ECONOMY OF FORCE: A MAJOR COMPONENT OF A STRATEGIC MASTERPIECE

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16 April 1973

INDIVIDUAL RESEARCH REPORT

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ABSTRACT

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The strategy of General MacArthur was investigated as it pertained to the New Guinea Campaign. Specific emphasis was placed on three critical battles: Milne Bay, Lae/Nadzab, and Hollandia. The principles of war employed so successfully by General MacArthur (Economy of Force, Mass, Surprise and the Objective) were analyzed in depth. A detailed discussion of the environment that existed during the campaign was felt necessary as it had a great effect on both MacArthur's actions and those of the Japanese. Some criticisms of General MacArthur were also evaluated, but in large part they were directed against MacArthur's personality, and not his strategy. It was concluded that the strategy of the Southwest Pacific Area, and more specifically the New Guinea Campaign was brilliant. General MacArthur overcame almost insurmountable obstacles of enemy, terrain, lines of communications, and Allied priorities to consistently defeat the enemy in engagement after engagement with minimum losses being sustained by the Allies.

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CHAPTER I

INTRODUCTION

> The way of the superior man is threefold --but I am not equal to it. Virtuous, he is free from anxieties; Wise, he is free from perplexities; Bold, he is free from fear.
>
> ----Confucius

In Europe today, the beaches of Normandy and Dunkirk, the drop zones of Ste. Mere Eglise and Nijmegen, the hillsides surrounding Bastogne and Verdun--all lasting monuments of the "Great Crusade," are visited by thousands each year. Reasons for the visits are many and varied, but the majority of people are there to satisfy a curiosity, and to find out just what it was that caused each of these places to be selected by history as milestones of the "great war."

In sharp contrast, the islands of Indonesia and Melanesia stand practically as they did prior to the outbreak of hostilities in 1941--unvisited, and largely unknown or unheard of by a major segment of the Western World. Ironically, this same "indifferent" feeling seemed to be prevalent with many in Washington responsible for the war effort during the early 1940's--more on this later.

The rich southern Pacific resources area was to be the main prize of the war for Japan. (see figure 1).[1] With it, Japan would be almost self sufficient economically--without it, her days in the war would indeed be numbered.

The Boundaries of the Southwest Pacific Area and the Extent of the Japanese Advance

Figure 1

Analysis of the Pacific Theater's geography, dictated a new type of warfare, characterized by a sustained struggle for control of the sea, and the air above it.

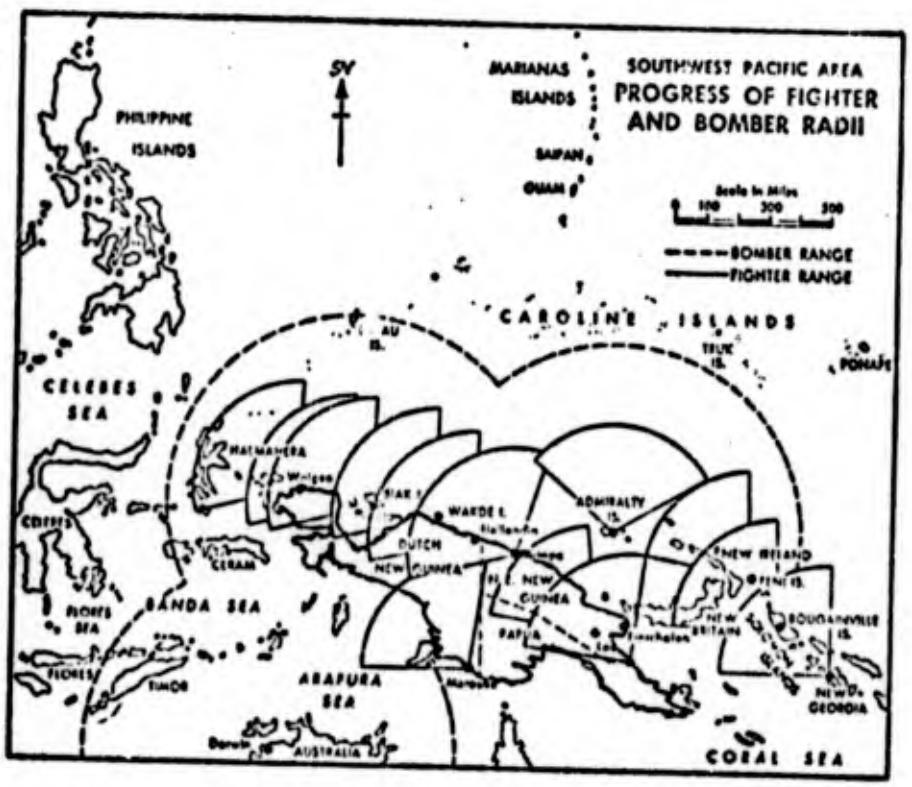
While this paper will specifically address only three operations, (Milne Bay, Lae and Hollandia) there were literally hundreds of individual landings, raids, assaults, and feints. In General MacArthur's Southwest Pacific Area however, through all these semingly scattered actions, there ran a red thread of design, the operative "Leitmotif"--the flexible, inexorable advance on the Philippines--somewhere--somehow--sometime.[2]

MacArthur was devoted to the offensive--this perhaps is not so readily apparent as his limited resources dictated repeated defensive periods, and care and skill in launching attacks. He had the aggressiveness of the Matador, not of the bull.[3] There are critics of MacArthur, although their numbers shrink with time, but they focus mainly on his personality, or on military matters of little significance. The soundness of his WWII Pacific strategy is seldom questioned. A detailed and thoughtful examination of General MacArthur's campaign reveals a pattern of precepts, artistically repeated. The word artistic is properly descriptive of MacArthur's approach. Application of principles was varied, unpredictable, and skillfully integrated to the point of grace.[4] The aim of this paper is to analyze a small portion of MacArthur's Southwest Pacific strategy, and his

application of certain principles and precepts. A sifting of history will be attempted to extract the principles which guided the General to successive, critical victories during the dark days of 1942-43. The rare scraps of criticism will be evaluated also, for a deeper strategic understanding of this renouned soldier's tenets.

In studying MacArthur's campaigns, an outstanding quality that surfaces is his operational flexibility. He planned in a fashion which left options open for operational developments. A main pillar of MacArthur's philosophy of modern war, fought with the barest of forces, and at the extreme minimum loss of human life, was his advancing bomber line protected by his short range fighters. To a group of exhausted engineers who had gone from one airfield construction job to another, MacArthur reminded them of this new philosophy--"Gentlemen, victory in war today, depends on the advancement of the bomber line."[5] (See figure 2)[6]

His envelopments were deep, more in the nature of the classical turning movement. Invariably the aim was to get astride the enemy lines of Communication, and in almost every case, the enemy were forced to abandon their positions.[7] Hopefully, the fine line between genius and recklessness will show through, as we analyze the battles previously mentioned,and assess the calculated risks taken, for the objectives involved. Colonel Matsuichi Ino of the Japanese Eighth Army Staff put it rather simply:



Progress of Fighter and Bomber Radii, Southwest Pacific Area.

Figure 2

> ". . . This was the type of strategy we hated most. The Americans attacked and seized, with minimum losses, a relatively weak area, constructed air fields and then proceeded to cut the supply lines to our troops in that area. Our strong points were gradually starved out. The Japanese Army preferred direct assault, after the German fashion, but the Americans flowed into our weaker points and submerged us, just as water seeks the weakest entry to sink a ship."[8]

Chapter II deals with a brief discussion of those principles of war employed and adhered to by General MacArthur, as he came to grips with the seemingly impossible task of fulfilling his pledge to a beleaguered people--"I shall return."

CHAPTER I

FOOTNOTES

1. Reports of General MacArthur, Vol. II, p. 32.

2. Major General Charles A. Willoughby and John Chamberlain, MacArthur 1941-1951, pp. 139-40.

3. Lieutenant Colonel John F. Forrest, The Strategic Thinking of Douglas MacArthur, p. 4.

4. Ibid., p. 2.

5. General George C. Kenney, The MacArthur I Know, p. 120.

6. Willoughby and Chamberlain, MacArthur 1941-1951, p. 254.

7. Ibid., pp. 365-366.

8. Ibid., p. 105.

CHAPTER II

FOUR PRINCIPLES OF WAR: (ECONOMY, MASS, OBJECTIVE, SURPRISE)

> Perfection consists not in doing extraordinary things, but in doing ordinary things extraordinarily well.
>
> ---Antoine Arnauld

> A good soldier, whether he heads a platoon or an army, is expected to look backward as well as forward, but he must only think forward.
>
> ---Douglas MacArthur

An interesting insight into the theory of why military men study and analyze fundamental principles, their combinations and applications, (which in past have been productive of success) is shown in an excerpt made by General MacArthur to the Secretary of War in 1935, when he was Army Chief of Staff.

> ". . . Devoid of opportunity, in peace, for self instruction through actual practice of his profession, the soldier makes maximum use of historical record in assuring the readiness of himself and his command to function efficiently in emergency.
>
> . . . Those callow critics who hold that only in the most recent battles are there to be found truths applicable to our present problems have failed to grasp the basic fact that principles know no limitation of time.
>
> . . . Were the accounts of all battles, save only those of Genghis Khan, effaced from the pages of history, and were the facts of his campaigns preserved in descriptive detail, the soldier would still possess a mine of untold wealth from which to extract nuggets of knowledge useful in molding an army for future use.

> . . . He devised an organization appropriate to conditions then existing; he raised the discipline and the morale of his troops to a level never known in any other army, unless possibly that of Cromwell; he developed his subordinates; he insisted on speed in action which by comparsion with other forces of his day was almost unbelievable.
>
> . . . Regardless of his destructiveness, his cruelty, his savagery, he clearly understood the unvarying necessities of war. It is these conceptions that the modern soldier seeks to separate from the details of Khan's technique, tactics, and organization, as well as from the ghastly practices of his butcheries, his barbarism, and his ruthlessness. So winnowed from the chaff of medieval custom and all other inconsequentials, they stand revealed as kernals of eternal truth, as applicable today in our effort to produce an efficient army as they were when, seven centuries ago, the great Mongol applied them to the discomfiture and amazement of a terrified world. We cannot violate these laws and still produce and sustain the kind of army that alone can insure the integrity of our country and the permanency of our institutions, if ever again we face the grim realities of war."[1]

In analyzing the four basic precepts or principles that General MacArthur so closely adhered to throughout his campaigns, no significance should be placed on the order I have selected for discussion.

ECONOMY OF FORCE

Economy is a corollary to the principle of mass or concentration. The minimum of forces must be used in all places except at the place of the main effort. Economy of force also applies in

obtaining a balanced organization. There will usually be constant and conflicting demands between Mass, Economy, and Security.[2] The commander should commit no more forces than required for accomplishment of a secondary or diversionary mission (and thus reinforce the principle of concentration or mass)--in general, employ forces judiciously.[3]

Economy of Force does not denote stinginess. It means instead wise spending. It has been defined as an intelligent expenditure for present needs, in order to preserve maximum power for the future or final need. Its application involves the critical question for a commander of what is, and what is not a necessity. If this principle is violated there can in essence be no mass. This principle implies there is always a compromise between two allied demands, dispersion and concentration. The ideal is attained when we achieve concentration while forcing the enemy to disperse. This is more easily achieved by a sea power when opposed by an enemy land power. For once, the land power will find the greater her size, the more she is undone. She must disperse to guard herself on all sides--she must be prepared to oppose landings and fight off air attacks from a myriad of directions. Along the fringes of the average land power's coastline are obstacles to her efforts such as deserts, mountains, water barriers, and wastelands. It is practically impossible to move even a fraction of her troops across these desolate regions or to give effective logistic support to

defensive airfields she may wish to have in these areas. This means larger forces must be held in reserve as close to the vulnerable areas as they can be maintained. Meanwhile, seapower, and sea-air power can effect overwhelming superiority at any chosen point on relatively short notice.[4] Many of these factors were problems the Japanese faced in their attempts to defend such a vast expanse of islands and bases.

MASS (CONCENTRATION)

The principle of mass means more than the concentration of superior numbers. It also means superiority in fire power, supplies, supporting services and all the other wherewithal which goes to getting a decision at a crucial point. It must be at the right time and the right place. Fredrick the Great in his instructions to the Generals put it as follows: "Those Generals who have had little experience attempt to cover every point, whilst those who are better acquainted with their profession guard against decisive points and acquiesce in smaller misfortunes to fight greater."[5]

Mass has been sometimes called the most vital principle of all. It means superiority at the point of contact. It means superiority which can be sustained as long as the situation requires--or as some may term it, "capacity." The correct and skillful application of all other principles of war should lead

to one single end: The concentration of maximum combat power at the selected time and place to strike an overwhelming blow at the decisive point, in order to achieve the objective.[6]

OBJECTIVE

At the outbreak of hostilities the National war aims are defined in accordance with the policies of the government, and these are then translated into objectives of the Armed Forces by the Joint Chiefs of Staff. Unless the aim is properly defined, the resources of a country will be frittered away in following and pursuing different objectives, instead of concentrating all the resources into achieving one common aim.[7] When you have chosen your primary goal wisely--adhere to it steadfastly, regardless of the many distractions of combat.[8] The objective also described as the mission, aim, or purpose of our efforts, is unquestionably the most important of all the principles of war. It is the connecting link which, alone, can impart coherence to war; for fighting just for the sake of fighting becomes insensate slaughter. Without the objective, all other principles are pointless. It gives the commander the "what." The other principles are the guides in the "how." It is, therefore, sometimes referred to as the fundamental military principle. Some say the true objective is the National objective, whatever it might be.

"But," one is told, the National objective has already been determined and is written in a hundred text books.

The objective of a nation at war is to impose its will upon the enemy.[9] But what is a nation's will? It can be written in no textbook, and must be determined each time by the nation itself. In WWI our National objective was the overthrow of the enemy's government. In WWII it was "Unconditional Surrender." The effect these two diverse objectives had on our military people were profound and far reaching. In WWI we were able to greatly weaken enemy morale with words (Wilson's Fourteen Points). In WWII, however, we were forced to practically destroy both governments, as the common man in both the principal enemy countries stood his ground until the last.

The selection of a sound National objective is, therefore, the most important single decision of the war.[10]

SURPRISE

Surprise is not only the means to the attainment of numerical superiority, but it is also to be regarded as a substantial principle in itself, said Clausewitz.[11]

The crafty Sun Tzu laid great stress on surprise and deception, at which the Chinese are so adept. This is what he advocated: "All warfare is based on deception. Hence, when able to attack, we must seem unable; when using our forces we must seem inactive; when we are near, we must make the enemy believe that we are away; when far away, we must make him believe we are near. Hold out baits that entice the enemy, feign disorder and crush him."[12]

Surprise is frequently termed the greatest weapon in war. It is certainly one of the most effective methods of obtaining victory. It has a tremendous effect on morale. Surprise is the creation of an unexpected situation for which the enemy has not properly prepared himself. It strikes a telling blow which is not only physical but mental. Surprise can give us all the advantages of good staff work, while denying them to the enemy. The situation to him is new, therefore, he must improvise and react. The situation to us has been carefully planned for, and at least mentally rehearsed by all the key personnel in our forces. The principle of mass, previously discussed, must be applied with surprise, otherwise it cannot be exploited.[13]

Factors entering into surprise are secrecy, preparation, rapidity of execution, and deception. No surprise is more effective than a new novel device or weapon. The examples are many: gas, tanks, radar, rockets, the influence fuze and the atomic bomb. Their value is never greater than when first introduced. Let me repeat, there must be Mass to ensure exploitation.

Surprise can boomerang too. It can so intoxicate the user as to lay him open to an even greater surprise. In war we must never become too intent on our own aims.[14]

Whether we call them principles, precepts, fundamental assumptions, factors, axioms, maxims, distilled history or capsules of wisdom--their application must be geared to the set of circumstances requiring their use. They should be viewed as working tools for analysis, and must be more like a vernier caliper, than a rigid gauge block for maintaining exact specifications.[15]

The various principles are not, as some would think, ingredients which will, if compounded in the right proportions, produce a species of victory cake. They are more like the colors of an artist's palette, which only in the hands of an artist can produce a masterpiece.[16]

Chapter III deals with some background data on General MacArthur--the leader, and some discussion on the environment within which the mission assigned to him had to be accomplished.

CHAPTER II

FOOTNOTES

1. Frank Kelley and Cornelius Ryan, MacArthur Man of Action, pp. 185-187.

2. Major General Har Prassad, The Principles of War: Lessons from History to Remember, pp. 184-185.

3. Colonel Wesley W. Posvar, The Meaning of Strategy, p. 114.

4. Rear Admiral C. R. Brown, The Principles of War, p. 630.

5. Prassad, The Principles of War: Lessons from History to Remember, p. 184.

6. Brown, The Principles of War, p. 626.

7. Prassad, The Principles of War: Lessons from History to Remember, p. 178.

8. Posvar, The Meaning of Strategy, p. 114.

9. Brown, The Principles of War, p. 624.

10. Ibid., p. 625.

11. Anatol Rapoport, Clausewitz on War, p. 269.

12. Prassad, The Principles of War: Lessons from History to Remember, p. 183.

13. Brown, The Principles of War, p. 629.

14. Ibid., p. 630.

15. Roger A. Beaumont, The Principles of War Revisited, p. 69.

16. Brown, The Principles of War, p. 630.

CHAPTER III

THE LEADER AND THE ENVIRONMENT

> The most valuable ability of all is the ability to select men of ability.
>
> ---J. Ogden Armour

> Great men are like eagles, and build their nests in solitude.
>
> ---Schopenhauer

> Doubt whom you will, but never doubt yourself.
>
> ---Christian Bovee

To fully comprehend the magnitude and totality of General MacArthur's accomplishments in the Southwest Pacific Theater, one must appraise the entire situation as it then existed. This assessment will include a look at the leader himself, something of his background, his manner and his approach. Following this, the environment, which in a sense contained the leader and the men he led, will be discussed. First, let us take a look at the man--the Commander in Chief, Southwest Pacific Theater--Douglas MacArthur.

General MacArthur was a complex individual who could inspire loyal, zealous service in his subordiantes, as few commanders could.[1] The real MacArthur will always be elusive because, like Franklin D. Roosevelt, the general was a master at role-taking.[2] If one could discern which of his varied roles reflected his real self, it was probably that of the gentleman--aristocrat, whereby Christianity, democracy, and patriotism were almost synonyms to him.[3]

MacArthur the realist, was never afraid to face new truths, no matter how harsh and distasteful they might be. His alert and far seeing mind constantly searched for things of the inner spirit, especially when they concerned the national dreams that help make up the imponderables of a country's military strength. He believed firmly in Napoleon's dictum that morale is to all other factors as four is to one.[4]

MacArthur expected only 5 percent of an intelligence estimate to be accurate. The trick of the good commander he said is, "to isolate that five percent."[5] He had a "deep wisdom" according to LTG Almond in selecting objectives.[6] The most commonly selected objective invariably turned out to be the enemy's line of communication. While not discussed in this paper, MacArthur's masterful stroke at Inchon during the Korean War was a classic in this regard.

He was a brilliant student of military history, and an avid reader. Close associates estimate he had a personal library of over 8,000 books. Another tremendous asset he used to maximum advantage throughout the war, and beyond, was his knowledge of the oriental. Dating back to 1905 when he was aide to his father LTG Arthur MacArthur in Manchuria, he had studied the Japanese character and ambitions. Through the years he watched the compelling development of the fanatical Japanese religion.[7]

William Ganoe (MacArthur's Chief of Staff at the Military Academy) stated the impression created by MacArthur on those he

came in contact with was "indelible."[8] There were four qualities that General MacArthur possessed to a marked degree . . . Perception, Perspicacity, Prescience, and Principles. His perception was all around you like a floodlight. His absorbtion and digestion of information were instant . . . His rare perspicacity came constantly into play with problems and decisions--always culminating in a judgement so clear and easy, you'd be ashamed you hadn't worked it out. . . . His prescience was uncanny. He would predict how individuals would react, or what would eventuate if certain moves were made . . . Controlling this astonishing mental organism was a set of principles held to as rigidly as a spar by a man overboard. To him the word "gentleman" held a religious meaning--it was an attitude of life, allowing no let down in execution, and demanding near perfect self-mastery.[8]

MacArthur himself felt there were three essentials of combat leadership. These were: aggressive vision, mastery of tactics and strategy, and the ability to extract the maximum of fighting qualities from men and equipment.[9] He felt that too detailed planning by higher headquarters could serve to imprison the operations of subordinate elements, and was a prime fault in modern warfare. He said that final decisions should be made "at the front," by people who are there. "The essence of victory lies in the answer to where, and when," he wrote. People miles away can only guess at possibilities and potentialities.[10]

Once his decision on a strategy was conceived and passed to his staff, he did not want to be bothered with details. He kept his time and mental energy for the big job. He did not clutter up his mind or hours with things other capable men could do. He had true perspective--a large part of his military genius.[11]

Speaking of MacArthur's WWI experiences, Frazier Hunt observed:

> "Somewhere in those chalk hills and deadly woods of the Champagne, and in the terror of the German attack that failed, MacArthur caught a glimse of the new technique in offensive tactics that he would mull over for a quarter-century to come. Then when his own moment arrived, he would lift the lesson in tactics into the realm of strategy--and the great by-pass of the Southwest Pacific would be born."[12]

Douglas MacArthur was not without his critics, but as one author observed, . . . "invariably, his (MacArthur's) severest critics were persons who personally knew him little, or not at all."[13]

Next, something on the Environment. As previously stated the environment as used herein shall be "all-encompassing," and contains both the leader and the men he leads (the led). There are a great number of factors which impact on this environment, and thereby directly or indirectly affect the leader and the led. For purposes of this discussion, only those factors which had a major impact on practically every facet of the New Guinea Campaign were selected. These factors were:

1. Allied Priorities. (Rainbow 5 Plan).

2. The Japanese Soldier.

3. Lines of Communication.

4. Environmental Conditions.

   a. Weather
   b. Climate
   c. Terrain
   d. Geography

5. Organizational Structure.

6. The Situation in early 1942.

The Rainbow 5 Plan as defined by the Joint Board, (predecessor of the Joint Chiefs of Staff) assumed the United States, Great Britain, and France to be acting in concert; hemisphere defense was to be assured with early projection of U.S. forces to the Eastern Atlantic, and to either or both the African or European continents; offensive operations were to be conducted in concert with British and allied forces, to effect the defeat of Italy and Germany.

A "Strategic Defensive" was to be maintained in the Pacific until success against the European Axis powers permitted transfer of major forces to the Pacific for an offensive against Japan.[14]

The magnitude of what "Rainbow 5" meant to the Southwest Pacific Theater is vividly pointed out by MacArthur after the battle of the Bismarck Sea (28 Feb 1943) . . .

> "At this time (1943) I had slightly less than 2 percent of the total US Army and Air Force. My allocation of slightly more than 100,000

> men gave me almost exactly 10 percent of the more than 1,000,000 Army and Air Force personnel then stationed outside of the continental United States. My share of the total U.S. Navy forces in both ships and men was even smaller than my percentage of Army troops."[15]

Theaters receiving U.S. Personnel and equipment, (other than Europe) and therefore competing with the Southwest Pacific for resources were: North America, Latin America, North Africa, Central America, North Pacific, South Pacific, Central Pacific, and Asiatic. This factor alone markedly points out a major contributing cause for the numerous problems associated with the existent organizational structure. General MacArthur constantly asked for a unified command in the Pacific--but to no avail. "Failure to unify the command in the Pacific cannot be defended in logic, in theory, or in common sense. It resulted in divided effort, in waste, diffusion, and suplication of force, and the consequent extension of the war, with added casualties and cost."[16] General "Hap" Arnold of the Air Force was an advocate of unifying the command, but was constantly overruled by the Navy. General Arnold stated that as a result of the organization in the Pacific, there were overlapping air operations, overlapping lines of communication, overlapping sea operations, and finally overlapping land operations.[17]

The Japanese soldier with his religious indoctrination was a tenacious opponent, who would die without complaint for his Emperor and his regiment. Death was his reward--bravery his commonplace virtue--Here lay the true Japanese strength.[18]

Regarding Lines of Communication, one merely has to look at a map of the Pacific Ocean area, and the relative position of Australia and Indonesia, to the West Coast of the United States in order to gain a bare insight into the magnitude of the problem. Yet another insight into this complex problem follows. (see figure 3)[19]. . . The Continental U.S. will fit roughly between Australia and the Philippines. The distance from New York to San Francisco is roughly the same as from Rabaul to Java. With Miami located at the coastal city of Townsville in Australia, Hollandia will fall on Milwaukee. Biak (where the Japs ultimately had to be routed out of caves) will be south of Minneapolis, and Moratai will be near Bismarck, North Dakota . . . inherent tactical and strategic problems of a land and sea advance from Australia and Papua, directed from headquarters at Post Morseby and Brisbane, through New Guinea and the Moluccas, are comparable to those of a hypothetical American headquarters stationed in the Caribbean Sea 750 miles southeast of Miami, with its advanced echelon in vicinty of Roanoke, Virgina, charged with airstrikes on Boston, New York and Washington . . . and an advance by land and sea from Norfolk (Milne Bay) via Milwaukee (Hollandia) northwest across the middle of Saskatchewan, Canada (Leyte) to northern Alberta (Manila). Couple this with the fact that the "hypothetical" headquarters in the Caribbean drew its supplies for bombing missions from Venezuela (Southern Australia) and from northern

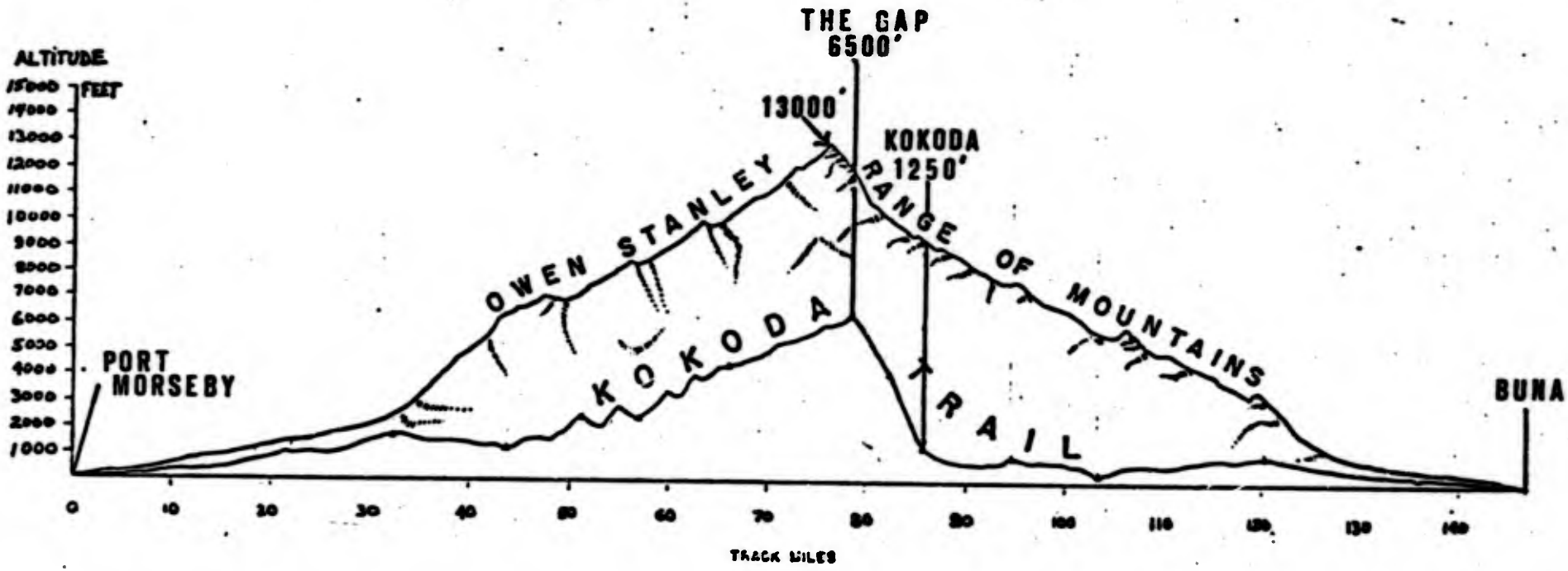
Continental United States.
Superimposed over Southeast Pacific Area.

Figure 3

Norway (California) . . . and as a result of this, factors used for computation of logistic requirements of Southwest Pacific forces were much less (sometimes one-half) of those factors used for other theaters. This of course was due to the tonnage and distance problems involved. Thus, not only were supplies short due to priorities established in Washington, but further shortages occurred as a result of the extended line of communication.

Environmental conditions that existed in New Guinea almost defy description. They naturally worked against both friend and foe, and in a few instances we used them to our advantage. One dominant factor was the Owen Stanley Mountain Range (see figure 4).[20] Rising to a height of some 13,000 feet from sea level on the north coast and back down to sea level again on the south. Few trails and no roads traverse the Owen Stanleys. The main trail thru Kokoda does no favors for anyone, as it rises sharply some 5,250 feet in a distance of eight miles between Kokoda and "The Gap." The New Guinea jungle is perhaps the worst in the world. A New Zealand officer told the author that if he had to compare the jungles of New Guinea to those of South Vietnam--Vietnam would strongly resemble the "putting green" on a golf course. The officer exaggerated perhaps, however, the point was made.

Finally, a brief word about the "situation" that existed in those early months of 1942. A tired and disillusioned general had arrived in Australia three weeks after departing Corregidor.



SECTION ALONG THE KOKODA TRAIL

PORT MORESBY TO BUNA, ACROSS THE OWEN STANLEY RANGE

Figure 4

Only a token force of Americans were in Australia when MacArthur arrived, and from what he had been led to believe, this caused him the greatest anguish and anxiety--further heightened by the National Authority's establishment of priorities which was discussed earlier.

In spite of this; in spite of a high level conference held in March of 1942 directing Pacific operations be "run from Washington," by the JCS; in spite of Admiral King's JCS Planning directive . . . "Hold Hawaii, support Australasia, drive northwest from the New Hebrides with Naval and Marine forces to cover LOC to Australia, and conduct operations in Guadacanal under Naval control"[21]--General MacArthur issued his pledge to the Philippines people--"I shall return."

The following chapter deals with selected battles of the New Guinea Campaign, in an effort to analyze the methods and principles employed by General MacArthur--to see how he came to grips with the factors discussed in this chapter, and how he successfully recognized, controlled, structured and managed the variables affecting the "environment" of his command,--to fulfill his pledge, and accomplish his mission.

CHAPTER III

FOOTNOTES

1. Clayton D. James, The Years of MacArthur, Vol. I 1880-1941, p. 570.

2. Ibid., p. 572.

3. Ibid., p. 575.

4. Frazier Hunt, The Untold Story of Douglas MacArthur, p. 157.

5. Major General Courtney Whitney, MacArthur, His Rendezvous with History, p. 94.

6. Lieutenant Colonel John F. Forrest, The Strategic Thinking of Douglas MacArthur, p. 6.

7. Frazier Hunt, MacArthur and the War Against Japan, p. 133.

8. William A. Ganoe, MacArthur Close Up, p. 129.

9. General of the Army Douglas MacArthur, Reminiscences, p. 157.

10. Ibid., p. 94.

11. Hunt, MacArthur and the War Against Japan, p. 132.

12. Hunt, The Untold Story of Douglas MacArthur, p. 79.

13. James, The Years of MacArthur, Vol. I 1880-1941, p. 571.

14. Kent Roberts Greenfield, Command Decisions, p. 24.

15. MacArthur, Reminiscences, pp. 171-172.

16. Ibid., pp. 172-173.

17. Gavin Long, MacArthur, p. 123.

18. Hunt, MacArthur and the War Against Japan, p. 133.

19. Major General Charles A. Willoughby and John Chamberlain, MacArthur 1941-1951, p. 82.

20. Reports of General MacArthur, Vol. II, p. 52.

21. Lieutenant Colonel Charles M. Simpson III, Strategic Choice: Formosa or the Philippines, pp. 7-8.

CHAPTER IV

MILNE BAY - LAE - HOLLANDIA

> Genius may conceive, but patient effort must consumate.
>
> ---Horace Mann

> By the work, one knows the workman.
>
> ---Jean de la Fontaine

> When nothing seems to help I go out and look at a stonecutter hammering away at his rock perhaps 100 times without as much as a crack showing in it. Yet at the 101st blow it will split in two, and I know it was not that blow that did it--but all that had gone before.
>
> ---Jacob Riis

General MacArthur's insistence on offensive action was contrary to Japanese hopes and expectations. As we discuss these selected operations, there are certain conditions peculiar to the Pacific Theater that should be kept in mind.

1. Tremendous logistical problem became limiting factor in size of forces employed.

2. Extremely long range planning required, due to distances between points, and slow rate of travel by water or land.

3. Use of large masses of troops precluded by size of battlefield, and difficult terrain.

4. Most operations were individual in nature, requiring highly trained personnel, and special equipment.

5. Role of air power even more important than in Europe, because of longer and more tenuous LOC's.

6. Combined land, sea and air power had to be used together as one team, strategically and tactically. No single one could gain victory alone.[1]

Although eluded to in the third chapter, the terrain, climate, and health conditions existing in New Guinea bear special mention, as they combined to form as tough and tenacious an enemy as the Japanese.

General Eichelberger eluded to this in his report on a particular campaign:

> The high mountain ranges and deep gorges, the dense jungles, the reeking nipa and mangrove swamps--a stinking jumble of twisted, slime-covered roots and muddy "soup"--the hazardous trails, the Kunai grass with its razor edged blades growing to heights of six or seven feet, the swollen streams, the mud, the off shore reefs, most of them uncharted, the poor harbors . . . The problems of climate and health were no less severe. The energy sapping heat accompanied by intense humidity and torrential rains that defy description. Health conditions were among the worst in the world. Malaria, dengue fever, bacillary and amoebic dysentery were forbidding possibilities. Tropical ulcers easily formed at the slightest scratch and were difficult to cure . . . Millions of insects abounded everywhere. Clouds of mosquitoes, flies, leeches, chiggers, ants, fleas, and other parasites pestered man night and day. Disease was an unrelenting foe. New Guinea, the last obstacle between the Japanese and Australia provided a background in which almost every threat of nature combined with the sudden and unforeseeable dangers of modern war to provide a microcosm of the vast struggle in the Southwest Pacific.[2]

The actual effect of the "combined enemy," mentioned alone, is shown in the following casualty figures from the Buna Campaign. Total Casualties of all kinds in the U.S. 32d Division

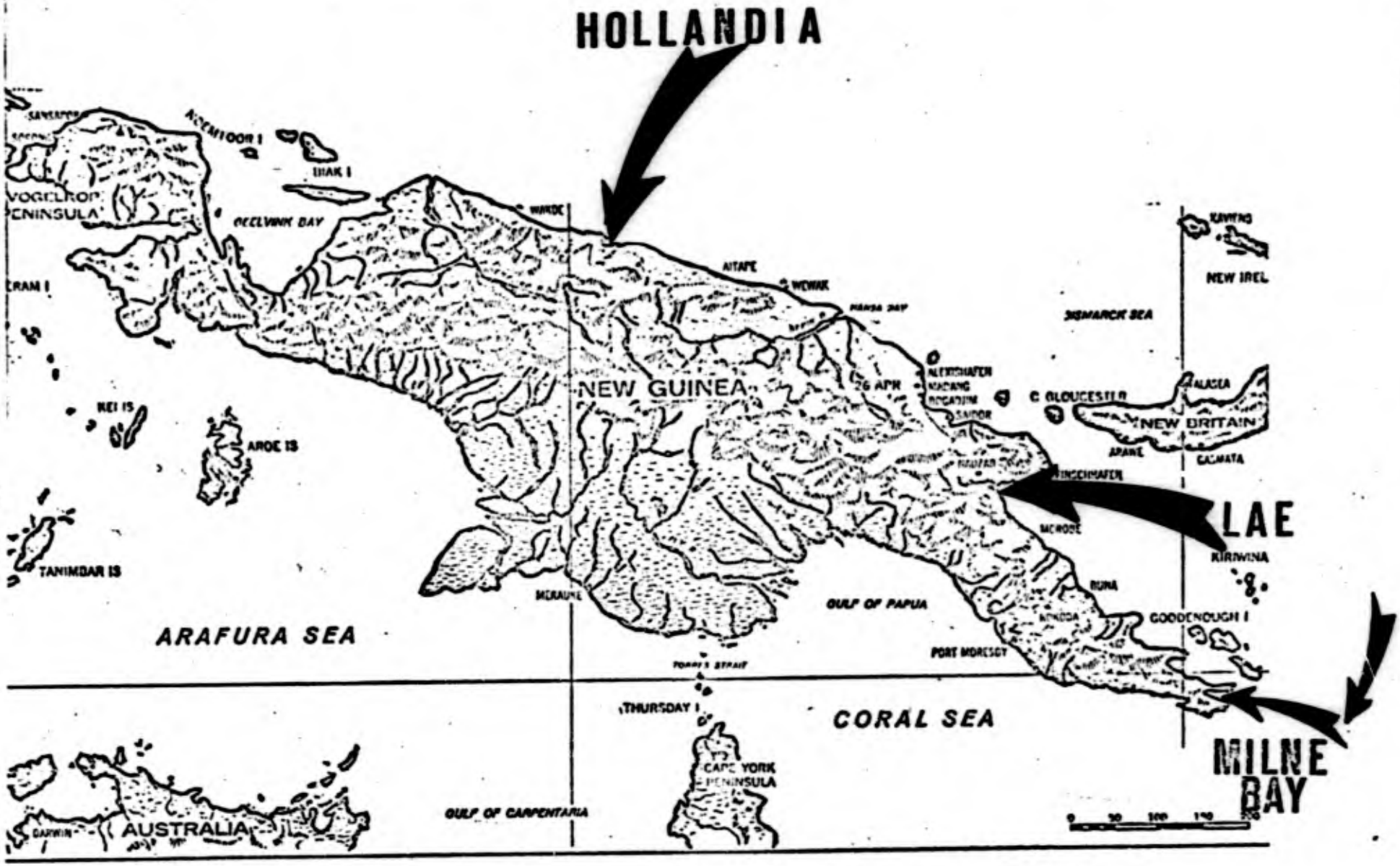
was 10,960. Of this total, 8,286 were disease casualties, 5,358 of them caused by fever, principally malaria. The same story is told by an Australian report:

> "The sickness rate at least doubled the battle casualties. In this phase of the first New Guinea Campaign, of every nine men put out of action, three were battle casualties--one killed, two wounded --and six were sickness casualties. Any reserve force was, therefore, suffering two-thirds the wastage of manpower of those engaged in actual battle."[3]

MILNE BAY

The first of the three battles I have selected for discussion is that of Milne Bay located at the extreme southeastern tip of New Guinea. (see Figure 5).[5] Prior to discussing the engagement, and the actions taken prior thereto, it is important to understand the strategic and tactical importance placed on Milne Bay both by the Japanese and by General MacArthur.

The Milne Bay operation represented another phase in the Japanese feverish attempts to gain control of Port Morseby. On the other hand, General MacArthur's concept of defense for Australia was to defend in New Guinea, and develop Port Morseby as a major air and land base. Port Morseby, located on the Southeast coast, is guarded by the natural defense line of the 13,000 feet Owen Stanley Range, and was ideally situated for future air operations against enemy positions to the North and Northeast. A strong base in this region would not only serve to protect

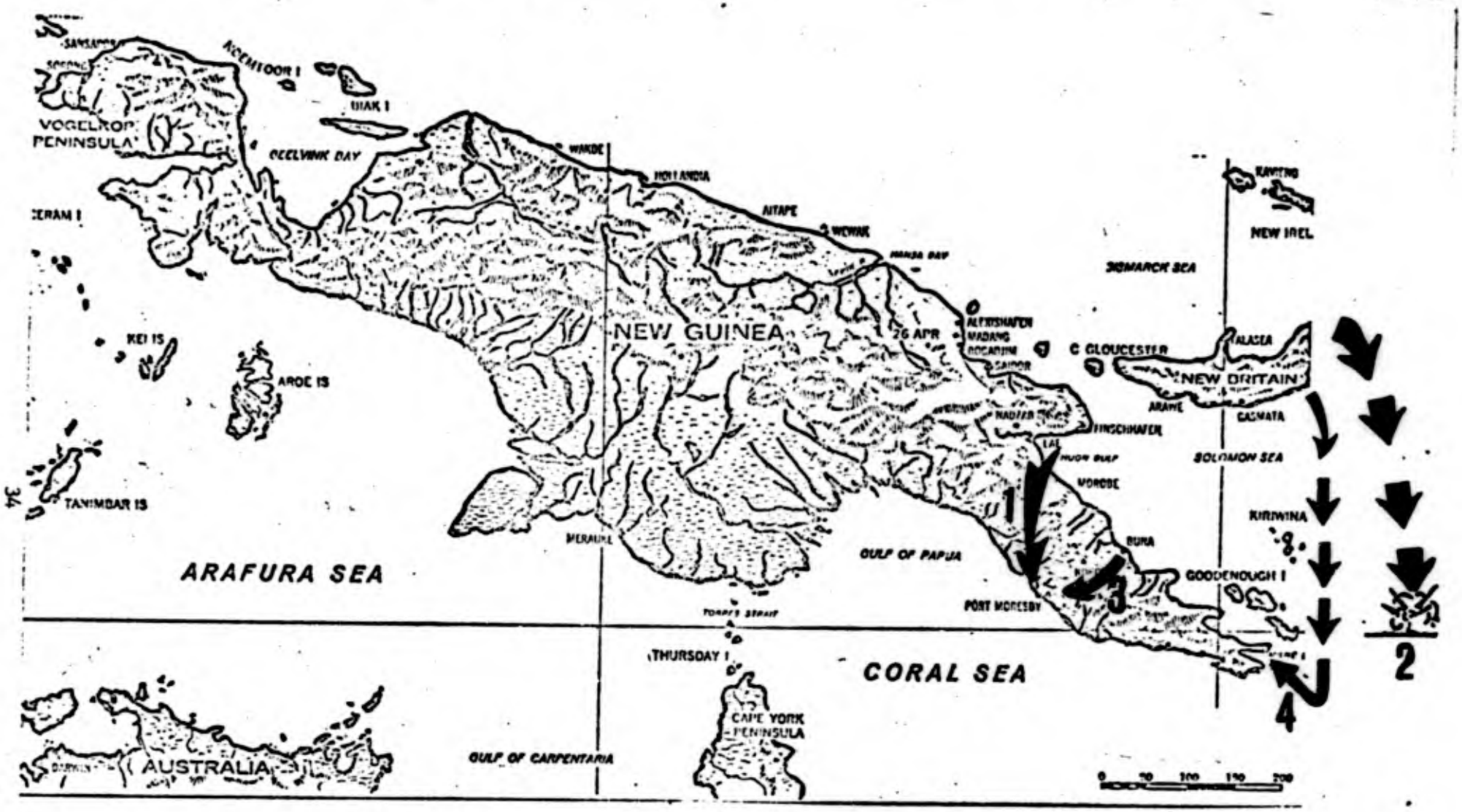


Map of New Guinea showing locations of Milne Bay, Lae and Hollandia.

Figure 5

Australia from hostile raids, but also provide the starting point on the road back to the Philippines--the heart of the enemy's supply and communications network in his newly conquered empire.

Japan began the first of its four efforts to secure Port Morseby in March of 1942, by attempting to turn Morseby's left flank over the Owen Stanley Range from Lae and Salamana on the North Coast. (see figure 6).[6] This proved impractical. Following shortly thereafter, in early May, the Japanese made an unopposed landing at Tulagi Harbor in the southern Solomons to provide an advanced seaplane base to cover the forthcoming attack against Port Morseby. The veteran Japanese South Seas Detachment loaded on 12 transports and set sail from Rabaul on 4 May. Some four days later, the enemy task force was intercepted in the battle of the Coral Sea, and heavy damage was inflicted on the escort warships causing the transports to return to Rabaul. In June, the battle of midway descimated the Japanese fleet and restored the Naval balance in the Pacific. The Japanese now felt that an overland attack against Port Morseby from Buna along the Kokoda trail was called for. Consequently, in July-August 1942, enemy forces were built up during "Research operation Ri-Go" in the Buna area to about 6,000 troops. The overland effort (Buna-Gona-Kokoda) to pierce the center, turned into a weak effort as the Japanese forces took heavy losses from



Japanese attempts to secure Port Moresby.

Figure 6

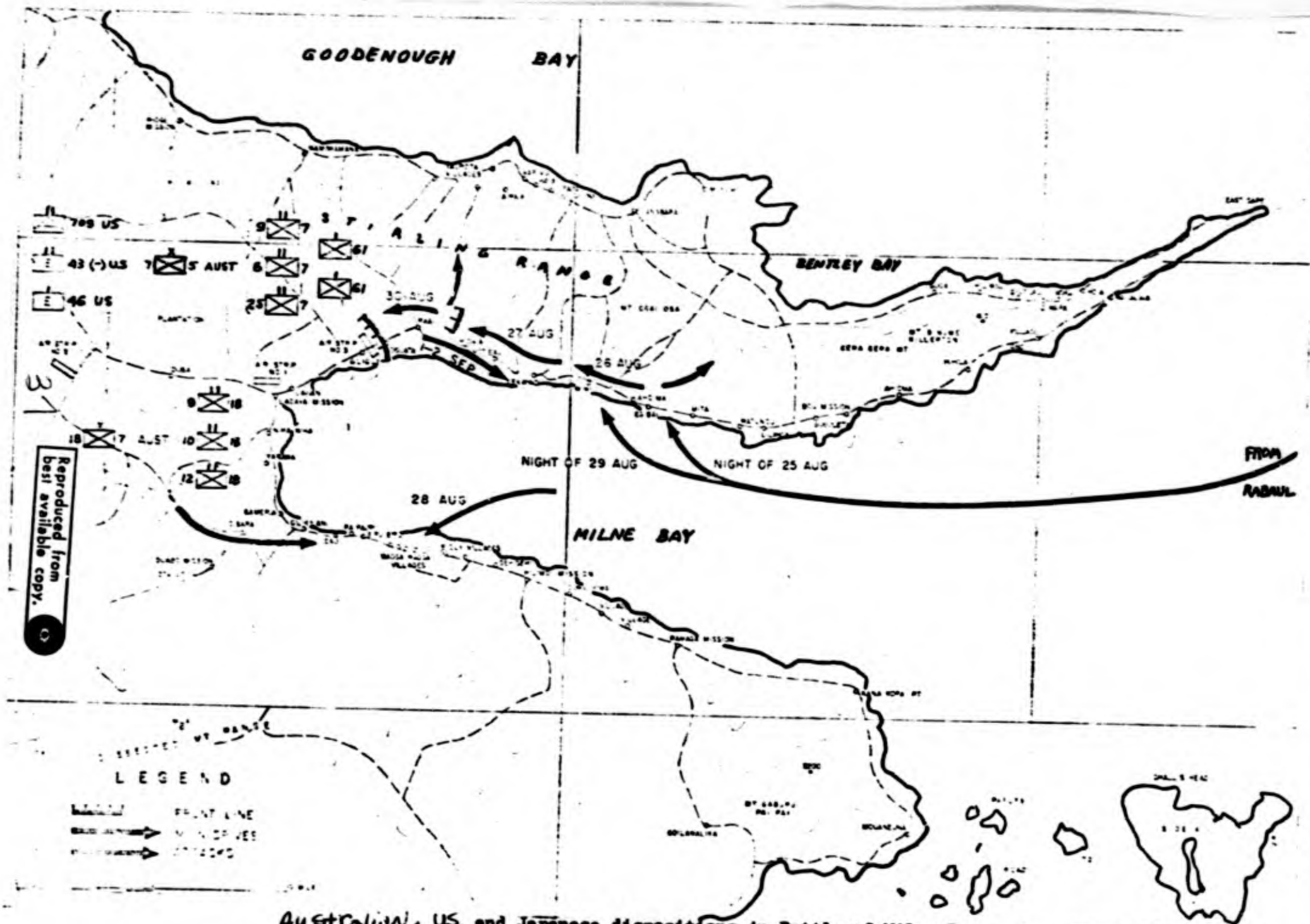
our air power due to their exposed positions on the Kokoda trail. Nevertheless, in spite of staggering odds, remnants made it to a ridge some 32 miles Northeast of Port Morseby before they were stopped by Australian forces.[7] The final effort was an attempt to turn the right flank by a surprise attack at Milne Bay in August of 1942. In this battle we see a brilliant example of General MacArthur's classic blending of certain principles of war, (Surprise, Economy of Force, Mass and the Objective) as part of a Master Plan.

Whereas the battle of Midway compelled the Japanese to concentrate their attention on the New Guinea area, the battle of the Coral Sea had pointed to the strategic importance of Milne Bay. It convinced the Japanese that a base in that location would be invaluable, if not critical, for air support of any future convoys rounding the southeast tip of Papua. It further disclosed another line of approach to Port Morseby--the coastal trails along which ground troops could infiltrate and divert Allied strength from its defenses, and reinforce Japanese troops attacking over the Owen Stanley Range.[8]

In spite of the early August American invasion of the Solomons the Japanese stuck to their August timetable for the Milne Bay operation. Reinforcing elements at Buna from Rabaul, the South Seas detachment finally totalled some 14,000 personnel for its push to Morseby.[9]

Japanese Eighth Fleet Commander, Vice Admiral Mikawa envisioned the Milne Bay operation taking place after recapture of Guadacanal. When 18th Army reports indicated failure of the Ichiki detachment to accomplish the seizure of Guadacanal, Admiral Mikawa directed the 35th brigade and the 18th Cruiser Division at Rabaul to begin the Milne Bay operation--fully expecting the Guadacanal action to end soon.[10]

The move by the enemy was anticipated by MacArthur and prepared for with great care. With complete secrecy, positions around the two priceless airfields at Milne Bay were occupied by the 7th and 18th Australian brigades (operation "Fall River") under MG Cyril A. Cloves. (see figure 7)[11] The position was rapidly converted into a strong point. Surprise was complete, and when attempting to land their light tanks on 25 August the Japanese suffered heavy casualties. Relentless Australian counterattacks indicated to the Japanese that the battle was irretrievably lost, and a withdrawal was ordered on 4 September. Before they were vanquished, however, the enemy gave the Australians a taste of the desparate quality of their resistance to come. Practically all Japanese were killed and only three were taken prisoner. Wounded Japanese who could not be evacuated were shot by their own men.[12] Defeat was complete and decisive, and the victory ended Jap attempts to secure Port Morseby, terminating any genuine threat that might have existed with



Australian, US, and Japanese dispositions in Battle of Milne Bay.

relations to an invasion of Australia, or the cutting of our lines of communication from the United States.

The overall plan and direction came from General MacArthur, but the battle of Milne Bay and the subsequent pursuit of the Japanese back the Kokoda Trail toward Buna, was done by brave "Dinkum" Aussies.

For the first time General MacArthur was no longer directly threatened. For the moment he was master of the land, and the gray skies above those deadly purple mountains of the Owen Stanley Range. Now was the time to hit hard, to "slug-it-out," to close in, with Buna as the prize.[13] Thus it was, that the first significant victory for the allies in the Southwest Pacific was accomplished. Surprise, Economy, Mass and adherence to a Master Plan--all skillfully combined by the masterful strokes of the artist. MacArthur's planning had been bold and imaginative--and decisive!

Judged by the number of troops involved, the Milne Bay operation was indeed small; but in the results attained it will rank high among the decisive battles of our war with Japan. Here for the first time we defeated the enemy in an offensive operation (Guadacanal was still being fought). Once the enemy was stopped on the Kokoda Trail, immediate offensive action was required while the Japanese were still occupied at Guadacanal, and MacArthur took advantage of the enemy's dispersion of strength.[14]

For the first time in the war, the Allies had transported and supplied entire units by air--an operation that was rendered even more difficult by the conditions encountered.[15]

General MacArthur stated that the widespread use of air power (thus allowing maximum employment of the principle of Economy of Force) . . . was the most "outstanding military lesson" learned in the campaign, and pointed to the ultimate defeat of Japan . . . further air transport broadened the conception of warfare, permitting applications of offensive power in swift, massive strokes . . . vis a vis island to island advance that some assumed necessary in a theater where the enemy's far flung strongholds are dispersed throughout a vast expanse of archipelagoes.[16]

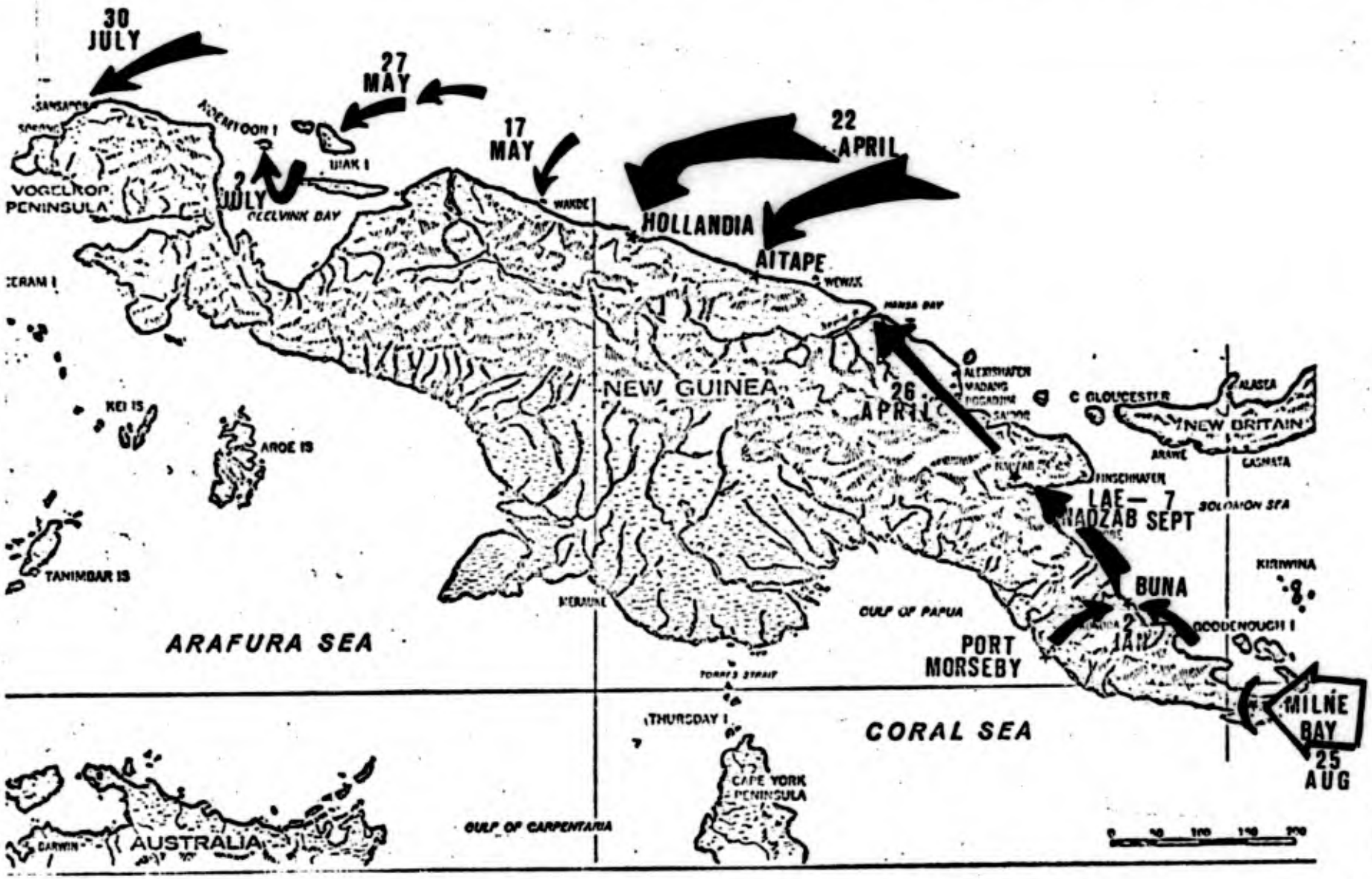
Concurrently with these and subsequent operations, the G-2 section of Southwest Pacific Headquarters set up a series of "coast watcher" stations on strategic locations in the Solomon Islands and along the New Guinea coastline. Each station consisted of secret radio teams located behind enemy lines, reporting on Japanese troop, plane and ship movements. There were some 50 established in 1942 and upwards of 65 by the end of 1943.[17]

Following General Eichelberger's securing of Buna Mission and Buna village on 2 January 1943, the strategy of General MacArthur was directed up the coastline, and much amphibious

training was conducted by Rear Admiral Daniel Barbey, Commander of the 7th Amphibious Force.[18] On 3 March, the Allied cause got a tremendous lift, when practically an entire Japanese convoy of reinforcements heading for eastern New Guinea (Lae-Salamaua area) was destroyed in the battle of the Bismarck Sea. Only about 800 of an estimated 7,000 soldiers made it safely to the Lae area. With our air superiority growing each passing day, the Japanese were unable to resupply their garrisons in New Guinea, other than by destroyer, submarine, or barge. Henceforth, except for desparate counterattacks by isolated units, the Japanese were compelled to abandon all plans for the offensive in the Southwest Pacific.[19]

Before discussing the Lae-Nadzab operation, it would be pertinent here to mention briefly General MacArthur's thoughts on the concept of "island hopping." This was a concept or term which the news media used to describe MacArthur's operations in the Southwest Pacific--a term which the General firmly disagreed with.

> "I do not intend to 'take' the Japanese strong points, I intend to envelop them, incapacitate them--let them die on the vine, so to speak . . . This is the very opposite of 'island hopping,' which is the gradual pushing back of the enemy by direct frontal pressure, with the consequent heavy casualties involved. New conditions and new weapons require new, and imaginative methods for solution and application."[20] (see figure 8).[21]



Major envelopments by Allies along Northern New Guinea Coast.

Almost certainly General MacArthur had in mind, vivid recollections of his WWI experiences, for some 15 years after the Armistice he would write:

> "The writings of our Allies and of our opponents in the late war are particularly revealing in their comments upon American battle operations. Foch, Hindenburg, Ludendorff, and many others have praised without stint, the courage and dash of American units on the Western Front. But even while these veterans of many battles were lost in admiration for the bravery of troops that could sustain apalling numbers of casualties and still keep on attacking, they were aghast at the useless and costly sacrifices we made because of unskilled leadership in the smaller units."[22]

Some have criticized MacArthur for not selecting a number of Australian and Dutch officers, for high positions on his staff.[23] Upon analysis, this type of criticism proves rather shallow, when considering the "total" environment discussed in Chapter III. MacArthur had an almost insurmountable task assigned him upon arrival in Australia--given the conditions and difficulty of the mission, coupled with General MacArthur's personality and style, it would appear logical indeed for him to select those whom he knew intimately, and more importantly those who knew him, and his modus operandi.

A short, anxious, busy year followed the inital, critical Allied success at Milne Bay. General MacArthur felt that Buna had been built up sufficiently during this time, as an intermediate supply base and staging area, for the combined amphibious-airborne operation at Lae-Nadzab.

LAE-NADZAB

The successful operations at Lae-Nadzab were chosen for discussion, as here again, similar to Milne Bay, the principles of Economy of Force, Mass, Surprise and Objective were masterfully combined to achieve a brilliant victory.

Short the planes and ships he so desperately desired, General MacArthur was still determined to mass his strength at decisive points in the fight for New Guinea. This critical shortage placed added emphasis on the timing of operations, which, of necessity, required the combining of all available sea and air transport (together with overland troop movement whenever possible).

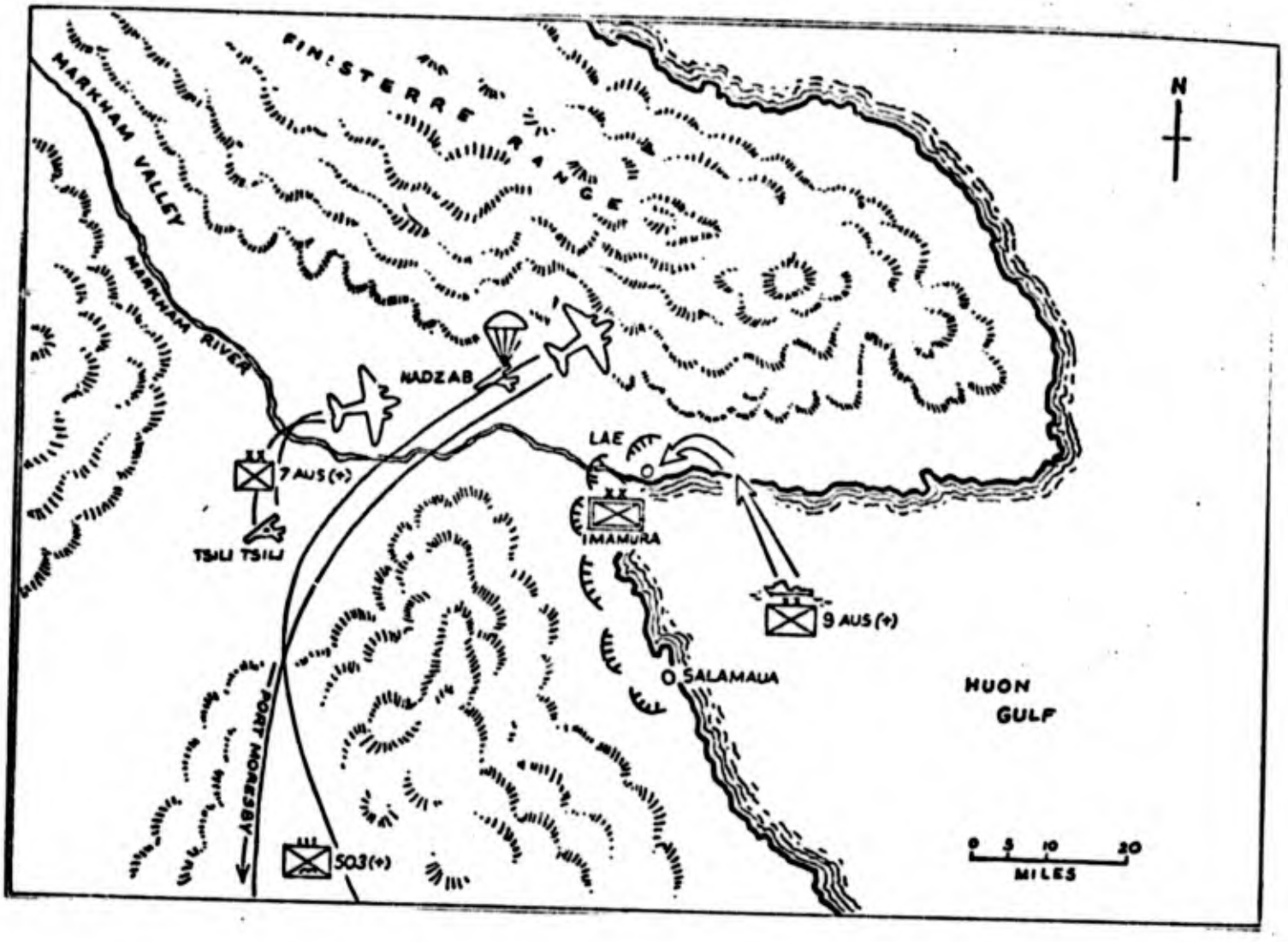
As American and Australian infantry moved slowly along the north coast, MacArthur decided to feint toward Salamaua; draw the Japanese defenders toward him from Lae, and then swing around Salamaua and hit Lae from two sides at once. It was a bold plan that would use every ounce of mobility that MacArthur could squeeze out of his limited resources.[24]

Running inland from the port of Lae, the Markham Valley is a flat, sandy, grass covered ribbon of ground between the Finisterre and Kratke mountain ranges. From Lae, the valley runs northwest for 380 miles to open on the sea again at the mouth of the Ramu River, draining the far end.[25] The flat valley floor was prized as practically the only area where good airfields

could be located--such as the one at Nadzab, a well-built pre-war strip in the center of the valley, twenty-five miles inland from Lae.[26]

Ten thousand Japanese under General Hitoshi Imamura were located in the Lae-Salamaua area, and MacArthur hoped to trap them all. He planned to "close off" the valley with a parachute and glider assault against Nadzab while ground troops made an amphibious landing at Lae, and attacked up the valley. The 7th Amphibious force would land 7,800 men of the 9th Australian Division across the beaches the morning of D-Day, and another 2,400 that evening, then 3,800 more on the following two days. The paratroopers (503rd Parachute Infantry Regiment) would come in a few hours after the first sea landings and would secure the airstrip at Nadzab for the airlanding of the 7th Australian Division. (see figure 9)[27] All ground forces were under orders of General Sir Thomas Blamey, Commanding General of the New Guinea Force, who coordinated ground, sea and air planning. General Kenney, Commander of the 5th Air Force dealt with Blamey on a "coordination and cooperation" level.[28]

. . . Upon seizure of the airstrip at Nadzab, the 503rd was to repair it; prepare for the transport and glider landings; hold the road down the valley to Lae, blocking off any supplies and reinforcements that the Japanese might send overland from Wewak, and also trapping the units defending Lae. The Australian 7th Division would then be airlifted from Tsili-Tsili, thirty-five



Units and dispositions in Lae-Nadzab operation.

Figure 9

jungle miles to the south, and Port Morseby another 150 miles farther south. An Australian engineer battalion was standing by their gliders at Morseby to be towed into Nadzab. D-Day, originally set for 1 August, was moved to 27 August, then 4 September, in order to allow Kenney time to assemble more transport aircraft. He finally came up with ninety-six, a very small force considering his task--to fly an airborne assault, then lift a full division to Nadzab before the Japanese could react.[29]

Local air superiority was gained in the Lae area as a result of highly successful raids on four enemy airstrips in the vicinity of Wewak. Many enemy aircraft were destroyed on the ground, and in the long run prevented the Japanese from executing a planned reinforcement of the Lae-Salamaua area, before our attack.[30]

At dawn on 5 September two brigade groups of the 9th Australian Division landed over two beaches twelve and sixteen miles east of Lae. Japanese forces under Imamura were not mobile enough to meet this assault.

Early that same morning the 503rd took off from Port Morseby and headed northward over the Owen Stanleys toward Lae and Nadzab. As the formation of some eighty-five C-47 transports approached Tsili-Tsili they were joined by an escort of 100 fighters. Up ahead at Nadzab six squadrons of B-25 bombers dropped fragmentation bombs on the field and nearby installations, and were followed by six A-20 attack bombers laying an accurate and heavy smoke screen. Within four and one-half minutes after

the first man had exited his aircraft the Regiment was "on the ground," and encountered its first enemy--12 to 14 foot high Kunai grass (previously estimated at two feet) thick with jungle vine. From the air, however, the operation looked smooth indeed and MacArthur flying overhead stated it was "the most perfect example of discipline and training that he had ever seen."[31]

Surprise had been complete, and based on the total success of the parachute drop, General Blamey cancelled the glider phase from Port Morseby as "unnecessary."[32] The paratroopers after assembling, moved to block the road running to Lae, thereby severing a line of supply and a route of withdrawal for the Japanese.

The 7th Australian Division began landing on the following day, and by 11 September, the C-47's had carried in 420 planeloads of men and equipment to the two runways of Nadzab.[33]

Pressing down the valley toward Lae from the west, the 7th Australian Division combined with the 9th Australian Division attacking from the east. Salamaua fell on the 13th of September and Lae was empty of Japanese troops when the Allies entered three days later, as Imamura's force broke up and faded into the deadly jungles of the Huon Peninsula.[34]

In personal discussions with Colonel Galvin (author of Air Assault), an attempt was made to determine whether any other benefits were gained, in addition to the obvious tactical success,

by the employment of the 503rd. Galvin indicated the results of the jump were very welcomed in Washington, as a sharp contrast to the operation in Sicily just two months earlier. The Sicily operations came very close to spelling the "death-knell" for any future large unit airborne operations. General Joseph Swing, then commander of the 11th Airborne Division, using the Nadzab jump, and a highly successful maneuver by his division near Fayetteville, North Carolina, was able to convince General Leslie McNair that activation, training, and commitment of Airborne Divisions is feasible in combat.[35]

The operation against Lae was a masterful employment of all available sources of firepower and mobility. It was the first tactical parachute jump in the Pacific, and the first major tactical airlift of combat troops in the theater. The coordination with the overland feint against Salamaua and the amphibious assault on Lae, with the well timed support of air and naval forces, was an excellent example of joint planning and operations. Nadzab gave Kenney another excellent airfield to use as a forward base for attacks farther to the west, and provided a terminus for supplies airlifted from Morseby and Australia. It was soon built into one of the largest Fifth Air Force bases in New Guinea. It was a firm foothold in the Markham Valley, to date the most important terrain on the Northeast end of New Guinea.[36]

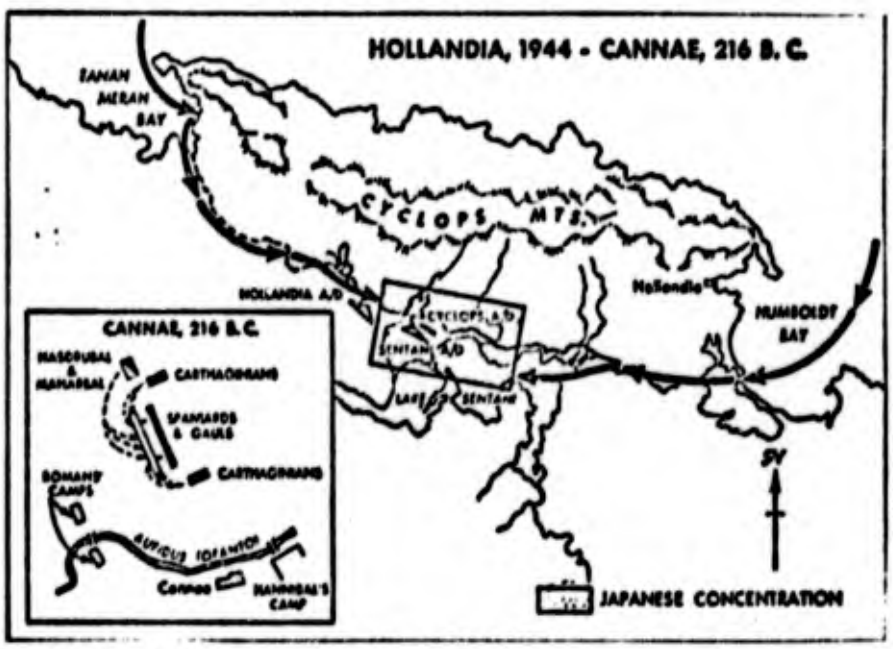
Our forces killed some 4,140 at Salamaua and around 2,240 in the vicinity of Lae. The remaining 3,600 Japanese of the

original 10,000 man Imamura force made their way North as best they could.[37]

The 503rd was not destined to jump again until the air reinforcement of Noemfoor Island, some ten months later. Investigation reveals that the reasons behind "non-employment" of this airborne capability lay in the problems of available aircraft. With the established priorities, the theater just didn't have enough aircraft to go around.

As at Milne Bay, General MacArthur had again gained tactical surprise. This time deceptive tactics were used instead of infiltrations, (as was the case at Milne Bay). By brilliant use of all available airpower, MacArthur not only interdicted enemy lines of communication, but air transported and air dropped more than a division of men. This utilization of aircraft assets, coupled with the equally professional performance of the amphibious forces, allowed the Allies to "Mass" at Lae-Nadzab and destroy the enemy--Another example of brilliance in concept, and perfection in execution.

Some eight months later we see General MacArthur again going for the enemy's "jugular"--his line of communication, in a masterful stroke at Hollandia. This battle has been described by some military historians as another "Cannae"--a double envelopment, ending in near total annihiliation of enemy force (see figure 10).[38]



Hollandia operation compared to the Battle of Cannae.

Figure 10

HOLLANDIA

Japanese setbacks in General MacArthur's area of operation during 1943 caused a sweeping and fundamental revision of Imperial General Headquarter's long-range strategy for operations in the Pacific Theater. Initial losses at Milne Bay and Buna coupled with the subsequent losses in the space of a few months of the vital Lae-Nadzab area as well as major Japanese strategic outposts in the Solomons convinced the Japanese high command that MacArthur's aim was the complete disintegration of the Japanese position south of the Mandated Islands.[39]

The increased tempo of air attacks on Japanese bases along the north coast of New Guinea, seemed to foreshadow an offensive move by General MacArthur's forces in April of 1944. Additionally, Japanese operations reports, captured after the war, revealed intensification of Allied espionage and amphibious patrol activity along the coast from Madang as far west as Hollandia (to include a 24 March report of Allied agents landing from a submarine in Tanahmerah Bay). The most advanced Allied air bases were located at Saidor, and in the Admiralties. Thus the Japanese High Command, (based on MacArthur's past tactics) estimated the next attack to be aimed at seizing a forward fighter base somewhere between Madang and Aitape, in preparation for a later invasion of Hollandia.[40]

Allied actions instrumental in strengthening the enemy's belief that the next blow would fall in the Madang-Wewak area included the unleashing in March of a heavy air offensive directed at the coastal area from Wewak eastward. Additionally, a marked increase in motor torpedo boat activity took place from the Dampier Strait west to Hansa Bay. This deliberate deception program added immeasurably to the ultimate success of the landings at Hollandia, and the gaining once again of tactical surprise so essential to victory.[41]

After sealing off the huge Japanese bastion at Rabaul on the island of New Britain, with units of the Australian First Army, and by successfully interdicting the enemy lines of communication to Rabaul, an advance up the New Guinea coast could be undertaken months ahead of schedule. A problem facing MacArthur in his desire to "go for Hollandia," was the inability of Vice Admiral Kincaid's Seventh Fleet to support the projected offensive. General Kenney's aircraft were committed to bombing attacks in the Netherland East Indies, and against isolated Japanese forces already by-passed. Sensing the need for carrier based planes, MacArthur hurriedly conferred with Admiral Nimitz in Australia, and secured the use of Admiral Mitscher's Task Force 58 to assist the Seventh Fleet.[42] Thus, with the needed aircraft now available, General MacArthur moved swiftly to execute his plan.

Hollandia involved the most intricate series of cross-plays between planning, intelligence and the other "G's" of MacArthur's staff. Since this leapfrogging concept involved leaving some 125,000 Japanese troops isolated at Rabaul, any mistake in estimating Japanese ability to move, or reinforce, or supply these "behind-the-lines" troops might have been fatal. Constant interdiction was required, and matters were further complicated in that naval forces on loan from Nimitz were "in" for Hollandia on a strictly limited basis. Nimitz refused to allow his large carriers to remain in New Guinea coastal waters for more than four days after D-Day fearing Jap reprisals from ground bases in the Indies.[43]

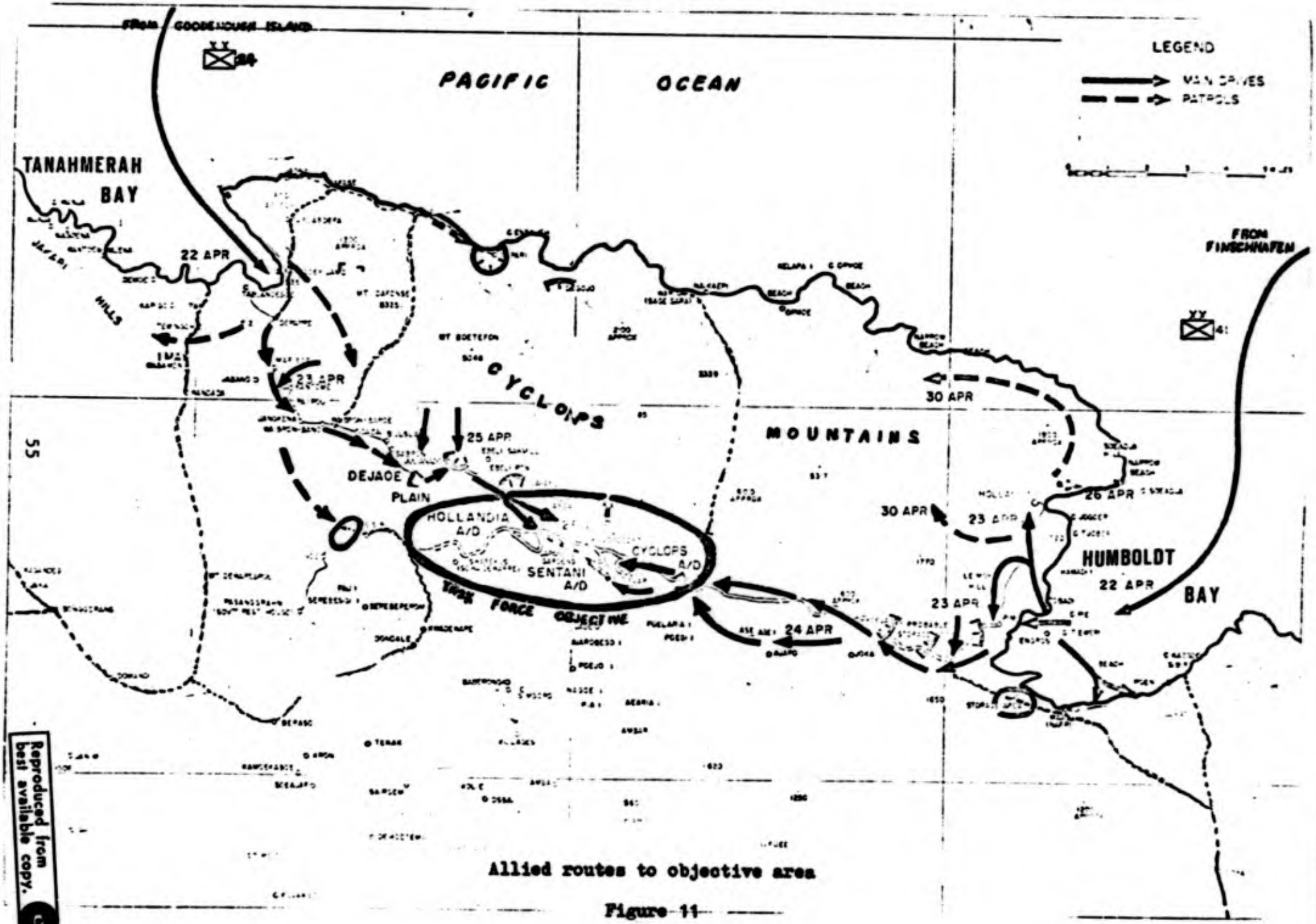
The plan called for landing on both sides of Hollandia, at Humboldt and Tanahmerah Bays, with a simultaneous landing by a smaller force at Aitape, midway between Hollandia and Wewak, a distance of 150 miles. The Hollandia forces would converge on the flanks of the three airstrips inland, while the forces to the east would seize the fighter strip at Aitape and prevent any juncture of the enemy's Wewak and Hollandia troops. Target date for the operation was set for 22 April.[44]

The task force for the invasion rendezvoused north of the Admiralties, and proceeded in a northwesterly direction. Enemy strengths in the Hollandia area were estimated at some 14,000 and some 3,500 at Aitape. To accomplish his mission MacArthur had massed some 50,000 troops for the operation. The major forces involved were the 41st Division, scheduled to land at Humboldt Bay, and the 24th Division utilizing Tanahmerah Bay.[45]

The convoy suddenly swung southward and approached the Dutch New Guinea coast. Just as the branches of a tree spread out from its trunk toward the sky, so did the tenacles of the invasion convoy slither out toward the widely separated beaches in the objective area.[46]

At Hollandia, the principal Japanese rear supply base in New Guinea,there were accumulated supplies that would have lasted 10,000 Japanese troops for six months. Most important, however, were the three critical airfields waiting to be "plucked." Hollandia also served as an important trans-shipment point for transfer of personnel and cargo from large transports to smaller coastal vessels.[47]

On 22 April, after heavy preliminary naval and air bombardment, the invasion troops went ashore, about thirty miles apart, according to plan (see figure 11).[48] Complete tactical and strategic surprise was achieved, and by the 26th, the three airdromes (Hollandia, Sentani, and Cyclops) were secured. The painstaking deception measures had been remarkably effective. Losses on the part of the landing force were almost negligible (some 609), while the 15,000 dumfounded Japanese service troops faded rapidly into the jungle to suffer and die in that wilderness. The Japanese Ninth Fleet Headquarters was also based at Hollandia, and all of its 300 officers and men (to include Admiral Endo) perished. The Ninth Fleet incidently was never reformed.[49]



Allied routes to objective area

Figure 11

The loss of Hollandia seriously compromised the Japanese Second Army's hopes of safely moving reinforcements into Western New Guinea, even from the nearby Halmahera area. The Allies now had an operating base within easy fighter range of future objectives to the west and northwest.[50]

It is astounding that the total losses in the first two years of fighting in the SWPA, were fewer killed in action, than America lost in the single operation for the beaches of Anzio.[51]

Now, the advancing bomber line would coincide with the advancing Staging Area. Hollandia, the sleepy little Dutch native village long forgotten and neglected, would soon mushroom into a vivid, busy port, with hundreds of ships riding lazily in its harbor. Within a month after the assault waves had hit the beaches, our bombers would take off from the newly captured airfields behind the Cyclops, and blast the remaining enemy garrisons on the head of the great setting buzzard of New Guinea.

Beginning in May other bases would be grabbed--Wakde and then Biak Island in Geevlink Bay. These two jumps alone would bring MacArthur 350 miles nearer his dream--The Philippines. MacArthur would never stop until he reached those shores once again and make good his vow of liberation.[52]

General John Pershing wrote MacArthur after the Hollandia operation stating:

> "When history looks back to master strategic strokes, your capture of Hollandia will undoubtedly stand out as one of the most masterly. Seldom, if ever, in history have such important military results been obtained at such small cost to the attacker, and with such surprise and disaster to the defender."[53]

With victory still fresh in his mind, MacArthur begins again to revalue, rediagnose the enemy's dispositions and strengths. Once he gains this knowledge, he plans and strikes with deadly sureness. Within his means, he can feint, parry, shift his attack, then strike again at a time and place of his own choosing.[54] In so doing, he will again combine in perfect proportion the four precepts that have become his creed--Economy, Surprise, Mass and the Objective. It was perhaps a strange world for an American to be fighting in and for. But only by so doing could that country remain safe and free.

Literature dealing with the engagements just discussed, and those other operations conducted in New Guinea under General MacArthur's direction during the period 1942-44, are rather remarkable for their lack of critical comment. In my research only one author was found to be critical of MacArthur on a number of counts. Ironically enough, Gavin Long, author of the book, "MacArthur as a Military Commander," fits snugly into Clayton James' mold of a MacArthur critic--"persons who knew him little, or not at all."

Upon examination, the criticisms proved rather shallow, dealing predominantly with MacArthur's personality, and not his strategy.

Long felt that MacArthur's personal handling of, and strict control over, release of communiques was improper. This control failed, according to Long, to give the Navy (specifically Admiral Halsey) due credit for many successes and useful recommendations, thereby creating dissent and disenchantment among the Navy. A detailed review of Admiral Halsey's book on the war fails to reveal a single instance, or remark, that showed anything less than a "flawless relationship with MacArthur --where not a single decision was ever forced upon me."[55] Further insight into the relationship between these two great leaders is reflected in MacArthur's last dispatch to Admiral Halsey on 19 September 1945.[56]

> "Your departure leaves all your old comrades of the Pacific war lonesome indeed. You carry with you the admiration and affection of every officer and man. May your shadow never decrease."

As to dissent and disenchantment within the Navy created by MacArthur's "modus operandi," the following message received by MacArthur from Secretary of the Navy Forrestal would tend to cast some doubt as to the validity and scope of such allegations.

> "The magnitude and scope of your accomplishments have stirred the imagination and evoked the admiration of your fellow countrymen. I may add that the Navy--and when I say the Navy I include all hands.--share this admiration, and don't let anyone tell you to the contrary."[57]

Non-use of senior Australian staff officers has been previously addressed. Some other comments eluded to the fact that MacArthur at times was too slow to react to a changing situation--Lae and Hollandia would tend to disprove this thesis.

The spectacular amphibious leaps that carried MacArthur to Hollandia and beyond, will stand forever as one of the most brilliant series of operations in military history. The unprecedented speed of the advance, and the unbelievably small losses incurred, are unmatched in the annals of modern warfare. They are the recorded facts that testify to the unsurpassed strategy that fathered the operations. In less than 9 months General MacArthur had spanned some 1,500 miles of land and sea to reach Morotai. The great enemy defense bastion at Rabual had been completely isolated and tens of thousands of Japanese troops were left to "wither on the vine."[58]

CHAPTER IV

FOOTNOTES

1. T. Dodson Stamps and Vincent J. Esposito, A Military History of World War II with Atlas Vol, II, pp. 194-195.

2. Reports of General MacArthur, Vol, I, pp. 42-43.

3. Ibid., p. 89.

4. Ibid., p. 91.

5. General of the Army Douglas MacArthur, Reminiscences, p. 186.

6. Ibid.

7. Reports of General MacArthur, Vol, I, p. 70.

8. General of the Army Douglas MacArthur, Reminiscences, p. 159.

9. Reports of General MacArthur, Vol, II, p. 152.

10. Ibid., p. 153-156.

11. Reports of General MacArthur, Vol, I, p. 65.

12. Major General Charles A. Willoughby and John Chamberlain, MacArthur 1941-1951, p. 87.

13. Frazier Hunt, MacArthur and the War Against Japan, pp. 97-98.

14. Stamps and Esposito, A Military History of World War II with Atlas Vol, II, p. 352.

15. Ibid., p. 353.

16. Ibid., pp. 353-354.

17. Reports of General MacArthur, Vol, I, p. 82.

18. Ibid., p. 107.

19. Ibid., pp. 111-113.

20. MacArthur, Reminiscences, p. 169.

21. Reports of General MacArthur, Vol. I, p. 135.

22. Gavin Long, MacArthur as a Military Commander, p. 32.

23. Ibid., p. 91.

24. Lieutenant Colonel John R. Galvin, Air Assault, p. 111.

25. Ibid., p. 112.

26. Ibid.

27. Ibid., p. 113.

28. Ibid., p. 112.

29. Ibid.

30. Ibid.

31. Ibid., p. 115.

32. Ibid.

33. Ibid., p. 116.

34. Ibid.

35. Interview with John R. Galvin, LTC, Author of book Air Assault, Carlisle Barracks, Penn., 7-8 Feb. 1973.

36. Galvin, Air Assault, p. 116.

37. Stamps and Esposito, A Military History of World War II with Atlas Vol. II, p. 357.

38. Willoughby and Chamberlain, MacArthur 1941-1951, p. 184.

39. Reports of General MacArthur, Vol. II, p. 225-226.

40. Ibid., p. 263.

41. Ibid.

42. Ibid.

43. Stamps and Esposito, A Military History of World War II with Atlas Vol. II, p. 394.

44. Willoughby and Chamberlain, MacArthur 1941-1951, p. 178.

45. MacArthur, Reminiscences, p. 189.

46. Ibid., p. 190.

47. Ibid.

48. Reports of General MacArthur, Vol. I, p. 147.

49. Long, MacAthur as a Military Commander, p. 143.

50. Reports of General MacArthur, Vol. II, p. 273.

51. Hunt, MacArthur and the War Against Japan, p. 164.

52. Ibid., p. 159.

53. MacArthur, Reminiscences, p. 191.

54. Hunt, MacArthur and the War Against Japan, p. 163.

55. Admiral William F. Halsey, and J. Bryan III, Admiral Halsey's Story, p. 155.

56. Ibid., p. 290.

57. MacArthur, Reminiscences, p. 249.

58. Stamps and Esposito, A Military History of World War II with Atlas Vol. II, p. 421.

CHAPTER V

GENERAL

> It is not the critic who counts, not the man who points out how the strong man stumbled or where the doer of deeds could have done them better. The credit belongs to the man who is actually in the arena; whose face is marred by dust and sweat and blood; who strives valiantly; who errs and comes up short again and again; who knows the great enthusiasms, the great devotions, and spends himself in a worthy cause; who at best, knows in the end the triumph of high achievements, and who at the worst if he fails--at least fails while daring greatly, so that his place shall never be with those cold and timid souls who know neither victory nor defeat.
>
> ---T.
> ---T. Roosevelt

There have been times when some would pose the question, "Could anyone have done as much or more with the limited resources available to General MacArthur in the Southwest Pacific? My conclusion, based partly on results obtained by Allied forces, would indicate no. During three years of fighting in the Southwest Pacific, eight Japanese Armies were defeated or bypassed.[1] Impressive as this fact is (when coupled with the losses sustained by Allied forces), the dominant factor influencing my finding was the maturity and makeup of the man himself. It took a man of courage and conviction to overcome the environment existing in the Southwest Pacific, during the dark days of 1942-44. It took a man whose most

predictable trait was his unashamed, wholehearted dedication to Duty, Honor, and Country. It took a man who had the ability to "select men of ability," to work with him--instilling in them total dedication and loyalty. Success required someone who knew exactly when to take the "calculated risk," required for victory, and economize his forces in order to mass, and defeat the enemy--a man who comprehended the deadly challenge presented by the terrain and jungle, and caused them to work to his advantage. General MacArthur had these attributes, and many more. He, in my judgement, was a humble man, who always remembered the simplicity of true greatness, the open mind of true wisdom, and the meekness of true strength.

William A. Ganoe, chief of Staff to MacArthur at West Point, offered the following observation:

> "Little men seeing little things have always been with us--there were those who couldn't see Washington through his wealth and wine; Scott through his fuss and feathers; Lincoln through his mussed hair and dirty stories; Grant through his butchery and bottle, and Cleveland through his duck shooting and trumped-up stories of wife beating. The same types can't see MacArthur through his corncob pipe, embroidered cap, picture poses, aristocratic airs, and rumors of a brewery in Manilla . . .
>
> Coming historians will look back through the perspective of time to recreate beyond the glory of his triumphs a man of self denial, whose domestic fullness came to late, whose gigantic tasks were undertaken at an age when most men have been retired . . . They will see the calm reason in the hour of peril. They will discern the peculiar patience with which he waited, quickness

> with which he thrust, hardness with which
> he struck, doggedness with which he clung,
> as well as his genius to overcome handicaps . . .
>
> Gradually and imperceptibly, as the decades
> roll along, generations will discover that
> no nobler figure ever stood as a bulwark
> in four nations' lives--any nation's life
> --and they will view him with a reverance
> which will hush them in the presence of
> his memory."[2]

Time alone will tell how accurate is Ganoe's appraisal. What can be stated with certainty now is, that regardless of the difficulty of the challenge, Douglas MacArthur was always true to himself. Field Marshall Sir William Slim once said, "Command is <u>You</u>, and regardless of all else, be yourself--for no imitation was ever a masterpiece."

The campaign in New Guinea, waged against a fierce and fanatical enemy, and against almost insurmountable odds was no imitation--It was a strategic masterpiece combining indominable qualities of leadership, lofty principles of personal conduct, and invincible patriotism which will be indelibly stamped on our Army for all time.

Douglas MacArthur was indeed the "beau sabreur"--a "First Captain" in every sense of the term.

JOHN R. WESTERVELT
LTC INF

CHAPTER V

FOOTNOTES

1. General of the Army Douglas MacArthur, Reminiscences, pp. 259-260.

2. William A. Ganoe, MacArthur Close Up, pp. 168-169.

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