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**FMFRP 12-90**

# **Second Marine Division Report on Gilbert Islands Tarawa Operation**



**U.S. Marine Corps**

**PCN 140 129000 00**



DEPARTMENT OF THE NAVY  
Headquarters United States Marine Corps  
Washington, DC 20380-0001

26 September 1991

FOREWORD

1. PURPOSE

Fleet Marine Force Reference Publication (FMFRP) 12-90, *Second Marine Division Report on Gilbert Islands-Tarawa Operation*, is published to ensure the retention and dissemination of useful information which is not intended to become doctrine or to be published in Fleet Marine Force manuals. FMFRPs in the 12 series are a special category of publications: reprints of historical works which are not available elsewhere.

2. SCOPE

This reference publication is the after-action report of the 2d Marine Division on its landing at Tarawa. This manual traces how an amphibious operation was conceived, planned, and executed, and then provides for lessons learned to be used in later battles/campaigns. Viewpoints and suggestions come from every source from within the division. Interesting and instructional, it is a book which every officer and SNCO should at least read, ingesting the many points to be learned.

3. CERTIFICATION

Reviewed and approved this date.

BY DIRECTION OF THE COMMANDANT OF THE MARINE CORPS



M. P. CAULFIELD  
Major General, U.S. Marine Corps  
Director, MAGTF Warfighting Center  
Marine Corps Combat Development Command  
Quantico, Virginia

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AFJ/jtl

HEADQUARTERS, SECOND MARINE DIVISION,  
FLEET MARINE FORCE, IN THE FIELD

December 23, 1943.

From: CG.  
To: CG, 5th Phib Corps

Subject: Report on GALVANIC Opn.

References: (a) CG, 5th Phib Corps Serial 00252,  
dated 5Nov43.  
(b) CG, 5th Phib Corps dispatch 160059.

Enclosures: (A) Report on GALVANIC Opn, CT 2.  
(B) Report on GALVANIC Opn, LT 1/2.  
(C) Report on GALVANIC Opn, LT 2/2.  
(D) Report on GALVANIC Opn, LT 3/2.  
(E) Report on GALVANIC Opn, CT 6.  
(F) Report on GALVANIC Opn, LT 1/6.  
(G) Report on GALVANIC Opn, LT 3/6.  
(H) Report on GALVANIC Opn, CT 8.  
(I) Report on GALVANIC Opn, LT 1/8.  
(J) Report on GALVANIC Opn, LT 2/8.  
(K) Report on GALVANIC Opn, LT 3/8.

1. In compliance with the references, the enclosures are submitted. It is not practicable for this headquarters to analyze and comment on the recommendations contained in each of the enclosures at this time.

2. The report of LT 2/6, at present on detached duty with the 2d Def Bn at TARAWA, will be forwarded at a later date.

3. The following comments and recommendations, lettered in order corresponding to the questions of paragraph 1 of reference (a), are submitted by this headquarters with the understanding that they may apply solely to the GALVANIC operation, or to amphibious operations against Atolls very similar to LONGSUIT:

a. (1) Not all of the equipment carried on this operation was required. Organic combat equipment for offensive action against a limited objective was excessive, particularly in the case of artillery. Each article of equipment must be given careful consideration for each specific operation.

(2) All subordinate units have recommended that the combat pack be eliminated for combat troops engaged in a similar operation. This headquarters feels, however, that this recommendation should not be made until it has been definitely determined that, without the combat pack, the individual Marine has adequate provision for carrying all essential items of supplies

and equipment, particularly the intrenching tool, without decreasing his mobility or efficiency. In this connection it is noted that in recent operations lack of hostile artillery fire and aerial bombing has tended to minimize the importance of having intrenching tools immediately on hand at all times. This tendency may prove costly in future operations.

(3) Only a small percentage of vehicles were landed, but the number taken on the operation is not considered excessive. The remainder would have been required ashore if the assault elements had not been withdrawn to the new base so soon, or if the situation ashore had required a longer mopping-up period in the atoll. At least one company of the Motor Transport Battalion should be equipped with DUKWs for atoll operations. It is believed that consideration should be given to the advisability of employing amphibious jeep ambulances to evacuate wounded.

(4)  $\frac{1}{4}$  ton 4x4 TCS's could not be landed dry in the assault phase and consequently were of little value. A radio-equipped amphibious jeep is recommended for similar operations.

b. Ammunition prescribed for the operation was considered adequate except for hand grenades. The number of offensive, thermite, and smoke hand grenades in a unit of fire should be greatly increased. It is recommended that the amounts assigned to each caliber for a unit of fire be adjusted to meet normal requirements, and that the number of units by caliber and weapon for each operation be specified to meet the anticipated needs for the operations. Specific recommendations concerning revision of present units of fire will be submitted later.

c. Dannert wire, sand bags, and fuel were considered excessive for the needs of assault troops in this operation. The total amount of these supplies to be unloaded should be determined by the estimated initial defense requirements of the Garrison Forces. Rations carried ashore by assault troops can be limited to as little as 1/3 C, D, or K rations. Experience indicates that this is adequate for forty-eight (48) hours under strenuous combat conditions.

d. Detailed recommendations on specific articles of equipment and supplies will be submitted in separate reports.

e. Recommendations on the use of pallets are not submitted at this time inasmuch as only a limited number were received immediately prior to departure from WELLINGTON and they could not be properly loaded for a fair test. The construction of the pallet is considered sound inasmuch as a few were towed across the reef with entirely satisfactory results.

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f. (1) AKAs and APAs were not unloaded at the same time. Unloading complications which arose resulted from the unloading of garrison forces at the same time that the assault forces were unloading supplies which were carried mainly for garrison forces. For future operations of this type, it is recommended that only assault troops, their equipment, and initial supplies, boated in LVTs be landed from the APAs. When this is done, APAs can be withdrawn to a reasonably safe distance from the area. The continued supply for assault troops should be made from one or more AKAs. Supplies remaining on board the APAs constitute reserve supplies to be landed only on call or in the event the AKA becomes a casualty. However, for operations in which opposition is light and a beachhead can be quickly gained, it is recommended that the APAs be completely unloaded initially, and that the AKAs arrive in the discharging area only on call.

(2) It is the opinion of this headquarters that in this operation the Garrison Forces arrived in the area too soon and unnecessarily complicated the unloading problems. It is recommended that only the Special Weapons Group, one or two C. B. companies, and reconnaissance elements of the Garrison Forces accompany the assault force, to remain when the assault force is withdrawn. All other elements of the Garrison Forces should remain at the staging base or other safe area on call until an adequate beachhead, or the entire atoll, is secured in order to reduce beach and transport area congestion.

g. The Shore Party personnel provided for this operation is considered sufficient. However, consideration must be given to each operation and the Shore Party composed to best fit the beach on which it is intended that they function.

h. The equipment of the Shore Party was augmented by six (6) light tractors from the Motor Transport Bn. No increase in Shore Party equipment is recommended for normal amphibious operations. It was found impracticable in the assault phase to erect any beach markers. It is recommended that the landing of this equipment be deferred until a beachhead of adequate depth is secured to permit the landing of the bulk of the supplies.

i. The basic organization of the Shore Party is satisfactory; however, to function smoothly the following must be considered:

(1) At least one (1) month prior to an operation, the Shore Party, in its entirety (including Navy elements), be formed, billeted, and trained as an organization.

(2) Shore Parties remain under Div control and land on Div order.

(3) Shore Parties be embarked aboard ships as a separate unit which is not under command of the Lt. Commander but

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aboard ship for transportation.

(4) Once assigned to that organization, all officers and men remain with that unit until the Shore Party disbands.

(5) It is considered essential that replacement personnel above authorized strength be assigned to the division for initial assignments to the service platoons of the Shore Party in order that the efficiency of combat units will not be impaired when Shore Party personnel are drawn from them.

j. The equipment and supplies of engineer elements of the Shore Party were adequate and appropriate. Consideration of each piece of engineer equipment as it is needed in the operation was made prior to the formulation of the loading plans.

k. (1) No major change is recommended in the basic Division Shore Party SOP.

(2) Specific recommendations concerning Shore Party operations are being submitted as the subject of a separate report.

l. Water distillation plants functioned efficiently.

m. The Coral Reef caused no appreciable damage to the LVTs.

n. The front and sides of the cabs of the assault LVT (1)s were equipped with 6mm armor plate, which was generally successful in providing protection against small arms fire including .31 caliber. The front end sides of the cabs of the assault LVT(2)s were equipped with 3/8" boiler plate, which was not sufficiently 'hard' to turn the hit of a .30 cal bullet. Small arms fire readily penetrated all sections of the LVTs not provided with some kind of extra protective plating. Some LVTs (it is impossible to give an exact figure at this time) were knocked out by anti-boat gun, mortar, and small arms fire; some LVTs had to be abandoned when the gas tanks were set on fire by hostile fire. It is apparent, from the large number of driver casualties, that the driver's compartment must be provided with hardened armor plate sufficient to turn 20mm fire. The belly, bow, and, in fact all areas of the tractor exposed to frontal or flanking fire, should be provided with some kind of "bolt-on" protective plate.

REPORT ON GALVANIC OPN (Cont'd)

o. For atoll operations, LVTs are absolutely necessary and must be provided on a sufficient scale (a minimum of 300 per Division) to boat all combat elements. LVT (A) (1)s should be provided on a scale sufficient to provide 75 per division. A detailed report relative to the LVT is being made subject of a separate letter in reply to 5th Phib Corps dispatch, 292350 of November, 1943. Amphibious jeeps and DUKWs must be made available in quantities determined by the nature of the operations.

p. A detailed description of enemy fortifications has already been compiled by D-2 at Headquarters, 5th Phib Corps and will be submitted as a separate report when available.

q. The 4.5" Barrage Rockets were mounted only on LCSs. It is believed that a total of eight (8) rockets were fired as the assault waves approached the beach but their effectiveness can not be estimated inasmuch as Naval Gunfire was falling on the beach at the same time. It is the opinion of this headquarters that barrage rockets will cause no material damage to emplacements, but should be very effective against exposed personnel. It is believed that the LVT(A) (1) carrying a 75mm gun would provide better supporting fire.

r. The 2.36 Rocket Launcher AT, M-1 (Bazooka) was not used in this operation inasmuch as they were received at WELLINGTON too late to issue to the troops. However, it is believed that this weapon might have been effective against the lighter emplacements encountered provided that the electrical firing system could be kept dry during the ship-to-shore movement.

s. The M9-A1 AT rifle grenade was found to be very effective against light tanks, the smaller emplacements, and the apertures of larger emplacements. It is recommended that the universal launcher now available for issue that can be used on the Carbine, M1, and M1903 rifles be issued in lieu of the launcher now in use in this command, and that a replacement launcher be packed with each box of grenades.

t. A time interval of three (3) minutes was prescribed for the first waves of assault LVTs. Inasmuch as almost all LVTs were unable to proceed inland over the beach, it is believed that a five (5) minute time interval between wave would have been more desirable in preventing the congestion that resulted.

(4) Detailed recommendations concerning several of the above subjects will be submitted as soon as additional data becomes available for more thorough analysis.

JULIAN C. SMITH

TAC-vcem

Hq. 2dMar  
In the Field  
17Dec43

From: CO  
To : CO 2dMarDiv

Subject: Report of Opns, GALVANIC, CT 2.

Reference: (a) Ltr CG 2dMarDiv, serial 002MD2 dated 11Nov43.

1. In accordance with the reference, the following information is submitted.

a. All the equipment carried on the operation was not necessary. It was found that equipment other than individual and that organic equipment needed for offensive combat was extraneous. In regard to individual equipment, the pack should be eliminated for use in the offense. No appreciable number of vehicles were landed and it was found that they were not needed. Radio "Jeeps" were of absolutely no value, because they could not be landed.

b. The ammunition prescribed for the operation was adequate. It is recommended that assault troops be equipped with the "Bazooka".

c. All supplies other than ammunition, demolitions, water, medical and rations were found to be excessive, these excess supplies should be carried on AKAs not on assault APAs.

d. No additional comments at this time. Detailed recommendations are being prepared.

e. Neither pallets or sleds were used or their use observed by this organization.

f. (1) It is not believed that the AKAs were unloaded at the same time as the APAs. The points where supplies could be landed were so few and limited that the APAs had supplies in boats many hours before they could be landed.

(2) The first echelons of the garrison forces arrived at the proper time.

g. It is believed that the size of the shore party would have been adequate had we been able to use it.

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Subject: Report of Opns, GALVANIC, CT 2. (Cont'd)  
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h. It is not known whether or not the equipment of the shore party was adequate because of the unnatural situation existing on BETIO.

i. It is not known whether or not the shore party organization was satisfactory as it had no chance to properly function.

j. The supplies and equipment of assault engineers should be augmented by more "bangalore torpedoes", more demolitions and a self-propelled, armored, high capacity flame thrower.

k. It is recommended that the labor details of the shore party should be an organic part of the shore party organization at all times and should not be drawn from assault units.

l. No water distillation plant was observed in operation.

m. No damage to amphibian tractors crossing the reef was noted other than that caused by enemy gunfire and mines.

n. Small arms fire penetrated unarmored parts of the amphibian tractor, punctured pontoons, punctured radiators, wounded and killed personnel.

o. Amphibian tractors are absolutely essential in this type of operation.

p. Enemy beach fortifications consisted of numerous concrete, steel and sand-coconut log pill boxes in which were emplaced machine guns, riflemen and anti-boat guns. In addition there was highly developed trench and tunnel systems connecting emplacements. There were numerous, large, excellent bomb proof shelters. Just off the beach was a wall of sand, coral and coconut logs which amphibian tractors could not climb. Light and medium tanks provided a mobile defense. There were numerous tank traps and barricades. Anti-aircraft guns served a dual purpose as anti-aircraft and anti-boat guns. All beaches were heavily defended in depth and due to the flat terrain the majority of the enemy weapons could engage targets in all directions.

q. The 4.5" Barrage Rocket was mounted only on the two flank LCS's. They each fired one salvo during the approach to the beach. No estimate of their effectiveness is practicable due to the fact that naval gunfire and air engaged the same beach targets at about the same time.



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Subject: Report of Opns. GALVANIC, CT 2. (Cont'd)  
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r. The "Bazooka" was not available and therefore not used.

s. The AT Grenades were somewhat effective against pill boxes but due to the structure of the pill box walls they were unable to penetrate and were only effective when they could be projected through the small gun slots in the pill box. They proved most effective against the light tankette.

The time interval between waves of LVTs was three (3) minutes and was satisfactory.

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D. M. SHOUP.  
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HEADQUARTERS, SECOND BATTALION, SECOND MARINES,  
SECOND MARINE DIVISION, FLEET MARINE FORCE,  
IN THE FIELD.

20 December 1943.

From: CO, Landing Team 2/2  
To: CG, Second Marine Division.  
Subject: Report of Operations, GALVANIC.  
Reference: (a) CG, 2d MarDiv, Letter, Serial 002MD2,  
dated 11Nov43.

1. In compliance with reference (a), the following report is submitted:

2. (a) Q. Was all of the equipment carried on the operation required? If not, what types and quantities were unnecessary? (Data on motor vehicles is especially desired.)

A. No. Defensive, organizational combat, camp galley and combat packs. Only 30% 1/4 ton trucks instead of 60% should be carried on APA. Preference given to medium tanks or higher priority.

(b) Q. Was the ammunition prescribed for the operation adequate or excessive? If excessive, what types and what quantities do you consider could have been omitted, and what would you recommend carrying on future similar operations?

A. No.

(c) Were the quantities and types of supplies prescribed for this operation adequate or excessive? If you consider them excessive, what would you recommend be omitted and what would you recommend be carried on similar future operations?

A. Excessive in the case of PX supplies and automatic supplies. Only cigarettes were needed and no automatic supplies were needed.

(d) Q. Any additional comments or recommendations desired?

A. More medium tanks.

(e) Pallets.

(1) Q. Were pallets feasible?

A. No.

(2) Q. Was the sled or the toboggan type the better?

A. Sled type was better.

(3) Q. Would it be possible to eliminate all slings on the pallet, and use

Subject: Report of operations, GALVANIC (Cont'd).

only the slings carried by vehicles  
and not slow down operations?

A. No.

(4) Q. Was any difficulty encountered in use  
of pallets? If so, where, and how can it  
be eliminated.

A. Yes, pallets not strong enough and each  
pallet should have a cable at each corner.

(f) Ships.

(1) Q. Did unloading the AKA at the same time  
the APA's were unloaded complicate un-  
loading on the beach?

A. Yes.

(2) Q. Did the first echelons of the Garrison  
Forces arrive too soon? Too late?

A. Not observed.

(g) Q. Was the size of the shore party adequate  
at each beach?

A. Not observed.

(h) Q. Was the equipment for shore parties  
adequate?

A. Not observed.

(i) Q. Was shore party organization satisfactory?

A. Not observed.

(j) Q. Was the equipment and supplies of organic  
engineer element adequate and appropriate for engineer  
missions?

A. No. Needed more portable bangolar torpedoes  
and a self-propelled (armored) flame thrower of large  
capacity.

(k) Q. Do you recommend any change in shore party  
organization, SOP?

A. No.

(l) Q. Report on operation of any water distillation  
plant used.

A. None used.

(m) Q. What damage was caused to Amphibian Tractors  
crossing reefs?

A. None noted.

n. (Q) What damage was caused to Amphibian Tractors  
from small arms fire?

A. Bullets penetrated sides and bow of Amphibian  
Tractors.

o (Q.) Give your opinion on the use of Amph. Tracs in  
this type operation.

A. Very good. Armored tractor with easier debarka-  
tion characteristics is desirable.

(p) Q. Give detailed description of enemy beach  
fortifications.

A. Barbed wire in water ten yards from beach;  
numerous rifle pits behind sea wall. Reinforced concrete  
pill boxes and anti-boat gun emplacements.

(q) Q. Was the 4.5" Barrage Rocket used?

A. Not used.

Report of Operations, GALVANIC (Cont'd)

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(q) Q. Was the 4.5" Barrage Rocket used?  
A. Not used.

(r) Q. Was the 2.36 Rocket Launcher A.T., M-1  
(Bazooka) effective against pill boxes.  
A. Not used.

(s) Q. Was the A-T grenade effective against  
pill boxes.  
A. Yes.

(t) Q. What time distance was prescribed between  
boat waves and was it satisfactory?"  
A. Between LVT waves-3min., between LVT wave  
and boats-14 min., between boat waves-10min., this time distance  
was satisfactory.

H. J. RICE,  
Major, USMC.

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Co 2dMar, 2dMarDiv

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21Dec43

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D. M. SHOUP  
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HEADQUARTERS FIRST BATTALION, SECOND MARINES,  
SECOND MARINE DIVISION, FLEET MARINE FORCE,  
IN WHE FIELD.

18 December, 1943.

From: CO.  
To : CG, 2nd Mar Div, FMM.  
Via: CO, 2nd Mar, 2nd Mar Div, FMM.  
Subject: Report of operation, GALVANIC.  
Reference: C. G. Ltr RMCct/jtl, Serial 002MD2, dated 11Nov43.

1. Individual combat equipment only was used. Combat packs were found to be unnecessary for **first** two days of operation.

2. The ammunition prescribed was adequate. One cartridge belt full of S. A. ammunition and one unit of fire for the mortars and machine guns was sufficient for the first twenty-four hours of the operation. Two hand grenades (frag.) per rifleman should be carried initially, with early replenishment desirable. The number of demolition kits issued on the present basis proved to be inadequate. There should be one per rifle squad and at least eight for the weapons company. An early replenishment of T. N. T., fuse, and caps is desirable. The heavy machine gun (1917A-1) was used on the light tripod (1919A-4), and was found to be satisfactory in every way. The resulting reduction in weight increased the mobility of the machine gun platoon, and greatly simplified getting the guns into position when the routes of approach were under fire.

3. Ammunition, water, and rations only are necessary for the first few days of an operation. Mess equipment should be omitted initially.

4. The use of pallets was not observed.

5. Unloading of the AKA's and AFA's outside of ammunition, water, and rations, was not observed.

6. The arrival of the Garrison Forces was not observed.

7. No shore party operations were observed.

8. No engineer equipment or supplies observed.

9. Water distillation plants were not observed.

10. Damage to amphibian tractors crossing reefs was not observed.

11. Many amphibian tractors were disabled by S. A. fire.

12. Amphibian tractors were absolutely necessary for this operation.

13. Enemy beach fortifications consisted of emplacements for individual riflemen, connected by communication trenches. These were strongly built of coconut logs, with a layer of coconut logs covered with dirt for overhead cover. At intervals along the beach were pillboxes, constructed of several layers of coconut logs, with dirt between them, or in some cases, of reinforced concret. Most pill boxes had very limited fields of fire.

Subject: Report of operation, GALVANIC.

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- 14. The 4.5" Barrage Rocket was not observed.
  - 15. The 2.36 Rocket Launcher A. T., M-1 was not used.
  - 16. The A T grenade was moderately effective against the weaker pill boxes.
  - 17. The time distance prescribed between boat waves was 10 minutes. This was not followed after leaving the L. D. due to the necessity of transferring into amphibian tractors.

W. B. KYLE

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CO, 2dMarines \_\_\_\_\_ 19December 1945.  
DIXON GOEN.

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HEADQUARTERS, THIRD BATTALION, SECOND MARINES,  
SECOND MARINE DIVISION, FLEET MARINE FORCE,  
IN THE FIELD.

20 December 1943.

From: CO LT 3/2  
To: CG, 5th Phib Corps.  
Via: (1) CO CT2.  
(2) CG, 2ndMarDiv.

Subject: Report of Opns, GALVANIC.

Reference: (a) Ltr CG, 5th Phib Corps, Serial 00252, dated  
5Nov43.  
(b) Ltr CG, 2ndMarDiv, Reinf, Serial 002MD2 dated  
11Nov43.

1. All answers correspond numerically to the questions as numbered in the above reference. It must be borne in mind that these answers apply only to the Tarawa Opn and not to an extended opn over a considerable area.

- (a) No. The operation was of such short duration that only individual and certain special equipment was necessary. Motor vehicles were not required and they were very difficult to land. Combat vehicles such as medium tanks and half tracks were especially required.
- (b) Adequate. Except .50 cal MG which was excessive. Demolitions should be greatly increased with the assault troops. Issue of heavy type 31mm Mortar shells should be resumed.
- (c) Adequate.
- (d) All com equipment should be waterproofed, and equipped with floatation gear. Small arms, clips of ammo should be wrapped in oil paper. Assault troops should be equipped with Bazooka's. Replace light tanks with mediums. Leave 37mm anti-tank guns behind. Half tracks are good; but a 105mm assault gun in a light tank chassis is far better. In anticipation of concrete fortifications, the 155 assault gun with delayed action shell is necessary. Numbers of flame throwers must be increased. Individuals take only arms, ammo, belt, 2 first aid kits, canteen, entrenching tool, light cleaning rod and brush, and two (2) D type rations.
- (e) Not used.

- (f) Not Accomplished on our beach.
- (g) It is believed that the Shore Party would have been adequate had the situation gone according to plan.
- (h) As in (g).
- (i) As in (g).
- (j) Increase size and amount of demolitions.
- (k) No.
- (l) Not observed.
- (m) None, except by mines.
- (n) Killed and wounded drivers, troops, stopped engines, and set them on fire.
- (o) Very necessary.
- (p) Fortifications were in depth from the beach inland. MG and anti-boat gun emplacements on the beach were built to accomodate from 4 to 8 men. Structure on these were mostly coconut logs held in position by steel spikes, and camouflaged by sand. The majority of the beach fortifications were of this type but concrete was noted on some. A portion of the fortifications were linked together by communication trenches or tunnels. All were mutually supported by others. On most of the beach front, the interval between these fortifications was between 5 to 20 feet, and other larger pill-boxes were from 10-20 yards behind (inland) them. Several large caliber cannon emplacements were also noted on this beach proper. These emplacements were built up 10 to 20 feet and were made entirely of concrete and steel.
- (q) In direct support of the landing by one support craft.
  - (1) Not observed.
  - (2) Mounted on LCS.
  - (3) Not observed.
  - (4) Employed against area targets, before landing.
  - (5) Not observed.
  - (6) No recommendations because not observed.





Headquarters, Sixth Marines,  
Second Marine Division, Fleet Marine Force,  
In the Field,

19 December, 1943.

From: Commanding Officer, Combat Team Six.  
To: Commanding General, Fifth Amphibious Corps.  
Via: Commanding General, Second Marine Division.  
Subject: Report of Operations, Galvanic.  
Reference: Letter Commanding General, Second Marine Division,  
Serial 002MD2, dated 11 November, 1943.

1. In accordance with the above reference, the following comments are submitted. Sub-paragraphs coincide with sub-paragraphing of reference.

(a) No, it is felt that assaulting troops were too heavily laden with unnecessary gear; as a result, most of this gear, including necessary arms and equipment, was discarded in the water or on the beach. A greater degree of combat efficiency and mobility could be attained by assault units carrying only the following:

1. Weapon, with cartridge belt.
2. Two canteens.
3. First aid packet.
4. Bayonet, with M-1 or .03 rifle.
5. Poncho, folded over cartridge belt.
6. Entrenching tool on belt.
7. Two-thirds "D" ration in pocket.

No vehicles were landed or needed by this CT.

(b) Ammunition was adequate, not excessive, but it is recommended that the grenade allowance be increased to four (4) per man - Two (2) fragmentary - One (1) WP - One (1) thermite. Fragmentary grenades were of no value in knocking out "L" shaped or compartmented emplacements, but smoke or fire would force them into the open or physically incapacitate them momentarily. Also it is recommended that the 60mm mortar illuminating shell be made available to aid in repelling infiltration and counter-attacks.

(c) Supplies were adequate, but it is recommended that the "I" priority be revised to better meet the supply problems in landings on small atolls.

(d) Tanks: It is recommended that medium tanks replace the light tanks entirely, and that the latter be converted to flame throwers. The light tank does not mount a heavy enough weapon to knock out enemy emplacements, whereas, the 75 mm carried by the medium tank will knock out emplacements. The light tank, as an armored mobile flame thrower with a large fuel capacity, could greatly aid assaulting units.

(e) No pallets, sleds or toboggans were used.

(f) 1. The AKA assigned this CT did not unload.  
2. Arrived at the proper time.

(g) This CT did not use the SP in its entirety, but for the gear and supplies it was necessary to unload, the SP was adequate. It is recommended that the CT SP not be landed until the beach is sufficiently cleared for their proper functioning. It is also recommended that a regimental officer with a small staff, who has a knowledge of loading details of all ships in that particular Transdiv, be retained aboard ship to coordinate unloading and to expedite movement of needed supplies to the beach. It is further recommended that an AK be loaded only with essential combat items for all arms and to lay in close to the beach and to stay in that position regardless if air or sea attack forces the other ships to sea. (This ship to be in effect a floating stock room under Division control). This may sacrifice a ship, but troops on the beach would be assured by needed supplies.

(h) Not observed.

(i) Not observed in this operation, but is felt that SP's draw too heavily on combat units. It is recommended that LT's be allowed an overage of personnel (200 men and officers) to be used as SP labor units and if need be, as replacements for assault troops.

(j) No, the most important function of engineers in similar operations to Tarawa is demolitions and flame throwers. It is recommended that engineer units carry more demolitions and flame throwers and that each LT have such a unit available.

(k) See (1).

(l) Not used.

(m) Not observed.

(n) No apparent damage from SA fire.

(o) LVT's executed the passage of the reef, but it is recommended that consideration be given to landing at low tide. The AmphTrac's land speed is greater than its speed in the water, and it is felt that the speed attained moving across a dry reef would enable them to move quickly under the naval and air barrage onto the beach, debark troops, catch the Japs in their shelters, and knock out beach defenses before the Japs had time to man the defenses.

(p) Beach fortifications were generally of reinforced concrete and coconut logs.

(q) No.

(r) No. Had it been available, it would have been of great value in destroying Jap emplacements which held up our advance and caused many casualties.

(s) No, it was too light and had no marked effect on the target.

(t) Lt's of this CT landed separately in reserve. There was no time distance prescribed.

----- M. G. HOLMES. -----

Hq, 1stBn, 6th Marines, 2nd MarDiv, FMF, In the Field.

6 December, 1943.

From: CO, LT 1/6.  
To : C G, 2nd MarDiv, FMF.  
Via : CO, CT-6.  
Subject: Report of Operations, Galvanic.  
Reference: (a) Ltr CG, 2ndMarDiv, RMC CT/541, serial  
OO2ND2 (Secret), dated 11Nov43.

1. In accordance with reference (a), the following report is submitted:

A. The following equipment carried on the operation was not required:

- (1) Gas mask.
- (2) Combat packs -- It is recommended that in a similar future operation of expected short duration, the entrenching tool be secured to the cartridge belt and the combat pack be landed as part of the transport pack at the conclusion of the operation. The articles carried in the pack were neither needed nor used until the completion of the operation.
- (3) Vehicles -- No vehicles were landed by this LT nor were they needed. It is recommended that LVT be used for the landing of the troops and subsequently for supply and evacuation missions.

B. The ammunition prescribed seemed to be adequate but not excessive. This LT used approximately three and one half units of small arms, 60mm and 81mm ammunition from the night of 21 November to the morning of 24 November. It is believed the allowance of grenades should be approximately doubled and consist of 30% Thermite and 10% C.N. grenades.

It is suggested that some sort of an illuminating shell that could be fired in back of the enemy attacking forces to silhouette them would increase the value of the 60mm in night defense missions. Such a shell is included in the unit of fire but has never been received.

C. The quantities and types of supplies prescribed are believed to have been adequate. An accurate opinion on this is not possible, however, due to the lack of actual facts to the contrary and the handling of supplies by Division instead of LT's.

Hq, 1stBn, 6th Marines, 2nd MarDiv, FMF, In the Field.

Subject: Report of Operations, Galvanic.  
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- D. Additional comments and recommendations --  
(1) Tanks -- The tanks are capable of opening the emplacements. They must be closely followed, however, by the infantry since they do not destroy the majority of the enemy in the emplacements. The tanks are ineffective at night. Due to poor visibility, the tanks do not discover and destroy more than seventy-five per cent of the emplacements.

Recommendations --

(1) Tanks -- More medium tanks be employed on future similar operations. Light tanks equipped with flame throwers be employed to follow up the medium tank. A tank liaison team similar to the SFCP team be attached to each LT. A spotter with the assault companies, a liaison officer with Battalion CO and necessary communication personnel would be adequate. Inability to call back and control the attached tanks when they had missed a strong pillbox or were needed elsewhere, caused this LT CO to hold out one tank with radio at his CP in order to effectively coordinate the tanks, artillery, NGF, air support and infantry.

(2) Flame Throwers -- Six flame throwers were employed by this LT in seizing assigned objectives. The combination tanks, flame throwers, and riflemen proved effective in destroying the enemy with minimum losses. Two flame thrower teams followed in close support of the tanks protected by a platoon of infantry. The remaining four worked with the next rifle platoon in mopping up. When the leading platoon was held up, the next platoon with two of the four reserve flame thrower teams passed through and continued the attack.

Recommendations --

(2) Flame throwers -- Additional flame throwers and teams (approximately 12 total) be assigned each LT. Sufficient supply personnel be part of the assault engineers to keep fuel and spare parts within 75 yards of the advancing troops at all times. Use of the flame throwers was limited due to the rapid expenditure of fuel and minor repairs needed. Spare parts and fuel were difficult to procure during all phases of the operation.

Hq, 1stBn, 6th Marines, 2nd MarDiv, FMF, In the Field.

Subject: Report of Operations, Galvanic.

(3) Heavy Machine Guns -- It is recommended that whenever possible, heavy machine guns should be brought ashore particularly by reserve elements making a covered landing.

(4) Supply and Evacuation --

(a) The supply and evacuation problem of this LT was greatly increased since 125 members of the battalion were in the shore party and therefore not available. It is recommended that such personnel be available to the LT for supply and evacuation missions when not being used on the shore party.

(b) LVT's were invaluable both in furnishing supplies to the front and in evacuating the wounded therefrom.

(c) The combat pack may be effectively lightened by carrying only two "D" rations and eliminating the "C" and "K" rations. The troops do not have the desire or time to eat more than this while they are engaged, and the extra rations are just additional weight. This LT did not eat from 0630, 22 November to 0930, 23 November. During that time it was engaged in continuous fighting and advanced approximately 1400 yards. No ill effects were reported, salt and water being the main necessities during actual combat.

E. Pallets were not used by this LT as there were no tractors to pull them.

F. The shore party of this LT did not function with this LT or on the same island.

G. Not observed.

H. Not observed.

I. Not observed.

J. Not observed.

K. Not observed.

L. Not observed.

M. Not observed.

N. Not observed.

Hq. 1stBn, 6th Marines, 2ndMarDiv, FMF, In the Field

Subject: Report of Operations, Galvanic  
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O. It is the opinion of this LT that LVT's are the most practical means of landing troops and accomplishing supply and evacuation missions.

P. Enemy beach fortifications in this LT's sector consisted of emplacements, obstacles and mines:

(1) Emplacements:

(a) Open type emplacement -- these were usually three to five feet deep varying in size depending on the number of troops they were to accommodate. The revetment consisted of coconut logs. Under the same heading may be included trenches which consisted mainly of individual foxholes leading into a connecting trench. Very few enemy were found in this type of emplacement although there were a large number of such emplacements prepared.

(b) Covered emplacement-- these emplacements usually consisted of one room approximately five to six feet deep, covered with coconut logs with sand piled on them, and varying in size depending on the number of troops they were to accommodate. They usually had from two to four fire ports. Hand grenades and flame throwers were effective against this type of emplacement using the ports or the entrance.

(c) Concrete emplacement -- these emplacements varied in size but were usually very large accommodating from twenty to one hundred and fifty enemy. They had from four to ten fire ports. Grenades and flame throwers were not completely effective against this type of emplacement since it usually had several rooms, tunnels or partitions behind which the enemy was comparatively safe. The emplacement was usually covered completely by sand with the exception of the fire ports and entrance.

(2) Obstacles:

(a) Barbed wire -- usually double-apron.

(b) Concrete obstacles with iron rails as spikes placed one hundred yards seaward from high water mark. It is believed they were capable of stopping an LVT.

(c) Tank traps -- approximately six feet deep and twelve feet wide.



Hq. 1stBn, 6th Marines, 2ndMarDiv, FMF, In the Field.

Subject: Report on Operations, Galvanic  
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(3) Mines -- land mines capable of completely wrecking LVT's and killing all hands aboard were placed in great quantities on GREEN BEACH SOUTH. It is not known to this LT if mines were found on the southern beach of the island.

Q. The 4.5" Barrage Rocket was not used by this LT.

R. The 2.36 Rocket Launcher A.T., M-1 (Bazooka) was not used by this LT.

S. The m-9 A.T. grenade was used by this LT against enemy emplacements and pillboxes and was not effective. The M-9 A-1 A.T. grenade was not available.

T. An LCR landing was made by this LT on a covered beach and the time interval of five minutes and distance of one hundred yards between waves was satisfactory.

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W. K. JONES.  
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Third Battalion, Sixth Marines,  
Second Marine Division, Fleet Marine Force,  
In the Field

December 1, 1943.

From: CG, LT 3/6.  
To: CG, 2dMarDiv.  
Via: (1) CO, CT 6.  
Subject: Report of opn, Galvanic.  
Reference: (a) Ltr CG, 2dMarDiv, RMcQT/jtl, serial 002ND2  
dated 11Nov43.

1. In accordance with reference (a), the following comments are submitted:

(a) Vehicles were neither needed nor used by this battalion in this operation. If they had been used, they could have been landed only at high tide due to the coral reef. It is therefore suggested that amphibious tractors be used in lieu of vehicles for hauling supplies. Tanks were a vital factor in the success of the operation, and it is highly recommended that medium tanks replace the light tanks.

(b) The amount of ammunition carried by this Landing Team proved to be adequate in the types carried. However more incendiary grenades were needed and less fragmentary grenades. It is estimated that each LT should have an initial supply of at least one (1) Fragmentary and one (1) incendiary grenade per man as a unit of fire. In addition, there should be more belted .30 caliber ball machine gun ammunition, with no tracer, in the initial supply. The Smm mortar platoon should be supplied with at least two hundred (200) rounds of the "heavy" shell (Shell HE, M45 w/PDF, M45, super quick-delayed) for future operations of this type. This shell is very effective in destroying material and emplacements.

It is recommended that each LT be equipped with Rocket Launchers AT M-1 (Bazooka) in accordance with tables of organization. Although this weapon was not used in this operation, it is felt that it could have been used to good advantage in breaching pillboxes and in conjunction with the flame throwers.

Subject: Report of opn, Galvenic (cont'd).

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The weapons company machine gun platoons had little opportunity to employ their fire power in an assault of this type. It is recommended that in future operations of this nature, these platoons be equipped with at least two (2) flame throwers per platoon, in addition to the Bazookas, thereby enabling them to give valuable close support to the rifle companies.

(c) Pallets were not used by this LT as there were no tractors on the beach with which to tow them.

(d) At Boxcloth, the first echelons of the Garrison Forces arrived about the right time. However, delaying their arrival another day would have given the provisional troops time to investigate the area, and thus be of more aid to the Garrison Forces.

(e) As the shore party functioned on an unopposed beach, there was sufficient personnel, and the breakdown of working parties proved adequate. Therefore no changes are recommended for the present shore party SOP when functioning on an undefended, or lightly defended beach.

(f) The assault engineer units did not have sufficient demolition kits. As demolitions and flame throwers were of prime importance in clearing pillboxes of Japs, it is highly recommended that every available man in assault engineer units be equipped with demolitions or flame throwing equipment.

(g) It is the opinion of this LT that enough praise cannot be given to the work of the amphibian tractors. We did not land troops in them, but they aided extremely in bringing supplies from landing boats to the beach, and in bringing water, rations, and ammunition to the front line troops.

(h) This LT made an unopposed landing on a beach lightly held by our own forces. As most of the enemy beach installations were destroyed upon our arrival, it is believed LT's making the initial landing could give a more detailed description of pill boxes and emplacements.

When this LT was ordered to land on the North half of Beach Green, the tide was out, and much coral was encountered about two thousand (2000) yards from the beach. Landing boats could get no closer to the beach, so troops were forced to wade ashore. At this point the time interval between waves was disregarded, for the prime factor was in getting the troops ashore.

K. F. MC LEOD

EEH/ggb

Hq, 8thMar, 2dMarDiv, FMF,  
In the Field

2 December 1943.

SECRET

From: The Commanding Officer, Combat Team Eight.  
To : The Commanding General, Second Marine Division.  
Subject: Report of operations, Galvanic.  
Reference: (a) Ltr CG 2dMarDivReinf Serial 002MD2 dated  
11Nov43.

1. In accordance with reference (a) the following report is submitted. Paragraph numbers refer to directive from CG 5thAmphibCorps quoted in reference (a):

a. No. The following equipment was unnecessary for the troops on shore:

Pack  
Change of clothing  
Blankets  
Fork, haversack  
Knife, haversack  
Can, meat w/cover  
Shelter-half w/accessories  
Net, mosquito  
All priorities II & III  
All vehicles except jeep ambulances, radio jeeps, prime movers for guns, and tractors.

b. Excessive amounts of the following types of ammunition were carried:

50 caliber (3 units were carried. 1 was needed)  
37 mm AP (3 units were carried. 1 was needed)  
37 mm HE (3 units were carried. 2 were needed)  
Grenades, AT (3 units of M9 were carried but were not used, one unit of M9AI would be sufficient)

An insufficient amount of the following types were carried:

Grenades, smoke (200 per LT were carried, 400 were needed)  
Grenades, incendiary (200 per LT were carried, 400 were needed)  
60 MM Mortars (3 units were carried, 5 were needed)  
81 MM Mortars (3 units were carried, 5 were needed)

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Subject: Report of operations, Galvanic. Page #2.  
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c. An excessive quantity of the following types of supplies were carried:

Sandbags (150,000 per LT were carried, 5,000 were needed)  
Dannert wire (500 rolls per LT were carried, 20 were needed)

The following supplies were carried but not used at all:

"B" Rations, insecticle and insect repellent cloth, osnaburg.

d. 1. None of the priority II & III equipment carried on this operation was used. It is recommended that none be carried.

2. Consideration should be given the adviseability of loading in amphibious barges, or shallow-draft, sealed pontoons, expendable as are the belly fuel tanks of an airplane, supplies for 3 days combat for the assault units employed. These supplies to be solely combat supplies as distinct from the housekeeping equipment contemplated in the normal logistical shore party landing exercise. Such supplies could be towed to the beach by boat as far as possible, thence dragged ashore by man power or tractor, or anchored off shore or allowed to drift in as wind and tide permitted. Details of design of such a vehicle or container should be made a matter of immediate study.

e. Pallets were not used. No comment.

f. Not observed.

g. Yes, but note the unusual circumstances of all unloading being done at the end of the pier.

h. Not observed.

i. Not observed.

j. Not observed.

k. No change is recommended in shore party SOP at this time. Shore party organization is, and should be designed so that it can be modified to meet the needs of each specific mission, having in mind the type of beach, tactical situation, and strategic considerations involved in each operation.

l. Not observed.

m. Not under cognizance this Hq.

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Subject:            Report of operations, Galvanic            Page #3  
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- n.            Not under cognizance this Hq.
- o.            More speed and armor is desired. Amphibious tractors are indispensable for assault and supply. Personnel should be trained in taking advantage of cover and on mutually supporting each other on discharge of troops.
- p.            Subject of study by 2 section to be reported later.
- q.            None used
- r.            None used
- s.            M9 grenades were not sensitive enough to detonate on impact on sand covered emplacements.
- t.            Not observed. This will be covered in LT reports.

ELMER E. HALL  
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1stBn, 8th Mar, 2dMarDiv, FMF,  
In the Field.

29 November, 1943.

From: CO, LT 1/C.  
To: CG, 2dMarDiv.  
Via: CO CT8  
CO CT2

Subject: Report of Opns, GALVANIC.

References: (a) Ltr CG, 5th Phib Corps, Serial 00252, dated  
5Nov43.  
(b) Ltr CG, 2dMarDiv, Reinf, Serial 002MD2, dated  
11Nov43.

Enclosure: (A) Description of Beach Defences.

1. In compliance with reference (b) the following report is submitted:

(a) Equipment carried on operation from the APA to the beach by assault troops could be reduced by deleting gas masks, combat packs, and types "C" and "K" rations. The following motor vehicles could not be landed on the beach, and it is believed were not required on this type operation.

- (1) Prime movers for 37mm guns and 75mm pack howitzers.
- (2) TCS radio jeeps.
- (3) Ambulance jeeps.
- (4) All organizational transportation.
- (5) Three-hundred (300) gallon water trailers.

(b) Excessive ammunition.

- (1) Two (2) units fire .50 cal.
- (2) Two (2) units fire, AP shot M74, 37mm AT gun.
- (3) Two (2) units fire, M43A1, 81mm mortar.

(c) Ammunition to be carried on future similar operations:

- (1) Three (3) units fire small arms.
- (2) One (1) unit fire .50 cal.
- (3) Three (3) units fire HE, M3, 37mm gun.
- (4) Three (3) units fire canister, 37mm gun.
- (5) One (1) unit fire AP shot, M74, 37mm gun.
- (6) Five (5) units fire, grenade, hand frag MII.
- (7) Seventy-five (75) per landing team, grenade smoke, HE, M3.
- (8) Three (3) units fire, grenade, AT M9A1.
- (9) Three (3) units fire, grenade, thermite M14.
- (10) Three (3) units fire, 60mm mortar.
- (11) Three (3) units fire, M43A1, 81mm mortar
- (12) Fifty (50) torpedo, bangalore per landing team.
- (13) Ten (10) 55-lb demolition charge per landing team.
- (14) Artillery did not support this landing team consequently no observation was made.

(d) Excessive supplies.

(1) All automatic supplies.

(e) To be carried on similar future operations.

(1) PX supplies (to remain aboard APA and to be issued gratuitously after operation).

(2) One (1) field desk and typewriter (to remain aboard APA).

(3) Twenty-five percent replacement clothing consisting of utility suits complete (to remain on APA and issued after operation to the wounded, whose clothes are usually stripped off by medical personnel).

(f) Comments and recommendations.

(1) That each landing team have attached two (2) assault engineer platoons, equipped with three (3) flame throwers per platoon. This is essential in view of the fact that landing teams did not have guns of sufficient caliber to knock out most enemy emplacements encountered in this operation. It was found that in order to completely destroy personnel in emplacements, it was necessary to burn them out with flame throwers.

(2) That all personnel be trained in simple demolitions, such as making up dynamite hand charges.

(3) That the light tank lacks fire power heavy enough to knock out reinforced emplacements.

(4) That the 75mm self-propelled (half-track) proved very valuable and effective against light and medium emplacements. It is recommended that each landing team have attached a minimum of two (2).

(5) That each landing team be equipped with two (2) BD-9 switchboards in lieu of the large, heavy monocord board.

(6) That a water-proof carrier be provided for the EE-8 telephones.

(7) That this landing team suffered one-hundred (100) percent failures in the TBY radios due to the fact that these sets are not water-proof. A lighter water-proof extra-high frequency set should be adopted for communication within assault companies, and the TBY, water-proofed, for communications from battalion to companies.

(8) That the Air Liaison and Naval Gunfire TCS radio jeep be replaced with the TBX radio.

(g) Pallets - Pallets were not loaded or used by this landing team.

(h) The shore party of this landing team did not function as a separate shore party, but was split into working parties on HELEN, CORA, and aboard an LST.

(i) This landing team did not land in amphibian tractors. It is the opinion of the undersigned that they proved excellent in transporting supplies from the beach to inland dumps.

(j) Enemy beach fortifications (see enclosure A)

(k) The 4.5" barrage rocket was not used by this landing team.

(l) This landing team was not equipped with the 2.36 Rocket Launcher.

(m) The AT M9A1 grenade was effective against light pill boxes.



(n) This landing team landed as a reserve in LCVP's with the following time interval between waves.

1st wave - H.  
2d wave - H/5  
3rd wave - H/15  
4th wave - H/25

L. C. HAYS, JR.

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HEADQUARTERS, SECOND BATTALION, EIGHTH MARINES,  
SECOND MARINE DIVISION, FLEET MARINE FORCE,  
IN THE FIELD.

17 December, 1945.

From: The Commanding Officer, LT 2/3.  
To: The Commanding General, Second Marine Division.  
Subject: Report of Opns, GALVANIC.  
Reference: (a) Ltr. CG, 2ndMarDiv., Serial 002MD2,  
dated 11Nov43.

1. The following report is submitted in accordance with the above reference.

(a) Since this Battalion was ashore less than 5 days, no equipment other than organic combat equipment and water containers were necessary. This Battalion had 3  $\frac{1}{2}$  ton trucks, 3 500 gallon water trailers, 1  $\frac{1}{4}$  ton ambulance and 1 TCS radio jeep aboard. During the 5 days ashore, none of these vehicles were landed. If this Battalion had remained on Helen Island for an indefinite period, it is believed that 3  $\frac{1}{2}$  ton trucks, 3 500 gallon water trailers, and 1  $\frac{1}{4}$  ton ambulance would have been adequate.

(b) It is believed that the 3 units of fire carried by this LT was adequate except that the medium tanks and half tracks should carry more AP. Say 40% HE, 40% AP, and 20% APC.

(c) The supplies carried were considered adequate in quantity and type. 1/3 D ration and one tube of dextrose are adequate for 36 hours.

(d) None.

(e) Not observed.

(f) Not observed.

(g) Not observed.

(h) Not observed.

(i) Not observed, but from maneuvers held previous to the landing, it is believed to be satisfactory.

(j) Not observed.

(k) No.

(l) Not observed.

SUBJECT: Report of Opns, GALVANIC.

(m) No apparent damage to those used on Red Beach #3.

(n) None observed.

(o) It is believed that Amphibian Tractors are absolutely necessary for a successful landing in this type of operation.

(p) The enemy had very little wire or other obstructions from the edge of the reef to the beach on that portion of Red Beach #3 from the main pier east to Burns Phillips Pier. Approximately 20 feet from the high tide mark was a rampart 4 to 5 feet high, built of coconut logs. Ten yards in from this rampart was a row of emplacements about 20 feet apart. These emplacements were built of coconut logs and steel. Some were machine gun and others anti-boat gun emplacements. All were covered. The space between the emplacement and rampart was filled with coral to such a height that very little of the emplacement was visible from the sea. About 50 feet in from the emplacement was a rifle fire trench and on Red Beach #5 this trench faced south across the airport. There were no heavy caliber guns on Red Beach #5 and it is believed that in case of an attack from the south, that the troops manning the emplacements would come out and man the fire trench where they would have had an excellent field of fire.

(q) The 4.5 Barrage Rockets were used only on one LCS on Red Beach #3 and the number and results were not observed.

(r) Not used.

(s) Not used.

(t) The following time distance between waves was prescribed.

1st wave LVIs	H hour.
2nd wave LVIs	H plus 3 minutes.
3rd wave LVIs	H plus 3 minutes.
4th wave LCVPs	H plus 14 minutes.
5th wave LCMs	H plus 20 minutes.
6th wave LCVPs	H plus 25 minutes.

It is believed that this time distance is too small for all but the second wave.

H. P. CROWN,  
Major, U. S. Marine Corps.

HEADQUARTERS, THIRD BATTALION, EIGHTH MARINES,  
SECOND MARINE DIVISION, FLEET MARINE FORCE,  
AT SEA.

26 November, 1943.

From: The Commanding Officer, Landing Team 3/8.  
To : The Commanding General, Second Marine Division.  
Via : The Commanding Officer, Combat Team Eight.  
Subject: Report of operations, Galvanic.  
Reference: (a) Ltr CG, 2dMarDiv, Serial 002 MD2, dtd 11Nov43.

1. In accordance with reference (a), the following report is submitted concerning the points covered by paragraphs 1 (a) to (t).

A. (1) Equipment carried on operation was excessive. No vehicles other than ambulance jeeps, prime movers (jeeps) for 37 mm guns, prime movers (jeeps) for 75mm pack howitzers, bull dozers, tanks, and one ton trucks should be carried by Landing Teams. Landing Teams should not be loaded down with such items as heavy wire (Dannert), extra fuel, low priority gear, etc. A small amount of barbed wire and sand bags are essential for defense of phase lines during an operation and should be carried by each Landing Team. The fuel carried on the vehicle should be sufficient for two days. The amount of individual equipment carried was excessive. No combat packs are necessary for this type of operation.

(2) The following is recommended as standard, individual equipment for assault waves.

Organic weapon - - - - one unit of fire  
Cartridge belt  
2 canteens of water  
One canteen cover filled with 3 or 4 grenades  
First aid packet  
Poncho  
Cleaning brush and small can of oil tied to belt  
One third "D" ration and one third "K" ration  
carried in pocket.  
One waterproof packet of salt tablets  
Leggings  
Camouflage paint, applied  
Lifebelt, inflated until on beach

(3) The following is recommended as minimum number of vehicles to be carried by a Landing Team for this type of operation.

(a) Infantry Battalion	2 Cargo jeeps 2 Ambulance jeeps 1 TCS jeep 2 Water trailers
(b) Artillery Battery	4 Jeeps (prime movers) 2 TCS jeeps 2 1 ton, 4X4, cargo trucks, w/1 ton trailers 1 Water trailer
(c) Engineers (for shore party)	2 Tractors, w/angle dozer 1 Jeep 1 Ambulance jeep 1 Water purification unit

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Subject: Report of operations, Galvanic, LT 3/8.  
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(d) 37mm Platoon 4 Jeeps (prime movers)  
1 Truck, 1 ton w/trailer  
(e) Medical Company, Collecting Section  
1 Ambulance jeep  
(f) Tank Platoon. 6 Light or medium tanks  
1 TCS jeep  
(g) Shore Fire Control Party and Air Liaison Group  
2 TCS jeeps

B. Ammunition prescribed was adequate except for mortar ammunition. Five units of fire are recommended for all types of mortars with priority of unloading. Belted machine gun ammunition must have high priority. If assault units are equipped with flame throwers and demolition kits, additional TNT, dynamite, and fuel for flame throwers must be carried.

C. Supply of rations carried by Landing Team was excessive. Individuals can carry only 2/3 rations (1/3 "D" and 1/3 "K"). It is recommended that each Landing Team carry, in addition to the individual's ration, the following: 2 days "K"; 3 days "C"; and 700-5 gallon water cans, to be filled not earlier than D-1 day. No other group equipment need be carried by a Landing Team. All priority 2 and 3 gear should be brought in later by LST.

D. Some provision must be made for post exchange supplies and clothing for wounded, evacuated, personnel. They normally are evacuated with absolutely nothing and some arrangements must be made to reclothe them and supply them with necessary toilet articles, cigarettes, etc.

E. Pallets - use of pallets was not observed.

F. Since all unloading during the early stages was done from the end of the pier, the entire Shore Party set-up was very confused; and any remarks would be pertinent for this operation only and of no value for the next operation. SOP 4-3 is still feasible but supplies cannot be brought in until a fairly deep beach-head is established. It is my belief that all APAs should be completely unloaded in LSTs with ammunition, water, and medical supplies on 2 1/2 ton amphibious trucks near the ramp. At night of "D" day, push LST up to the edge of the reef at low tide and drive trucks or amphibious tractors into beach over previously marked route. Load all heavy gear into vehicles at the edge of the reef. Trying to manhandle or float equipment in from edge of reef would require more manpower than is available to a Landing Team shore party. Organizational hand carts are extremely valuable for moving ammunition and water to front line units.

G. See "F" above.

H. See "F" above.

I. See "F" above.

J. No. Assault engineers need additional, spare flame throwers and demolition kits. Also, all assault troops must be able to use this equipment at any time and should be so equipped. Spare parts, accessories, and fuel for flame throwers must be carried.

K. No.

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Subject: Report of operations, Galvanic, LT 3/8.  
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- L. None observed.
- M. Not observed but they seemed to continue to function, except those blown up or damaged by enemy fire.
- N. Not observed.
- O. Excellent for both assault troops and for carrying supplies.
- P. Thick, deep, concrete, steel, or log pillboxes with narrow slits allowing limited fields of fire, mutually supporting, and all completely covered with earth or sand to a depth of two to three feet.
- Q. None observed.
- R. None observed.
- S. Yes, the M9AT grenade was effective; but it is believed that the M9A-1 would be much more effective.
- T. The time distance between waves was five (5) minutes for this Landing Team, landing in reserve. Since all waves except one landed on or near the end of the pier, great crowding and confusion occurred. However, under ordinary circumstances, it is believed that this time distance is satisfactory.

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R. H. RUUD.  
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HEADQUARTERS, SECOND MARINE DIVISION, FMF,  
c/o Fleet Post Office, San Francisco, Cal.

22 December 1943.

REPORTS OF BATTALION COMMANDERS.

Major William S. Vasconcellos, 1st Ban, 2nd Marines.

At about 1000 Major Kyle by CO CT2 had given verbal orders to land on Beach Red 2. I then issued orders to the assault companies. This battalion was the reserve of CT2. I was told to transfer the men from the boats to the AmphTracs because the boats could not get over the reef.

Lieutenant John B. H. Wickersham, ExecO, Company "A".

I was in the second wave. I had two assault platoons, with one Machine Gun squad, attached to each. Major Kyle told us to transfer to AmphTracs, land on Beach Red 2, and help 3-2. I landed on what I thought was the right half of Beach Red 2, under heavy rifle and machine gun fire, which came from the boundary between Beaches 1 and 2. I had only three men with me. The rest of the unit had been pinned down and dug in. Early in the afternoon, I collected the rest of my men amounting to about 21. Since it was getting dark, I decided to lie low, and the next morning, rejoined 3-2 under Major Ryan. We set up a line on the beach of Beach Red 1, which we held for two days. The Sixth Marines came in the next morning, relieved us, and we went back to Green Beach. An hour later we were recalled back to the lines. On the fourth day, we were given the work to join 1-2, on Beach Black.

All the casualties that I know of in our Company were sustained on the beach.

Captain Maxie R. Williams, CO, Company "B".

I had Company "B" and was ordered to go in on the left of Company "A". We landed about 1030, but were unable to locate Company "A". We landed in front of a machine gun which was inland and towards the third battalion area. I hit the beach about 150 ~~yards~~ from the pier. About 1230 Major Culhane told me to take all available units and move inland. We reached the fighter strip and were stopped by our own bombing and strafing, sustaining two casualties. About 1430 I moved out with Company "F", not being able to contact Major Culhane. We stayed there until dark, and the next morning, were in telephone communication with the Battalion. We received word to remain where we were and move out on order. We moved out later to an unoccupied trench at square 232 with bomb shelters on each flank. We had about forty or fifty casualties in this area. At dusk, Major

Captain Maxie R. Williams, cont'd.

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Kyle came over with about 300 men. We set up there for the night, receiving supplies by LVTS. On the fourth day we moved to the West end of the Island, receiving no opposition.

Captain James R. Clanahan, CO, Company "C".

I received verbal orders to land on Beach Red 2, organize, stand by, and await further orders. Our objective was on the South Beach in area 221. Nothing developed that afternoon. At dark we were ordered to tie in with Companies "A" and "B". I had only a LMG and a BAR to begin with, and the next morning I received a platoon of HMGs from Company "D". They had only the ammunition they carried. In about the center of 221, we set up our defense against pill boxes. The next day we worked on the pill boxes with tanks and scout-snipers.

Q. What were your total casualties?

A. 13 killed; 35 wounded; none missing.

Q. Captain Williams, what were your casualties?

A. A total of 86; 21 killed; 3 missing; the rest wounded.

Q. Lieutenant Wickersham?

A. 3 officers and 21 enlisted killed; 57 wounded; and 3 missing. Most of these sustained on the beach.

Q. How deep was the water when you landed?

A. (Capt Williams): About a foot of water over the reef at 1000  
(Lt Wickersham): About two feet.  
(Capt Clanahan): Two feet or more.

NOTE: The following information was received as the result of interrogation.

There were plenty of grenades and rifle ammunition. The men fired all the ammunition in their belts, but on the afternoon of D+1 day, we were short on everything.

One belt of rifle ammunition is sufficient.

The M-1 is very good if kept dry from oil; there were no stoppages due to salt water.

The BAR gave trouble as a result of salt water, coral and sand.

The Carbine had very few stoppages; it is a very good weapon. A more accurate rear sight is needed to include finer adjustments in elevation and windage.



Machine guns worked well. They can be carried easily with the light tripod, using the HMG. The heavy tripod is too hard to handle, while the light is one piece, and gives a lower silhouette, and is still accurate.

Anti-tank grenades - Some discharges became ruptured.

Evacuation of casualties - Our collecting section got in and worked well. There is nothing better for evacuation of casualties than the AmphTracs.

Total Battalion Casualties - Killed:	6 off,	75 enl.
Wounded:	6 Off	152 Enl.
Missing:		10 Enl.

Communications - TBYS worked very well. TBXS worked fine, but they are too heavy. Being a reserve battalion, we carried no MUs. Highly recommend some kind of container, water-proofed, for floating batteries into the beach.

Rations - There is no use to carry rations because they were not eaten.

Packs - It is recommended that the pack be done away with, and that all gear be attached to the belt.

We should have more demolition kits, at least one per squad, with replacements.

Entrenching tools are a necessity, but no ponchos should be carried on an operation such as Tarawa.

HEADQUARTERS, SECOND MARINE DIVISION, FMF  
c/o Fleet Post Office, San Francisco, Cal.

22 December, 1943.

REPORTS OF BATTALION COMMANDERS.

Major Howard J. Rice, Exec O, 2nd Bn, 2nd Marines.

We began debarking about 0400. We received of Company "F" that they were on the beach, and resistance was stiff. Soon after that message was received our radio went out of commission. We hung off in our boats and were under fire from medium guns. When we hit the reef, enemy fire on the AmphTracs was heavy. On hitting the beach I looked to the left and saw the pier. I determined later that I had landed on the east flank of 230. I got in at H+13. The area was being swept with fire from 227 and 224. With the radio I had at the time, I had contact with one of our companies ahead. I located 3-2 just before dark by runner; the TBX would not work, because the generator was out. From then on, I did not do much.

All the LVTs were used getting in supplies, and taking out wounded. A shore party from 3-2 landed shortly after we did. On D+3 day morning, I got an AmphTrac and joined the Battalion on the pier. Everything was practically secured.

Captain Warren Morris, CO, Company "F".

I landed in the first wave at about 0905, receiving heavy fire by the time we hit the beach. We were supposed to land in the middle of the company area at about the right flank of 220, but instead we landed in the right flank of 222. I got ashore with myself and four out of the eighteen who started. We had two flame throwers in the first wave, neither of which got ashore, but we did get demolition kits in. With an MU I contacted CP of Company "G", and used their TBY to contact the Battalion.

About H+60, I got 15 men from Company "E" in charge of a Sergeant. He did not know where the officers were. About 1200 part of 1-2 came in. We attached a mortar squad to them, and they pushed forward receiving only sniper fire. The 1st Battalion reached 201 with little trouble and built up a line there. We continued around the right flank to form a perimeter defense. We had about 30 wounded there, and a Doctor and some Gorpomen set up an aid station on the beach. We had little trouble that night. Late on D Day I found my Exec and 25 men left of the Company. The next morning Colonel Jordan, who was in charge of the Battalion at the time, told me where our Company was, and I joined them at 201, where we received orders to go to the South Beach. By that time two Companies of 1-2 had joined us.

Captain Warren Morris cont'd

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The remainder of the three Companies, "A" and "B", from 1-2, "F" from 2-2, and 20 men from "E" and "G" went across to the South Beach. This was D +1 day. Late that afternoon we got two AmphTracs over with ammunition, water and rations. Colonel Jordan then turned over the Battalion to Major Kyle.

Lieutenant James C. Reed, Jr. ExecC, Company "G".

We were in the third wave, and on reaching the coral received heavy fire. We fired the .50cal. MGs on the Amph Tracs as we went in, but the Tracs bounded around considerably. On landing I received orders from Colonel Jordan to push ahead, and by noon we got to the air strip. I had no communication, so I went back to the CP and was ordered to set up in front of the CP, which I did. We moved up the next morning. I had a Sergeant and six men and sent them to the left flank to contact Major Crowes outfit at the head of the pier.

NOTE: The following information was received as the result of interrogation.

We did not get much fire from the pier itself, because I believe Lt. Hawkins was already on the pier. Some of the assault LVTs went over the parapet one of which went fifty yards inland.

There was a tendency for the men to crouch behind the sea wall. There was also some difficulty in getting them out of the AmphTracs. Low water was about 1200. The LVTs had no trouble getting through the concrete obstacles and the barbed wire.

Two platoons in direct support of the two assault companies had LMGs; two reserve and two support platoons had HMGs. It is recommended that the heavy gun be used on the light tripod. The heavy gun is easier to carry, light tripods has a lower silhouette and gives the dispersion you want. The main reason for not using the LMGs is because of the necessity for carrying spare barrels. Also, the men had more confidence in the heavy.

With the exception of grenades there was no real shortage of any ammunition at any time. However, some rifle ammunition was collected from the dead.

M-1 - Salt water caused numerous stoppages with the M-1s. We had to organize three men as a cleaning detail to work them over. However, the men like it's fire power and still prefer it to the '03.

Captain Norris cont'd

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The BAR did not work ~~very~~ too well because of the sand. The main trouble was in the action, and not in the magazine.

The carbine is fine. We had few or no stoppages.

Inflated life belts - There were several wounded men picked up out of the water wearing inflated life belts.

The shore party was used as infantry. The night they started working on the gear organization was good. I do not think the shore party should be brought in early when there is no beach head.

Communication - We had a TNY which we managed to keep dry. Some provision must be made to keep communication equipment water proofed. It is recommended that a duplicate set of signal equipment with a water-proof covering be carried so that it may be floated in in case of emergency.

We did not get any notice of approaching Japanese planes. Our set was on the right frequency, but ships did not want to open up and reveal their position; They had the planes recorded on their radars. We expected that when they got a bogey they would give us the word, but the only time we got it was from our Air Liaison Officer.

Ammunition replenishment was good, but men were wounded in getting 61mm mortars ammunition over the side of the AmphTrecs. Perhaps a rubber boat could be towed behind an LVT for that purpose.

The 37mm crews were used as infantry and the breach blocks of the guns were removed and hidden. Two guns however were set up in the triangle and we lost five out of six men. It was reported that these guns fired on some targets.

It is recommended that similar radios be used for tanks and infantry.

The collecting section functioned well but there was a shortage of personnel. The present set up is believed to be sound under ordinary circumstances, but not so if casualties are exceptionally high.

HEADQUARTERS, SECOND MARINE DIVISION, FMF,  
c/o Fleet Post Office, San Francisco, Cal.

22 December 1943.

REPORTS OF BATTALION COMMANDERS

Major John F. Schoettel, CO, 3-2.

We debarked according to schedule and later landed on Beach Red 2. We received word that H hour was delayed to 0845, then again to 0900. We crossed the line of departure at about 0830. The LVTs disembarked their troops in the water about 500 yards out receiving fire of medium caliber. One of the guns was on Green Beach firing over the edge at about 229. We called for air support. The water at the time of landing was about waist high. Two of the tanks supporting us were serviceable while all the others were ground out by going into bomb holes on the reef. There were no tanks or half tracks on Beach Red 1. Wounded were transferred to AmphTracs and evacuated. At this time we drew fire from both beaches and withdrew to seaward. It was thought they were all wiped out. We then landed on Beach Red 2, arriving there at about 1600.

Q. Did anybody actually land on Green Beach?

A. No.

Major Michael P. Ryan, CO, Company "L".

We landed on the coral to the left of the small ship on the reef, disembarked, and headed in. I was in the Battalion Reserve, Company "L", which came in slowly and very disorganized. As soon as my company came in, we moved in behind Company "I". Men were still coming in in dribbles. Two medium tanks got in over the reef, and the Engineers blasted a hole in the sea wall for them to come through. We put three companies abreast, took two medium tanks, but the two tanks were knocked out. It was then about 1630. We could not find a radio in communication with Division and later found the Second Battalion's. The next morning we got another medium tank and Naval gun fire came from somewhere. We sent a message recommending that troops land on Green Beach. We attacked with the tank and Naval gun fire support about 1100. There was little opposition. Upon receiving word that troops would land on Green Beach we sent another message saying that Green Beach South was mined. We had about 150-200 yards inland of Green Beach. The next day we received orders to stand fast, that the Sixth Marines were moving to our right.

Q. Was there much fire coming from the South coast to the East?

A. No.

Major Michael P. Ryan, cont'd.

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- Q. Were there many Japs in the personnel dugouts on Beach Red 1?
- A. Yes. On coming down we bypassed them, but later got them out with flame throwers.
- Q. Did anybody land on the east of Beach Red 1?
- A. No.
- Q. What knocked out the AmphTracs?
- A. It seemed to be a 40mm; some of them were burning.

Captain James W. Crain, CO, Company "K".

I had the left assault company, Company "K". We were to land on the east of Beach Red 1. We were receiving quite a bit of small arms fire including automatic weapons, and there were possibly two anti-boat guns in 224. My TBY got ashore and after some repairs I got in touch with the Battalion Commander. I gave him my position and reported the situation. I found that a machine gun platoon was to my right front, and I joined it. This was about 1100. My left flank platoon leader was cut off with the few men he had, and a few stragglers. He set up a small area on the beach, and held a this strip for about two days, waiting for us to push down that way.

- Q. Was there any Jap strongpoint in 227 or 230?
- A. Not when we landed. There was no heavy fire in that area. There were some Japs in 227.
- Q. Was there much opposition inland?
- A. No, mostly mortars and snipers, and possibly one or two MGs trained inland.

I was supposed to contact Company "E" on Beach Red 2, but I could see no Marines on the beach, so I tied in with Company "I" on the right.

Major Michael P. Ryan, CO, Company "L".

- Q. What was your casualty situation?
- A. The Doctor set up an aid station on the beach and was there for about three days, when he moved inland for shelter.
- Q. What was the tie-in with 3-6?
- A. They came in the day following 1-6 had took over our lines so that we could reform. We then took over the lines and 3-6 moved in behind 1-6.

NOTE: The following information was received as a result of interrogation.

We did not have fluorescent panels when we went in. The old black and white ones were distributed but the fluorescent panels came in aboard ship.

The men shed their packs on the way in, because they were too heavy, although there was little else besides rations in them. It is recommended that no packs be taken.

There were few gas masks discarded for the reason that they were too hard to remove.

The entrenching tool is an essential piece of equipment.

Rations - It is recommended that 1/3 each of C, D, and K be carried.

Ponchos were not needed in this operation, not even for the wounded. They use no cover.

There were no mines on Beach Red 1.

The 50 cal. on the AmphTracs fired but opened up too far out, dispersing the fire. It is believed however, that it keeps the enemy down.

We were about ten minutes from the beach when Naval gun fire lifted and the air was strafing the beach, just about before we landed. My first wave crossed the line of departure at about 0830. The actual operation was excellent as compared to the rehearsal.

The main cause for the delay in reaching the beach was that the transports were in area B instead of A. The transports were practically west of the Island. They were ordered to move 2000 yards north because they were in the support group positions.

HEADQUARTERS, SECOND MARINE DIVISION, FMF,  
c/o Fleet Post Office, San Francisco, Cal.

22 December, 1943.

REPORTS OF BATTALION COMMANDERS

Capt. Daniel V. McWethy, Jr., Bn-3, 1st Bn, 8th Marines.

NOTE: In the absence of Major Hays, Capt. McWethy reported for the 1st Bn, 8th Marines.

Everything went along very smoothly from Wellington to the target area. We debarked and arrived at the control vessel at about 1330, where we stayed until 0530 the next morning. We were ordered to land on Beach Red 2 immediately, and the message also stated that there was no opposition.

The first wave landed on the edge of the reef at about 0615, and when the ramps went down it received very heavy fire. I believe we received 90% of our casualties in the water. Our total casualties, were, I think, 328 including 90 missing. We lost about 250 men in the water. About 1200 we had just about all of our troops ashore, numbering about 630, but they were greatly disorganized. We encountered no heavy resistance throughout the operation, except in certain emplacements.

NOTE: The following information was received as the result of interrogation.

In coming through the water, the BARs suffered the most because of the salt water, sand and coral. The LMGs had to be worked over and were in operating condition the next day. Our 81mm mortars were gotten over the pier and all landed in good condition. We lost most of our 60mm mortars. The M-1s had to be worked over also before they fired satisfactorily.

We lost all of our TBVs in the water. All telephones were ruined. Two TBVs were landed, one of which was used for air liaison. Each assault company had 4 hand set radios (MUs) and they were all put out of commission by the salt water.

The men like the M-1 very well.

The Carbine gave considerable trouble by reason of sand causing stoppages, but water apparently didn't do any harm. It is thought that the necessary and proper cleaning gear, other than the oiler and thong case, can be carried by the individual Marine.



Capt. McWethy, 1st Bn, 8th Marines (cont'd).

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We had sufficient quantities of all types of ammunition, and it is believed that a belt of ammunition is enough for the rifleman on such an operation as the last one. The only shortage of ammunition was that of grenades. It is recommended that some sort of carrier be provided for the grenades.

It is believed that requests for ammunition from the assault units should indicate the type (mortar, rifle, grenades, etc) desired.

It is essential that a time date group be shown on all messages.

There was little trouble with the evacuation of our casualties because we used the pier, after it was cleared, for walking wounded. The collecting section from the Band was sufficient, and I believe we used very, very few combat troops as stretcher bearers.

The Battalion "4" Section should be increased, because it is felt that the present personnel is insufficient to take care of the demands.

The 2 Cargo LVTs assigned to a Battalion is believed to be definitely a sound plan.

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Major Robert H. Ruud, 3rd Bn, 8th Marines

We were boated about H+95 and were ordered almost immediately to report to the Line of Departure and that we had passed to control of CT2. We were ordered to land on Beach Red 3 to protect the left flank of LT 2-8 and to assist in an attack which was then under way. Our waves were dispatched by the control vessel at about 1200, and we drew no fire from the beach even when we got to within 400 yards. When we first hit the coral, however, we drew heavy fire, but I believe our casualties were light. The water then was about 3 feet deep.

The LaSalle substituted a couple of LCMs for LCVPs and when they came toward the pier the ramp was let down and the men disembarked in water over their heads. The ramp was let down before the LCM reached the pier.

We arrived at the pier at about 1530 and about 1730 I set up my CP on Beach Red 3. It was quiet that night, and Major Crowe and I combined parts of our Shore Parties and worked the supplies in from the pier. We received quite a bit of mortar fire on the afternoon and night of D+1 Day.

Major Robert H. Ruud, 3rd Bn, 8th Marines (cont'd).

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About 1300 on D+2 Day we boated, went to Cora, and there set up a defense until we were again boated and went aboard ship with the assault troops on D+3 Day.

Q. Did you report to CT2 when you hit the beach?

A. No, sir. I couldn't raise them on my radio, but I did have communication with them later.

Q. How many LVTs did you put to use that were lying in the area of your beach?

A. We used four.

I would like to emphasize that some sort of control boat be set up just off the beach after the planned operation to control the boats that come and go. There were many just milling around apparently not knowing what to do, and I believe that some sort of control craft in such a case is essential.

NOTE: Recommendations and answers to questions of Major Ruud are essentially the same as those given in the preceding report of Captain McWethy of the 1st Bn, 8th Marines.

HEADQUARTERS, SECOND MARINE DIVISION, FMF,  
c/O Fleet Post Office, San Francisco, Cal.

22 December, 1943.

REPORTS OF BATTALION COMMANDERS.

Major Henry P. Crowe, CO 2-8.

The loading was alright, because we had plenty of time, However, the ships were overloaded. I had more than 200 troops I could not touch and I lost my CBs. These troops included Artillery units and Headquarters detachments.

On reaching the target area there was some confusion in the boats, due, I believe, to signals. They knew no way of recognizing the HAYWARD. I believe that the Navy Personnel should be on the <sup>HAYWOOD</sup> same ship with the landing team with which they are to work, so that they can become acquainted with one another.

From the line of departure on, everything went well. We crossed the line of departure at about 0830. The LVTs did surprisingly well, except for the LVT2s which ran ahead. I believe the landing waves were too close together. When we test fired the .50 cal we had quite a bit of trouble with them. They should be test fired as late as possible before arriving in the target area. When we hit the sea wall on the beach, we could not make it over. Two LVTs found a break and went all the way in to the taxi strip where the troops disembarked. I got ashore about four minutes after my first wave hit the beach. We had no casualties out of my boat probably because the ramp would not go down. I recommend taking only LVTs and two free boats at least for the first thirty minutes, and I would get my tanks in about H+45. Half tracks would have done a world of good except that one was grounded out and another broke an axel. My 37mmx set up according to my orders, one section covered the pier and another to fire west and shout of the taxi strip.

A decision must be reached regarding Navy or Marine Corps authority in the boats.

I believe an armored bulldozer would be ideal for closing over small pill boxes.

The cooperation from the Navy combat ships particularly the destroyers assigned to my landing team for support was excellent.

Major Henry P. Crowe, cont'd.

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Q. How close were you to the beach, before Naval gunfire lifted?

A. When we were about 3000 yards out.

As far as the .50 calibers on the AmphTracs go, all reports indicate that the results indicate that the results were excellent.

Q. When did you tie in with 2-2?

A. Not until D+1 day, and then only visually.

Casualties - I had about 20 or 25 getting in and debarking. I had quite a few casualties in succeeding waves. They were hit wading in, and amounted to about eight or ten percent.

Q. Did the Japs have much organization inland?

A. Only in spots; they were in emplacements.

Q. When do you think the tanks should be sent in?

A. I would say hold the medium tanks for about 45 minutes. That will give me time to size up the situation and to employ them to the best advantage.

Q. What do you think made the Japs fold up so rapidly?

A. Naval gun fire, bombs and mortars. I think also that it was due to the constant pressure.

NOTE: The following information was received as the result of interrogation:

M-1 - The men are very enthusiastic about the M-1. We used a cleaning detail for small arms and it helped out considerably. Most of the trouble was caused by dirt and sand. In the reserve companies we had more trouble with the salt water than anything else.

Carbine - The Carbine gave us plenty of trouble because of the sand.

What we need is plenty of training with all types of weapons, grenades and demolitions that will actually be used.

It is recommended that no demolitions be given the infantry, but that all such work be done by the Engineers.

Pack - Leave the pack behind.

Rations - It is recommended that only 1/3 of D Ration plus Dextrose be taken.

Ammunition - We had plenty of grenades, but I think that a thermite grenade will help considerably. We tried the smoke type and they worked very well. There were sufficient supplies of both 60mm and 81mm mortar ammunition. The 60's worked fine. One belt of rifle ammunition is sufficient for an entire operation such as Tarawa. The LMGs fired about four or five thousand rounds and worked excellently. I think the men prefer the Lights to the Heavys because they are easier to get around.

We did not have enough stretcher bearers.

I did not have enough men in my "4" Section, exclusive of jeep drivers, and I believe should have at least 20 men in the Battalion supply.

I believe that the scout-snipers are good if training as a unit, and that all should have telescopic sights on their rifles. The telescopic sights at Tarawa did give a little trouble due to the salt water.

Communications - Signal equipment should definitely be carried in water-proofed containers. I recommend more sound power telephones. Our TBX worked fine with naval gun fire.

Q. How much water was over the reef when you went in?

A. At the very most, three feet. I believe the tide was then coming in.

HEADQUARTERS, SECOND MARINE DIVISION, FMF,  
c/o Fleet Post Office, San Francisco, Cal.

19 December, 1943.

REPORTS OF BATTALION COMMANDERS

Major William K. Jones - 1st Bn, 6th Marines:

My landing was made in rubber boats. I received orders on D+ Day at about noon to land on Green Beach south. I left the HARRIS and got back to the FELAND at about 1400.

Q. Was there any reason why you could not have executed on dispatch orders rather than be called from the FELAND to the HARRIS?

A. No, sir.

We had the boats inflated and the FELAND moved towards the transport area, but could not close to less than 12,000 yards, where we started boating. That was about 1500 or a little after, and it took us about an hour and a half. We went in to the beach with an LCVP towing 6 rubber boats and the first wave hit the beach at 1800 -- that is, Green Beach South, and the entire battalion was landed by 1835. When the first wave landed, I got the word that Green Beach South was heavily mined, so coming in in a column of companies, I changed the route of approach and landed on the North of Green Beach South. My two AmphTracks were to follow my last wave in. These were loaded with medical gear and food and water, but on coming in they lost control and we were out of communication with them. One hit a mine, and the other got on the beach and stayed there until daylight.

I contacted Ryan, who told me that he had a beach head about 100 yards inland, and that there was a Jap packet on the North Beach. I planned to attack in column of companies to the edge of the air strip and be prepared to continue the attack. At 1930 I was ordered to delay the attack until the following morning. During the night we had an air raid and lost the second AmphTrac.

Q. Did the obstacles on Green Beach bother you?

A. Yes, the barbed wire bothered the rubber boats.

Q. Would the mines have interfered with rubber boats?

A. No, I don't believe the mines would.

Q. Did the AmphTracs have trouble getting through obstacles other than the mines?

A. No. Except that as far as the pyramidal concrete obstacles were concerned, the AmphTracs did have to maneuver to go between them.

Major Jones, 1st Bn, 6th Marines - cont'd.

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Q. What did Ryan tell you was in front of him?

A. He said there was a cleared area from the end of the air strip to the beach; that all opposition was along the South coast. This was in addition to the pocket on the North beach.

I had six tanks which tried to land on Green Beach North. One grounded, and the other five were brought up to the high-water mark. There was also landed a platoon of Assault Engineers.

At 0600 the next morning I received orders from CT 2 to attack at 0800 along the South coast, with direction of attack to the east. We jumped off at about 0805 in column of companies; two flame throwers were attached to the assault company. We had little or no trouble going along the coast, and cleaned up a coastal gun at the southwest corner. We had visual contact with Kyle at 1015. In this movement the tanks preceded the riflemen by about 10 or 15 yards. By 1100 we started to pass through Kyle's battalion. At 1130 I was ordered to report to CT2, leaving the passage of the lines to Major Beamer. At HQ I was ordered to attack at 1300 on a line about even with Crowe.

We jumped off at 1300, having one medium and seven light tanks. One light was held at the CP in order to use its radio to control the rest. Shortly after 1300 we ran into heavy enemy resistance and made about 300 to 400 yards that afternoon. About 1500 I was ordered to relieve Crowe's battalion on my left with a company, and "C" Company was assigned to that mission. From 1545 on I had no contact with that company because their TBV went out of commission. With the assignment of "C" Company to relieve the CT8 battalion, all my companies were committed. "A" Company had been passed through "B" Company, which had so much trouble that "A" moved around them. "A" Company's left flank was touching the air strip. About 1830 all tanks were recalled. Companies "A" and "B" were ordered to consolidate their positions and await orders, and were held there for the night. Companies "A" and "B", particularly the latter, lost many men, mostly by machine guns.

Our line that night at 1800 was approximately between squares 212 and 213. There was a truck park about 25 yards in front of us extending almost from the turn-around to about 50 yards of the beach. I had no contact with Company "C".

Q. Did you have Heavy or Light Machine Guns?

A. I had Heavy MGs.

About 1830, Company "A" reported that they visual contact with Company "C" on the left.

Major Jones, 1st Bn, 6th Marines -(cont'd)

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About 1930 the Japs started their first attack. They numbered about 50 and made considerable noise seemingly to locate our automatic weapons and our main line of resistance. About that time, our artillery was brought to bear on them. They opened a gap between "A" and "B" Companies, having broken through our screening force. The line was then between 212 and 213 and the Japs caused considerable confusion. I committed my Mortar Platoon together with odds and end of headquarters and had them assist "A" Company in consolidating its line. I ordered company "A" to consolidate its line and in the meantime I called for NGF in squares 208 and eastward. Artillery fires 3 smoke shells as a reference for NGF. Company "C" was reported by Company "A" to be 75 yards in front of our lines. Most of the Jap pressure was against Company "B" on the coast, and my CP was in square 215. When I heard about the attack, Major Kyle backed up our line. Major Tompkins brought up 3-6 and relieved Kyle' line. From there on (about 2100) we were squared away.

About 2300 the Japs raised quite a commotion on "A" Company's sector about 100 yards south of the air strip. At the same time, about 50 Japs hit Company "B" again. Artillery was again brought to bear and the attack died down. From then on it was quiet.

Q. Was the artillery effective?

A. Artillery fire was extremely effective.

One of the difficulties was that the Japs managed to move up machine guns in and around the wrecked trucks and harassed us. Then at about 0400 they came up the beach in about a column of 3's, but our Heavy Machine Guns just worked them over. I estimate that about 150 to 200 were accounted for then.

The next morning at dawn I set the tanks to work on the pill boxes and emplacements so that I could evacuate the wounded. At 0800 3-6 passed through us and I ordered "C" Company to join me in square 213, our assembly area, where re re-watered and prepared for attack on order. At 1045 I reported to CT 6 that we were ready to resume attack. We remained in the assembly area until 1500 that afternoon, when we were ordered to defend the South beach from the air strip to the eastern tip of the island. All companies had machine gun platoons attached. That night we got about 35 Japs. Some of our men were bayoneted and wounded by grenades by Japs coming out in 2's and 3's and making small sorties.

The next day we were ordered to send a Company to ELLA, and Campaign Durfee with Company "A" went there.

I did not employ my 37mm's at all.



Q. What were your casualties?

A. Slightly over 200. I had 3 officers killed and 6 wounded; and 52 enlisted killed and 138 wounded.

The supply situation was excellent, and it worked perfect as far as the Division SP was concerned, but I could have used some of the SP to evacuate the wounded. I could have also used part of the SP to reinforce my line that night.

Q. What do your people think of the Carbine?

A. They like it.

Q. Does it function OK?

A. As a whole, yes. Occasionally sand will result in a stoppage.

Q. How do your machine gunners feel about the Carbine?

A. Every man who has a two-handed job to do, such as the Nos. 1 and 2 of the MG squad and also the Corpsmen, would prefer a pistol to the carbine.

Q. Would you have like to have some smoke grenades?

A. Yes, very much so.

The 60mm and 81mm mortars were very effective, and Heavy MGs were carried by hand with no trouble keeping up.

The men do not have the confidence in the LMG that they do in the Heavy. Actually, they feel that it was the Heavies that saved them that night.

As far as the pack is concerned, I would rather not take any. We didn't eat for 36 hours and the rations made up most of the weight.

It is thought that a tube of salt tablets (to fit in the first aid pouch) would help considerably to ward off heat exhaustion. Salting the water in the canteen will probably not solve the situation because the initial swallow creates a distaste for future swallows.

The M-1 worked very well and the men like it.

I would like to recommend that the SP for a beach be made available only to the Division or only to the Battalion using it.

(After some discussion here it was generally agreed that the SP should consist of an organized unit, and trained as such, to be used where needed in an emergency).

Major Jones, 1st Bn, 6th Marines (cont'd)

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Something went wrong with the little MP Radio sets.

Lieutenant Colonel Kenneth F. McLeod, 3rd Bn, 6th Marines:

My battalion was boated about 1600 on D+1 Day. Upon arriving at the control vessel, both of my AmphTracs were missing. By this time it was dark, and I gathered my Company Commanders, but Commodore McGovern ordered them off. I stayed aboard. The Navy personnel of the boat division were manning their own TBY, and, thinking we were going to lie there all night, shut off their sets. Consequently I was out of communication with my assault waves all night. Fortunately we were not ordered to land at dark but to rendezvous at Green Beach at 0800. Shortly after 0800 we were ordered to land at Green Beach North because Green Beach South was heavily mined. We waded ashore because the tide was low. I myself got in about 1130 while the remainder of the battalion was in at 1400. I received orders to supplement Ryan's line.

Q. Where did those orders come from?

A. That is not quite clear. I'm sure it was CT2 because I had been receiving orders from CT2.

About 1715 I was ordered to move up in rear of 1-6 at area 226. I had three casualties from shippers on the way and by 1900 we were shaken down. About 1930 we were ordered to send one company to help 1-6. This one company went as ordered, and the rest of us went into the area 212-215. At 0300 I received word that we would be back under CT6 and that we would relieve 1-6 and continue the attack to the east to secure the remainder of the island. Our first objective was the first tank trap about 150 yards in front of 1-6. I picked that as our objective because I thought that it would be the first place we would meet any determined opposition to our advance. However, we had no trouble at all and I continued the attack. At about areas 207-208 Company "I" ran into a strong emplacement. I left "I" Company to take care of the emplacement while the remainder of the battalion moved to the end of the island. The only opposition was a few snipers. At no time was there any determined defense. I did not use my artillery at all, and called for naval gunfire for only about 5 minutes, which was all the support fire used by me. We used flame throwers, and could have used more. Medium tanks were excellent. My light tanks didn't fire a shot.

I have the same idea as Jones about the SP. My "4" came ashore with about 30 men and they proved invaluable carrying supplies. My supplies were furnished from Division, and I had no hitch whatsoever in getting them.

I defended the opposite coast from that of Jones.

My casualties were 11 killed and 31 wounded.

I did not fire a machine gun out of my Weapons Company.

I found that my communications to CT2 were in good order, but not so with CT6.

The only remark I have to make about prisoners is that on one occasion a Korean laborer told us that there were a group of Japs in a dugout. We told him to tell them to come out and surrender. He did so and came back with about 6 prisoners. That would indicate that Japanese-speaking personnel could be used in the same manner.

I recommend that some sort of communication be established between the infantry and the tanks, because I had to withhold a tank from employment for the sole purpose of using its radio for communication with the others.

Back to landing craft, I noticed that only about one out of every three boats or craft had anchors, and that during the night they would drift out on the reef.

I found also that Benzedrine tablets came in quite handy.

Not a single boat wave officer had his designating light (such as red for the 1st wave; blue for the 2nd wave, etc).

HEADQUARTERS, SECOND MARINE DIVISION, FMF,  
c/o Fleet Post Office, San Francisco, Cal.

22 December 1943.

REPORTS OF BATTALION COMMANDERS

Major Henry G. Lawrence Jr., CO, AmphTrac Battalion.

At Suva the experiments of landing AmphTracs over Coral reefs proved successful.

Just before we left Wellington for the target area, the Navy put the Tracs over the side and the coxwains, not being familiar with the mechanism, played hell with the timing gear and we had to go ashore again for more.

At the first practice landing at Efate, we got most of the Tracs in, and in the next landing which was considerably better we got 42 ashore initially. At this time I gave final instructions to my men, saying that the Navy would be in control up to the line of departure, and, that all AmphTracs Officers would take orders from the landing troops.

Before we left Wellington a detail went to Samoa to get 50 new LVT2s, which were fitted with armor plate for the cab for the protection of the driver against small arms fire. These Tracs were loaded on LSTs which proved to be the best type of craft. Seventeen "Buffaloes" can be put on the lower deck, and I believe the top deck could be used to take more Tracs, moving the ventilators. I believe the method of loading the AmphTracs from boats is sound.

Captain McGovern put an Ensign in each Trac during the rehearsal, but decided against that on D-day because he did not have them to spare.

On going in and reaching the pier we drew light fire from the shore, and about half way in from the end of the pier the fire became extremely heavy. The wire barricade did not at all prove to be an obstacle to the Tracs. As far as I know no deliberate attempt was made to pull up the wire. There were mines on Beach Red 2 because we hauled a couple of Trac loads away and dumped them in deep water.

Some of the tracs went up and over the sea wall, one or two getting completely in to the taxi strip. On Beach Red 3 only one out of fourteen did not reach the beach because of enemy fire. Threat one received a direct hit in the belly about 100 yards off shore.

Major Henry G. Lawrence cont'd.

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The Tracs were used to a great advantage in hauling ammunition and supplies to the beach, and likewise to evacuate the wounded both from the front lines to the beach and from the beach to the ships. The Navy personnel on the warships were very cooperative and helped out in any way they could.

We should have, by all means, some sort of radio communication in each AmphTrac, perhaps an RU/GF and a smaller portable one for an emergency.

A number of Tracs became worn and damaged throughout the operation and it is believed that a vessel such as an LST should be made available for repairs and maintenance, and at the same time, used as a control point.

It is urgently recommended that each AmphTrac be equipped with a manually operated bilge pump.

Casualties - In the entire Battalion there were 34 officers and men killed; 100 wounded; and 68 missing.

At the end of the operation there were a total of 42 Amph Tracs which were serviceable.

We experienced some difficulty in our contacts with the Acorn units. We were unable to get working parties from them to handle their own supplies, and there was a great delay in going through them to get clothing and food etc.

Q. How were the men who joined you at the last moment?  
A. They were excellent men and did a wonderful job. I would like to have every one of those men back with me. There were about 39 in all.

Q. Did you turn over your motors every day on the way to the target area?  
A. Yes, of the ones on deck. We disconnected the batteries of those in the hold.

We test fired the .50 calibers on some but not all, because some of the ships would not permit it. I believe that on such an operation the .50 calibers we now have should not be taken because there are too many jams. Also, there were no regular gunners for these weapons. I think that the guns should be inside the tractors, or that a shield be provided for the gunners.

Q. What do you think of the life of the AmphTrac motor?  
A. With the maintenance available they should last through an entire operation.

Major Henry P. Lawrence cont'd

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Q. How did you arrange for reliefs of the drivers?

A. That was no problem because the men from the Tracs which were knocked out were sufficient. In fact some of the drivers joined the infantry.

Q. Do you think reserve rations in the Tracs is desirable?

A. Yes, particularly when they are ground out and adrift.

All of the 24 officers we had at Wellington landed in the assault wave for the reason that we had to get in and be able to set up a maintenance shop.

The armor plate furnished and fitted by the CBs at Funafuti did stop the .25 caliber, but the .32 caliber would penetrate it.

It is highly recommended that a set of stretchers be included in the AmphTracs to facilitate in the handling and evacuation of casualties. As it was, we improvised racks in the Tracs, using 2X4s on which to place the stretchers.

Either armor plate or self-sealing gas tanks for protection and safety are highly desirable.

Something has got to be done about the mines, particularly the big ones which are powerful enough to blow the bow off of a Trac. If all beaches had been mined we would never have gotten in.

HEADQUARTERS, SECOND MARINE DIVISION, FMF  
c/o Fleet Post Office, San Francisco, Cal.

22 December, 1943.

REPORTS OF BATTALION COMMANDERS

Lieutenant Colonel Presley M. Rixey, CO,1-10

We landed on Helen with few casualties. We could shoot on the left flank because of the mass and also because of the trees. The TBYS worked excellently as long as they were kept dry. One of our Packs was used to knock out a block house which took 20 rounds. Early in the afternoon we had all our pack Howitzers ashore with one unit of fire. We used only charge 1, because most of our ranges were around 1000 yards. We fired about a total of 2400 rounds, and used air bursts during the counter attack by the Japs.

We landed no transportation initially, because the operation did not require it. We need rubber tires on our T4 carts to be of any use at all. Also, we should have two radio jeeps as soon as we can, and they should be of the amphibious type.

The equipment we landed with was too heavy, and it is recommended, that artillery personnel on such an operation be landed with only arms and ammunition; a K ration in the pocket; one canteen of water; and no pack at all. I believe that if a smoke screen had been layed, casualties would have been much fewer.

I feel that there was poor control on the part of junior officers and NCOs over the men landing from LCVPs. I recommend that in schools, leadership and control of groups be stressed.

The Naval gun fire should be given credit for wonderful support, except that I think if more rounds had been put in the water, the main center of impact would have been on the beach positions.

Our communication equipment must be water-proofed, and TBX channels should be farther separated. We should like to have Army generators which open up into a seat for the operator. The TBX is too unwieldy and should be reduced in size, and a more compact field phone should be adopted.

We received fine cooperation from the shore parties, and rubber boats were put to good use in landing Pack Howitzers.

I recommend that all our people be armed with a pistol. We would like also to have BARs. The Carbine will not function with sand and dust.

Lieutenant Colonel Presley M. Rixey, cont'd

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I am convinced that each Artillery Battalion should have a scout-sniper squad armed with flame throwers and demolitions to take care of snipers in our area.

I also recommend very highly more school in which all personnel are given studies of the employment and capabilities of all arms of our own units.

Planes should strafe parrallel to the front lines.

It is recommended that fewer packs and less clothing be taken and that the transport quartermaster issue emergency clothing upon return to the ship. This should also apply to 782 equipment.

White phosphorous shells were used at night to mark points of fire for the DDs.

We also used a special paper for writing at night during blackouts.



HEADQUARTERS, SECOND MARINE DIVISION, FMF,  
c/o Fleet Post Office, San Francisco, Cal.

22 December 1943.

REPORTS OF BATTALION COMMANDERS.

Lieutenant Colonel Chester J. Salazar, Shore Party Commander,  
(CO, 2-18).

The Shore Party SOP is basically sound as presently set up, but had to be discarded on this operation.

Upon arriving at the pier of the afternoon of D Day, the shore party was scattered throughout the vicinity and I sent an officer to size up the situation. It was not until dark that I contacted the CP of CT2. By that time supplies began coming in and Major Cooper set up a system of sending supplies forward, designating routes and types of transportation. The Shore Party was used for operating bulldozers and for demolition purposes, which is not the function of the Shore Party. Our contact with the Navy was wonderful. The control vessel however was out of order in that they wanted to run the Shore Party.

One of the difficulties we had was that the 75mm artillery ammunition and 81mm mortar ammunition were too hard to distinguish because of the similar type package, and it is recommended that they be marked more plainly.

Another thing was that certain items of supply were coming in too early, some of the boxes containing mops and blanco. I think the QM Personnel should take over the dumps much sooner than they did, because it is extremely hard for the Shore Party personnel to pick out the supplies required.

The Division Shore Party Commander should be informed as to where the various Shore Parties are. Major Vogt and his Executive Officer did not land at all, and I could have used them.

Shore Parties should be assigned certain beaches on which to operate and not to certain combat units.

Communications - We had a Navy radio hooked up with the control vessel. We also had a smaller one which eventually tied in with CT2. All of our communications, as far as I know, were being used to assist the Division.

I recommend that the Shore Party be taken away from the Engineers and given to the Service Troops.

I think the roller system is good and I have recommended it in my report.

Lieutenant Colonel Chester J. Salazar, cont'd.

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Q. Do you think you had enough personnel in your Shore Party?  
A. Yes, The personnel as assigned was sufficient, but we were whittled down by taking the replacements away from us at an early stage.

Q. Do you think the Beachmaster should remain as the Port Director?  
A. Yes, I definitely think so. Also, the beach party should be organized to remain during the occupation. I also think that the transports should leave their boats and personnel to form the boat pool.

(NOTE): AT THIS POINT A GENERAL DISCUSSION OCCURED AS TO WHETHER OR NOT THE BOAT POOL SHOULD BE FURNISHED BY THE TRANSPORTS OR BROUGHT IN AS AN ORGANIZED UNIT.

Major George L. H. Cooper, Bn-3, 1-18.

I was to have Company "I", 8th Marines as a shore party, but it was immediately put into the front lines.

I went to Beach Red 2, which was covered by enemy fire and helped Major Johnson of the 2nd Marines and Captain Lawrence of the AmphTracs to set up dumps, which were limited to the edge of the beach. There was little or no organization at the time, and in addition the beach was being used as a rest area for troops being relieved. As the area became more under control we moved our dumps inland until finally we reached the taxi strip.

We operated distillation plants on the beach by the boat basin and I don't believe there was any serious shortage of water at any time.

Q. Did you have any Shore Party equipment not suitable for your needs?  
A. No, we actually had more than we needed because seven bulldozers landed on that one beach instead of the one only which was assigned to it.

It is highly recommended that the D-6 bulldozer be furnished instead of the TD9 for heavy work ashore. It is also recommended that a portable pier be furnished for future operations. It is believed that the "Cherry-Picker" type of bulldozer with the "A" frame would be a great help in lifting drums of gas and oil. It is also thought that control boats would be better than beach markers if the personnel were properly indoctrinated.

It was almost impossible to work with pallets but we did use sleds, some of which were towed in over the reef at low tide by tractors.

Major George H. L. Cooper cont'd.

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It is recommended that Diesel Engines be used in tractors which are to operate in the water.

HEADQUARTERS, SECOND MARINE DIVISION, FMF.  
c/o Fleet Post Office, San Francisco, Cal.

22 December 1943.  
REPORT OF BATTALION COMMANDERS

Major Charles W. McCoy, CO, Second Tank Battalion.

The use of the LSD was very successful. Our reconnaissance party landed at H:14 on Beach Red 1, but they had no time to reconnoiter Beach Red 3. The channel markers which had been set up floated away and the reconnaissance party acted as markers. The sea wall was the most effective obstacle the Japs had, and the Engineers had to blow out a section for the tanks to go through. In a fight between a Jap light tank and one of our mediums, they fired about simultaneously and both were knocked out.

- Q. How deep was the water when you landed?  
A. On Beach Red 1 it was about five feet in places. On Beach Red 3 it was lower because they were able to get in closer.

It is believed that some of the tanks were knocked out by magnetic mines because there were some on the Island. I think others were knocked out by a Jap gun probably of a 75mm caliber.

Light tanks - The light tanks landed on Beach Red 2, and as they arrived they were assigned to LTs as called for.

Some mediums received numerous hits with about a 40mm which, although did not knock any, penetrated the sides of the tanks.

It is recommended that for prolonged operations spare tank crews be made available. We did not lose a man inside the tanks but most of them were lost getting out and trying to communicate with the infantry.

Communications - Communication in the medium tanks was poor. We lost some radios in the light tanks because of salt water. Likewise, several light tanks were ground out by salt water.

The 37mm gun is definitely not heavy enough to knock out the type of pill boxes encountered at Tarawa. It is necessary that we get ammunition in as early as possible.

NOTE: The following information was received as a result of interrogation:

There is no telephone outlet on the medium tank. It is recommended that each assault LT commander have a tank liaison man with facilities to communicate with tanks.

I believe the tanks were landed at the right time, and that all would have gotten in if it had been at low tide.

The best method of target designation in such an operation is by tracer, or perhaps a burst from a machine gun or other automatic weapon. The tank can take care of targets if designated.

It is believed that flame throwers on light tanks would have worked extremely well.

The RU/GF is a good radio, but trouble was experienced with the dynamotor.

Total casualties for the battalion were 14 dead, 28 wounded, and about 15 missing.

At the end of the operation there were two mediums and 15 lights that were servicable. Out of a total of 36 tanks in all 29 were recovered.

HEADQUARTERS  
2d AMPH TRAC BN, 2d MAR DIV  
FMF, IN THE FIELD.

December 22, 1943.

From: CO.  
To: D-3.

1. In accordance with verbal instructions from your office, the following recommendations and opinions are submitted:

a. All amphibian tractors that are to be used for landing assault troops must be armored so as to protect crew and troops during assault phases on a landing operation. Maximum armor should be placed on the cab, bow, belly and all areas of the tractor exposed to frontal or flank fire. Armor installed must be capable of repelling small arm fire up to and including heavy machine gun fire.

b. Unless the aviation type fifty caliber machine guns are available for amphibian tractors, then it is believed that it would be advisable to replace the fifty caliber M-2 machine gun now being used with the thirty caliber 1919-A4 Machine Gun.

c. Mount two (2) thirty caliber machine guns on ball mounts in the tractor cab, firing over the bow of the tractor. This would mean minor changes in the construction of the tractor cab. If the guns are to be mounted in the cargo compartment they should be mounted on some type of pedestal mount, and it is absolutely necessary that an armor shield, giving all-around protection for the gunner, be provided.

d. Periscopes be provided for the tractor driver, the gunner in the cab, and, if possible, a periscope in the cargo compartment for the crew chief.

e. All tractors should be equipped with a two way radio incorporating I.C.S. The TCS 4 and 5 meet these requirements.

f. All tractors must be equipped with self-sealing gas tanks.

g. All tractors should be equipped to permit the use of flame throwers

h. Have an LST equipped to take care of second and third echelon repairs. This LST could be used initially as a control point for all tractors. Also, have a refueling station set up here. In addition, fit out an LCM with a maintenance crew and parts to be used as amobile repair boat to take care of first echelon repairs just off the beaches. Also, have two or three salvage boats to pull in sinking tractors and tractors that are floating out to sea. This would be a means to get them back to the LST and repair them.

i. When organizations need tractors to haul equipment and supplies during any phase of an operation that a request be sent through the proper channels. There were many instances where tractors had been sent on specific missions and enroute they were "Appropriated" and kept for several days. The Amphibian Tractor Bn. did not know what had happened to them until they returned. If they had been requested through proper channels, then a more equitable distribution could have been made and more efficient operation could have been obtained.

j. The maintenance section of an Amph Trac Bn should be increased and organized along the same lines as the maintenance section in a Light Tank Bn. The increase in personnel is requested because there are more tractors in an Amph Trac Bn than there are tanks in a Light Tank Bn.

k. That all new type amphibian tractors be provided with a manually operated bilge pump in addition to the present bilge pump.

l. Allgasoline tanks should have screw caps.

m. Water Tight compartments in each pontoon be increased from five (5) to ten (10).

n. Different type lubrication fitting for clutch linkage. The present type "freezes".

o. Solid weld around all cleats.

p. Reinforce base of track return idler.

q. Increase length of gear shift lever.

2. The above recommendations represent facts and opinions gained from experiences in recent operations. They are not complete due to the fact that the Bn. has never had the LVT(2) for training, but only used them for the landing at TARAWA. After they have been used for training by this Bn., it is believed that more recommendations can be made.

HENRY G. LAWRENCE, Jr.

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HEADQUARTERS  
2D Amph TRAC BN, 2D MAR DIV,  
FMF, IN THE FIELD

December 23, 1943

From: CO  
To: D-3.

1. As requested by 5th Phib Corps dispatch #292350, the following information concerning LVTs which were used in the GALVANIC operation is herewith furnished.

a. Seventy-five (75) LVT(1)s and fifty (50) LVT(2)s were used for the landing on BETIO ISLAND, TARAWA ATOLL. A total of one hundred twenty five (125) LVTs used for the operation.

b. Below is given as accurate an account as possible of the seventy-five (75) LVT(1)s used for the landing at TARAWA:

(1) Three (3) LVT(1)s - Running - loaded aboard LSTs when this Bn left BETIO ISLAND 5Dec43.

(2) Two (2) LVT(1)s - Running - Never unloaded from the BELLATRIX - Picked up by this Bn upon arrival at HILO.

(3) Fourteen (14) LVT(1)s - Running - turned over to Bn of 6th Mar who remained on TARAWA as garrison troops.

(4) Fourteen (14) LVT(1)s - Out of action - Known sunk at sea or in the lagoon. Hulls of tractors were pierced by small arm, machine gun, mortar, grenade, and anti-boat gun projectiles as there were no facilities to weld holes in the hulls these tractors filled with water, motor was drowned out, and the tractor eventually sunk. A few of these tractors sank the first day, but the bulk of them operated several days before going out of action.

(5) Thirty-one (31) LVT(1)s - Out of action. Left in a salvage area on the beach at BETIO. These tractors were towed to the salvage area from various points along the beach and on the reef. From observation and inspection of hulls of these tractors it is believed that they were put out of action as listed below.

20 LVT(1)s - Small arm, machine gun, mortar, grenade, and anti-boat gun projectiles hitting the motors, ignited the fuel tanks, and in some cases the tractors were eventually stopped by projectiles hitting a vital part of the motor; if it had been possible to replace these parts then the tractor could have been continued in action. But as it worked out the tractor had to be abandoned and at high tide the tractor filled with



water from holes in the hull and became partly or wholly submerged.

7 LVT(1)s - Fuel tanks ignited by small arm, machine gun, mortar, grenade, and anti-boat projectiles. The tractors burned on the beach after landing initially and discharging troops.

4 LVT(1)s - Out of action due to mechanical failures. None of these mechanical failures were experienced on the initial landing, and most of them happened after D-day.

(6) Ten (10) LVT(1)s - Out of action - Left at various points on the beach. It was impossible to tow them to the salvage area. These tractors were put out of action by small arm, machine gun, mortar, grenade, and anti-boat gun projectiles.

(7) One (1) LVT(1) - Out of action - demolished by mine in wire baracade on GREEN Beach. This tractor hit the mine the night of D-day.

c. Recapitulation of Seventy-five (75) LVT(1)s

- 3 LVT(1)s - Running - Returned from TARAWA with Bn.
- 2 LVT(1)s - Running - Left on BELLATRIX. Picked up at HILO.
- 14 LVT(1)s - Running - Turned over to 6th Marines.
- 14 LVT(1)s - Out of action - Sunk at sea from holes caused by gunfire.
- 20 LVT(1)s - Out of action - On reef, filled with water from holes in hull, etc.
- 7 LVT(1)s - Out of action - Burned on beach. Gunfire ignited fuel tanks.
- 4 LVT(1)s - Out of action - Mechanical failures.
- 10 LVT(1)s - Out of action - On beach from all types gunfire.
- 1 LVT(1) - Out of action - Demolished by mine.

19 LVT(1)s running  
56 LVT(1)s out of action

75 - Total LVT(1)s

d. Below is given as accurate an account as possible of the fifty (50) LVT(2)s used for the landing at TARAWA.

(1) Twelve (12) LVT(2)s - Running - loaded aboard LSTs when this Bn left BETIO 5Dec43.

(2) Eight (8) LVT(2)s - Out of action - Loaded aboard LSTs when Bn left BETIO ISLAND. Four of these were out of action from gunfire (all types) and four from mechanical failures.

(3) Four (4) LVT(2)s - Running - Used for landing at APAMAMA. Left with Garrison Troops on APAMAMA ATOLL.

(4) Twenty-one (21) LVT(2)s - Out of action - Sunk at sea and lagoon. Hulls pierced by small arm, machine gun, grenade, mortar, anti-boat projectiles. No facilities to weld up holes. Some sank the first day but many operated several days before sinking.

(5) One (1) LVT(2) - Out of action - Burned on reef. Machine gun fire ignited fuel tanks.

(6) Two (2) LVT(2)s - Out of action - On reef due to small arms and machine gun fire.

(7) One (1) LVT(2) - Out of action - Demolished by mine in wire baracade on GREEN Beach. This tractor hit the mine the night of D plus 1.

(8) One (1) LVT(2) - Out of action - Burned on beach. Machine gun fire ignited fuel tanks.

e. Recapitulation of fifty (50) LVT(2)s.

12 LVT(2)s - Running - Returned from TARAWA with Bn.

4 LVT(2)s - Running - turned over to garrison troops APAMAMA.

8 LVT(2)s - Out of action - four from gunfire four mechanical failures. Returned from TARAWA with Bn.

21 LVT(2)s - Out of action - Sunk at sea and in lagoon from holes in hull caused by all types of gunfire.

1 LVT(2) - Out of action - On reef burned. Machine gun fire ignited fuel tanks.

2 LVT(2)s - Out of action - On reef due to small arm and machine gun fire.

1 LVT(2) - Out of action - Demolished by mine.

1 LVT(2) - Out of action - On beach, burned. Machine gun fire ignited fuel tanks.

16 LVT(2)s running  
34 LVT(2)s out of action

50 Total LVT(2)s.

f. Recapitulation of one hundred and twenty-five (125) LVTs used for landings in GALVANIC Operation:

RUNNING

35 LVTs - (19 LVT(1)s - 16 LVT(2)s)

OUT OF ACTION

35 LVTs - (14 LVT(1)s - 21 LVT(2)s) -  
Sunk at sea or in lagoon  
from holes in hull from  
all types of gunfire.

26 LVTs - (20 LVT(1)s - 6 LVT(2)s)  
Filled with water at high tide  
on reef from holes in hull from  
all types gunfire.

9 LVTs - (7 LVT(1)s - 2LVT(2)s)  
Burned from gunfire igniting  
fuel tanks.

8 LVTs - (4 LVT(1)s - 4 LVT(2)s) Mech-  
anical failures. None on  
initial landing.

2 LVTs - (1 LVT(1) - 1 LVT(2)) Demolished  
by mines in baricade on GREEN  
Beach.

10 LVTs - (10)LVT(1)s - Knocked out by  
all types gun fire on beach.

125 TOTAL LVTs.

2. It is the opinion of this office that if the present type Amphibian Tractor (LVT(1), LVT(2)) is to be used to land assault troops and to haul supplies in later phase of the operation then there should be three hundred (300) tractors furnished to a Marine Division and replenishment should be seventy-five (75) percent. Having never had any experience with an armored vehicle of this type no positive recommendations can be made, but the initial allowance would have to be the same. It is believed that replenishment percentage would be very much less. Possibly not over thirty (30) percent.

H. G. LAWRENCE, JR.

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HEADQUARTERS, SECOND MARINE DIVISION, FMF,  
c/o Fleet Post Office, San Francisco, Cal.

22 December, 1943.

REPORT OF MEDICAL OFFICERS

NOTE: As the result of a previous conference of Medical Officers, Lieutenant Commander Donald R. Nelson, USNR, R Surgeon of the Second Marines, presented the following in the form of recommendations:

Medical supplies should be limited to the amount actually required initially, such as morphine in water-proof cans, sulpanilamide, battle dressings, adhesive tape, plasma, litters and Navy splints.

Doctors and Corpsmen should be armed with a pistol, preferably with a shoulder holster.

ALL MEDICAL SUPPLIES SHOULD BE BROUGHT ASHORE, EITHER CARRIED OR FLOATED, IN WATER-PROOF BAGS.

A new medical kit should be designed or the present one improved to afford easy access to all contents. It is suggested that the type used by the Parachutists be adopted.

AmphTracs. should be equipped with racks to hold stretchers.

Rubber boats were put to good use in taking care of casualties.

The present water cans are unsatisfactory. Enamel lined cans should solve this problem and eliminate the rust factor.

All water should be salted to one-tenth to 1% as prescribed by BuM&S.

Benzedrine tablets should be furnished each man to ward off fatigue.

Rations should consist of a D ration or a portion of hard candy.

A great deal of medical supplies are lost due to pilferage in a search for alcohol and brandy. Word should be passed to the troops that these items are not carried in the medical supplies.

Troops should be furnished with lipstick for chapped lips.

Doctors should be shuffled in the Division so that the younger ones are assigned to combat units.

A free boat with two Corpsmen should be assigned to each CT to take care of casualties in boats which are just milling around.

The Shore Party Medical Section should be divided amongst all ships with combat troops aboard in order to take care of the casualties that come aboard. A Corpman is preferable to a Marine for keeping records aboard ship, and perhaps the Medical Battalion could also be used for this job.

Some APHs should be assigned to the task force.

Syrettes should be in a press-proof, crush-proof box.

Amphibious jeep ambulances should be experimented on before being furnished the Medical Sections.

Enemy medical supplies and equipment should not be retained by individuals as souvenirs but turned in to the Medical Section for use.

DOG TAGS SHOULD BE WORN BY ALL HANDS, ONE AROUND THE NECK AND ONE ON THE WRIST . LOSS OF, AND FAILURE TO WEAR DOG TAGS SHOULD BE MADE A DISCIPLINARY OFFENSE.

Medical officers should be informed of the nature of the terrain involved in the operation in order to assist them in deciding what supplies and equipment to take.

Transports should be better equipped to receive casualties, and should not, if at all possible, refuse to take on wounded.

MEDICAL COMPANIES SHOULD BE COMPRISED 100% OF NAVY PERSONNEL. MARINES AS PRESENTLY ASSIGNED HAVE NO ROOM FOR PROMOTION.

Dental Officers are not needed ashore.

Medical Officers and line officers should arrange for conferences to acquaint themselves with each other and to recognize mutual problems.

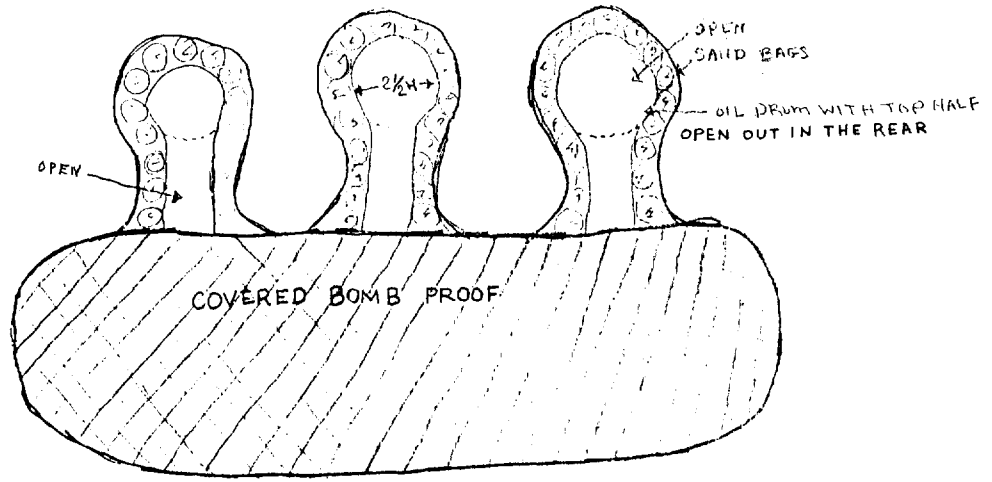
A SOP for operation aboard ship should be set up.

A special burying detail should be set up for that particular job.

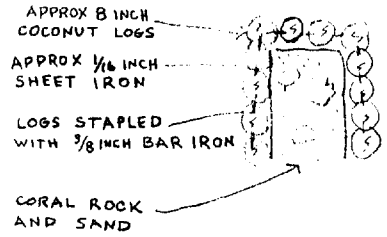
The manner of hoisting patients aboard ship should be improved.

Under normal conditions, the present number of stretcher bearers is adequate, although in this operation the number assigned should have been doubled because of the heavy casualties.

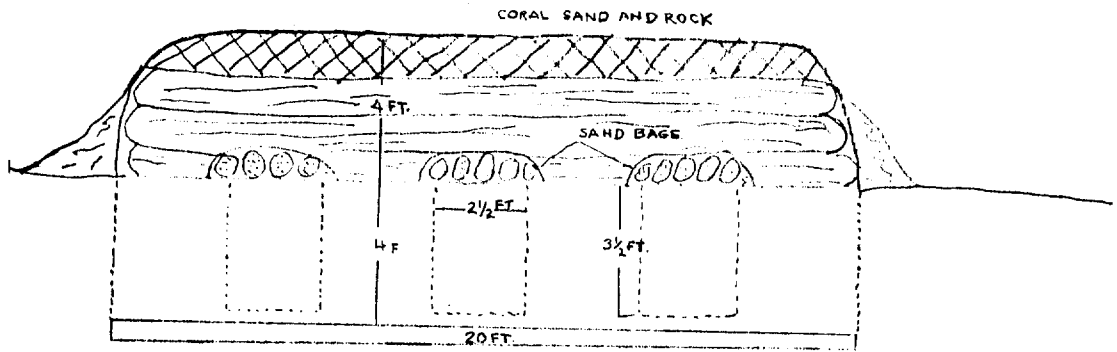
# STANDING TYPE FIRING PITS



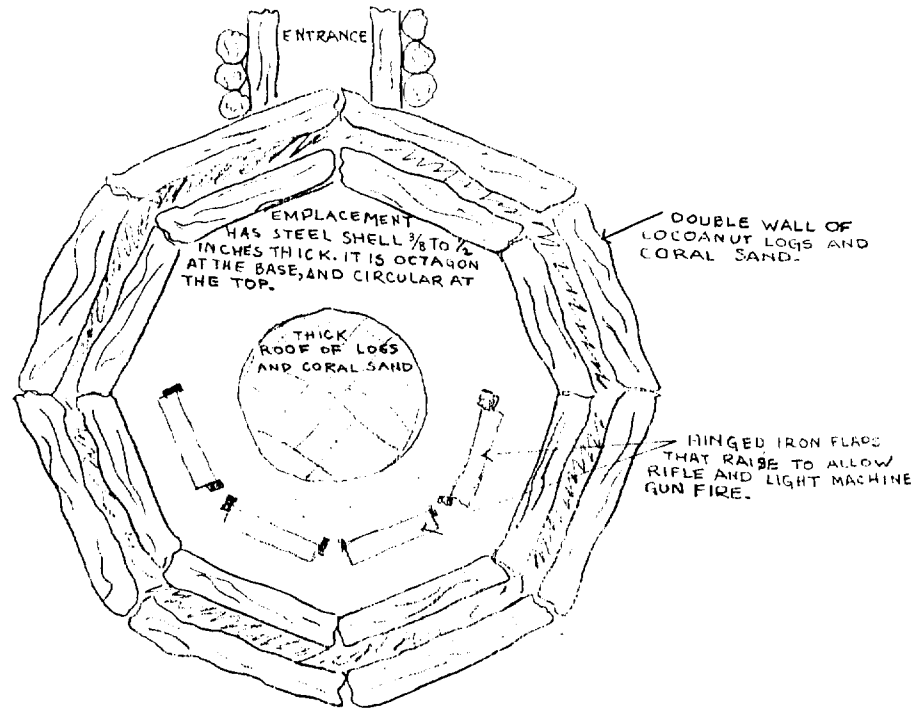
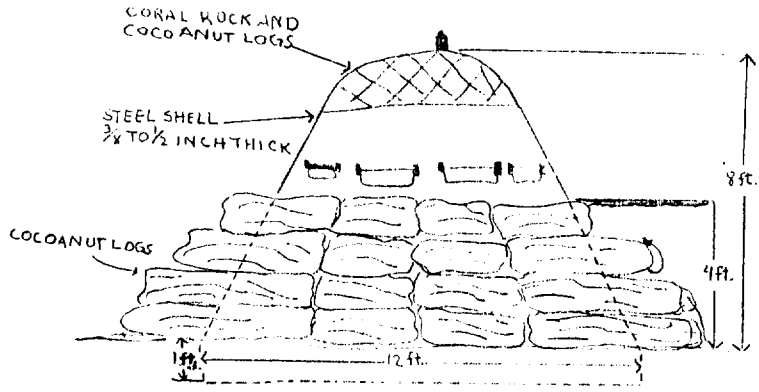
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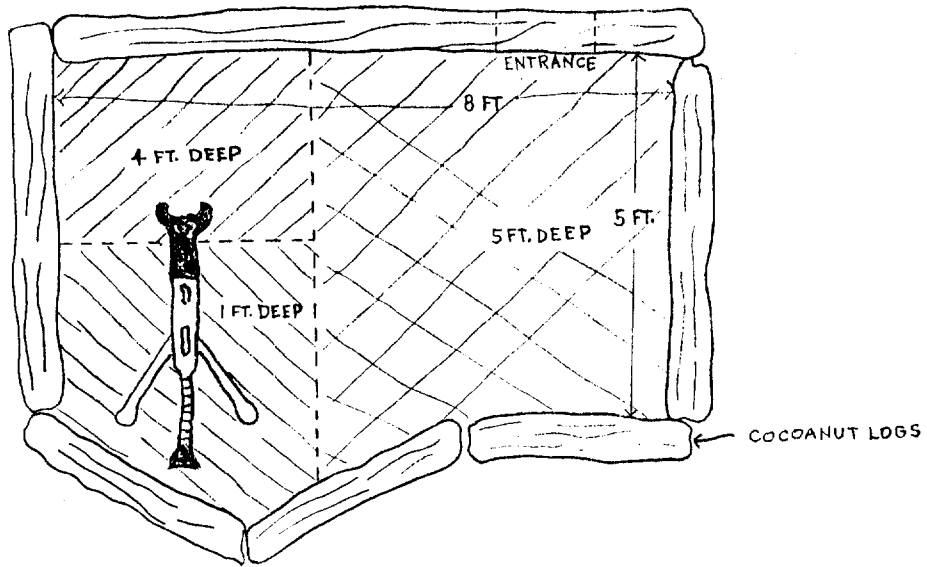


( IN GROUPS OF THREE OR FIVE )

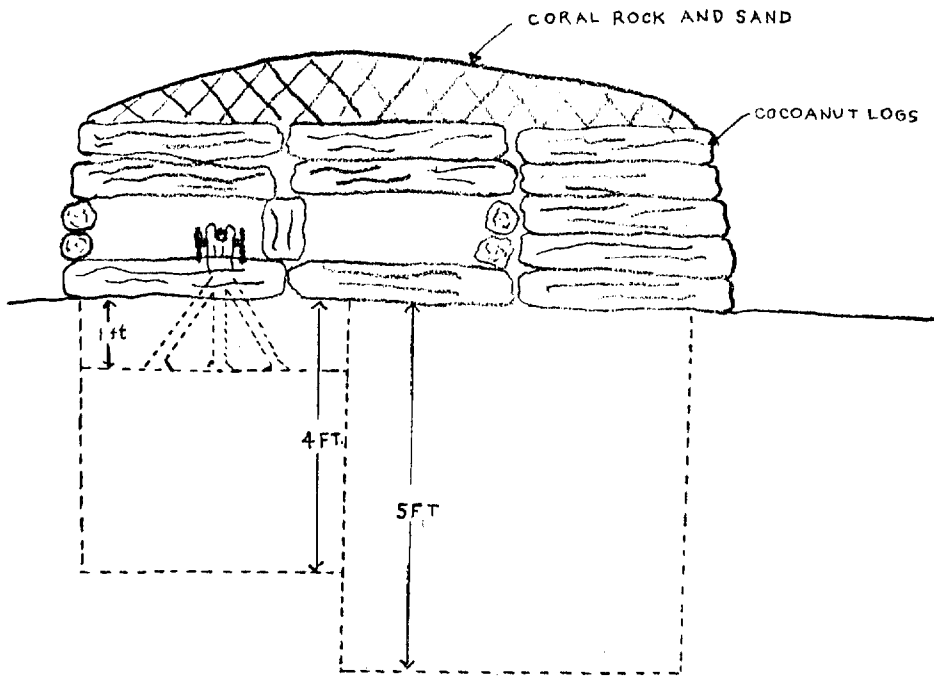


STEEL TYPE EMPLACEMENT USED FOR RIFLEMEN OR LIGHT MACHINE GUN



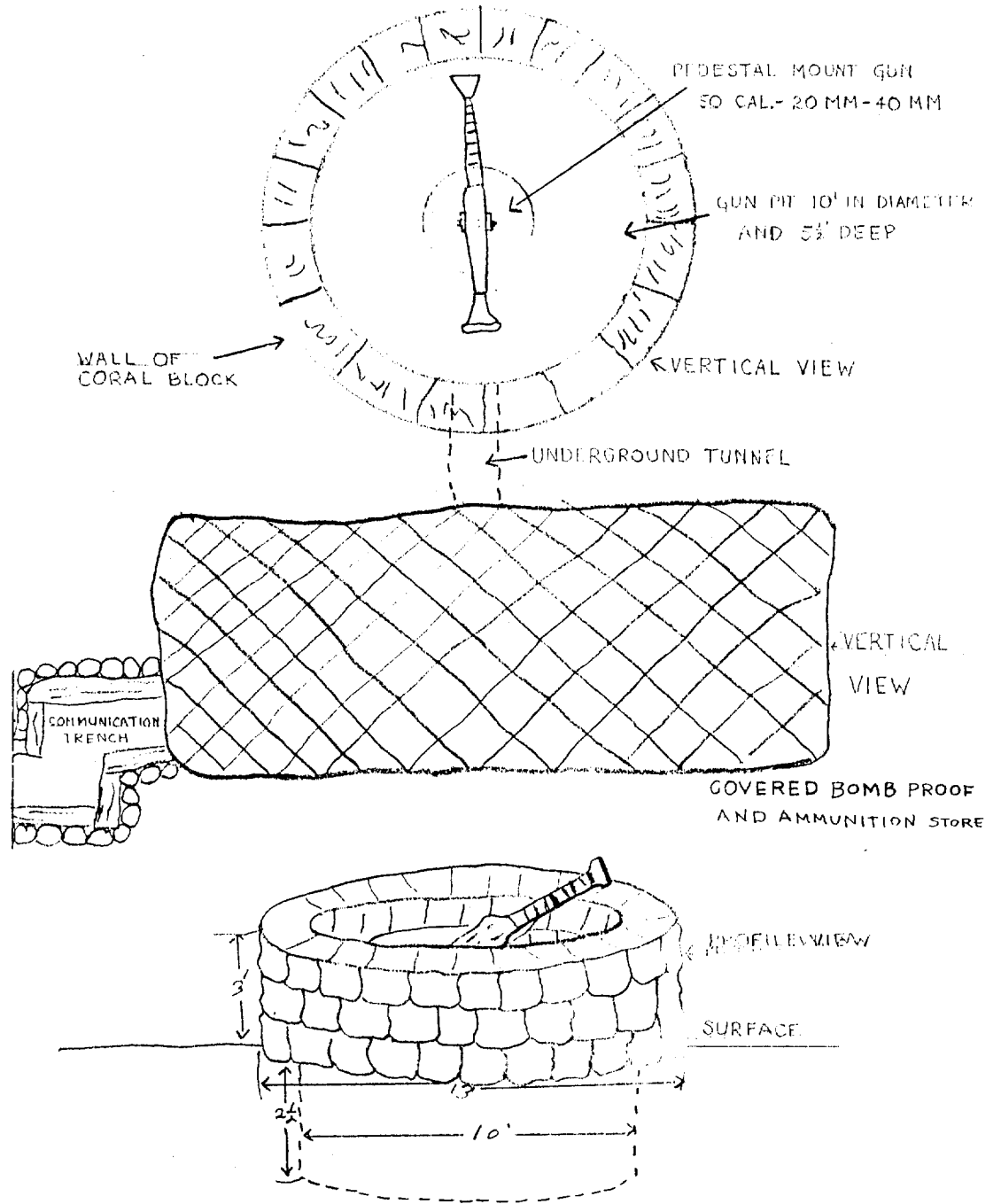


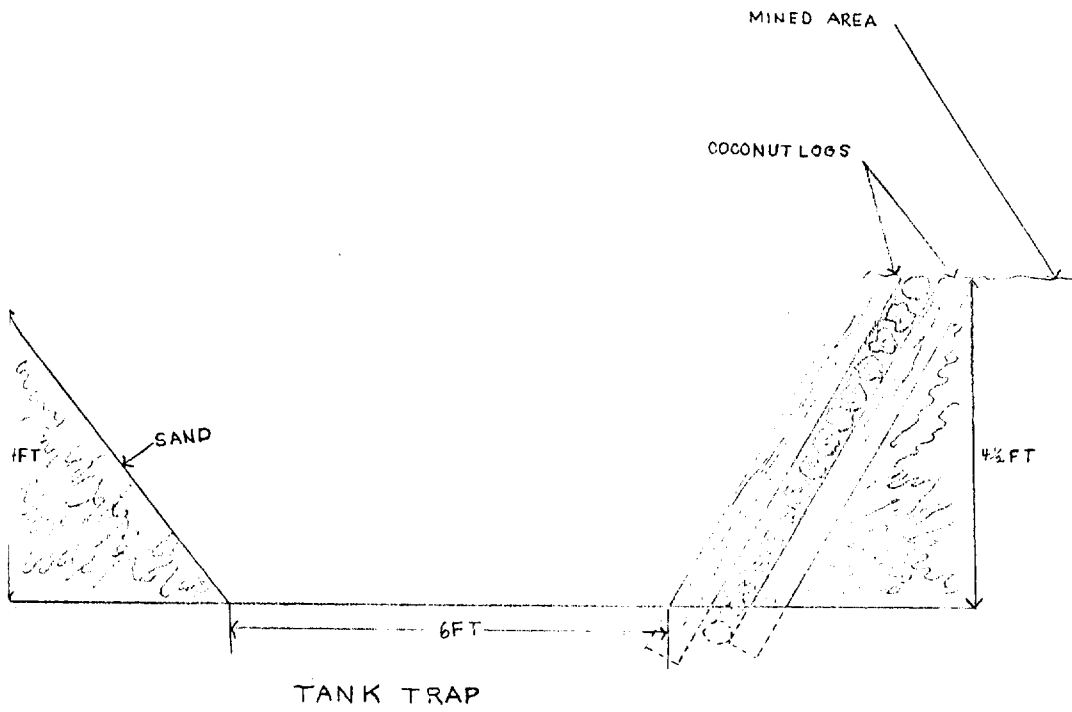
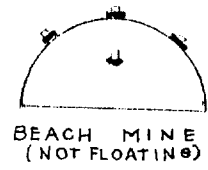
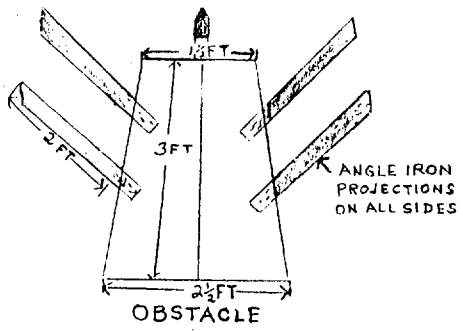
HEAVY MACHINE GUN EMBLEMENT



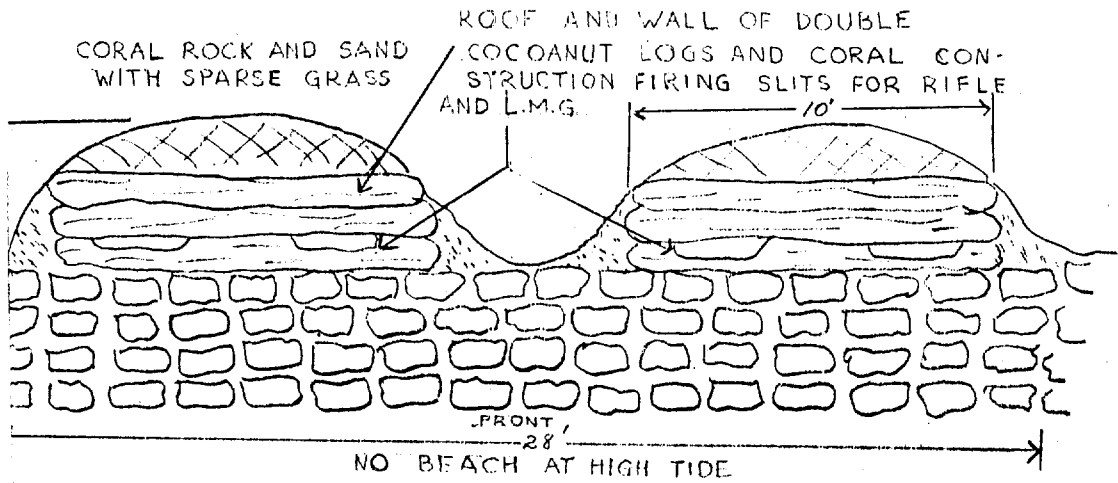
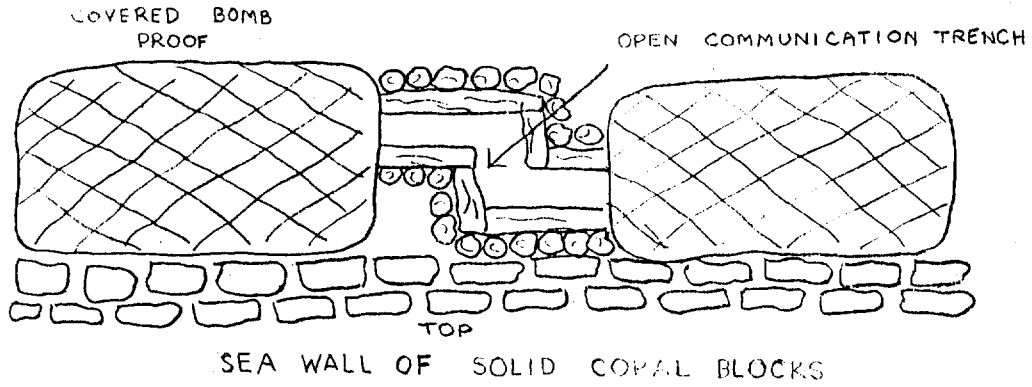


ALL PURPOSE (ANTI-BOAT-TANK-AIRCRAFT) OPEN TYPE GUN PIT





BEACH EMPLACEMENTS FOR 3 TO 4 MEN  
USUALLY IN STRINGS OF 3 TO 5



### **NOTE TO READERS:**

**The following photographs were taken from a roll of film said to have been found on the body of a Japanese officer at Tarawa.**





