnerable on Kavieng airdromes.⁴⁷

The interruption of the Rabaul offensive had doubtless given the Japanese an opportunity to repair the havoc wrought by the heavy bombers, and this fact probably accounted for a decision to strike the airdromes again with heavy bombers rather than to risk the strafers in a low-level attack on shipping. Not until 29 October was the First Air Task Force able to renew the Rabaul offensive. Even on that day the weather report was not particularly promising: deep cloud areas with moderate to heavy rains over the Coral and south Solomon seas; and the "usual deep clouds with heavy showers over ranges during the evening." But it proved to be a routine and quite successful attack on Vunaknau airdrome. Forty-six B-24's

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reached the target, and dropped 120-lb. frag clusters and 50-lb. demolition bombs over runways and revetments. Later photo interpretation indicated considerable damage. Reports by the crews themselves claimed approximately nine aircraft destroyed on the ground, but the later reports more than doubled that number.

The bomber crews and fighter pilots found that enemy interceptors were numerous, but not particularly effective. It seemed evident that less experienced Japanese pilots were being brought in as replacements, and that "the eager pilots were not experienced; and the experienced not eager." This was perhaps fortunate, particularly on this occasion, for the American fighter escort assigned to the mission had, for once, become badly confused. An initial mix-up at Kiriwina, for example, resulted in the 39th Squadron's taking off between flights of the 432d Squadron, and these flights never re-established contact during the mission. The 431st Squadron, which was assigned the top-cover position, moreover, found to its surprise that a considerable number of P-38's were flying above, and that there was no squadron between its flights and the bombers. Nevertheless, enemy interception was relatively unsuccessful. B-24 gunners destroyed seven of the enemy. American fighter pilots shot down 18 more, while one P-38 and its pilot, Lt. Christopher O. Bartlett, failed to return.

Simpson Harbor, 2 November

Again an impenetrable weather front settled down over the Solomon Sea and prevented a follow-up mission. This was a delay which the strafing squadrons were "sweating out." It had been definitely decided that

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the next strike was to be a low-level attack upon shipping in Simpson Harbor rather than upon airfields. There were a number of reasons for this decision. Attacks on airfields were becoming less and less lucrative. The Japanese bomber force at Rabaul had been cut down to a minimum of perhaps 40 aircraft, and the Rabaul fighter force consisting of some 100 planes were usually able to avoid being caught on the ground. Thus shipping appeared as the most fruitful target. It seemed probable too that an attack on shipping would be of most assistance to the offensive operations then under way in the south Pacific. Allied forces had gone ashore in the Treasury Islands on 27 October as a preliminary move for the major landing at Empress Augusta Bay on 1 November. Since the Japanese force at Rabaul was the principal source of reinforcements for the entire area between the Solomons and New Britain, an Allied strike on shipping in Simpson Harbor would contribute directly to the success of the ⁴⁵ Halsey forces on Bougainville.

It was realized that a low-level attack on Simpson Harbor was fraught with risks. Not only were the Japanese expected to throw every available fighter plane into the defense of precious shipping, but Simpson Harbor, shaped something like a bathtub and rimmed by high ground, was ideal for anti-aircraft defenses. The Japanese had taken full advantage of this. Heavy guns and automatic-weapon batteries were emplaced along the shore and in the surrounding hills, and these together with the warships in the harbor were in a position to provide a vicious barrage against low-level attack.

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A primary consideration, in any plan of attack on Simpson Harbor, therefore, was the neutralization of these defenses. Enemy interception could be partially taken care of by a fighter sweep preceding the arrival of the strafers. But the antiaircraft was more of a problem. The solution recommended by General Whitehead was to blanket the land defenses with smoke prior to the strike on shipping. Experiments by tactical units in cooperation with chemical warfare and ordnance experts had shown white phosphorous bombs armed with instantaneous impact fuzes had the desired effect. There was some danger in dropping the chemical from a low altitude, but it was found that cutting the powder charge in the burster by 50 per cent permitted a safe release of the bombs at altitudes above 100 feet.

Tension was high in the American units designated for the strike. On four consecutive days medium and fighter units were alerted, and planes put in final readiness for the strike. On each occasion at the last minute First Air Task Force (FATF) called it off because of the weather. The strain was not eased by the knowledge that every hour's delay was permitting the enemy to bring in more aircraft to replace losses from previous Allied attacks. The strategy had already been carefully worked out. Two fighter squadrons, the 79th and 80th, were to carry out a fighter sweep over Lakunai and Simpson Harbor three minutes before the bombardment. The bombers were to come in from the northeast in order to take advantage of protecting hills and the tide which caused ships to lie broadside to this approach. Four squadrons of the 345th Group, covered by the 431st and

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432d Squadrons, were then to neutralize shore antiaircraft positions by smoke, strafing, fire, and bombs. Making an approach through an opening in the smoke screen on the northeast corner of the harbor, the 13th and 90th "Attack" squadrons with the 9th Fighter Squadron as close cover were then to begin the assault upon the ships in Simons Harbor. Four minutes later the 8th, 71st, and 406th Squadrons with the 432d Fighter Squadron as protection were to conclude the attack.

Meanwhile the 8th Photo Squadron was making daily attempts to obtain photo reconnaissance of the Rabaul area. On each occasion weather interfered. Early in the morning of 2 November, as on several previous occasions, the First Air Task Force alerted the bomber units. At least four squadrons were dispatched on the mission to Simons Harbor. Within a few minutes, however, foreboding weather reports caused a change of plan, and they were recalled. In less than an hour, two F-5's were sent out. This time the skies were relatively clear, and the flying smooth. Two hours later, the photo planes were covering virtually the entire Rabaul area, and their photographs later showed 7 destroyers, 1 tender, and 20 merchant vessels, estimated at a total of 91,000 tons, in the harbor, and 171 fighters, 37 medium bombers, and 29 light bombers on the airdromes.

While the F-5's were still photographing the busy scenes in Simons Harbor and on Vanakanau, Lakunai, Racono, and Tobera, the bombers were ordered off the ground again. By 1100 nine squadrons of bombers and six of fighters flying more than 60 B-25's and approximately the same number of P-38's were on their way. At 1330 two squadrons of fighters led by Maj.

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Edward Cragg of the 80th Squadron began the sweep across Lakunai and the harbor. The 39th, flying between 8,000 feet and 10,000 feet, met little enemy resistance, and only one pilot, Lt. Hamilton H. Salmon, was credited with a definite kill. The 16 pilots of the 80th Squadron, on the other hand, soon found themselves engaged with more than 60 enemy fighters. Several pilots counted at least 100. By this time the neutralizing force led by Maj. Benjamin Fridge, deputy commander of the 345th Group, was over its objective, the shoreline of Simpson Harbor and the near-by hills which concealed Japanese AA positions. Great clouds of smoke marked the course of the first two squadrons as they covered the area with white phosphorous bombs. More B-25's followed the same route and added to the confusion of the Japanese gunners by dropping parafrags through the burning clouds of smoke. These lead squadrons met a fury of antiaircraft thrown up from Lakunai and Vunakanau, from shore batteries, and from war ships in the harbor. Eight B-25's were hit, and, of these, three failed to return to base. Enemy intercession, also fierce throughout the encounter, varied from aggressive head-on attacks to the dropping of aerial bombs from points far above the harbor. The B-25's themselves claimed 17 Japanese fighters destroyed, but the 431st and 432d Fighter Squadrons diverted their share of the enemy assaults, and shot down an additional 17 Zekes and Harps.

"Chaos and pandemonium" greeted the strafing squadrons which bored through the white smoke and lobbed their 1,000-lb. bombs at the sides of the ships trying to get under way in Simpson Harbor. Approximately 40 B-25's led by Maj. John P. Henbry, commander of the 2d Group, carried out the

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shipping attack. Antiaircraft defenses on the shore had been well taken care of but the cruisers and destroyers in the harbor sent up a hail of shells and waterspouts. Bombing was nevertheless surprisingly accurate. The 71st Squadron reported a 7,000- to 10,000-ton merchant vessel and a destroyer left in a sinking condition, and a Fox Tare Charlie in flames. The 408th Squadron succeeded in destroying a 300-ton tug and claimed a hit on a 5,000-ton freighter. The 90th Squadron claimed direct hits on a cruiser, two destroyers, and nine transports. They listed none as actually sunk, but reported that the cruiser had rolled over on its side; one destroyer was left "sinking in stern," and one transport had its stern blown away. Another was burning and sinking, a third was probably sunk, and all ⁴⁹ were on fire or smoking at the conclusion of the attack.

The 13th Squadron, instead of following the 90th over Simpson Harbor, swung north of The Mother, a famous volcanic landmark, and then turned abruptly to the south. There it saw a melee of aircraft in the midst of clouds of smoke and antiaircraft bursts, hardly an ideal spot for a calm and accurate assessment of damages. However, the squadron claimed near misses on a number of vessels and direct hits on two freighter transports.

The 8th Squadron, close on the heels of the 13th, had been baffled by the course followed to the objective, which, it claimed, was entirely at variance with the original attack plan. Maj. Raymond H. Wilkins, 8th Squadron commander, who had briefed his unit numerous times on the exact manner of approach, questioned the change by radio, but finally followed the other unit in order to keep his assigned position in formation. The

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altered line of approach, however, upset carefully rehearsed plans. Two sharp turns had to be made which broke up the formation, and from the new direction there was only a 100-yard corridor through the smoke. Thus the squadron could not attack in line abreast. In spite of these difficulties, however, the 8th Squadron made a successful bomb run. Wilkin's plane scored a direct hit on a destroyer which "was seen to explode and become enveloped in a mass of flames and was definitely left sinking." Other hits were scored on a large Fox Tare Able, a Fox Tare Uncle, which according to one report broke in two, a Fox Tare Charlie which was probably destroyed, and a Fox Tare Baker which "must have been destroyed."

According to the original plan, the 8th Squadron was to withdraw from the harbor west of Vulcan Crater. But the direction of approach prevented this relatively simple escape, and several of the planes could not swing to the west without dangerously crowding other planes in the squadron. Accordingly these B-25's were forced to traverse the entire length of the harbor, a course which carried them directly across two Japanese cruisers near its mouth. Wilkins had intentionally taken a position on the extreme left of his squadron in the belief that part of the formation might have to pass close to one of the warships. Instead of one, however, he faced the concentrated fire of two. His plane, already damaged by anti-aircraft fire, was caught in the tremendous barrage sent up by the cruisers which knocked off one vertical stabilizer and a part of the wing. He crashed at the entrance to the harbor. Another B-25, piloted by Lt. William C. Mackoy, met a similar fate just south of the two cruisers.

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The date 2 November 1943 became known to the Fifth Air Force as "Bloody

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Tuesday." Japanese antiaircraft had accounted for a total of eight B-25's, enemy fighters for another; and American bombers had shot down 26 enemy planes and had destroyed 10 flying boats and float planes in the harbor. The P-38 cover had been daring and exceedingly effective. It claimed a total of 42 enemy aircraft definitely destroyed, but the Japanese pilots had proved superior to others faced in previous months, and had shot down nine F-38's. Another American fighter was washed out in a crash landing. As a result of the action, 45 Americans were listed as either killed or missing. One entire B-25 crew, that of Major Henebry, was rescued off Kiriwina after its plane had been "blasted to bits between Zeros and those damn cruisers." An accurate assessment of shipping damage is practically impossible. The official communiqué claimed that three destroyers, eight large merchant vessels with an aggregate tonnage of 50,000 tons, and four small coastal vessels had been sunk. A later report of the Fifth Air Force listed 1 destroyer, 5 merchant vessels totaling approximately 13,000 tons, "a mincraft," and a tug as sunk and 22 other vessels damaged, but even these figures do not entirely agree with the reports of the participating squadrons.

Conclusion of the Rabaul Offensive, 2-11 November

The Rabaul offensive from the Southwest Pacific continued for a little more than a week after the 2 November strike. During the period results were disappointing, and again the weather had been the most effective enemy. The medium bomber units could hardly have been expected to carry out large-scale missions immediately following their effort of 2 November, but on the two

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following days no bombers at all could get through. On 5 November, however, the weather improved, and a powerful force of approximately 100 naval planes from the South Pacific successfully hit Rabaul shipping, and shot down more than 20 enemy aircraft. Japanese fighters had little chance to recover from this early morning mission when 27 B-24's from the 43d Group protected by 67 F-38's dropped 81 tons of bombs on the wharf areas near the town. Other formations of heavy bombers returned to Rabaul on 7, 10, and 11 November to hit the town as well as Lakunai and Rapopo dromes. The first of these attacks resulted in 13 Japanese aircraft destroyed on the ground and 23 enemy fighters shot down. Five F-38's were lost. The Fifth Air Force attack of 11 November was unescorted and in the early morning. The only obvious results were large fires and explosions. A carrier task force later that day, however, sank two destroyers and a cruiser and shot down 36 intercepting enemy fighters.

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So far as the Fifth Air Force was concerned, the strike of 11 November 1943 ended the Rabaul offensive. RAAF Beauforts throughout November and December carried frequent and damaging attacks usually at night against air-dromes and shipping, and by the middle of December the South Pacific command initiated "the assault to render Rabaul ineffective." The Fifth Air Force had not accomplished the results anticipated by both Kenney and Whitehead. The weather had prevented the sort of sustained operations necessary to destroy Rabaul as a major base for supply and operations. Nevertheless no story of the reduction of Rabaul is complete without the contribution of the flyers of the Fifth Air Force. They destroyed buildings and supplies in the towns and on the docks. They sank a substantial tonnage of shipping. But

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their primary contribution was the losses inflicted upon the Japanese air force. According to General Kenney: "Our first target has been and will continue to be the Jap air Even when attacks are directed against the enemy shipping, our primary objective is still the destruction of Jap fighters enticed into the air to protect that shipping. We are actually using the Jap Navy and Merchant Marine as bait." ⁵⁴

The Japanese air force during the month of October suffered an overwhelming defeat. According to the best intelligence estimates Allied air units in the Southwest Pacific destroyed 648 planes, probably destroyed 215, and damaged 138. This had not necessarily diminished the enemy's immediate power of resistance. He still had an airplane reserve from which he could draw reinforcements, and reinforcements were maintaining his defensive fighter force in the Southwest Pacific at a substantial strength. The enemy order of battle for New Britain and New Ireland as estimated for 12 October showed 183 fighters and 174 bombers, and, for 12 November, 210 fighters and 65 bombers. When compared with this strength, the enemy's scale of effort in the South and Southwest Pacific was pathetically small. From 17 October to 13 November his average daily strength of bombers in the two theaters was 312, or 154 less than the previous 28-day period. There were 417 recorded enemy bombing sorties, approximately one and a third a month per plane. This was slightly higher than the 1.09 per plane for the previous 28 days. Offensive fighter sorties, on the other hand, showed a marked decline. With an average of 216 fighters on hand, the average number of sorties per plane declined from 2.17 to 1.53. Obviously growing Allied air power was throwing the enemy ^{almost} entirely on the

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defensive. His air forces, the Army Air Service based on Newak and at other points in New Guinea, and the Naval Air Service in the Bismarcks and the Solomons, were in no position to venture far or frequently from base. Allied Intelligence estimated that from 17 October to 13 November the enemy carried out a total of 5,409 sorties in the South and Southwest Pacific, but "only 902 of these were directly against our airplanes or bases."

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Chapter V

AIR ACTION DURING OPERATION DEXTERITY, NOVEMBER 1943-FEBRUARY 1944

November Operations

Although the attack of 11 November was the Fifth Air Force's last strike of importance against Rabaul, the Bismarck Archipelago continued to be the principal objective of the Allied forces under the strategic direction of General MacArthur. Over-all plans called for a continued air neutralization of the main Japanese bases in the Bismarcks, culminating in landings at points in New Britain and New Ireland by forces of both the South and Southwest Pacific. The Bougainville landing on 1 November by Admiral Halsey's command had thrown the initial South Pacific phase of the operations into high gear. Its early successes had driven a wedge into the enemy garrison and threatened the supply route from Rabaul into the upper Solomons.

In the meantime, American land forces in the Southwest Pacific were preparing for what was to be known as Operation DEXTERITY, an offensive designed to land American units at points in New Britain and at Saidor on the New Guinea coast. D-day for this operation had been scheduled for early December, and General MacArthur had every intention of maintaining the timetable. Lower echelons, however, were growing increasingly dubious of their ability to push preparations through in time. The Fifth Air Force insisted upon building up elaborate bases in the Markham valley and on the

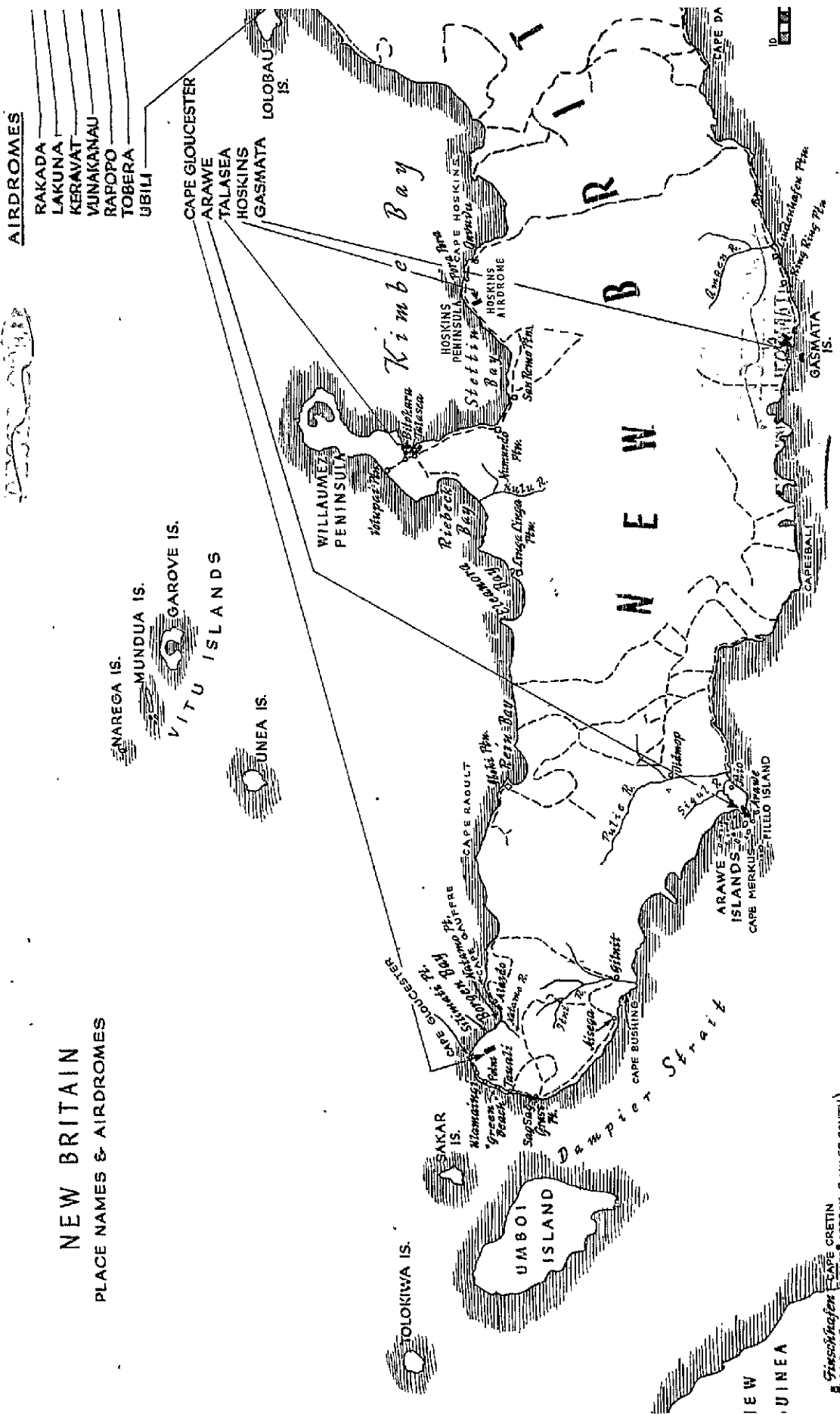
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NEW BRITAIN
PLACE NAMES & AIRDROMES

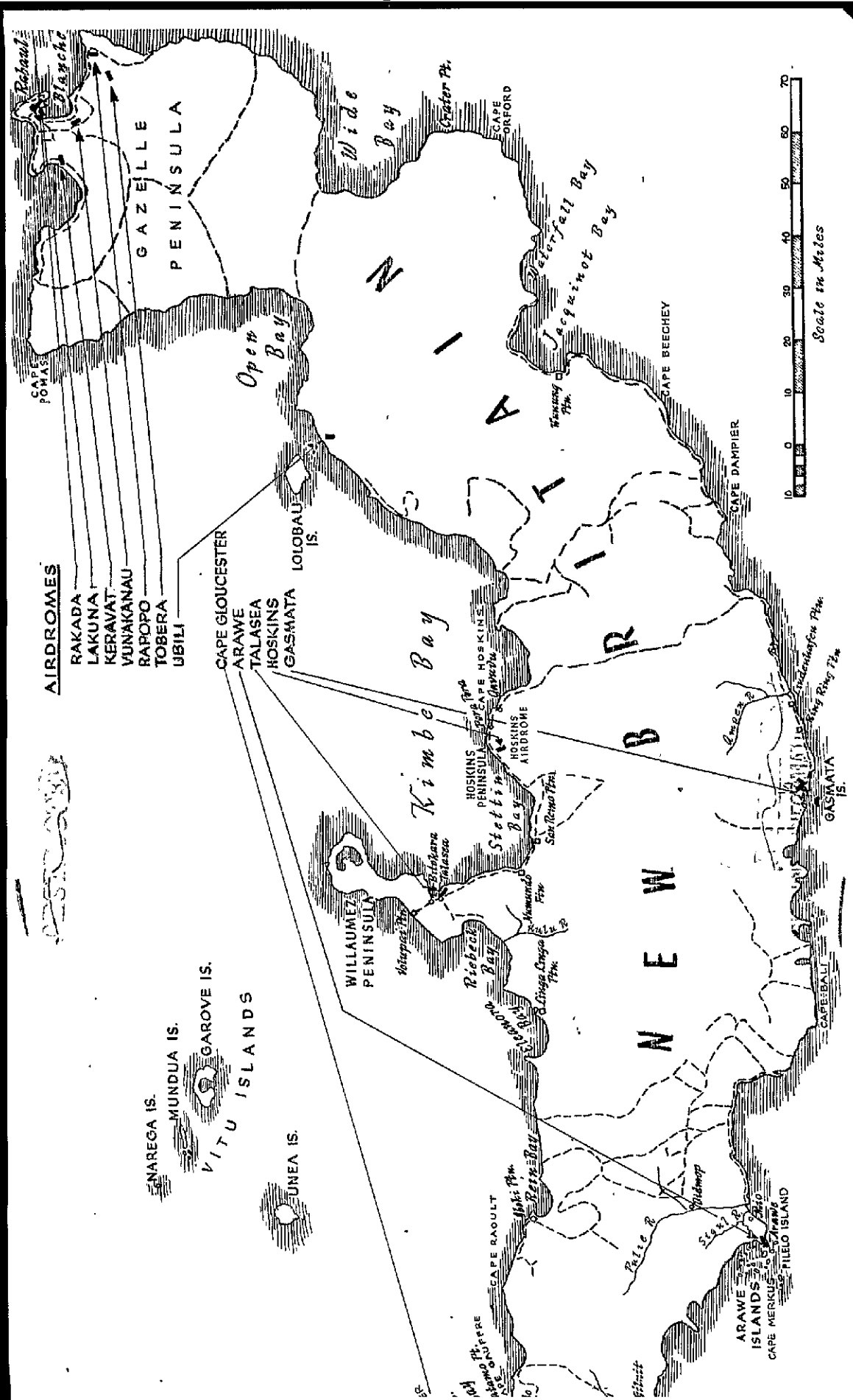
AIRDROMES

- RAKADA
- LAKUNA
- KERAVAT
- VUNAKANAU
- RAFOPO
- TOBERA
- UBILI

- NAREGA IS.
- MUNDUA IS.
- GAROVE IS.
- VITU ISLANDS
- UNEVA IS.



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 Airdrome, Town, 12 Cape (Approx. 5 Miles South)



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Huon Peninsula as a necessary preliminary, and although this was admitted as desirable by General Headquarters, the problem was complicated by the inadequacy of shipping. Virtually every base and unit commander was clamoring for more supplies and equipment, and it was considered doubtful if the shipping then available in the Southwest Pacific could satisfy the needs of all of them.¹

The DEXTERITY operation would have been much simpler to plan had it been the only responsibility of air and ground forces at this time. But DEXTERITY was only an essential diversion from the main drive along the New Guinea coast. The two Australian divisions and two air task forces already committed to this drive demanded a share of the supplies which reached the north shore of New Guinea. It was a major logistical problem to keep these forces, operating in widely separated areas, supplied and reinforced. In the Boma valley, Australian patrols probed into Japanese positions at points 15 to 25 miles south of Bogadjim guarding the approaches to Madang, but made no startling advances. Only minor strikes were carried out in this area by the Fifth Air Force during November. The largest of the month occurred on 5 November when 22 B-25's and 6 B-26's of the 23d Group hit Japanese defense positions outlined by Australian smoke shells along the upper Poria River.²

More notable advances were made by the 9th Australian Division around Sattelberg. Aided by the heavy bomber attack of 21 October, the Australians had halted a Japanese thrust toward the coast. For the next two weeks, the area was relatively quiet except for patrol activity. This stalemate was not encouraging to Allied plans for offensive operations. Not only was the Japanese force on the Huon Peninsula a threat to any cross-strait operations

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to New Britain, but it was holding an area which was considered essential for Allied radar stations. Whitehead determined, therefore, "to try and dislodge the Nips" at Sattelberg and Warco. On 16 November 15 B-25's swept over a coastal area held by the Japanese, dropped propaganda leaflets near enemy positions, and bombed and strafed the track. On the following day the 90th and 43d Bombardment Groups (H) and the 32d Group with its mediums were sent out to saturate the enemy defenses as a prelude to a general advance on land. But the weather which had been growing steadily worse during the month shut out the target, and none of the mediums and only one of the B-24's reached the objective. The Australians jumped off nevertheless, and supported by artillery fire and tanks pushed to points within a mile of ³ Sattelberg village.

For the remainder of the month, medium and light bombers pounded steadily at Japanese bunkers and other strong-points to the north and on the trails leading from near-by Warco to Bonga. Between 16 and 30 November, a total of 56 B-24's, 182 B-25's, 46 B-26's, and 59 A-20's, escorted by 92 F-38's and 22 P-47's, set out for these objectives. Of these, 55 B-24's, 11 B-25's, 3 B-26's, 1 A-20, and 4 F-38's were forced to turn back, but those that reached the target during the month dropped more than 500 tons of bombs. Japanese fighter opposition was nonexistent, and no Allied planes were lost in combat. On the ground Allied patrols blowing through swamps, along flooded trails, and around fanatical Japs prepared the way for a determined Allied advance. On 25 November the Australians captured Sattelberg, within a week had pushed farther inland toward Warco, and on 29 October captured the village of Bonga on the coast approximately six miles north of

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Finschhafen.

Bonga had been one of the principal supply dumps for the Japanese in the Sattelberg area. With the northeastern coast of New Guinea south of Hansa Bay virtually cut off from major Japanese reinforcement efforts, the enemy on the Huon Peninsula had to rely upon barges for reinforcements. The Allies could not hope to stop this means of supply, although PT boats--operating in some cases at night--were successful in sinking many barges. During the week ending 15 November, for example, 13 barges were sunk. But by day they were usually carefully hidden, and Allied aircraft had to rely on intelligence reports to identify hideouts along the coast. Of these perhaps the most important was in the vicinity of Sio, on the northern tip of the Huon Peninsula. Accordingly, in their harassing attacks on the Japanese supply line, Allied light and medium bombers concentrated on this area. B-25's dominated the sweeps along the coast, and carried out at least 88 sorties from minimum and medium altitude during the month of November. A total of more than 10 tons of bombs was dropped from 17 November until the end of the month by all planes that participated in these attacks including B-24's, B-26's, P-40's, and RAAF A-21's, and at least eight barges were sunk. Strong escorts were generally provided for these missions, but the fighters had little to do except to fly, since no enemy interception was encountered. Antiaircraft fire, however, on occasion was fierce and accurate, and the only losses suffered in the Sio area during the month, two B-25's, were attributed to A.I.

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The missions in the Ramu valley, on the Huon Peninsula, and against barge routes along the New Guinea coast were carried out in direct cooperation

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with the ground troops in that area. Although General Kenney insisted that "all the Air in the theater was available" for "support of ground operations," there were actually very few requests which originated with the ground forces themselves. During the period 10 October to 18 November, for example, no more than 37 requests of ground origin were received at ADVON, and hence General Whitehead was able to act personally upon each request.

Requests for ground support were supposed to reach ADVON not later than the evening preceding the mission. No definite time for close support strikes could be specified because distance and undependable weather could cause many hours of delay. To rely on a definite time might result in disaster for ground forces. In such circumstances only limiting times were acceptable, and most cooperative missions were flown with a restriction that bombs were not to be dropped after a specified hour. Another limiting factor on air operations was the bomb line. An air bomb line was established across the entire front, and was generally located about five to 10 miles beyond the points of contact with the enemy. Beyond that line, the air could operate freely without coordination with the ground. Within the air bomb line air units could attack only when a target bomb line had been designated on the "air support photograph by which the mission was evaluated, briefed and flown." In jungle country, such a designation was a rare event. A minimum 500-yard safety limit was essential, and usually ground contact occurred at close quarters, rarely at more than 100 yards. Yardage was precious; hence "ground commanders often preferred the known advantages of maintaining contact to the doubtful results of an air strike."

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The RAAF Fourth Army Cooperation Squadron was frequently of greater value than the attack planes in the immediate process of gaining ground. One flight of this unit, consisting of nine single-seater Boomerangs and three two-seater Wirraways, supported the 7th Division in the Ramu valley and another flight the 9th Division on the Huon Peninsula. The pilots of these slow and almost unarmed aircraft were in frequent contact with officers at division headquarters. They flew day after day over the same area, and hence became intimately acquainted with every distinguishing landmark. Their tasks included reporting the strength, disposition, and movement of enemy troops, following the progress of their own troops, locating artillery targets and adjusting artillery fire, executing emergency direct support attacks, and performing numerous staff and rescue missions.

It is clear, then, that ground cooperation missions were only one, and perhaps the least important, function of the Fifth Air Force during the Huon Peninsula campaign. Long and exhausting but little publicized reconnaissance flights usually carried out over water and by B-24's or B-25's were at this time more essential to the Southwest Pacific campaign as a whole. On 27 October the Allied Air Forces were given the responsibility of reconnoitering the Bismarck Sea and an area covering roughly the Solomon Sea between New Guinea and New Britain. In addition they were to overlap into the South Pacific Area in order to provide for local defense and to continue "current deep reconnaissance" of the approaches to Truk. Reconnaissance flights were designed to obtain intelligence concerning enemy movements and weather information rather than to sink ships or to destroy enemy planes. Nevertheless

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the planes usually carried bombs, and frequently attacked shipping or land targets on New Britain or New Guinea. During November, 193 B-24's were dispatched on reconnaissance missions, rarely in flights of more than two. Of these, 21 turned back, in most cases because of some mechanical failure. Those that completed their mission dropped between 60 and 70 tons of bombs with some success. Indeed, the 63d Squadron's B-24's made an outstanding record, claiming 2 Tare Ables, 1 Sugar Able, 1 Sugar Charlie, 1 tanker, 1 destroyer, and 2 light cruisers as sunk. All other squadrons on reconnaissance patrol accounted for no more than one Sugar Baker. The hazards of these flights were principally those encountered either in landings and take-offs or in flying through the miserable weather usually encountered during flights frequently of more than 10 hours' duration. Only 14 enemy aircraft were spotted in the air by these planes during the entire month. One of these was shot down, but of the four B-24's that failed to return, it was not believed that any were shot down by enemy fighters. B-25's supplemented the activity of the heavy bomber patrol by covering an area from Kiriwina to St. Georges Channel. In flights of three to six aircraft, they met even less opposition than the heavies. Four enemy planes were seen, none were shot down, and no B-25's were lost.

Reconnaissance flights were essential in preparing for the tactical functions of attacking enemy lines of communications and supply centers. The B-24 which flew most of the night over a potential objective provided weather information necessary for a bombardment strike on the following day, and the crew spotted enemy planes arriving on an airdrome, unusual con-

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struction activity, or a parade of barges creeping into a tropical hide-out furnished intelligence indispensable for major attacks. During November 1947, the major attacks by Allied bombardment, other than that used in direct cooperation with ground troops, were aimed primarily at three general areas: Alexishafen-Madang, Newak, and southern New Britain.

The Alexishafen-Madang area was the most immediate threat to Allied forces on the Huon Peninsula. It embraced a network of roads and tracks connecting the harbor and air facilities on Hansa Bay with those near the villages of Madang and Alexishafen. Madang itself had a small airfield, but it had been little used in many months. Nevertheless 79 P-39's and 79 P-40's carried out fighter sweeps over the Madang-Bogadjim area during November, and together with 96 B-25's, 10 B-36's, and 10 A-20's, dropped more than 120 tons of bombs. No enemy aircraft were encountered on any of these flights, and no Allied aircraft were lost. The air facilities of Alexishafen were probably more important to the Japanese than those at Madang. The two airfields gave evidence of frequent use, and it was suspected that enemy aircraft were staging through these fields in making hit-and-run attacks on Gusab and Madzab. This focused the attention of the Fifth Air Force on Alexishafen, which, less than 150 miles from the advanced Allied bases, was an easy objective. Accordingly from 9 to 16 November, heavy, medium, and light bombers struck at the two staging fields with demolition bombs, marking the runways, firing fuel dumps, and silencing antiaircraft positions. Even short-range fighters, P-40's and P-39's, flew fighter sweeps over that area. In a week's time B-34's carried out 113

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sorties, B-25's 78, A-20's 21, P-40's 27, and P-39's 16. During these attacks 94 P-47's, 24 P-40's, 16 P-39's, and 65 P-38's acted as escort, and more than 320 tons of demolition bombs and numerous parafrags were dropped. On the mission of 12 November alone, two groups of B-24's and two squadrons of B-25's loosed 223 tons, probably the heaviest single attack in New Guinea until that time. Enemy aircraft were encountered on only one mission, that of 9 November, when two of the escorting fighter squadrons each reported approximately 20 Zekes, Oscars, Hamps, Nicks, and Tonys. Sixteen of these were shot down with no Allied losses, and a total of 18 others were destroyed on the ground. During the month one B-25 and one P-40 failed to return from Alexishafen missions. 10

Although the staging airfields at Alexishafen were the most immediate threats to Allied forward elements, Newak was still the strongest Japanese base in New Guinea. On 6 November there were at least 97 airplanes, most of them fighters, on the four Newak dromes, and it was assumed that bombers were concentrated at the rear bases of Hollandia and Wakde. The heavy Allied attacks on Alexishafen neutralized its fields, at least temporarily, but the Newak strength continued to build up. Photos of 15 November showed 112 airplanes there, and on the following day, Allied observers counted 70 fighters taking off from the four fields. Four days later although the strength at Newak seemed to have declined somewhat, photographs of Hollandia showed 82 twin-engine planes. Japanese intentions in New Guinea were always baffling, but it was reasonable to assume that the continued development of bases indicated a determination to hold a defensive line east of Newak. Moreover the sighting on 25 November of several large ships, including

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destroyers, and on the following day of six merchant vessels approaching that anchorage, gave added weight to such a supposition.

Enemy activity in the Newak area was carefully recorded not only by the usual reconnaissance and photo planes but by fighters as well. Small flights of fighters, rarely of more than four aircraft, made frequent sweeps to Newak. Their purpose was to gauge the scale of enemy reaction to such operations, to report unusual activity on Dagua, Boram, But, and Newak, and to interrupt, if possible, any reinforcing flights of enemy planes from Hollandia. The P-47 with its speed, fire power, tremendous diving ability, and high-altitude action was ideally suited to such sweeps. Its short range was a handicap, but Gusap was a convenient staging base and was less than 300 miles from Newak. These fighter sorties--and approximately 130 were carried out during November--were punctuated by a number of escorted bombing attacks by B-24's and B-25's. The weather was, as usual, an ally of the Japanese, and several of the attacks scheduled for Newak were at the last minute diverted to Alexishafen. Japanese forays against Allied bases, moreover, thwarted several other attempts of the medium bombers. On both 7 and 15 November, two groups of B-25's with a fighter cover set out for Newak. On both occasions enemy bombers were reported in the Nadzeb and Gusap area, and when the Allied cover was diverted for interception, the B-25's turned back. Heavy attacks, however, were completed on 27 and 28 November and again on 1 December. During November, a total of 200 B-25's and 54 B-24's started out for Newak. Of these, 157 B-25's and 5 B-24's did not reach the target, but the remainder dropped more than 100 tons of demolition bombs and numerous parafrags. On 1 December the 43d and 90th Groups continued the

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assault with 47 more B-24's and dropped another 110 tons.

Although these attacks struck at the most important Japanese base in New Guinea, interception was surprisingly ineffective. Escorting P-47's and P-38's were, of course, partly responsible for the infrequency of bomber interceptions, but even the American fighters encountered few Japanese planes. The American attacks on Newak occurred on 11 days during November and were escorted by a total of 158 P-47's and 92 P-38's, but on only five occasions were enemy aircraft encountered, and then opposition was rarely from more than 50 planes. During the month 17 Japanese fighters were shot down, an additional 24 were destroyed on the ground, and 2 P-38's and 2 B-25's were lost. The mission of 1 December resulted in 8 enemy fighters and a bomber destroyed on the ground, 8 Japanese fighters shot down in the air, and 2 B-24's lost.

The November attacks on Alorisha fen, Madang, and Newak, heavy as some of them were, could hardly have been considered offensive strikes. They were primarily defensive in that they were designed to cover the activities of the Australian infantry on the Huon Peninsula and in the Ramu valley and the American air and service forces engaged in building up advanced air bases. Offensive air strikes during November, as would be the case during the first part of December, were still aimed in the direction of New Britain. The most extensive amphibious operations yet undertaken in the Southwest Pacific were scheduled for mid-December, and the Allied Air Forces, the Fifth from New Guinea and the EACF from Kiririna, were assigned the task of making the landing easy. During November alone (and with one or two exceptions after 30 November) more than 100 B-25, 170 B-24, and approximately 10 B-26 sorties

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were flown against the Gasmata, Lindenhafen, and Cape Gloucester areas. More than 600 tons of bombs were dropped on airfields, supply points, and barge hideouts. Neither the bombers nor the F-47 and P-38 escort encountered any interception, but one B-25 and one B-24 were lost, probably from antiaircraft fire.

A striking factor about air operations during November was the ineptitude of the enemy. The infrequency of fighter interception of Allied bombing attacks was surprising enough. The inability of the Japanese to mount sustained bombing attacks of their own, in spite of their having substantial numbers of planes on hand, indicated that the Japanese had fallen back to an air defensive or that their organization had deteriorated. During November few Japanese offensive strikes were particularly damaging. One of these occurred on 6 November just as three C-47's were landing at Gusap. One troop carrier was destroyed, and the other two damaged. At the same time, the fighter strip used by the 41st Fighter Squadron at Nadzab was also heavily bombed and strafed. Two enlisted men were killed, at least one P-39 was destroyed, and nine others damaged. On the following day, the same squadron suffered again; three more planes were destroyed, and 10 were damaged. A week later Gusap again was the objective of an attack by about 20 Lily bombers and more than 30 Hamps, Zekes, and Oscars. Two C-47's were badly damaged, eight drums of fuel were set on fire, miles of cable were destroyed, and several antiaircraft gunners killed. In spite of the relative infrequency of these raids, the fact that they could occur and do some damage was a morale-corroding factor, particularly to units which had only recently been transferred to the forward bases. Moreover it was somewhat discouraging to find that there seemed to be a rather general failure of aircraft warning facilities. Alerts were not sounded

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properly, and coordination between the warning units and the fighter controller was conspicuously lacking. On 6 November, for example, the red alert had been sounded four minutes after the attack started, and on 7 November, the fighter sector was able to sound the warning, but not in time for an interception. Eight days later when the warning system worked better, the pilots of two squadrons of intercepting P-40's had considerable success, particularly Lt. Robert L. West, who accounted for four of the 21 enemy planes shot down.¹⁴

The Allied fighters that actually met the enemy in combat, however, were the exceptions rather than the rule. During the month of November, exclusive of bomber escort and offensive sweeps, Fifth Air Force fighters performed the following number of assigned flights: 2,155 P-39, 1,771 P-40, 736 P-47, and 535 P-38.¹⁵ The great majority of these flights consisted of escorting troop carrier planes, performing routine patrol over Allied territory, and scrambling according to the direction of the fighter controller. On all these flights, no more than 200 enemy aircraft were encountered, of which 53 were shot down for a loss of 4 P-38's, 2 P-40's, and 2 P-39's.¹⁶

Base Development, November-December 1943

While large forces--air, sea, and land--were poised for a strike into the Bismarck Archipelago, Allied activity in northeastern New Guinea was devoted to preparation. The building up of the bases at Gusap, Nadzab, Lae, and Finschhafen was essential not only for the advance in New Guinea, but for the DEXTERITY operation as well. It will be recalled that aircraft based at these points would be stationed more than 100 miles closer to Cape Gloucester than at previously constructed New Guinea bases. Although much had been accomplished in the two months after the capture of Lae and Nadzab, the

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facilities at none of the new bases had progressed much beyond a primitive stage. Construction demands at Gusap and Nadzab, even in late October and early November, called for the movement of between 750 and 900 tons of construction material from Lae. This in turn required the landing of more than 200 troop carriers a day during daylight hours with an equal number of take-offs. Thus even at Lae, which was not primarily an air base, it was necessary to have extensive runways and hard-standings as well as "alert parking areas" for two flights of fighter planes as insurance against attacks on the shipping in the harbor. ¹⁷ At Nadzab, all-weather facilities for 75 fighters, 32 medium bombers, 18 light bombers, and 78 troop carriers; at Gusap for 75 fighters and 36 A-20's; and at Finschhafen for 75 fighters and possibly 26 ¹⁸ troop carriers, were considered minimum requirements.

To construct the facilities was perhaps not an unusually difficult undertaking in spite of the limited area suitable for airfields at Lae. It was in fact the least of the tasks facing Brig. Gen. Carl Connell's engineers and those working in conjunction with the Second and Third Air Task Forces at Gusap and Nadzab. Considering the obstacles imposed by jungle terrain and the almost continuous rain of October, November, and early December, the task, of course, was large enough. But added to these natural difficulties was that of transportation. It was admitted even by the most fervent supporters of air transport, that large-scale airdrome construction in the Nadzab area would have to wait until heavy construction equipment could move by road from Lae to Nadzab. The need was urgent, and General Connell was "straining every nerve" to complete the road by 1 December. He had diverted one engineer

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battalion, the 842d, from airdrome construction at Nadzab, and the road project was being pushed from both ends night and day when weather permitted. 19

It was a stupendous undertaking. It rained 46 of the last 60 days of the project. The subgrade was saturated and could be worked only in the late afternoon when the rain usually stopped. Work continued into the night until a new downpour began. Connell said, "We literally floated that road into Nadzab and had to back-end dump surfacing materials for more than half its entire length. I hope I never have to set out on another such project." 20

The task was not made easier by the poor judgment of some of the responsible personnel. Against General Connell's order prohibiting traffic on the unfinished road, the commanding officer of the 60th Signal Battalion who was charged with laying wire between Lae and Nadzab attempted to push his heavy equipment and trucks over unfinished sections of the Nadzab road, "doing damage to the subgrade, culverts, and bridges" in the process. General Connell summarily relieved him and charged him with causing a delay of 10 days in opening the road, a delay which was one of the factors in preventing completion of ^{the road} by 1 December as planned. On another occasion, Connell inspected the section of the road assigned to the 836th Engineer Battalion at night just before the road was completed. He found that no officers were present, and intimated that they had all gone to bed, leaving supervision to noncoms who apparently had little knowledge of what they were doing. 21

At long last, on 15 December 1943, "Jonah's road" from Lae to Nadzab was opened, and equipment began to move. The first units to use the new route

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found that there was still a considerable amount of work to be done at certain points, but enough had been accomplished to release some of the engineers for the Nadzab project. Technically this too was one of Connell's responsibilities, and he advised the engineer battalions that their being "somewhat removed" from his headquarters would not free them from thorough inspections, particularly on night work. Actually, however, he delegated a good share of his authority to Col. Jarred Crabb, commander of the Second Air Task Force and thus in charge of operations at Nadzab.

The road was open, but a further delay developed. There was a shortage "or rather a non-existence of trucks for the Lae-Nadzab road operations." A considerable number of American trucks had arrived at Lae, but these had been "loaned" to the 9th Australian Division with the understanding that they would be returned when that organization moved to Finschhafen; however, when the Australians departed, only 77 unserviceable American trucks were left behind, together with approximately 50 Australian trucks which, according to Connell, were also "junk." Requests for more vehicles had been made almost six weeks previously, but by 19 December had resulted only in the arrival of the 48th Quartermaster Truck Regiment. This unit had 150 trucks, but they were "all crated, repeat all crated," and Connell estimated that uncrating and assembling five trucks was a good day's work for the men available. Trucks were indispensable, as it was felt that air transport, vitally needed to haul supplies and equipment to Gusao, should not serve Nadzab, which could not be reached by "a better than average water bound macadam road."

Connell's responsibilities also included the development of the base

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at Finschhafen. By November the task of dredging the harbor and mooring a large floating dock was well under way. The construction of air facilities, however, had been somewhat delayed. Early in October engineers had surveyed the area and had decided that a location south of Langemac Bay was most suitable for the airfield. At about the same time, staff officers from General Whitehead's headquarters had made an aerial reconnaissance of the area and had recommended a site to the north near Heldsbach Plantation. Both recommendations went to General MacArthur who requested clarification. By 20 October Whitehead had decided upon the southern location, but Connell later said that Whitehead's determination to "fly the strips" before making a decision had delayed the completion of the airfield by two weeks.

From the point of view of supply, the location south of Langemac Bay was less satisfactory than the other. Only three LST's could be landed there at a time in contrast to six at the northern location, and Whitehead calculated that it would take twice as many "amphibious movements" to move in the assigned engineers and Sea Bees. By November, however, two army engineer battalions and the 60th Battalion of Sea Bees had arrived, and within 10 days trees had been bulldozed out of the way, and airfield construction was well advanced. Furthermore, all roads "pertinent to construction of the airfield were 80% complete," and it was believed that by the time the roads were finished, the runway would be ready to surface with coral.

Rain here as at Lae was a continual handicap. An inch of rain during the night was to be expected. One of the engineering officers witeously asked Connell to request a cessation of rain, if he had "any influence with the old master." The problem was how to provide adequate drainage. In some of the

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construction projects the engineers had used logs as a substitute for pine, but this was not done at Finschhafen because it was believed that transporting of sufficient timber to the culvert sites would do irreparable damage to the subgrade. Empty oil and gas drums would have worked well enough, but an insufficient number were being brought in at that time. The only answer was to requisition pine, ^{but,} although this had been done as early as 10 October, it was at least a month before any had arrived.

Meanwhile air units had begun to reach the new base. An air liaison party had landed with elements of the 9th Australian Division, and had begun operations on 12 October. On 11 November the 52d Portable Hospital arrived, and within 10 days a Negro Quartermaster Truck Company, the 2026th, a reporting platoon of the 565th Aircraft Warning Battalion, and two service squadrons, the 232d and the 96th, had arrived. At this time enemy troops were less than 10 miles from Finschhafen, and landing operations, construction, and the routine of living were subject to almost daily interruptions by hedgehopping enemy planes. Rain continued to impede the building of the base, and heavy equipment became bogged down in the mud. But all personnel pitched in to unload boats, to clear camp and work areas, to construct living quarters, mess halls, shops, and warehouses. Radio contact was established with other bases, telephone communication was installed, and bomb and ammunition dumps, ³⁷ armament and automotive repair shops, and warehouses were built.

Gradually the bases took on a more civilized appearance. By the end of November a general move forward to advanced areas had started. More camps were hacked out of the jungle, and medics were attempting to stamp out new cases of gastroneuritis, malaria, and dengue. By the end of November, the

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7th and 8th Fighter Squadrons were flying from Gusap, and a near-by site for the 9th Squadron was chosen. By that time, too, movies were being shown, Special Services were offering the usual magazines, books, stationery, phonographs, radio, and piano. Thanksgiving Day at both Gusap and Madzab (two fighter squadrons and several troop carrier and service squadrons were regularly based in the latter area) was celebrated with turkey and all the trimmings, "and the men cooperated gladly in disposing of it." Within a month after Thanksgiving, airdromes at Madzab were ready for medium bombers; and the 2d and 408th Squadrons were moved from Bokdura and the 36th and 39th Fighter Squadrons from Fort Moresby.

At Finschhafen, too, final preparations were being made for the reception of aircraft. With a 5,700-foot runway surfaced with steel matting, two alert areas, and a parallel taxiway 85 per cent completed by 10 December, it was thought that the air force could operate two fighter squadrons there in an emergency. Four days later Kenney informed Connell that he needed base facilities for four F-47 squadrons "in a hurry." Connell immediately went into action and ordered an engineer battalion and the Sea Bees to stay on the drome until necessary work was completed. On 12 December 27 troop carrier planes landed on the new runway, and within four days the entire 348th Fighter Group with F-47's, and on Christmas Day the 35th Fighter Squadron with F-40's made the transfer from Moresby. This sudden influx of aircraft for a time resulted in confusion. Indeed the 35th Squadron reported that "Finschhafen was one of the poorest run bases we had ever been at." Aircraft warning was almost nonexistent, and the inadequacy of control resulted in numerous

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accidents on the runways. The tactical advantages, however, were worth the hazards. Four squadrons of fighter planes were 200 miles nearer Cape Gloucester and almost 150 miles closer to Wewak.

By 19 December, Port Moresby had definitely become a rear base. The 47d and 90th Bombardment Groups (H) had moved from there to Dobodura, thus leaving no combat units except the 35th and 345th Bombardment Groups (H) and the 8th Photo Squadron on Durand, Schwimmer, and Jackson airmacs. Tentative plans called for even more ambitious forward movements. After considerable discussion during August and September, it was finally decided to send an engineering party led by Col. L. J. Sverdrup of GHQ to reconnoiter the upper Digoel and Fly river valleys both on foot and in the air. Shortly after the first of November, the party set out in a Catalina. Within two weeks reconnaissance was complete, and Sverdrup had recommended the construction of an airbase in the vicinity of Tanah Merah on the upper Digoel River in Netherlands New Guinea and about 500 miles west of Sidor. The air force representative in the party, however, had not been convinced of the value of the site because of a rather bad weather area. Moreover the logistical problem in such a development was tremendous. Tanah Merah was 700 miles by boat from Horn Island, northernmost tip of Australia, and 250 miles of this distance up the Digoel River could be traveled only in small vessels. Although General Whitehead very definitely disapproved of diverting important engineer units or slowing essential shipping for this particular venture, other reconnaissance projects were constantly under consideration to introduce Allied personnel into enemy controlled territory from the Sepik River west and into Netherlands New Guinea.

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December Operations

In November and December 1943, there was actually little need for air bases at such remote points in New Guinea as Tanah Merah. The principal objectives for air attack were already well within reach of the Allied bombers. November had seen air attacks in considerable strength on Sattelberg, Madang, Alexishafen, and Lae. In spite of Allied preoccupation with Irian in New Britain, December was to witness continued assaults on the same objectives with ever-growing attention paid to the Bogadjia-L. Long-Alexishafen area. The advance forward put those points within range of virtually all American air units, even though the 8th and 90th Bombardment Squadrons had been converted from B-29's to the shorter-range A-29's. Throughout the month, medium and light bombers of the 7d Group with some assistance from the 23d and 59th hit the remaining Japanese defense positions on the Huon Peninsula with approximately 250 tons of bombs, enemy interception was nonexistent, and no American planes were lost in combat. During the same period the Madang-Alexishafen area was receiving an unprecedented blistering by all types of American bombers, particularly by the B-25's of the 2d and 408th Squadrons, which frequently flew two missions a day from their Madang bases. A total of almost 800 tons was dropped on objectives along the coast from Alexishafen to Madang and inland to Bogadjia during the month. Only one B-24 and two B-25's were lost in these operations, and again a notable fact was the complete absence of any enemy interception.

The inactivity of the enemy in the air was in contrast to that on the ground. On the Huon Peninsula, the enemy was willing to be exterminated rather

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than to abandon hopeless positions. Nevertheless the Australians were making some progress. Attacking from two directions, they occupied Darso, an important trail junction, on 8 December. It took more than two weeks of air and artillery bombardment and ground attack before they could cross the rivers and descend on the coastal regions and reach Fortification Point, no more than 10 miles from Darso. This was something of a turning point, however, and another 10 miles to Blucher Point was covered in four days. In the Koro valley, on the other hand, the 7th Division was making no important gains. Early in the first week in December, the enemy showed considerable aggressiveness and forced advanced patrols of the tired and malaria-ridden Australian units to withdraw. Allied bombers almost doubled their attacks on supply points and lines of communication during the last half of the month and apparently succeeded in limiting the offensive capabilities of the Japanese. For once the weather cooperated with the Allies, and heavy rains, soaking the mountainous slopes bordering the Japanese supply routes, washed away at least 15 bridges and caused landslides which blocked the Bogadjin road in numerous places.

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The small counter attack of the Japanese in the Koro valley indicated that they were in no mood to abandon that portion of New Guinea to the Allies. Other indications, such as new construction on the Honeys airfield, rapid repair of bomb damage on the Bogadjin road, and evidence of motor convoys on the network of roads and tracks inland from the coast, gave weight to such a deduction. But if the Japanese were preparing to resist further Allied advances in New Guinea, they must also have suspected that MacArthur's ambitious

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forces were soon to move in the direction of New Britain. By December the First Air Task Force was hurling heavier attacks than ever against Cape Gloucester and related areas. The veteran 43d Group had moved to Dobson and together with the 7d Group was frequently flying two missions a day across the Solomon Sea. Between 19 November and 26 December, the First Air Task Force flew 379 B-24, 673 B-25, 182 A-20, and 59 B-26 sorties against Cape Gloucester and other points in northern New Britain, and dropped almost 4,000 tons of bombs.

Original plans had envisaged first an amphibious assault on Gasmata, followed later by one at Cape Gloucester. But as the DEERLICKY plans were developed, it was decided to substitute a landing at the well-defended Arava for the one at Gasmata. Preliminary bombardment was designed to confuse the Japanese defending forces. Not until 13 December were attacks directed against the Arava area, and many of these were on the Lindenhafen and King King plantations and on Gasmata. In two days, 13 and 14 December, all types of Fifth Air Force bombers carried out almost 300 sorties and dropped approximately 700 tons of bombs along the southern New Britain coast. On 15 December, elements of General Krueger's Sixth Army were landed by the Seventh Amphibious Force at Arava, and for nearly a month thereafter were locked in characteristic jungle combat with a tenacious enemy. Allied fighters and attack bombers received effective support and attempted to beat off enemy air assaults, and by the end of January Japanese resistance in that area was at an end.

In the meantime, the second phase of Operation DEERLICKY had achieved corresponding successes. The pre-invasion bombardment of Cape Gloucester

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reached a climax on 23 December when the 1st Marine Division landed on Cape Gloucester, and when 107 B-24's, 109 P-38's, and 32 A-20's dropped more than 400 tons of bombs in cooperation with the landing. Japanese air reaction to this operation was not immediate, but by noon escorted enemy bomber formations began to strike at Allied shipping and beachheads. At least 100 Japanese aircraft participated in these assaults, but they had difficulty in penetrating the screen provided by the American cover. During the day, P-38's flew 112 sorties, P-47's 117, P-39's 33, and P-40's 30 over the beachhead. Sixty-three enemy aircraft were shot down to a loss of five American fighters.

December had been a significant month in Southwest Pacific operations. The Fifth Air Force had dropped a record tonnage of bombs, over 7,000. Together with the BAAF it had destroyed 283 enemy planes, while the South Pacific forces were credited with 152 and the Central Pacific 169. In carrying out its assigned missions, it had helped the ground forces to establish themselves on New Britain. Allied forces in control of Cape Gloucester had been in a good position to cut off any attempts on the part of the Japanese in New Guinea and New Britain to send reinforcements into enemy-held territory above Finakhan in New Guinea; and MacArthur had achieved success in what was probably the most dangerous operation attempted in the Southwest Pacific up to that time.

The MICHELLEMAS Operation, 2 January-10 February 1944

But the Arupe and Cape Gloucester operations were only two phases of Plan DEMETER. The third phase, and perhaps the most important so far as future operations were concerned, was a landing at Saisor on Vitiaz Strait and ridge between Blucher Point and Madang. By this operation, General MacArthur

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expected to acquire an additional area for airfields, a good harbor for small naval craft, and in general to "secure our hold of Huon Peninsula and ensure destruction of all enemy forces trapped along the coast between this force and advancing Australians from Finstehafen." The area, although used for months as a staging point in the Japanese barge supply route, was apparently not strongly held. Aerial photos, which showed evidence of use of the tracks in the vicinity but no antiaircraft or coastal defenses. Weather forecasts for the period between December and March were not promising. It was a time when the heaviest rains of the year were to be expected, varying from six to 18 inches a month. Flooded streams would hamper ground activity, and clouds regularly billowing up on the northern side of the Finisterre Range, creating a ceiling as low as 1,000 feet, would make aerial activity hazardous for both Japanese and Allied planes, particularly for the latter since theirs were the more distant bases.

The difficulties facing the Allies at Saidor were ^{clearly} outweighed by the advantages. Moreover a landing there seemed to promise tactical surprise, not only because the Japanese had apparently constructed few if any defenses, but also because they would probably not expect an amphibious operation in New Guinea on the heels of those in New Britain. For that reason, the detailed planning and the organizational phases of the MICHAELMAS operation, and the landing at Saidor as called, were begun soon after the Arave landing.

On 10 December the Deputy commander of the 52d Infantry Division, Brig. Gen. Clarence A. Martin, who had just arrived at Goodenough Island, was informed that the MICHAELMAS Task Force for the capture of Saidor was to be activated under his command as a subordinate unit of General Krueger's Alamo

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Force. Within four days initial plans had been made, and on 20 December a conference to consider the projected operation was held under the direction of the C-3 of the Alamo East Force with General Whitehead, Rear Adm. Daniel Farber of the Seventh Amphibious Force, and General Martin present. According to the plan, submitted by the Alamo Force and dated 20 December, the following tasks were to be performed by the various components of General MacArthur's command: The New Guinea Force supported by the Allied Air Forces was to intensify operations along the New Guinea coast with the objective of destroying enemy elements isolated by the occupation of Saidor and was to "operate vigorously" in the Forojim-Earu area; the Allied Air Forces were to prevent seaborne reinforcement and supply of the Madang-Alexichafen area, specify the facilities required for an airbase large enough for one fighter group in the Saidor area, and cooperate with the commander of the Alamo Force for the establishment there of fighters, air warning facilities, communications, and service elements; the Allied Naval Forces were to cooperate with the air in blockading the Madang-Alexichafen area and to establish light naval units in the Saidor area; finally the Saidor East Force, as the agent of Alamo, was to seize the Saidor area by waterborne operations, establish control of adjacent areas, assist Allied air and naval elements, and construct a major port and base facilities.

At the conference of 20 December, General Whitehead presented a tentative plan for close air support of MICHELINS. It called for preliminary bombardment of the beaches on D minus 1, fighter defense of the task force convoy by ground alert and by patrols if necessary, attacks by medium and heavy bombers in cooperation with landing forces, the use of the attack bomber

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force in "direct support in accordance with the ground situation," defensive patrols and offensive sweeps by the fighter force, and the intensification of long-range day and night reconnaissance. In general, Martin concurred in Whitehead's plan. However, both Barney and Martin believed that an E-hour of 0745, implicit in the air schedule, would negate the possibility of surprise and hence they recommended landing at 0650. The letter also suggested that attack bombers, instead of strafing the beaches just prior to the landing, should sweep the approaching trails and bomb near-by supply points.

Final preparations were rushed to a rather precarious state of readiness within the next 10 days. On 23 December D-Day was tentatively set for 2 January 1944, and General Martin was advised to maintain his command in such a state of readiness that the operation could be initiated "on or after 2 January on 48 hours notice" Units of the force were located at widely separated points, Kirisimo, Goodenough, Cape Cratin, Cro Ey, Lee, Milne Bay, Anwe, and even Australia. They were being moved toward staging areas at Goodenough, Lee, Cape Cratin, Cro Ey, and Loboara. Most of the units, including the 120th Regimental Combat Team of the 30th Infantry Division were bivouacked in what amounted to a swagfire on Goodenough Island. The last-minute rush in trying to centralize widely dispersed forces made it quite impossible to obtain complete loading data on all units, but in spite of the confusion, Martin was informed on 28 December that he might expect his operation to be ordered on schedule.

The next three or four days were almost chaotic. Continual rains and a lack of transportation hindered the movement to collection areas, ordered at

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1800 on 23 December. On the following day General Martin received a message announcing the arrival of LST's, but not stating whether they were to be loaded for a previously announced practice or for the actual landing. As a matter of fact, it had been decided that the Seabor operation would begin as soon as landing craft could be secured from Cape Gloucester, and so the LST's that reached Goodenough on 29 December were for the real thing, but Martin was not informed of this until several hours after their arrival. On 29 December, approximately 12 LST's and 9 LAD's joined the LST's, and officers and even complete units continued to pour into the island. For two new arrivals, some of them were without field equipment and clothing, a transfer from one ship to another was necessary, but loading was completed and a brief rehearsal of the landing boat formation held in the late afternoon of 31 December. By the next afternoon the landing craft had met their destroyer escort in Goodenough.

In the meantime, the details of air participation in the operation had not been made entirely clear to General Martin. Following the preliminary conference at Goodenough on 29 December, an air liaison party (ALP 10) was flown to Goodenough from Fort Hoveby. For the next few days the original air plan was discussed by liaison officers and the task force staff, and on 27 December a revised air plan was submitted to General Whitehead at Fort Hoveby. At that time Whitehead assigned the air phase of the MICHAELMAS operation to the First Air Task Force. Two days later the plan was flown to General Smith's headquarters at Bobodura by Captain Lindell, air liaison officer for the Seabor operation, where it was discussed with the A-3 and A-3 of the task force. The final air plan and operations order was not prepared

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before Lindblom returned to Goodenough, but he was assured that he would receive copies of the approved documents prior to D-day.⁴¹

As a result of last-minute planning, the FATF air plan which was flown from Dobodura on 31 December did not reach General Martin until he had transferred to his destroyer flagship, the Conygham, on 1 January. Fortunately it was almost identical with earlier drafts, although one small change caused considerable anxiety. The final operations instruction assigned an alternate target which proved to be inside the bomb line. By the time this fact had been discovered, the convoy was on the way, radio silence was in effect, and nothing could be done to correct the situation until the landing had occurred. Then the air liaison officer with the ground forces succeeded in establishing contact with the alerted planes before any damage had resulted.⁴²

The air plan, dated 31 December, called for a thorough bombardment of the Sidor area, strong fighter protection for the bombers, and additional bomber and fighter squadrons maintained on alert in case of emergency. On D minus 1, nine squadrons of heavy bombers and eight of medium bombers, covered by F-38's of the 475th Fighter Group, were to strike assigned targets in the Sidor area. P-47's of the 348th Fighter Group and one squadron of P-40's were to patrol the Cape Gloucester area, and additional fighters together with the 22d Bombardment Group were to be on ground alert until released. On D-day five squadrons of B-25's were to strike assigned targets between 0728 and 0745 and five of B-24's were to follow from 0800 to 0815. For approximately half an hour after this, three B-25's were to spread a smoke screen over certain objectives to conceal Allied activities in the

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landing craft area. A series of four flights of eight planes to provide
area cover of the beaches from 0700 to 1800, and four additional flights
were to alternate in protecting the landing craft during the same period.
Finally three A-20 squadrons of the 34 Group were to be on air alert over
Sidor, and the 835 Reconnaissance Squadron and the 50th and 303rd Bombardment
Groups were to be on readiness call.

Actually, of course, the "blowdowning" process of November and
December could all be considered a part of the preparations for the Sidor
as well as the New Britain landings. Likewise the low-level bombing attacks
on Aorok and Alexishafen during the last week of December, together with the increased pressure upon
Ladang and Alexishafen during the last week of December, were linked invari-
ably with any new Allied operations in Northeast New Guinea. Nevertheless
the immediate preliminaries to HIGHSEAS were the attacks of 1 January 1944
when 60 B-24's and 48 B-25's littered the coast line at and near Sidor with
218 tons of demolition bombs.

By this time the convoy, consisting of 16 LST's, approximately 9 AFB's,
6 LCI's, and 3 destroyers, had formed in Oro Bay. As it moved into Buco
Gulf the skies were clear and bright, but during the night a typical tropical
storm blew up and reduced visibility to zero. The LST's lost their position
in the formation, and there were several near collisions. When visibility
improved, the destroyers were kept busy rounding up the stragglers. Before
H-hour, however, the convoy was off the three landing beaches which had been
chosen after a careful study of aerial photographs. By that time visibility
had cleared sufficiently to permit the beginning of the naval bombardment,

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no more than 15 minutes late. The six destroyers rained five-inch shells into the rear area, or quickly bringing the range down to cover the landing beaches themselves. When the heavy bombardment ceased, several LCI's covered the landing assault wave by more than 300 rounds of ^{4.5-in.} rockets for three minutes before the landing. Immediately thereafter the first waves of small landing craft from the LVT's hit the beaches. In 17 minutes they had landed more than 1,400 troops. They were almost unopposed as only 11 Japanese were killed during the entire landing beach operation. The LCI's followed, putting 3,800 men ashore, and finally two LST's moved up on each beach loaded with 2,400 troops, 300 vehicles, and approximately 1,800 tons of other supplies and equipment.

Meanwhile the weather had prevented the implementing of the first part of the air plan. None of the 42 B-26's that took off for their objective at first light were able to cross the bay. But three B-26's of the 499th Squadron succeeded in breaking through a storm front and went over the Sailor air strip and other inland points at 0748, laying a smoke screen from 70-gallon smoke tanks. A few minutes later, 42 B-26's also reached their assigned targets to the rear of the beachheads and dropped about 100 tons of bombs from less than 5,000 feet. Within two hours 40 A-20's, operating down to tree-screening altitude, had dropped an additional 26 tons.

Allied intelligence had calculated that the amphibious landing, aiming at the heart of Japanese Army Air Service territory, might be expected to provoke an attack by from 50 to 100 enemy planes, and that such attacks would probably continue. A strong fighter cover had been provided in the air plan for this contingency, and every attempt was made to provide adequate air support

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and fighter control. The previously tested system of using a destroyer to house fighter controllers was again employed, and a company of the 433d Aircraft Warning Battalion landed by LST on I-day. Within 48 minutes, one COM-208 had been set up, and aircraft warning facilities were established and tied in with two AA batteries in the vicinity. There were some delays because of a lack of sufficient vehicles to "mobile-load" radar equipment and supplies, and the whole setup was inconvenienced because the fighter control unit did not arrive until later. But as long as the destroyers were off shore, fighter controllers on land were hardly necessary.

Actually Japanese assistance to the Allied landings was "pitiful." For more than eight hours, no enemy aircraft appeared. By that time all landing craft had unloaded their cargoes and were heading back toward Oro Bay. Shortly after 1300 nine Hellcats escorted by perhaps 20 Corsairs and Zivkys carried out the first raid on the Oro Bay beachhead. The enemy pilots were not particularly enthusiastic, and when 12 P-40's approached, several of the bombers jettisoned their bombs and with the fighters kept a hasty retreat. A number of bombs were dropped, however, and one American enlisted man was killed and another wounded. In the brief combat that had meanwhile developed overhead, one P-40 was seen to go down in flames, and two Hellcats and three enemy fighters were destroyed.

Japanese attacks on Oro Bay never reached serious proportions. During the night of 2/3 January, there were three small bombing attacks. Two bombs, which seriously wounded two men, were dropped during the following night. On 5 January, four P-47's accurately strafed two American LCM's, but caused

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no casualties, and that evening the Japs struck twice with no success, and lost one plane from anti-aircraft. The night later there were five stall raids causing little more uneasiness than loss of sleep to the Americans on the beach. After the first week and until the end of the campaign there were numerous red alerts, but on only one occasion were bombs dropped. The raids were usually not intercepted. One enemy attempt on 16 January to attack an Allied convoy in the Spider area, however, met with a thorough setback. The convoy was escorted by the 20th Fighter Squadron from Finnschhafen. When 15 miles north of Spider, its 15 P-40's spotted from 75 to 40 Meims, Oscars, Oscars, and one A1 over a chain in three- and four-plane elements from the north. The enemy pilots were unresponsive enough, but so inexperienced that the American flyers had little difficulty in getting in good attacking positions. Lt. Lynn M. Pitt, Jr., soon shot down the Tail and two Oscars. Lt. William A. Gardner destroyed three Meims, and the squadron as a whole claimed 19 definite kills, something of a record for one flight by a single squadron.

Meanwhile as the infantry was gradually enlarging its perimeter, and in spite of enemy opposition, the air service units were organizing a base on the air strip. On 10 January, the 21st Lighter Sub-Sector had established communications with related sectors, and three SCR-602's were in operation. The senior controller, Capt. William Schroeder, had arrived by the first week in January. Under his direction operations headquarters was set up in an improvised building set four feet below the surface of the ground and heavily sand-bagged. Its functions originally were to alert defenses and coordinate and to notify adjacent sectors of any enemy attack. Little more could be done until the

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Sidder airfield, an Australian commercial strip before the war, could be put into operation. Three aviation engineer battalions had been assigned to the Sidder Task Force, and within a week elements of three units had defied soaking rains and had smoothed out a runway 2,800 feet long and 200 feet wide. While the engineers were working on the field, the 38 Air-transport Squadron, which had arrived on 9 January, was preparing to service the first planes to land on the new runway. Two days later, a flight of 12 C-47's loaded with ammunition and led by Lt. Col. Joel G. Pitts, commanding officer of the 375th Troop Carrier Group, landed on the reconditioned field.⁵⁰

Plans called for two strips with dispersal facilities for 200 planes, a 20,000-barrel aviation gas installation, a Liberty ship dock, and a motor torpedo boat base. It was estimated, however, that no more than a 6,000-foot strip with dispersal for 20 planes could be completed by 3 March. Meanwhile C-47's made almost daily trips to Sidder bringing in ammunition, rations, and other supplies. Meals which consisted initially of bully beef, cabbage, and lemon-extract drink rapidly improved. Conditions were still somewhat chaotic, however, when the 56th Fighter Control Squadron and various other service units arrived on 21 January. In all, rain, and a confusion of orders camp sites were cleared, fox holes dug, and tents pitched on one location after another with some units playing the old army game of "rush in and quit." But a system soon was re-established, and a good camp site with showers and electric lights was functioning three days after the landing. With the arrival of the 56th Fighter Control Squadron, the 21st Fighter Sector officially relieved the sub-sector, and the aircraft warning net was

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placed in the hands of Maj. William E. Houston, commanding officer of the 51st 88th Squadron.

The infantry on the Huon Peninsula was making rapid strides towards eliminating the Japanese defenders. The Australians, fighting in less difficult country than any they had yet encountered since the fall of Finschhafen, had reached the important base center at Sio by 14 January. Here they found many Japanese dead as evidence of successful Allied bombing attacks, but no enemy resistance. The Americans at Sidor, fanning out in all directions, were meeting little but sniping Japanese patrols. Ten days after the landing, for example, the battalion which was spearheading the American advance could claim only 47 Japs killed since the beginning of the operation. In view of light Japanese resistance there was little need for air support for the MICHELLEMAS force, but from D-day until the end of the campaign, the air liaison party reported that 400 planes, exclusive of fighter cover, had participated in direct support missions, and that approximately 900,000 pounds of bombs had been dropped.

The advances along the Huon Peninsula were rapid when compared with those by the 7th Australian Division in the Poma valley. Throughout December and most of January a virtual stalemate had existed there. The principal obstacles confronting Australians trying to reach the Bogadjim road and the approaches to Madang were the enemy defenses on Sherry Ridge, six miles north of Duma, and approximately 40 miles south of Madang. The Japanese, holding the high north end of the ridge, dominated the path along which the Australians had to advance. This approach to the "rimole" was from two to three feet wide with dross of 700 to 800 feet on either side and was honeycombed with enemy

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machine gun nests and fox holes. The infantry supported by mountain guns had made several unsuccessful attempts to take this position, and an unusual effort by the air units was deemed necessary.

Detailed preparations were made by the Third Air Task Force. The plan was for an RAAF Boomerang to guide dive-bombing F-40's to the objective. At Australian brigade headquarters, the A-2 and A-3 of the task force, Boomerang pilots, and interested Australian staff officers discussed the problems involved and arrived at a definite understanding as to troop movements and timing. The operation warranted careful planning since Australian troops were dug in within 150 yards of the objective. Upon returning to TAFHQ headquarters, all F-40 pilots who were to participate in the mission were briefed and given "complete information on the whole show." On 20 December, the first dive-bombing attack was carried out by four F-40's of the 7th Fighter Squadron, each loaded with one 500-lb. bomb. A Boomerang led the way to the ridge and then unerringly indicated the exact objective by firing tracers into it. The F-40's diving to 1,000 feet scored one direct hit, and dropped the other three bombs "very near top on 17 slots."

The success of this first test encouraged a more elaborate effort, and seven days later the same squadron was again assigned the Shaggy Ridge village as an objective. This time every plane ready for combat, 17 F-40's in all, set out. They were divided into two sections with two flights of four F-40's in each per section. While the second section provided cover, the first section swept into the target on the trail of a Boomerang and dropped 500-lb. bombs;

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then they furnished protection while the second section roared down to dive-bomb. A short artillery barrage followed, and the first section returned to strafe the objective before departing for base. The remaining P-40's patrolled the area, machine-gunning rear points of Japanese resistance indicated by the Boomerang while the Australian infantry pushed forward. The pinple was easily occupied.⁵⁵

The Diggers soon found that they had captured only one in a series of strong-points held by the Japanese. Shaggy Ridge itself seemed to extend almost indefinitely north and south, and its crest and sides were a maze of foxholes and trenches. The Third Air Task Force again undertook to blast the enemy out of these positions, and planned a coordinated B-25 and P-40 attack in what was known as the "Cut-throat Operation." For three days, 18 to 20 January, B-25's from Nadzab and Port Moresby plastered the ridge itself and near-by stores and ground installations with 500-lb. bombs. The 38th Group apparently scored amazing successes on these missions, claiming 390 hits out of 390 bombs dropped. P-40's then struck on 21 January, but on this occasion they were guided not only by a Boomerang but by white panels to mark the Australian lines and smoke shells to mark the target. On the following day a large formation of P-40's again worked over Shaggy Ridge, and later artillery blasted at these same positions just before the infantry advanced. By 23 January the Australians were in possession of most of the strongest enemy positions in the Shaggy Ridge area.⁵⁶

The Australians gave much credit to the air units for this success. It was perhaps difficult to estimate the precise results of the bombing, since

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a heavy artillery concentration had worked over the same area. But at least two 50 -lb. bombs had done tremendous damage, literally carving away portions of the ridge. Many bombs had just missed the crest and had exploded 50 to 100 feet down the slope. Such near misses were of value in clearing a field of fire for the artillery and exposing enemy positions. The Australians were impressed with the accuracy of American bombing, and apparently had little fear of bombs exploding in a target area 150 yards away. Indeed one Australian liaison officer stated that "the splendid effect on morale of our men as the result of such accurate and concentrated bombing on enemy positions surpassed by far the actual material damage caused."

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While the light and medium bomber squadrons, particularly the 88 and 408th, were exerting every effort to clear the path of advance for the ground forces, other medium and heavy units were increasing their assaults on the principal Japanese bases in New Guinea. The successes of both Americans and Australians on the Huon Peninsula must have increased the fears of the Japanese for the security of every strategic site along the New Guinea coast from Madang to Hollandia. Madang and Alexishafen as the natural havens for defeated Japanese fleeing from the Solomons area, Buna Bay as a communications and supply center, and Wewak as the home of the Japanese Army Air Service in New Guinea were logical points of attack for Allied bombers. Alexishafen and Madang received the heaviest tonnage of bombs. During January a total of 708 B-24, 107 B-25, and 9 B-26 sorties were carried out against Alexishafen and Madang, in which more than 1,100 tons of bombs were dropped. By 13 January Allied Intelligence had decided that Alexishafen had been abandoned as an important supply and distribution center, and it was attacked for the last time in

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January on that date. From then until the end of the month, attention was turned toward Buna Bay and Lae, with 505 tons of bombs dropped in the course of 150 B-24 and 181 P-51 sorties against Buna Bay and 500 tons in three strikes employing 137 P-51's against Lae.

All attacks on important Japanese bases were executed by several squadrons usually either of P-51's or P-47's. The fighter escort was usually engaged over enemy territory, but on the whole enemy activity in the air declined even from the level of previous months. During January 38 enemy fighters and 4 bombers were shot down by American fighters, and 33 Japanese fighters by bombers, 10 of these in the Northwestern Area. American fighters in turn shot down 1 B-24, 3 P-51's, and 2 P-40's; antiaircraft accounted for 2 P-51's; and the American Navy shot down 1 P-40. Five P-51's, 2 P-40's, 1 B-24, and 1 P-59 were also lost from unspecified causes.

From 1 to 13 January the Allied Air Forces in the Southwest Pacific had engaged in 17 aerial combats with the enemy. Of these, 12 consisted of interceptions by the enemy over a main Japanese base or en route to it. This compared with 27 air engagements, of which 14 were Allied interceptions, during the preceding 13 days. The enemy resistance to amphibious landings had also shown a decline. During the first 13 days of the Arava operation, the Jap had completed 205 combat sorties, which compared with 160 during a similar period of the Cape Gloucester, and 83 during 13 days of the Seifor operations. Bomber raids against Allied bases had been few and inconsequential. Of 20 raids completed, 14 had been during the hours of darkness, and only 2 of the 6 daylight raids were in substantial numbers.

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After reviewing the extent of Japanese aerial activity during the preceding weeks, Allied Intelligence on 15 January had come to the conclusion that all evidence pointed to a defensive attitude on the part of the enemy, coupled with a plan for future operations based entirely around the air defense of rear bases such as Rabaul and Selek. Evidence gathered from prisoners of war seemed to indicate that Allied air attacks had caused "terrific havoc," and that the Japanese command had decided to leave its troops on the Huon Peninsula and on New Britain to fend for themselves. It was concluded, therefore, that the Japanese would attempt to acquire sufficient fighter strength to provide reasonable protection for Selek and Rabaul and would hold their bombers until Allied ground troops and shipping seemed to threaten seriously "such bases as Rabaul, Selek, and some of the larger bases southeast of Selek."

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Chapter VI

THE SOUTH PACIFIC AREA IN JANUARY 1944

The ~~OPERATION~~ Operation was officially terminated on 10 February 1944. It had been overwhelmingly successful. By ejecting enemy forces from western New Britain and establishing garrisons there, General MacArthur's forces were in a position to threaten "the citadel of Rabaul" by land. South Pacific forces, continuing to make slow but steady progress on Bougainville Island, wereounding Rabaul's airbases and supply depots from the sea and the air. Central Pacific forces too were contributing to the war of nerves against Japan's Pacific garrisons with sensational landings in the Gilbert and Marshall Islands. By the first week in February they had reached Kwajalein.

The capture or neutralization of bases in the Mikarok had been a primary objective of General MacArthur's planning since the spring of 1943. In present operations, therefore, the landings in New Britain took a place of first importance, and the landing at Seidor was considered as a means of protecting the left flank of the elements of the Force at Arve and Cape Gloucester. In long-range plans, however, operations in New Guinea were components of the main drive in the Southwest Pacific, while those in the Mikarok Archipelago were more in the nature of thrusts on the flank. The victory at Seidor, for example, completed the Huon Peninsula campaign. It not only hastened the destruction of Japanese troops in that area, but, when considered in conjunction with the Australian advance in the same valley, brought pressure against the enemy strongholds of Madang and Aleriskien and opened the way

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for further advances along the New Guinea coast.

The success of operations in New Britain and of those on the Huon Peninsula brought to a completion the various modifications of the Likton Plan, originally drawn up in February 1943. But the modified Likton had become little more than an introduction to the EMO series, plans designed to carry General MacArthur and his command back to the Philippines. The initial phase of EMO III called first for the occupation of the Hense Bay area as Operation D, followed by the seizure of Kavieng as Operation E, and the Admiralty Islands as Operation F. By December details of air, land, and sea participation in these projected operations were being worked out.

General Whitehead strongly supported this schedule of operations, asserting that bases at Hense Bay were essential in order to neutralize Kavieng, and that with Kavieng captured Manus Island would fall almost of its own weight. In support of these views he argued that "from the air power standpoint, Hense Bay is decisive. Based there, this Air Force will own every thing west to include Hollandia. By owning the area, I mean the sea as well as the land areas. Hense Bay is the decisive step on the road to Manila--Hense Bay is the spring board from which the north coast of New Guinea can be 'rolled up' with latitude the next jump."

Early in January certain of General MacArthur's staff suggested a radical modification of the first phase of EMO III. These advisers proposed the landing of something less than a division on the beaches to the north of Alexishafen, and a conference was held on 11 January 1944 to discuss this suggestion. General MacArthur opened the conference by saying that he had made his decision, "but that prior to announcing it he would be glad to listen to any remarks from those present." Admiral Hinkaid, who saw advantages

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in having naval shore base facilities there, argued in favor of an Alexishafen landing. Both General Gumbertin, G-3 of CAG, and General Wilson of the Fifth Air Force, on the other hand, opposed such an operation as a useless expenditure of effort. After listening to both sides of the argument, General MacArthur stated that the original plan would not be modified and pointed out that "inevitable confusion" would result from a sudden change. Moreover he asserted that a landing at Alexishafen would be a short hop, and would violate his tactical principle of "going where they are not." He added that he could move into Manus Bay immediately if he had the "amazing means" at hand, but since these were not available, he could see no advantage in moving into the nearer area.

At approximately the same time, however, one change was made in the schedule of operations. The new plan called for the "Yawieng-Manus show" prior to the landing at Manus Bay. This alteration had been made after an exchange of "a series of ultra secret wires" among the various Pacific theaters. Whitehead's arguments in favor of Manus Bay as the first move "had been given deep study," but MacArthur finally had decided upon the other course of action in order to coordinate his operations more closely with those of Admiral Nimitz in the Central Pacific.

The success of the earlier operation had convinced Allied commanders that the Japanese could offer little effective resistance to an amphibious landing so long as the Allies could choose the point of attack. Nevertheless Japanese forces were still strong in both the Bismarck Archipelago and in New Guinea, and posed a real threat to future Allied advances as well as to their advanced air bases. The Japanese Naval and Army Air Services were

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the principal danger. Allied estimates for 1 February 1944, for example, showed a total of 188 combat aircraft still on New Britain fields and an additional 54 in New Ireland and the Admiralties. It was believed, furthermore, that the Japanese were moving more fighters and bombers into New Guinea, and were thus maintaining air strength at least and increasing the number of aircraft at Hollandia. On 11 February there were an estimated 78 combat aircraft on the four Newak bases, 176 at Hollandia, and a total of 47 on the fields at Ocolows, Sentani, Bekda, and Endji. It was clear that enemy bombing of forward bases was an ever-present danger and that the possibility of a retrograde attack to destroy airplanes, personnel, and installations at such isolated areas as Gusan could not be entirely ruled out.

Although it was not believed that the enemy was planning a serious offensive, various signs pointed to a determination to slip in from Madang to Koro Bay. A continued increase of shipping in the Newak area, feverish construction activity, and sea and air traffic even at night pointed to the importance of that base. Koro Bay, too, apparently fitted into the enemy's defensive plans as barges, and possibly destroyers, were known to be moving supplies and troops south into the area around Kubi and Bogia.

If the Japanese air force in the Southwest Pacific intended to remain for the time being on the defensive, Allied plans called for vigorous aerial offensives. The basic goals of Fifth Air Force operations were to move the combat line forward, and to bring Japanese bases within the range of single-engine fighters. By February 1944 the developments on the Huon Peninsula and in the Sora valley had brought both within the range even of F-40's. Fort Moresby could no longer be considered a forward area. ADVCOM was still

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located there, but preparations were being made to rush all of its elements forward to Fadzab. General Curteenth's 7 Fighter Command had already made that move, as well as the air echelon of the V Bomber Command, under Col. John Davies. The only combat groups that were regularly based at Fort Moresby are the 317th Troop Carrier Group and the 28th Bombardment Group, and the latter was scheduled for a move to Finschhafen in the rather indefinite future.

Even Doboaura was figuring little in future plans. Further developments, such as the construction of a 10,000-foot concrete runway, were canceled, and the First Air Base Force was making preparations for a move to Finschhafen. The 375th Troop Carrier Group was rotating between Fort Moresby and Doboaura, but the 44d and 90th Bombardment groups, the 47th Fighter Group, and the 418th Light Fighter Squadron continued to use the Doboaura airfields. With the exception of the 280th Bombardment group, which still provided the heavy bombers for strategic operations in the Northwestern area, all other combat units of the Fifth Air Force were either in the New Guinea valley or on the Huon Peninsula.

Since October 1943 the Fifth Air Force had been considerably strengthened. Indeed by February 1944, it was overall in many respects superior to corresponding Japanese air strength in numbers alone. Whereas, according to Allied Intelligence, the Japanese had 485 fighters, 239 bombers, and 195 other types of aircraft spread out from the Solomons to the Philippines, the Fifth Air Force had 1,981 operational planes of all types in the Southwest Pacific, of which 745 were fighters and 778 bombers. It had a total personnel strength

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of 77,149 with approximately 800 bombardment crews and 750 fighter pilots. In addition to the American planes, there were more than 500 tactical planes in the hands of the RAAF and 70 more flown by the Dutch.

The 7 Bomber Command had become a better balanced force by changes in type of aircraft. The three veteran heavy bombardment groups, the 43d, 90th, and 780th, continued to fly the B-24, and two of the medium groups, the 74th and 73th, flew the B-25. But the 22d group was being changed from a medium unit to one equipped with B-29's. This organization had had a rather spotted career in the South Pacific. It had flown B-29's from Fort Hareby to Koroil in the spring of 1943, and had carried out shorter missions for the remainder of that year. For the first half of 1947, it rarely was in combat, as its B-29's were being replaced. In the last three months of 1947, it made something of a record with one squadron flying B-29's and the other three squadrons B-25's. According to the group's year book: "In one month the Group exceeded all other similar units in the tonnage of bombs dropped, and ran more combat sorties than any other bomber Group in this theater. Again the following month [Jan. 1947] to climax operations in medium bombers, two squadrons of this Group exceeded by 70 per cent all other groups of four squadrons in this theater in number of combat sorties run. The 73d combat strike sorties by the 2d Squadron and 324 by the 403th Squadron in thirty days established first and second place in the entire American Air Force in the number of planes which went out on missions against the enemy in any one month."

Light bomber strength, which until November had consisted only of the 89th Squadron of the 53 Group, also had considerably increased. After making

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... distinguished record with B-25's, the 4th, 17th, and 20th Squadrons of the 51st Bombardment Group (L) had been converted to B-29's. Two additional light bombardment groups had joined the Fifth Air Force, but of these the 212th was temporarily equipped with B-40's, and the 417th had not been assigned any aircraft.

By February veteran fighter units had lost their ancient P-51's and P-40's replaced, and a number of new fighter squadrons were entering combat. Although the P-51, because of its long range and two engines, was still the plane generally preferred in the theater, the P-47 had won considerable distinction. From the middle of August to the first of January a total of 550 P-47's had been involved in 37 engagements with the enemy. Only two P-47's were lost in these engagements, but 102 enemy airplanes (with probably more than 200 men) had been shot down. By February there were nine fighter squadrons equipped with P-47's, four with P-51's from the F through the J model, three with P-52's, two night fighter squadrons with P-70's and modified P-51's, three reconnaissance squadrons with an assortment of P-39's and B-25's, and one photo reconnaissance squadron with principally P-51's and P-38's. These included newly arrived elements of the 58th Fighter Group, the 415th and 421st Night Fighter Squadrons, and the 71st Reconnaissance Group.

That the Fifth Air Force was greatly strengthened between October 1943 and February 1944 is amply demonstrated by the increase in striking power during that period. In October the Fifth Air Force carried out a total of 9,870 combat sorties exclusive of troop carrier activities and dropped 1,065.5 tons of bombs. In January these figures had increased to 13,851 sorties and

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 1,787.3 tons. Increased striking power in the air was vital in the con-
 ception of operations in the Southwest Pacific where naval and land forces
 were used in support of air operations. The Allied Air Forces were dispersed
 over a wide area from the 380th Group and Allied units in the Northwest-
 ern Area to the First Air Task Force at Bobodura and the 44th on Kiriwina.
 With forces so widely dispersed, it was essential that their objectives be
 carefully chosen according to an over-all offensive plan which would best
 employ the functions of a tactical air force. General Perrett frequently
 emphasized what these functions were: to destroy the enemy's air force, to
 strike at lines of communications, to bomb enemy concentrations in the rear
 areas, and to cooperate with ground forces by hitting defense positions,
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 near-by command posts, and supply depots.

By February 1944 the air superiority which the Fifth Air Force had
 earlier achieved over its own bases in New Guinea had virtually become air
 supremacy over almost any point within range of its fighter planes. Allied
 fighters, while escorting bombers and transports, defending their own bases,
 convoying shipping, and flying routine patrols, rarely encountered enemy air-
 craft. Allied bombers carried out their strikes without interception except
 on unusual occasions. The principal threat to Allied air operations came not
 from enemy fighter planes, but from poor flying conditions and to a lesser
 extent from antiaircraft fire.

Attacks on enemy lines of communications also achieved considerable
 success, although specific results were in many cases difficult to assess.

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Light and medium bombers bombed and strafed the native tracks used by the Japanese and the barge supply routes along the coasts. Usually results on these missions were reported as unobserved, but some barges were sunk, and the Japanese were forced to move their supplies by night. The air force, moreover, had won a considerable victory in limiting the operations of destroyers and merchant vessels. Rarely did large ships venture within range of attack bombers. Occasionally there were indications that destroyers were anchoring off the New Guinea coast as far south as Hansa Bay, but shipping even at Wewak had fallen off sharply in the past six months. In general the enemy arranged his schedule so that the largest ships would be out of range of daylight patrols. The most profitable targets were, therefore, to be found only at night. This restricted the antishipping strikes of the V Bomber Command since only Catalinas and the 63d Squadron's LAB-couipped B-24's were able to carry out night missions effectively. These aircraft, however, established an enviable record, and claimed 16 warships and 153,700 tons of merchant shipping sunk or damaged between October 1943 and January 1944. In January the Catalinas alone claimed an additional 52,500 tons sunk. During the four-month period from December 1943 through March 1944, the 63d Squadron flew 265 sorties, encountered enemy ships on 82 flights, and sank 60,700 tons of shipping. During a similar period, 392 aircraft from the remainder of the Fifth Air Force sank 64,865 tons.¹⁶

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The results of bombing attacks on the principal enemy bases were particularly difficult to determine. Claims by the participating squadrons were modest in that they generally reported the results as unobserved. Aerial photographs clinched many doubtful points, but it still was difficult to assess damage accurately. The Rabaul attacks of October and November 1943 were a case in point. They did not wipe out Rabaul as a potential enemy base; aircraft still used the fields, and shipping the harbor. Yet by destroying aircraft on the ground and by knocking down planes that rose to intercept, the bombers contributed to the decreasing efficiency of the enemy air force, and by their assaults on shipping they were aiding in the cutting of the enemy supply line. The results were perhaps not what Generals Kenney and Whitehead had visualized when the Rabaul offensive was started on 12 October. But the results were far greater than is implied in the Navy's assertions that "the air assault to render Rabaul ineffective was initiated 17 December" ¹⁷ It is probable, moreover, that these attacks together with those against Alexishafen, Madang, Hansa Bay, Wewak, and points in the Netherlands East Indies were more effective than could be shown by numbers of planes destroyed or of ships sunk. It will be recalled that the enemy's air effort during this period was negligible, and that large escorted bomber strikes against Allied bases were nonexistent. Allied Intelligence generally explained this as a plan of the enemy not to risk his air strength until a predetermined defense line was threatened. Postwar interrogation ^{indicated that another} explanation was that enemy supply and service routine had been disrupted and spare parts and

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fuel reserves destroyed by Allied bombing of communications and important
installations.

Perhaps the most delicate assignment for any air force unit was close
cooperation with ground forces. Only those strikes which were arranged well
in advance were practicable, and even those sometimes had inconclusive results.
In the Sattelberg offensive, Brig. D. L. Mitchell of the Australian land
forces doubted that the heavy raids on Japanese positions were particularly
effective. Usually direct hits had to be scored to destroy well-constructed
outposts and bunkers, and it was difficult to pinpoint any target in the jungle.
On the other hand, the Stripper operations demonstrated what could be done
in a carefully prepared close-support mission, and the pre-invasion "glue-
tazing" of western and southern New Britain and of Milne Bay at least discour-
aged any serious Japanese opposition to the landings.

Although these were the principal tactical functions of the Fifth Air
Force, there were countless others which in the day-to-day routine were equally
important. Troop carriers, in ferrying cargo and personnel, dropping provisions
to troops in forward areas, and evacuating sick and wounded, performed an in-
dispensable function. Yet it is easy to exaggerate their efforts. For
example, in September, October, November, and December 1943, the 67th Troop
Carrier Squadron carried 1,877,694; 2,152,914; 2,018,944; and 2,889,215
pounds of cargo respectively. This total of 8,937,566 pounds is equivalent
to approximately 10,000 tons and could easily have been carried by two medium-
sized freighters. But neither freighters nor motor transport could get to
Guadalcanal and numerous other points in New Guinea and New Britain, nor could they
be called upon to deliver a vital piece of equipment or essential reinforcements.

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from Australia in a few hours. It is the character of the theater that made air transport so important; and the true nature of the photo-reconnaissance work of the 8th Photo Squadron and specially-equipped bomb squadrons, air-sea rescue operations, the work of air liaison parties with ground forces, and airfield construction by engineers, in addition to the usual duties of aircraft training, maintenance, communications, and other tasks performed by service and supply units.

In general it can be said that the Fifth Air Force carried out its combat operations with conspicuous success. It had participated in the winning of a series of small but nevertheless crushing victories. Victory is supposed to breed confidence, high spirits, good humor. It would seem, then, that with its winning tradition, its veteran personnel, and its cocky leadership, the Fifth Air Force's morale should have been of the highest. It would be inaccurate to say that the opposite was the case. Soldiers with poor morale do not win battles, and when the chips were down, as for example in the 2 November attack on Glasgow Harbor, the air crews took their losses and were ready for more. And, in the Gloucester operations when several squadrons were flying two missions a day, the ground crews had to work almost continuously to ready their aircraft for the next strikes, and this they did.

But if the morale of the Fifth Air Force was not universally low, there certainly were a number of conditions which intensified the traditional GI grime. One of these involved the question of promotions. It was one which had bothered officers and enlisted men alike, and usually was caused by the inadequacy of the tables of organization. In November, for example, the

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four squadrons of the 38th Bombardment Group (H) complained about the status of the flight officers in their organization. The 71st Squadron had two flight officers who had been in grade for 11 months, one with over 500 combat hours and the other with over 75. They were performing the duties of first pilot and co-pilot respectively. The 405th Squadron had five flight officers, three serving as first pilots, but the other two occupying captaincy positions as flight leaders. Both the 822d and 825d Squadrons had flight officers performing a captain's duties, and recommendations for promotions had been in error two to three months.

There were probably fewer valid complaints about promotions by the end of 1947 than at any previous time in the history of the Fifth Air Force. From the beginning of his assignment in the Southwest Pacific, General Kenney had fought for a liberal promotion policy which would disregard tables of organization. He had won a number of concessions. He had refused, in most cases, to accept high-ranking officers without combat experience for duty in his theater unless he had requested them personally and by name; moreover he was reluctant to accept any combat personnel, except for new units, above the rank of second lieutenant. This policy was not popular with the office of A3/L&S Personnel which had frequently recommended officers for staff duties in the Fifth Air Force only to have them politely but very definitely refused. The subject came to a head when General Kenney, V Bomber Commander, was returned to the United States with a serious ear infection. The War Department immediately suggested three brigadier generals as possible replacements, but in a message signed by General LeMay, the Fifth Air Force's policy was clearly expressed: "Kenney's successor should be selected from officers now in the 5th Air Force who have proven their ability and leadership under actual combat conditions."²³

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There was certainly much to be said for such a personnel policy. The danger as foreseen by Brig. Gen. J. M. Evans, AG/AS Personnel, was that sooner or later the veterans of the Southwest Pacific would become worn out. If it were then necessary to replace them from the continental United States, sufficient and qualified officers might not be available, since, according to Evans, they were being drained off to other theaters whose commanders appreciated their services. General Arnold's approach to the problem was slightly different from that of Evans. He wished to give all Regular Army officers, and particularly general officers, field experience. A policy of rotation had been established with all theaters except the south east Pacific, and Arnold decided in December that the latter should fall into line. Accordingly he informed Kenner that with the intention of giving "competent Generals" field experience, he planned to send Maj. Gen. St. Clair Streett to the Fifth Air Force "to function initially as deputy commander." Kenner was not enthusiastic about replacing experience with inexperience, most especially if it meant losing his present deputy commander, General Whitehead. He argued that "if I take gambles on breaking new people in, it costs me too many kids and airplanes." His idea was to take older officers, carry them as attached, give them staff work and combat experience for seven months, and then send them back to the states.

General Kenner's personnel policy was obviously designed to reward veterans for their months of labor in staff work or in combat. It was a policy which was calculated to improve morale among staff officers in the theater. It did not completely solve the promotion problem in the combat

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units. The case of the flight officers was only one example of inherent unfairness; probably all units with more than a year in the Southwest Pacific could have justifiably complained, as did the 404th Bombardment Squadron, that the stagnation of promotions because of "L/O limitations," together with a shortage of ground personnel, threatened the efficiency of the organization.

Clearly, however, promotions were only one of many factors which were breeding discontent within the veteran organizations. Almost all the combat squadrons complained that the lack of sufficient ground personnel was putting an undue burden upon the men available. The 4071 Squadron needed 30 noncombatants for mess and transportation duties to fill the table of organization; the 528th Squadron, building up the Darwin base, had to use its specialists for "routine details." The 700th Squadron insisted that an increase in mechanical failures had resulted from a shortage of engineering, maintenance, and communications personnel. The 60th Squadron had an ordnance section designed to service 12 B-17's. It was, however, equipped with 14 B-24's which doubled the bomb tonnage and proportionately increased the ordnance duties. The 499th Squadron was authorized 30 ordnance men and six sheet-metal workers. It was assigned 12 and three respectively.

From Australia to Gwyn, unit commanders and social service officers were attempting to combat growing discontent. At Gwyn's Towers, where some of the personnel were dissatisfied at being left so far behind the war, living and recreation facilities were civilized enough. One ordnance company stationed there, for example, probably lived as well as if they were stationed in the

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United States. Bents were floor'd, and all had electric lights. The day room was equipped with electric lights, radio, books, magazines, and a ping-pong table. The post had volleyball and baseball teams, and the men were permitted to play during duty hours. Beer was furnished at periods of from one week to two weeks, depending upon availability. Picnics and dances featured girls invited from Charters Towers. Trucks regularly carried the men to town where the Red Cross provided food parcels, sponsored medical clinics, and furnished books, magazines, and sports equipment. Horseback riding and golf facilities were available, as were movies at the post six nights a week and at Charters Towers seven nights a week.

Fort Moresby, although a base which at one time or another had been the home of almost every unit of the Fifth Air Force, still had its drawbacks. Units which arrived in late or December 1943 did not always find camp sites ready for them. The 80th Air Depot Group, for example, after performing most work by daylight had to build their camp by night, and spent many arduous hours clearing land, building roads, ^{and} ~~and~~ constructing mess halls, a dispensary, and headquarters buildings. Food was sometimes good and sometimes bad. There was generally such a degree of ignorance about it, however, that the issued rations were frequently supplemented by wild game. "Meats were excellent when prepared properly, deer in lieu of bully beef was a delicacy; wallaby roasts should by all means be tried by all visitors to New Guinea."

The greatest air base development during the past year had been at Dobodura. This was true in the comforts of living as well as in the facilities for flying aircraft. Frequent rains and continual darkness made the round boggy, and the high water table prevented the construction of deep-trench latrines.

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in most camps. But incinerators took care of garbage, better refrigeration, fly and mosquito control, and careful chlorination of all drinking water neutralized the fever-breeding nature of the surrounding swamps. The diet, although not particularly appetizing and lacking in fresh eggs, vegetables, and fruits, was "calorically adequate." The boys could always fall back on peanut butter when "bully beef, dehydrated foods, and matutinal pancakes," seemed just more than they could bear. Ice-cream freezers, purchased by some squadrons, dispensed an "unpredictable chilled substance which on fortunate occasions bore a recognizable resemblance to the familiar product."²⁹

Special Services at Dobodura also improved during the last few months of the year. Recreational programs included football, baseball, volleyball, and, of course a softball league. Day rooms contained books and games. Some commanding officers made special efforts to improve the lot of their men. Colonel Prentice of the 475th Fighter Group, for example, made special trips across "the Hump" to Port Moresby to bring back PX supplies in a F-38 with a freight-carrying belly tank. Officers and men spent spare time in constructing mess halls, clubs, and movie houses. The 55th Troop Carrier Squadron built their own mess hall, known as the "Waldorf Astoria Grill," by bartering with the Australians for lumber, screening, nails, and roofing materials. The enlisted men of the same unit built their own club, "Biscuit-Bomber Club Embassy." More elaborate was "Club 38, 475th Dobodura Avenue," the 475th Fighter Group's officers' club. This elaborate establishment sported a semicircular bar, equipped with a foot rail. Behind the bar hung a colorful painting "executed on mattress cover canvas, of four demi-mondaines who, seated upon a lounge lavishly draped with velvet, returned with ennuied

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gaze the interested examination of the 'bar-flies.'" Liquor was dispensed by coupon and with a nightly quota, and parties were held for neighboring and Australian units, nurses, and Red Cross personnel. One of the great events of the year to this and other clubs was the visit in November of a stage company starring Gary Cooper, Phyllis Brooks, and Una Merkel.³⁰

The problem of entertainment for troops in the forward areas was not easy to solve. For security reasons camp sites at the large advanced bases were separated as much as possible and were built at safe distances from airfields, the most likely target for an enemy bombing attack. Large social gatherings were not encouraged for a number of reasons. Unit commanders, responsible for the security of their commands, wanted to exercise stringent control over their personnel; transportation, inadequate even for essential purposes, could not be spared to carry men from one camp to another; and higher authority generally discouraged large gatherings outside unit areas. Thus squadron day rooms became the centers of social activity. General Kenney had originally planned that air force units would build the day rooms, that the Red Cross and Special Services would equip them, and that the Red Cross would attempt to staff them with girls, perhaps one Red Cross worker for each group's day rooms. There was some progress in working out this program, but late in 1943 the girls who had been assigned to day rooms were transferred out of New Guinea, and by the middle of January 1944 no one had been assigned to replace them. Red Cross officials favored "Service Centers" and apparently were unwilling to continue the attempt to staff day rooms. Their objection to the latter was perhaps understandable as it was obviously impossible to staff all of them. On the other hand, General Whitehead very definitely

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opposed Service Centers, and believed that the Red Cross was not doing everything in its power to adapt itself to the peculiar demands of the Southwest Pacific. "A considerable percentage of our air force soldiers," according to Mitchell, indicated in their letters that "the American Red Cross is not doing anything for the individual concerned."

It would have been impossible to provide entertainment, food, and living quarters to satisfy every individual in such a diverse and sprawling organization as was the Fifth Air Force, and the men complained loudly and earnestly about these factors. But probably the chief cause of complaint was not any one of these, but was instead an ingrained and continuous yearning to go home. There is no question that the actual or imagined effect of this longing together with the natural ailments of a tropical climate were serious. This fact becomes distressingly obvious in reading report after report from the various combat squadrons. The accounts might be considered monotonous if they were not so tragic.

Efficiency of enlisted personnel has been declining considerably in past six months. 118 A1 and A2 officers have been in tropics for past 21 months. 68% of enlisted personnel and 60% of non-combat officers have more than 1 year's service in the tropics. Unfavorable attitude of older NCOs had an adverse effect on newly assigned men. (8th Bombardment Squadron (L), November 1947)

The factors of the climate and environment are borne out when we compare the efficiency of our personnel who have been here one year and the more recent arrivals. The former group at present are definitely inferior in their output of work. This has been seriously brought to our attention whenever the stress is great. (71st Bombardment Squadron (L), November 1947).

The ground personnel have been overseas 60 months, of which 10 months were spent in tropical climate. These men have been forced to carry on under extremely adverse conditions, and due to the shortage of replacements, they have to work harder and longer. The inadequacy of diet, proper leaves, and housing facilities has lowered both the physical and mental efficiency of the ground personnel. It is strongly recommended that the ground personnel be sent back to the United States after a maximum of foreign service of 24 months. Length of service in the tropics

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should be set at one year. (671 Bombardment Squadron (B), October 1943)

The general health of the ground personnel has been noticed to be deteriorating recently. Some of the men have lost as much as 20 lbs. in weight. There has also been a noticeable increase in hospitalization due to gastric neurosis. I believe these conditions are due to the fact that the ground personnel are becoming mentally and physically fatigued. (719th Bombardment Squadron (B), October 1943)

It is a conspicuous fact men on duty in this area for a prolonged period . . . suffer easy fatigability, a definite lowering of morale as compared to 'new' men and have periods of depression and complaint, and are more susceptible to disease. However, these men carry out their duties with the high standards of the Squadron. An examination of the records for the period 1 October, 1943 through 31 March 1943, reveals the enlightening data that there were twice as many 'old men' (on foreign duty over a year or more) hospitalized as there were 'new' men. The hospitalization rate for the squadron since its return to New Guinea in October 1942 is three times that of the preceding three months. (2d Bombardment Squadron (B), December 1943)

One hundred and forty (140) enlisted men of this command have been overseas twenty-three months and in New Guinea most of the time. They have worked over fatigue. The average loss of efficiency is sixty-five percent. Not one of these men is able to do over four hours hard work in any given day. Practically all admissions to the hospital are from this group. Of this group almost fifty men are in various stages of psychoneurosis. (40th Lighter Squadron, December 1943)

The situation is becoming so serious that it is most urgently recent the serious and devastating effect of increasing fatigue on efficiency of this squadron. The tremendous increase of pressure on already exhausted ground personnel by the doubled activity recently has been almost disastrous. If these men with 18 months in tropical aren't replaced immediately their ultimate rehabilitation and recuperation is questionable. (6th Bombardment Squadron, December 1942)

Marked drop in efficiency of ground personnel, the majority of whom have 21 months overseas of which 19 months is operational combat service. Combat missions flown from Moraby since May 1942. Morale parallels decreasing efficiency. Unless more of ground replacement the proverbial last straw coupled with rumors of forward rather than backward movement. With no relief in the past and no hope in the future, the condition has become acute. (8th Photo Squadron, December 1942)

Problems are unresolvable and inevitable, being those that in the absence or presence of which make a difference. That the ground maintenance men must be replaced in the Squadron is a fact. The failure to replace them will result in another fact, the collapse of the squadron as an efficient fighting organization. (8th Bombardment Squadron (), January 1944)

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The subject of morale is of immediate concern to unit medical personnel. In addition to regular reports, some flight surgeons made special studies of the problem. In November 1947 reports from all combat squadrons (except those of the 74th Lighter Group, and the 750th and 745th Bombardment Groups) and numerous service units were collected as an over-all study on Fatigue for Headquarters AFMTC. These reports without exception emphasized the low morale of the noncombat personnel. The situation is anything but normal during base for 13-5. For the 71st Squadron, for example, a report early in the month which stated that the morale of the men had reached a low ebb. This had been attributed, according to the flight surgeon, by tropical rains and temperatures usually of over 100° which resulted in "laziness and loss of appetite," and an increased sick call. The flight surgeon of the 73rd Squadron reported that the mental attitude of the great majority of "the men in the squadron" is one of "ultra dejection," that this feeling was at first characteristic only of the older men in the squadron, but that the older men soon "contaminated the mind of the new arrivals until efficiency of the new men is less than that of the old." This report concluded with the warning: "The permanent effect of these conditions on the mind of the men concerned remains to be seen, but with the young men, you present the ideas they have imprinted in their minds now are most likely to remain with them throughout their life, and thus affect their future ability to work, think and get along with people in peacetime. . . . Many of them are referred to now as 'crack pots', 'secret hells', etc., and no one seems to be able to get along with them in any way."

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One of the means taken to combat what was rapidly becoming a serious situation was to facilitate furloughs and leave to the mainland. By the end of 1943 the Air Transport Command ran a ferry service exclusively for air crew personnel from Port Moresby to Sydney. Combat crews were given two weeks in Sydney for each six months service in New Guinea. Crews in the 84th Troop Carrier Wing also had a consistent leave policy of seven days in Sydney every three months. Ground crews and service personnel in New Guinea, however, were less well off. Theoretically they were entitled to a two-week leave for every six months of service, but actually they did not get leave unless transportation was available, and it was almost invariably at least 10 months before the enlisted men received furloughs. By December, leave ships from Port Moresby to Sydney were provided, but these were under control of USMCS and the air force was allowed only a "fair quota of space." Moreover, there was no indication of how the enlisted men were to get to the north coast of New Guinea to Port Moresby.

Within the 84th Troop Carrier Wing, and this was probably not unusual, "the furlough situation," according to the unit history, was "truly S.N.-fu." From March until 14 May 1943, all leaves and furloughs were discontinued, per ADJG Memo No. 75, dated 2 March 1943. On 15 May, per ADJG Memo No. 77, seven-day leaves and furloughs to Brisbane were authorized, while the former policy of 10 days at Moresby continued as an alternative choice. On 9 August 1943, per AAF Regulation 70-71 and ADJG Memo No. 112, six months continuous duty in New Guinea became a requirement for 7-day leave. The next change came on 20 November, with the publication of USMCS Regulation No. 1-43.

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By its provisions, leave and furlough for fifteen (15) days were authorized for personnel with six months' continuous duty anywhere in the SWPA, and leave areas authorized included Brisbane, Sydney, and Melbourne for New Guinea troops. DTC Memo 75-30, dated 18 January 1944, further stipulated that all ground personnel would travel by water direct to Sydney."

It is not entirely clear how much was done within the squadrons to combat the feeling of discontent. A report by the Operations Analysis Section indicated that more could have been done by officers in higher echelons in the way of the wearing of badges, letters of commendation, and visits to remote units. There was also unpleasant rumors about "fat-cat" planes which made regular trips to Australia to bring back luxuries for "top-brass." There is no question, on the other hand, that earnest efforts were made to improve the policy of leaves and of rotation between the theater and the United States. In September, both General Wilson and General Kenney wrote to General MacArthur urging an improved system of granting leaves. They suggested that men serving in the tropics should be granted two months of leave a year, and that the Air Force should be allotted a 20 per cent overstrength to replace the men on leave. MacArthur did not reply to these communications until November. Then, in his endorsement to the basic communications, although he expressed agreement in principle with the views expressed by Kenney and Wilson, he pointed out that the shortage both of personnel and ship in- would prevent acquiring any overstrength in units. However, MacArthur was able to report that four ships were being furnished to transport personnel from "tropical forward areas to the mainland."

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General Monney repeatedly urged the establishment of a reasonable rotation policy for ground crews and service personnel. His suggestions received sympathetic consideration from both General Arnold and General Marshall. Marshall liked Monney's suggestion of maintaining an over-strength to replace tired personnel, although he apparently preferred establishing a regular monthly replacement rate. The interest in the problem at Headquarters was stimulated by a memorandum from President Roosevelt which requested that "further consideration be given to officers and men in tropical commands with the thought that to seek a more definite schedule in relieving units from those combat areas where there has been much fighting and where malaria and other diseases are serious factors."⁴⁰

As a result of the President's memorandum, various attempts were made during October and November to clarify the issues involved. Finally on 6 December the Joint Chiefs of Staff approved a proposal made by General Marshall four days before which provided for "the rotation of ground personnel in the SMCFA, SMC, and CMI to the extent of 1 per cent per month of the total deployment in each theater, details to be left to the theater commander."⁴¹ On 29 December the interested theaters were informed of this new policy and told that the first replacement personnel would be shipped from the United States in March 1944. Even later decision, it was established that the additional personnel were to be obtained by revising, under the 1944 Army Iron Basis by 72,000 men of whom the AEF would receive 11,000.⁴²

On 3 January 1944 General Banfill announced the rotation policy to subordinate echelons of his command. Officers, warrant officers, nurses, and

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enlisted men who had served faithfully in the Southwest Pacific for at least 18 months were to be selected for return to the United States. In choosing from those eligible, preference was to be given to men with at least six months' service in islands north of Australia or in certain isolated areas of the mainland and to those whose physical and mental condition indicated the greatest urgency of return. Quotas were established as follows:

| | March | | April | | May | |
|----------------|-------|-------|-------|-------|-----|-------|
| | O | EM | O | EM | O | EM |
| 6th Army | 71 | 1,260 | 80 | 1,428 | 38 | 1,596 |
| 5th AF | 45 | 784 | 51 | 834 | 53 | 975 |
| USASCS | 101 | 27 | 968 | 113 | 21 | 1,091 |
| XIV AA Command | 18 | | 326 | 21 | | 761 |
| | | | | | 136 | 34 |
| | | | | | 53 | 398 |

Although the quotas permitted under the new policy were small when compared with the more than 75,000 men in the Fifth Air Force, any announcement of policy would have been greeted with enthusiasm by homesick personnel. The 6th Troop Carrier Wing, although realizing that their quota of one officer and three enlisted men per month was small, nevertheless felt that ground had been broken. In other squadrons "morale ran sky high," "the morning sick call decreased, and the amount of personnel in slit trenches during air raids increased." Shortly after the first decision on rotation, the matter was discussed further with General Kenney, who was in Washington early in January. As a result of these discussions, it was decided to augment the 1 per cent rotation quota by sending 6,000 replacements to the Southwest Pacific on a man-for-man exchange with an equal number of worn-out members of the ground echelons of combat units.

Another problem which was perhaps never satisfactorily solved within the Fifth Air Force was that of an efficient administration. The character

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of the theater, with its great distances, high mountains, poor communications, and tropical jungle country, made impossible a closely knit organization. These factors in fact seemed to demand an air force with many separate headquarters--the Fifth Air Force at Brisbane, ADVOL and the V Bomber and V Fighter Commands at Port Moresby, the First Air Task Force at Dobo, the Second Air Task Force at Fozzab, and the Third Air Task Force at Guay, as well as the various subdivisions of the service commands. Such a large number of headquarters required a large number of well-trained and efficient personnel. Unfortunately, according to one report, "the key officers of the air staffs are few and the experience level drops off sharply below them. This results in their carrying the bulk of the load continuously Should any of them crack there are no understudies to replace them."¹⁶

General Kenney was planning in January 1944 to increase the administrative problem even more. The War Department at that time was planning to break up the Thirteenth Air Force, give part of it to the Central Pacific, and the remainder to the South Sea. Kenney argued that he should receive the entire air force as a unit, and eventually convinced General Arnold of the wisdom of this. Moreover, Kenney also favored establishing another air force, the Sixteenth, in the Darwin area to consist initially of the 800th Bombardment Group and miscellaneous Australian units. Such a conception was based on the belief that there would be a tremendous flow of air units to the Pacific following the defeat of Germany, and that it would be more effective to expand three air forces than just the one.¹⁷

The emphasis in the Fifth Air Force from the beginning had been not upon efficient administration, but upon effective operations. Its commanders

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obviously disliked the thought of red tape and liked to talk about getting on with the war. General Kenney once wrote to the editor of the Army and Navy Journal apologizing for not having produced an article for publication. He explained that his staff, occupied in the jungles of New Guinea, had been unable to prepare the article, and, he added, "in a way this is somewhat typical of the Fifth Air Force in that we are always working toward the future and scarcely looking at the past."⁴⁸

Although better administration would undoubtedly have improved efficiency of operations, there is little doubt that the Fifth Air Force had enjoyed more than a year of almost continuous success. General Kenney's claims of an outstanding record for his command were partially corroborated in a study by AAF Statistical Control in December 1943. This study pointed out that with 16 per cent of the combat planes in all war theaters, the Fifth Air Force had destroyed 29 per cent of all enemy planes claimed, that in the Southwest Pacific AAF planes had destroyed 7.7 enemy planes to a loss of one of their own, and that in all other theaters the ratio was 3.7 to 1. An officer from General Marshall's staff touring the Southwest Pacific at the time of the Rabaul strikes of October 1943 was impressed with the "apparently effortless manner and rapidity with which the very limited staffs of the Advanced Air Echelons are able to orient and control such a maximum concentration of their total striking force." He found that "the primary reason for the extraordinary effectiveness of this Air Force" was its "surprising flexibility." He explained that approval of a general air plan by Generals MacArthur and Kenney was followed by "complete decentralization of detailed plan and execution," with final coordination

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accomplished at one short personal conference between task force commanders and ADVON. General MacArthur was convinced of the effectiveness of the Allied Air Forces. In January 1943, he had described his strategy as "based upon the fundamental necessity for the progressive advance of airfields in order to provide landbased air protection for naval movements, both tactical and logistical, and to bring heavy and medium bombers in force with fighter cover over the objective."⁴⁹ A year later when Milne Bay, Woodlark, Nassau Bay, Tsili Tsili, Lae, Salamaua, Madzab, Finschhafen, Gusap, Cape Gloucester, and Saidor had been occupied by following this strategy, MacArthur cabled General Arnold a confirmation of his earlier views: "The Air Force here⁵⁰ has been magnificent and is the very hub of our success."

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G L O S S A R Y

| | |
|--------------|--|
| AAF MC | AAF Materiel Command |
| ADVON | Advanced Echelon, Fifth Air Force |
| AFAEP | AC/AS, Plans |
| AFDMA | Materiel Division, M&D |
| AFRAL | Allocations Br., OC&R |
| AFRDB | Bombardment Br., OC&R |
| AFRTH | Theater Br., OC&R |
| AFSC | Air Force Service Command |
| AGF | Army Ground Forces |
| ANA | Australian National Airways |
| APD | Naval high-speed transport |
| ARC | American Red Cross |
| ASAC | Air Service Area Command |
| ASCPFO | Air Service Command, Patterson Field, Ohio |
| ASV | Airborne sea-search radar |
| CE | Chief Engineer |
| Com. | Communications |
| COMAIRSOLS | Air Command, Solomons |
| COMINCH | Commander in Chief |
| C/S | Chief of Staff |
| DAI | Directorate of Air Transport |
| FATF | First Air Task Force |
| GHQ | General Headquarters |
| ICFR | Individual Combat Fighter Report |
| ICR | Individual Combat Report |
| IFF | Identification friend or foe |
| Isum | Intelligence Summary |
| JCS | Joint Chiefs of Staff |
| LAB | Low-altitude bombardment |
| LGI | Landing craft infantry |
| LST | Landing ship tank |
| NCMR | Narrative Combat Mission Report |
| NCR | Narrative Combat Report |
| NLI | Netherlands East Indies |
| NMR | Narrative Mission Report |
| OC&R | Operations, Commitments, & Requirements |
| Ops. Instrs. | Operations Instructions |
| RAAF | Royal Australian Air Forces |
| RNZAF | Royal New Zealand Air Force |
| SATF | Second Air Task Force |
| SG | Service Group |
| SWPA | Southwest Pacific |
| TATF | Third Air Task Force |
| TC | Troop Carrier |
| USAFPE | U. S. Army Forces in the Far East |
| USASOS | U. S. Army Services of Supply |

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Chapter I

1. Communications, 4 Oct. 43.
2. CM-IN-842 (2 Oct. 43), Brisbane to MAR, 43-8268, 2 Oct. 43; Intelligence Summary (ISUM) 144, 6 Oct. 43.
3. Ibid., 145, 9 Oct. 43.
4. Ibid., 142, 20 Oct. 43.
5. Ibid., 157, 6 Nov. 43; CM-IN-842 (2 Oct. 43), Brisbane to MAR, 43-8268, 2 Oct. 43.
6. Colonel Brownfield had succeeded General Connell on 29 August 1943 when the latter "was placed on temporary duty with the United States Army Services of Supply and given charge of construction in the Los-Madros area." "Air Service Command in the SWPA, 1941-1944," p. 27.
7. GO 25, Hq Allied AF, 9 Sep. 43.
8. CM-IN-731 (1 Oct. 43), Brisbane to MAR, 43-8265, 1 Oct. 43; CM-CUI-7337 (19 Oct. 43), OPD to CINC SWPA, 8708, 18 Oct. 43. It was planned in the Southwest Pacific theater to organize the V Fighter Command so that it would include five "mobile fighter wings" by the end of 1944; two were to be established early in the year. They were to be organized on a regional basis to provide efficient air warning service and proper control of the fighter groups. Ltr., Hq CG SWPA to Hq AAF, Wash., D.C., 16 Oct. 43, in AFSPD 7244-76.
9. Third Air Task Force history; GO's 71, 72, Hq AFVON, 24, 20 Sep. 43, in ibid. For a few weeks, beginning on 17 September, the First Air Task Force was commanded by Col. John H. Davies. GO 66, Hq AFVON, 17 Sep. 43.
10. Ibid.
11. CM-IN-831 (2 Oct. 43), Brisbane to MAR, 43-8274, 2 Oct. 43; CM-IN-8123 (14 Oct. 43), Brisbane to MAR, 43-1937, 13 Oct. 43; Form 74, 2-9 Oct. 43.
12. Ibid.; CM-IN-8123 (14 Oct. 43), Brisbane to MAR, 43-1937, 13 Oct. 43.

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- 17. Ibid.; Form 54, 2-3 Oct. 47; 55th Air Sq. history. On 10 October 1947 Admiral E. E. Elmy indicated that he desired the 37th Squadron to return to the South Pacific Area before 1 November. Consequently plans were made to send the RCAF 75 Squadron to Australia in its place. Although authority was granted on 13 October, and the move began within a few days, the relief was not officially granted until 1 December 1947. Memo to SAC Pac. HQ by Col. R. L. Telle, Dir. of Cons., Allied AF, 10 Oct. 47; GO 4708, 26 Oct. 47, 2 Dec. 47.
- 18. Commodore I. S. Coner, COMAIR SARP, Historical Report. By GO 47, 11 August, and 73, 29 September 1947, operational control of new 1st Air Squadron (W 101 and W 111) was given to the Commander, Allied Air Forces. A third squadron, W 33, joined the others in RCAF Unit 77.1.1. On 8 December this unit was put under the operational control of the Commander, Allied Air Forces, but this was later overruled, giving the operational control of this unit to ADFW. Ltr., HQ Allied AF to CINC SARP, 1 Dec. 47; GO 47, HQ Allied AF, 11 Dec. 47.
- 19. 3d Lt. Cont. Div., Listing of Air Corps and AAF Air and Service Organizations Overseas (Attached Station List with Detail of 30 Oct. 47; 31-11-11149 (13 Nov. 47), Brisbane to HQ AF, 2-8063, 13 Nov. 47. Personnel to operate centers were on detached service from combat or service units. Thearrison personnel were mostly of the 3d Air Service Group, which was actually based at Charters Towers. Ibid.: 3d Air Serv. Gr. history; 1540th Ordnance S&M Co., 404th CW Plt., and 50th Serv. Sq. history.
- 20. Report by Col. Carl E. Baldwin, "The Defense of the Territory of Northern Australia," 2 Nov. 47, in AFHQ Library, 7-31055.
- 21. Ibid.
- 22. 418th Sig. Co. Avn. history.
- 23. Form 34; Station Lists of 20 Nov. and 20 Oct. 47.
- 24. History of the 15th Air Force Service Command in New Guinea; 865th AA Bn. history; 1541 Ordnance S&M Co. history; SAC S&M, Off. of the CE, "Engineer Construction in the South Pacific Area," n. 77; Station List, 20 Nov. 1947, in "Air Service Command in the SARP, 1941-1947," pt. 1.
- 25. Form 70; 78 Air Group Sq. history.
- 26. Ltr., Brig. Gen. Carl Correll to SAC Avn. Sq., USASCS, 21 Nov. 47, in AFHQ-18, 7278-4.

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- 22. Ibid.
- 23. Memo to Lt. Col. W. K. Sutherland, ex-Lt. Col. Carl Connell, 1 Ser. 47, in AF-33-3, 7275-4.
- 24. Ltr., Connell to Col. E. E. Westwood, Lt. Col. 670, 21 Ser. 47, in AF-33-3, 7275-1; ltr., CG 33rd Lt Sq to CG USAF, 12 Oct. 47, in Ibid., 7275-8; ltr., Connell to Capt. Christian Peterson, 20 Oct. 47, in Ibid., 7275-2; 1st ind. (ltr., Whitehead to CG Inv. Sec., USAF, 23 Dec. 47), Ex. Inv. Sec. USAF to Ex. CG 5th Lt, 3 Jan. 48.
- 25. Form 71, 40th and 41st Cos., 20-20 Oct. 47; History of the Fifth Air Force Service Centers in New Guinea; 41st Tr. Co., 70th TC Co., 1204th W Truck Co. (Avn.), 34th Tr. Co. histories; Group Medical and Sanitation Report, 1947 in Ibid.; CG 47, Ex. Allied AF, 10 Nov. 47.
- 26. 40th TC Wing, 673d Airborne Tr. Avn. Bn., 40th Sig. Bn. (Const.), and Third Air Task Force histories.
- 27. Ibid.; Narrative by Capt. Lorette Lerner, in History of the Fifth Air Force Service Centers in New Guinea.
- 28. Ibid.; 40th T.C. Wing, 673d Airborne Tr. Avn. Bn., and Third Air Task Force histories.
- 29. Ibid.; History of the Fifth Air Force Service Centers in New Guinea.
- 30. Col. W. L. Durbin, "Durbin's Diary in the Southwest, South, and Central Pacific Theaters," 121 p., 44, in AF 3721 Subj, Inscriptions; ltr., Col. Durbin to Connell, 6 Nov. 47 and Connell to Durbin, 13 Nov. 47, in AF-33-3, 7275-6, 17.
- 31. 370th TC Co. history; 40th TC Wing History. Only two squadrons, the 20th and the 60th, of the 4076 Group were sent to the Southwest Pacific. The helicopter squadrons and the other two squadrons were assigned to the South Pacific. On 9 November, the 20th and 60th Squadrons were assigned to the 4076 Group. Ibid.
- 32. 40th TC Wing history.
- 33. Ibid.; 317th TC Co. history.
- 34. 5th AF, Rep. 44-06, 9 Dec. 47, in 40th TC Wing history.
- 35. 70th TC Co. history.

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- 37. Log.: 1911th, 1994th, and 2073th AM Truck Co. histories. At Suva the Third Air Task Force established a system under the 1st. It was at first very difficult since all supplies were coming in by air on several different strips several miles apart. But by utilizing one truck company, two AF companies with their aerial transportation, and the freight-handling organizations, they brought order out of chaos. Third Air Task Force history.
- 38. 80th Medical Air Evacuation Sq. history. The nurses were restricted in their flights, and were allowed to go no further forward than Coteleur during the fall.
- 39. 5th AF, Para. 40-50, 26 Oct. 47, in 804th Medical Air Evacuation Sq. history.

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NOTES

Chapter II

1. In Eltton Plan.
2. Memo for Pacific Conference by Maj. Gen. E. M. Henny, 15 Mar. 47, in Eltton Plan; OCS, 107th Meeting, 14 Aug. 47.
3. OCS, 107th Meeting, 14 Aug. 47; OCS, 110th Meeting, 17 Aug. 47.
4. OCS 319/2, 27 Aug. 47.
5. Ibid.
6. Ibid.
7. OCS 729/5, 30 Aug. 47. As of 1 January 1944, 2,578 aircraft were allocated to the South and Southwest Pacific areas for the Army, Navy, NAAF, and RAAF. These were considered sufficient for the planned operations.
8. The US Chiefs of Staff in August envisaged the following target dates: Buna-Misaki, 10 October 1943; western New Britain, Nieta, Buw (neutralize), 1 December 1943; Sakaule (neutralize), Suva, 1 February 1944; Luweng, 1 May 1944; Manus, 1 June 1944; Hollandia, 1 August 1944; Lae, 10 September 1944; Jaren, 15 October 1944. OCS 301/3, 27 Aug. 47. The JCS specifically suggested a number of general plans to reach positions for an all-out effort against Japan by attaining a line that ran roughly through the Falous and the Vogelkop in western New Guinea. The following moves were suggested as possible: Seizure and consolidation of the Gilberts prior to further advance into the Marshalls; seizure of Marshalls including Wake and Kurie; capture of Honome; seizure of eastern Carolines or for western Wake and establishment of fleet base at Truk; capture of Falous including an initial seizure of Yen; seizure of Java and the Jap Marianas. Ibid.; OCS 319/2, 27 Aug. 47. See also OCS 319/5, 27 Aug. 47 and OCS 729/2, 30 Aug. 47.
9. See note 8 above; CM-IP-12650 (18 Sep. 47), COMCINCPAC for action COMCINCPAC-12650 (for MacArthur for action, for Hirth and King for information), 150674, 18 Sep. 47; CM-IP-12699 (18 Sep. 47), COMCINCPAC to COMCINCPAC, 150673, 18 Sep. 47.
10. See note 9 above.

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- 11. CM-1-12401 (18 Sep. 47), CINFO SA. SA.3 for action COMSECAC, #160710, 16 Sep. 47; memo for Admiral Elsey by Lt. Gen. L. T. Harrison, 12 Sep. 47, in Memo on Operations, in AFSEC 7-37-22.
- 12. Minutes of conference held at CEO S&A, 10 Sep. 47 (1), between SA.3 and COMSECAC, in AFSEC 7-37-22 Special file.
- 13. CM-301-370 thru 372 (2 Oct. 47), ORD to CINFO SA.3 etc, 2 Oct. 47. On 1 November General Marshall requested MacArthur to list the new and air bases which he felt that the United States should have in the Philippines. It was hoped that the Philippine Government would refer these to the United States prior to Quezon's retirement on 15 November. Marshall added that it was desirable to secure a commitment within the next 10 days. (CM-301-370 (1 Nov. 47), O/S to MacArthur, #9496, 1 Nov. 47.) MacArthur replied that he believed that the provisions for U. S. bases in the Philippines should be general and sweeping enough to permit exact locations to be determined by U. S. military authorities upon the conclusion of the war. He pointed out that the listing of such localities then might require future adjustment because of the rapidly changing characteristics of air equipment. He stated that the detail of selection of sites should be determined by the United States untrammelled by controversial negotiations, that the right should be "complete and absolute," and that "a firm attitude now cannot fail to be accepted with little or no opposition." (CM-301-372 (2 Nov. 47), Rear Echelon Brisbane to MAC (for Marshall), 2 Nov. 47.) MacArthur replied to a similar message giving a long list of recommended bases. CM-301-374 (5 Nov. 47), #151, 5 Nov. 47.
- 14. AFM III, 30 Oct. 47.
- 15. It was estimated that the following forces would be required for Phase 1: Land--7 infantry divisions and 2 parachute regiments for assault, 9 infantry divisions and 1 armored brigade for garrison; Air--5 H/L groups, 10 H/B groups, 11 L/B groups, 10 F(D) groups, 1 F(T) group, 6 troop carrier groups, 6 photo reconnaissance groups. Ibid. included all South and Southwest Pacific shore-based aircraft and those used for rear area protection. Ibid.
- 16. It was estimated that the following forces would be required for Phase 2: Land--2 infantry divisions, 1 airborne division, and 2 parachute regiments for assault, 12 infantry divisions and 1 armored brigade for garrison; Air--3 H/B groups, 10 H/D groups, 11 3/4 L/B groups, 10 F(D) groups, 2 F(T) groups, 8 1/2 troop carrier groups, 11 photo reconnaissance groups. Ibid.

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17. It was estimated that the following forces would be required for Phase 2: Land--5 infantry divisions, 1 Airborne division, and 1 parachute regiment for assault; 12 infantry divisions and 1 armored brigade for garrison; Air--10 H/B groups, 12 H/B groups, 12¹ L/B groups, 12¹ F (D) groups, 2¹ F (S) groups, 10¹ troop carrier groups, 11 photo reconnaissance groups. Ibid.
18. If the capture of Ambon were considered necessary, the follow operation would not occur until 15 January 1945; otherwise the target date would be 1 December 1944. Ibid.
19. Ibid.
20. CDS 330/2, 18 Nov. 43.
21. JCS 381, 9 Nov. 43.
22. Ibid. It will be noted that the movement into the Maninbar, Rai, and Troe islands, a part of Phase II of PLAN III, was omitted by the Joint Planners. It was felt by them that sufficient assault shipping would not be available to ensure the success of this operation.
23. JCS, 1574 Meeting, 15 Nov. 43.
24. Ibid.; JCS, 164th Meeting, 17 Nov. 43. In addition to the insertion of the two items on WLR bombing, there was a deletion of the seizure of the follow under the 2 to 31 December 1944.
25. Memo for Joint Staff Planners by the U. S. Chiefs of St FF, in JCS 335, 25 Nov. 43; CDS 417, 2 Dec. 43; CDS 337, 3 Dec. 43.
26. Durelov Conference, Minutes of the Plenary Session, 28 Nov. 43. Prime Minister Churchill stated later that "Marshal Stalin had voluntarily proclaimed that the Soviet would also war on Japan the moment Germany was defeated. This would give us better bases than we could ever find in China, and made it all the more important that we should concentrate on making OY-LEAD a success." Sextant Conference, Minutes of Third Plenary Meeting, 4 Dec. 43.
27. CDS 337, 3 Dec. 43. The aim of the operational concept was "to advance along the New Guinea-N.E.I.-Philippine axis and to complete the capture of the Mandated Islands in time to launch a major assault in the Luzon-China area in the spring of 1945 (i.e. before the onset of the typhoon season), from a distant base." CDS 417, 2 Dec. 43.

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- 25. JCS, 1780 Meeting, 21 Oct. 47. Generalissimo's memo, Ltr., 1780 to Arnold, 22 Oct. 47, in 120 710.10, Operational Letters.
- 26. In addition to the units, the 70th ACGF Reconnaissance Sqd from with 12 F-50's to depart in 1 to October; the 11th ACGF Reconnaissance Squadron to leave with 12 F-50's in early November; the 71st Reconnaissance Group consisting of the 97th and the 110th Reconnaissance Squadrons with 18 F-50's each plus 20 per cent reserve was shipped in July; the 10th Liaison Squadron of this group was shipped with 30 L-5's plus a in reserve (30 had arrived and the others were en route) and the 17th Reconnaissance Squadron (bomb) with 10 B-25's to depart in October by air. CM-CUT-4576 (9 Sep. 47), AS/AS COMR to CINC USA, 7720, 9 Sep. 47.
- 27. CM-12-12372 (20 Oct. 47), briefing to SAC, 21 Oct. 47; CM-12-12382 (9 Nov. 47), memo to CINC USA, 30, 9 Nov. 47. This allocation also includes the 10th Liaison Squadron (d) equipped with 12 F-50's (F-7's).
- 28. CM-12-12386 (20 Nov. 47), briefing to SAC, 22 Nov. 47; Ltr., 22 Nov. 47, in 120 710.10.
- 29. CM-12-12397 (23 Oct. 47), briefing to SAC, 24 Oct. 47; Ltr., 24 Oct. 47.
- 30. CM-12-12406 (28 Oct. 47), MEMO to CINC USA, 4721, 28 Oct. 47; CM-CUT-12401 (28 Oct. 47), CM-CUT to CINC USA, 4720, 28 Oct. 47.
- 31. CM-12-12400 (2 Oct. 47), MEMO to CINC USA, 4690, 2 Oct. 47; CM-CUT-12402 (2 Oct. 47), MEMO to CINC USA, 4690, 2 Oct. 47; memo for AG/AS COMR by Brig. Gen. E. M. Smith, Lt. Gen. C/AS, 23 Oct. 47; and memo for General Smith by Brig. Gen. O. R. ... Chief Components Div., COMR, 1 Nov. 47, in Air 12 SAC-47.1, So. Pac; CM-CUT-12445 (1 Nov. 47), MEMO to CINC USA, 4720, 1 Nov. 47; CM-12-12440 (1 Nov. 47), briefing to SAC, 2-7000, 1 Nov. 47; MEMO, COM Allied AF to CM-12700, 1 Nov. 47, in 120 710.10.
- 32. Memo for General Smith by Brig. Gen. O. R. ... 1 Nov. 47, in Air 12 SAC-47.1, So. Pac; CM-12-12476 (18 Nov. 47), briefing to SAC, 18-7000, 17 Nov. 47; Ltr., Brig. Gen. Donald Wilson to CINC USA, 28 Nov. 47, in 120 710.10; MEMO, AG/AS COMR to Sec. of the Air at HQ, 10 Dec. 47, in 120 710.10, Conferences; L-12-98, 8 Dec. 47, teletype conference between Kennedy and Giles, 7 Dec. 47, in Ibid.; L-12-98, 20 Dec. 47, teletype conference between Kennedy and Giles.

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- 76. Ibid.; CM-CUI-2080 (26 Nov. 43), Asst. Chief of Staff for Comd. to SACIAF, 1082, 25 Nov. 43; ltr., Chief Traffic Div. IAWD to Chief Aircraft Distribution Off., IAWD, ASO, AFO, 2 Nov. 43, in IAW 430.11, Australia.
- 77. CM-IT-2454 (13 Dec. 43), Brisbane to CG AAF, 4-2471, 13 Dec. 43; CM-CUI-6488 (17 Dec. 43), GFD to CINC SUSA, 1851, 13 Dec. 43; AD-10-96, 20 Dec. 43, Conference between Kenney and Giles; ltr., Arnold to Mill rd Harmon, 27 Dec. 43, in Air 10 270.2, So. Pac; CM-CUI-2025 (23 Dec. 43), CDR to CINC SUSA, 2144, 23 Dec. 43; CM-CUI-11081 (30 Dec. 43), 12 r-shall for MacArthur, -2350, 30 Dec. 43. Kenney on his point, but General Marshall and General Arnold considered the following: Why did not General Kenney establish receiving and erecting depot at Townsville to relieve the load on Brisbane and to shorten his wire-line to New Guinea; why had General Kenney never asked for an increase in his assembly establishment at Brisbane? Memo for the Record for General Giles, 27 Dec. 43, in IAW 3810, War Plans (Misc.).
- 78. On 5 October, there was an estimate that 50 A-20G's could be "sent" to the SWP within the next 60 days. In October and November, '43 arrived. In December, '43 arrived. On 21 October, Kenney estimated that he needed 192 A-20G's for the two new light bombardment squadrons; at this time he was planning to equip the 78 Group with B-26 strafers. (CM-IT-12878 (21 Oct. 43), Brisbane to CG AAF, 4-3011, 21 Oct. 43.) Ten days later, Kenney expressed a preference for A-20's for the 76 and 417th Groups, and A-20's for the 512th Group. This conformed to the request of General Whitehead. (CM-IT-12871 (21 Oct. 43), Brisbane to CG AAF, 4-3103, 21 Oct. 43; ltr., Brig. Gen. Donald Wilson to CG ADVON, 29 Oct. 43, in IAWO, 7244-37.) In November General Arnold stated that it was preferable to equip all three light bombardment squadrons with A-20's because of the "overall shortage in fighter aircraft," and this was accepted by the theater. (CM-IT-1548 (4 Nov. 43), IAWD to CINC SUSA, 4-50, 4 Nov. 43; CM-IT-3382 (14 Nov. 43), Brisbane to WAR, 3-7800, 14 Nov. 43.) On 3 November, MacArthur was informed that the 417th Group equipped with 50 A-20G's was to move/his theater within the next 60 days, the aircraft in December. Eighty-five A-20's actually arrived in December. (CM-CUI-2022 (5 Nov. 43) AMEMB to CINC SUSA, 23, 5 Nov. 43.) On 23 December, CMA informed Kenney and MacArthur that, in light bombers, present authorized unit equipment plus 50 per cent reserve totaled 257 aircraft. This would be met by 112 A-20's then on hand, 84 en route, and 74 to depart before the end of January. Actually the Fifth Air Force had on hand 177 A-20's on 1 January, 217 on 1 February, and 200 on 1 March. There had been 2 A-20 losses in January, and 12 in February. CM-CUI-2025 (27 Dec. 43), CDR to CINC SUSA, 2144, 23 Dec. 43. For figures on status see Appendix 1. For operations of the 417th and 512th Groups see Form 741- for Jan. 44.

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- 39. The following items are extracted from the records on hand in the USA on the right of the months indicated: December, 1941; January, 1941; February, 1941; and March, 1941. CR-CHE-3470 (18 Nov. 47), AFBAL to CINC USA, 15 Oct. 48.
- 40. Ltr., Kenney to Arnold, 6 Nov. 47, in A-2 Library. General Whitehead also records removing the common and concentration on Air Force. Ltr., Whitehead to Kenney, 17 Nov. 47, in A-2 7-21.3.
- 41. CR-CHE-3240 (14 Oct. 47), AFBAL to CINC USA, 18 Oct. 47; D-10-25, 8 Dec. 47, teletype conference between Kenney and GIL, 7 Dec. 47, in A-2 7773, Conference; HCB, 10/10 CCBAL to Sec. of the Air Staff, 12 Dec. 47, in A-2 370.2, 20 Dec.
- 42. Form 541a, 71, 101, 20th, 21st Groups, 7-17 Nov. and 11 Dec. 47; Appendix 1; CR-CHE-3070 (17 Dec. 47), CCBAL to CINC USA, 18 Dec. 47.
- 43. Ibid.; CR-IT-4000 (6 Nov. 47), Brisbane to GIL, A-2107, 6 Nov. 47; CR-CHE-7000 (10 Nov. 47), AFBAL to CINC USA, 10 Nov. 47; ltr., Brig. Gen. Donald Wilson to CG DWH, 29 Oct. 47, in A-2 773-27; Appendix 1.
- 44. Ltr., Kenney to Arnold, 6 Nov. 47, in A-2 Library.
- 45. AIRR: No. 13, 21st Air Force in the Non-Combat Situation, Summary October 1947; CR-CHE-337 (2 Oct. 47), AFBAL to CINC USA, 2 Oct. 47; ltr., Kenney to Arnold, 10 Oct. 47, extract in memo for the C/S by General Arnold, 10 Oct. 47, in A-2 770.21, notation of General.
- 46. RFB, Chief Gen'l. Plans Div. to Sec. of the Air Staff, 2 Dec. 47, in AF IT-3-3 Australia; CR-CHE-3070 (17 Dec. 47), CCBAL to CINC USA, 18 Dec. 47; CR-CHE-1700 (18 Jan. 44), CFB A-1'S to CINC USA, 18 Jan. 44; CR-IT-1000 (17 Jan. 44), Brisbane to AFB, A-169, 17 Jan. 44; HD-10-125 (7 Jan. 44), conference between Kenney and Sutherland, 7 Jan. 44; Appendix 1.
- 47. Capt. James M. Stentz, Radar Officer, 1st Bombardment, "Report on Lectures of PBY Catalina Ferry-shipping; Strikes," 7 Jan. 44, in A-2 Library.
- 48. Ibid.

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49. CM-IN-8690 (14 May 43), Brisbane to CG AAF, #A-858, 14 May 43; CM-OUT-7620 (18 May 43), AFRDB sgd Arnold for Kenney, #3846, 18 May 43; CM-IN-16567 (26 May 43), Brisbane to WAR, #A-954, 25 May 43; CM-OUT-11917 (28 May 43), AAF MC to CINC SWPA, #4195, 27 May 43; CM-IN-20132 (31 May 43), Brisbane to CG AAF, #A-992, 31 May 43; CM-OUT-983 (3 June 43), Arnold to Kenney, #4377, 2 June 43; CM-IN-3219 (5 June 43), Brisbane to CG AAF, #A-1027, 5 June 43; CM-OUT-4266 (10 July 43), Arnold to CINC SWPA, #5611, 9 July 43; CM-IN-9755 (14 July 43), Kenney to CG AAF, #A-1280, 14 July 43.
50. Form 34, 63d Sq., 10-16 Oct. 43; CM-IN-16807 (28 Oct. 43), Brisbane to WAR, #A-2078, 28 Oct. 43; Report to CG 10th AF by Brig. Gen. Donald Wilson, C/S 5th AF, [Feb.] 44; ltr., Hq 5th AF to Dir., Aircraft Radio Lab., Materiel Comd., Wrigat Field, 15 Feb. 44, in A-2 Library.
51. 2d Opns. Anal. Sec., 5th AF, "Low Altitude Blind Bombing by Radar."
52. CM-IN-7505 (12 Jan. 43), Brisbane to WAR, #A-66, 12 Jan. 43. During the period from 1 October to 31 December, PBX's made almost an equally good record, carrying out 177 sorties of which 87 per cent were completed, making 75 contacts and 50 attacks, scoring 21 hits and 15 near misses, and claiming 8 warships sunk or damaged and 80,700 tons of merchant shipping sunk or damaged. Of the incomplete sorties, 12 were due to radar failure, 5 to the weather, 2 to mechanical trouble, and 4 to other reasons. Memo to the CG by Col. Harry F. Cunningham, AC/AS A-2, Hq ADVON, 6 Jan. 44, in A-2 Library.
53. Ltr., Col. J. T. Murtha, Jr., to Col. M. E. Cross, Requirements Div., OC&R, 21 June 43, in AAG 312.1B, Classes of Correspondence; ltr., Kenney to Maj. Gen. G. E. Stratemeyer, 15 July 43, in AAG 312.1D, Operations Letters; ltrs., Kenney to Arnold, 28 July 43, Giles to Kenney, 27 Aug. 43, and Arnold to Kenney, 31 Aug. 43, in same file.
54. Ltr., Kenney to Arnold, 29 Oct. 43, in AAG 312.1B, Operations Letters.
55. Kenney also made the following assertion: "It was rather significant that a couple of weeks after we dropped a few tons of bombs on Sourabaya and Balikpapan the Japs were short of aviation fuel at all their fields from Ambon to Newak and even at Palau and Truk. The refineries at Sourabaya and Balikpapan together handle only about one fifth of the total output of refined oil coming out of the Netherlands East Indies but they are the only ones I can reach with the B.24 and three thousand pounds of bombs is the maximum load the B.24 can carry that far." Ibid.
56. Ibid.

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57. Ibid.; JCS, 1978 Meeting, 15 Nov. 47; msg. 16/13 Flank to CINC USA (for Kenney from Marshall), 231, 14 Nov. 47; ltr., Giles to Kenney, 18 Nov. 47, in A-2 212.11, Operations Letters. Kenney had made the following criticism of the B-29: "The main thing that concerns me, however, about the B-29 is still the question of its armament. I wrote you some time ago about this question and evidently you spoke to Echols about it, as he tried to reassure me on the subject during his recent visit. Frankly, he did not convince me that the B-29 is anywhere near sufficiently armed. The two top turrets blanket each other for firing directly along the skin line. In addition, the scanning dome in forward of the rear top turret interferes with firing from that turret directly ahead. If a Zero takes a twelve o'clock head on attack from about two degrees above the horizontal, there are only two fifty-calibre guns on the B-29 to oppose the Zero's armament of two twenty millimeter cannon and four machine guns. Most of his attacks are made by three airplanes, the leader coming in as I have described and the two wing men coming in at ten and two o'clock with Number Two passing under the leader, Number Three passing above. I am afraid that the B-29 with six men in that forward compartment protected by nothing but Plexiglas, would be taken out on a single pass by three or even one Jap fighter. Echols told me not to worry on account of the efficiency of the new guns sights and automatic fire control system. He said that with this fire control system an enemy fighter could be knocked down fifteen hundred yards away. However, the fact remains that it takes the twenty-eight thousand foot second bullet 1.3 seconds to go fifteen hundred yards. During that time if the two airplanes approached each other at the rate of only four hundred and twenty miles an hour the Jap airplane moves nine hundred and eighty-five feet. The problem of the gunner in the B-29 is therefore somewhat similar to that of the man behind an anti-aircraft gun. In both cases they have excellent firing data but in order to score a hit it is necessary for the target to move on a predicted course. If the target does not follow that course, there is no hit. Accuracy of fire is something that we all strive for but I finally believe that in air combat we must never lose sight of the fact that volume of fire in a short time is the thing that scores hits and brings down airplanes. If there is any possibility of doing it without interfering with production I believe it is essential to install a four gun turret in the upper forward position and another turret with four fifty-calibre guns directly in the nose of the B-29.

As I have mentioned, for this year out here the pressure cabin with its complications and weight is unnecessary. I do not believe that the probability of scoring hits from an altitude of from thirty to thirty five thousand feet is enough to warrant going to those altitudes. While it is true that an airplane flying that high and at speed credited to the B-29 would be relatively safe against Jap fighter opposition, if we could not score hits on a fairly concentrated target the trip would not be worth the expenditure of a coline and bombs. If necessary I would rather take the B-29 in at night and torched by the aid of flares. If the existing armament cannot be increased, I am afraid we will have to do that anyhow." Ltr., Kenney to Arnold, 8 Nov. 47, in A-2 Library.

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Chapter III

1. "Air Service Command in the SARP, 1941-1944," p. 53.
2. Supply Memo 15 and 17, HQ 5th AFHQ, 8 Aug. 47 and 20 Nov. 48, in "Air Service Command in the SARP, 1941-1944," Pt. 4.
3. Ltr., Wartsith to Dep. Com. 5th AF, July 47; ltr., HQ 5th AF to CG USAF, 26 Sep. 47; ltr., Capt. Harry M. Hayes, Asst. A-4, 54th EC Wing to Wing Commander, 18 Dec. 47, in Postov Report 200.
4. Memo to Liaison Officer by Col. Alvin L. Fachynski, 20 Dec. 47, in Report of Liaison Officer SARP, 19 Feb. 48, in AAG 319.1, Subk.
5. 60th Depot Repair Sq. history.
6. 1503th Air Truck Co. history.
7. CM-11-2781 (6 Oct. 47), Brisbane to USAF, 20-2708, 6 Oct. 47; CM-11-7061 (12 Oct. 47), Brisbane to USAF, 20-2708, 12 Oct. 47.
8. CM-001-12600 (29 Oct. 47), USAF to CG USAF, 1949, 28 Oct. 48.
9. AD-PR-766 (2 Dec. 47), Brisbane to CG USAF, 20-2708, 2 Dec. 47; AD-11-674 (4 Dec. 47), Brisbane to CG USAF, 20-2708, 7 Dec. 47; AD-PR-1880 (8 Dec. 47), AAG 150 to Brisbane, 11-27, 8 Dec. 47; CM-11-14415 (17 Dec. 47), Brisbane to CG USAF, 20-2708, 23 Dec. 47; CM-001-9579 (24 Dec. 47), AAG 150, to CG USAF, 21-27, 24 Dec. 47.
10. Ltr., Maj. G. D. Kauffman to Maj. Aubrey J. Fletcher, Sr. Off., 5th AF, 16 Sep. 47, in AAG 417.44, Entry; memo to Liaison Officer by Col. Alvin Fachynski, 20 Dec. 47, in Report of Liaison Officer, SARP, 19 Feb. 48, in AAG 319.1, Subk.
11. Four P-51s for the following squadrons: 80th Str. Sq. and 451st Str. Sq., 19-25 Sep.; 571st Bomb Sq., 50th Str. Sq., and 80th Str. Sq., 26 Sep.-2 Oct.; 472d Str. Sq. and 501st Bomb Sq., 7-9 Oct.; 473d Str. Sq., 10-16 Oct.; 408th Bomb Sq., 27-30 Oct.; 15th Bomb Sq., Nov., Dec., and Jan.
12. AD-PR-4498 (25 Dec. 47), Brisbane to CG USAF, 20-2708, 25 Dec. 47. A note written on this cable to USAF reads as follows: "Instructions were given to Gen. [redacted] to give Gen. [redacted] tires to keep his air-olives flying. Why can't we do it?" See also AD-PR-4548 (25 Dec. 47), Brisbane to CG USAF, 20-2708, 25 Dec. 47 with attached note; AD-PR-1532 (9 Jan. 48), Brisbane to USAF, 21-27, 9 Jan. 48.

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13. Form 24's, 76th Ftr. Sq., 19-23 Sep. 43; 60th Bomb. Sq., 26 Sep.-1 Oct. 43; 40th Ftr. Sq., 6-11 Dec. 43; 17th Bomb. Sq. and 40th Ftr. Sq., 9-15 Jan. 44; 56th L3 Co. and 478th Ftr. Co. histories.
14. 1st ind. (ltr., 5th AFHQ to CO's of Depots 1, 2, and 3, 11 Dec. 43), HQ ADVA to CO 5th AFHQ, 17 Dec. 43, in "Air Service Command in SIA, 1941-1944," Pt. 4.
15. Ibid.
16. Form 24's, 312th Bomb. Sq. and 500th Bomb. Sq., 18-25 Sep. 43; 498th, 499th, 504th, 501st, and 750th Bomb. Sq., 26 Sep.-1 Oct. 43; 320th and 400th Bomb. Sq., 2-9 Oct. 43; 17th Bomb. Sq., 17-27 Oct. 43; 405th Bomb. Sq., 23 Dec. 43-1 Jan. 44. Refer personnel which arrived in the theater were described as being generally of high caliber, although about half the teams required additional training before they could be sent out to work unsupervised. Ltr., Ltj. C. D. Huffman to Ltj. Hubrey J. Fletcher, Sig. Off., 16 Sep. 43, in AAG 413.44, Refar.
17. 478th Ftr. Co. history.
18. Memo to Liaison Officer by Col. Alvin L. Brachynski, 29 Dec. 43, in Report of Liaison Officer SIA, 12 Feb. 44, in AAG 319.1, Refar.
19. "Air Service Command in the SIA, 1941-1944," pp. 20-21.
20. Ibid., p. 31-32.
21. Ibid., pp. 28-29; Form 24, 50th Sq., 29 Jan.-5 Feb. 44. The principal explanation for the complaints was that pilots just did not like to fly planes with overhauled engines.
22. 4th Air Depot Sq. and 478th Serv. Sq. histories.
23. 7 Air Serv. Area Comd. history; C-1-7786 (17 Nov. 43), Brisbane to WAA, A-2806, 17 Nov. 43. "The first B-26B came out of the factory with the 75m. cannon and two fixed .50 cal. guns in the nose. Two .50 cal. guns in blisters on the right hand side were installed in modification centers, although a number of airplanes left the U.S. without this modification." Memo for the Sec. of the Air Staff by Maj. Gen. O.F. Skols, AG/AS 112D, 11 Dec. 43, in Air AG SIA 370.2, 3d Sec.
24. There seems no way of definitely attributing the losses of the 8872 and 8872 Squadron to the fact that they were flying the B-26B. Three of the six planes lost or abandoned after combat missions, one was shot down by AA, and the other two were listed as missing. Fifteen out of 70 crew members were lost. Form 24's, 8872, 8872, 71st, 400th Sq., 10 Oct.-25 Dec. 43; ME-10-96 (20 Dec. 43), teletype conference between Lerner and Giles, 20 Dec. 43.

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- 65. CU-CUI-2156 (27 Nov. 47), AFBHQ to CINC USA, 857, 27 Nov. 47; V Air Serv. Area Comd. history.
- 66. AD-EE-1547 (8 Oct. 47), Brisbane to CG USAF, 44-9889, 8 Oct. 47; CU-CUI-2272 (9 Oct. 47), AFBHQ to CINC USA, 43239, 8 Oct. 47.
- 67. Ibid.; CU-1-1197 (1 Dec. 47), Brisbane to USA, 44-2752, 1 Dec. 47; Check sheet, Col. Bertram's to Col. Trounfield, 14 Oct. 47, in "Air Service Command in SIA, 1941-1947," Pt. 4.
- 68. I-11-2809 (23 Oct. 47), Brisbane to CG USAF, 44-2071, 23 Oct. 47; AD-1-2809 (24 Oct. 47), Brisbane to ACPFO, 44-10780, 24 Oct. 47; ltr., attached to Perry, 21 Oct. 47, in ACPFO files.
- 69. Ibid.; CU-CUI-1777 (20 Oct. 47), AFBHQ to CINC USA, 43780, 20 Oct. 47; AD-1-2809 (27 Oct. 47), Brisbane to CG USAF, 44-2071, 27 Oct. 47; CU-CUI-1512 (27 Oct. 47), AFBHQ to CINC USA, 43780, 27 Oct. 47.
- 70. AD-1-2801 (18 Nov. 47), Brisbane to USA, 44-11044, 18 Nov. 47; CU-11-1206 (27 Nov. 47), London to USA, 44-1872, 27 Nov. 47; CU-12-1409 (20 Nov. 47), ^{AF} to Brisbane, "H-3700D, 20 Nov. 47.
- 71. D-1-1530 (9 Nov. 47), Brisbane to ACPFO, 44-11044, 9 Nov. 47; memo for the Sec. of the Air Staff by Col. Gen. O. F. Goble, AC/AS USAF, 11 Dec. 47, in Air CG SAC 270.2, so far. A number of improvements were being made to increase the H-37 fuel capacity in the United States. One of them, which was expected to be included in regular production by April 1948, was to redesign the cockpit and the fuselage in order to permit a 60-million increase in the main fuel tank. RLM, AC/AS USAF to Sec. of the Air Staff, 12 Dec. 47, in Ibid.; 81st Air Depot Group Year Book, 1947-1948.
- 72. Ibid.
- 73. Ltr., Perry to Whitford, 7 Nov. 47, re Goble's memo to Wilson, 9 Jan. 48, in ACPFO files.
- 74. V Air Serv. Area Comd. history; ltr., Cont 11 to Col. J. J. Clinch, AC/AS USAF, 13 Dec. 47, in "Air Service Command in the SIA, 1941-1947," Pt. 4.
- 75. IV Air Serv. Area Comd. history.
- 76. Ibid.; Capt. J. J. Galt's interview with Col. Jerry L. Cartellier, Exec. Dir., IV ACD, 1 May 48, Ibid., Pt. 4; Houston report, "Evaluation of Activities of the 8th Air Depot at Louisville.

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- 27. CM-IN-2781 (3 Oct. 43), Brisbane to W.A., 43-3403, 5 Oct. 43; CM-OUT-2100 (7 Oct. 43), W.A. to CINC S.P.A., 3890, 6 Oct. 43; CM-IN-17381 (22 Oct. 43), Brisbane to W.A., 43-6371, 20 Oct. 43; CM-OUT-10430 (24 Oct. 43), W.A. to CINC S.P.A., 3458, 23 Oct. 43; CM-IN-16861 (27 Nov. 43), Brisbane to W.A., 43-8271, 27 Nov. 43. General Giles informed CFB on 21 February 1944 that all Headquarters approved granting the authority to resign and reassign personnel with the restriction that the theater commander be ordered to re-form the service group in standard form on 30-day notice. Memo for the AC/S, CFB by Lt. Gen. Barney H. Giles, O/AS, 21 Feb. 44, in Air AG SLS 270.2, 20 Feb.
- 28. CG 408, HQ 5th AF, 9 Jan. 44, in "Air Service Command in the S.A.I., 1941-1944," Pt. 1; CG 2, HQ 5th AFSC, 10 Jan. 44, in V Air Serv. Area Command history. The area commands were at first designated by the Arabic numeral, but soon changed to the Roman. On the same day as the activation, the Headquarters Squadrons of the 21st, 26th, and 30th Service Groups were disbanded. CM-IN-2310 (13 Jan. 44), Brisbane to W.A., 43-647, 13 Jan. 44.
- 29. "Air Service Command in the S.A.I., 1941-1944"; V Air Serv. Area Command history.

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General IV

1. Comd. Instr. 59, HQ Allied AF, 1 Oct. 47, in memo 7277-5.
2. With the assistance of the New Guinea Force, efforts to establish air routes and radio navigation facilities in occupied areas along the north coast of New Guinea. Id.
3. Id.
4. Four G-1s, 308th, 189th, 309th, and 371st Grps., Oct.-Nov. 47; Group extract, 1-3 to W-103, 1-1, 13 Oct. 47, in memo 7044-7.
5. Id.; Four Day Mission Report [REDACTED] 78, 20 Oct. 47, Operation 100 10, 20 Oct. 47; ISM 140, 27 Oct. 47.
6. Id. and 142, 7 Nov. 47; LTR 45, 20 Oct. 47, Operation 100 10, 20 Oct. 47; Four G-1s, 308th, 309th, 309th, 371st Grps., Oct.-Nov. 47.
7. Id., 29th sq., 8-10 and 10-16 Oct. 47; ISM 147, 13 Oct. 47. Air-Admiral's report stated that the 2 October attack on Sattelberg destroyed buildings and destroyed the vehicle ammunition dumps. If this were so, the damage must have been caused by the attack of the 100th Group, for which no specific mission accounts are available. That the formations were able to reach Sattelberg, however, seems doubtful since they attacked at the same time as the 89th Group, which claimed that Sattelberg was blotted out by the weather. CI-IT-6034 (10 Oct. 47), from Colonel GHQ AFHQ to SAC, 3-383, 10 Oct. 47.
8. ISM, 147, 6 Oct. 47; ltr., Conway to Arnold, extract in memo for the C/C, 20 Oct. 47, in memo 7044-22, Operation of 100th Group.
9. Between 1 and 10 October, the only Allied bombing mission which could be connected with the area which was in question occurred on 7 October. Seven B-24s struck the north coast of the Huon Peninsula, striking camps, and bombing and striking with incendiaries in the Logidjir area. One B-24 was destroyed; another was damaged. On the same day eight B-24s and five B-17s bombed the Logidjir road, destroying two warehouses and the village of Logidjir over the Gadi River. CI-IT-7050 (6 Oct. 47), from Colonel GHQ AFHQ to SAC, 3-383, 6 Oct. 47.
10. South Pacific Air Operation Ex. History.

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- 11. An exception was the raid of 9 October on the Takodan-Cano Bay area carried out by 15 to 16 enemy aircraft in which a B-24 bomber was hit, and some 17 men killed and 75 wounded. ISM: 147, 16 Oct. 47; 49th Tr. Co. history. One enemy aircraft was shot down by F-40's of the 8th Fighter Squadron over Himekoshu on 9 October. Para 74, 8th So., 2-10 Oct. 47.
- 12. Memo for Colonel Langer by Capt. John W. Miller, 7 Feb. 47, in Report of Division Officer, in AFM 227.1, Instructions; RMR 1, 24th Tr. Co., 11 Oct. 47. Colonel Langer was awarded the Congressional Medal of Honor for this exploit. GO 3, Encl/D, 25 Jan. 47.
- 13. Memo to General Sutherland by General Kenney, 19 Aug. 47, in AFMCO 700-51.
- 14. Ibid.; ltr., General Wilson to CI 3 SFA, 22 Aug. 47, Ibid..
- 15. CM-IT-1025 (2 Oct. 47), Brisbane to AAR, 3-3501, 2 Oct. 47; CM-IT-6490 (11 Oct. 47), Rear Colonel GHO SFA to AAR, 3-3586, 11 Oct. 47; CM-IT-7008 (12 Oct. 47), Brisbane to AAS, 3-6514, 12 Oct. 47.
- 16. Extract, ltr., Kenney to Arnold, 10 Oct. 47, in memo for the C/S, 24 Oct. 47, in AFM 700.21, Rotation of Replacements.
- 17. N. Y. Times, 12 Oct. 47.
- 18. Para 74's, 8th, 17th, 20th, 71st, 103th, 498th, 500th, 501st Bomb. Sqds., and 9th, 471st, 472d, and 473d Tr. Cos., 9-12 Oct. 1947; 49th Tr. Co. history; Lt. J. D. Roberts, Individual Combat Report ICR, Mission 1, 12 Oct. 47; Narrative Combat Mission Reports 47-67, 49th Tr. Co., 4984-A for the 498th, 71st, 17th, 8th, 9th, 498th, and 499th Bomb. Sqds., all on 12 Oct. 47. Japanese sources and interrogation of Allied prisoners of war at Khabarovsk indicate that this raid resulted in great damage to the Japanese air force. One POW states that there were 200 wrecked or damaged aircraft on Yonakura Harbor the night, and that the Japanese had suffered about 200 casualties. The Japanese Navy admit that nine aircraft were destroyed and "that nearly all the remaining aircraft were damaged by bomb splinters." "Mission Personnel Investigation Unit Report on Yonakura," by the Navy School of Communications Center, Oct. 47, in 12th AF AFMCO File.
- 19. A squadron of B-24 bombers hit Tokyo and Kyoto shortly after the B-29 strike. In fact, the 8th Squadron on its return to Himekoshu almost ran into the B-24's at 13:00, and 100 shots were fired before they were identified as friendly planes. AFM 4984-ax, 8th B-24. Co. 12 Oct. 47.

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- 20. IIR #2840, 403d Bomb. Sq., 12 Oct. 47.
- 21. IIR #2840, 321st Bomb. Sq., 4031 Bomb. Sq., 719th Bomb. Sq., and 400th Bomb. Sq., 12 Oct. 47; Individual Combat Fighter Report, ICFR, Mission #217, 80th Ftr. Sq., 12 Oct. 47; Form 74's, 64th, 66th, 403d, 719th, 800th, 321st, and 400th Bomb. Sqs. and 79th and 80th -tr. Sqs. Japanese records show that nothing more than a near miss was scored on the destroyer Nochizuki, during this raid. Their record, however, does not include merchant shipping. USSS memo Nov. 11, 16 Oct. 45.
- 22. See note 20 above. The official report agrees with the figures as used in the text except for the shipping losses. The official report states that "in the assault on the enemy's shipping our heavy bombers with thousand pound bombs sank or destroyed three destroyers, two merchant ships of 5,800 tons each, one of 7,000 ton, forty-three sea going cargo vessels ranging from 100 tons to 500 tons and seventy harbor craft. In addition, they hit and severely damaged a submarine and a 3,000 ton tender, one 6,800 ton destroyer tender and one 7,000 ton cargo ship." Commaidant, 14 Oct. 47.
- 23. CM-III-3342 (14 Oct. 47), Brisbane to MAR (sgt Ritchie), 13-3676, 14 Oct. 47.
- 24. CM-III-3231 (15 Oct. 47), Brisbane to MAR, 13-3707, 15 Oct. 47; IIR #280 285 L, 64th, 65th Bomb. Sqs., and 285 K, 400th Bomb. Sq., 17 Oct. 47; Form 74's, 80th, 72th, 9th, 431st, 4391, and 4771 Ftr. Sqs., and 321st, 328th, 64th, 65th, 403d, 519th, 800th, 321st, and 400th Bomb. Sqs., 9-16 Oct. 1947; History of the Fifth Air Force Service Command in New Guinea.
- 25. Form 74's, 28, 19th, 73d, 400th, 800d, 807d, 71st, 405th Bomb. Sqs., 41st, 342d, 431st, 473d, 477d Ftr. Sqs., 9-16 Oct. 47; CM-III-3231 (15 Oct. 47), Brisbane to MAR, 13-3707, 15 Oct. 47; CM-III-9700 (16 Oct. 47), Brisbane to MAR, 13-3744, 16 Oct. 47.
- 26. ISM, #148, 20 Oct. 47.
- 27. 477d Ftr. Sq. and 478th Ftr. Gp. histories; Form 74's, 7th, 9th, 431st, 473d, 477d Ftr. Sqs., 9-16 Oct. 47.
- 28. Ibid., 437d Ftr. Sq., 9-16 Oct. 47; 475th and 478th Ftr. Gp. histories.
- 29. IIR #280 289-H, 501st Bomb. Sq., 16 Oct. 47; Form 74's, 80th, 72th, 400th Ftr. Sqs., 495th, 490th, 800th, and 501st Bomb. Sqs., 9-16 Oct. 47. The official report of the morning following the attack claimed only 10 aircraft destroyed on the ground, 17 others probably destroyed, and hits on AA positions and ammunition dumps. CM-III-10217 (17 Oct. 47), Brisbane to MAR, 13-3769, 17 Oct. 47.

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- 70. Ltr. to SAC, 438th and 501st Sq., 18 Oct. 47.
- 71. 4774 Str. Co. and 4775th Str. Co. histories; Form 741, 7th, 9th, 41st, 200th, 400th, and 4774 Str. Co., 17-27 Oct. 47. For strikes - first controller; were carried out in the afternoon of 17 October by B-29's of the 39th Squadron and B-29's of the 10th Squadron. Form 741.
- 72. Ltr. to SAC, 438th, 400th, 501st, and 510th Bomb. Sq., 18 Oct. 47; ISM 149, 20 Oct. 47; 31-IX-1172a (18 Oct. 47), evidence to SAC, 3-3181, 19 Oct. 47; Form 741, 9th, 28th, 30th, 41st, 4700, and 4774 Str. Co., and 438th, 501st, 4th, 5th, 400th, 510th, 200th, 31st, 40th, 71st, 400th, 400th, 50th, and 501st Bomb. Sq., 17-27 Oct. 47.
- 73. Ltr., attached to Kennard, 20 and 21 Oct. 47, in AFSSB files.
- 74. Ibid.
- 75. Ibid.; ISM 149, 27 Oct. 47; 149, 27 Oct. 47; and 149, 20 Oct. 47; Form 741, 9th, 28th, 30th, 4074, 510th, 400th, 501st, 400th, 8th, and 50th Bomb. Sq., 17-21 Oct. 47.
- 76. Ltr., attached to Kenney, 21 Oct. 47, Form 741, 71st, 400th, and 500th Bomb. Sq., and 51st, 510th, 400th Str. Co., 17-27 Oct. 47; 149, 200th Str. Co., 27 Oct. 47; and 71st Bomb. Sq., 22 Oct. 47.
- 77. ISM, 149, 27 Oct. 47.
- 78. Ltr., attached to Kenney, 21 Oct. 47, in AFSSB files; Form 741, 24th, 28th, 400th, 510th, 400th, 501st, and 50th Bomb. Sq. and 30th, 30th, 24th, 471st, 4700, and 471st Str. Co., 17-27 Oct. 47; 471st Str. Co. file; also ISM's.
- 79. Form 741, 9th, 18th, 30th, 438th, 400th, 500th, and 501st Bomb. Sq. and 24th, 28th, 30th, 471st, 4700, and 4774 Str. Co., 17-27 Oct. 47; 500th Str. Co. and 471st Str. Co. histories; ltr., attached to Kenney, 27 Oct. 47, in AFSSB files.
- 80. Ltr., 200th, 8th and 17th Bomb. Sq., 27 Oct. 47.
- 81. Ltr., attached to Kenney, 27 Oct. 47, in AFSSB files.
- 82. Form 741, 24th, 28th, 30th, 400th, 510th, 400th, 501st, 400th, 8th, 50th, 30th, 9th, 471st, 4700, and 4774 Str. Co., 17-27 Oct. 47; also ISM's.

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- 45. ISUMS -148, 7 Nov. 47, 153, 6 Nov. 47, 154, 10 Nov. 47. On 29 October, Mitchell's plan was approved by General Kenney and the 5th AF was ordered to strike Hanoi on 25/26 October to 31 October/1 November. Regs., COM 5th AF to COM 7th AF, 24 Oct 47, in AFHQ 7374-77; CM-11-16858 (27 Oct. 47), Rear Echelon CMC to MAR, 13-7120, 27 Oct. 47; CM-11-16859 (28 Oct. 47), Brisbane to MAR, 13-7101, 28 Oct. 47; CM-11-17025 (28 Oct. 47), Rear Echelon CMC to MAR, 13-7093, 28 Oct. 47; CM-11-16860 (31 Oct. 47), Rear Echelon CMC SWPA to MAR, 13-7224, 30 Oct. 47; CM-11-16867 (31 Oct. 47), Brisbane to MAR, 13-7226, 31 Oct. 47; CM-11-16868 (1 Nov. 47), Rear Echelon CMC to MAR, 13-7228, 1 Nov. 47.
- 46. Form 24's, 64th, 65th, 408th, 818th, 820th, 821st, and 49th Bomb. Gps. and 28th, 79th, 80th, 471st, 492d, and 497th Tr. Gps., 24-30 Oct. 47; 47th Tr. Sq. history; misc. MR's.
- 47. ISUMS, 148, 7 Nov. 47, and 153, 6 Nov. 47; ltr., Mitchell to Kenney, 24 Nov. 47, in AFHQ files.
- 48. Ibid., 21 Oct. 47; General Arnold's Com. Report on Use of Smoke at Hanoi, 20 Oct. 47, in AFHQ Library, 13-61008.
- 49. Pictorial Report, November 2, 1947, 2nd ed., 3rd ed., in AFHQ.
- 50. Form 24, 9th Photo Gp., 31 Oct.-6 Nov. 47; CM-11-16864 (3 Nov. 47), Rear Echelon CMC to MAR, 13-7228, 3 Nov. 47.
- 51. Misc. MR's; Form 24's, 3th, 79th, 80th, 471st, 492d, and 497th Tr. Gps., and 28th, 17th, 90th, 71st, 408th, 498th, 499th, 50th, 801st, Bomb. Gps., 31 Oct.-3 Nov. 47.
- 52. Ibid.; prelim. and 2nd MR's, Strike on Hanoi in Saigon Harbor, 2nd ed., 2 November 1947, dated 5 and 7 Nov. 47.
- 53. Ibid. and other MR's; Pictorial Report, November 2, 1947, 2nd ed., 3th ed., 4th ed., 80th, 471st, and 492d Tr. Gps., and 49th Tr. Gp. histories; ltr., Kenney to Arnold, 6 Nov. 47, ltr. Van Atta to Kenney, 5 Nov. 47, Whisbert to Kenney, 4 Nov. 47, in AFHQ files. The preliminary cable operations report lists 3 destroyers, 1 destroyer leader, 6 merchant vessels, 2 freighters, and 1 auxiliary ship; 3 airer ft destroyed on the ground, 10 in the harbor, and 67 shot down in combat. CM-11-16864 (3 Nov. 47), Rear Echelon CMC to MAR, 13-7228, 3 Nov. 47. The Japanese submitted a record to the US Strategic Bombing Survey which purports to list all Japanese warships sunk during the war. The doc does not say any warships having been sunk at Hanoi on 3 November. It does, however, state that a near miss was scored on the cruiser Hyogo on 1 November, a date which might be in error. USSBS Memo T-11, 11.

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- 32. Index; ISMS, 154, 10 Nov. 47, 155, 13 Nov. 48, and 156, 17 Nov. 47.
- 33. "The Air Assault on Guadalcanal, 17 Dec. 47-19 Feb. 1948," by U. S. Pacific Fleet, South Pacific Force, in A-2 Library, H 25004.
- 34. Ltr., Kenney to Arnold, 3 Nov. 47, in A-2 Library.
- 35. ISMS, 146, 15 Oct. 47, 155, 13 Nov. 48, and 158, 24 Nov. 47.

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NOTES

Chapter V

1. Ltr., Hixon to Mitchell, 25 Oct. 43, in AFHQ 9214-37.
2. For 31's, 20, 19th, 32d, 40th C.S., Nov. 43.
3. Ibid.; Ltr., Mitchell to Henny, 11 Nov. 43 in AFHQ File; Form 34's, 6th, 65th, 402d, 315th, 320th, and 403th C.S.; UI Weekly, Vol. II, 47, 24 Nov. 43.
4. Ibid. 45, 1 Dec. 43; Form 34's, all 5th AF C.S., Nov. 43.
5. Ibid.; UI Weekly, 48, 1 Dec. 43; ISM 156, 17 Nov. 43.
6. Col. Henry H. Dexter, report on air support in South Atlantic Theater during the period 1 Nov. 1943 to 1 February, 1944 (Dexter Report), 10 Nov. 44, in AFHQ files.
7. Ibid.
8. Ibid.
9. Form 34's, all 5th AF C.S., Nov. 43.
10. Form 34's, for the 5th AF, Nov. 43; ISM 154, 10 Nov. 43, 155, 13 Nov. 43, and 156, 17 Nov. 43.
11. ISM 154, 10 Nov. 43, 156, 17 Nov. 43, 157, 20 Nov. 43, 158, 24 Nov. 43, 159, 27 Nov. 43.
12. Form 34's, all 5th AF C.S., Nov.-Dec. 43.
13. Ibid.
14. Ibid.; 39th, 31th, and 41st Air Grps., 35th and 43rd Air Grps., and Third Air Force Area histories.
15. The statistics in the text are based on Form 34's. The majority of the fighter sorties were routine patrols of Allied bases, the escort of convoys, and the convoying of shipping. But they also include courier and ferrying sorties and others which could not be classed as noncombat. They all occurred, however, in the theater, and are useful in demonstrating the intensity of intervention even in the rear areas. Of the sorties cited in the text, the following proved effective: 24 P-40, 5 P-51, 4 P-51, and 2 P-47.

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- 27. Michael's Operation Diary.
- 28. Ibid.
- 29. Report of 1st Lt. Operation, 10, 9, Operations Air Mission Party, in Ops. r., 91-33.1.
- 30. Ibid.; Michael's Operation Diary. The reason for such an error is not clear. The Michael's diary notes that after in airties showed that the orders of the Michael's 1st Operation could have cleared up the matter in which he delivered to his fifth air force failed to reach the first air force. which he prepared the operation plan of air support. Ibid.
- 31. 10, 10, 11, 12, 13, 14, 15, 16, 17, 18, 19, 20, 21, 22, 23, 24, 25, 26, 27, 28, 29, 30, 31, 32, 33, 34, 35, 36, 37, 38, 39, 40, 41, 42, 43, 44, 45, 46, 47, 48, 49, 50, 51, 52, 53, 54, 55, 56, 57, 58, 59, 60, 61, 62, 63, 64, 65, 66, 67, 68, 69, 70, 71, 72, 73, 74, 75, 76, 77, 78, 79, 80, 81, 82, 83, 84, 85, 86, 87, 88, 89, 90, 91, 92, 93, 94, 95, 96, 97, 98, 99, 100, 101, 102, 103, 104, 105, 106, 107, 108, 109, 110, 111, 112, 113, 114, 115, 116, 117, 118, 119, 120, 121, 122, 123, 124, 125, 126, 127, 128, 129, 130, 131, 132, 133, 134, 135, 136, 137, 138, 139, 140, 141, 142, 143, 144, 145, 146, 147, 148, 149, 150, 151, 152, 153, 154, 155, 156, 157, 158, 159, 160, 161, 162, 163, 164, 165, 166, 167, 168, 169, 170, 171, 172, 173, 174, 175, 176, 177, 178, 179, 180, 181, 182, 183, 184, 185, 186, 187, 188, 189, 190, 191, 192, 193, 194, 195, 196, 197, 198, 199, 200, 201, 202, 203, 204, 205, 206, 207, 208, 209, 210, 211, 212, 213, 214, 215, 216, 217, 218, 219, 220, 221, 222, 223, 224, 225, 226, 227, 228, 229, 230, 231, 232, 233, 234, 235, 236, 237, 238, 239, 240, 241, 242, 243, 244, 245, 246, 247, 248, 249, 250, 251, 252, 253, 254, 255, 256, 257, 258, 259, 260, 261, 262, 263, 264, 265, 266, 267, 268, 269, 270, 271, 272, 273, 274, 275, 276, 277, 278, 279, 280, 281, 282, 283, 284, 285, 286, 287, 288, 289, 290, 291, 292, 293, 294, 295, 296, 297, 298, 299, 300, 301, 302, 303, 304, 305, 306, 307, 308, 309, 310, 311, 312, 313, 314, 315, 316, 317, 318, 319, 320, 321, 322, 323, 324, 325, 326, 327, 328, 329, 330, 331, 332, 333, 334, 335, 336, 337, 338, 339, 340, 341, 342, 343, 344, 345, 346, 347, 348, 349, 350, 351, 352, 353, 354, 355, 356, 357, 358, 359, 360, 361, 362, 363, 364, 365, 366, 367, 368, 369, 370, 371, 372, 373, 374, 375, 376, 377, 378, 379, 380, 381, 382, 383, 384, 385, 386, 387, 388, 389, 390, 391, 392, 393, 394, 395, 396, 397, 398, 399, 400, 401, 402, 403, 404, 405, 406, 407, 408, 409, 410, 411, 412, 413, 414, 415, 416, 417, 418, 419, 420, 421, 422, 423, 424, 425, 426, 427, 428, 429, 430, 431, 432, 433, 434, 435, 436, 437, 438, 439, 440, 441, 442, 443, 444, 445, 446, 447, 448, 449, 450, 451, 452, 453, 454, 455, 456, 457, 458, 459, 460, 461, 462, 463, 464, 465, 466, 467, 468, 469, 470, 471, 472, 473, 474, 475, 476, 477, 478, 479, 480, 481, 482, 483, 484, 485, 486, 487, 488, 489, 490, 491, 492, 493, 494, 495, 496, 497, 498, 499, 500, 501, 502, 503, 504, 505, 506, 507, 508, 509, 510, 511, 512, 513, 514, 515, 516, 517, 518, 519, 520, 521, 522, 523, 524, 525, 526, 527, 528, 529, 530, 531, 532, 533, 534, 535, 536, 537, 538, 539, 540, 541, 542, 543, 544, 545, 546, 547, 548, 549, 550, 551, 552, 553, 554, 555, 556, 557, 558, 559, 560, 561, 562, 563, 564, 565, 566, 567, 568, 569, 570, 571, 572, 573, 574, 575, 576, 577, 578, 579, 580, 581, 582, 583, 584, 585, 586, 587, 588, 589, 590, 591, 592, 593, 594, 595, 596, 597, 598, 599, 600, 601, 602, 603, 604, 605, 606, 607, 608, 609, 610, 611, 612, 613, 614, 615, 616, 617, 618, 619, 620, 621, 622, 623, 624, 625, 626, 627, 628, 629, 630, 631, 632, 633, 634, 635, 636, 637, 638, 639, 640, 641, 642, 643, 644, 645, 646, 647, 648, 649, 650, 651, 652, 653, 654, 655, 656, 657, 658, 659, 660, 661, 662, 663, 664, 665, 666, 667, 668, 669, 670, 671, 672, 673, 674, 675, 676, 677, 678, 679, 680, 681, 682, 683, 684, 685, 686, 687, 688, 689, 690, 691, 692, 693, 694, 695, 696, 697, 698, 699, 700, 701, 702, 703, 704, 705, 706, 707, 708, 709, 710, 711, 712, 713, 714, 715, 716, 717, 718, 719, 720, 721, 722, 723, 724, 725, 726, 727, 728, 729, 730, 731, 732, 733, 734, 735, 736, 737, 738, 739, 740, 741, 742, 743, 744, 745, 746, 747, 748, 749, 750, 751, 752, 753, 754, 755, 756, 757, 758, 759, 760, 761, 762, 763, 764, 765, 766, 767, 768, 769, 770, 771, 772, 773, 774, 775, 776, 777, 778, 779, 780, 781, 782, 783, 784, 785, 786, 787, 788, 789, 790, 791, 792, 793, 794, 795, 796, 797, 798, 799, 800, 801, 802, 803, 804, 805, 806, 807, 808, 809, 810, 811, 812, 813, 814, 815, 816, 817, 818, 819, 820, 821, 822, 823, 824, 825, 826, 827, 828, 829, 830, 831, 832, 833, 834, 835, 836, 837, 838, 839, 840, 841, 842, 843, 844, 845, 846, 847, 848, 849, 850, 851, 852, 853, 854, 855, 856, 857, 858, 859, 860, 861, 862, 863, 864, 865, 866, 867, 868, 869, 870, 871, 872, 873, 874, 875, 876, 877, 878, 879, 880, 881, 882, 883, 884, 885, 886, 887, 888, 889, 890, 891, 892, 893, 894, 895, 896, 897, 898, 899, 900, 901, 902, 903, 904, 905, 906, 907, 908, 909, 910, 911, 912, 913, 914, 915, 916, 917, 918, 919, 920, 921, 922, 923, 924, 925, 926, 927, 928, 929, 930, 931, 932, 933, 934, 935, 936, 937, 938, 939, 940, 941, 942, 943, 944, 945, 946, 947, 948, 949, 950, 951, 952, 953, 954, 955, 956, 957, 958, 959, 960, 961, 962, 963, 964, 965, 966, 967, 968, 969, 970, 971, 972, 973, 974, 975, 976, 977, 978, 979, 980, 981, 982, 983, 984, 985, 986, 987, 988, 989, 990, 991, 992, 993, 994, 995, 996, 997, 998, 999, 1000.
- 32. Ibid.; 56th Air. Control Co., 2019 Airbase Co., and 58 Airbase Co. Flights.
- 33. Michael's Operation Diary; 3rd Operations Reports; Report of Michael's Operation, 10, 9, Operations Air Mission Party, in Ops. r., 91-33.1.

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- 53. Third in line series [1 12] history.
- 54. Idid: For 34, 7th Air. Gr., 20 Dec. 43; also to "all concerned" by 34, 2 Dec. 44, in 1-2 Library, 1-45924.
- 55. For 34, 7th Air. Gr., 27 Dec. 43; 1st AF history. Both the 1st AF history and the 47th AF group history state that 34-16, rather than 34-10, was the base on this mission.
- 56. Idid: For 34's, 50th and 22d ABW, 4 Dec. 44. 1st AF Van (see also article in "The Army Air Corps" at 62, OAI-13000 (20 Jan. 44), War College, 2 Dec. 44, 3-725, 20 Dec. 44).
- 57. 1st AF history; Capt. J. J. Stevens, 101st Inf. Co. 15 Dec., "Observation of Direct Air Support Mission during 7th Air. Division Sabotage Operation 33-31 Jan. 1944," in 1-2 Library, 1-45924.
- 58. The statistics on the sorties were based on the data and analysis for the period 34's for the month of January. Only those sorties actually carried out against the airfields, the towns, and the supply depots specifically identified as being at Lorschafen or Lorsch were considered in the calculation. It must be noted that the 1st AF 1-39 and 1-40 units, particularly the 1st AF 1-39 and 2d AF 1-39 units, were the usually hitting troops and supply points along the coast and in the low valley of the general Lorschafen-Lorsch area. These missions were not included in the figures cited in the text.
- 59. Figures for 34's for the month of January are similarly calculated and for 34's. The only exception is to include 34's and 34's.
- 60. For 34's for the month of Dec., 44. It will be noted that these statistics do not include the losses or victories of 34's.
- 61. 101-173, 12 Dec. 44.
- 62. 1016.

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13. (Contd.) We thrashed it out in weekly pilot meetings together with other technical and tactical problems. We have it licked now. Belly tank release had us buffalced for a while. . . . Pilots are beginning to question the scrambling of P-47's. It takes so long to climb that they regard the mission as futile."
14. CI-IN-17731 (29 Nov. 43), Brisbane to WAR, #A-2332, 29 Nov. 43; CI-IN-6177 (9 Feb. 44), Brisbane to WAR, #A-305, 9 Feb. 44. Actually the peak during this period was reached in December when a total of 7,065 tons was dropped. (CI-IN-4754 (8 Jan. 44), Brisbane to WAR, #A-42, 7 Jan. 44.) These figures are certainly indicative of the scale of effort of the Fifth Air Force and are official. They should be used with some caution. The Operations Analysts of the Fifth Air Force made a study of bombing operations in the Southwest Pacific, and apparently used figures on sorties which in some particulars were quite different. "Striking Power of the Fifth Air Force."
15. Report of Liaison Officer, SWPA, SCUPAC, and Central Pacific Areas, 19 Feb. 44, in AAG 319.1, Bulk.
16. Memo to the CG by Col. Harry F. Cunningham, AG/AS A-2, ADVON, 6 Jan. 1944, and Report, "Black Cat Operations by Task Force 73 in the Bismarck Sea during January 1944," 1 Feb. 44, both incls. in K-53901, A-2 Lib.
17. U. S. Pacific Fleet, South Pacific Force, "The Air Assault on Rabaul, 17 Dec. 1943-19 Feb. 1944," in A-2 Lib., K-55004.
18. AGF Board Report, SWPA, #19, 17 Feb. 44, in Opns. Br., AGO (1627) A-2.19/44.
19. 67th TC Sq. history.
20. The following were a number of complaints leveled against some of the aircraft warning units in "Analysis of Enemy Raids," memo report by Maj. Harold L. Cadwallader, 2d Opns. Anal. Sec. 5th AF, 2 May 44: "In most cases individual radar stations did a good job. Outstanding job was done by SCR 602's in the Ramu Valley above Gusap. Some of the SCR 270's gave good results; others were below par, probably because of poor maintenance and operations. Radio filtering was fair; information was often presented, but alerts sometimes called late even when a raid had been on the board for some time. Early warning was weak. This was to be expected from forward sub-sectors because of the limitations of the radar sets. Cross telling between sectors was poor; one sector did not seem to appreciate that the information of immediate importance to it might be the early warning that an adjacent sector should have had; as a result there was point

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20. (Contd.) defense in each sector with very little early warning. Some radar stations were sited as individual units with little consideration given to an overall air defense system. One organization at Finschhafen had plenty of radar equipment, but operated very poorly against raids analyzed; six radar units were located on the tip of the Huon Peninsula in an area 12 miles by 2 miles; these units gave coverage to the south and east, but are screened by mountains to the north and west; most of the raids on Finschhafen came from the north or northeast. Radar units made no effort to estimate height or number of aircraft; pick-up heights could have been estimated at all stations even from simple calibration on single planes; number of aircraft can be determined quite accurately if the radar operators had been trained to interpret pips."
21. "I would like to point out that the AA situation is still a mess and is no nearer solution than it was in July and August. General Marquart indicates that the allocation of anti-aircraft directly to forces will be issued shortly, but this has been promised for some time.
- "I recently discussed with General Marquart the anti-aircraft requirements for Sixth Army Operations. The situation here is one of considerable confusion and I do not see how matters can be improved until all politics are eliminated from antiaircraft. In the occupation of the Markham Valley there was no difficulty. This can be explained by the fact that anti-aircraft units for airdrome defense were allotted to the Air Force and the Air Force installed these units as fast as airdromes were obtained. The Seventh Division had its own anti-aircraft which assisted in airdrome defense and there was never any competition between the two. In the case of the Sixth Army all anti-aircraft is allotted to the Army and the airdrome anti-aircraft can be initially employed in beach head defense. The Sixth Army has no 50 caliber machine gun batteries and the Air Force may have to furnish these on call to the Sixth Army at an unknown time. There is no apparent reason why the anti-aircraft airdrome defense for Dexterity operation cannot now be allocated to the Air Force, placed in a priority of arrival, installed by the airdromes when captured.
- "There is very little we can do about this until the Air Force has an Anti-aircraft Officer and is given sufficient antiaircraft units for the airdrome defense required." Check Sheet, A-3 to C/S, 22 Oct. 43, in AFSHO 7244.37.
22. Form 34's, 71st, 405th, 822d, 823d Sqs., 31 Oct.-6 Nov. 43.
23. CM-OUT-1102 (3 Dec. 43), CG AAF to CINC SWPA, #1303, 3 Dec. 43; msg., Kenney to COMADVCN 5, #XA-12072, 4 Dec. 43, in AFSHO 7244-40; CM-IN-3653 (6 Dec. 43), Rear Echelon GMQ to WAR, #C-8582, 6 Dec. 43; R&R, AC/AS Personnel to C/AS, 11 Dec, 43, in AAG-337J, Conferences.

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34. (Contd.) filthy. Why not blame the commanding officer one asks. No, in the opinion of this writer the medics are to blame. It is their job, and they don't care much. Every sore is painted with ring-worm cure; and every bellyache is either identified as appendicitis or banana oil.
- "Health is of primary importance over here. Every man wants to go back healthy, and every man is afraid of certain ailments, common to the jungle. Lectures by medical personnel so far in the squadron have amounted to perhaps two hours all told, and of these two hours, most of the time was spent in kidding, and repeating the old business about Anna Pholes, the 'skeeter whose rear sticks up in the air.' There is an incidence of jungle sores of the legs and feet, and athlete's foot, yet little or nothing has been done to find the cause and to rectify it." 70th TC Sq. history.
35. Medical History of the Fifth Air Force for 1943, in AFSHO 7709-10. Furloughs to Camp Mackay were easier to get, but frequently enlisted men would pass up this chance because they felt entitled to a Sydney furlough. As a result, many more months went by before these men received the leave. Form 34, 403d Bomb. Sq., 26 Dec. 43-1 Jan. 44.
36. 54th TC Wing history.
37. Lt. Col. Robert C. Vernreuter, 2d Opns. Anal. Sec., 5th AF, 8 May 44, "Increasing Morale Through Awards and Badges."
38. Enough returning officers have mentioned these "rumors" to give them some grounding in fact. It should also be noted, of course, that there are instances of other commanding officers using influence and skill in getting the very best possible food and recreation equipment for their men.
39. 1st ind., (ltr., Wilson to CG USAFFE, 17 Sep. 43), Lt. Col. J. N. Donnell, by command of General MacArthur, to CG 5th AF, 19 Nov. 43, and 1st ind. (ltr., Kenney to CG USAFFE, 25 Sep. 43), Hq USAFFE to CG 5th AF, 19 Nov. 43, in AFSHO 7244-35.
40. Memo for General Arnold by GC [Marshall], 25 Oct. 43, in SAS 370.2, So Pac.; memo for the S/W, etc., by "Roosevelt," 20 Sep. 43, in AAG 320.2E, Rotation of Personnel.
41. JCS 595 and 595/1.
42. R&R, AC/AS Plans to G/AS, 25 Jan. 44, in AAG 320.2E, Rotation of Personnel; CX-CUT-9493 (24 Dec. 43), OPD to CINC SWPA, #2185, 21 Dec. 43; CX-CUT-10637 (29 Dec. 43), OPD to CINC SWPA, #2309, 29 Dec. 43.

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- 43. Ltr., Hq USAFFE to CG Sixth Army, CG 5th AF, etc., 3 Jan. 44, in 54th TC Wing history.
- 44. Form 34, 5th AF, Jan. 44; 8th Ftr. Control Sq., 35th Ftr. Gp., 80th Ftr. Sq., 41st Ftr. Sq., 432d Ftr. Sq., and 54th TC Wing histories.
- 45. CM-CUT-9349 (? Jan. 44), OPD to CINC SYPFA, #3391, 22 Jan. 44.
- 46. CM-IN-8542 (14 Oct. 43), Brisbane to WAR (Ritchie for General Marshall signed MacArthur), #C-6676, 14 Oct. 43.
- 47. MD-TC-125 (7 Jan. 44), teletype conference between Kenney and Sutherland, 7 Jan. 44; CM-CUT-6918 (18 Jan. 44), CG AAF to CINC SYPFA, 18 Jan. 44.
- 48. Ltr., Kenney to LeRoy Whitman, 15 Nov. 44, in AFSHO 7244-39.
- 49. CM-IN-4574 (10 Jan. 43), Brisbane to WAR, #C-82, 10 Jan. 43.
- 50. CM-IN-15005 (24 Dec. 43), Adv. Echelon GHQ to WAR, #CA-118, 23 Dec. 43.

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BIBLIOGRAPHICAL NOTE

This study is based upon documents located in repositories at Headquarters, AAF, together with those sent in by AAF historians from the Southwest Pacific theater. The sources available for a narrative of operations have been steadily improving because of the increased flow of material from the theater. At the time of completion of the text, however, few bombardment squadrons had submitted unit histories. Most of the missing unit histories are now available in the Archives Section of the Air Historical Office and should be used to supplement this narrative.

The sources used for the planning and policy portions of the history were also incomplete. Documents in the office of AC/AS-5 gave good coverage of the over-all planning at AAF Headquarters, but other material in Operations Division of the War Department General Staff was not made available. A considerable amount of material sent in from the theater--check sheets, operations instructions, and correspondence among staff officers--provided useful documentation for policy-making in the higher echelons.

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

AC/AS-2, Air Information Division, Library Branch (cited A-2 Library):
Interviews, Intelligence Summaries, and miscellaneous reports.

AC/AS-5 files.

Air Adjutant General:

Mail and Records Division, Classified Records Section:

Collections of letters, memos, R&R's, etc., cited AAG with decimal.
Message and Cable Division.

Air Historical Office, Archives Section:

Cable messages, unit histories, special studies, and assorted documents filed with the Fifth Air Force and Far East Air Forces materials.

Office of Statistical Control:

Combat Analysis studies, operational and personnel statistics, including Form 34's, now in the Air Historical Office.

The Adjutant General, Operations and Training Division, Operations Branch:

Records of ground units participating in the SNPA campaigns.

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Appendix 1

STATUS OF AIRCRAFT, FIFTH AIR FORCE
JANUARY 1943-March 1944

| P-17 | On Hand 1st of Month | Received From Other Commands | Released To Other Commands | Losses | Gains From Salvage | Returns to U.S. | Average On Hand |
|--------|-------------------------|---------------------------------------|----------------------------------|--------|--------------------------|--------------------|--------------------|
| Jan 43 | 61 | | | 7 | | | 57 |
| Feb | 54 | | | 2 | | | 53 |
| Mar | 52 | | | 3 | | | 51 |
| Apr | 49 | | | 2 | | | 48 |
| May | 47 | | | 5 | | | 45 |
| Jun | 42 | | | 5 | | | 40 |
| Jul | 37 | | | 3 | | | 35 |
| Aug | 34 | | 1 | 1 | | | 33 |
| Sep | 33 | | | 4 | | | 30 |
| Oct | 28 | | | | | 5 | 28 |
| Nov | 24 | | | | 3 | 3 | 24 |
| Dec | 24 | | | | | 4 | 21 |
| Jan 44 | 20 | | | | 1(2) | | 20 |
| Feb | 20 | | | 2 | 1(2) | | 21 |
| Mar | 21 | | | | | | |
| TOTAL | | 1 | 1 | 34 | 5 | 12 | |

* Taken from the monthly aircraft summary ledgers, computed by and filed in AAF Stat. Control. The figures in Average on Hand column are approximate.
 CODE: (1) 1st line (a/c which are suitable to perform the mission for which they were intended).
 (2) 2d line (a/c which because of age, obsolescence, or other reasons are not suitable).

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Appendix 1 (contd)

| B-24 | On Hand 1st of Mo | Arrivals From U.S. | Recd From Other Comds | Released To Other Commands | Losses | Gains From Sal- vage | Reclass From 2d To 1st Line | Returns to U.S. | Average On Hand |
|--------|----------------------|-----------------------|--------------------------------|----------------------------------|--------|-------------------------------|--------------------------------------|--------------------|--------------------|
| Jan 43 | 59 | 2 | | | 5 | | | | 58 |
| Feb | 56 | | | | 3 | | | | 55 |
| Mar | 53 | 10 | | | 3 | | | | 53 |
| Apr | 60 | 40 | | | 14 | | | | 68 |
| May | 86 | 14 | | | 4 | | | | 96 |
| Jun | 96 | 10 | | | 6 | | | | 101 |
| Jul | 100 | 33 | | | 11 | | | | 106 |
| Aug | 122 | 22 | | | 10 | | | | 125 |
| Sep | 134 | 62 | 1 | 1 | 10 | | | | 151 |
| Oct | 185 | 67 | 1 | | 20 | | | 4(2) | 210 |
| Nov | 233 | 14 | | | 17 | 2 | | 7(2) | 232 |
| Dec | 228 | 17 | | | 11 | 1 | | 3(2) | 230 |
| Jan 44 | 228 | 47 | | 6(2) | 13 | | 25 | | 232 |
| Feb | 259 | 23 | | | 9 | | 1 | | 265 |
| Mar | 267 | 43 | | | 26 | | 10 | | 237 |
| TOTAL | | 404 | 1 | 7 | 162 | 3 | 36 | 14 | |

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Appendix 1 (cont'd)

| B-25 | On Hand 1st of Mo | Arrivals From U.S. | Recd From Other Comds | Losses | Gains From Sal- vage | Reclass From 2d To 1st Line | Returns to U.S. | Average On Hand |
|--------|----------------------|-----------------------|--------------------------------|--------|-------------------------------|--------------------------------------|--------------------|--------------------|
| Jan 43 | 61 | | | 6 | | | | 57 |
| Feb | 55 | 3 | | 4 | | | | 54 |
| Mar | 54 | 9 | | 3 | | | | 55 |
| Apr | 60 | 10 | | 5 | | | | 63 |
| May | 65 | 101 | | 4 | | | | 109 |
| Jun | 162 | 55 | | 10 | | | | 184 |
| Jul | 207 | 16 | | 11 | | | | 208 |
| Aug | 212 | 56 | 1 | 9 | | | 1 | 235 |
| Sep | 260 | 24 | | 15 | | | | 271 |
| Oct | 268 | 5 | | 17 | | | | 263 |
| Nov | 256 | 1 | | 21 | 5 | | | 245 |
| Dec | 241 | 5 | | 21 | 1(1) 1(2) | | | 233 |
| Jan 44 | 225 | 10 | | 13 | 5(1) | 7 | | 222 |
| Feb | 224 | 55 | | 16 | | 7 | | 242 |
| Mar | 268 | 25 | | 12 | | 6 | | 252 |
| TOTAL | | 375 | 1 | 167 | 12 | 20 | 1 | |

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Appendix 1 (contd)

| B-26 | On Hand First of Month | Received From Other Commands | Losses | Average on Hand |
|--------|---------------------------|---------------------------------|--------|-----------------|
| Jan 43 | 32 | | 3 | 30 |
| Feb | 29 | | 1 | 28 |
| Mar | 28 | | 1 | 27 |
| Apr | 27 | | 1 | 27 |
| May | 27 | | 1 | 27 |
| Jun | 26 | | | 26 |
| Jul | 26 | 11 | 1 | 34 |
| Aug | 36 | 1 | | 36 |
| Sep | 37 | | 1 | 36 |
| Oct | 36 | | 2(2) | 35 |
| Nov | 34 | | 2(2) | 33 |
| Dec | 32 | | 2(2) | 33 |
| Jan 44 | 30 | 1 | 3 | 31 |
| Feb | 28 | | 28 | |
| Mar | 0 | | | |
| TOTAL | | 13 | 45 | |

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Appendix 1 (contd)

| A-20 | On Hand 1st of Mo | Arrivals From U.S. | Released To Other Commands | Losses | Gain From Sal- vage | Reclass From 2d To 1st Line | Average On Hand |
|--------|----------------------|-----------------------|----------------------------------|--------|------------------------------|--------------------------------------|--------------------|
| Jan 43 | 26 | | | 3 | | | 25 |
| Feb | 23 | | | | | | 23 |
| Mar | 23 | | | 3 | | | 22 |
| Apr | 20 | | | 3 | | | 20 |
| May | 17 | | | 2 | | | 15 |
| Jun | 15 | 7 | | 1 | | | 16 |
| Jul | 21 | | | 3 | | | 20 |
| Aug | 18 | 6 | | 3 | | | 19 |
| Sep | 21 | 45 | 9 | | 1 | | 39 |
| Oct | 58 | 22 | 5 | | | | 60 |
| Nov | 75 | 24 | 4 | | | | 79 |
| Dec | 95 | 85 | | 3 | | | 102 |
| Jan 44 | 177 | 44 | 1(2) | 2 | | 2 | 189 |
| Feb | 219 | 39 | | 13 | 1(1) | 3 | 241 |
| Mar | 244 | 7 | | 31 | | 12 | 225 |
| TOTAL | | 279 | 19 | 67 | 2 | 17 | |

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Appendix 1 (contd)

| P-400 | On Hand First of Month | Received From Other Commands | Losses | Gains From Salvage | Returns To U.S. | Average On Hand |
|--------|---------------------------|---------------------------------------|--------|--------------------------|--------------------|--------------------|
| Jan 43 | 79 | | 7 | | | 76 |
| Feb | 72 | | 4 | | | 70 |
| Mar | 68 | | 3 | | | 66 |
| Apr | 65 | | 13 | | | 62 |
| May | 52 | | 1 | | | 52 |
| Jun | 51 | | 1 | | | 50 |
| Jul | 50 | | 3 | | | 49 |
| Aug | 47 | | 6 | | | 43 |
| Sep | 41 | | | | | 41 |
| Oct | 41 | | | | 28 | 24 |
| Nov | 13 | 2 | | 1 | 13 | 4 |
| Dec | 3 | | | | | 3 |
| Jan 44 | 3 | | | | | 3 |
| Feb | 3 | 1(2) | 3 | | 1(2) | 3 |
| Mar | 0 | | | | | 1 |
| TOTAL | | 3 | 41 | 1 | 42 | |

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Appendix 1 (contd)

| P-38 | On Hand 1st of Mo | Arrivals From U. S. | Losses | Gains From Salvage | Reclass From 2d To 1st Line | Average On Hand |
|--------|----------------------|------------------------|--------|--------------------------|--------------------------------------|--------------------|
| Jan 43 | 66 | 20 | 2 | | | 80 |
| Feb | 84 | 19 | 3 | | | 99 |
| Mar | 100 | 8 | 10 | | | 98 |
| Apr | 98 | | 11 | | | 92 |
| May | 87 | | 4 | | | 84 |
| Jun | 83 | 34 | 6 | | | 88 |
| Jul | 111 | 81 | 15 | | | 160 |
| Aug | 177 | 55 | 20 | | | 193 |
| Sep | 212 | 15 | 23 | | | 212 |
| Oct | 204 | 4 | 27 | | | 185 |
| Nov | 181 | 11 | 35 | 3 | | 162 |
| Dec | 160 | 30 | 19 | 6 | | 177 |
| Jan 44 | 177 | 15 | 20 | 3(1) | 11 | 176 |
| Feb | 178 | 52 | 6 | 3(2) | 6 | 224 |
| Mar | 225 | 52 | 24 | 1(1) | 11 | 219 |
| TOTAL | | 396 | 225 | 16 | 28 | |

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Appendix 1 (contd)

| P-39 | On Hand 1st of Month | Arrivals From U.S. | Recd From Other Comds | Released To Other Comands | Losses | Gains From Sal- vage | Reclass From 2d to 1st Line | Returns to U.S. | Losses From Func- tional Changes | Average On Hand |
|--------|----------------------------|-----------------------|--------------------------------|---------------------------------|--------|-------------------------------|--------------------------------------|--------------------|--|--------------------|
| Jan 43 | 105 | | | | 13 | | | | | 99 |
| Feb | 92 | | | | 1 | | | | | 91 |
| Mar | 91 | | | | 3 | 1 | | | | 89 |
| Apr | 89 | | | | 11 | | | | | 84 |
| May | 78 | 15 | 8 | | 2 | | | | | 78 |
| Jun | 83 | 42 | | | 3 | | | | | 111 |
| Jul | 150 | | 25 | | 8 | | | | | 147 |
| Aug | 142 | 13 | | | 15 | | | | | 139 |
| Sep | 140 | 2 | 5 | | 8 | | | | | 141 |
| Oct | 139 | | 2 | 18 | 10 | | | 10 | | 122 |
| Nov | 101 | | 1(2) | 1 | 19 | 2 | | 5 | | 91 |
| Dec | 80 | | 1 | | 7 | 2(2) | | 10 | | 68 |
| Jan 44 | 66 | | | | 5 | 5(2) | 2 | 13(2) | 53 | |
| Feb | 0 | | | | 3 | 3(2) | | | | |
| Mar | 0 | | | | | | | | | |
| TOTAL | | 75 | 33 | 27 | 108 | 13 | 2 | 38 | 53 | |

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appendix 1 (contd)

| F-40 | On Hand 1st of Mo | Arrivals From U.S. | Recd From Other Comds | Losses | Gains From Sal- vage | Reclass From 2d To 1st Line | Returns To U.S. | Average On Hand |
|--------|----------------------|-----------------------|--------------------------------|--------|-------------------------------|--------------------------------------|--------------------|--------------------|
| Jan 43 | 101 | | | 3 | | | | 99 |
| Feb | 98 | | | 1 | | | | 98 |
| Mar | 97 | | | 5 | | | | 94 |
| Apr | 92 | | | 6 | | | | 90 |
| May | 86 | | | 3 | | | | 84 |
| Jun | 83 | | | 3 | | | | 82 |
| Jul | 80 | 40 | | 5 | | | | 97 |
| Aug | 115 | 15 | | 8 | | | | 126 |
| Sep | 122 | 9 | | 8 | | | | 122 |
| Oct | 123 | 22 | 71 | 9 | | | 14(2) | 139 |
| Nov | 207 | 2 | | 10 | 1(2) | | 16(2) | 191 |
| Dec | 186 | 12 | | 15 | 2 | 4 | 2(2) | 171 |
| Jan 44 | 169 | | | 12 | | 7 | 13(2) | 164 |
| Feb | 155 | | | 11 | | 1 | | 144 |
| Mar | 131 | | | 9 | | | | 101 |
| TOTAL | | 100 | 71 | 108 | 3 | 12 | 45 | |

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Appendix 1 (contd)

| P-47 | On Hand First of Month | Arrivals From U.S. | Losses | Gains From Salvage | Reclass From 2d To 1st Line | Average On Hand |
|--------|---------------------------|-----------------------|--------|--------------------------|--------------------------------------|--------------------|
| Jun 43 | 59 | 59 | 1 | | | 3 |
| Jul | 114 | 56 | 7 | | | 96 |
| Aug | 107 | 0 | 1 | | | 112 |
| Sep | 149 | 43 | 11 | | | 124 |
| Oct | 175 | 37 | 6 | 1 | | 164 |
| Nov | 293 | 123 | 26 | 1 | | 193 |
| Dec | 315 | 47 | 7 | 6 | 6 | 313 |
| Jan 44 | 438 | 124 | 18 | 1 | 17 | 357 |
| Feb | 454 | 33 | 40 | 3 | 35 | 452 |
| Mar | | 105 | | | | 429 |
| TOTAL | | 627 | 117 | 12 | 58 | |

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Appendix 1 (contd)

| P-70 | On Hand First of Month | Arrivals From U.S. | Losses | Gains From Salvage | Average On Hand |
|--------|---------------------------|-----------------------|--------|--------------------------|--------------------|
| Mar 43 | | 6 | | | 16 |
| Apr | 6 | | 1 | | 5 |
| May | 5 | | 2 | | 4 |
| Jun | 3 | | | | 3 |
| Jul | 3 | 1 | 1 | | 3 |
| Aug | 4 | 1 | | | 4 |
| Sep | 4 | 1 | | | 6 |
| Oct | 12 | 8 | 1 | | 12 |
| Nov | 13 | 2 | 2 | | 12 |
| Dec | 12 | 1 | 1 | | |
| Jan 44 | 11 | | | | |
| Feb | 11 | | | 1(2) | |
| Mar | 11 | | 1 | | |
| TOTAL | | 19 | 9 | 1 | |

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Appendix 1 (contd)

C-47 On Hand First of Month Arrivals From U.S. Recd From Other Comds Released To Other Commands Losses Gains From Salvage Reclasse From 2d To 1st Line Average On Hand

| | | | | | | | | | | |
|--------|-----|-----|---|---|----|--|--|--|----|-----|
| Jan 43 | 16 | 54 | | | 4 | | | | | 42 |
| Feb | 66 | 2 | 2 | | 2 | | | | | 66 |
| Mar | 66 | | | | 5 | | | | | 62 |
| Apr | 61 | 2 | | | 2 | | | | | 63 |
| May | 63 | 16 | | | | | | | | 69 |
| Jun | 77 | 45 | | | | | | | | 90 |
| Jul | 122 | 54 | 1 | | 5 | | | | | 151 |
| Aug | 171 | 61 | | | 7 | | | | | 183 |
| Sep | 225 | 28 | | | 2 | | | | | 235 |
| Oct | 251 | 12 | | | 3 | | | | | 254 |
| Nov | 260 | 40 | | | 9 | | | | | 265 |
| Dec | 291 | 34 | | | 19 | | | | | 304 |
| Jan 44 | 306 | 15 | | | 12 | | | | | |
| Feb | 312 | 1 | | | 7 | | | | 20 | |
| Mar | 314 | | | | 3 | | | | 4 | |
| TOTAL | | 364 | 3 | 3 | 80 | | | | 2 | |

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Appendix 1 (contd)

| F-4/5 | Cn Hand 1st of Mo | Arrivals From U.S. | Recd From Other Comds | Released To Other Commands | Losses | Gains From Salvage | Reclass From 2d To 1st Line | Average Cn Hand |
|--------|----------------------|-----------------------|--------------------------------|----------------------------------|--------|--------------------------|--------------------------------------|--------------------|
| Jan 43 | 11 | 1 | | | | | | 12 |
| Feb | 12 | | | | | | | 12 |
| Mar | 12 | 4 | 1 | 1 | 1 | | | 12 |
| Apr | 15 | | | | 1 | | | 15 |
| May | 15 | 1 | | | 3 | | | 15 |
| Jun | 15 | 2 | | | 1 | | | 16 |
| Jul | 14 | | | | | | | 14 |
| Aug | 13 | | | | 1 | | | 13 |
| Sep | 13 | | | | | | | 12 |
| Oct | 12 | | | | | | | 12 |
| Nov | 12 | | | | | | | 12 |
| Dec | 12 | 10 | | | 3 | | | 12 |
| Jan 44 | 19 | 26 | | | 4 | | | 12 |
| Feb | 41 | | | | 6 | 5(2) | 2 | 12 |
| Mar | 35 | | | | 4 | | | 13 |
| TOTAL | | 44 | 1 | 1 | 24 | 5 | 2 | |

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LEADING FIGHTER PILOTS, FIFTH AIR FORCE

30 Sep 1943*

| | Enemy Planes Destroyed |
|--|---------------------------|
| Capt Richard I Bong, 9th Fgtr Sq, 9th Fgtr Gp | 16 |
| Maj Thomas J Lynch, 39th Fgtr Sq, 35th Fgtr Gp | 16 |
| Capt George S Welch, 80th Fgtr Sq, 8th Fgtr Gp | 16 |
| 1st Lt Kenneth C Sparks, 39th Fgtr Sq, 35th Fgtr Gp | 11 |
| Capt Ernest A Harris, 8th Fgtr Sq, 49th Fgtr Gp | 10 |
| Maj Edward Cragg, 80th Fgtr Sq, 8th Fgtr Gp | 10 |
| Capt Paul M Stanch, 39th Fgtr Sq, 35th Fgtr Gp | 9 |
| 1st Lt Robert H White, Headquarters 49th Fgtr Gp | 8 |
| 1st Lt David W Allen, 431st Fgtr Sq, 475th Fgtr Gp | 7 |
| 1st Lt John L Jones, 80th Fgtr Sq, 8th Fgtr Gp | 7 |
| 1st Lt Thomas B McGuire Jr, 431st Fgtr Sq, 475th Fgtr Gp . . | 7 |
| Capt Daniel T Roberts Jr, 432d Fgtr Sq, 475th Fgtr Gp . . . | 7 |
| 1st Lt Richard E Smith, 39th Fgtr Sq, 35th Fgtr Gp | 7 |

* CA-IN-932 (2 Oct 43), Brisbane to RAR //A-1846, 2 Oct 43.

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Appendix 3

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SERVICE OF GROUND PERSONNEL

IN S. PA AS OF 30 APRIL 1944*

| Months in the Theater | Months in the Forward Areas | | | | | | | | Over 30 | |
|-----------------------|-----------------------------|-------|-------|-------|-------|-------|-------|-------|---------|--|
| | None | 1-6 | 7-12 | 13-17 | 18-21 | 22-24 | 25-27 | 28-30 | | |
| 1-6 | 4111 | 21528 | | | | | | | | |
| 7-12 | 3053 | 2873 | 14310 | | | | | | | |
| 13-17 | 643 | 177 | 1118 | 1108 | | | | | | |
| 18-21 | 883 | 278 | 666 | 1834 | 963 | | | | | |
| 22-24 | 1200 | 129 | 353 | 421 | 1033 | 41 | | | | |
| 25-27 | 1025 | 887 | 1560 | 2460 | 3536 | 373 | 78 | | | |
| 28-30 | 196 | 131 | 118 | 71 | 254 | 25 | 70 | 3 | | |
| Over 30 | 1 | 11 | 15 | 18 | 4 | | 2 | | 1 | |

* No information was available for 766 officers and 9,777 enlisted men. Report #10, "The Rotation of Fifth Air Force Ground Personnel," by Lt. Col. R. G. Bernreuter, 2 June 44, COA.

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STATISTICS ON SICK CALL,
38TH BOMBARDMENT GROUP (M)*

Incidence of sick calls and loss of man-days due to sickness in relation to length of service overseas of all enlisted personnel not serving on combat crews. Sick calls which result in sick in quarters or sick in hospital are not included in columns headed "sick call."

| Unit | Months Overseas | | | | 6 to 9 | | | | 15 to 18 | | | | Over 18 | | | |
|-------|-----------------|-----------|---------------|----------------|---------|-----------|---------------|----------------|----------|-----------|---------------|----------------|---------|--|--|--|
| | No. of Men | Sick Call | Sick Qrs Days | Sick Hosp Days | No. Men | Sick Call | Sick Qrs Days | Sick Hosp Days | No. Men | Sick Call | Sick Qrs Days | Sick Hosp Days | | | | |
| Hq | 13 | 13 | | 6 | 3 | 3 | | | 94 | 112 | 7 | 69 | | | | |
| 71st | 57 | 5 | 8 | 33 | 46 | 8 | 3 | 17 | 116 | 96 | 21 | 121 | | | | |
| 405th | 55 | 71 | 31 | 43 | 28 | 33 | 3 | 15 | 137 | 144 | 4 | 129 | | | | |
| 822d | 137 | 12 | 10 | 34 | 23 | 3 | | 66 | 75 | 24 | 9 | 35 | | | | |
| 823d | 148 | 24 | 22 | 94 | 4 | 1 | | | 96 | 29 | 17 | 120 | | | | |
| TOTAL | 410 | 125 | 71 | 210 | 104 | 48 | 6 | 98 | 518 | 405 | 58 | 474 | | | | |

All personnel in the foreign service group of more than 18 months left the U.S. on 31 Jan. 1942, thus having actually 22 months overseas. The group arrived in New Guinea on 25 Oct. 1942, thus having over 13 months' jungle service. The 15-to 18-month group left the U.S. between 1 and 10 Sep. 1942 and arrived in New Guinea 25 Oct. 1942. The entire 6-to 9-month group left the U.S. on 15 May 1943 and arrived in New Guinea 23 June 1943.

* Report by Capt. Earl W. Bender, Stat. Control Officer, attached to Form 34, 4 Dec 44.

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Appendix 5

AIRPLANE AND ENGINE TIME, 8TH FIGHTER GROUP

NOVEMBER-DECEMBER 1943*

| | <u>November</u> | 35th Sq | 36th Sq | 80th Sq |
|--|-----------------|---------|---------|---------|
| Avg number of planes assigned per day | | 25 | 26.50 | 20 |
| Avg number of planes in commission per day | | 23 | 23 | 16 |
| Percentage of planes in commission | | 92 | 87 | 80 |
| Total flying hours for November | | 1178.55 | 1438.15 | 907.10 |
| Avg hours per plane per day | | 1.34 | 1.48 | 1.31 |
| Avg hours per plane per month | | 47.09 | 54.15 | 45.21 |
| Number of engine changes | | | | 5.00 |
| Avg hours flown between engine changes | | | | 239.09 |
| <u>December</u> | | | | |
| Avg number of planes assigned per day | | 25.09 | 16.87 | 23.42 |
| Avg number of planes in commission per day | | 23.51 | 16.06 | 23.51 |
| Percentage of planes in commission | | 93.67 | 95.19 | 74.40 |
| Total flying hours for November | | 1548.56 | 768.20 | 1286.38 |
| Avg hours per plane per day | | 2.07 | 1.30 | 2.23 |
| Avg hours per plane per month | | 65.50 | 47.48 | 74.16 |
| Number of engine changes | | 3 | | 5 |
| Avg hours flown between engine changes | | 181.38 | | 293.21 |

* 8th Fighter Group history.

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Appendix 6

LOCATION OF AIRCRAFT WARNING UNITS

AS OF 31 JANUARY 1944*

| <u>Unit</u> | <u>Station</u> | <u>Date of Arrival</u> | <u>Date of Departure</u> |
|------------------|----------------|------------------------|--------------------------|
| Bn Hq | Moresby | 10 Apr 43 | None |
| <u>Co A</u> | | | |
| Co Hq | Dobodura | 5 Apr 43 | None |
| 1st Report Plat | Oro Bay | 17 Feb 43 | None |
| 2d Report Plat | Tufi | 17 Feb 43 | None |
| 3d Report Plat | McLaren H | 17 Feb 43 | None |
| 4th Report Plat | Oro Bay | 16 Dec 43 | 2 Jan 44 |
| | Gloucester | 5 Jan 44 | |
| 20th Report Plat | Dobodura | 11 Jul 43 | None |
| Plot Plat A | Dobodura | 22 Jan 43 | |
| <u>Co B</u> | | | |
| Co Hq | Goodenough | 8 Aug 43 | 18 Jan 44 |
| | Saidor | 29 Jan 44 | |
| 5th Report Plat | Goodenough | 14 Mar 43 | 18 Jan 44 |
| | Saidor | 29 Jan 44 | |
| 6th Report Plat | Goodenough | 14 Mar 43 | 18 Jan 44 |
| | Saidor | 29 Jan 44 | |
| 7th Report Plat | Goodenough | 25 Nov 43 | 18 Jan 44 |
| | Long Island | 29 Jan 44 | |
| Plot Plat B | Goodenough | 8 Aug 43 | 18 Jan 44 |
| | Saidor | 29 Jan 44 | |
| <u>Co C</u> | | | |
| Co Hq | Nadzab | 4 Dec 43 | None |
| 8th Report Plat | Finschhafen | 16 Nov 43 | None |
| 9th Report Plat | Nadzab | 30 Sep 43 | None |
| 19th Report Plat | Hopoi | 29 Sep 43 | None |
| Plot Plat C | Nadzab | 11 Oct 43 | None |
| <u>Co D</u> | | | |
| Co Hq | Kiriwina | 12 Aug 43 | None |
| 11th Report Plat | Kiriwina | 12 Aug 43 | None |
| 12th Report Plat | Ule Island | 6 May 43 | None |
| 13th Report Plat | Kiriwina | 4 Jul 43 | None |
| Plot Plat D | Woodlark | 1 Dec 43 | 30 Jan 44 |
| | Kiriwina | 30 Jan 44 | |

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* 565th Aircraft Warning Battalion history.

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Appendix 6 (contd)

| <u>Unit</u> | <u>Station</u> | <u>Date of Arrival</u> | <u>Date of Departure</u> |
|------------------|-----------------|------------------------|--------------------------|
| <u>Co E</u> | | | |
| Co Hq | Oro Bay | 7 Dec 43 | None |
| 14th Report Plat | Oro Bay | 7 Dec 43 | None |
| 15th Report Plat | Oro Bay | 7 Dec 43 | None |
| 16th Report Plat | Oro Bay | 7 Dec 43 | None |
| Plot Plat E | Gusap | 16 Oct 43 | None |
| <u>Co F</u> | | | |
| Co Hq | Oro Bay | 19 Dec 43 | 2 Jan 44 |
| | Cape Gloucester | 5 Jan 44 | |
| 17th Report Plat | Cape Ward Hunt | 19 June 43 | None |
| 18th Report Plat | Morobe | 17 Aug 43 | None |
| 19th Report Plat | Oro Bay | 19 Dec 43 | 2 Jan 44 |
| | Cape Gloucester | 5 Jan 44 | |
| Plot Plat F | Oro Bay | | 2 Jan 44 |
| | Cape Gloucester | 5 Jan 44 | |

Abbreviations:

Plat -- Platoon

Plot -- Plotting

Report -- Reporting

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DISTRIBUTION OF TOTAL FLYING EXPERIENCE OF PILOTS IN THE 375TH TROOP CARRIER GROUP*

| Orgn | No. of Pilots | No. with less than 200 Hrs | No. with 200 to 500 Hrs | No. with 500 to 800 Hrs | No. with more than 800 Hrs |
|----------|---------------|----------------------------|-------------------------|-------------------------|----------------------------|
| 55th Sq | 43 | 0 | 5 | 11 | 27 |
| 56th Sq | 42 | 0 | 0 | 23 | 19 |
| 57th Sq | 46 | 0 | 9 | 12 | 25 |
| 58th Sq | 46 | 0 | 8 | 16 | 22 |
| Hq | 5 | 0 | 0 | 2 | 3 |
| Gp TOTAL | 182 | 0 | 22 | 64 | 96 |

DISTRIBUTION OF COMBAT FLYING EXPERIENCE OF PILOTS IN THE 375TH TROOP CARRIER GROUP*

| Orgn | No. of Pilots | No. with less than 200 Hrs | No. with 200 to 500 Hrs | No. with 500 to 800 Hrs | No. with more than 800 Hrs |
|----------|---------------|----------------------------|-------------------------|-------------------------|----------------------------|
| 55th Sq | 43 | 11 | 32 | 0 | 0 |
| 56th Sq | 42 | 15 | 27 | 0 | 0 |
| 57th Sq | 46 | 16 | 30 | 0 | 0 |
| 58th Sq | 46 | 15 | 31 | 0 | 0 |
| Hq | 5 | 3 | 2 | 0 | 0 |
| Gp TOTAL | 182 | 60 | 122 | 0 | 0 |

* Monthly Statistical Report, in 375th Troop Carrier history.

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EXTRACTS FROM MEDICAL REPORTS
OF THE 80TH FIGHTER SQUADRON*

Overseas and Forward Area Time for Ground Personnel (February 1944)

| No. of Personnel | Months Overseas | Months in Forward Areas |
|------------------|-----------------|-------------------------|
| 7 | 24 | 22-24 |
| 15 | 24 | 19-21 |
| 3 | 24 | 16-18 |
| 1 | 24 | 13-15 |
| 131 | 22-24 | 19-21 |
| 3 | 19-21 | 16-18 |
| 8 | 19-21 | 13-15 |
| 3 | 16-18 | 16-18 |
| 70 | 7-9 | 7-9 |
| 1 | 7-9 | 4-6 |
| 2 | 4-6 | 4-6 |
| 2 | 4-6 | 1-3 |

Number of ground personnel eligible under the rotation policy for immediate departure for the United States: 158 (18 months or more overseas).

Incidence of Malaria and Fever of Unknown Origin,
November 1942-January 1944

| | Malaria | FUO |
|------------------|------------|------------|
| Nov 42 to Feb 43 | 74 | 60 |
| Feb 43 | 28 | 28 |
| Mar | 42 | 10 |
| Apr | 5 | 15 |
| May | 6 | 10 |
| June | 8 | 8 |
| July | 13 | 4 |
| Aug | 9 | 11 |
| Sep | 3 | 3 |
| Oct | 1 | 3 |
| Nov | 2 | 3 |
| Dec | 3 | 2 |
| Jan 44 | 0 | 2 |
| | <u>194</u> | <u>159</u> |

(contd)

* 80th Fighter Squadron history, 1st and 2d Installments.

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The relatively high incidence of fevers of unknown origin from November 1942 to February 1943 is probably due to a considerable increase of malaria. These cases have not been classified as malaria because of absence of laboratory confirmation.

The increased incidence of malaria in July and August 1943 is associated with a temporary duty transfer of 90 men to Goodenough Island.

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Appendix 9

ATTRITION AND SCALE OF EFFORT
DURING THE RABAU OFFENSIVE*

| Date & Sq | Planes on Hand | Planes in Comm | Crews on Hand | | Planes which set out | Aborts |
|---------------------|----------------------|----------------------|---------------|--------|-------------------------|--------|
| | | | Present | Absent | | |
| <u>9th Sq</u> | | | | | | |
| 10-16 Oct | 21 P-38 | 16 | 32 | 8 | 117 | 26 |
| 17-24 | 20 | 14 | 34 | 7 | 130 | 25 |
| 24-30 | 17 | 15 | 34 | 8 | 56 | 29 |
| 31-6 Nov | 14 | 12 | 32 | 7 | 53 | 0 |
| 6-13 | 15 | 11 | 26 | 11 | 39 | 11 |
| <u>39th Sq</u> | | | | | | |
| 10-16 Oct | 24 F-38 | 15 | 25 | 13 | 70 | 26 |
| 17-24 | 24 | 16 | 33 | 6 | 85 | 21 |
| 24-30 | 19 | 16(?) | 39 | 23(?) | 69 | 34 |
| 31-6 Nov | 18 | 16(?) | 24(?) | 14(?) | 12 | 9 |
| 6-13 | 16 | 10 | 17 | 17 | 34 | 16 |
| <u>80th Sq</u> | | | | | | |
| 10-16 Oct | 25 P-38 | 21 | 32 | 6 | 59 | 26 |
| 17-23 | 27 | 19 | 34 | 4 | 122 | 27 |
| 24-30 | 20 | 17 | 37 | 17 | 120 | 29 |
| 31-6 Nov | 19(?) | | 22(?) | 15(?) | 114 | 17 |
| 6-13 | 19(?) | 16 | 30(?) | 5(?) | 60 | 5 |
| <u>8th Sq</u> | | | | | | |
| 10-16 Oct | 25 P-40N | 18 | 19 | 20 | 203 | 4 |
| 17-24 | 24 | 17 | 27 | 15 | 208 | 9 |
| 24-30 | 24 | 20 | 25 | 17 | 172 | 4 |
| 31-6 Nov | 24 | 15 | 28 | 14 | 224 | 2 |
| 6-13 | 28 | 19 | 31 | 11 | 239 | |
| <u>8th Photo Sq</u> | | | | | | |
| 10-16 Oct | 4 F-4 | 4 F-5 | | | | |
| | 4 P-38 | 1 B-17 | 18 | 3 | 47 | 4 |
| 17-24 | 4 F-4 | 4 F-5 | | | | |
| | 2 P-38 | 1 B-17 | 15 | 5 | 42 | 13 |
| 24-30 | 4 F-4 | 4 F-5 | | | | |
| | 3 P-38 | 1 B-17 | 22 | 4 | 40 | 18 |
| 31-6 Nov | | | 20 | 7 | 30 | 17 |
| 6-13 | 4 F-4 | 4 F-5 | | | | |
| | 2 P-38 | 1 B-17 | | | 29 | 16 |

* These statistics, computed from Form 34, are designed to give some idea of scale of effort in relation to the number of aircraft and crews available during the Rabaul offensive. All of the squadrons chosen actively participated, except the 8th, 340th, and 41st Fighter Squadrons which were tabulated solely as examples of squadrons which did not participate.

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Appendix 9 (contd)

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| Date & Sq | Planes on Hand | Planes in Comm | Crews on Hand | | Planes which set out | Aborts |
|-----------------|-------------------------------------|----------------|---------------|--------|----------------------|--------|
| | | | Present | Absent | | |
| <u>431st Sq</u> | | | | | | |
| 10-16 Oct | 19 P-38 | 15 | 28 | 8 | 96 | 30 |
| 17-24 | 16 | 13 | 28 | 4 | 111 | 29 |
| 24-30 | 13 | 11 | 31 | 6 | 43 | 22 |
| 31-6 Nov | 15 | 12 | 30 | 4 | 53 | 30 |
| 6-13 | 14 | 14 | 26 | 7 | 30 | 9 |
| <u>432d Sq</u> | | | | | | |
| 10-16 Oct | 21 P-38 | 20 | 28 | 7 | 90 | 19 |
| 17-24 | 22 | 21 | 29 | 6 | 114 | 26 |
| 24-30 | 22 | 18 | 30 | 5 | 56 | 16 |
| 31-6 Nov | 18 | 16 | 27 | 6 | 51 | 28 |
| 6-13 | 18 | 16 | 24 | 9 | 33 | 4 |
| <u>433d Sq</u> | | | | | | |
| 10-16 Oct | 26 P-38 | 19 | 34 | 2 | 108 | 25 |
| 17-23 | 25 | 21 | 25 | 10 | 137 | 23 |
| 24-30 | 25 | 20 | 26 | 10 | 62 | 35 |
| 31-6 Nov | 20 | 18 | 27 | 6 | 52 | 30 |
| 6-13 | 15 | 13 | 22 | 9 | 42 | 11 |
| <u>340th Sq</u> | | | | | | |
| 10-16 Oct | 33 P-47 | 28 | 35 | 3 | 163 | 15 |
| 17-24 | 30 | 30 | 35 | 3 | 125 | 22 |
| 24-30 | 30 | 27 | 34 | 5 | 134 | 37 |
| 31-6 Nov | 30 | 23(?) | 35(?) | 4(?) | 102 | 14 |
| 6-13 | 30 | 23(?) | 35(?) | 4(?) | 78 | 17 |
| <u>41st Sq</u> | | | | | | |
| 10-16 Oct | 26 P-39 1 P-38 | 24 1 | 34 | 8 | 158 | 4 |
| 17-24 | 26 P-39 | 24 | 34 | 7 | 229 | 7 |
| 24-30 | 26 P-39 | 24 | 36 | 5 | 192 | 6 |
| 31-6 Nov | 21 | 20(?) | 38 | 4 | 173 | 3 |
| 6-13 | 23 | 19 | 31 | 7 | 198 | 8 |
| <u>8th Sq</u> | | | | | | |
| 10-16 Oct | 16 B-25 | 15 | 11 | 6 | 39 | 13 |
| 17-24 | 16 B-25 1 A-20G | | 11 | 5 | 9 | 0 |
| 24-30 | 15 B-25 2A-20G | | 13 | 5 | 21 | 13 |
| 31-6 Nov | 14A-20 (?) | 13 (?) | 17 | 5 | 10 | 2 |
| 6-13 | Transferred and A-20's no missions. | | | | | |

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| Date & Sq | Planes on Hand | Planes in Comm | Crews on Hand | | Planes which set out | Aborts |
|-----------------|----------------------|----------------------|---------------|--------|-------------------------|--------|
| | | | Present | Absent | | |
| <u>13th Sq</u> | | | | | | |
| 10-16 Oct | 15 B-25 | 12 | 13 | 3 | 40 | 27 |
| 17-23 | 15 B-25 | 14 | 14 | 2 | 0 | 0 |
| 24-30 | 15 B-25 | 14 | | | | |
| | 1 A-20G | 1 | 13 | 3 | 25 | 12 |
| 31-6 Nov | 19 B-25 | 11 | | | | |
| | 2 A-20 | 2 | 14 | 2 | 10 | 2 |
| 6-13 | 19 B-25 | 11 | | | | |
| | 2 A-20 | 2 | 14 | 2 | 37 | 27 |
| <u>90th Sq</u> | | | | | | |
| 10-16 Oct | 16 B-25 | 10 | 13 | 2 | 33 | 21 |
| 17-24 | | | | | | |
| 24-30 | 14 B-25 | | | | | |
| | 2 A-20G | | 7 | 6 | 30 | 0 |
| 31-6 Nov | 17 B-25 | 9 | | | | |
| | 2 A-20 | 2 | 14 | 2 | 9 | 0 |
| 6-13 | 17 B-25 | 12 | | | | |
| | 2 A-20 | 1 | 15 | 1 | 25 | 16 |
| <u>71st Sq</u> | | | | | | |
| 10-16 Oct | 16 B-25 | 15 | 18 | | 49 | 3 |
| 17-24 | 17 B-25 | | 14 | 4 | 20 | 3 |
| 24-30 | 18 | | 18 | 2 | 25 | 18 |
| 31-6 Nov | 15 | 11 | 16 | 3 | 27 | 19 |
| 6-13 | 13 | 10 | 18 | 2 | 29 | 11 |
| <u>405th Sq</u> | | | | | | |
| 10-16 Oct | 15 B-25 | 13 | 17 | 5 | 47 | 3 |
| 17-24 | 13 | | 19 | 2(?) | 20 | 3 |
| 24-30 | 12 | | 19 | 2(?) | 9 | 9 |
| 31-6 Nov | 12 | 12 | 20 | (?) | 27 | 19 |
| 6-13 | 13 | 11 | 18(?) | 4(?) | 30 | 12 |
| <u>498th Sq</u> | | | | | | |
| 10-16 Oct | 15 B-25 | 14 | 17 | 4 | 28 | 0 |
| 17-24 | 15 | 13 | 17 | 4 | 16 | 0 |
| 24-30 | 15 | 14 | 17 | 4 | 27 | 10 |
| 31-6 Nov | 15 | 13(?) | 17(?) | 4(?) | 27 | 9 |
| 6-13 | 14 | 13 | 16 | 5 | 18 | |

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| Date & Sq | Planes on Hand | Planes in Comm | Crews on Hand | | Planes which set out | Aborts |
|-----------------|----------------------|----------------------|---------------|--------|-------------------------|--------|
| | | | Present | Absent | | |
| <u>499th Sq</u> | | | | | | |
| 10-16 Oct | 16 B-25 | 11 | 18 | 3 | 21 | 1 |
| 17-23 | 14 | 11 | 17 | 4 | 9 | 0 |
| 24-30 | 16 | 12 | 16 | 5 | 18 | 9 |
| 31-6 Nov | 13 | 11(?) | 11(?) | 9(?) | 19 | 10 |
| 6-13 | 14 | 9 | 15 | 5 | 9 | 1 |
| <u>500th Sq</u> | | | | | | |
| 10-16 Oct | 15 B-25 | 13 | 18 | 1 | 25 | 3 |
| 17-24 | 12 | 9 | 16 | 1 | 9 | 3 |
| 25-30 | 10 | 10 | 15 | 2 | 19 | 10 |
| 31-6 Nov | 10 | 10 | (?) | (?) | 18 | 9 |
| 6-13 | 10 | 9 | 14 | 2 | 9 | 0 |
| <u>501st Sq</u> | | | | | | |
| 10-16 Oct | 18 B-25 | 15 | 19 | 2 | 20 | 1 |
| 17-24 | 17 | 17 | 16 | 4 | 11 | 0 |
| 24-30 | 17 | 13 | 16 | 4 | 19 | 11 |
| 31-6 Nov | 13 | 12(?) | (?) | (?) | 18 | 9 |
| 6-13 | 12 | 11 | 14 | 5 | 9 | 0 |
| <u>822d Sq</u> | | | | | | |
| 10-16 Oct | 20 B-25 | 11 | 22 | | 21 | 3 |
| 17-24 | 20 | | 22 | | 27 | 2 |
| 24-30 | 20 | | 22 | | 34 | 11 |
| 31-6 Nov | 20 | 19 | 22 | | 38 | 10 |
| 6-13 | 18 | 16 | 20(?) | 1(?) | 64 | 12 |
| <u>63d Sq</u> | | | | | | |
| 10-16 Oct | 13 B-17 | | | | | |
| | 13 B-24 | ? | 8 | 6 | 32 | 0 |
| 17-23 | 3 B-17 | 3 | | | | |
| | 11 B-24 | 5 | 11 | 3 | 7 | 0 |
| 24-30 | 1 B-17 | 1 | | | | |
| | 10 B-24 | 10 | 14 | 1 | 6 | 1 |
| 31-6 Nov | No data. | | | | | |
| 7-13 Nov | No data. | | | | | |
| <u>68th Sq</u> | | | | | | |
| 10-16 Oct | 14 B-24 | 11 | 14 | 3 | 26 | 15 |
| 17-23 | 12 B-24 | | | | | |
| | 1 B-17 | | 11 | 5 | 44 | 5 |
| 24-30 | 13 B-24 | | 14 | 5 | 23 | 2 |
| 31-6 Nov | 14 | 12 | 15 | 4 | 15 | 0 |
| 6-13 | 14 | 12 | 16 | 3 | 24 | 0 |

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| Date & Sq | Planes on Hand | Planes in Comm | Crews on Hand | | Planes which set out | Aborts |
|-----------------|----------------------|----------------------|---------------|--------|-------------------------|--------|
| | | | Present | Absent | | |
| <u>65th Sq</u> | | | | | | |
| 10-16 Oct | 13 B-24 | 12 | 12 | 7 | 25 | 12 |
| 17-23 | 13 | | 13 | 5 | 32 | 4 |
| 24-30 | 13 | | 10 | 8 | 26 | 5 |
| 31-6 Nov | 14 | 13 | 11 | 8 | 13 | 0 |
| 6-13 | 14 | 11 | 12 | 5 | 30 | 10 |
| <u>403d Sq</u> | | | | | | |
| 10-16 Oct | 12 B-24 | 10 | 13 | 3 | 28 | 5 |
| 17-23 | 13 B-24 1 B-17 | | 14 | 2 | 32 | 11 |
| 24-30 | 14 B-24 | | 13 | 6 | 28 | 3 |
| 31-6 Nov | 1 B-17 14 B-24 | 13 | 14 | 5 | 16 | 2 |
| 6-13 Nov | 1 B-17 11 B-24 | 0 7 | 13 | 5 | 42 | 8 |
| <u>319th Sq</u> | | | | | | |
| 10-16 Oct | 15 B-24 | 11 | 11 | 2 | 20 | 2 |
| 17-23 | 13 | | 14 | | 27 | 10 |
| 24-30 | 13 | | 14 | | 17 | 0 |
| 31-6 Nov | 14 | 13 | 17 | 3(?) | 2 | 1 |
| 7-13 | 12 | 11 | 16(?) | 1(?) | 31 | 10 |
| <u>320th Sq</u> | | | | | | |
| 10-16 Oct | 15 B-24 | 9 | 9 | 5 | 23 | 12 |
| 17-23 | 13 | | 13 | 3 | 33 | 13 |
| 24-30 | 10 | | 6 | 9 | 22 | 8 |
| 31-6 Nov | 13 | 12 | 16 | 2 | 5 | |
| 6-13 | 13 | 12 | 16(?) | 2(?) | 29 | 10 |
| <u>321st Sq</u> | | | | | | |
| 10-16 Oct | 15 B-24 | 8 | 13 | 2 | 23 | 5 |
| 17-23 | 15 | | 10 | 3 | 31 | 12 |
| 24-30 | 15 | | 15 | 1 | 21 | 5 |
| 31-6 Nov | 14 | 14 | 15 | 2 | 7 | 1 |
| 6-13 | 11 | 9 | 15 | 1 | 28 | 11 |
| <u>400th Sq</u> | | | | | | |
| 10-16 Oct | 14 B-24 | 14 | 16 | | 25 | 4 |
| 17-23 | 14 | | 12 | 4 | 30 | 3 |
| 24-30 | 10 | 4 | 10 | 6 | 19 | 3 |
| 31-6 Nov | 11 | 11 | 5 | 11 | 8 | 1 |
| 6-13 | 13 | 11 | 10 | 6 | 27 | 2 |

Note: Present -- available for duty.
Absent -- unavailable for duty.

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Appendix 11

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MISCELLANEOUS STATISTICS ON TROOP CARRIER ACTIVITIES

Report on Air Evacuations^a

| | From Forward to Rear Bases in New Guinea | | Between Forward Bases in New Guinea | | From New Guinea to Australia | |
|--------|--|------------|-------------------------------------|------------|------------------------------|------------|
| | US | Australian | US | Australian | US | Australian |
| Oct 43 | 518 | 3,585 | 124 | 689 | 534 | 122 |
| Nov 43 | 417 | 2,283 | US & Aus 1,207 | | 509 | 511 |
| Dec 43 | 595 | 5,244 | 248 | 2,852 | 781 | 231 |
| Jan 44 | 1,201 | 2,689 | 593 | 1,347 | 1,035 | 110 |

Ton Miles Flown
54th Troop Carrier Wing^b

| | |
|---------------------|-----------|
| July | 803,214 |
| August | 1,588,113 |
| September | 1,935,093 |
| October | 2,063,390 |
| November | 2,810,632 |
| December | 4,024,205 |
| January | 4,480,786 |

Individual Freight-Hauling Records, 70th Troop Carrier Squadron, September 43 to January 44^c

| | | |
|--------------------------|-----------|-----|
| 1. 2d Lt. R. N. Smith | 1,876,634 | lbs |
| 2. 2d Lt. D. P. Fraleigh | 1,840,466 | |
| 3. 1st Lt. G. W. Fallon | 1,793,657 | |
| 4. 1st Lt. K. C. Lowry | 1,776,307 | |
| 5. 2d Lt. R. I. Hart | 1,746,656 | |
| 6. 2d Lt. C. G. Ward | 1,696,029 | |
| 7. 2d Lt. J. J. Slade | 1,692,161 | |

- a. The figures in this table should be considered only as approximations. Sources differ on exact numbers. For example, the official figure for November 1943 as cabled to General Arnold from General Kenney was 5,712. The above for the same month add up to 4,927. The source for the above is the 804th Medical Air Evacuation Squadron history, which should give reasonably accurate figures.
- b. According to 54th Troop Carrier Wing history.
- c. According to the 70th Troop Carrier Squadron history. Of the 52 pilots on the list, 34 were credited with more than one million pounds of cargo.

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CONSOLIDATION BY SQUADRONS OF AIR TRANSPORT
ACTIVITIES IN NE. GUINIA--375TH TC GROUP*

| | <u>September 42</u> | <u>55th Sq</u> | <u>56th Sq</u> | <u>57th Sq</u> | <u>58th Sq</u> | <u>TOTAL</u> |
|-------------------------|---------------------|----------------|----------------|----------------|----------------|--------------|
| Planes flown | | 243 | 243 | 238 | 244 | 968 |
| Time in air (hrs) | | 1,038 | 981 | 1,089 | 944 | 4,053 |
| Personnel carried (lbs) | | 283,175 | 206,500 | 243,360 | 296,000 | 1,029,035 |
| Freight carried (lbs) | | 1,455,909 | 1,338,000 | 1,434,529 | 1,323,586 | 5,552,024 |
| Trips | | 405 | 322 | 349 | 319 | 1,395 |
| <u>October</u> | | | | | | |
| Planes flown | | 252 | 245 | 233 | 208 | 938 |
| Time in air (hrs) | | 945 | 1,052 | 967 | 841 | 3,805 |
| Personnel carried (lbs) | | 457,170 | 437,600 | 313,501 | 313,950 | 1,524,721 |
| Freight carried (lbs) | | 1,694,660 | 1,870,300 | 1,370,991 | 1,349,643 | 6,285,594 |
| Trips | | 469 | 517 | 394 | 421 | 1,801 |
| <u>November</u> | | | | | | |
| Planes flown | | 240 | 237 | 233 | 225 | 935 |
| Time in air (hrs) | | 1,224 | 1,182 | 1,271 | 1,156 | 4,833 |
| Personnel carried (lbs) | | 286,950 | 331,800 | 435,165 | 559,000 | 1,612,915 |
| Freight carried (lbs) | | 1,989,445 | 1,835,618 | 1,723,015 | 1,579,423 | 7,127,501 |
| Trips | | 490 | 503 | 513 | 488 | 1,994 |
| <u>December</u> | | | | | | |
| Planes flown | | 269 | 276 | 303 | 246 | 1,094 |
| Time in air (hrs) | | 1,053 | 1,125 | 1,171 | 1,094 | 4,443 |
| Personnel carried (lbs) | | 642,700 | 637,710 | 638,050 | 622,350 | 2,540,810 |
| Freight carried (lbs) | | 2,089,430 | 2,023,776 | 2,072,738 | 1,637,015 | 7,822,959 |
| Trips | | 845 | 823 | 863 | 786 | 3,317 |

* History of 375th TC Group.

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| January 44 | 55th Sq | 56th Sq | 57th Sq | 58th Sq | TOTAL |
|-------------------------|-----------|-----------|-----------|-----------|-----------|
| Planes flown | 252 | 274 | 283 | 265 | 1,074 |
| Time in air (hrs) | 1,316 | 1,458 | 1,344 | 1,440 | 5,558 |
| Personnel carried (lbs) | 865,108 | 661,500 | 797,650 | 845,400 | 3,169,658 |
| Freight carried (lbs) | 1,914,292 | 1,788,139 | 1,940,209 | 1,860,566 | 7,504,206 |
| Trips | 800 | 695 | 768 | 797 | 3,060 |

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LOCATION OF COMBAT UNITS^a

| Unit | 30 Sep 1943 | 1 Dec 1943 | 1 Feb 1944 |
|-------------|--|-------------|-----------------------|
| 317th TC Gp | (On 28 Sep, sqs exchanged locations with 374th Gp) | | |
| Hq | Garbutt | Wards | Wards |
| 39th Sq | Archerfield | Wards | Wards |
| 40th | Garbutt | Wards | Wards |
| 41st | Garbutt | Wards | Wards |
| 46th | Garbutt | Wards | Wards |
| 374th TC Gp | (See above) | | |
| Hq | Wards | | |
| 6th Sq | Wards | Garbutt | Garbutt |
| 21st | Jackson | Archerfield | Archerfield |
| 22d | Wards | Garbutt | Garbutt |
| 33d | Wards | Garbutt | Garbutt |
| 375th TC Gp | | | |
| Hq | Dobodura | Dobodura | Dobodura ^c |
| 55th Sq | Dobodura | Dobodura | Dobodura |
| 56th Sq | Dobodura | Dobodura | Dobodura |
| 57th | Dobodura | Dobodura | Dobodura |
| 58th | Dobodura | Dobodura | Dobodura |
| 403d TC Gp | | | |
| Hq | (Assigned to South Pacific Area) | | |
| 65th Sq | Jackson ^b | Nadzab | Nadzab |
| 66th | Jackson ^b | Nadzab | Nadzab |
| 433d TC Gp | | | |
| Hq | Jackson | Nadzab | Nadzab |
| 67th Sq | Jackson | Nadzab | Nadzab |
| 68th | Jackson | Jackson | Nadzab |
| 69th | Jackson | Jackson | Nadzab |
| 70th | Jackson | Nadzab | Nadzab |

a. Form 34; Station List, 1 Feb 44, in History of Fifth Air Force, Pt. III, 1 Feb to 15 Jun 44, App. II; 54th TC Wing.

b. Air Echelons at Tsili Tsili and Nadzab.

c. The 54th TC wing history puts the entire 375th TC Group at Port Moresby from 20 December 1943 through this date.

Abbreviations: ER (en route). TP (to proceed).

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| Unit | 30 Sep 1943 | 1 Dec 1943 | 1 Feb 1944 |
|-------------------|-------------|------------|----------------|
| 6th Photo Gp Ren | | | Port Moresby |
| Hq | | | ER Nadzab |
| 8th Sq | Schwimmer | | Schwimmer |
| 25th | | | Nadzab |
| 26th | | | Dobodura |
| 20th Combat Map | | | Dobodura |
| | | | TP Nadzab |
| 71st Ren Gp | | | Dobodura |
| 17th Sq | | | TP Cape |
| | | | Gloucester |
| 82d | | | Oro Bay |
| | | | TP Finschhafen |
| 110th | | | Port Moresby |
| | | | TP Cape |
| | | | Gloucester |
| 25th Liaison | | | Nadzab |
| 3d Bomb Gp (L) | | | Dobodura |
| Hq | Dobodura | | ER Nadzab |
| 8th Sq | Dobodura | Dobodura | Nadzab |
| | | | Air Ech ER |
| 13th | Dobodura | Dobodura | Dobodura |
| | | | ER Nadzab |
| 89th | Dobodura | Dobodura | Nadzab |
| | | | Air Ech ER |
| 90th | Dobodura | Dobodura | Nadzab |
| | | | Air Ech ER |
| 312th Bomb Gp (L) | | | Kaiapit |
| Hq | | | Kaiapit |
| 386th Sq | | | Kaiapit |
| 387th | | | Kaiapit |
| 388th | | | Kaiapit |
| 389th | | | Kaiapit |
| 417th Bomb Gp (L) | | | Oro Bay |
| Hq | | | TP Saidor |
| 672d Sq | | | Oro Bay |
| | | | TP Saidor |
| 673d | | | Oro Bay |
| | | | TP Saidor |
| 674th | | | Oro Bay |
| | | | TP Saidor |
| 675th | | | Oro Bay |
| | | | TP Saidor |

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| Unit | 30 Sep 1943 | 1 Dec 1943 | 1 Feb 1944 |
|-------------------|--------------|------------|----------------------------------|
| 22d Bomb Gp (M) | | | |
| Hq | Reid River | | Dobodura ER Nadzab |
| 2d Sq | Reid River | Dobodura | Nadzab Ground Ech ER |
| 19th | Reid River | Dobodura | Dobodura ER Nadzab |
| 33d | Reid River | Dobodura | Nadzab Ground Ech ER |
| 408th | Reid River | Dobodura | Nadzab Ground Ech ER |
| 38th Bomb Gp (M) | | | |
| Hq | Durand | Durand | Durand |
| 71st | Durand | Durand | Durand |
| 405th | Durand | Durand | Durand |
| 822d | Durand | Durand | Durand |
| 345th Bomb Gp (M) | | | |
| Hq | Jackson | | Oro Bay TP Cape Gloucester |
| 498th Sq | Jackson | Jackson | Oro Bay |
| 499th | Schwimmer | Schwimmer | Oro Bay |
| 500th | Jackson | Jackson | Oro Bay |
| 501st | Schwimmer | Schwimmer | Oro Bay |
| 43d Bomb Gp (H) | | | |
| Hq | Jackson | | Dobodura |
| 63d Sq | Jackson | Dobodura | Dobodura |
| 64th | Jackson | Jackson | Dobodura |
| 65th | Jackson | Jackson | Dobodura |
| 403d | Jackson | Jackson | Dobodura |
| 90th Bomb Gp (H) | | | (All TP Nadzab) |
| Hq | Fort Moresby | Wards | Dobodura |
| 319th | Wards | Wards | Dobodura |
| 320th | Wards | Wards | Dobodura |
| 321st | Wards | Wards | Dobodura |
| 400th | Wards | Wards | Dobodura |

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| Unit | 30 Sep 1943 | 1 Dec 1943 | 1 Feb 1944 |
|--------------------------|------------------------|------------|--|
| 380th Bomb Gp (H) | | | |
| Hq | Fenton | | Fenton |
| 528th Sq | Fenton | | Fenton |
| 529th | Manbullo | | Long |
| 530th | Fenton | | Fenton |
| 531st | Manbullo | | Manbullo |
| 8th Fighter Gp | | | |
| Hq | Schwimmer | | Port Moresby TP Saidor |
| 35th Sq | Kila | Kila | Moresby---TP Saidor (Air Ech-Finschhafen) |
| 36th | Wards | Wards | Moresby---TP Saidor (Air Ech-Finschhafen) |
| 80th | Kila | Kila | Moresby---TP Saidor (Air Ech-Dobodura) TP Saidor |
| 35th Fighter Gp | | | |
| Hq | Johns Gulley | Schwimmer | Nadzab |
| 39th Sq | Schwimmer | Schwimmer | Nadzab |
| 40th | Tsili Tsili | Nadzab | Nadzab |
| 41st | Jackson-Tsili Tsili | Nadzab | Nadzab |
| 49th Fighter Gp | | | |
| Hq | Dobodura | Gusap | Gusap |
| 7th Sq | Dobodura | Gusap | Gusap |
| 8th | Tsili Tsili | Gusap | Gusap |
| 9th | Dobodura | Dobodura | Gusap |
| 58th Fighter Gp | | | |
| Hq | | | Oro Bay TP Cape Gloucester |
| 69th Sq | | | Oro Bay TP Cape Gloucester |
| 310th | | | Oro Bay TP Cape Gloucester |
| 311th | | | Oro Bay TP Cape Gloucester |
| 348th Fighter Gp | | | |
| Hq | Schwimmer | | (All TP Saidor) Finschhafen |
| 340th Sq | Jackson | Jackson | Finschhafen |
| 341st | Durand | Durand | Finschhafen |
| 342d | Wards | Wards | Finschhafen |

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| Unit | 30 Sep 1943 | 1 Dec 1943 | 1 Feb 1944 |
|------------------------------|--|------------|------------------------|
| 475th Fighter Gp | | | |
| Hq | Dobodura | Dobodura | Dobodura |
| 431st Sq | Dobodura | Dobodura | Dobodura |
| 432d | Dobodura | Dobodura | Dobodura |
| 433d | Dobodura | Dobodura | Dobodura |
| Detachment A (M1 Fighter) | Berry (Take-off from Jackson and Dobodura) | | |
| 418th Ni Fighter Sq | | | Dobodura |
| 421st Ni Fighter Sq | | | Milne Bay TP Nadzab |

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