

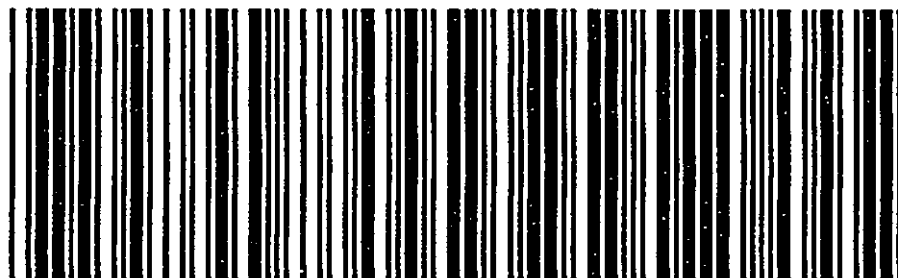
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1/5/20 DIVISIONS

9 Australian Division General
Staff Branch (9 Aust Div GS
Branch)

October 1943 - January 1944,
Report on operations



1/5/20-0432

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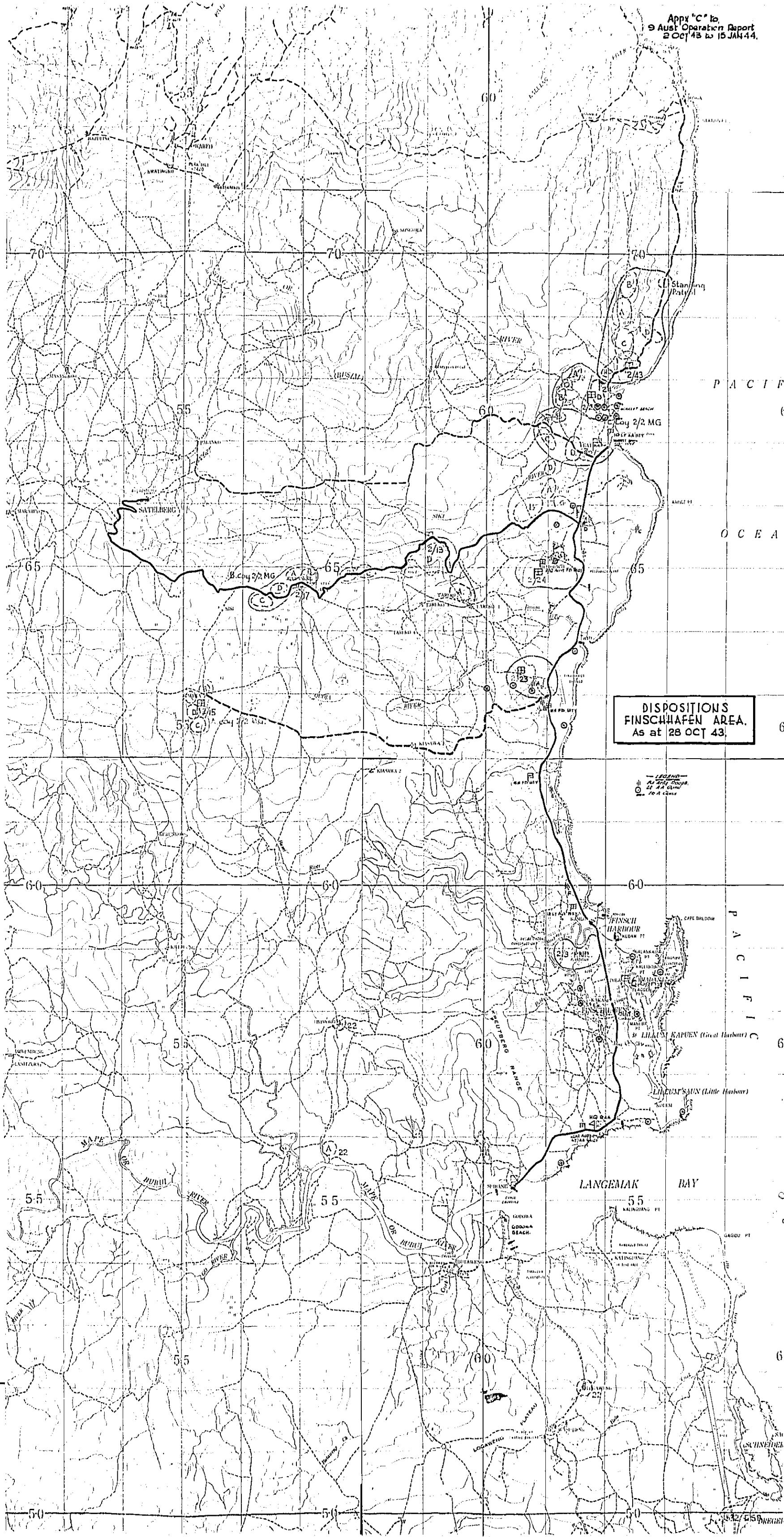
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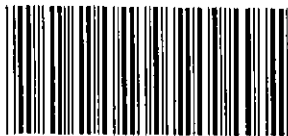
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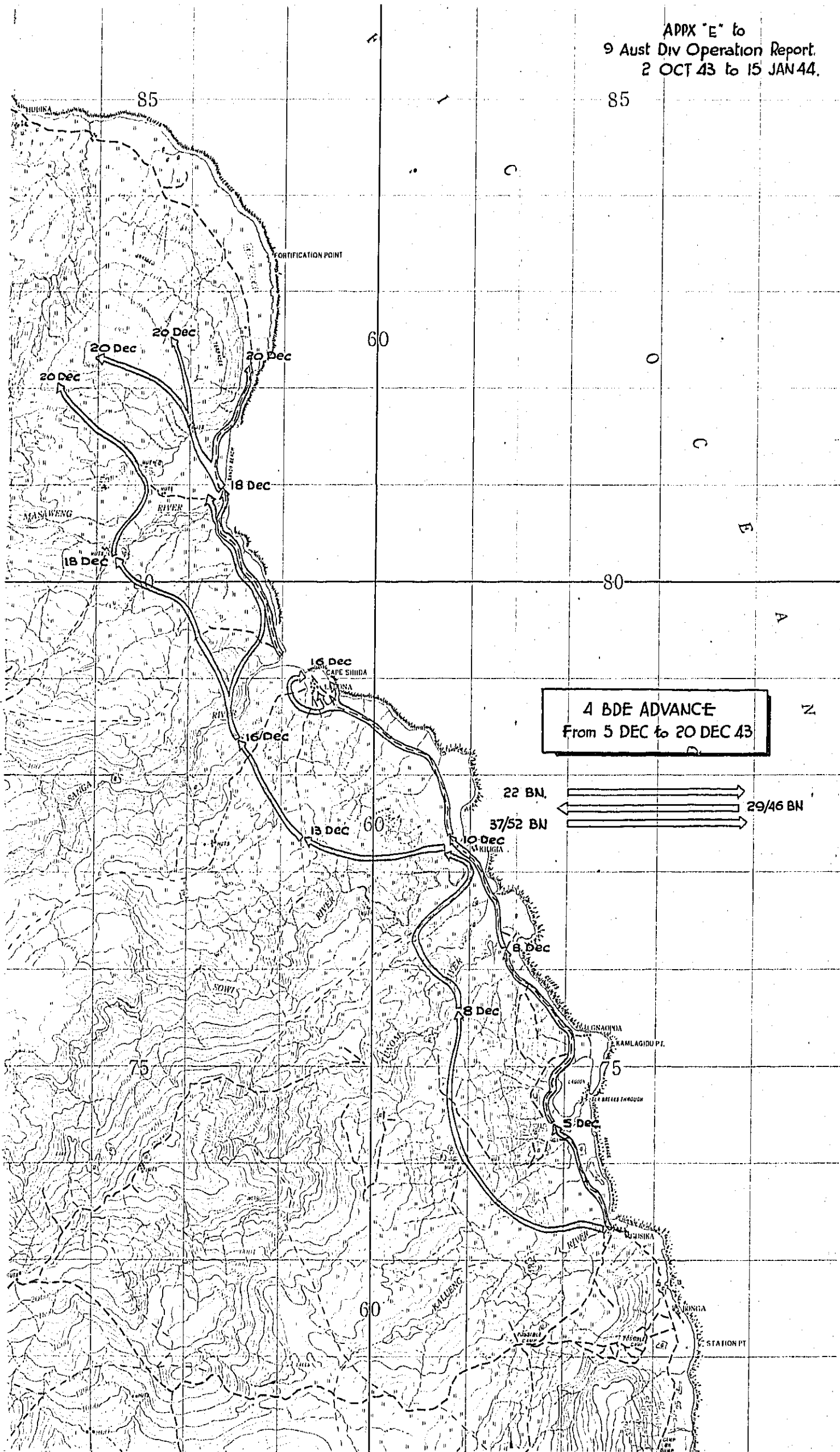
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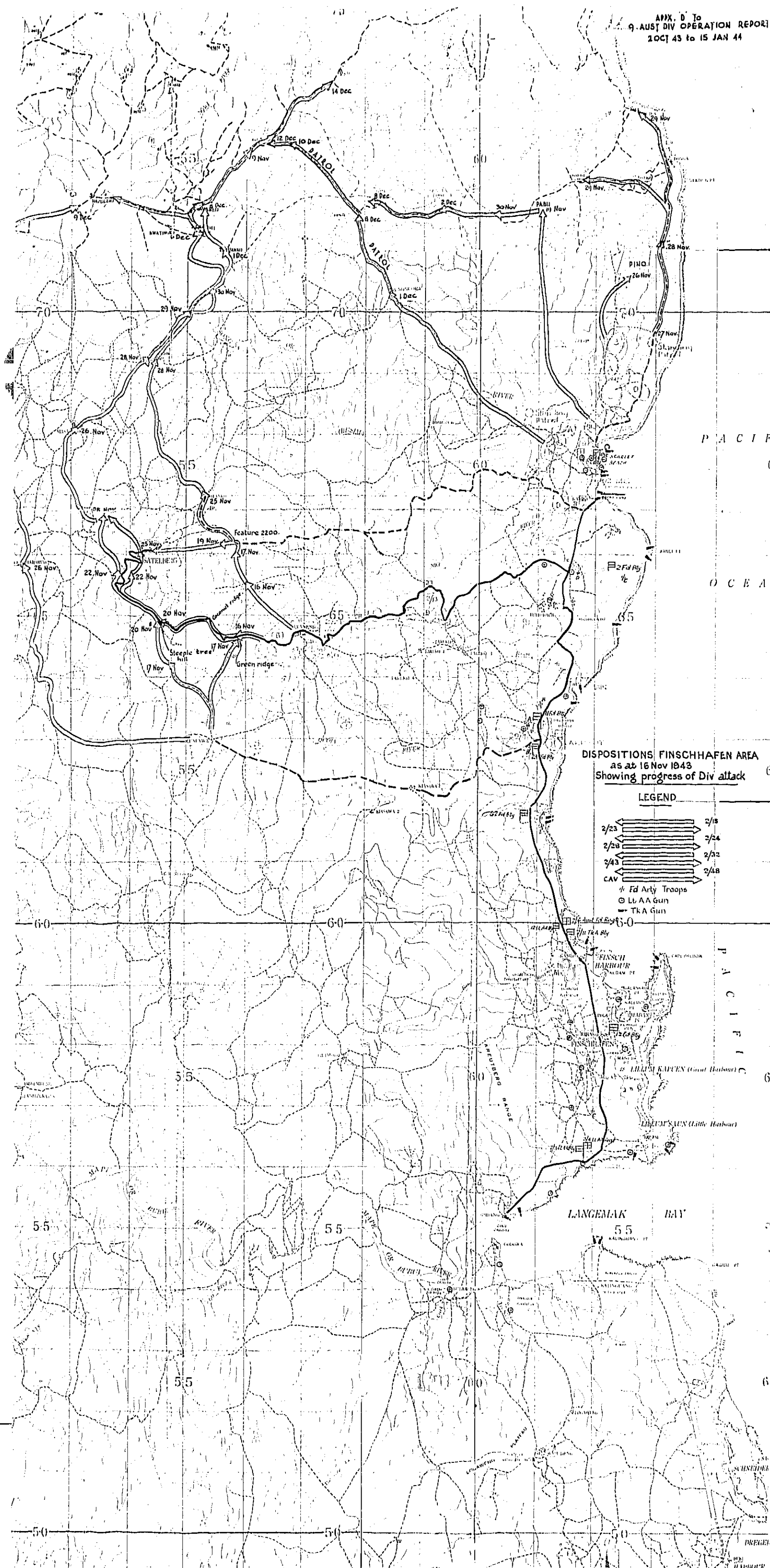


APPX "E" to
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2 OCT 43 to 15 JAN 44.

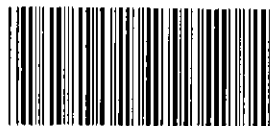


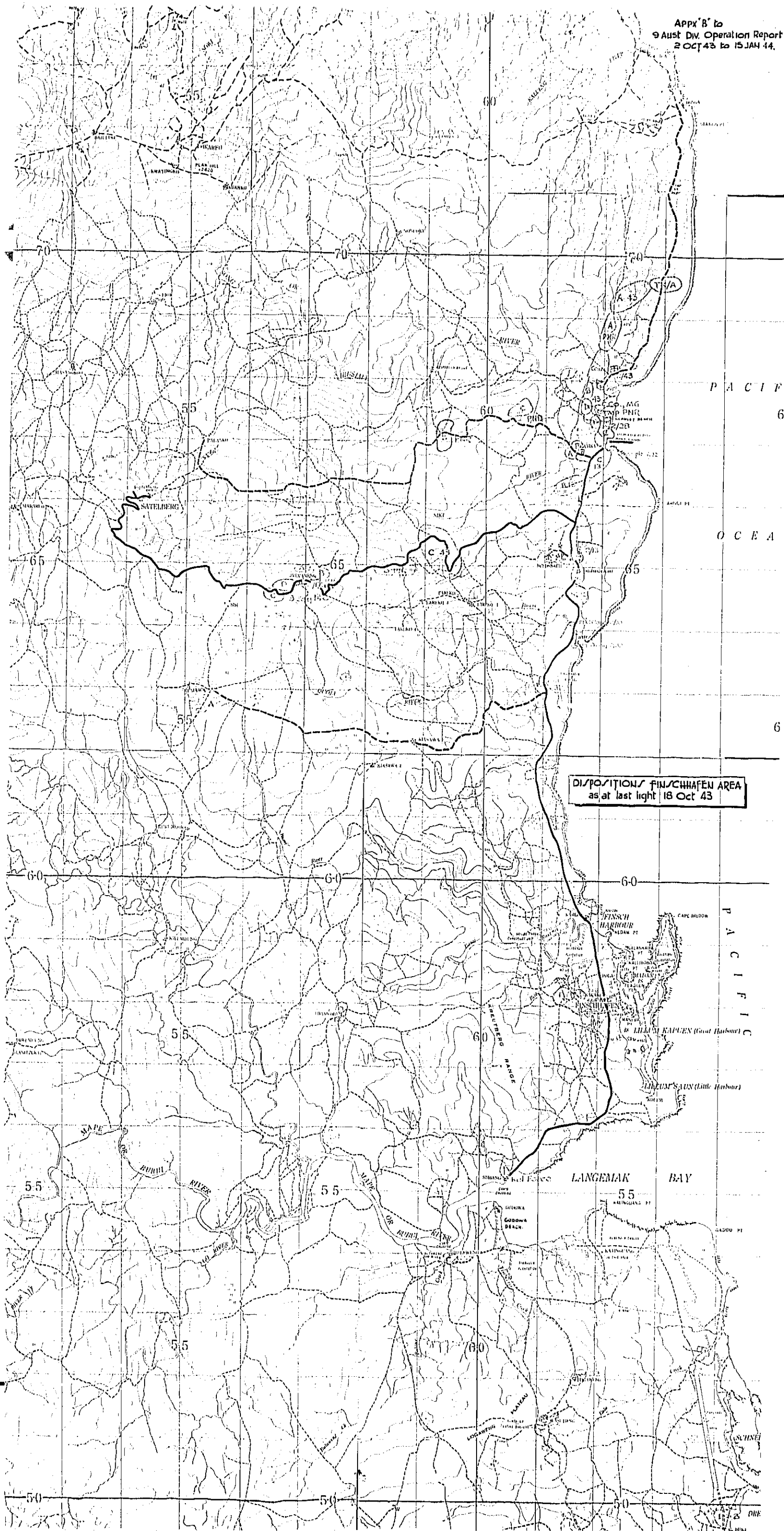
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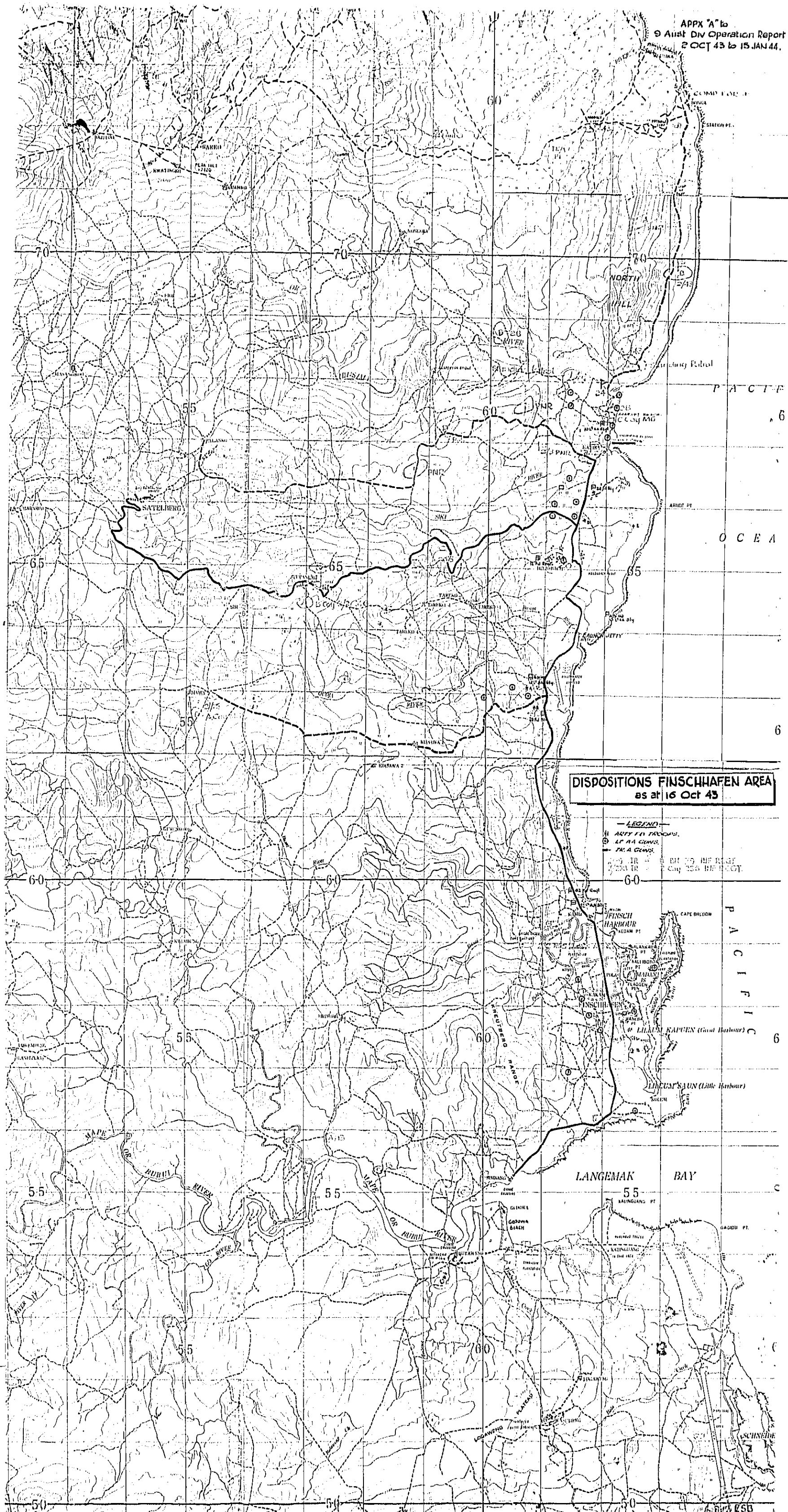
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**Aust Div. REPORT on OPERATIONS
2 OCT 43 - 15 JAN 44.**

W. H. Jones

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9 AUST DIV REPORT ON OPERATIONS

2 OCT 43 - 15 JAN 44

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SECTION I - NARRATIVE OF EVENTS

INTRODUCTION

On 8 Oct 44, FINSCHHAFEN fell and a new phase began in the campaign on the HUON PENINSULA.

In anticipation of the capture of FINSCHHAFEN, Comd 1 Aust Corps visited Div HQ at R BUNGA on 1 Oct and issued the following general orders, subsequently confirmed on 5 Oct in 1 Aust Corps Op Contr No 6.

3 Aust Div was to -

- (a) Defend FINSCHHAFEN
- (b) Develop FINSCHHAFEN as a Base Sub Area
- (c) Gain control of the east coast of HUON PENINSULA up to and including SIO

The events from this date onwards until the capture of SIO on 15 Jan 44 fall into five main phases:

- PHASE I Reinforcement and preparation for offensive by both sides 2 Oct - 15 Oct.
- PHASE II The enemy attempt to retake FINSCHHAFEN 16 Oct - 28 Oct.
- PHASE III Reorganisation and redistribution of forces in preparation for our offensive 29 Oct - 15 Nov.
- PHASE IV The attack 16 Nov - 20 Dec.
- PHASE V The pursuit, and the capture of SIO 31 Dec - 15 Jan 44.

PHASE I

Reinforcement and preparation for offensive by both sides
2 Oct - 15 Oct 44

Situation - Our Troops

For the capture of FINSCHHAFEN, Comd 20 Bde had concentrated his three bns in the R BUNGA area, leaving only 2/43 Ia to protect the SCARLET BEACH maintenance area. This bn was disposed with one coy in NORTH HILL area covering the approach from the north along the coastal track; one coy astride the track west of KATIKA covering the direct route into SCARLET BEACH from the SATELBERG direction, and 2/43 Bn less two coys on the SATELBERG track, with the forward coy occupying JIVEVANG VILLAGE area.

Situation - Enemy

During the 20 Bde advance on FINSCHHAFEN, the enemy had been withdrawing his forces from the area south of R MAP via the inland track TIRIMORO - GURUNKOR - KUMAWA to SATELBERG. By 2 Oct, this move had been completed, and with the naval garrison which had withdrawn from FINSCHHAFEN, the total enemy strength in SATELBERG area, after allowing for casualties suffered from 22 Sep to 1 Oct, was approximately 4,500.

At the same time, substantial reinforcements were moved down the coast by sea and overland, to SATELBERG. This force totalled 6,800 and consisted principally of HQ 20 Div, Div troops and 70 Inf Regt. They had been engaged on road work in BOGADJIM area but after the landing at LAE, were ordered to move at once to FINSCHHAFEN.

partly by barge and partly on foot and between 3 - 12 Oct were arriving in WAMBO area via the overland track from KALASA.

The enemy resisted strongly all our attempts to advance on SATELBERG, and his general intention in this phase seems to have been to build up his strength and prepare for his counter offensive, aimed at the recapture of FINSCHHAFFEN.

SC Phase Operations Before Arrival of Div HQ

In a message sent to Comd 20 Bde before the fall of FINSCHHAFFEN, the Div Comd had stressed the importance of the early capture of SATELBERG, and with this object, and in view of the increasing enemy activity on the SATELBERG track and in the coastal sector north of SCARLET BEACH, Comd 20 Bde began an immediate redistribution of his forces. The Bde Comd's plan was to relieve 2/45 Bn less two coys on the SATELBERG track by 2/17 Bn. The whole of 2/45 Bn would then be available for the close protection of SCARLET BEACH from the north and west, and 2/17 Bn was to press on west along the track from JIVEVAHENG and capture SATELBERG.

The execution of this plan was interrupted by offensive action by the enemy. On 1 Oct, A Coy 2/45 Bn at JIVEVAHENG had been isolated by an enemy force which outflanked their position to the north and got astride the SATELBERG track in their rear to the east of the village. Several attempts to relieve A Coy were unsuccessful, and eventually on 4 Oct the coy, under instructions dropped to them by two R aircraft, rejoined the main body by moving south of the enemy position on another track. While isolated the coy repulsed numerous enemy attacks, killing at least 50 Japs and wounding many more.

It was now apparent that the enemy was in strength on the SATELBERG track, and to drive on SATELBERG along that axis would be a long and costly task. Comd 20 Bde therefore decided to attempt an outflanking movement to the south. On 5 Oct, accordingly, 2/17 Bn less two coys moved by a steep native pad up to KUMAWA village, which they occupied without opposition. The seizure of this feature brought several tactical advantages, and also some difficulties: it cut the main enemy inland route into SATELBERG from the south (though an alternative track existed via MORENG and MARAUO), and gave good observation up to SATELBERG and access north to SATELBERG rd and thence to the SATELBERG HEIGHT itself. But the very fact of its position on the enemy inland withdrawal route from FINSCHHAFFEN, its tactical value, and its importance to us as a supply dump area required that at least one coy remained to hold the area of the track junction and protect it against any enemy attack from the south. Thus the force available to exploit north towards SATELBERG was very small, and when it struck solid enemy opposition on 6 Oct north of KUMAWA, little further progress was possible.

The other difficulty was maintenance: the engs at once began work on a jeep track through KIASATA up to KUMAWA, and eventually reached the village, but it was at best an extremely steep dry-weather track, and during its construction, and in wet weather, it required numerous native porters assisted by deta of other units to keep supplies up.

Comd 20 Bde now decided to increase the pressure towards SATELBERG, by moving 2/15 Bn to KUMAWA and concentrating 2/17 Bn on the SATELBERG track; leaving the protection of FINSCHHAFFEN to 2/15 Bn in the SHIBANG area, with coys forward at TIREMORO and on the north bank of R MAPE, and to 22 Bn, disposed south of R MAPE in area PUKAWENG - LOGAWENG. Accordingly, two coys 2/17 Bn relieved 2/45 Bn in JIVEVAHENG area on 5 Oct, and on 7 Oct 2/15 Bn began to march north from FINSCHHAFFEN to KUMAWA. Before their arrival, on 8 Oct, the enemy launched a heavy counter-attack on 2/17 Bn near KUMAWA; but the attack failed completely, being repulsed with heavy losses.

3/17 Bn followed up with a successful encircling attack on the BATEBERE track, capturing a dominating knoll, which they subsequently held against three heavy and very costly counterattacks by the enemy. But their further attempts to advance were stubbornly resisted.

The situation when Adv HQ 9 Aust Div opened at FINSCHHAFFEN on 10 Oct 43, was that 2/15 Bn had taken over the KULANA sector, 2/17 Bn was at JIVEVANENG both now facing strong enemy forces well dug in. The SCARLET BEACH maintenance area somewhat weakly protected by only one Lt (2/43 Bn) and the lines of communication to both RUMBA and JIVEVANENG uncertain in wet weather. At this time heavy rain did actually make these tracks impassable to jeeps and further advance was held up until supplies could be built up.

Forward Move of HQ 9 Aust Div and 24 Bde Gp

In order to carry out the orders issued in 1 Aust Corps Op Instr No 6 (see para 2 above), Comd 9 Aust Div was authorised to move to FINSCHHAFFEN the balance of the Div less one bde group, at his discretion, with the proviso that the movement of troops and the subsequent maintenance of the force from LAE area must be within the capacity of the craft of the Boat Bn 532 Regt 2 ESB under command 9 Aust Div, assisted by whatever craft 543 Regt, under comd USASOS Adv Base LAE, could make available.

It was thus necessary to decide what number of craft could be spared from maintenance of the FINSCHHAFFEN area for the movement of units forward from LAE, and what scale of reserves it was necessary to build up in the forward area. It was also necessary to determine the most suitable priority of units for the forward move and the allocation of the craft available. The situation at FINSCHHAFFEN made it clear that more fighting troops were required forward as early as possible: but that need had to be balanced against the requirements of administrative units to develop the base and to maintain the force at FINSCHHAFFEN as it increased in size.

On 6 Oct the moves by sea in craft of 532 Regt (2 ESB) began and continued steadily until by 15 Oct the force at FINSCHHAFFEN comprised the following :-

- Adv HQ 9 Aust Div
- HQ RAH 9 Aust Div
- 2/12 Aust Fd Regt
- 2/4 Aust Lt AA Regt (less one bty)
- HQ LAE 9 Aust Div
- 2/5 Aust Fd Coy
- Det 2/1 Aust Mech Eqpt Coy
- HQ 20 Aust Inf Bde
- 2/13 Aust Inf Bn
- 2/15 Aust Inf Bn
- 2/17 Aust Inf Bn
- HQ 24 Aust Inf Bde
- 2/28 Aust Inf Bn
- 2/32 Aust Inf Bn
- 2/43 Aust Inf Bn
- 2/2 Aust MG Bn
- 2/3 Aust Pnr Bn
- 22 Aust Inf Bn

On 10 Oct Adv HQ 9 Aust Div opened on the north shore of LANCERAK BAY, and relieved 20 Bde of responsibility for maintenance in FINSCHHAFFEN and the administration of the many subunits and supporting troops in the area.

The Div Comd appreciated that the vital ground in the area was

- (i) SATELBERG mountain feature
- (ii) The long narrow ridge running west from GUSIKA on the coast to WAREO.

Along this latter ridge ran a track which the enemy used to carry supplies brought down the coast in barges, to his troops inland in the WAREO - SATELBERG area. Possession of the ridge would deny the enemy excellent observation of the coastline as far south as DEGER HARBOUR and cut one of his supply routes from the coast; Further, WAREO, at the western end of the ridge was itself on a 2600 ft plateau which dominated the entire R SONG VALLEY and the country inland from SCARLET BEACH as far west as the SATELBERG HEIGHT. It was also the junction point of many important tracks - notably the Jap inland track from KALASA, the track from the rich HOLE district centred on KULUNGUTU, and several routes down to the coast at GUSIKA, KALIGIA and LAKONA. From WAREO also radiated tracks to SATELBERG, PALANG and NONGORA - all of them routes of supply for enemy forces in these localities and of access for the enemy to attack our forces in the SCARLET BEACH and FINSCHAFEN areas.

The capture of the GUSIKA - WAREO line would therefore both secure the FINSCHAFEN area and provide the ground from which an offensive could be launched to drive the Japs from the east coast of NEW GUINEA and capture SIO, which were the two operational tasks given to the Div. While the enemy held SATELBERG, however, the left flank of a drive for the GUSIKA - WAREO line would be open to attack, and the Div Comd's plan therefore envisaged two preliminary moves before the advance on WAREO :

- (a) The capture of SATELBERG.
- (b) The control of track junctions in BONGA area to cut the enemy supply line to the coast and open the WAREO feature to attack from the east by the spur along which the track ran from GUSIKA.

By 11 Oct, 21 Bde was beginning to arrive at FINSCHAFEN and Div Comd reallocated areas of responsibility as follows :

North: 24 Bde (2/43 Bn, 2/3 Pnr Bn)
 Centre: 20 Bde (2/13, 2/15, 2/17 Bns)
 South: 21 Ln

The boundaries of the centre sector (with the north sector) ran incl road SATELBERG - JIVEVAENG thence all excl road to northern edge HEDSBACH PLANTATION thence to ARNET PT: the boundary with south sector was incl R LAPE. Tasks allotted were as follows :-

- 24 Bde - To protect SCARLET BEACH area in depth against any enemy attack from west or NW, and with not less than two coys to gain control of track junctions vicinity BONGA.
- 20 Bde - To continue pressure towards SATELBERG with a view to its capture.
- 22 Bn - To protect area south R LAPE, incl LOGAWENG and landward defence DEGER HARBOUR.

The remainder of 24 Bde had not yet moved from LAE, but 2/28 Bn on arrival 14 Oct came under comd 24 Bde and 2/32 Bn on arrival 15 Oct came into div reserve in area R QUOJA.

The reorganisation of the force and the other preparations necessary to execute this policy were still proceeding when evidence from many sources indicated strongly that an enemy attack was imminent. It was appreciated that the attack might come from land or sea, or possibly a combination of both, and that its object would be the recapture of FINSCHHAFFEN.

The probability of such an enemy move had been foreseen by the Div Comd, and underlined by increasing evidence of strong enemy reinforcements arriving in the KAPO area. He had hoped to anticipate the enemy in resuming the offensive, but as it now seemed certain that the enemy would be ready first, orders were issued on 15 Oct, laying down the policy for the defence of FINSCHHAFFEN. The principal points were :-

- (a) Certain defined vital ground to be held at all costs.
- (b) Defence in depth.
- (c) Local mobile reserve to be maintained in each sector.
- (d) Coast watching stations and beach defences to be organised from incl SCARLET BEACH to DREGER HARBOUR.

The vital ground to be held at all costs included the track junctions near BONGA; NORTH HILL; the high ground about two miles west of SCARLET BEACH between R SOME and SATELBERG track near JIVEVALENS; KUMAWA; TIRIMORO area; LUBAWENG; LOGAWENG; and 582 Regt LGS base and harbour areas DREGER HARBOUR. Two coys 2/2 MG Bn were placed under Comd 20 Bde, one coy under Comd 24 Bde.

Lt AA guns sited on the beaches were given a dual role of beach defence and additional guns were brought from inland positions to thicken the defences. Inf 3 prs were sited along the coast, and coast watching and challenging stations organised from elements of 2/2 LG Bn, Lt AA, 2/12 Fd Regt and Inf B echelons. All these dispositions were to be completed by 1700 hrs 16 Oct.

2/32 Bn, on arrival 15 Oct, was to come into div reserve. The only other unit in div reserve at this time was 2/2 MG Bn less three coys. The task of protecting FINSCHHAFFEN and the shortage of inf was a constant handicap, throughout this stage, not only to offensive and counter-offensive operations but also to the creation of an adequate div reserve. Both 2/15 Bn and 22 Bn were committed to the protection of FINSCHHAFFEN from the west, and 2/32 Bn, in div reserve in R QUOGA area, had one coy at short notice as mobile reserve for coastal defence in the ARINDT PT area. 20 Bde had no reserve readily available - in fact its only troops not committed were 2/15 Bn less two coys, at SINEANG. 24 Bde had, as bde reserve, only 2/26 Bn less one coy, of which one coy was disposed for beach defence on SCARLET BEACH.

However by 1700 hours 16 Oct, all preparations possible had been made to meet the expected enemy attack. The dispositions of our troops are shown on Map Appx "A".

Maintenance

On the first day of the landing on SCARLET BEACH 23 Sep, 15 days' supplies had been landed for 20 Bde Gp. From that date, FINSCHHAFFEN was resupplied solely from LAE area, by 582 Regt EFB craft under Comd 9 Div, our of reserves brought by LCTs from DUMA. The necessity for carrying units forward to FINSCHHAFFEN in the same craft still further complicated the maintenance position. The greatest efforts could not safely guarantee to replace an expenditure of more than 600 rounds of arty ammunition per day, and at one stage only two days' balanced rations for the force were held forward at FINSCHHAFFEN. The difficulties of supply and maintenance were further increased by the irregularity and uncertainty of deliveries to I W area. At one stage, stocks held at G BEACH and LAE SMO Area together represented only 3 days' reserve; and from these stocks reserves had to be built up at FINSCHHAFFEN.

The transport of vehicles forward was especially difficult, and this resulted in a general shortage of vehicles and workshop facilities in FINSCHHAFEN, which remained acute until late Dec. Even in Jan there was still a number of 9th Aust Div vehicles at G BEACH because craft were not available to bring them forward.

With the arrival of HQ 9 Aust Div at FINSCHHAFEN, the Div Maintenance Area was laid out so that it could be subsequently developed into a Base Sub Area. KEDAM BEACH was developed to maintain dumps in FINSCHHAFEN area, and LAUNCH JETTY BEACH opened to supply HELDSBACH area, later destined to become the Div Maintenance Area as Base Sub Area took over at FINSCHHAFEN. SCARLET BEACH then became merely a forward supply beach for units in the area, and was supplied by sea from FINSCHHAFEN stocks.

PHASE II

ENEMY ATTEMPT TO RETAKE FINSCHLAFEN

16 Oct - 28 Oct

Enemy Situation and Intentions

The dispositions of the enemy force on 16 Oct, just before his counter offensive began, are shown on Map Appx "A" attached. Confirmation of the enemy's intentions had been obtained in a document taken from the body of a Jap Officer killed in a patrol clash near GUSIKA on 15 Oct. This was a copy of 20 Div OO No A 320, issued at SATELBERG on 12 Oct by Lt Gen KATAGIRI, Comd 20 Div. First para of this read -

"After dusk on X Oct the main strength of 79 Inf Regt will attack the enemy in ARNDT PT area from the north side. The assault boat Butai will penetrate through the north coast of ARNDT PT on the night of X Day".

In a later para it was stated:-

"X Day will be decided on X minus 1 day at 2200 hrs and a fire will be seen for 20 minutes on the SATELBERG HEIGHTS".

Units were to light similar fires in their areas to acknowledge receipt.

Maps and Operation Orders captured later showed that the enemy had planned three co-ordinated attacks:-

- (a) A "diversion" in the north, by two coys 79 Inf Regt advancing south from BONGA, supported by a counter battery programme, which for some reason was never fired.
- (b) A seaborne attack : a force consisting of 10 Coy 79 Inf Regt and a det of 20 Engr Regt, liberally equipped with explosives and demolition charges, was to move in barges down the coast from HAMBARIWA, and land on SCARLET BEACH "on the night of X day". Instructions to this TOPPA TAMEI TAI (boat penetration tai) stated "ammunition dumps, artillery positions, tanks, enemy HQ moored boats, barrac etc should be selected as objectives".
- (c) The main landward attack : 20 Div was to attack eastward from SATELBERG-WAREO area, with 80 Inf Regt astride SATELBERG road, and 79 Inf Regt to the north. Objective of 80 Inf Regt were shown on a captured map as HELDSBACH, north end HELDSBACH PLANTATION, and our arty positions in the area. The plan of 79 Inf Regt was shown in an OO issued 16 Oct, as follows:

"HAYASHIDA Butai (79 Inf Regt) will charge in and attack and annihilate the enemy located north of ARNDT PT".

2 Bn, on the left, was to break through our defenses towards SCARLET BEACH, "mop up the enemy along the right to R BONG" and then prepare to exploit southwards.

3 Bn, on the right, was to follow 2 Bn through the breach in our defenses, and then "attack with surprise the enemy in KATIKA from the rear and annihilate them".

X Day, as stated by this Operation Order, was 16 Oct.

The Enemy Attack

All units of 9 Aust Div had been ordered to post sentries to watch for the fire on SATELBERG, which according to the 20 Div OO, was to indicate "X minus 1 Day". No such fire was observed, and since it rained heavily all night 15/16 Oct, it is doubtful whether a fire was ever successfully lit, and quite certain that few, if any,

return fires were lit, in acknowledgement. This may, perhaps, have been the reason for a certain lack of co-ordination, and an apparent mistiming, in the various enemy drives.

The information received from higher authority about signs of an impending attack by "a new div" gave no indication of the probable nature of the offensive. It had been suggested that it might be a wholly seaborne attack by a "division of ships", and in any case, the Div Comd had to be prepared; throughout this period, for a seaborne diversion or full-scale assault, coordinated with a counter-offensive on land. The security of FINSCHHAFEN and KOTTEL BAY against an attempted enemy landing was a constant source of concern, and a strain on the Div's resources of troops and suitable weapons.

At 0600 hrs on 16 Oct, 2/17 Bn near JIVEVALENG, was heavily attacked by enemy estimated at one coy, presumably from 80 Regt, whom they repulsed with heavy losses. Fighting continued in the area all day, and at one stage an enemy force got astride the road east of JIVEVALENG but were driven out by a vigorous counter-attack. At 1600 hrs approximately two enemy coys, supported by 70 mm gun, again attacked from the west, but were finally repulsed after two hours heavy fighting. By nightfall, the enemy attacks had petered out, though elements were believed to be still in the area.

The enemy "diversion" from the north in the coastal sector was not pressed determinedly and resulted merely in what was regarded as patrol skirmishes near GUSINA on 16 Oct and was not recognised as a part of the attack until the enemy order was captured.

The night 16/17 Oct was quiet until 0300 hours when a heavy air bombing raid began on FINSCHHAFEN area, continuing for an hour and doing no damage whatever. This heralded the seaborne attack. At 0415 hours three barges approached SCARLET BEACH, gliding in with motors muffled, close to the northern cove. Owing to rain and darkness and the noise of the surf the barges were not detected until they were not detected until they were close to the mouth of the river. They were then engaged at point blank range by Bofors and 4.2 inch guns and rifles of 2/28 Bn, assisted by 37 mm and 50 cal guns of a det of 522 Regt L EsB. Two were disabled on the sand spit at the mouth of the river; the third was hit but managed to retract and withdrew north up the coast, carrying many casualties, to judge from the noise. 39 enemy were killed on the beach and their weapons and equipment captured, including many demolition charges, mines and Bangalore torpedoes. 36 enemy escaped across the mouth of the river into the jungle on the north bank but were mopped up during the day by patrols of 2/15 Bn. The seaborne arm of the attack was thus a complete failure.

On 17 Oct, the main enemy landward attack from the west began, and was pressed with great vigour and persistence for six days. It is now clear that on 16 Oct the enemy had been passing a large force, probably the whole of 79 Inf Regt Gp, between the widely dispersed forward coys of 2/6 Pnr Bn, into a concentration area about five miles west of KATIKA. Patrols from the 2/3 Pnr Bn had had several clashes with small enemy parties on 16 Oct, indicating increased enemy activity in this sector. It was not possible to assess accurately what strength of enemy was involved. It was reasonably clear, however that the enemy parties encountered were probably advanced and flank guards screening the eastward movement of a considerable force. Indications therefore pointed to concerted enemy thrusts along the axis of the SATELBERG ROAD and from the west towards SCARLET BEACH.

At 1100 hrs 17 Oct HQ 2/3 Pnr Bn, on the high ground west of KATIKA, was heavily attacked by about one enemy coy. The attack was repulsed, but spasmodic fighting continued in the area all day; at last light a second strong attack was launched, which broke into the defensive area and forced the Bn HQ to withdraw into the 2/28 Bn perimeter at KATIKA, thus leaving the three forward coys on the high ground further west without line communications, and without a secure supply route.

Comd 24 Bde decided to employ part of his Bde reserve, namely two coys 2/28 Bn, early on 18 Oct to clear up the situation west of KATIKI and re-establish communications with the three isolated coys of 2/45 Bn. In order to keep some reserve, if the enemy pressed his attacks, 2/45 Bn was ordered to withdraw its troops from the GUMUKA - LIMO HILL area, and to hold two coys in reserve to move south of R SONG if required. The withdrawal of these troops was extremely difficult, over 5 miles of difficult jungle terrain in darkness and rain. However, by first light 18 Oct, the two coys had reached R SONG mouth.

The night 17/18 Oct was quiet, and in view of the defeat of the enemy's drives, and the enemy's spasmodic and apparently uncoordinated efforts on the western flank, the Div Comd decided to recapture the initiative. Orders were accordingly issued early on 18 Oct for 24 Bde to regain effective control of the area held by it before the battle began, and to prepare plans for the capture of the ground north of R SONG in LOGORA area in preparation for an advance on WABO. 24 Bde was to exert pressure towards SATELETER and gain ground wherever possible. Before these orders could be implemented however, the enemy precipitated the heaviest fighting of the battle.

The Battle for KATIKI

At 1000 hours 18 Oct, as 2/22 Bn was forming up on the spur west of KATIKI for its counter-attack, and 10 minutes before its start time, the enemy launched a heavy and most determined attack on the Bn. This spur was one of the enemy's primary objectives, and fierce fighting continued until 1240 hours, in which the enemy suffered very heavy casualties and made no headway at all. The direct frontal attack was resumed several times during the afternoon, with further heavy losses to the enemy, but 2/28 Bn stood firm, their own casualties being remarkably light.

Meanwhile the enemy had been making probing attacks on both flanks of his main drive. Lt AA guns disposed for the protection of SCARLET BEACH in the kunai south of R SONG, and Lt AA positions protecting the fd gun area south of R SIKI, were both attacked. The AA gunners defended themselves, firing Bofors guns over open sights at point-blank range and using small arms to good effect. In the latter attack they were assisted by the fd guns, also firing over open sights at as little as 400 yards range. Both attacks were repulsed, and a third heavy attack on the gun area in the early afternoon met the same fate.

Comd 24 Bde, recognizing that SCARLET BEACH was open to attack from the west between R SONG and KATIKI, ordered the two coys 2/45 Bn previously held in reserve at R SONG mouth, to take up positions in the gap and link with 2/28 Bn to the south. They arrived in time to meet and repulse a heavy and determined enemy attack on SCARLET BEACH from the west. Fighting continued all the afternoon but all enemy attempts to penetrate were defeated. During the attack, the LMS near SCARLET BEACH was under heavy small arms and mortar fire, and it was evacuated, all the patients being removed in craft from SCARLET BEACH to 2/5 CCs at SIMBAU.

During the afternoon, the enemy, though unable to make any impression on the 2/28 Bn positions west of KATIKI, succeeded in out-flanking the Bn by moving to the south along the bed of R SIKI, and reached the sea at SIKI COVE. Orders were issued verbally, and confirmed later, by Div HQ, that 24 Bde was to hold at all costs the SCARLET BEACH area from both incl NORTH HILL - KATIKI. However, in view of the threat to SCARLET BEACH from both west and south, Comd 24 Bde informed Div HQ that he was unable to include KATIKI in his defences, and was withdrawing 2/28 Bn from KATIKI into a perimeter extending from NORTH HILL southwards, with a depth of 400/500 yards west from SCARLET BEACH, and having its southern flank resting on the small promontory just north of SIKI COVE. Line communication between Div HQ and HQ 24 Bde was then cut by the enemy, and wireless remained the only means of communication, apart from the 532 Regt LBS small craft, which continued to run to SCARLET BEACH throughout the battle.

By 1600 hours 2/28 Bn had completed its withdrawal to the new perimeter without interference, and 24 Bde were confident of being able to hold the enemy and prevent any penetration. There was now, however, an enemy wedge between 24 and 20 Bdes and the greatest danger at this time was that the enemy would swing south from KATIAA and SE from SIKI COVE and attack through the gun areas and HELDSBACH PLANTATION towards LAUNCH JETTY. If successful, this move would have cut off the 20 Bde units on the SATELBERG road and made their supply precarious and their control by higher authority most difficult. However, this possibility had been foreseen by the Div Comd and 2/13 Bn (less two coys) was already on the way from FINSCHHAFEN. On their arrival in the HELDSBACH area, 20 Bde was ordered to use them to prevent any enemy penetration southwards from R SIKI between 24 and 20 Bdes. One coy 2/32 Bn was allotted from the already slender div reserve to come under comd and re-inforce 2/13 Bn for this purpose. During the night, 2/13 Bn on the south of R SIKI and immediately East of its mouth repulsed three enemy attacks which proved to be the last attempts by the enemy to strike southwards from SIKI COVE. Meanwhile the attacks by 30 Inf Regt on 2/17 Bn had met with little success and resolved themselves into a series of small skirmishes on the west and north of the bn perimeter. One party of enemy did, however, succeed in getting astride SATELBERG road east of JIVEVANENG during night 18/19 Oct, and thus cut the bn's main supply route; but their maintenance was not prejudiced, since there existed an alternative supply trail further south which the enemy had not discovered. In 2/15 Bn sector at KUMAWA, all had been quiet, and the bn was ordered to patrol aggressively towards SISI and the SATELBERG road. In the succeeding days, 2/15 Bn offensive patrols successfully attacked several enemy posts and penetrated deeply to the vicinity of SISI. There is evidence that this action forced the detachment of further elements of 30 Inf Regt to strengthen the threatened southern flank and SW approaches to SATELBERG, with a resultant decrease in the force available for use against 2/17 Bn.

The situation of the three isolated coys of 2/3 Bn was not precisely known at this stage, as they were out of communication. The R planes, however, had sighted them waving to the aircraft, still in the positions they had been ordered to hold, and apparently not in difficulties; further, each coy had 3 days supplies and ample ammunition in its area, and the only likely shortage was water. The Div Comd now decided that they were no longer in a position to affect the course of the battle and they were to be withdrawn. For this purpose, they were placed under comd 20 Bde, which was ordered to contact them and arrange for them to move back south to the SATELBERG road. On 19 Oct, D Coy took up a position on the SATELBERG road east of JIVEVANENG, but 20 Bde and PIB patrols were unable to locate B and C Coys owing to the thick jungle and difficult terrain. Orders were to withdraw, as well as ammunition and rations, were therefore dropped to the Coys by Tac R aircraft, and on 21 Oct both coys moved out through the enemy lines into the 24 Bde perimeter. B Coy had distinguished itself by beating off numerous enemy counter-attacks on its position, killing more than 60 JAPS for a loss of only 2 men wounded.

Throughout this period, the lack of an adequate div reserve was causing the Div Comd considerable anxiety and difficulty. The only troops now available were 2/32 Bn less one coy (with another coy still at short notice as mobile reserve for coast defence in the ANSDT PT area) and 2/2 MG Bn less three coys (with elements engaged on beach defence and coast watching duties to FINSCHHAFEN area). Div Comd increased his reserve by moving two coys 22 Bn from south of R MAPE to come under comd 2/2 MG Bn at KAKAKOG, but the limited reserve available remained a great handicap. However, advice was received from Corps HQ on 18 Oct that arrangements had been made with US Navy to move 26 Bde in LSTs from LAE to FINSCHHAFEN, ETC on GODOWA BEACH CICO hours 20 Oct. The earliest that the bde could reach the fighting area would be 27 Oct.

Our Counter Attack

During the night 18/19 Oct there was considerable enemy movement along the whole 24 Bde perimeter. Our army, which had been continually in action for two days and had already wrought much havoc among the enemy, especially in his massed attacks on 2/28 Bn, brought DF on several occasions, evidently with damaging effect to the enemy who voiced his distress. On the morning of 19 Oct, however, the enemy was unexpectedly inactive. He had suffered very heavy losses in the fighting on 18 Oct, and seems also to have had some difficulty in appreciating the situation accurately. An OC issued by Col HAYASHIDA, Comd 79 Inf Regt, at 1850 hours 19 Oct stated:-

- "1. The enemy north of ARNDT PT (24 Bde) is retreating to FINSCHHAFEN. The enemy in front of II Bn (i.e. 2/28 Bn at KATIKA) is stubborn.
2. Main strength of the Regt will advance to the area south of KATIKA and demolish the retreating enemy."

After withdrawal of 2/28 Bn from KATIKA by 24 Bde at 1600 hours which was effected without interference, a further operation order was issued by 79 Inf Regt, timed 1800 hours 19 Oct:-

- "1. The night attack on the KATIKA position was successful with great fighting of the front line units, and captured it at 2000 hours.
2. 79 Inf Regt will mop up the SONG and ARNDT PT area as already planned. A portion will secure firmly ARNDT PT and KATIKA against the enemies in the direction of HELDSBACH. The main strength will be concentrated one kilo NW and make preparations for the future attack."

The main strength was to be assembled and reorganised NW of KATIKA for a final assault on HELDSBACH and subsequent advance to FINSCHHAFEN. Then for three days the enemy failed to attempt to follow up effectively what success he had gained, at considerable cost on 18 Oct.

Comd 9 Aust Div now fixed the interbde boundary, incl to 24 Bde, as R SIKI, and 24 Bde was ordered while still holding area NORTH HILL-SCARLET BEACH to re-establish contact with contact with 24 Bde and drive the enemy from the SIKI COVE-KATIKA area. Accordingly Comd 24 Bde ordered 2/29 Bn to recapture the high ground 500 yards west of KATIKA with two coys and to patrol south to R SIKI to contact 2/13 Bn. At 1800 hours the two coys with heavy mortar support, succeeded in reaching their objective, routing the enemy who attempted to oppose them, and dug in in good positions on the spur. The enemy pocket between KATIKA and the sea was thus almost completely enclosed.

The night 19/20 Oct was quiet, and again on 20 Oct the enemy remained inactive, thus allowing our counter measures and reorganisation to proceed unhindered. 26 Bde arrived safely in LANGEMAK BAY during the night, and arrangements were made to ferry the troops forward in ESB craft to LAUNCH JETTY on 20 and 21 Oct. Meanwhile, an attempt by another coy 2/28 Bn to drive the enemy from SIKI COVE area and contact 2/13 Bn, was unsuccessful owing to stubborn enemy resistance; however, in the afternoon, a fighting patrol 2/28 Bn did reach P SIKI south of KATIKA, contacted 2/13 Bn and returned laying sig cable. Line communication between Div HQ and 24 Bde was thus re-established.

Reorganisation

The following orders were issued by the Div Comd for 21 and 22 Oct:-

- (a) One bn 26 Bde (2/23 Bn nominated) to come into div reserve area R QUOJA.

- (b) 2/28 Bn to move by sea to SCARLET BEACH as soon as craft were available, and to revert under command of 24 Bde.
- (c) All elements 2/3 Pnr Bn in 20 and 24 Bde areas to return, as soon as relieved, to FINSCHHAFEN.
- (d) On arrival 2/3 Pnr Bn at FINSCHHAFEN, two coys 2/15 Bn in div reserve at KAKAKO to revert to comd 20 Bde and re-join 2/15 Bn on SATELBERG road.
- (e) 20 Bde (less one bn) to relieve 2/15 Bn and take over the sector from exclusive SIKI COVE to inclusive beach on SATELBERG road north of HELDSBACH.
- (f) On relief of 2/15 Bn by 26 Bde, 24 and 26 Bdes to make and execute mutual plan to eliminate enemy from KATIKA - SIKI COVE pocket, and to advance their FDLs to a general line west of the main coast road.

The gap which still existed between the 24 Bde perimeter and the two coys 2/28 Bn on the KATIKA spur was closed on 21 Oct by B Coy 2/28 Bn on arrival at SCARLET BEACH by sea. The only escape route then remaining to the enemy at SIKI COVE lay along the bed of the R SIKI itself. Throughout 20 and 21 Oct the enemy pocket, whose strength was estimated at 200, was pounded by art and mortars and ceaselessly sniped and harassed with MGs and rifles from both north (2/28 Bn) and south (2/15 Bn). During the night 21/22 Oct the position was evacuated, the remnants withdrawing by the difficult route along the R SIKI; 2/28 Bn patrols next morning found 50 enemy dead and much equipment abandoned in the area.

On 20 Bde sector, the enemy force astride the SATELBERG road had been strongly reinforced and was well dug in on a small feature overlooking the track. 2/17 being already in contact with enemy parties to the west and north of its positions was unable to spare troops to attack eastwards and reopen the track. The enemy position was consistently mortared from both east and west, and heavily shelled with several regimental concentrations, but an attempt by D Coy 2/3 Pnr Bn from the east to clear the position was unsuccessful. 2/15 Bn were patrolling aggressively with some success against enemy posts to the north of LUMATA. Meanwhile arrangements had been made for 6 Son 1 Aust Tn Bn to be brought forward from MOROBE in three LSTs, and the Son arrived in LANGEMAN BAY night 20/21 Oct. Two troops were allotted a defensive role south of LANGEMAN BAY in TIMBULUM PLANTATION. The remainder were moved in LCMs to KEDAM BEACH thence to near POLA.

The Son was in Div reserve.

Final Enemy Attacks

The two coys 2/28 Bn west of KATIKA had been attacked repeatedly and unsuccessfully between 19 and 21 Oct, by small parties of enemy, but in general, the enemy had allowed three days to pass without any major move, while our forces, now reorganised and reinforced, had regained the initiative. When the enemy at length resumed his attacks on 22 Oct, our troops were well able to deal with them, and they were to prove a complete and costly failure.

On 22 Oct, in accordance with the Div Comd's orders, 2/28 Bn advanced their FDLs astride KATIKA track westward for 500 yards, thus gaining greater depth from SCARLET BEACH and the main coastal track. The enemy (8 Coy 79 Inf Regt) offered some opposition but was quickly overcome. There is evidence that this move dislocated the enemy's plans for an attack on "enemy positions near the boat landing point", (i.e. SCARLET BEACH) by II Pl 79 Inf Regt. A fresh operation order issued later on 22 Oct ordered: "II Bn will attack the enemy in front of 8 Coy (i.e. 2/28 Bn) before attacking the enemy boat landing point". The attack was to begin about dusk.

At 1945 hrs 22 Oct, under cover of MG fire, the enemy strongly attacked 2/26 Bn positions astride KATIKA track. The first assault was a charge in mass straight down the track, which was met by concentrated fire from arty, mortars and IEGs, and repulsed with heavy casualties. After this setback the enemy attempted for several hours a series of infiltrating attacks, all of which failed in the face of inf small arms fire and grenades. Our arty and mortars consistently pounded probable enemy assembly areas and lines of approach, and by midnight the enemy attacks had ceased, and he spent the remainder of the night getting away his wounded and some of his dead.

By this time, the enemy's appreciation of the situation had substantially altered. At 1700 hrs 22 Oct, Comd 20 Div issued an operation order, which read :-

- "1. The enemy is gradually increasing his strength in ARNDT PT area. The enemy has increased his strength in R SONG area. They have their eyes towards MAISO. A portion of the enemy in KUMAWA area is advancing towards SISI - SATELBERG HEIGHTS. The enemy is still constructing a position running east - west to ARNDT PT and HELDSBACH.
2. YAWASHIDA Butai (79 Inf Regt) will attack the enemy in the east of KATIKA at daybreak of the 23rd and secure firmly the line. From 1000 hrs execute an attack on the enemy constructing the position. Direct the main strength to the right flank and attack."
3. Other Butais will continue their present duty".

By this time 2 and 3 Coys of I Bn 79 Inf Regt (presumed to have been in div reserve) had been brought into the battle. But in spite of the orders given above there was no further sign of offensive action by the enemy until the evening of 23 Oct.

During the day, 24 Bde front was readjusted. 2/43 Bn was made responsible for the area north of R SONG, inclusive NORTH HILL; 2/25 Bn occupied a sector extending 1000 yds south from R SONG and linking on the left with 2/32 Bn, who held from inclusive KATIKA track south to S SIKI, where a junction point was established with 26 Bde (2/48 Bn). These moves had scarcely been completed and the position prepared for defence when the enemy returned to the attack.

At 1800 hrs, the attack developed against 2/32 Bn astride and north of the KATIKA track. As expected, the enemy made no change either in his tactics or in his line of approach, and once again the only support came from heavy MG fire. By this time, our own fire power in this area had been greatly strengthened, especially in mortars and IEGs, and our arty had effectively resisted the new defensive fire tasks; with the result that enemy casualties were particularly heavy. Nevertheless he persisted in a series of attacks of varying intensity most of the night: none had the slightest success. By this time the enemy's confidence had waned. In the operation order of I Bn 79 Inf Regt for its attack on 24 Oct the intention was rather differently expressed as : "En will do its utmost to try and take these positions".

On 24 Oct, and during night 24/25 Oct the enemy persistently attacked in the direction of KATIKA from the west and NW. Initially, these attacks were estimated to be at bn strength: later they were reduced to one and two coy scale. In all cases the intensity of our arty and mortar fire, supplemented by inf small arms, was too much for the attackers.

During the night 24/25 Oct, the enemy brought a 75mm gun up along the KATIKA track to a position 70 yds from our FDLs: in the morning it was seen and promptly knocked out by inf 2 pr (brought forward for the purpose), after our MAGs had killed a series of enemy gunners attempting to man the gun.

The enemy remained in close contact on 24 Bde front during 25 Oct, but his positions were under constant heavy fire from arty, mortars and IFGs; and that night he finally gave up this attempt to recapture FINSCHHAFFEN, broke off close contact, and began to withdraw westward the way he had come.

On 26 and 27 Oct, both 24 and 26 Bdes pushed their FDLs further west to ground well suited to defence, giving a depth of more than 1200 yds from KATIKA and SCARLET BEACH. 26 Bde area was extended to include KATIKA track and this allowed 24 Bde to produce more adequate bn and bde reserves. Under instructions from Div HQ, a solid defence line was constructed in depth. Lines of visibility and fire were cut, well dug positions with head cover were prepared, trip wires and booby traps were laid. Standing patrols were established on all likely approaches. The dispositions of our troops at the end of the battle on 28 Oct are shown on map Appx "C".

Meanwhile, strong fighting patrols were out each day on the whole front, with orders to locate and attack the retreating enemy. The patrol policy laid down by the Div Comd was that the enemy was not to be allowed to dig in, but was to be constantly harried, particularly with arty and mortars and forced, mainly by the use of fire power to abandon each new position. For this purpose, FOCs were attached to each patrol with communication by both assault cable and wireless to the guns, and enemy positions located were very effectively shelled. On every occasion the enemy were compelled to withdraw. Numerous small encounters also ensued between our fighting patrols and groups of enemy, in which the enemy lost heavily. Gradually the enemy became more difficult to find, and by 29 Oct, none remained in the whole area held by 9 Aust Div before the battle began, except the strong pocket of about one coy, astride the SATTLBERG road in rear of 2/17 Bn.

Enemy losses in this counter offensive had been heavy. Known Jap dead counted by our troops amounted to 679. Many more had been killed by arty and mortar fire, others were dragged away at night and buried by their comrades, many were never discovered. Enemy wounded must also have been high and a conservative estimate of enemy battle casualties would be 1500. The bulk of the casualties had fallen on the newly arrived formation, 79 Inf Regt, whose II and III Bns suffered severely, but two coys of I Bn, the Div envs and arty also shared in the losses. Enemy equipment losses were less substantial, but one 75mm gun and numerous IFGs, mortars and rifles and items of general equipment were captured. Our own casualties were, in proportion, light: the Div total 16 - 28 Oct being:-

<u>Killed</u>	<u>Wounded</u>	<u>Missing</u>	<u>Total</u>
Ofprs OR	Ofprs OR	Cofprs OR	Ofprs OR
3 46	4 175	nil	7 221

Maintenance

The principal change in the supply and maintenance situation during this phase was that US Navy LCTs were brought into use for the resupply of FINSCHHAFFEN. In spite of strong representations, however, they refused to beach at KEDAM, and were unloaded at GODOA BEACH on the south side of LAKEGEAK BAY. This necessitated ESB small craft being taken off the run to LAE in order to ferry supplies from GODOA forward to KEDAM and LAUNCH JETTY.

This also meant that stores were handled five times before reaching the Div dumps - a serious waste of manpower. The provision of labour for handling stores was a great difficulty throughout the campaign, and at periods large numbers of front line troops were engaged on work on the beaches and in the dump areas. At this stage however calls for labour were moderate, and were met by the allotment of dets of 22 Bn, 2/2 MG Bn and later 2/3 Pnr Bn.

Maintenance during the battle was not interrupted. When 24 Bde was isolated by land, ESB craft continued to run supplies to SCARLET BEACH and to evacuate casualties, though sometimes under enemy LMG fire from SIKI COVE. The engs were working hard to build the coastal track as a 3 ton all-weather road, but meanwhile the track was rough, and muddy, and in wet weather, passable only to jeeps. The mainstay of the maintenance organisation was the ESB craft running supplies to LAUNCH JETTY where the Div dumps were situated, whence a good track ran through HELDSBACH PLANTATION to enable delivery to forward units by jeep.

During this period also BASE SUB AREA units began to arrive in FINSCHHAFEN and come under command 9 Aust Div. HQ Base Sub Area staff also arrived gradually, and began to assume control of the Base installations already planned and developed by 9 Aust Div.

PHASE III

REORGANISATION AND PREPARATION FOR OUR OFFENSIVE

29 OCT - 15 NOV.

The defeat of the enemy's counter-offensive now enabled the completion of plans and preparations for carrying out the Div Comd's intention of seizing the GUSIKA - WAREO ridge. The responsibility for the seaward and landward protection of FINSCHHAFEN Base remained a handicap to offensive operations, especially when our advance should take our troops out of the FINSCHHAFEN area altogether, and the Div Comd had already requested the allotment of additional troops (one bde inf, one fd regt, one LG bn, Tk A bty) for the protection of and working the Base, in order to free the major part of 9 Aust Div for offensive operations northward. On 29 Oct, 2 Aust Corps CO No 2 was issued, setting out the intention of 2 Aust Corps as follows :-

- (a) To clear the enemy from the FINSCHHAFEN area.
- (b) To establish control of the east coast of the HUON PENINSULA.
- (c) To consolidate 7 Aust Div positions in MARKHAM and RAMU VALLEYS.

The tasks allotted to 9 Aust Div were :-

- (a) To protect FINSCHHAFEN including the DREGER HARBOUR airstrip area.
- (b) To conduct offensive operations to clear the enemy forces from the FINSCHHAFEN area.
- (c) To establish control of the east coast of HUON PENINSULA as far as and including SIO.

In effect, there was thus no change in the role of 9 Aust Div from that previously set out in 1 Aust Corps OI No 6 of 5 Oct. A great change was however effected by the allotment of the following units to move to FINSCHHAFEN and come under Comd 9 Aust Div :-

2/6 Aust Fd Regt
2/11 Aust Tk A Bty
Remainder 4 Aust Inf Bde incl 4 Aust Fd Amb
Additional 9 Aust Div troops from LAE.

9 Aust Div Plan

At two conferences held at HQ 9 Aust Div and HQ 20 Bde on 1 Nov the Div Comd outlined the next phase of operations. He gave his intention to resume the offensive as soon as possible, the time now being favourable since the enemy's counter-offensive had failed, and additional troops had arrived to provide more adequate seaward and landward protection of the vital rear areas. The sqn of MATILDAS and the additional fd regt also gave the Div more hitting power.

The immediate object was to be the capture of the high ground SATELBERG - PALANKO by 26 Bde, supported by all available Div resources, with a view to a subsequent advance to the GUSIKA - WAREO line. A Div OC would be issued giving the task in outline; 26 Bde was to proceed at once with recce for a detailed plan. Recce had indicated the possibility of using MATILDAS on SATELBERG rd, and 26 Bde would have tanks to support the attack. Training of inf coys with tanks to work out the new tactics required and the best means of mutual cooperation and control was to begin at once.

The Div Comd laid down several principles governing the employment of tanks:

- (a) They were to be used as a surprise weapon. Their forward move to concentration area to be concealed as far as possible.
- (b) They were to be given adequate cover from air observation as a precaution against bombing.
- (c) Tanks at all times were to move with inf protection against Jap demolition squads, etc.

Relief of 20 Bde by 26 Bde units was to proceed in stages as laid down by Div HQ. 20 Bde was to take over the central sector and with 24 Bde to continue the role of offensive patrolling, to drive the enemy still further back and distract his attention from 26 Bde preparations. In the course of this active patrolling, arty was to be used wherever possible to blast the enemy from his positions with result^{ant} economy in inf casualties. PIB were to be used for long range patrolling to collect information about the enemy rearward dispositions and movements.

24 Bde was also to be prepared to send one bn northward to the track GUSIKA - WAREO, if ordered by Div HQ, in order to cut this enemy supply line and threaten WAREO from the east. Reces and planning were to proceed for this purpose, but the decision to order the move would depend entirely on tactical developments in the near future.

/supplying

HQ 3 Aust Corps was arranging large-scale operations with aircraft, PT boats, etc., against the enemy maintenance system/his troops in FINSCHHAFFEN area. This was to begin about D minus 5 Days. By this time, considerable information had been collected about the enemy's rearward supply system. NAMPALWA was known to be his main forward base, where submarines from NEW BRITAIN and barges from MADANG discharged their cargoes. From this point supplies and troops proceeded south down the coast in barges to staging points at SIALUM, KANOMI, WALINGAI, WANDOKAI and LAKONA, or overland via the inland track KALASA - WAREO. A summary of air operations in support of 9 Aust Div, which were mainly directed against the enemy L of C, is given in Appx "F"; a similar summary of PT boat operations by CTG 70.1 US Navy is given in Appx "G".

Administrative Planning

Supply and maintenance preparations for the attack were to continue as rapidly as possible. The tracks to JIVEVANENG and KUMAY were still only dry-weather jeep tracks, although the enemy were making to convert the SATTELBERG road to an all-weather surface. This meant that large forward dumps of supplies and ammunition would be required, from which 26 Bde units could be supplied by carrier line if necessary, so that wet weather would not halt the attack by making the supply routes impossible to traffic. It was decided to build up reserve dumps at KULWA (20 days for 500) and JIVEVANENG (20 days for 2000) by jeeps and trailers as long as the fine weather held, and the dumps were in fact completed by 14 Nov. The number of native carriers in the area was extremely limited, only 250 being available for allotment to 26 Bde. Arrangements were however made by HQF to have 1000 natives flown down the MARKHAM valley to LSE, whence they were despatched to FINSCHHAFFEN in ESB craft at the rate of about 200 every 2 days. Eventually 600 were allotted to 26 Bde for the operation - sufficient to carry for the whole Bde on a one-day turnaround. It was not expected that water would be readily available in the SATTELBERG area, and almost every 2 gallon container in the Division was withdrawn and held filled at JIVEVANENG for onward movement by jeep and trailers, or by native carrier, as required by circumstances. On 1 Nov, there were 12000 rounds of 25pr ammunition

in FINSCHHAFEN, but stocks were increasing by 2,000 rounds (two LCM loads) from G BEACH per day, less daily expenditure (average at this time approximately 500 rounds), and by D Day a satisfactory reserve would be built up

Reorganisation

The tasks of the Div engs in simultaneously building 3 ton roads in FINSCHHAFEN and northward to SCARLET BEACH to enable development of the Base Sub Area, and maintaining fair-weather tracks to KUMAWA and JIVEVANENG, was a heavy one especially since 2/7 Fd Coy was still under Comd 5 Aust Div at LAE, and was not released and moved forward to FINSCHHAFEN until 17 Nov. Two coys 2/3 Pwr Bn had already been allotted to assist RAE in road construction on 24 Oct. The balance of the bn could now be released from FINSCHHAFEN area by the arrival of 4 Bde units, and the whole unit was placed under the direction of CRE for work on the supply routes, with the proviso that at all times they were to be on two hours notice to resume an operational role.

The arrival of 2/11 Aust Tk A Bty allowed the coast defence to be developed further; in addition to their 16 x 6 pr guns, the Bty also manned 16 inf 2 prs, and the guns were sited in pairs (one 6 pr and one 2 pr) at points on the coast from both incl SCARLET BEACH - LANGEMAK BAY. Some 40mm light AA guns were withdrawn from the beaches and allotted to the AA protection of 2/6 Fd Regt, and the system of coast watching and challenging stations was strengthened.

Between 30 Oct - 3 Nov the remainder of 4 Bde arrived by small craft from LAE. 22 Bn reverted to comd 4 Bde which was made responsible for the seaward and landward protection of area FINSCHHAFEN - LANGEMAK BAY, and had in support for this task three tps 1 Tk Bn, one tp 2/12 Fd Regt, one Bty 2/6 Fd Regt, D Coy 2/2 MG Bn and all the RAA coast defence and coast watching dets in the area. In the event, however, a principal share fell on 4 Bde of the provision of labour to unload ships on GODOWA BEACH and KEDAM. Demands were heavy, and in the absence of any considerable labour unit available to FINSCH Base Sub Area, not less than 1½ bns were continually engaged on this work. The subject is dealt with more fully in para on Maintenance 5 pages on.

Preliminary Moves

An essential preliminary to the inter-bde relief and the building up of reserve dumps at JIVEVANENG was the elimination of the enemy pocket astride the SATELBERG rd east of the village. This enemy position was by now very deeply dug in and had withstood almost continual hammering by arty and mortars since 18 Oct. On 30 Oct, 20 Bde began a "squeezing" process, 2/17 Bn exerting pressure and inching forward from the west, 2/13 Bn from the east. The enemy resisted strongly and fierce fighting resulted for 4 days in country made extremely difficult by precipices and thick bamboo. On night 2/3 Nov, however, the enemy remnants, being almost surrounded, evacuated the position, leaving many dead and much equipment. 2/17 Bn then attacked enemy positions north of JIVEVANENG and after bitter resistance drove the enemy out and cleared the whole area down to R SIKI.

The relief of 20 Bde by 26 Bde was completed without incident by 6 Nov and on 7 Nov the MATILDAS began to move up to their assembly area near JIVEVANENG. They were ferried forward in LCMs from KEDAM to LAUNCH JETTY, under tarpaulins, and great precautions were taken to keep their presence hidden from the enemy. Sections of SATELBERG rd which were under enemy observation from SATELBERG HEIGHTS were traversed at night and the noise of the tanks' approach was covered by arty fire. The tanks were unable to climb several steep sections of the track made slippery by rain, but RAE D6 tractors accompanied them and successfully towed them through the obstacle.

By 9 Nov, the 9 MATILDAS were in position under cover in their assembly area. Intensive reces by inf patrols, and by arty, tank and inf officers, were proceeding on the whole 26 Bde front to locate the enemy positions, determine routes of approach, and maintain ascertainment forward of our positions to prevent enemy reces.

Meanwhile 24 Bde had been pushing patrols westward from their SCARLET BEACH perimeter without contact. Extensive patrolling to the north located enemy in the coconuts at BONGA and on PINO HILL, the feature 1 mile north of NORTH HILL. A very successful OP was established by a 2/43 Bn det with a few PIB, beside the GUSIKA - WAREO track, which counted all enemy moving both ways, and sent back regular detailed reports. It became clear that the enemy was sending out large parties to the coast, presumably for carrying in supplies, and numerous large working parties were seen toiling up the steep slopes towards WAREO carrying ammunition and supplies. Most were unarmed, but it was decided not to lay any ambush for the present, in view of the value of the information being obtained, as it would probably result in denying to us the future use of the OP.

The final Div Plan for the attack was as follows. 26 Bde was to capture the high ground running east and west through SATELBERG and exploit towards WARFO, beginning on a D Day to be notified by 10 9 Aust Div. For the operation, C Tk Sqn less three tps (9 MATILDAS), 2/12 Fd Regt less one bty, 2/15 Fd Coy and B Coy 2/2 MG Bn were placed in support 26 Bde. 20 and 24 Bdes were to continue their present role of very active patrolling, and were to harass and try to distract the enemy by all possible means. 20 Bde was given responsibility for the defence of SATELBERG rd to exclude JIVEVANENG, so as to release 26 Bde as far as possible for offensive operations. 4 Bde in addition to defending FINSCHHAFEN was to patrol offensively to the west, and as a further diversion, to locate and harass the enemy southern flank area JURUNKOR - KWEMBUNG - MORENG. On D minus 1 day 2/4 Cav Sqn was to com. under comd 26 Bde, to take over KUMAWA area and free the whole 2/23 Bn for offensive operations.

For the purpose both of creating a strong diversion and of protecting the eastern flank of 26 Bde advance, 20 Bde was ordered to use one coy on D Day to move forward into GARABOW area and establish a base from which to patrol actively, particularly in the direction of FIOR and the R SONG crossing used by the enemy.

2/6 Fd Regt less 56 Bty had now arrived in the area and the Div arty was redistributed. At the time the attack began the arty plan was:-

2/12 Fd Regt (less one bty) in support 26 Bde
24 Bty 2/12 Fd Regt in support 24 Bde
11 Bty 2/6 Fd Regt in support 20 Bde
12 Bty 2/6 Fd Regt in support 4 Bde

In addition, the two btys supporting 20 and 24 Bdes were to make necessary preparations and be prepared to shoot in 26 Bde sector if required.

All preparations for the attack having been completed, 17 Nov was appointed by the Div Comd as D Day.

Enemy Situation and Intentions

In spite of the severe losses suffered in his counter offensive, which reduced most of his bns below half strength, and in spite of serious supply difficulties, the enemy had not abandoned his object of retaking FINSCHHAFEN. Reinforcements had arrived, consisting of II Bn 238 Regt from NAMBARIWA.

At the end of Oct, Comd 18 Army (Lt Gen ADACHI) visited SATELBERG, remaining there until 3 Nov. As a result of his visit, 20 Div issued new orders on 3 Nov ;

- "1. The enemy in the FINSCHHAFEN area, approximately the size of a div and a half appears to consist mainly of 9th Aust Div. They have secured FINSCHHAFEN, LANGEMAK BAY and also HELDSEACH AIRFIELD. It appears as if they are planning to control the DAMPIER STRAIT. Their front line runs along both sides R SONG. It is certain that they have secured JIVEVANENG, KUMAWA and BUTAWENG.

The enemy at present is supplying its position and at the same time is trying to remove the strong pressure of HAYASHIDA Butai (79 Inf Regt) north of JIVEVANENG.

2. 20 Div, with the object of capturing FINSCHHAFEN, will attack locally and gradually annihilate the enemy. In order to accomplish this, a powerful force (80 Inf Regt) must occupy SATELBERG HEIGHT quickly and make it secure. Distribute units in vital points in the rear to meet enemy landings and endeavour to protect the supply simultaneously. Main body (79 Inf Regt, Div HQ, Div Troops) will assemble at NONGORA -----"

At the time of 26 Bde attack, therefore, the enemy was disposed with 80 Inf Regt holding the SATELBERG area, with III Bn on the SATELBERG rd and II Bn on the spur running east from SATELBERG to HILL 2200, and a mixed force holding the west flank MORENG - MARARUO. II Bn 238 Regt was in GUSIKA area, and the "main force" of 79 Inf Regt (I and III Bns, at least) concentrated in NONGORA area. The purpose of this concentration, as will be shown later, was to launch a further counter offensive, which the enemy called "Operation No 2". HQ 20 Div moved to NONGORA area from SATELBERG on 10 Nov.

Maintenance

Maintenance problems were exceptionally difficult during this phase. Resupply of FINSCHHAFEN by naval craft was expected to cease on 15 Nov, when USASOS LAE was to assume responsibility, and meanwhile higher authority desired to build up stocks in the area to the maximum while naval vessels were still available, and large numbers of LSTs and LCTs began to arrive at GODOWA BEACH. Heavy demands for labour to unload and handle the stores were inevitable, and the task fell principally on fighting units under Comd 9 Aust Div, especially 4 Bde. At one period 800 men by day and 400 by night were continuously employed on GODOWA and KEDAM BEACHES.

Simultaneously, the development of a large air base for Fifth Air Force, and of a Naval Base for PT boats, was begun in the DREGER HARBOUR area. All construction units, AA units, and administrative deta, with their personnel, vehicles, equipment and stores, were landed on GODOWA BEACH, from LSTs. The beach became chaotically overcrowded because of insufficient means to clear it, and heavy rain for several days turned TIMBULUM PLANTATION behind the beach into a quagmire. Vehicles had to be dragged off the beach by bulldozers and left in the mud behind. Gradually, however, roads were built to DREGER and the congestion slowly sooted.

There was considerable doubt at this time as to the limits of the US and Aust Base Areas. After many delays and changes of plan, it was eventually decided that the Aust Base Area should extend from both incl LAUNCH JETTY - R SONG. This involved the clearance of Aust dumps from the area developed at FINSCHHAFEN to the new area, and the further use of 9 Aust Div small craft and vehicles, since no other transport was available to Base Sub Area.

Administrative units for the Aust Base Sub Area continued to arrive and gradually took over the base installations. On 26 Nov FINSCHAFEN Base Sub Area ceased to be under Cmd 9 Aust Div and became directly responsible to NGF. Available resources did not permit the calls on the Div to provide administrative deta, transport and labour to cease entirely, and even in Jan the Div was still partly supplying itself by small craft from the Base dumps at LAUNCH JETTY.

PHASE FOUR

THE ATTACK

16 NOV - 12 DEC

26 Bde Plan

In outline, 26 Bde plan for the capture of SATELBERG provided for simultaneous advances by all three bns. The first intermediate objective was the dominating STEEPLE TREE feature (2600 ft) and the junction of SATELBERG rd and NW track from KUMAWA; patrolling and recce would then determine the best route for the final assault on SATELBERG. 2/48 Bn was to advance west on the axis of SATELBERG road supported by all the tanks; 2/23 Bn was to advance north from KUMAWA along both the NE and NW tracks and link with 2/48 Bn on the SATELBERG road; 2/24 Bn was to move NW from JIVEVANENG, cross R SIKI and seize the HILL 2200, thence exploiting west up the spur towards SATELBERG.

A preliminary operation, timed for D minus 1 day, was the capture by 2/48 Bn of the enemy outpost position on GREEN RIDGE and the securing of the track junction SATELBERG road - NE track from KUMAWA through SISI. This attack was successfully carried out on 16 Nov by two coys 2/48 Bn with heavy arty support. GREEN RIDGE was captured and the enemy garrison routed, numerous weapons and much equipment were captured. On the same day, as previously ordered, 2/4 Coy Sqn came under 26 Bde, and relieved 2/23 Bn at KUMAWA, thus releasing the whole bn for the attack; 2/24 Bn moved NW and secured a bridgehead over R SIKI in preparation for its attack on HILL 2200 next day. For the ultimate maintenance of 2/24 Bn, Div engrs had already begun the construction of a jeep track from KATIKA, following the track used by the enemy in his October counter-offensive. For some days, however, 2/24 Bn was to be maintained/native carriers from JIVEVANENG.

Development of 26 Bde Attack

At 0700 hrs 17 Nov, the attack began with heavy arty, mortars and ML concentrations on enemy positions, especially on COCONUT RIDGE. The tanks advanced with leading troops of 2/48 Bn and fierce fighting immediately developed astride SATELBERG rd. The use of tanks obviously came as a surprise to the enemy who had no effective counter at hand; nevertheless, the enemy resisted bitterly, frequently remaining in his defences until literally blasted out by the fire of the tanks. The advance was made slow as much by the nature of the terrain as by the enemy: the road ran along a narrow ridge covered in thick bamboo which made int movement difficult and the locating of enemy positions a long and arduous task. Four days of strenuous fighting and steady advance, followed by a final assault, secured STEEPLE TREE HILL and 2/48 Bn linked with 2/23 Bn who had overcome strong enemy opposition on the move along the NW track from KUMAWA. The enemy had already tried various means of stopping the MATILDAS - 37mm guns firing AP and HE; 75mm regtl guns firing HE at point-blank range; tank mines, and three ditches dug across the track. None was successful. The gunfire failed to penetrate the tank armour, the mines exploded harmlessly, and the

tank ditches caused only slight delay while inf and tanks combined to reduce the enemy's covering defences by fire, and the engrs prepared a crossing with a bulldozer. Enemy losses in personnel and equipment were heavy; our casualties being principally to the use of tanks, were light, in spite of the great natural strength of the enemy's positions and his tenacity in defence.

This ended Phase I of 26 Bde attack. 2/24 Bn to the north had secured HILL 2200 after some fighting, but so far had had little success in pushing west along the spur towards SATELBERG, owing to strong enemy defences, thick bamboo, and precipitous slopes. Nevertheless their presence constituted a direct threat to the flank of the enemy positions on SATELBERG and the Div Comd allotted a further 200 of tanks to 26 Bde for use on this flank. The MATILDAS were to move along the KATIKA track to HILL 2200, as soon as the engrs had completed the jeep track. The tanks arrived just before the fall of SATELBERG, in time to take part on 25 Nov in the final assault by 2/24 Bn on the enemy positions in this area.

The progress of the 26 Bde attack is shown on Map, Appx D.

Development of Div Offensive

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The Div Comd also struck at the enemy held ridge and track GUSIKA - WAREO, with the object not only of cutting / the enemy's supply routes, but also of securing ground from which an attack could be developed against WAREO from the east; and of securing the right flank of a thrust at WAREO in the centre NW through NONG RA. 24 Bde was accordingly ordered, on 18 Nov, whilst still holding NORTH HILL - SCARLET BEACH high ground west of KATIKA, to prepare to advance with one bn (2/32 Bn nominated) to secure high ground at PABU, a timbered knoll astride GUSIKA - WAREO track, and to control all tracks tracks in the area as far west as the LAKES. Div engrs were to construct a jeep track to follow 2/32 Bn as rapidly as possible, 2/4 Pz Coy, which had just arrived from LAE, being allotted in support of 24 Bde for this purpose. Meanwhile 150 native carriers were allotted for the maintenance of the Bn. In the event of the Bn's L or C being cut, tentative arrangements were made for supply-dropping by aircraft.

24 Bde Attack on PABU

19 Nov was appointed by the Div Comd as D Day for the 24 Bde advance. The move was a complete success. 2/32 Bn less one coy moved forward under cover of jungle, captured PABU after overcoming slight enemy resistance, and prepared it as a defended area dominating the surrounding country and the enemy supply route from GUSIKA. On all sides the approaches to PABU lay up steep slopes covered with open bamboo. The enemy were obviously completely surprised, and next day several large parties of enemy were ambushed on the track and almost completely annihilated. The enemy reacted strongly, and a determined attack was made against PABU from the SE at midday, but repulsed with heavy loss. One coy 2/32 Bn then began to exploit westwards towards the LAKES area, but encountered strong opposition. It is now known that this sudden stroke by 2/32 Bn, besides embarrassing the enemy's supply, also anticipated and partly dislocated his plans for a powerful counter-attack to relieve the pressure on his SATELBERG garrison.

The Enemy Counter Attack

On 22 Nov the enemy launched a three-pronged counter-attack on our positions north of BONG and at the northern end of SCARLET BEACH. One force (II Bn 253 Rgt less two coys) attacked southwards from BONGA along the coastal track. This attack was met and defeated by one Coy 2/43 Bn, with enemy casualties 80 killed; a second and heavier attack was launched from the NW by two bns 79 Inf Regt, with the object of reaching the mouth of BONG along the north bank and linking with the coastal attack. This attack was made in difficult country for movement and coordination; and after initial

dislocation by heavy arty and mortar fire; never developed into a powerful concerted assault as planned. Nevertheless heavy fighting developed to the west of NORTH HILL, along the north bank R SONG and near the 2/32 Bn jeep track; which the enemy had now cut, during the day; and it was not until the evening, when one coy 2/32 Bn made a well timed counterattack; that the enemy was finally defeated. A third enemy group crossed R SONG and attempted to reach SCARLET BEACH from the west, but were intercepted by patrols and harassed by arty fire; and finally driven off by heavy mortar fire from 2/28 Bn perimeter south of R SONG. On 23 Nov strong patrols, usually accompanied by FOOS, pursued and attacked the retreating Japs and engaged them with arty concentrations wherever located. Many dead were counted and much abandoned equipment were taken and 1200 enemy foot-holes were found at the scene of the fighting. The enemy suffered very severely in men and equipment in this counterattack which ended in complete failure.

Capture of SATELBERG

While the enemy counterattack was being launched and defeated north of R SONG, 26 Bde had been pressing on towards SATELBERG. STAPLE TREE HILL proved to be the main enemy defensive position on the SATELBERG rd, and Comd 26 Bde now decided to attack SATELBERG along the axis of the road, 2/48 Bn and the tanks leading, followed by 2/23 Bn. 2/24 Bn was to continue to exert pressure and try to advance and threaten the eastern flank of SATELBERG HEIGHTS.

2/48 Bn made rapid progress, surprising and routing several enemy groups in half-dug positions along the road; and by 22 Nov had reached the southern slopes of the SATELBERG feature itself: about 600 yards in a direct line from the summit. Here the enemy was again encountered in strength, and it was found that a landslide had completely destroyed the road and prevented further advance by the tanks. A halt was called while strong patrols probed the enemy positions and preparations were made for the final assault. The enemy was heavily engaged day and night by arty, mortars and MGs. The 26 Bde plan was for 2/48 Bn to attack directly uphill towards the eastern end of the SATELBERG feature and the village, and 2/23 Bn to swing out westwards and seize the 3200 feature to the northwest. On 24 Nov the advance was resumed with heavy arty and mortar support and fierce fighting continued all day. By nightfall, elements of 2/48 Bn had outflanked the enemy to the east and were within 150 yards of the summit, while 2/23 Bn had made substantial progress in heavy going towards its objective, after repulsing three strong counterattacks. 2/4 Cav Sqn patrols reported the enemy on the west flank had withdrawn northwards from MORING.

On 25 Nov the final attack of SATELBERG HEIGHTS was made by the three bns from the east, south and SW; enemy rearguards were routed and by 1300 hours the whole feature was in our hands. 2/24 Bn occupied PALANKO finding much abandoned equipment and 2/4 Cav Sqn reached MARARIK where strong defences had been vacated.

Preparations to Attack WAREO

The next stage was to be the capture of the line GUSIKA - WAREO. 26 Bde was now ordered to secure GUSIKA and gain control of the area as far west as the LAKES, while 26 Bde was to exploit from SATELBERG north towards WAREO. Much depended on the progress of these moves. Both moves, apart from enemy resistance, were faced with extremely difficult country - especially the precipitous valley of R SONG which lay across 26 Bde axis - and plans were also prepared for 20 Bde to drive on WAREO in the centre NW through KONGOK.

Between 20 - 25 Nov, 20 Bde was concentrated in the area NW of KATIKA, and on 25 Nov a warning order was issued to 20 Bde to be prepared to advance and capture KONGOK area and the high ground to the north astride track GUSIKA - WAREO, known as XIAS HILLS, with a

View to exploiting towards WAREO. Additional troops to be placed in support 20 Bde were 2/6 Pz Regt, 2/3 Pz Coy less one pl, 11 Pz Coy, PIB, Medical and JASG dets. Administrative planning for the operation was to be based on the construction of a jeep track before D Day along the south bank of R SONG for about 2500 yds, and the establishment of a forward base dump of supplies and ammunition at the jeephead. Subsequent maintenance was to be by native portage from the forward dump, for which purpose 600 natives were allotted. This would be supplemented by air dropping if necessary.

Development of 24 Bde and 26 Bde Advances

The enemy counterattack north of R SONG had cut communications with 2/32 Bn at PABU, though wireless contact was maintained. The native carrier line was unable to get through because of enemy elements in the area, and the Bn was maintained for several days by air dropping. Plans were now prepared to capture PINO HILL and open an L of C to PABU further to the east. 2/32 Bn meanwhile had ambushed several enemy parties of enemy and inflicted severe casualties, but was itself taking casualties from the direct fire of several enemy 75mm guns: on 24 Nov, one coy 2/32 Bn returned from PABU to MORI HILL carrying the wounded.

On 26 Nov, at 0500 hrs, the enemy launched a very determined attack on PABU from the SW and NW. Documents captured later showed that this was planned as an attack from three directions to reopen the track to GUSIKA. Arty fire broke up the thrust from the east before it developed, but heavy fighting lasting 2½ hrs took place to the SW and NW before the enemy was finally repulsed with heavy casualties and the attack collapsed.

On the same day, at 0900 hrs, PINO HILL was successfully assaulted by two coys 2/32 Bn supported by three MATILDAS and heavy arty and mortar concentrations on the objective. On this occasion, the tanks were able to move in the open kunai where they had freedom of manoeuvre, and the inf moved along the jungle fringes, whence they were still able to give effective close protection to the tanks. A safe L of C was immediately opened to PABU for the movement of native carriers and the evacuation of wounded.

The next phase of 24 Bde operations was the securing of the right flank to the sea, by the capture of GUSIKA. This operation was carried out 27 - 29 Nov by 2/28 Bn, with one tp of MATILDAS in support, moving along the axis of the coastal track (see Map Appx D). The track was narrow and muddy, running through thick jungle, and intersected by numerous creeks; most of which were temporary tank obstacles. The inf therefore led the advance, followed by a pl of engs with a bulldozer, to construct creek crossings for the tanks and jeeps. When the inf struck solid opposition, they shelled and mortared the enemy and waited for the tanks to come forward. An inf assault, supported by the tanks, was invariably decisive, and in two days, 2/28 Bn had captured GUSIKA, reducing en route a series of enemy positions astride the track. 24 Bde was now ready to turn west and attack towards WAREO itself.

Meanwhile, 26 Bde had been making rapid progress in their exploitation north from SATTLBERG. An attempt by an enemy force to hold the R SONG crossing at the suspension bridge NE of FIOR was broken by 2/23 Bn who crossed the river lower down on 30 Nov, and then proceeded to encircle and wipe out the whole enemy garrison. On 1 Dec KUANKO village was occupied. The principal problem of 26 Bde at this stage was maintenance. In spite of great exertions by the Div engs with bulldozers and a coy of 2/3 Pz Bn assisting, jeephead in dry weather had still only reached PALANKO, and in wet weather the whole route almost as far back as KATIKA became impassable, and jeeps had to be towed through by RAE tracked tractors. From PALANKO forward to KUANKO was a 3 day turn-round over very steep country, and as all the natives which could be spared for 26 Bde were insufficient, the whole of 2/24 Bn was engaged in carrying for 2/23 Bn. 2/48 Bn was holding the SATTLBERG area, and 2/4 Jay Bn patrolling wide

to the west from MARAUO.

In view of the progress being made on the 24 and 26 Bde sectors, the Div Comd decided that it would not be necessary to commit whole of 20 Bde to a direct attack on WAREO via NONGORA. In order to confuse the enemy, and prevent concentration of his reserves, he ordered that one bn (2/15 Bn nominated) develop a third threat to WAREO by advancing to NONGORA, and employ strong fighting patrols forward against enemy positions. This was done on 1 Dec and 2/15 Bn continued to exert pressure in this area by active fighting patrols until the fall of WAREO on 8 Dec.

4 Bde Advance North of GUSIKA

Preparations were now made to launch 4 Bde in a drive northwards along the coast from GUSIKA. It was expected that this thrust, by threatening the enemy's coastal supply line, would force him to abandon the whole WAREO position; and in the event, this intention was realised. A warning order was issued on 29 Nov to 4 Bde to make plans for this advance, for which the following troops would be placed under command:

7 MATILDAS C Sqn Tks

9 Pl C Coy PIB

Dets AASC, Medical, 532 Regt 2 ESB, ANGAU

and in support 2/6 Fd Regt

2/7 Fd Coy.

The objective given 4 Bde was the high ground at MORTIFICATION Pt. The advance was to be made by bounds from one beach maintenance area to another, only two of which were to be in use concurrently, and which 4 Bde was to protect until relinquished.

Dispositions were reorganised to provide for striking up the coast with 4 and 20 Bdes, while 24 and 26 Bdes remained to protect the FINSCHLAFEN area. The inter-bde boundary incl to 24 Bde was fixed as KEAS HILLS - NONGORA track. Both bdes were ordered to complete the capture of GUSIKA - WAREO line and then to organise their sectors for defence, to patrol actively all tracks leading into their areas and establish standing patrols backed by reserves in depth on all likely lines of enemy approach. On D Day 20 Bde was to come into Div reserve in area SCARLET BEACH - NONGORA, with one on 3 hours notice, and the rest of the bde on 6 hours notice, to follow 4 Bde in the coastal advance.

The concentration of 4 Bde in GUSIKA area was completed by 3 Dec, and 5 Dec was appointed by the Div Comd as D Day. "Q" required to develop the small beach at the mouth R KALUENG (GUSIKA) as an initial maintenance area for the advance; this involved a great deal of work in the removal of underwater and landward obstacles. It was also necessary if tanks and jeeps were not to be left behind at the outset to construct a vehicle crossing of the steep-sided R KALUENG before D Day. On 3 Dec, therefore, 22 Bn crossed the river and secured a bridgehead within which the engrs could work with bulldozers on the approaches and construct a log bridge. Strong enemy defences consisting of solid bunkers protected by a minefield, were located about 500 yds south of the LAGOON.

On 5 Dec the advance began. Again, the tanks moved in rear of the leading inf, to be called forward when strong opposition was encountered. One pl of engrs with a bulldozer preceded the tanks to make crossings over the numerous watercourse obstacles. The tanks proceeded to the edge of the first minefield, and by directing heavy fire at the bunkers assisted 29/46 Bn to break through the position. Thereafter, however, for some days the tanks were unable to catch up with the advance, because the enemy produced an effective delaying device in the shape of tank mines posted with large prepared

charges of picric acid, buried deep in the ground. Neither mine detectors nor prodding with bayonets was successful in locating them, and several tanks and bulldozers had tracks blown off, and one tank was irreparably damaged. The only solution was to cut a new track.

Capture of GUSIKA - WAREO line

On 8 Dec, 26 Bde captured WAREO, after a long outflanking movement by 2/24 Bn had secured PRAK HILL and dislodged the enemy from the difficult approach north of KUANKO. The same day 24 Bde which had been moving west up the steep jungle track towards WAREO, and driving the enemy from his positions by successive encircling attacks, captured KEAS HILLS and linked with 2/15 Bn patrols from NONGONA. Both bdes continued their pressure on enemy rearguards covering the enemy withdrawal to the coast at LAKONA via the inland track running NE from WAREO and in spite of fierce enemy resistance on several razorback ridges, opened the GUSIKA - WAREO track on 12 Dec.

Development of Coastal Advance

The advance of 4 Bde continued steadily, under the heaviest arty support of the campaign (4700 rounds fired in one day). The enemy resisted strongly, mainly at creek crossings in the coastal jungle, but heavy arty and mortar fire blasted him out, and 4 Bde made continual encircling and by-passing attacks, which invariably forced the enemy to withdraw. Further, the enemy did not occupy the commanding ground to the west, which was covered mainly with open kunai, and a force moving along this high ground was continually outflanking his positions near the coast.

20 Bde followed close behind 4 Bde, with the responsibility of protecting the left flank and rear of the leading bde, by means of inf patrols moving on the high ground, and F13 patrolling in depth along the tracks leading inland; and of taking over the protection of the four beachhead as new maintenance beachheads were developed forward.

On 16 Dec, the MATILDAS again demonstrated their value at LAKONA. 22 Bn on 14 Dec had surrounded a party of about 100 Japs in the coconuts at CAPE SIBIDA: the enemy resisted desperately for two days and caused 60 casualties to three attacking inf coys. Late in the evening, 5 MATILDAS, which had been held up at creek crossings, arrived and immediately attacked with one inf coy. Within an hour the entire position was overrun, the enemy force wiped out with the exception of a few who threw themselves over the cliffs of CAPE SIBIDA. Casualties to the attacking inf were 6 wounded, to the tanks, nil.

The enemy was by now in full retreat, but his rearguards continued to fight stubbornly. By 20 Dec, however, 4 Bde with powerful support by tanks and arty, had broken enemy resistance in the MASAWING area and occupied its objective - the high ground at FORTIFICATION PT. 20 Bde, which had been following 4 Bde in div reserve now prepared to move through and take up the pursuit.

Maintenance

Throughout the advance of 4 Bde the supply and maintenance organisation had worked as originally planned. ESB amphibious scouts moved with the leading troops and made a landward recce of each beach as it was secured. The 532 Regt 2 ESB recce craft was then called forward to make a seaward recce of a potentially suitable

beaches. Suitable beaches were then selected and a beachhead group was brought in by craft, consisting of AASC, Medical and ESB dets, to set up a DID, beach evacuating post, and other administration installations. 4 and 26 Bdes were maintained from successive beachheads. Div engrs successfully kept the jeep track up with the leading inf, but subunits moving on the high ground to the west were supplied by native carriers. COCONUT, KILIGIA, LAKONA and MASAWENG BEACHES were all used, the leading bde closing up its beach dets from the rearward beach as the advance went on.

PHASE FIVE

THE PURSUIT

21 Dec 43 - 15 Jan 44

Between 20 - 25 Dec, a further reorganisation took place, to allow the advance to be continued with two bdes (20 and 26) leaving 24 Bde to hold area GUSIKA - WAREO - SATELBERG with responsibility for the area south to LANGHIAK BAY, and 4 Bde to hold FORTIFICATION PT - R MASAWENG area. 24 Bde relieved 26 Bde in the SATELBERG - WAREO and the latter moved down to the coast to be ferried forward in craft to MASAWENG.

On 21 Dec, 20 Bde took up the pursuit of the retreating enemy. From this point the advance proceeded rapidly in successive stages laid down by Div HQ, until the capture of SIO on 15 Jan 44. 20 Bde, leading, concentrated its main attention on the coastal strip and was responsible for the defence of beachheads in its area. 26 Bde, moving close behind in immediate div reserve was responsible for protecting the rear of 20 Bde and the left flank, by means of inf patrols moving from the coast by lateral tracks to the main inland track ZAGANEHI - KALASA, thence searching the track for some distance and returning to the coast. IIB were used on deep inland patrols and made continuous coverage of the main inland track. 26 Bde was also responsible for the protection of the rear beachheads in its sector, assisted by ESB and RMA dets manning Tk A guns. The left rear of the advance was covered by 4 Bde patrolling the inland area north of R MASAWENG, linking at KOMPUA with 2/4 Cav Sqn. Patrols from WAREO under command of 24 Bde, which was made responsible for patrolling south of R MASAWENG.

The successive objectives set 20 Bde by Div HQ and the dates they were secured, were as follows :-

Line coast 520880 - spur 1000 in 5286	21 Dec
Spur 458933 - 431925	27 Dec
NANDA - spur running SW	31 Dec
Line R SANGA	4 Jan
Line R DALLEMAN	6 Jan
Line R BURI	9 Jan
Line R KAPUGARA	12 Jan
NAMBARIWA area, the line of track 447458 - 443426 thence SSW to foothills	15 Jan

The rate of advance was regulated by three factors :-

- (1) Maintenance of the force. Successive beachheads were opened as suitable beaches were secured. The Div Comd required at least 7 days supplies to be within reach of the forward troops, so that if bad weather prevented ESB craft running, there would be sufficient reserves forward.

- (ii) Necessity for providing continuous arty support. Guns were brought forward either by road or in LCMs, but on land the speed of arty movement did not greatly exceed that of the inf, since most of the personnel marched. The speed of the inf advance involved frequent changes of gun positions. The availability of LCMs, the state of the weather, and the proximity of suitable beaches were the main factors in planning sea moves.
- (iii) The Div Comd required the force to be kept concentrated and "Q" were instructed to clear the stocks from rearward beachheads forward as quickly as possible, since troops were required to protect the beaches in rear as long as they were in use, and the force - especially the rear bde - would tend to become strung out along the coast.

The advance was halted on several occasions for one or two days to allow reserves to be put into the forward beaches, and field guns to be brought up, and when KELANOA was reached a pause was ordered while all available craft and road transport were turned to clearing stocks at all rearward beachheads forward to SIALUM, which became a large forward Base for the Div, eventually holding 21 days' reserves of all natures.

Throughout the advance, the Div had been maintaining itself by means of its own 532 Regt ESB craft from Base dumps at LAUNCH JETTY. When a Div Maintenance Area was established at SIALUM, this involved a turnaround of almost 100 miles, and in the rough weather caused by the continual NW monsoon the LCMs had great trouble with maintenance, and the use of LCVs became quite impracticable. On 8 Jan 44, 2 Aust Corps placed two trawlers at disposal of Base Sup Area to form a third-line supply first to SIALUM and later to KELANOA. These sufficed to carry the rations required by the force, in all weather, but all other supplies, including ammunition, had still to be brought forward in LCMs.

After the capture of NAMBARITA, supplies were brought in by sea to KELANOA, and forward maintenance was done from SIALUM to clear and allow the closing of that beach. Until NAMBARITA beach was opened, supply forward of KELANOA was by jeep, native carrier and LUKWs.

Demands for labour to unload ships at FINSCHLAREN and work in the Base Area dumps continued to be heavy, and were met by 24 Bde units, one shore coy ESB, and the retention for the purpose in the Div Reception Camp at KEDAM of several hundred "X" List personnel and reinforcements.

LCVs and LCMs of 532 Regt 2 ESB were used not only for the transport of guns, supplies and tanks but also for the carriage forward of troops, wherever possible, to save time and exhaustion to the inf.

On the coral coastal shelf covered with kunai, the engns were able to keep jeephead up to the leading bn, the main obstacle being small ravines and streams. The tanks were also able to keep with the forward inf, the only serious obstacles - deep ravines between HUBIKA and WANDOKAI - being circumvented by ferrying the tanks in LCMs before the road was pushed through. Line communications were maintained continuously, by the Div Sigs moving with the leading on to lay the main Div artery from jeeps.

On 2 Jan 44, an AMERICAN force landed at SAIDOR, blocked the coastal track between SIO - BOGALWIM and increased still further the enemy's supply difficulties.

Enemy rearguards offered sporadic opposition, almost invariably from timbered creeks, but inf pressure and arty and mortar concentrations always forced them to withdraw overnight. Along the coast, abandoned runs and dumps of equipment, ammunition, medical supplies and other stores were found, and smashed enemy barges littered the beaches. As SIO was approached an increasing number of enemy dead were found along the track, and many sick and wounded who were unable to keep up in the retreat had been abandoned to their fate. On 13 Jan 44 the main enemy supply base at NAMBARIWA was occupied without opposition and showed the destructive effect of the heavy bombing it had received. On 15 Jan SIO MISSION was occupied, and the whole area was being thoroughly combed for Jap stragglers, and arrangements made for salvaging the very large dumps of enemy material throughout the area.

Under instruction HQ 2 Aust Corps, 4 Bde had been left in FORTIFICATION PT area, and on 4 Jan, 2 Aust Corps relieved 9 Aust Div of responsibility for the area south of R MASAWENG, and assumed command of 4 and 24 Bdes and of all 9 Aust Div troops in that area. Finally on 13 Jan 44 2 Aust Corps ordered that HQ 5 Aust Div take over comd of forward area as 8 Bde moved forward. By 20 Jan units of 8 Bde had relieved 20 Bde, and at 1800 hours 20 Jan 44 HQ 9 Aust Div handed over to HQ 5 Aust Div and prepared to concentrate the Div in FINSCHAFEN area preparatory to embarkation.

Results of Campaign

Enemy losses in the campaign were heavy. Enemy forces forward of SIO under Comd HQ 20 Div totalled 12,635. The enemy OOB and unit strengths are given at Appx "H". Of this total, about 7,750 became battle casualties, comprising :-

Counted enemy dead	8,099
PW	38
Estimate of wounded (3:2)	4,644
	<hr/> 7,781

This estimate is substantiated by captured documents and PW statements. No allowance has been made for casualties due to sickness, out of the remaining 4,895 it is known from captured unit strength states and PW that less than 4,300 survived to withdraw from SIO towards SAIDOR, of which the inf bns of 79 and 80 Regts totalled only 1,000. A large proportion of this force was by then ineffective owing to wounds, sickness and exhaustion. This is borne out by the large number of dead found along the routes of withdrawal, and by the fact that 8 Bde accounted for a further 1,200, mostly found dead, between SIO and SAIDOR.

Captured weapons comprised:-

		<u>WE Strength</u>
Guns 75mm	18	26
Guns 70mm	5	16
Guns 37mm	12	16
Mortars 81mm & 90mm	16	29
HMGs	28	36
Cannon 20mm	8	
AAIG 13mm (Naval)	17	
LMGs	125	
Grenade dischargers & light mortars	45	
Explosive thrower	1	
Flamethrowers	4	

Many other weapons are known to have been abandoned by the enemy, but being buried in the ground, or thrown into rivers or into the sea, were never recovered.

Our own battle casualties were as follows:-

				<u>Killed</u>	<u>Wounded</u>	<u>Missing</u>	<u>Total</u>
PHASE ONE	2 Oct	- 16 Oct		3- 62	9-206	Nil	12-268
PHASE TWO	16 Oct	- 28 Oct		3- 46	4-175	Nil	7-221
PHASE THREE	29 Oct	- 15 Nov		8	4- 37	Nil	4- 45
PHASE FOUR	16 Nov	- 20 Dec		9-144	52-229	- - 1	41-374
PHASE FIVE	21 Dec	- 16 Jan		1- 7	1- 47	Nil	2- 54
				16-267	50-694	- - 1	66-962

(Sgd) G. F. WOOTTON

Maj Gen
Comd 9 Aust Div

It is desired to record an appreciation of the work of FIFTH Air Force and PT boats of Task Group 70.1 US Navy in their incessant attacks on the enemy L of C. Their willingness to cooperate and the determination with which they pressed home their attacks caused great difficulties in the enemy's supply and maintenance system and contributed materially to his final defeat.

It is also desired to make special mention of 532 Re-2 ESE. This Re-2 served under command of the Div during the LAE and FI "SCOUT" operations, during which time it performed invaluable service in making possible the movement and maintenance of the Div. Their outstanding spirit of cooperation and, their courage and skill in the face of the enemy were of the greatest value.

SECTION II

LESSONS GENERAL

1. Separate reports have been made regarding:-

- (a) Employment of tanks
- (b) MT - Performance, types recommended to be adopted and recommended scale of issue.

2. Protection of Beach Head Area

As in operations for the capture of LAE so in subsequent operations at FINSCHHAFEN was the need felt for a fourth bde to hold the beachhead and main supply routes to the main force so as to free three inf bdes for offensive operations. Until the arrival of 4 Bde it was not feasible to operate far away from the beachhead area, with more than two inf bdes, thus rendering the retention of an adequate div reserve a constant problem.

3. Beach Group

- (a) To overcome the difficulties experienced in the initial development of FINSCHHAFEN Base Sub Area which placed a heavy strain on the Div, it is considered that in an amphibious operation the Beach Group which takes part in the original landing should be so formed that it contains the nucleus of a Base Sub Area.
- (b) It should contain units of all the services and should have its FSD, FAD, BIPOD, FOD, medical establishments, own labour and transport and provide local protection from within its own resources.
- (c) Shortly after D Day it should be responsible for all reception and holding in the beach and beach maintenance area, for forward distribution as far as the div rear dump area and for evacuation to and from the beach and beach maintenance area.

4. Movement Considerations within the Div

The Div's operations were governed to a large extent by the following factors affecting movement within the formations:-

- (a) Native Labour for carrying. Until additional natives had been brought from FINSCHHAFEN to LAE in Nov the Div was not able to operate to any appreciable extent beyond the restricted area that could be supplied by sea or road or by the very small number of natives available.
- (b) Numbers of and ability to use small craft. Too few craft were held for the tasks required of them and this frequently delayed operations for periods of a few days while units and necessary supplies could be shuttled forward with the craft available.
Until KELANOA was reached FINSCHHAFEN HARBOUR was the most northerly safe anchorage held. This added considerably to turn-round and difficulties of intercommunication during the advance up the coast.
When suitable beaches were not available along the coast the force became dependent on road communication for forward maintenance. Bad weather which prevented or restricted movement of craft emphasised the desirability of having MT (and roads) as an alternative. Bad weather also emphasised the need for building up forward reserves concurrently with the forward move of troops by sea.
- (c) Availability of sufficient numbers of suitable vehicles
The number of suitable vehicles available was below requirements. Often the one vehicle was driven continuously throughout the 24 hours in the day to move forward essential equipment and maintenance. On occasions moves had to be postponed because vehicles or prime movers were not available for load carrying or towing.

The advance of forward troops at times had to wait for arty to be brought forward and in these cases the guns could not have been ready as soon as the inf, had it not been necessary to move them forward by shuttling.

(d) Adequate engr units and mechanical equipment for essential tasks.

As at LAE the engr resources were below requirements. Three fd coys and one pl of a mechanical equipment coy were insufficient for the div alone and yet much of their effort and equipment had to be allotted for work on the large number of beaches used, the div maintenance area and for initial development of the Base Sub Area. This shortage had an adverse effect on availability of roads for operations.

Operations were frequently based on use of troops for carrying but there were never sufficient troops who could be spared for this task to allow it to be done except within a very circumscribed area. The attack from SATELBERG to WAREO when the advance was on a narrow frontage until the objective area was neared, was made possible only by using the second bn to supplement the inadequate number of natives to supply the leading bn and build up sufficient forward reserves of ammunition and supplies to enable both bns to be used in the final attack. However, shortly after WAREO was captured it was supplied from GUSIKA, from which a jeep track ran a part of the way; and it was not many days before this jeep track was pushed through to WAREO itself.

5. Availability of Landing Craft

- (a) During the whole of the recent operations along the coast there has been a serious shortage of craft. This in itself has reduced the efficiency of all units by preventing such items as unit equipment, stores, vehicles and guns being readily available at all times.
- (b) It is considered that 90 LCM are required to maintain a div moving along the coast. This would enable all maintenance and operational requirements to be met without any serious delay.
- (c) In reckoning the availability of craft it has been found that only approximately 50% of craft allotted are available at any one time owing to heavy maintenance requirements.
- (d) When the turn round is over 100 miles it is essential that some means of transportation be arranged involving heavier craft (i.e. LCT or Trawlers). With regard to trawlers, the two small trawlers allotted for AASC supplies from FI SCHHAFEN to KELANOA were a success and the boats could operate in weather too rough for LCV or LCM.
- (e) LCT are essential to enable stores, guns etc to be landed on beaches where the surf is too high for the smaller craft.
- (f) The LCV, though used throughout the operation, is not considered a suitable craft for any purpose other than the landing of the assault troops. It cannot be used in rough seas, has small loading capacity and is slower than the LCM.
- (g) At least four fast boats are required for communications, both for beach to beach and beach to boat communication. On occasions missions have departed from a beach just prior to receipt of information which should reach the mission leader, e.g. change of destination operationally necessary. This information could not be passed to the

Mission leader until he reached his original destination. When beach recesses are carried out the information should be immediately available to the persons responsible for sending craft forward. With the present lack of a fast craft this information is usually not available until the following day.

- (h) As craft have frequently to beach within sight and small arms range of the enemy, some form of support craft is necessary as an escort, when ground opposition is expected, to engage the enemy and protect the craft afloat, and the working party, the crews and the craft when beached.

6. Boat and Shore Regt

532 B & S Regt which was under comd of the Div gave excellent service and the fullest cooperation. Facilities such as it offered were indispensable to the prosecution of operations. However the organisation and equipment of the regt is not considered satisfactory for adoption. Alterations considered necessary are indicated in succeeding paragraphs.

The Boat Bn is recommended to be a selfcontained unit. Whether or not a shore bn is necessary depends on whether the nature of future operations warrants it; and the same applies to a regt HQ.

7. Boat Bn

Suggested outline organization is:-

(a) Bn HQ

One comd craft, speed 20 knots. Not a landing craft.
6 Support craft, speed 20 knots. Armed with a 40mm gun.
3 Comm craft, speed 15 knots. Armed and able to beach.
1 Navigation craft, speed 15 knots. Armed and able to beach.

RADAR, ASDIC, good wireless communications.

(b) Three coys each

4 Support craft, speed 20 knots. Armed, not necessarily landing craft. Wireless to Bn HQ and ground tps.
1 Communication craft
30 LCM
2 LCT

At least 200 swains, including one mechanic and necessary gun numbers per craft.

(c) Maintenance Section

Equipped to make all types of repairs to all craft.

8. Boat Bn - Allotment of craft

The following is in substantiation of the craft recommended to be allotted to a Boat Bn in support of a div operating along a coast.

(a) Bn HQ

- (i) Comd Craft - to enable the commander to keep full control of his bn at all times.
- (ii) Support Craft - 6. Two to be allotted to each coy and to provide protection to the missions both from the land and from small enemy surface craft.
- (iii) Communication Craft - 3
One for use by Div Comd.
Two for use by various comds and their staffs for speedy touch with the various units and establishments along the coast when their duty requires it.

- (iv) Navigation boat - 1. Owing to lack of means of navigation on landing craft and the necessity of craft travelling at night it is essential that at least one boat be fitted with good means of navigation and to be able to pick up the approach of any craft or the location of reefs either above or below the surface.

(b) Three coys - Each

- (i) Support craft - 4. These would enable missions of a smaller size than a company to be sent to different beaches at the one time with their own means of protection.
- (ii) Communication boat - 1. This would enable the coy comd to have more efficient control of his missions and to keep in touch with both his Bn HQ and the land forces.
- (iii) LCM - 30. Of these 30 craft approximately 15 - 20 only would be available at any one time. The total availability of the three companies should be capable of maintaining a div in operations up to a distance of 50 miles.
- (iv) LCT - 2. LCT are required to supplement the LCM when the distance involved is greater than a 100 mile turn round. They would also be required during weather too rough for LCM and on beaches where the surf makes the landing of LCM impracticable.

9. Shore duties when a Boat Bn is used.

When the Div operated away from the Base Sub Area and opened new beaches for itself the need was felt for some organisation, temporary or permanent, to carry out the duties in the vicinity of each such beach without calling on the resources of the Div. Three shore coys organised on the following lines would have met requirements:-

- (a) Coy HQ, which should include Sigs, MLO and troops for local protective duties.
- (b) A labour pl.
At least 90 workers were necessary on the bigger beaches. Labour was generally the greatest difficulty at any beach and could often only be provided from combatant units, which is undesirable.
- (c) A supply pl of about 30 all ranks to man the beach dumps.
This pl was required to relieve Div AASC for maintenance forward of the dumps. AASC supply detachments had to be detailed from Div resources.
- (d) Transport pl of about 30 all ranks equipped with 10 jeeps and trailers.
Beach clearance was a constant problem. Vehicles had to be provided by Div AASC who were already forced to overwork what transport they had.
- (e) In addition to the above, engr assistance is required on the beach not only to prepare but maintain beach roads and traffic circuits. Dump sites too have to be prepared by engr.
Maintenance of roads in and around the beach areas was usually very necessary on account of the heavy traffic that had to be kept moving in all weathers. Tractors were frequently required on the beach to tow off guns and vehicles. The number of engr and the mechanical equipment with the Div was however insufficient to provide for constant attention to the beaches and the tactical requirements of the Div at the same time.

10. Labour on Beaches

Labour on the beaches made big demands on the fighting troops and it is recommended that labour should as far as possible be met by providing enough men to do it without interfering with the strength, dispositions or preparedness to fight of the unit or formation responsible for protection of the beachhead.

11. Naval Representative Ashore

The necessity for having a senior naval representative ashore at the beachhead was emphasised again through the change that occurred in the beaching of craft soon after a naval representative was allotted to FINSCHHAFEN. It was only through his initiative that naval resupply craft were able to be brought direct into FINSCHHAFEN, thereby reducing the strain that has been placed on craft and labour when GODOWA BEACH was the unloading point for naval craft.

12. Reserve of Staff Officers

Sudden losses of numbers of staff officers through illness point to the need for having reserve staff officers, either with the div or handy enough for bringing forward quickly. It also shows the need for having within the div officers, who are not holding staff appointments, trained as staff officers.

13. Observers

In mobile operations of this type when a large number of observers can be expected, special facilities are required, additional to the div's resources, for the reception, accommodation and conducting of observer parties. A small self-contained and mobile organisation is required with messing facilities, accommodation stores and transport - either or both jeeps and small craft. The camp staff should include sufficient officers to meet, arrange itineraries for and guide observer parties.

14. Air Photos

The one unsatisfactory feature about air photos has been the time taken, generally two weeks, to deliver extra prints requested after the initial issue has been made. It is recommended that a system be devised to permit such requests being met in a much shorter time.

For deliberate operations in difficult country neither maps nor photomaps have been able to show all the detail required. Consequently a fairly generous distribution of air photographs would have been of the greatest assistance. As an example, 26 Bde for its attack over the extremely broken country to SATTELBERG wanted ten stereo pairs - 1 for Bde HQ, 1 per bn HQ and 6 for forward coys. Some sets, however, were not received before the attack had finished.

15. CW Equipment - Disposal

CW equipment was left in the beginning at BUNA and was not brought into the operational area. As this equipment is awkward to carry, takes up shipping space and deteriorates rapidly unless expertly cared for in this climate, it is recommended that in future CW equipment be issued only in the training period and then be withdrawn from the Div unless it becomes the policy for the Div to retain it.

16. Liaison with PT Boats, CTG70-1

The cooperation received from CTG70-1 was excellent, but until personal contact had been made the coordination of operations of PT boats and 9 Aust Div was not satisfactory. There, messages between them had to be passed in cipher and through other HQ and were rarely received in time to achieve what was desired.

Soon after HQ 9 Aust Div moved to FINSCHHAFEN it was arranged that outgoing PT missions should call at FINSCHHAFEN. Thereafter, comds were able to confer and daily liaison was established, often with both outgoing and incoming missions. In addition, at appropriate periods, a naval officer of CTG70-1 lived at HQ 9 Aust Div. From the constant first-hand and early exchange of information and coordination of plans where they affected both parties, mutual benefit resulted.

17. Air Support

5 AF gave most helpful cooperation and effective support throughout the Div's operations.

The two difficulties found in arranging air support were

- (a) initiating requests for some uncoordinated attacks in time for action by 5 AF. The difficulty lay in forecasting rate of advance of the inf which governed;

nomination of a bombline that would not restrict our ground operations or endanger our troops, and

a decision, when the airstrike might impede the advance, as to whether the strike should be carried out and our troops held in check or whether to forego the strike.

To submit requests by 1600 hrs, which was the normal requirement, entailed making an estimate, based on the situation as at 1400 hrs of the disposition to be expected next day at the probable time for air attack.

Despite the late initiation of many requests for air support, all but two were fulfilled by 5 AF.

- (b) selecting targets warranting air attack yet able to be identified by attacking aircraft. This applied not so much on the coastal strip, where Intelligence and Tac R reports decided selection and where kunai, rivers, broken coastline and irregular occurrence of belts of forest aided location and recognition of targets, but particularly in the heavy jungle where most of the bivouac areas, defences, HQs and forward dumps were.

18. Army Cooperation Aircraft

Army cooperation aircraft of B Flight, 4 Tac R Sqn RAAF carried out Tac R, arty R and comph R for 9 Aust Div throughout the FINSCHHAFEN operations, and their work was of a very high standard. An average of two sorties daily were flown and Tac R information was dropped to forward bdes and Div HQ. Throughout the operations only three messages were lost.

In Tac R, track information was always a valuable source of intelligence, but as different pilots carried out recess or successive days it was found that some basis for comparison of track usage was required. For this purpose a track within our own FDLs was usually nominated. In assessing such information it was essential to take into consideration the last fall of rain.

For opportunity targets not large enough for a heavy air strike and out of range of arty, tac R aircraft leading in fighters equipped with bombs in place of belly tanks proved successful. Such missions were easy to arrange at short notice, since the sqn providing fighter cover readily cooperated.

In arty R, the standard procedure produced the most satisfactory results.

In the early stages of the operations some unnecessary delays occurred when two way communication was not established immediately and the pilot failed to realise that, although he could not hear the ground station, the ground station could hear him. Under similar circumstances, after both pilots and gunners had gained some experience, pilots were quick in initiating one way procedure. The best intervals in this type of shooting were found to be 4 minutes for initial rounds and one minute for succeeding rounds.

For both tac R and arty R it was found necessary to operate a control wireless set at Div HQ for :

- (a) additional tac R briefing, made necessary by changes in the ground situation after the sortie was airborne.
- (b) warning of hostile aircraft in the area to pilots.
- (c) relay of arty R if necessary, or instructing pilots to carry out a "one way shoot".
- (d) notification of last minute changes of arty R targets or troops to engage.
- (e) monitoring of shoots to correct and supervise arty R procedure.

19. Liaison Aircraft

/required

The provision by 4 Tac R Sqn of a light liaison aircraft proved extremely useful. The PIPER CUB aircraft provided only a short landing strip and little difficulty was experienced in finding a site which could quickly be made into a serviceable strip with a little eng^y assistance.

The main tasks for which the aircraft was used were :-

- (a) liaison between GIII(Air) and 4 Tac R Sqn.
- (b) local recon including engineer recon for roads and river crossings.

Experiments using the aircraft as an arty OP were not completed due to minor difficulties with the wireless equipment provided for the aircraft. The defects in the wireless equipment were mechanical and not characteristic. From observations made as far as the experiment was carried out it appeared that this type of aircraft could be successfully used as an arty OP.

20. Stereoscopes

Owing to the increased reliance which is being placed on air photos in inadequately mapped country, the recommended scale of issue of stereoscopes is :-

(a) Stereoscopes, Universal

HQ Div	2
HQ Inf Bde, HQ RAA and HQ RAE	1
Inf Bn, Pnr Bn, and MG Bn	1
Fd Regt RAA and Fd Coy RAE	1

(b) Stereoscopes, BS

HQ Div	2
HQ Inf Bde, and HQ RAE	1
Inf Bn	4
Pnr Bn and MG Bn	2
Fd Regt	3
Carr Coy	1

These scales were required in 9 Aust Div's operation.

21. Captured Enemy Equipment

It is desirable to spread knowledge of enemy equipment by the training of selected officers and NCOs from Div salvage unit, FS Sec and Intelligence Secs at a school where they can handle all known types of enemy equipment.

The attachment to Div during operations of a representative of Allied Enemy Equipment Board would also be desirable. All Intelligence personnel within the Div (except FS Sec) are mainly concerned with operational and topographical information, whereas a representative of Allied Enemy Equipment Board could concentrate on examination of enemy equipment. He would have the necessary technical knowledge to determine the importance for intelligence of various contents of enemy dumps and items of captured equipment. His advice would enable most effective use of limited resources of FS Sec and Div Salv Unit for recovery of enemy equipment and its despatch to the rear during operations. He would know the items of equipment specially required by Allied Enemy Equipment Board, and these could then be given high priority for despatch to the rear.

22. AAPIU Personnel Attached

The attachment of a WO 1 from 1 AAAPU to HQ Div proved most valuable. His services enabled interpretation of air photographs to proceed well ahead of operations. This was particularly important when advance along coast to SIO was being planned.

If a second WO or Sgt were attached to the Div, this would enable bdes to secure similar assistance when required.

The attachment of two AAAPU personnel to the Div is therefore recommended.

23. Fd Artv

Although in the LAE operations the 25 pr Short on Carriage Light (AUST) Mk I proved its worth, in the operations north of FINSCHHAFFEN it proved a handicap.

The advance north of FINSCHHAFFEN was a fairly quick one but shortage of road transport and shortage of small craft made the forward move of fd btys frequently a matter of shuttling. On one occasion, after a light bty had moved forward to support the advance it was able to fire only 60 rounds before it was out of range and on another occasion it was out of range by the time it had completed its move. In the end it became necessary to plan using only the 2 btys of Mk II guns to support forward operations.

It is recommended that in planning stage consideration be given to the holding well forward by Ord of reserves of either the Short 25 pr or 25 pr Mk II as applicable, so that any anticipated need for changing the type of gun manned by the forward btys can be quickly met.

24. The Tk A Gun for coast defence

The Tk A bty with the Div manned in addition to its own sixteen 6 prs, sixteen 2 prs which had been withdrawn from inf bns. These guns were used for beach defence and personnel from the bty also manned coast watching and challenging station.

The Tk A bty is not satisfactorily equipped for this task. For communications ship to shore and from guns and challenging stations to Div and Bde HQ special equipment was required, such as telephones, cable, lamps daylight signalling short range and also mortars 2 inch, for bombs illuminating, or SLs.

It is recommended that if in the planning stage Tk A guns are considered necessary for such tasks consideration be given to provision of adequate communications.

25. Engineer Resources

- (a) In this operation the lesson brought out most forcibly because every arm and service was affected by it, was that for operations in an undeveloped country it is essential that the proportion of engr to other arms in the Div be increased. From the experience gained it is recommended that the number of fd coys in the Div be doubled and that mechanical equipment units be placed under command of the Div.
- (b) Efforts were made to double the strength of the engr by placing under their command 2/3 Pnr Bn. This was only possible when pnr could be spared from essential operational tasks or from work labouring on the beaches. If the increase in engr strength is to be obtained by a permanent allotment of pnr then those pnr would have to be specially trained and equipped and could hardly be expected to be able to carry out an inf role, when required, efficiently. It would mean that pnr permanently allotted to engr would in fact become engr.
- (c) Two major problems would arise immediately with the increase of engr units. One would be the question of organisation. The double fd coy has the advantage of flexibility in that it would ensure continuity of advice and work when the double coy was supporting the one formation or employed in the one sector. Further, it would simplify the control and allotment of work by the CRE if he had three instead of six fd coy coms to deal with in operations. The second question is that of ability of HQ RAE as at present organised to command and administer not only an increased number of fd coys but also the fd pt coy, the engr sig sec, mechanical equipment units attached and any engr attached to such units as tanks allotted to the div. While it is essential that the CRE spend a great deal of time away from his HQ, and the extra administrative duties caused by the additional units will entail more office work. This might perhaps be solved by appointing a 2 i/c to the HQ of the engr and making the organisation more like that of a normal Bn. It is recommended that the Div Engrs should be organized as an Engr Bn with adequate HQ establishment.
- (d) The amount of mechanical equipment required for operations similar to the recent operation of 8 Aust Div are considered to be:-

Angle dozer D3	3	} To be 50% hydraulic and 50% cable operated.
Angle dozer D3	10	
Angle dozer D4	3	
Tractors D 6 with PCU	4	
Tractors D8	17	(To be WET on Fd and Fd Pk Coys if possible)
S		
Scoops carryall 6cyd	2	
Scoops carryall 4 " "	2	
Autopatrols	2	
Trailer Graders	2	
Quickway shovel	2	
Ripper	2	
Plough	2	
Ditchers	3	(BUCYRUS Type)

Special workshop facilities for this would be needed.

The amount for any specific operation would naturally have to be based on the appreciation of its particular requirements. Mechanical equipment allotted for a particular operation should come to the division as an organised unit with its own specialised personnel for plant maintenance. The mere allotment of mechanical equipment would be unsatisfactory because sufficient operators would not be available from div engrs nor would they have the necessary experience. A mechanical equipment coy less certain plant would be a guide as to what is required.

(c) It is important that in an amphibious operation the engr resources of the Div as discussed above should be freed from any of the engineering work required by the Beach Group. The Beach Group has its own engr problems and its requirements should be decided in the planning stage and be allotted quite separately.

26. Traffic Control

It was found impossible to provide all-weather roads capable of taking heavy duty traffic initially in the operations and it became important to exercise strict traffic control on all roads and tracks. It was also found necessary to invest complete control of these roads and tracks in the CRE to ensure that full operational value was obtained from their limited life.

A section of 9 Aust Div Pro Coy, which was all that could be spared, was allotted to RAE to enforce control but although this sec did very good work it was considered inadequate and often formations had to supplement the policing of roads where they passed through their sectors or affected their operations intimately.

27. Sign - Line Communication

- (a) Line was used as the primary means of communication forward of Div HQ.
- (b) To maintain line communication during a rapid advance it was found necessary to:-
 - (1) maintain detts building the line forward of the formation or unit which the line was intended to serve, in the case of Div - Bde line as far forward as forward infantry companies where possible.

- (ii) concentrate the efforts of line secs on forward lines. To this end it is necessary that div or bde line secs be relieved of all rearward commitments.

(c) Cable required:-

- (i) 30 miles of assault cable is required per bn, 10 for intra-bn use and 10 for patrols. For intra-bn work US assault cable is necessary, except in semi-static defensive positions when P III single should be laid. For patrol work, US assault cable being stronger, more durable and reliable is preferred to Aust enamelled assault cable. The latter can however be used and will be required when the former is not available.

- (ii) P III single is needed forward of bde HQ. It would be better for this cable to be issued on Reel No 1 (1/3 mile) than on Drums No 5 (1 mile) which are too heavy and unwieldy for forward inf.

- (d) Arrangements were made with div engrs that signal lines should be laid on one side of tracks while engr. development would be carried out on the opposite side. This necessitated a combined posse by engr and sig officers to determine which side lines would be laid.

- (e) Despite every care being taken by mechanical equipment operators damage to lines was inevitable. So that lines could be repaired with the minimum of delay, linemen were attached to mechanical equipment secs engaged in road construction. This arrangement proved satisfactory.

- (f) As cable routes were confined to existing tracks some congestion of lines resulted, particularly during the more static operations. Several methods of identifying lines were tried but the most successful was found to be labels as laid down in Signal Training All Arms Pamphlet 3 Section 34. The labels were cut from light tin plate and marked with the unit serial number punched with a nail.

- (g) Switchboards 6 line and 10 line are unsatisfactory due to

- (i) weight

- (ii) heavy maintenance and adjustments required due to delicate construction,

- (iii) susceptibility to damage by atmospheric disturbances even with normal protective devices.

It is recommended that a better and lighter 6 or 10 line magnetic board be provided.

- (h) Telephones D5 have proved unsatisfactory due to:-

- (i) susceptibility of component parts to dampness, principally buzzer unit and key apparatus.

- (ii) constant mechanical adjustment required by buzzer unit.

- (iii) weight.

The British type L phone overcomes all the disadvantages of telephones D5 except weight. It is recommended that a lighter telephone, embodying the advantages of the British type L phone be provided.

28. Sigs - Wireless Communication

- (a) Wireless sets 46A and SCR 536B, by their excellent performance, have won the complete confidence of inf bns.
 - (i) Wireless set 46A. This set proved extremely reliable and most suitable for coy - bn link. The main advantages are lightness, robust construction, effective waterproofing and simplicity of operation.
 - (ii) Wireless set SCR 536B. Again this set proved reliable for pl - coy communications under varied conditions. Some difficulty was experienced from rain leaking through the aerial aperture in the top of the set. The set was successfully used for inter communication between forward inf and tanks, the Number 19 set being tuned to the SCR 536B. The SCR 536B type wireless sets are considered essential for forward inf in mobile operations and it is recommended that they be issued on the basis of one ba kit for each bn in the div.
- (b) Wireless sets AT5AR2 proved suitable for the div terminal of the Div - Corps link.
- (c) Wireless sets Number 22. This set has proved to be a suitable substitute for Number 11 sets, particularly in fd arty regts and inf bdes where its lightness gives it a great advantage over the Number 11 set.
- (d) Wireless sets Number 109 performed exceptionally well throughout though its weight restricts its use to conditions where jeeps can be used or adequate native porters are available.
- (e) Dry batteries for the lighter types of sets should be forwarded in containers sealed against damp to avoid the high percentage of wastage due to deterioration.

39. Rations

- (a) Once again the necessity for a "balanced pack" was emphasised. One of the greatest difficulties experienced was in maintaining balanced stocks in depots.
- (b) The "balanced pack" on similar lines to the American Jungle Ration so far as packing goes, would enable :-
 - (i) Depots to be always balanced.
 - (ii) Reserves to be held with forward units without items becoming unserviceable and thus requiring replacement.
 - (iii) Rations to be sent to any number of personnel in their original pack.
 - (iv) Supplies to be transported by either sea, air, motor vehicles or native carrier without necessitating repacking.
- (c) The commodities to be contained in the balanced pack to be similar to the present SWPA ration.

40. AASC Personnel allotted to a Div

- (a) Owing to the long distance over which the operations were carried out and the large number of AASC detachments which had to be made, there was always a shortage of both Supply Depot and Gen Tpt Coy personnel.
- (b) The following additional AASC personnel are required in the Div :
 - (i) Two additional Supply Depot Pls. - This would make 8 Supply Depot Pls per Div and would enable 2 pls to be allotted to each Bde and two to be used for Div troops.
 - (ii) One additional Gen Tpt Pl. - equipped with 2½ ton 6 x 6 GMCs. This would enable one pl equipped with jeeps and trailers to be made available to each Bde, and the additional pl to be available in the rear areas where the greater bulk of the transport would be required.

41. Mob Fd Bakery

A most welcome and popular unit was the mobile fd bakery. It is recommended that in future amphibious operations the fd bakery be one of the units sent forward early after the force is properly established ashore. If the Div becomes separated from the beach maintenance area by communications that will not allow bread to be part of the daily ration, then that or another mob fd bakery will be required forward in the Div area.

42. Medical Organisation in Beachhead Area

- (a) Experience has shown that medical units must be provided in a beachhead area for the following functions :-
 - (i) Transporting patients from Div medical units, by landing craft, vehicle or bearer.
 - (ii) Receiving casualties and sick from Div medical units.
 - (iii) Evacuating patients to ships, landing craft or planes.
 - (iv) Providing medical posts on subsidiary beaches.

- (v) Providing a medical service for personnel in the beachhead.
 - (vi) Collecting medical stores unloaded from craft and conducting a medical stores dump.
 - (vii) Providing sea ambulance transport personnel.
- (b) For the above tasks, the following medical units are required in a beachhead maintaining a Div.
- (i) CCS
 - (ii) one fd amb
 - (iii) Det sea amb tpt.
 - (iv) Det medical stores depot
 - (v) Red Cross Stores Depot.
- (c) Evacuation arrangements should be in the hands of a beachhead SMO, who should be on the Beach Group Staff.

33. Medical Comforts Scale

It has been found that in an overwater operation, the percentage of casualties unable to take most items of normal diet is high; in addition many febrile cases are held and treated in the overseas area. For these reasons the medical comforts scale should be relatively lavish to supplement normal rations: for febrile cases the medical comforts scale must wholly replace the normal ration scale.

34. ADMS' Pool of MOs

A high rate of sickness prevailed among medical officers of the Div and fd amb and the CCS were at times seriously understaffed. Casualties by sickness to RMOs of units also caused great difficulty. It is recommended that a small pool of MOs should be made available to ADMS, as temporary replacements, and for allotment to beach posts and other small detachments which require an MO.

35. Stretchers

The standard amb stretcher is too narrow for use with patients held in MDS and CCS, as the body of the patient is in contact with both sides of the mosquito net and he is likely to be bitten through the net. A folding stretcher of sufficient width, and with scissor legs to prevent stretching or sagging of the canvas, should be issued to fd amb and CCS in malarious areas on a scale of 200 per unit.

36. Thiamin

Towards the end of the campaign, symptoms indicating Vitamin B deficiency were noted in numerous cases, and it is recommended that, except when the field operation ration is being consumed, a 3 mgm THIAMIN tablet be added to the daily ration scale.

37. Man-loads

It has been amply proved that fatigue and the MALARIA rate are directly proportional. This is an additional reason why equipment for the jungle should be as light as possible, and every expedient used to reduce man-loads.

EQUIPMENT

38. Barbers' Tools

Issue on the scale of one complete set to each subunit is recommended. The importance of keeping men shaved and barbered in tropical conditions cannot be overemphasized. Most units had their own equipment to begin with but replacement parts or new sets could not be obtained.

39. Propellant Charges - 3 inch Mortar

These have two serious defects:-

- (a) As at present packed, propellant charges, both primary and secondary, are susceptible to damp. Casualties may possibly have been inflicted on our own troops, and many misfires have occurred from this cause. It is strongly recommended that propellant charges should be packed separately from the bombs, in sealed waterproof containers.
- (b) Marked variations have occurred in different batches of propellant charges. This has limited the usefulness of mortars for very close support.

40. Grenades 36M

- (a) Wet weather causes deterioration, and numerous failures in detonation.
- (b) A waxed or cellophane envelope is recommended.

41. .303 Vickers MMG

- (a) Stoppages

Stoppages were very few, the majority being caused by badly filled belts. Lock springs and firing pins were the only breakages of any consequence and these were not serious. One interesting breakdown, which occurred on two guns, was caused by the sliding valve sticking when the guns were being fired at an acute angle of depression, thus allowing the water to boil off the rear end of the barrel where it bulged.

When rounds were loose in belts, it was found that approximately a quarter of a gallon of water poured into the liner 5 minutes before use, tightened the belt and no stoppages occurred.

- (b) Suggested Alterations and Additions to Equipment

- (i) Yukon type packs be issued for carrying gun stores and ammunition. (see MGO Equipment Memorandum No 8 Para 31)
- (ii) Better heat-resisting oil is necessary for MMGs. Present issue runs like water when really hot.
- (iii) Ammunition box cradles (collapsible) be fitted on all guns to permit of free swinging traverse.
- (iv) Small penoil type electric torches, with remote control, capable of being fixed to bayonet slot as aiming lamp be issued. The present Box Night Aiming, is too bulky and fragile. Aiming posts are unnecessary as stud on bayonet gives a good aiming mark.

- (v) That better type condenser cans, with recessed handles, be issued. Present cans shed handles and break seams easily. Collapsible canvas containers would be suitable in some cases. If water were available in area they could be carried collapsed. This would save an immense amount of trouble in carriage. / readily
- (vi) Better type ammunition box liners be developed. Present liners frequently have broken seams thus damaging the ammunition. Carrying straps rot and break.
- (vii) Water proof covers for guns, range finders and binoculars be issued.
- (viii) New type slide rule be issued, similar to No VIII. Cane rules split, become jammed and white ants eat them.

SECTION III

TACTICAL METHODS AND LESSONS

ENEMY METHODS

Attack

1. The following characteristics were noted, but enemy methods were not uniform.
2. Approach by night through thick vegetation to forming up are close to our FDLs. Enemy skilful in moving silently by night. PIB often heard sounds of enemy before these were detected by wh' troops.
3. Actual assault sometimes made at night; more often about dusk. Sometimes silent but often preceded by much noise, bugles and shouting.
4. Enemy attacks and counterattacks costly failures. Troops came on bunched, without any real plan and apparently knowing little of our dispositions. Having failed once they would come again in the same way at the same place. It appeared that once the attacks were launched, the Comd had no reserves or was unable to control them or his forward troops.
5. (a) Fire support largely absent and never well coordinated. Supporting weapons when used brought up by night or through jungle to close range. On occasions 37mm guns were fired at ranged of 40-70 yards.
(b) Arty and mortars when used in support of attack relied on direct observation. No indirect fire was used.
6. Positions very close up to our FDLs or astride our supply routes were at times gained by infiltration through jungle. Even if no further attack was made, the enemy was able from these positions to harass our positions by snipers, and he was easily dislodged. His proximity to our positions gave him immunity from arty and 3 inch mortar fire.
/not
7. Enemy approached by tracks or along streams. He did not make large movements across trackless country.

Defence

8. (a) Enemy field works were constructed more for protection against our fire than for coordinated use of weapons. Sitting (except in respect of protection and concealment) bad. Many pits on reverse slopes not sited for fire except at a few yards and many others largely "unfightable" because of heavy overhead cover.
(b) Pillboxes, when there was time for their construction, were very strong, made of coconut logs, often proof against arty and mortar fire.
(c) Weapon pits were of the foxhole type - ground level with soil removed - connected by underground tunnels. Sometimes developed pl positions that resembled rabbit warrens.
(d) In defence the Japs appear to rely to a considerable extent on the use of alternative positions.
9. Concealment and camouflage good. Defences were often a few yards back from edge of vegetation. This did not impede enemys view of advancing troops but made his positions difficult to locate. Thick bamboo provided an obstacle to inf assault more formidable than barbed wire.

10. (a) Defensive layout generally uncoordinated and with little appreciation of the value of enfilade fire.
(b) Positions seldom well sited for all round defence. Primary object apparently to cover track.
(c) Positions often in some depth along track but not usual extending very far on either side of track.
11. Inland positions sited to control a track were normally poaced where the track ran along a ridge. The site chosen was usually a narrow saddle where tributary gullies on either side made outflanking movements difficult. A standard layout was: a MW to fire down the track and a LMG on each side able to fire down gully; with usually one or two sentries up to 100 yds in front of the main position. The sentries were rarely alert and were usually dealt with by our forward scouts. But shooting them alarmed the post.
12. In several instances a fence made of a few strands of signal cable or pieces of light bamboo was erected across the track a short distance in front of an enemy post. The fence was not often extended beyond the edges of the track and was therefore no real obstacle. The purpose of these barriers was not clear. Probably they were intended to cause our forward scouts to pause so that they could be easily shot.
13. Defences found in places on the coast, sited to protect beaches, were more solidly constructed than most of these inland and were of the pillbox "bunker" type, e.g. those at SCARLET BEACH. They were often better sited than those inland but mainly for frontal fire. The advantages of fire from headlands seems to have been little appreciated.
14. (a) Fire was withheld until attack reached close quarters. It was difficult to estimate the strength or extent of enemy positions by drawing their fire, e.g. when one position was attacked it was found to be occupied by a coy with several automatics; yet no more than three rifles and one LMG had fired from it in retaliation to our fire over some days.
(b) This control of ammunition expenditure may have resulted as much from shortage of supplies as from policy. Earlier at FINSCHHAFEN the enemy had not been so sparing in his use of LMGs.
15. Trip wires and booby traps rarely used.
16. In the event of the enemy withdrawing from close contact it was generally done after the application of fire and inf pressure or after his communications had been threatened. Almost invariably the withdrawal was made at night and was often covered by offensive patrolling early in the evening.
17. (a) In defensive positions enemy moves much by night in spite of the difficulties of the ground and jungle.
(b) Tracks in rear of enemy FDLs were used freely by day with little provision for the protection of working and foraging parties, who were often unarmed. This carelessness gave great opportunities to our patrols.
18. When our leading scout was hit his body was invariably covered by fire. Attempts to rescue wounded or remove dead often resulted in further casualties.

OUR METHODS AND LESSONS LEARNED

General

19. The main lessons appear from the following paragraphs.
20. Well trained and lightly equipped inf in adequate numbers form the first requirement in a jungle campaign.
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22. There is no mystery in jungle fighting. Success in battle there, as elsewhere, depends on the morale qualities of determined leaders and resolute, confident, disciplined and well trained men.
23. Operations in the jungle demand the correct application of normal principles of war. Specialised tactics or "drills" should not be allowed to take the place of quick appreciation and the tactics and dispositions proper and appropriate for any particular situation.
24. It is as possible in the jungle, as elsewhere, to give inf full aid of supporting arms; and they should have it from the air, arty, tanks.
25. Commanders must beware of overestimating the tactical strength of their dispositions. There are two dangers:-
 - (a) In close country a unit or sub-unit usually has complete control of less ground than in open country. Distances between its components (sections, pls, or coys) are less, as the Japs cannot be so readily controlled by observed fire. But circles drawn on maps to indicate dispositions often cover more than the small areas effectively held - and can be misleading.
 - (b) With restricted fields of fire it is numbers of fighting men which count, not the forms of their organisation. A coy reduced to the fighting strength of a pl - (as was at times the case) - cannot hold the same ground as a coy at full strength. To continue to describe it as a coy can be misleading.
26. Although the ground which can be effectively held by a unit or sub-unit is less in the jungle than in open country, a continuous front is not essential. A large area can be controlled by a limited force with its units holding main tracks. Large stretches of unoccupied jungle must exist. Penetration between our positions will always be possible. It need not be serious provided:-
 - (a) The garrison of each position holds its ground and has adequate water, food and ammunition to hold out in isolation for several days.
 - (b) Each locality into which it is essential there should be no infiltration at all (e.g. dumps, installations, HQ areas etc) is occupied by a sufficient number of men to prevent this.
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29. In the jungle, difficulties of land communications make greater the restrictions on tactical mobility imposed by considerations of supply and transport.

30. (a) In attack, in the preparatory stage, pinpointing the enemy must be done thoroughly. The Japs excellent use of camouflage and concealment, his use of alternative positions and his practice of holding fire until attacked at close quarters, make proper pinpointing an essential if a sound plan is to be formed.

(b) If the enemy has been held in close contact and there is an overnight pause, before the attack is launched, it will, due to the Japs habitual choice of night for the breaking of close contact, often be necessary to test his positions early in the morning on which the attack is to be made. This applies also when delay in launching attack occurs in daytime.

31. Small arms pressure to be effective demands large expenditure of ammunition. Much harassing fire from MMGs at very close range is particularly effective. The enemy then seems to prefer tunnelling to retaliation. In one position which was captured after a period of close pressure, Japs were found at the bottom of their holes firing straight up in the air terrified to put more than their rifles above ground.

32. (a) Ground gained should be held however small the gain. On several occasions, attacks which at the end of the day seemed to have gained part only of their objectives were found in the morning to have been completely ineffective as the enemy had withdrawn from the whole of his positions.

(b) As the enemy is never prepared to surrender he has only two alternatives other than death when he feels his position untenable. He can break and run or he can sneak away by night. In attacking, our troops should all realise that if they resolutely hold the gains, however small, and keep up pressure on the enemy, then, if he does not do the former, he will in time do the latter.

33. When use of arty and 3 inch mortars is restricted by our forward troops being too close upon the enemy, high expenditure of grenades and 2 inch mortar bombs must be anticipated.

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(d) Positions not properly dug or constructed. Some overhead cover is essential to reduce casualties from shelling and mortaring. The material for overhead cover should not be dug within the area as the natural camouflage is destroyed.

- (e) Tendency to sunbake and sit about in groups in exposed positions with the knowledge that enemy posts are as close as 300 or 400 yards.
- (f) Insufficient care with ^{recess}map and photo reading.

35. Advance Guard Against Enemy Rear Guard

- (a) Operations of this kind were generally orthodox during the pursuit phase of the campaign.
- (b) At this stage the enemy could often be driven from his position by arty fire alone.
- (c) He did not hold the high ground on the flank of the coastal track or take advantage of the long fields of fire offered by extensive patches of kunai. He occupied narrow positions astride the track a few yards in from the edge of the timber where the track passed from kunai into patches of jungle and held his fire until the leading elements of the vanguard were close upon him.
- (d) In these conditions it was found best after contact was made to withdraw the vanguard to a safe distance and shell the area of the enemy position even if its extent was not fully known. In some case tanks were brought into action.
- (e) These methods often caused the enemy to go without it being necessary to commit inf to an attack and casualties were thus avoided.

36. Positive steps must be taken to prevent the development of a "cut-off", "surrounded" or "tight perimeter" complex when a unit is forced on the defensive in the jungle.

- 37. (a) When there is any risk of a unit's normal supply route being interrupted by the enemy, adequate reserves of ammunition and supplies should be in its posts.
- (b) It is important to make resort to these reserves for any length of time, unnecessary. Men who are expending their reserves because normal access has been cut off feel besieged. If an alternative route is opened and regular supply and evacuation resumed their confidence is increased.

- 38. (a) On occasions normal communications were cut by enemy parties establishing themselves across the track in rear of our positions and at the same time the enemy was established on our flanks. But no case occurred of a unit being literally surrounded; and it is thought that this is not very likely to occur.
- (b) When troops are apparently "cut off" aggressive patrolling is especially important. Morale is stimulated; the enemy's limits are discovered; new roundabout routes into our own positions are found; and it is realised that the "siege" is over.

39. When attacked and cut off the first determination of all commanders and troops in the jungle as elsewhere must be to yield no ground.

40. The common use of the word "perimeter" in jungle operations causes misconceptions which may prove dangerous.

- 41. (a) This term is generally taken to mean a closely manned, more or less circular area astride a track in which a unit or subunit bivouacs for the night when it is moving in contact or possible contact with the enemy.
- (b) But there is some tendency to regard such perimeters not as expedient for the security of a force temporarily bivouaced during mobile operations but as normal dispositions for a defensive battle in the jungle.

43. The disadvantages of close perimeter defences are :-

- (a) They tend to limit the ground held regardless of its tactical significance.
- (b) By limiting the ground held, they increase the risk of the force being in fact really surrounded and they restrict the opportunities for aggressive patrolling and internal freedom of manoeuvre.
- (c) They tend to be overcrowded and thus vulnerable to enemy heavy weapons and unsatisfactory for hygiene and administrative reasons.
- (d) They are bad for morale, as they tend to be essentially passive and to enhance the "cut-off" feeling.

43. Defences should be dug in and concealed where possible.

44. Lanes of fire and visibility are advisable in defence in order to regain and utilise the fire power of automatic weapons.

45. Wherever possible vegetation should be cleared to provide extensive fields, not merely lanes, of view and fire. Bulldozers will do this speedily; but if they cannot be used much can be done with machettes and axes to clear all light growth.

- 46. (a) This policy prevents the enemy getting so close to our positions that he cannot be safely engaged by arty and mortars.
- (b) It also enables a greater area to be held as ground between defended localities can be effectively covered by observed fire.
- (c) Surprise can still be achieved if clearings are correctly sited and the cutting of fields of fire which attackers must cross need not seriously prejudice concealment of actual firing positions.
- (d) Fewer men were needed forward when fire lanes had been cut and then weapon pits ten yards apart were in most cases, quite satisfactory. The economy in men permitted the holding of mobile reserves for fighting or for carrying etc.

47. The thicker the jungle in front of our position the more important it is that it be immediately explored. Thick growth obscures the conformation of the ground. Small rises and reentrants are not apparent. But their existence must be discovered if our weapons are to be sited to the best advantage. For example, it has been said of the MMG that it clears its own fire lane. That in a sense is true; but it cannot clear a fire lane through a bank of earth or coral.

- 48. (a) The selection of ground to be held in defence in jungle is dictated by the same considerations as elsewhere with emphasis on the following matters.
- (b) The main approaches are tracks which usually follow ridges and sometimes creek and river beds in their lower reaches.
- (c) The tactical value of high ground is diminished if it is in thick jungle as it offers no better observation than low ground. A hill feature on the flank of a track gives little control of the track if nothing can be seen from it.
- (d) The best places for controlling a track are where it follows a knife edge ridge.

- (e) Water is often difficult to obtain in the mountains. But provision should be made for holding a water point within a very defended position. Springs must be looked for and soaks constructed as soon as the position is occupied. Some reserve of water in containers should be maintained in each post.

Patrols

49. (a) In general patrols should be of not less than one pl strength.

- (b) It is not easy for any white patrol however small moving in jungle to detect the presence of concealed enemy without being itself seen. The reason for keeping these patrols small "to see without being seen", may often therefore give way to a policy of "safety in numbers".

50. The best composition for a patrol was found to be one pl with attached; a small group (three or four men) of PIB if available, one or two signalmen with light cable, amarty and (depending on the range) three inch mortar FOCs. The keenest senses of the PIB made them invaluable when working with the forward scouts to give warning of the enemy.

51. Ground found free of enemy by patrols cannot be presumed to remain so. If it is of tactical importance that it be held it should be occupied at once and further troops sent forward to reinforce the patrol if necessary.

52. (a) The object of a patrol must be definite and quite clear to the leader before he starts. Indefinite missions are of no more value in the jungle than elsewhere.

- (b) In particular, if a patrol is to go to a particular place, it must be clear whether it is to meet opposition on the track it is to remain and engage the enemy there or return, or break off contact and seek to reach its original objective by another route. Patrol leaders must not be deterred from their object by contact with the enemy..

53. Patrols moved slowly in close country and are at times out for two days or more. When possible, line communications should normally be maintained except in the case of land patrols.

Night Patrols

- 54 (a) Offensive night operations were not undertaken by us.
- (b) Movement by night in jungle is difficult; and because of the opportunities of concealed approach by day is of much less value than in open country.
- (c) Any large scale night operations are not recommended, but small parties might perhaps use night for placing ambushes or snipers for action at first light. This was not attempted. It might not be practicable in thick jungle but might be done in coconut plantations or kunai.

Appendix "F" to 9 Just Div
Report on Operations.
2 Oct 43 - 15 Jan 44.

AIR OPERATIONS

DATE	A/C ENGAGED	TARGET	REMARKS
5 Oct	11 Mitchells	Rail Coast - barge sweep	9 Barges attacked - results unobserved.
9 Oct	9 Bostons) 12 Vultecs)	Enemy posns - SISI and SATELBERG	Rain and low clouds over SISI - results unobserved. Large explosions at SATELBERG, possible amn dumps. Buildings destroyed.
10 Oct	9 Bostons) 11 Vultecs)	Close sp - enemy posns SATELBERG area.	Bombing and strafing reported accurate. Large explosion and column of smoke from rear of prominent building at SATELBERG.
15 Oct	27 Mitchells) 6 Marauders) 36 Mitchells)	Dumps and bivouac areas SIO - PESCHEL PT (west of SIO)	Fires started, otherwise unobserved due to heavy jungle.
16 Oct	3 Mitchells 9 Mitchells	" " " " " " REISS PT (west of SIO) to NAMBARIVA	SIO MISSION and a number of huts destroyed.
17 Oct	9 Mitchells) 9 Bostons)	Close sp - enemy posns SATELBERG area	Bombing and strafing bivouac areas and dumps. Huts destroyed. Bombing and strafing reported accurate.
19 Oct	9 Bostons) 10 Vultecs)	Enemy held villages PINSCH-SATELBERG area. Supply lines west of SCARLET BEACH.	A/C maintained attack for 1 hour.
21 Oct	61 Liberators) 19 Mitchells)	SATELBERG area	Enemy dump and bivouac areas. WARIO and SATELBERG villages demolished. 230 tons of bombs dropped.
24 Oct	9 Bostons	" "	Bombing and strafing enemy posns - accurate.
25 Oct	9 Bostons	Mouth of KASATENG R	Suspected dump area. Bombing and strafing reported accurate.
28 Oct	4 Thunderbolts	SIO - FORTIFICATION PT	Barge sweep - Two barges destroyed KANOMI. SIO MISSION strafed. 30 huts at SIALUM (SIO) strafed, fires started.

DATE	A/C ENGAGED	TARGET	REMARKS
8 Nov	12 Vultees 15 Thunderbolts	NAMBARIWA and track south	Suspected dump and bivouac area at NAMBARIWA. Dive bombing and strafing.
12 Nov	6 Marauders 11 Mitchells	ALARI area (west of SIO)	Barge staging point and bivouac area. Fires started in target area.
14 Nov		ALARI-KALINGAI	Barge hunt - nil sightings. Track TALINGAI-ZAGAHEMI strafed.
16 Nov		GUSIKI-FIOR-LAREO-KASATENG R- TALINGAI-KELANO.	Enemy maintenance areas. Bombing and strafing.
18 Nov	6 Marauders 24 Mitchells	ASANGKOO area	Suspected dump area. 42 tons bombs dropped. Probable ammunition dump hit in centre of target.
19 Nov	9 Bostons 31 Mitchells 6 Marauders 8 Bostons	SMELBERG KULUNGUTU GUSIKI-MUZEN	Suspected dump and bivouac area. Bombing and strafing - results not observed. Dump area. 38 tons bombs dropped. Direct hits observed on huts and dumps. Bombing and strafing along coast track.
20 Nov	24 Mitchells 8 Marauders 9 Bostons	KULUNGUTU area (centre of inland HUBE area) TIARI to HEDENBERG PT	Dump area. Direct hits were observed on huts and in the villages. Barge sweep. Coconut grove and tracks bombed and strafed. Results not observed.
21 Nov	11 Bostons	MASIKKOO-FIOR-KULANKO-LAREO- ZAGAHEMI	Enemy dump and bivouac areas. Bombing and strafing. Results not observed.
22 Nov	16 Mitchells 6 Bostons	LAREO-JONGENG area TALINGAI and AGO	Bombing and strafing tracks and dumps. Results not observed. Villages and coast track bombed and strafed.
23 Nov	15 Mitchells 6 Bostons	SMELBERG-MORENG	Enemy bivouac areas. MORENG accurately bombed - target indicated by art, smoke shells. Villages and tracks JOONGENG-KULUNGUTU bombed and strafed.
24 Nov	9 Mitchells 10 Marauders	KALISA	Villages, dumps and bivouac areas bombed.

DATE	A/C ENGAGED	TARGET	REMARKS
24 Nov	9 Mitchells } 6 Bostons }	KALASA - SIALUM IS	Suspected bivouac and dump areas. Bombed and strafed villages and tracks. Fires started. A gun at HARDENBERG PT destroyed.
26 Nov	23 Mitchells) 8 Marauders)	M...BARIWA	Suspected dump area and barge hideout. Fires started. 54 tons bombs dropped.
27 Nov	18 Mitchells 6 Mitchells	BONGA	Enemy def position. 27 tons bombs dropped. One large explosion; fires started. Supply dropping to 2/32 Bn at PABU.
28 Nov	7 Marauders) 9 Mitchells) 18 Mitchells) 9 Bostons	BONGA SANDOR (west of SIO) - FORTIFICATION PT. KALASA - SIALUM	Enemy def position. 23 tons bombs dropped. Barge sweep - nil sightings. Coast defences bombed and strafed. Bombing and strafing along track. Some explosions at KALASA.
30 Nov	18 Mitchells 11 Bostons	KALASA BAZULUO - MASAWENG R	Dump and bivouac areas. 27 tons bombs dropped. accurate - several explosions in target area. Suspected enemy L of C. Bombing and strafing tracks BAZULUO-LAKONA-MASAWENG R.
3 Dec	9 Mitchells) 10 Marauders)	SOWI R	Barge off-loading points and dumps. Bombing accurate. 29 tons bombs dropped.
4 Dec	12 Bostons 19 Mitchells	BLUCHER PT - WANDOKAI NANDU - SIO IS	Bombing and strafing coastal track and villages and suspected dump area at mouth of R SANGA. Some explosions and black smoke seen. Suspected dump areas. Some explosions and black smoke seen at SIO IS.
5 Dec	5 Boston	KILIGIDU PT	Bombing and strafing enemy occupied areas.
6 Dec	9 Bostons 12 Mitchells	" " LAKONA - KILIGIA	" " " " " " Enemy dump areas. Bombing accurate. Escort strafed fuel dump LAKONA.
7 Dec	11 Bostons	WANDOKAI - NUZEN	Suspected dump areas and L of C. Bombing and strafing coastal track and village.

DATE	A/C ENGAGED	TARGET	REMARKS
8 Dec	10 Marauders 11 Mitchells	WANDOKAI MILWA	Dump area. 15 tons bombs dropped. " " 15 " "
9 Dec	9 Bostons 10 Mitchells	WANDOKAI - LIAISON R HUBIKA	Dump areas and LoFC. Bombing and strafing coastal track and villages. Dump area 15 tons bombs dropped.
13 Dec	4 Airacobras	FORTIFICATION PT - SAIDOR	Barge sweep. 10 barges strafed, believed destroyed.
14 Dec	5 Thunderbolts	" " "	Barge sweep. 2 barges strafed.
16 Dec	10 Mitchells 9 Marauders	S.O MELANOR	Dump and bivouac areas bombed. " " " " "
17 Dec	9 Mitchells	MELANOR	" " " " "
18	11 Bostons 12 Bostons	KANOLI TALING I	Dump areas bombed and strafed. " " " " "
19 Dec	12 Bostons 10 Mitchells 6 Airacobras	MELANOR-MUZEN MUZEN RAI Coast	Coastal track and dump areas bombed and strafed. Barge off-loading point bombed and strafed. Barge sweep.
20 Dec	12 Mitchells 5 Marauders	WANDOKAI MELANOR	Dump areas bombed. Suspected bn area; large explosion seen.
21 Dec	11 Bostons	WANDOKAI-TALINGAI-AGO	Bombing and strafing enemy occupied areas - bombing accurate.
22 Dec	12 Boston } 8 Marauders }	WANDOKAI - HUBIKA	Bombing and strafing suspected dumps. 14 tons bombs dropped.
23 Dec	24 Bostons	MELANOR	Bombing and strafing barge hide-outs. 10 tons bombs dropped. Three barges destroyed, 2 damaged by strafing.
24 Dec	20 Bostons	MELANOR	Bombing and strafing barge hide-outs. Three barges damaged.

DATE	A/C ENGAGED	TARGET	REMARKS
27 Dec	18 Mitchells } 12 Bostons }	AS-UNGLI-KANOMI	Bombing and strafing suspected dumps. 29 tons of bombs dropped.
29 Dec	5 Liberators	310	Enemy bivouac area bombed.
30 Dec	12 Mitchell's	NAMBARIVA	Bombing and strafing barge hide-outs.
4 Jan	10 Marauders } 9 Mitchell's }	NAMBARIVA	Bombing barge hide-outs: 27 tons bombs dropped. Bombing accurate, fires observed.
5 Jan	8 Thunderbolts	Coast Patrol	One barge destroyed at NAMBARIVA, two off CHISSI IS and two in SCHLANGEN HARBOUR.
10 Jan	12 Bostons	NAMBARIVA - 310	Bombing and strafing bivouac areas.

NOTE: Air ops listed above are only those carried out in 9 Aust Div area of operations or adjoining areas directly affecting 9 Aust Div ops. Fighter interceptions by patrols and/or requests through FC Liaison party 5 AF attached 9 Aust Div are not included.

Appendix "A" to 9 Aust Div Report on Operations
2 Oct 43 - 15 Jan 44.

MTB OPS 2 OCT 43 - 15 JAN 44

x Destroyed includes craft probably destroyed. Damaged includes possibly destroyed.

Time	Vicinity	Destroyed ^x	Damaged ^y	Remarks
am	SIO	4 type A		Heading SE loaded with tps
night	KELANOA HARBOUR			1 beached barge strafed
"	NANDA	1 Type A 1 large MLC		4 barges encountered, all of which re- turned our fire. Some cas to MTB crew.
"	BLUGHER PT	1 large MLC	1 Type A	MTBs were engaged by shore guns.
"	WALINGAI	2 Type A	1 Type A	Barges were heading south and appeared empty.
"	BLUGHER PT	2 Type A		Heading SE and appeared empty.
"	KELANOA HARBOUR	4 Type A	1 large MLC	Heading SE loaded with stores. MTBs were engaged by shore guns.
2340	North of BLUGHER PT			Two type I submarines surfaced. Engaged with torpedoes, direct hits scored. Subs submerged. A large area of dis- coloured water seen, but no wreckage observed.
2300	WALINGAI	4 Type A		
night	"	3 Type A		
0110	CAPE KING MELLALAI	2 Type A		Loaded with tps moving north.

Date	Time	Vicinity	Destroyed ^I	Damaged ^X	Remarks
12 Nov	0200	NUZEN	4 Type A		Barges were beached when engaged. All set on fire. MTBs were engaged by shore guns.
13/14 Nov	night	KELANOA HARBOUR	3 Type A		
"	"	WALINGAI	1 Type A	1 Type A	
15/16 Nov	"	CAPE KING WILLIAM	2 Type A		Four barges encountered moving south. MTBs were engaged by heavy fire from shore guns.
16/17 Nov	"	SIAGUK	1 Type A		
22/23 Nov	"	SIOL	3 Type A		Barges were loaded
"	"	ELUCER PT	3 Type A		Four barges encountered moving south loaded. MTBs were engaged by shore guns.
24/24 Nov	"	HARDENBERG PT	2 Type A		Six barges encountered loaded and moving south.
24/25 Nov	"	CAPE KING WILLIAM	2 Type A		Moving south.
5 Dec	"	LA WARIWA			Five lumps each of 200 bags containing rice etc. and three rafts with heavy boxes suspended below believed amn. All believed to be deck cargo of submarine. All destroyed.

Date	Time	Vicinity	Destroyed ^x	Damaged ^x	Remarks
6/7 Dec	night	DORFER BAY (west of SIO)	4 Type A		Loaded and moving south. Two sank. Two destroyed on the beach.
7/8 Dec	"	REISS PT (west of SIO)	1 Type A 1 Type B		Unloaded and moving north. Type B sank, Type A destroyed on the beach.
9/10 Dec	"	REISS PT	2 Type B 3 Type A		Moving north.
"	"	HARDENBERG PT	4 Type A 1 large MLC		Barges were lying to 150 yards off HARDENBERG PT, all appeared empty. MLCs came under heavy fire from shore guns.
11/12 Dec	"	SANGA R mouth	3 Type A		1 x 70 ft enemy barge armed with 20mm gun escaped. Heavy fire from shore guns.
12/13 Dec	"	REISS PT	6 Type A 2 Type B 1x80/100 ft barge		All believed fully loaded.
18/19 Dec	"	REISS PT	7 Type B 2x80/100 ft barges		All moving north empty.
"	"	HALINGAI	1 Type B		Loaded and moving south.
21/22 Dec	"	"	2 Type A		" " " "
22/23 Dec	"	REISS PT	4 Type A 2 Type B		Moving north empty.
"	"	SCHAEFERST PT	1 Type A	3 Type A	Moving south loaded. MLCs came under heavy fire from shore guns.

Date	Time	Vicinity	Destroyed	Damaged	Remarks
24 Dec	0630	GNEISSIAU PT	1 Type A 1 Piquet boat 1 submarine barge		Submarine barge appeared to be designed for towing by a submarine, either surfaced or underwater. All craft were beached when engaged by MTBs.
26 Dec	0650	NAMBARIWA	1 Type A 1 Type B 1 Type B		Moving SE empty
1 Jan	2035	VINCKE PT (West of SIO)	1 Type B 1x80 ft barge		Moving SE. Shore guns engaged MTBs.
2 Jan	2200	NAMBARIWA	2 Type A		Moving north, one loaded with tps. MTBs fired on by shore guns.
3 Jan	0030	REISS PT	2 Type B		Moving west.
7 Jan	2100	NAMBARIWA			Two rafts carrying food and medical sups. Both destroyed by MTBs.
"	2135	"			One submarine 1½ miles offshore. Sub dived when attacked. No results observed.
9/10 Jan	night	"	1 Type A		Destroyed on beach. Tps on beach engaged MTBs.
"	"	HERZLATH PT (west of SIO)	4 large MLC		One loaded with 73/100 tps, one on beach loaded with amm. Moving east.
"	"	RIMBA (west of SIO)	3 barges		Loaded and moving east.
"	"	MARAKUN (west of SIO)	3 barges		On the beach

Date	Time	Vicinity	Destroyed ^I	Damaged ^I	Remarks
9/10 Jan	night	POMMERN BAY			40/50 boxes of food adrift destroyed.
9 Jan	2315	BIBI (west of SIO)	6 Type A		Barges destroyed on the beach.
10 Jan	0030	DORFER BAY	1 Type B	2 Type A 3 Type B	Barges were moving NW loaded with tps. All were armed and attempted to fight off MTB attack.
"	0427	WEBER PT (west of SIO)	1 Special 1 Type B	6 Special	All loaded with tps heading NE. Armed and attempted to fight off MTB attack.
10/11 Jan	night	REISS PT	3 Type A		Moving NE loaded with approx 30 persons each. Armed with 37mm and small arms.
11 Jan	0730	SIO IS	2 Type A 1 Lifeboat		Beached and loading pers. mainly natives.
15 Oct to 11 Jan 44.		LANGEMAK BAY to POMMERN BAY	84 Type A 21 Type B 7 Large MLC 4x80/100 ft b 1 special MLC 1 sub barge 1 piquet boat 1 lifeboat	3 Type A 3 Type B 1 large MLC 6 special MLC	

NOTES: The above summary includes only those MTB Ops which had a direct bearing on 9 Aust Div ops. MTBs patrolled the east coast of the HUON PENINSULA every night except when the weather conditions made it necessary to cancel patrols. LOGs from 9 Aust Div contacted patrols nightly and passed on any information gained by ground forces and at the same time received information of MTB patrols and results of previous night patrols. Results of MTB ops prior to 15 Oct 43 are not available.

Appx "H" to 9 Aust Div
Report on operations
8 Oct 43 - 15 Jan 44.

TABLE SHOWING JAP UNITS EAST OF SIO INVOLVED IN
OPERATIONS AGAINST 9 AUST DIV 22 SEP 43 - 15 JAN 44.

(a) Units which arrived before our capture of
FINSCHHAFEN 2 Oct 43 :-

<u>Unit</u>	<u>Strength</u>	<u>Remarks</u>
Naval troops incl 85 Garrison Unit and 15 AA Defence Unit	1,000	Only 300 effectives left after capture of FINSCHHAFEN 2 Oct; probably withdrawn during Oct.
1 Shipping Gp HQ (Maj Gen YAMADA) with attachments:- One sec 30 Indep Engr Regt One Sec 36 Indep Engr Regt Portion 8 Shipping Engr Regt Stores Depot	100	Withdrew during Nov.
80 Inf Regt less I Bn and 5 Coy	2652	Movement Order Strength.
Reinforcements for I Bn 80 Regt	100	
238 Inf Regt: 2 and 5 Coys, Regt'l Gun Coy, QF Gun Coy and 2 Bn Gun Pl	440	From 41 Div
III Bn 26 Fd Arty Regt less 7 Bty	250	
OKINO Coy, 102 Inf Regt	100	From 51 Div
One Pl 11 Coy 21 Inf Regt	30	From 5 Div
One pl 21 Indep Mixed Bde	30	
One coy 21 Lt Trench Mortar Bn	125	Probably 3 Coy
24 AA Unit (portion of 50 Indep AA Unit and of 19 Indep AA Unit attached)	100	May have arrived later.
20 Div Sig Sec	38	Movement Order Strength.
1 Fd Hosp 20 Div	84	" " "
41 Div Casualty Collecting Unit	80	
4 Fd Hosp 51 Div	80	
Total	5209	

(b) Units which arrived after 2 Oct :-

HQ 20 Div	100	Movement table Strengths
79 Inf Regt	3196	" " "
8 Coy 78 Inf Regt	70	" " "
HQ and II Bn 26 Fd Arty Regt	580	" " "
7 Bty 23 Fd Arty Regt	60	Evacuee from LAE
20 Engr Regt	580	Movement table Strengths
20 Div Sigs	130	" " "
20 Tpt Regt less 3 and 4 Coys	440	" " "
33 Indep Engr Regt less 2 Coy	600	" " "
20 Div Medical personnel	470	" " "
II Bn 236 Inf Regt less 5 and 6 Coys with one pnr pl attached	300	
I Bn 80 Inf Regt	300	KANOMI Defence Unit; evacuees from L.
Three coys of 51 Div	150	Engaged on tpt duties.

(b) Units which arrived after 2 Oct (Cont)

Elements incl 3 Coy, of 238 Inf	
Regt evacuated from LSE	100
HQ and 2 Coy 81 Lt Trench Mortar Bn	150
	<hr/>
	7426

GRAND TOTAL

12,636

NOTE:- 80 Div also had under command 5 Shipping Engr Regt. This is not included above, because it was based on NAMBARIWA and was not engaged in land operations.

REINFORCEMENTS:-

No allowance is made above for reinforcements. From PW statements, it appears practically no reinforcements reached units prior to retreat from GUSIKA - WAREO line. However, confirmatory evidence from PW captured both by 9 Aust Div and by SAIDOR FORCE indicated that 200 reinforcements for 80 Inf Regt and 800 for 79 Inf Regt reached GALI during Dec. It is known that some of these reinforcements moved east of SIO. 40 reinforcements for 80 Inf Regt got as far as HUBIKA, and 55 reinforcements joined II Bn 80 Inf Regt at KANGARUA on 27 Dec. As to the reinforcements for 79 Inf Regt, a PW stated an officer left from Regtl HQ 4 Dec to bring them forward. Another PW from 2 MG Coy 79 Inf Regt claimed that about 27 Dec near SIALUM he spoke with a soldier who was a reinforcement for 2 MG Coy 79 Inf Regt. PW was told that about 70 reinforcements had arrived for this coy, and they were retreating along the coast, because 2 MG Coy was withdrawing inland and could not be contacted. On the whole, it appears a substantial proportion of the 1,000 reinforcements moved east of SIO but no allowance is made for this in above table.

Apex "J" to 9 Aust Div
Report on Operations 2 Oct 44
15 Jan 44.

ORDER OF BATTLE, 9 AUST DIV, AS AT 15 DEC 43

NOTE: FINSCHHAGEN Base Sub Area was at this time under operational command of 9 Aust Div.

Arm or Service

Unit

HQ

Adv HQ 9 Aust Div
Rear HQ 9 Aust Div
A Coy 2/1 Aust Gd Regt less 1, B, 4 Pz
B Sec FSW

QAV

B/4 Aust Cav (Commando) Bde

ARMED

1 Aust Tk Bn, less B Sqn

ARTY

HQ RMA 9 Aust Div
2/6 Aust Fd Regt
2/12 Aust Fd Regt
2/4 Aust Lt AA Regt
2/3 Aust Lt AA Bty (Alphington)
2/1 Aust Comp AA Regt
11 Aust Tk A Bty
M Aust Hy Bty
2 Aust Mtn Bty (less sec)
1 Fd Sec 2/3 Aust Svy Bty
5 Aust Svy Bty
9 Det 1 Mob Met Flt
84 Aust AASL Bty

ENGR

HQ RAE 9 Aust Div
2/3 Aust Fd Coy
2/7 Aust Fd Coy
2/13 Aust Fd Coy
2/24 Aust Fd Pk Coy
2/29 Aust Camflg Unit
3 OD Pl 2/1 Aust Mech Engt Coy
Det 5 Aust Fd Sqn

SIG

Sigs 9 Aust Div
2/43 Aust Cipher Sec
2/6 Aust Fd Regt Sig Sec
2/12 Aust Fd Regt Sig Sec
2/4 Aust Lt AA Regt Sig Sec
2/1 Aust Comp AA Regt Sig Sec
5 Aust Engr Sig Sec
4 Aust Inf Bde Sig Sec
20 Aust Inf Bde Sig Sec
24 Aust Inf Bde Sig Sec
26 Aust Inf Bde Sig Sec
2/1 Aust Beach Sig Sec
Det 36 Aust W/T Task Sec

INF

HQ 20 Aust Inf Bde
1 Pl 2/1 Aust Gd Regt
2/13 Aust Inf Bn
2/15 Aust Inf Bn
2/17 Aust Inf Bn
Hq 24 Aust Inf Bde
8 Pl 2/1 Aust Gd Regt
8/28 Aust Inf Bn
8/29 Aust Inf Bn
2/43 Aust Inf Bn

Arm of Service

Unit

INF (cont)

HQ B8 Aust Inf Bde
4 Pl 2/1 Aust Gd Regt
2/B8 Aust Inf Bn
2/B4 Aust Inf Bn
2/48 Aust Inf Bn
HQ 4 Aust Inf Bde
28 Aust Inf Bn
29/46 Aust Inf Bn
37/52 Aust Inf Bn

9 Aust Div Carr Coy
A Coy PIB
B Coy PIB
B/B Aust Me Bn

MG

PNR

B/3 Aust Pnr Bn

ASCO

HQ Comd ASCO 9 Aust Div
2/6 Aust Sup Depot Coy
2/156 Aust Gen Tpt Coy
Det 4 Aust Armd Bde Coy ASCO

MEDICAL

B/8 Aust Fd Amb
B/8 Aust Fd Amb
B/11 Aust Fd Amb
4 Aust Fd Amb less A Coy
Det 6 Aust Lt Fd Amb
2/3 Aust COS
B/3 Aust AMOU

DENTAL

D and E Secs 2/5 Aust Dental Unit
77 Aust Dental Unit

ORD

2/118 Aust Bde Ord Fd Pk
2/122 Aust Bde Ord Fd Pk
Det 2/123 Aust Bde Ord Fd Pk
1 Aust Tk Bn Ord Fd Pk

ASME

2/53 Aust LAD
2/58 Aust LAD
2/61 Aust LAD
2/67 Aust LAD
2/72 Aust LAD
2/76 Aust LAD
2/77 Aust LAD
2/73 Aust LAD
264 Aust LAD
2/4 Aust Lt AA Regt Wkshop Sec
2/1 Aust Comp AA Regt Wkshop Sec
84 Aust AASL Bty Wkshop Sec
2/118 Aust Bde Wkshop
2/122 Aust Bde Wkshop
2/123 Aust Bde Wkshop
1 Aust Tk Bn Wkshop

MISO

9 Aust Div Pro Coy
9 Aust Div Fd Cash Office
9 Aust Div Postal Unit
9 Aust Div Salv Unit
9 Aust Div Sec Reception Camp

LHQ TROOPS UNDER COMD

Det 1 Aust AFIU
Det ATIS
Det ANGAU
Det Public Relations
Det W/T Sec 4 AG Sqn
Det ADCS
GHQ LO Party

US TROOPS UNDER COMD

532 Regt 2 ESB less A and B Coys

US TROOPS IN SUPPORT

8 Air Liaison Party 5 AF

FINSCHLAFEN BASE SUB AREA

FINSCHLAFEN Base Sub Area HQ
19 Aust Fd Coy
7 Aust Docks Op Coy
2/23 Aust Corps Fd Pk Coy
Det 11 Aust Water Tpt Gp Op Coy
2 Aust Fortress Sigs
19 L of C Sigs
HQ 23 Aust Sup Depot Coy
160 Aust Sup Depot Pl
161 Aust Sup Depot Pl
225 Aust Sup Depot Pl
56 Aust BIPOD Pl
2/104 Aust Gen Tpt Coy
4 Aust Fd Bakery
104 Aust FAD
44 Aust FOD
255 Aust LAD
2/65 Aust LAD
2/2 Aust CCS
Det 107 Aust Adv Depot Med Stores
Det ADCS
Det 2 Aust Corps Postal Unit
Det NG L of C Stationery Depot
Det 8 Aust Movement Control Gp
9 Aust Graves Registration & Inquiries Unit
Det 2/1 Aust Army Topo Svy Coy
Loft 33 8 Aust Pigeon Sec
ANGAU

9 AUST DIV REPORT ON OPERATIONS

3 OCT 43 - 15 JAN 44

MAP REFERENCES OF PLACE NAMES USED

Ref Maps 1/25,000 (second edition) series.

1. MAPE RIVER
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9. SCHARNHORST POINT
10. BIO

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BLUCHER POINT	7	43 99
BONGA	4	63 72
BUTAWENG	2	59 53
CAPE SIBIDA	4	59 79
COCONUT BEACH	4	616 764
COCONUT RIDGE	3	554 650
DREGER HARBOUR	2	64 49
FINSCHHAFFEN	2	62 57
FIOR	3	54 69
FORTIFICATION POINT	4	58 83
GARABOW	3	57 67
GREISERAU POINT	9	50 41
GODOWA BEACH	2	604 545
GREEN RIDGE	3	559 647
GURUNKOR	1	55 60
GUSIKA	4	62 73
HARDENBERG POINT	8	38 07
HILDSBACH	3	61 65
HILL 2200	3	55 66
HOLPUA	5	47 81
HUBIKA	4	56 84
JIVEVANENG	3	56 64
KALASA	7	30 05
KAKAKOO	2	61 58
KAMLAGIDU POINT	4	62 75
KANOMI	7	432 992
KATIKA	3	61 66
KANJARUA	6	43 95
KEDAM BEACH	2	622 590
KELANOA	9	23 19
KIASAWA	3	58 58
KILIGIA	4	61 77
KUANKO	5	55 71
KULAWA	3	55 63
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LAUNCH JETTY BEACH	3	616 640
LOGAWENG	2	61 52
MARARUO	3	52 65
MASANGKOO	3	53 68
MASAWENG BEACH	4	584 813
MORENG	3	51 62
NAMBARIWA	10	48 42
NANDA	7	39 03
NONGORA	3	58 70
NORTH HILL	3	62 69
NUZEN	7	38 05
PABU	4	611 717
PALANKO	3	55 67
PEAK HILL	5	55 71
PING HILL	4	627 711
POLA	2	62 58
R BUMI	2	618 593
R BURI	9	555 407
R DALEMAN	9	230 202
R KAPUGARA	9	510 415
R KALUENG	4	625 734
R MAPE	2	603 550
R MASAWENG	4	584 808
R SANGA	8	333 125
R SIKI	3	621 569
R SONG	3	623 678
R SOWI	4	609 773
R QUOJA	3	614 628
SATELBERG	3	54 66
SCARLET BEACH	3	622 675
SCHARNHORST POINT	9	55 40
SIALUM BEACH	8	344 112
SIKI COVE	3	621 670
SIMBAING	2	60 55
SIO	10	43 46
SISI	3	55 64
STEEPLE TREE HILL	3	548 648
TIMBULUM PLANTATION	2	60 53
TERIMORO	1	57 57
WALINGAI BEACH	6	456 930
WANDOKAI	5	51 88
WAREO	5	55 71
WASUTIENG	2	61 51
XMAS HILLS	4	580 718

AWM52

Australian Military Forces, Army headquarters,
formation and unit diaries, 1939-1945

1/5/20 DIVISIONS

9 Australian Division General
Staff Branch (9 Aust Div GS
Branch)

1943 - 1944, Operations



1/5/20-0443

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9 AUST DIV REPORT ON OPERATIONS

2 OCT 43 - 15 JAN 44

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9 AUSTRALIAN DIVISION REPORT ON OPERATIONS.

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PTWO HILL	4	627 711
POLA	2	62 58
R BUMA	2	618 593
R BURE	9	555 407
R DAINELAY	9	250 202
R KAPUGARA	9	510 415
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R LAPE	2	605 550
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R SANGA	8	333 125
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R SONG	3	623 678
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SECTION I - NARRATIVE OF EVENTS

INTRODUCTION

On 2 Oct 43, FINSCHHAFEN fell and a new phase began in the campaign on the HUON PENINSULA.

In anticipation of the capture of FINSCHHAFEN, Comd 1 Aust Corps visited Div HQ at R BUNGA on 1 Oct and issued the following verbal orders, subsequently confirmed on 5 Oct in 1 Aust Corps Op Instr No 6.

9 Aust Div was to -

- (a) Defend FINSCHHAFEN
- (b) Develop FINSCHHAFEN as a Base Sub Area
- (c) Gain control of the east coast of HUON PENINSULA up to and including SIO

The events from this date onwards until the capture of SIO on 15 Jan 44 fall into five main phases:

- PHASE I Reinforcement and preparation for offensive by both sides 2 Oct - 15 Oct.
- PHASE II The enemy attempt to retake FINSCHHAFEN 16 Oct - 28 Oct.
- PHASE III Reorganization and redistribution of forces in preparation for our offensive 29 Oct - 15 Nov.
- PHASE IV The attack 16 Nov - 20 Dec.
- PHASE V The pursuit, and the capture of SIO 21 Dec - 15 Jan 44.

PHASE I

Reinforcement and preparation for offensive by both sides
2 Oct - 15 Oct 43

Situation - Own Troops

For the capture of FINSCHHAFEN, Comd 20 Bde had concentrated his three bns in the R BUMI area, leaving only 2/43 Bn to protect the SCARLET BEACH maintenance area. This bn was disposed with one coy in NORTH HILL area covering the approach from the north along the coastal track; one coy astride the track west of KATIKA covering the direct route into SCARLET BEACH from the SATELBERG direction, and 2/43 Bn less two coys on the SATELBERG track, with the forward coy occupying JIVEVANEN VILLAGE area.

Situation - Enemy

During the 20 Bde advance on FINSCHHAFEN, the enemy had been withdrawing his forces from the area south of R MAPE via the inland track TIRIMORO - GURUNKOR - KUMAWA to SATELBERG. By 2 Oct, this move had been completed, and with the naval garrison which had withdrawn from FINSCHHAFEN, the total enemy strength in SATELBERG area, after allowing for casualties suffered from 22 Sep to 1 Oct, was approximately 4,500.

At the same time, substantial reinforcements were moved down the coast by sea and overland, to SATELBERG. This force totalled 5,800 and consisted principally of HQ 20 Div, Div troops and 79 Inf Regt. They had been engaged on road work in BOGADJIM area but after the landing at LAH, were ordered to move at once to FINSCHHAFEN.

partly by barge and partly on foot and between 3 - 12 Oct were arriving in WARRE area via the overland track from KALASA.

The enemy resisted strongly all our attempts to advance on SATELBERG, and his general intention in this phase seems to have been to build up his strength and prepare for his counter offensive, aimed at the recapture of FINSCHHAFFEN.

20 Bde Operations Before Arrival of Div HQ

In a message sent to Comd 20 Bde before the fall of FINSCHHAFFEN, the Div Comd had stressed the importance of the early capture of SATELBERG, and with this object, and in view of the increasing enemy activity on the SATELBERG track and in the coastal sector north of SCARLET BEACH, Comd 20 Bde began an immediate redistribution of his forces. The Bde Comd's plan was to relieve 2/43 Bn less two coys on the SATELBERG track by 2/17 Bn. The whole of 2/43 Bn would then be available for the close protection of SCARLET BEACH from the north and west, and 2/17 Bn was to press on west along the track from JIVEVANENG and capture SATELBERG.

The execution of this plan was interrupted by offensive action by the enemy. On 1 Oct, A Coy 2/43 Bn at JIVEVANENG had been isolated by an enemy force which outflanked their position to the north and got astride the SATELBERG track in their rear to the east of the village. Several attempts to relieve A Coy were unsuccessful, and eventually on 4 Oct the coy, under instructions dropped to them by two R aircraft, rejoined the main body by moving south of the enemy position on a other track. While isolated the coy repulsed numerous enemy attacks, killing at least 50 Japs and wounding many more.

It was now apparent that the enemy was in strength on the SATELBERG track, and to drive on SATELBERG along that axis would be a long and costly task. Comd 20 Bde therefore decided to attempt an outflanking movement to the south. On 5 Oct, accordingly, 2/17 Bn less two coys moved by a steep native pad up to KUMAWA village, which they occupied without opposition. The seizure of this feature brought several tactical advantages, and also some difficulties: it cut the main enemy inland route into SATELBERG from the south (though an alternative track existed via MORENG and MARARUO), and gave good observation up to SATELBERG and access north to SATELBERG rd and thence to the SATELBERG HEIGHT itself. But the very fact of its position on the enemy inland withdrawal route from FINSCHHAFFEN, its tactical value, and its importance to us as a supply dump area required that at least one coy remained to hold the area of the track junction and protect it against any enemy attack from the south. Thus the force available to exploit north towards SATELBERG was very small, and when it struck solid enemy opposition on 6 Oct north of KUMAWA, little further progress was possible.

The other difficulty was maintenance: the engrs at once began work on a jeep track through KIASAWA up to KUMAWA, and eventually reached the village, but it was at best an extremely steep dry-weather track, and during its construction, and in wet weather, it required numerous native porters assisted by deta of other units to keep supplies up.

Comd 20 Bde now decided to increase the pressure towards SATELBERG, by moving 2/15 Bn to KUMAWA and concentrating 2/17 Bn on the SATELBERG track; leaving the protection of FINSCHHAFFEN to 2/15 Bn in the SIEMANG area, with coys forward at TIRIMORO and on the north bank of LAKE, and to 22 Bn, disposed south of R MARE in area BUTAWENG - LOGAWENG. Accordingly, two coys 2/17 Bn relieved 2/43 Bn in JIVEVANENG area on 6 Oct, and on 7 Oct 2/15 Bn began to march north from FINSCHHAFFEN to KUMAWA. Before their arrival, on 3 Oct, the enemy launched a heavy counterattack on 2/17 Bn near KUMAWA; but the attack failed completely, being repulsed with heavy losses.

2/17 Bn followed up with a successful encircling attack on the SATTEBERG track, capturing a dominating knoll, which they subsequently held against three heavy and very costly counterattacks by the enemy. But their further attempts to advance were stubbornly resisted.

The situation when Adv HQ 9 Aust Div opened at FINSCHHAFFEN on 19 Oct 43, was that 2/15 Bn had taken over the KULAWA sector, 2/17 Bn was at JIVEVAHENG: both one facing strong enemy forces well dug in; the SCARLET BEACH maintenance area somewhat weakly protected by only one bn (2/45 Bn) and the lines of communication to both KULAWA and JIVEVAHENG uncertain in wet weather. At this time heavy rain did actually make these tracks impassable to jeeps and further advance was held up until supplies could be built up.

Forward Move of HQ 9 Aust Div and 24 Bde Gp

In order to carry out the orders issued in 1 Aust Corps Op Instr No 6 (see para 2 above), Comd 9 Aust Div was authorized to move to FINSCHHAFFEN the balance of the Div less one bde group, at his discretion, with the proviso that the movement of troops and the subsequent maintenance of the force from LAE area must be within the capacity of the craft of the Boat Bn 532 Regt 2 ESB under command 9 Aust Div, assisted by whatever craft 542 Regt, under comd USASOS Adv Base LAE, could make available.

It was thus necessary to decide what number of craft could be spared from maintenance of the FINSCHHAFFEN area for the movement of units forward from LAE, and what scale of reserves it was necessary to build up in the forward area. It was also necessary to determine the most suitable priority of units for the forward move and the allocation of the craft available. The situation at FINSCHHAFFEN made it clear that more fighting troops were required forward as early as possible; but that need had to be balanced against the requirements of administrative units to develop the base and to maintain the force at FINSCHHAFFEN as it increased in size.

On 6 Oct the moves by sea in craft of 532 Regt (2 ESB) began and continued steadily until by 15 Oct the force at FINSCHHAFFEN comprised the following :-

- Adv HQ 9 Aust Div
- HQ RA 9 Aust Div
- 2/12 Aust Fd Regt
- 2/4 Aust Lt AA Regt (less one bty)
- HQ LAE 9 Aust Div
- 2/3 Aust Fd Coy
- Det 2/1 Aust Mech Eqty Coy
- HQ 20 Aust Inf Bde
- 2/13 Aust Inf Bn
- 2/15 Aust Inf Bn
- 2/17 Aust Inf Bn
- HQ 24 Aust Inf Bde
- 2/28 Aust Inf Bn
- 2/32 Aust Inf Bn
- 2/43 Aust Inf Bn
- 2/2 Aust MG Bn
- 2/3 Aust Pnr Bn
- 22 Aust Inf Bn

On 10 Oct Adv HQ 9 Aust Div opened on the north shore of LAKE LAKE, and relieved 20 Bde of responsibility for maintenance in FINSCHHAFFEN and the administration of the many subunits and supporting troops in the area.

The Div Comd appreciated that the vital ground in the area was

- (i) SATELBERG mountain feature
- (ii) The long narrow ridge running west from GUSIKA on the coast to WAREO.

Along this latter ridge ran a track which the enemy used to carry supplies brought down the coast in barges, to his troops inland in the WAREO - SATELBERG area. Possession of the ridge would deny the enemy excellent observation of the coastline as far south as DREGER HARBOUR and cut one of his supply routes from the coast; further, WAREO, at the western end of the ridge was itself on a 2600 ft plateau which dominated the entire R SONG VALLEY and the country inland from SCARLET BEACH as far west as the SATELBERG HEIGHT. It was also the junction point of many important tracks - notably the Jap inland track from KALASA, the track from the rich HUEE District centred on KULUNGUFU, and several routes down to the coast at GUSIKA, KALICIA and LAKONA. From WAREO also radiated tracks to SATELBERG, PALANKO and HONGORA - all of them routes of supply for enemy forces in these localities and of access for the enemy to attack our forces in the SCARLET BEACH and FINSCHHAFFEN areas.

The capture of the GUSIKA - WAREO line would therefore both secure the FINSCHHAFFEN area and provide the ground from which an offensive could be launched to drive the Japs from the east coast of HOOK PENINSULA and capture SIO, which were the two operational tasks given to the Div. While the enemy held SATELBERG, however, the left flank of a drive for the GUSIKA - WAREO line would be open to attack, and the Div Comd a plan therefore envisaged two preliminary moves before the advance on WAREO :

- (a) The capture of SATELBERG.
- (b) The control of track junctions in BONGA area to cut the enemy supply line to the coast and open the WAREO feature to attack from the east by the spur along which the track ran from GUSIKA.

By 11 Oct, 24 Bde was beginning to arrive at FINSCHHAFFEN and Div Comd reallocated areas of responsibility as follows :

North: 24 Bde (2/13 Bn, 2/3 Pnr Bn)
 Centre: 20 Bde (2/13, 2/15, 2/17 Bns)
 South: 22 Bn

The boundaries of the centre sector (with the north sector) ran incl road SATELBERG - JIVEVAREMA thence all excl road to northern edge HELDSBACH PLANTATION thence to ARNDT PT: the boundary with south sector was incl R MAPE. Tasks allotted were as follows :-

- 24 Bde - To protect SCARLET BEACH area in depth against any enemy attack from west or NW, and with not less than two coys to gain control of track junctions vicinity BONGA.
- 20 Bde - To continue pressure towards SATELBERG with a view to its capture.
- 22 Bn - To protect area south R MAPE, incl LOGAWENG and landward defence DREGER HARBOUR.

The remainder of 24 Bde had not yet moved from LAL, but 2/28 Bn on arrival 14 Oct came under comd 24 Bde and 2/32 Bn on arrival 15 Oct came into div reserve in area R QUOJA.

The reorganisation of the force and the other preparations necessary to execute this policy were still proceeding when evidence from many sources indicated strongly that an enemy attack was imminent. It was appreciated that the attack might come from land or sea, or possibly a combination of both, and that its object would be the recapture of FINSCHHAFEN.

The probability of such an enemy move had been foreseen by the Dlt Gord, and underlined by increasing evidence of strong enemy reinforcements arriving in the HAREG area. He had hoped to anticipate the enemy in resuming the offensive, but as it now seemed certain that the enemy would be ready first, orders were issued on 15 Oct, laying down the policy for the defence of FINSCHHAFEN. The principal points were :-

- (a) Certain defined vital ground to be held at all costs.
- (b) Defence in depth.
- (c) Local mobile reserve to be maintained in each sector.
- (d) Coast watching stations and beach defences to be organised from incl SCARLET BEACH to DREGER HARBOUR.

The vital ground to be held at all costs included the track junction near BONGA; NORTH HILL; the high ground about two miles west of SCARLET BEACH between R SONG and SATELBERG track near JIVIVAHENG; KULAWA; TIRIMORO area; BUTAWENG; LOGAWENG; and 552 Regt base and harbour areas DREGER HARBOUR. Two coys 2/2 MG Bn were placed under Comd 20 Bde, one coy under Comd 24 Bde.

As AA guns sited on the beaches were given a dual role of beach defence and additional guns were brought from inland positions to thicken the defences. Inf 2 prs were sited along the coast, and coast watching and challenging stations organised from elements of 2/2 MG Bn, Lt AA, 2/12 Fd Regt and inf B echelons. All these dispositions were to be completed by 1700 hrs 16 Oct.

2/32 Bn, on arrival 15 Oct, was to come into div reserve. The only other unit in div reserve at this time was 2/2 MG Bn less three coys. The task of protecting FINSCHHAFEN and the shortage of inf was a constant handicap, throughout this stage, not only to offensive and counter-offensive operations but also to the creation of an adequate div reserve. Both 2/13 Bn and 22 Bn were committed to the protection of FINSCHHAFEN from the west, and 2/32 Bn, in div reserve in R QUOJA area, had one coy at short notice as mobile reserve for coastal defence in the ARNDT PT area. 20 Bde had no reserve specially available - in fact its only troops not committed were 2/13 Bn less two coys, at SIMBANG. 24 Bde had, as bde reserve, only 2/13 Bn less one coy, of which one coy was disposed for beach defence on SCARLET BEACH.

However by 1700 hours 16 Oct, all preparations possible had been made to meet the expected enemy attack. The dispositions of our troops are shown on Map Appx "A".

Maintenance

On the first day of the landing on SCARLET BEACH 22 Sep, 15 days' supplies had been landed for 20 Bde Gp. From that date, FINSCHHAFEN was resupplied solely from LAE area, by 552 Regt ESB craft under Comd 2 Div, our of reserves brought by LGAs from BUNA. The necessity for carrying units forward to FINSCHHAFEN in the same way still further complicated the maintenance position. The greatest efforts could not safely guarantee to replace an expenditure of more than 600 rounds of arty ammunition per day, and at one stage only two days' balanced rations for the force were held forward to FINSCHHAFEN. The difficulties of supply and maintenance were further increased by the irregularity and uncertainty of deliveries to LAE area. At one stage, stocks held at G BEACH and LAE Gp area together represented only 3 days' reserve; and from these stocks reserves had to be built up at FINSCHHAFEN.

The transport of vehicles forward was especially difficult, and this resulted in a general shortage of vehicles and workshop facilities in FINSCHHAFEN, which remained acute until late Dec. Even in Jan there was still a number of 9th Aust Div vehicles at G BEACH because craft were not available to bring them forward.

With the arrival of HQ 9 Aust Div at FINSCHHAFEN, the Div Maintenance Area was laid out so that it could be subsequently developed into a Base Sub Area. KEDAM BEACH was developed to maintain dumps in FINSCHHAFEN area, and LAUNCH JETTY BEACH opened to supply HELDSBACH area, later destined to become the Div Maintenance Area as Base Sub Area took over at FINSCHHAFEN. SCARLET BEACH then became merely a forward supply beach for units in the area, and was supplied by sea from FINSCHHAFEN stocks.

PHASE II

ENEMY ATTEMPT TO RETAKE FINSCHHAFFEN

16 Oct - 23 Oct

Enemy Situation and Intentions

The dispositions of the enemy force on 16 Oct, just before his counter offensive began, are shown on Map Appx "A" attached. Confirmation of the enemy's intentions had been obtained in a document taken from the body of a Jap Officer killed in a patrol clash near GUSIKA on 15 Oct. This was a copy of 20 Div OO No A 329, issued at SATELBERG on 12 Oct by Lt Gen KUTAGIRI, Comd 20 Div. First para of this read -

"After dusk on X Oct the main strength of 79 Inf Regt will attack the enemy in ARNDT PT area from the north side. The assault boat Butai will penetrate through the north coast of ARNDT PT on the night of X Day".

In a later para it was stated:-

"X Day will be decided on X minus 1 day at 2200 hrs and a fire will be seen for 20 minutes on the SATELBERG HEIGHTS".

Units were to light similar fires in their areas to acknowledge receipt.

Maps and Operation Orders captured later showed that the enemy had planned three co-ordinated attacks:-

- (a) A "diversion" in the north, by two coys 79 Inf Regt advancing south from BONGA, supported by a counter battery programme, which for some reason was never fired.
- (b) A seaborne attack: a force consisting of 10 Coy 79 Inf Regt and a det of 20 Engr Regt, liberally equipped with explosives and demolition charges, was to move in barges down the coast from HAIBARIWA, and land on SCARLET BEACH "on the night of X day". Instructions to this TOPPA TAI (boat penetration tai) stated "ammunition dumps, artillery positions, tanks, enemy HQ, moored boats, barracks etc should be selected as objectives".
- (c) The main landward attack: 20 Div was to attack eastward from SATELBERG-WAREO area, with 80 Inf Regt astride SATELBERG road, and 79 Inf Regt to the north. Objective of 80 Inf Regt were shown on a captured map as HELDSBACH, north end HELDSBACH FLAMMATION, and our arty positions in the area. The plan of 79 Inf Regt was shown in an OO issued 16 Oct, as follows:

"IMASHIDA Butai (79 Inf Regt) will charge in and attack and annihilate the enemy located north of ARNDT PT".

2 Bn, on the left, was to break through our defences towards SCARLET BEACH, "mop up the enemy along the right bank BONG" and then prepare to exploit southwards.

3 Bn, on the right, was to follow 2 Bn through the breach in our defences, and then "attack with surprise the enemy in KUTIKA from the rear and annihilate them".

X Day, as stated by this Operation Order, was 16 Oct.

The Enemy Attack

All units of 9 Aust Div had been ordered to post sentries to watch for the fire on SATELBERG, which according to the 20 Div OO, was to indicate "X minus 1 Day". No such fire was observed, and since it rained heavily all night 15/16 Oct, it is doubtful whether a fire was ever successfully lit, and quite certain that for 16 Oct

return fires were lit, in acknowledgement. This may, perhaps, have been the reason for a certain lack of co-ordination, and an apparent mistiming, in the various enemy drives.

The information received from higher authority about signs of an impending attack by "an enemy div" gave no indication of the probable nature of the offensive. It had been suggested that it might be a widely seaborne attack by a "division of ships", and in any case, the Div Comd had to be prepared; throughout this period, for a possible diversion or full-scale assault, coordinated with a counter-offensive on land. The security of FINSCHHAFEN and LAKE EWE against an attempted enemy landing was a constant source of concern, and a strain on the Div's resources of troops and suitable weapons.

At 0500 hrs 16 Oct, 2/17 Bn near JIVEVANENG, was heavily attacked by enemy estimated at one coy, presumably from 60 Regt, whom they repulsed with heavy losses. Fighting continued in the area all day, and at one stage an enemy force got astride the road east of JIVEVANENG but were driven out by a vigorous counter attack. At 1400 hours approximately two enemy coys, supported by a 70 mm gun, again attacked from the west, but were finally repulsed after two hours heavy fighting. By nightfall, the enemy attacks had petered out, though elements were believed to be still in the area.

The enemy "diversion" from the north in the coastal sector was not pressed determinedly and resulted merely in what was regarded as patrol skirmishes near GUSINA on 16 Oct and was not recognised as a part of the attack until the enemy order was captured.

The night 16/17 Oct was quiet until 0600 hours when a heavy air bombing raid began on FINSCHHAFEN area, continuing for an hour and doing no damage whatever. This heralded the seaborne attack. At 0415 hours three barges approached SCARLET BEACH, gliding in with motors muffled, close to the northern cape. Owing to rain and darkness and the noise of the surf the barges were not detected until they were not detected until they were close to the mouth of R. SONG. They were then engaged at point blank range by mortars and L.Gs and rifles of 2/28 Bn, assisted by 37 mm and 50 cal HMGs of a det of 532 Regt F.F.C. Two were disabled on the sand spit at the mouth of the river; the third was hit but managed to retract and withdrew north up the coast, carrying many casualties, to judge from the noise. 19 enemy were killed on the beach and their weapons and equipment captured, including many demolition charges, mines and Bangalore torpedoes. 26 enemy escaped across the mouth of the river into the jungle on the north bank but were mopped up during the day by patrols of 2/45 Bn. The seaborne arm of the attack is thus a complete failure.

On 17 Oct, the main enemy landward attack from the west began, and was pressed with great vigour and persistence for six days. It is now clear that on 16 Oct the enemy had been passing a large force, probably the whole of 79 Inf Regt C., between the widely dispersed forward coys of 2/3 Pnr Bn, into a concentration area about one mile west of KATIKA. Patrols from the 2/3 Pnr Bn had had several clashes with small enemy parties on 16 Oct, indicating increased enemy activity in this sector. It was not possible to assess accurately what strength of enemy was involved. It was reasonably clear, however that the enemy parties encountered were probably advance and flank guards screening the eastward movement of a considerable force. Indications therefore pointed to concerted enemy thrusts along the axis of the SATELBERG ROAD and from the west towards SCARLET BEACH.

At 1100 hrs 17 Oct HQ 2/3 Pnr Bn, on the high ground west of KATIKA, was heavily attacked by about one enemy coy. The attack was repulsed, but spasmodic fighting continued in the area all day; at last light a second strong attack was launched, which broke into the defensive area and forced the Bn HQ to withdraw into the 2/28 Bn perimeter at KATIKA, thus leaving the three forward coys on the high ground further west without line communications, and without a secure supply route.

Comd 24 Bde decided to employ part of his bde reserve, namely two coys 2/28 Bn, early on 18 Oct to clear up the situation west of KATIKA and re-establish communications with the three isolated coys of 2/3 Pnr Bn. In order to keep some reserve, if the enemy pressed his attacks, 2/43 Bn was ordered to withdraw its troops from the GUSIKA - PINO HILL area, and to hold two coys in reserve to move south of R SONG if required. The withdrawal of these troops was extremely difficult, over 5 miles of difficult jungle terrain in darkness and rain. However, by first light 18 Oct, the two coys had reached R SONG mouth.

The night 17/18 Oct was quiet, and in view of the defeat of two of the enemy's drives, and the enemy's spasmodic and apparently uncoordinated efforts on the western flank, the Div Comd decided to recapture the initiative. Orders were accordingly issued early on 18 Oct for 24 Bde to regain effective control of the area held by it before the battle began, and to prepare plans for the capture of the ground north of R SONG in NONGORA area in preparation for an advance on AREO. 20 Bde was to exert pressure towards SATELBERG and gain ground wherever possible. Before these orders could be implemented however, the enemy precipitated the heaviest fighting of the battle.

The Battle for KATIKA

At 1020 hours 18 Oct, as 2/28 Bn was forming up on the spur west of KATIKA for its counter-attack, and 10 minutes before its start time, the enemy launched a heavy and most determined attack on the Bn. This spur was one of the enemy's primary objectives, and fierce fighting continued until 1240 hours, in which the enemy suffered very heavy casualties and made no headway at all. The direct frontal attack was resumed several times during the afternoon, with further heavy losses to the enemy, but 2/28 Bn stood firm, their own casualties being remarkably light.

Meanwhile the enemy had been making probing attacks on both flanks of his main drive. Lt AA guns disposed for the protection of SCARLET BEACH in the kunai south of R SONG, and Lt AA positions protecting the fd gun area south of R SIKI, were both attacked. The AA gunners defended themselves, firing Bojors guns over open sights at point-blank range and using small arms to good effect. In the latter attack they were assisted by the fd guns, also firing over open sights at as little as 400 yards range. Both attacks were repulsed, and a third heavy attack on the gun area in the early afternoon met the same fate.

Comd 24 Bde, recognising that SCARLET BEACH was open to attack from the west between R SONG and KATIKA, ordered the two coys 2/43 Bn previously held in reserve at R SONG mouth, to take up positions in the gap and link with 2/28 Bn to the south. They arrived in time to meet and repulse a heavy and determined enemy attack on SCARLET BEACH from the west. Fighting continued all the afternoon but all enemy attempts to penetrate were defeated. During the attack, the LBS near SCARLET BEACH was under heavy small arms and mortar fire, and it was evacuated, all the patients being removed in craft from SCARLET BEACH to 2/3 CCS at SIKIANG.

During the afternoon, the enemy, though unable to make any impression on the 2/28 Bn positions west of KATIKA, succeeded in outflanking the Bn by moving to the south along the bed of R SIKI, and reached the sea at SIKI COVE. Orders were issued verbally, and confirmed later, by Div HQ, that 24 Bde was to hold at all costs the SCARLET BEACH area from both incl NORTH HILL - KATIKA. However, in view of the threat to SCARLET BEACH from both west and south, Comd 24 Bde informed Div HQ that he was unable to include KATIKA in his defences, and was withdrawing 2/28 Bn from KATIKA into a perimeter extending from NORTH HILL southwards, with a depth of 400/500 yards west from SCARLET BEACH, and having its southern flank resting on the small promontory just north of SIKI COVE. Line communication between Div HQ and HQ 24 Bde was then cut by the enemy, and wireless remained the only means of communication, apart from the 532 Regt ESB small craft, which continued to run to SCARLET BEACH throughout the battle.

By 1600 hours 2/28 Bn had completed its withdrawal to the new perimeter without interference, and 24 Bde were confident of being able to hold the enemy and prevent any penetration. There was now, however, an enemy wedge between 24 and 20 Bdes and the greatest danger at this time was that the enemy would swing south from KAITIRA and IE from SINI COVE and attack through the gun areas and HELDSBACH PLANTATION towards LAUREN JETTY. If successful, this move would have cut off the 20 Bde units on the SATTEBERG road and made their supply precarious and their control by higher authority most difficult. However, this possibility had been foreseen by the Div Comd and 2/13 Bn (less two coys) was already on the way from FINSCHHAFEN. On their arrival in the HELDSBACH area, 20 Bde was ordered to use them to prevent any enemy penetration southwards from K SINI between 24 and 10 Bdes. One coy 2/32 Bn was allotted from the already slender div reserve to come under comd and re-inforce 2/13 Bn for this purpose. During the night, 2/13 Bn on the south of K SINI and immediately East of its mouth repulsed three enemy attacks which proved to be the last attempts by the enemy to strike southwards from SINI CREEK. Meanwhile the attacks by 80 Inf Regt on 2/17 Bn had met with little success and resolved themselves into a series of small skirmishes on the west and north of the bn perimeter. One party of enemy did, however, succeed in getting astride SATTEBERG road east of JIVEVANG during night 18/19 Oct, and thus cut the bn's main supply route, but their maintenance was not prejudiced, since there existed an alternative supply trail further south which the enemy had not discovered. In 2/15 Bn sector at KUMANA, all had been quiet, and the bn was ordered to patrol aggressively towards SISI and the SATTEBERG road. In the succeeding days, 2/15 Bn offensive patrols successfully attacked several enemy posts and penetrated deeply to the vicinity of SISI. There is evidence that this action forced the detachment or further elements of 80 Inf Regt to strengthen the threatened southern flank and ST approaches to SATTEBERG, with a resultant decrease in the force available for use against 2/17 Bn.

The situation of the three isolated coys of 2/3 Pnr Bn was not precisely known at this stage, as they were out of communication. Tac R planes however, had sighted them waving to the aircraft, still in the positions they had been ordered to hold, and apparently not in difficulties; further, each coy had 3 days supplies and ample ammunition in its area, and the only likely shortage was water. The Div Comd now decided that they were no longer in a position to affect the course of the battle and they were to be withdrawn. For this purpose, they were placed under comd 20 Bde, which was ordered to contact them and arrange for them to move back south to the SATTEBERG road. On 19 Oct, D Coy took up a position on the SATTEBERG road east of JIVEVANG, but 20 Bde and FIC patrols were unable to locate B and C Coys owing to the thick jungle and difficult terrain. Orders were to withdraw, as well as ammunition and rations, were therefore dropped to the Coys by Tac R aircraft, and on 21 Oct both coys moved east through the enemy lines into the 24 Bde perimeter. B Coy had distinguished itself by beating off numerous enemy counter-attacks on its position, killing more than 60 JAPs for a loss of only 3 men wounded.

Throughout this period, the lack of an adequate div reserve was causing the Div Comd considerable anxiety and difficulty. The only troops now available were 2/52 Bn less one coy (with another coy still as short notice as a bile reserve for coast defence in the ARNUT PI area) and 2/2 MG Bn less three coys (with elements engaged on beach defence and coast watching duties to FINSCH HARBOR area). Div Comd increased his reserve by moving two coys 23 Bn from south of K SINI to come under comd 2/2 MG Bn at KAKAYOG, but the limited reserve available remained a great handicap. However, advice was received from Corps HQ on 18 Oct that arrangements had been made with US Navy to move 23 Bde in LSTs from LAE to FINSCHHAFEN, ETA on GODOWN BEACH 0100 hours 20 Oct. The earliest that the role could reach the fighting area would be 21 Oct.

Our Counter Attack

During the night 18/19 Oct there was considerable enemy movement along the whole 24 Bde perimeter. Our arty, which has been continually in action for two days and had already wrought much havoc among the enemy, especially in his masked attacks on 2/28 Bn, brought DE on several occasions, evidently with damaging effect to the enemy who voiced his distress. On the morning of 19 Oct, however, the enemy was unexpectedly inactive. He had suffered very heavy losses in the fighting on 18 Oct, and seems also to have had some difficulty in appreciating the situation accurately. An OO issued by Col IYASHIDA, Comd 79 Inf Regt, at 1800 hours 18 Oct stated:-

- "1. The enemy north of ARNDT PT (24 Bde) is retreating to FINSCHHAFEN. The enemy in front of II Bn (i.e. 2/28 Bn at KATIKA) is stubborn.
2. Main strength of the Regt will advance to the area south of KATIKA and demolish the retreating enemy."

After withdrawal of 2/28 Bn from KATIKA by 24 Bde at 1600 hours which was effected without interference, a further operation order was issued by 79 Inf Regt, timed 2300 hours 18 Oct:-

- "1. The night attack on the KATIKA position was successful with great fighting of the front line units, and captured at 2000 hours.
2. 79 Inf Regt will mop up the SONG and ARNDT PT area as already planned. A portion will secure firmly ARNDT PT and KATIKA against the enemies in the direction of HELDSBACH. The main strength will be concentrated one kilo NW and make preparations for the future attack."

The main strength was to be assembled and reorganised NW of KATIKA for a final assault on HELDSBACH and subsequent advance to FINSCHHAFEN. Then for three days the enemy failed to attempt to follow up effectively what success he had gained, at considerable cost on 18 Oct.

Comd 9 Aust Div now fixed the interbde boundary, incl to 24 Bde, as R SIKI, and 24 Bde was ordered while still holding area NORTH HILL-SCARLET BEACH to re-establish contact with contact with 20 Bde and drive the enemy from the SIKI COVE-KATIKA area. Accordingly Comd 24 Bde ordered 2/28 Bn to recapture the high ground 200 yards west of KATIKA with two coys and to patrol south to R SIKI to contact 2/18 Bn. At 1600 hours the two coys with heavy mortar support, succeeded in reaching their objective, routing the enemy who attempted to oppose them, and dug in in good positions on the spur. The enemy pocket between KATIKA and the sea was thus almost completely enclosed.

The night 19/20 Oct was quiet, and again on 20 Oct the enemy remained inactive, thus allowing our counter measures and reorganisation to proceed unhindered. 26 Bde arrived safely in LANGEMAR BAY during the night, and arrangements were made to ferry the troops forward in ESB craft to LAUNCH JETTY on 20 and 21 Oct. Meanwhile, an attempt by another coy 2/28 Bn to drive the enemy from SIKI COVE area and contact 2/13 Bn, was unsuccessful owing to stubborn enemy resistance; however, in the afternoon, a fighting patrol 2/28 Bn did reach R SIKI south of KATIKA, contacted 2/13 Bn and returned laying sig cable. Line communication between Div HQ and 24 Bde was thus re-established.

Reorganisation

The following orders were issued by the Div Comd for 21 and 22 Oct:-

- (a) One bn 24 Bde (2/25 Bn nominated) to come into div reserve area R QUOJA.

- (b) 2/32 Bn to move by sea to SCARLET BEACH as soon as aircraft were available, and to revert under command 24/3 Bde.
- (c) All elements 2/3 Pnr Bn in 20 and 24 Bde areas to remain, as soon as relieved, to FINSCHAFEN.
- (d) On arrival 2/3 Pnr Bn at FINSCHAFEN, two coys 2/15 Bn in div reserve at KAKAKOG to revert to comd 20 Bde and re-join 2/15 Bn on SATELBERG road.
- (e) 20 Bde less one bn to relieve 2/15 Bn and take over the sector from exclusive SIKI COVE to inclusive beach on SATELBERG road north of HELESBACH.
- (f) On relief of 2/15 Bn by 24 and 25 Bdes to make and execute full plan to eliminate enemy from KATIKA - SIKI COVE pocket, and to advance their FDLs to a general line west of the main coast road.

The gap which still existed between the 24 Bde perimeter and the two coys 2/28 Bn on the KATIKA spur was closed on 21 Oct by B Coy 2/32 Bn on arrival at SCARLET BEACH by sea. The only escape route then remaining to the enemy at SIKI COVE lay along the head of the R SIKI itself. Through but 20 and 21 Oct the enemy pocket, whose strength was estimated at 300, was pounded by arty and mortars and ceaselessly slipped and harassed with MGs and rifles from both north (2/28 Bn) and south (2/15 Bn). During the night 21/22 Oct the position was evacuated, the remnants withdrawing by the difficult route along the R SIKI; 2/28 Bn patrols next morning found 80 enemy dead and much equipment abandoned in the area.

On 20 Bde sector, the enemy force astride the SATELBERG road had been strongly reinforced and was well dug in on a small feature overlooking the track. 2/17 being already in contact with enemy parties to the west and north of its positions was unable to spare troops to attack eastwards and reopen the track. The enemy position was consistently mortared from both east and west, and heavily shelled with several regimental concentrations, but an attempt by D Coy 2/3 Pnr Bn from the east to clear the position was unsuccessful. 2/15 Bn were patrolling aggressively with some success against enemy posts to the north of KATIKA. Meanwhile arrangements had been made for C Sqn 1 Aust Lk Bn to be brought forward from MOROBI in three LSTs, and the Sqn arrived in LANGEMAK BAY night 20/21 Oct. Two troops were allotted a defensive role south of LANGEMAK BAY in TIMBULUM PLANTATION. The remainder were moved in LCMs to KIRAM BEACH thence to near POLA.

The Sqn was in Div reserve.

Final Enemy Attacks, 1

The two coys 2/28 Bn west of KATIKA had been attacked repeatedly and unsuccessfully between 19 and 21 Oct, by small parties of enemy, but in general the enemy had allowed three days to pass without any major move, while our forces, now reorganised and reinforced, had regained the initiative. When the enemy at length resumed his attacks on 22 Oct, our troops were well able to deal with them, and they were to prove a complete and costly failure.

On 22 Oct, in accordance with the Div Comd's orders, 2/28 Bn advanced their FDLg astride KATIKA track westward for 500 yards, thus gaining greater depth from SCARLET BEACH and the main coastal track. The enemy (8 Coy 79 Inf Regt) offered some opposition but was quickly overcome. There is evidence that this move dislocated the enemy's plans for an attack on "enemy positions near the boat landing point", (i.e. SCARLET BEACH) by III Bn 79 Inf Regt. A fresh operation order issued later on 22 Oct ordered: "III Bn will attack the enemy in front of 8 Coy (i.e. 2/28 Bn) before attacking the enemy boat landing point". The attack was to begin about dusk.

At 1945 hrs 22 Oct, under cover of MG fire, the enemy strongly attacked 2/28 Bn positions astride KATIKA track. The first assault was a charge in mass strait on down the track, which was met by concentrated fire from arty, mortars and MGs, and repulsed with heavy casualties. After this setback the enemy attempted for several hours a series of infiltrating attacks, all of which failed in the face of inf small arms fire and grenades. Our arty and mortars consistently pounded probable enemy assembly areas and lines of approach, and by midnight the enemy attacks had ceased, and he spent the remainder of the night getting away his wounded and some of his dead.

By this time, the enemy's appreciation of the situation had substantially altered. At 1700 hrs 22 Oct, Comd 20 Div issued an operation order, which read :-

- "1. The enemy is gradually increasing his strength in ARNDT PT area. The enemy has increased his strength in R SONG area. They have their eyes towards WALEO. A portion of the enemy in KUMAWA area is advancing towards SISI - SATELBERG HEIGHTS. The enemy is still constructing a position running east - west to ARNDT PT and HELDSMACH.
2. HAYASHIDA Butai (79 Inf Regt) will attack the enemy in the east of KATIKA at daybreak of the 23rd and secure firmly the line. From 1000 hrs execute an attack on the enemy constructing the position. Direct the main strength to the right flank and attack."
3. Other Butais will continue their present duty".

By this time 2 and 3 Coys of I Bn 79 Inf Regt (presumed to have been in div reserve) had been brought into the battle. But in spite of the orders given above there was no further sign of offensive action by the enemy until the evening of 23 Oct.

During the day, 24 Bde front was readjusted. 2/43 Bn was made responsible for the area north of R SONG, inclusive NORTH HILL; 2/28 Bn occupied a sector extending 1000 yds south from R SONG and lining on the left with 2/32 Bn, who held from inclusive KATIKA track south to SISI, where a junction point was established with 20 Bde (2/48 Bn). These moves had scarcely been completed and the position prepared for defence when the enemy returned to the attack.

At 1800 hrs, the attack developed against 2/32 Bn astride and north of the KATIKA track. As expected, the enemy made no change either in his tactics or in his line of approach, and once again the only support came from heavy MG fire. By this time, our own fire power in this area had been greatly strengthened, especially in mortars and MGs, and our arty had effectively registered the new defensive fire tasks; with the result that enemy casualties were particularly heavy. Nevertheless he persisted in a series of attacks of varying intensity most of the night: none had the slightest success. By this time the enemy's confidence had waned. In the operation order of II Bn 79 Inf Regt for its attack on 24 Oct the intention was rather differently expressed as: "Bn will do its utmost to try and take these positions".

On 24 Oct, and during night 24/25 Oct the enemy persistently attacked in the direction of KATIKA from the west and NW. Initially, these attacks were estimated to be at bn strength: later they were reduced to one and two coy scale. In all cases the intensity of our arty and mortar fire, supplemented by inf small arms, was too much for the attackers.

During the night 24/25 Oct, the enemy brought a 75mm gun up along the KATIKA track to a position 70 yds from our FDLs. In the morning it was seen and promptly knocked out by Inf 2 pr (brought forward for the purpose), after our MGS had killed a series of enemy gunners attempting to man the gun.

The enemy remained in close contact on 24 Bde front during 25 Oct, but his positions were under constant heavy fire from arty, mortars and MGS; and that night he finally gave up this attempt to recapture FINSCHAFEN, broke off close contact, and began to withdraw westward the way he had come.

On 26 and 27 Oct, both 24 and 26 Bdes pushed their FDLs further west to ground well suited to defence, giving a depth of more than 1200 yds from KATIKA and SCARLET BEACH. 26 Bde area was extended to include KATIKA track and this allowed 26 Bde to produce more adequate bn and bde reserves. Under instructions from Div HQ, a solid defence line was constructed in depth. Lines of visibility and fire were cut, well dug positions with head cover were prepared, trip wires and booby traps were laid. Standing patrols were established on all likely approaches. The dispositions of our troops at the end of the battle on 28 Oct are shown on map Appx "C".

Meanwhile, strong fighting patrols were out each day on the whole front, with orders to locate and attack the retreating enemy. The patrol policy laid down by the Div Comd was that the enemy was not to be allowed to dig in, but was to be constantly harried, particularly with arty and mortars and forced, mainly by the use of fire power to abandon each new position. For this purpose, FOCs were attached to each patrol with communication by both assault cable and wireless to the guns, and enemy positions located were very effectively shelled. On every occasion the enemy were compelled to withdraw. Numerous small encounters also ensued between our fighting patrols and groups of enemy, in which the enemy lost heavily. Gradually the enemy became more difficult to find, and by 29 Oct, none remained in the whole area held by 9 Aust Div before the battle began, except the strong pocket of about one coy, astride the SATELBERG road in rear of 2/17 Bn.

Enemy losses in this counter offensive had been heavy. Known Jap dead counted by our troops amounted to 679. Many more had been killed by arty and mortar fire, others were dragged away at night and buried by their comrades, many were never discovered. Enemy wounded must also have been high and a conservative estimate of enemy battle casualties would be 1500. The bulk of the casualties had fallen on the newly arrived formation, 79 Inf Regt, whose II and III Bns suffered severely, but two coys of I Bn, the Div encls and arty also shared in the losses. Enemy equipment losses were less substantial, but one 75mm gun and numerous LMGs, mortars and rifles and items of general equipment were captured. Our own casualties were, in proportion, light: the Div total 16 - 28 Oct being:-

<u>Killed</u>	<u>Wounded</u>	<u>Missing</u>	<u>Total</u>
Offrs OR	Offrs OR	Offrs OR	Offrs OR
3 46	4 175	nil	7 221

Maintenance

The principal change in the supply and maintenance situation during this phase was that US Navy LCTs were brought into use for the resupply of FINSCHAFEN. In spite of strong representations, however they refused to beach at KEDAH, and were unloaded at GODOVA BEACH on the south side of LARGELAK BAY. This necessitated ESB small craft being taken off the run to LAE in order to ferry supplies from GODOVA forward to KEDAH and LAUNCH JETTY.

This also meant that stores were handled five times before reaching the Div dumps - a serious waste of manpower. The provision of labour for handling stores was a great difficulty throughout the campaign, and at periods large numbers of front line troops were engaged on work on the beaches and in the dump areas. At this stage however calls for labour were moderate, and were met by the allotment of dets of 22 Bn, 2/2 MG Bn and later 2/3 Pnr Bn.

Maintenance during the battle was not interrupted. When 24 Bde was isolated by land, ESB craft continued to run supplies to SCARLET BEACH and to evacuate casualties, though sometimes under enemy LMG fire from SIKI COVE. The engns were working hard to build the coastal track as a 3 ton all-weather road, but meanwhile the track was rough, and muddy, and in wet weather, passable only to jeeps. The mainstay of the maintenance organisation was the ESB craft running supplies to LAUNCH JETTY where the Div dumps were situated, whence a good track ran through HELDSBACH PLANTATION to enable delivery to forward units by jeep.

During this period also BASE SUB AREA units began to arrive in FINSCHHAFEN and come under command 9 Aust Div. HQ Base Sub Area staff also arrived gradually, and began to assume control of the Base installations already planned and developed by 9 Aust Div.

PHASE III

REORGANISATION AND PREPARATION FOR OUR OFFENSIVE

29 OCT - 15 NOV.

The defeat of the enemy's counter-offensive now enabled the completion of plans and preparations for carrying out the Div Comd's intention of seizing the GUSIKA - WAREO ridge. The responsibility for the seaward and landward protection of FINSCHHAFEN Base remained a handicap to offensive operations, especially when our advance should take our troops out of the FINSCHHAFEN area altogether, and the Div Comd had already requested the allotment of additional troops (one bde inf, one fd regt, one MG bn, Tk A bty) for the protection of and working the Base, in order to free the major part of 9 Aust Div for offensive operations northward. On 29 Oct, 2 Aust Corps OO No 2 was issued, setting out the intention of 2 Aust Corps as follows :-

- (a) To clear the enemy from the FINSCHHAFEN area.
- (b) To establish control of the east coast of the HUON PENINSULA.
- (c) To consolidate 7 Aust Div positions in MARKHAM and RAMU VALLEYS.

The tasks allotted to 9 Aust Div were :-

- (a) To protect FINSCHHAFEN including the DREGER HARBOUR airstrip area.
- (b) To conduct offensive operations to clear the enemy forces from the FINSCHHAFEN area.
- (c) To establish control of the east coast of HUON PENINSULA as far as and including SIO.

In effect, there was thus no change in the role of 9 Aust Div from that previously set out in 1 Aust Corps OI No 6 of 5 Oct. A great change was however effected by the allotment of the following units to move to FINSCHHAFEN and come under Command 9 Aust Div :-

2/6 Aust Fd Regt
2/11 Aust Tk A Bty
Remainder 4 Aust Inf Bde incl 4 Aust Fd Arb
Additional 9 Aust Div troops from L&S.

9 Aust Div Plan

At two conferences held at HQ 9 Aust Div and HQ 20 Bde on 1 Nov the Div Comd outlined the next phase of operations. He gave his intention to resume the offensive as soon as possible, the time now being favourable since the enemy's counter-offensive had failed, and additional troops had arrived to provide more adequate seaward and landward protection of the vital rear areas. The son of MATILDAS and the additional fd regt also gave the Div more hitting power.

The immediate object was to be the capture of the high ground SATELBERG - PATANKO by 26 Bde, supported by all available Div resources, with a view to a subsequent advance to the GUSIKA - WAREO line. A Div OO would be issued giving the task in outline; 26 Bde was to proceed at once with recess for a detailed plan. Recce and indicated the possibility of using MATILDAS on SATELBERG rd, and 26 Bde would have tanks to support the attack. Training of inf cty with tanks to work out the new tactics required and the best means of mutual cooperation and control was to begin at once.

The Div Comd laid down several principles governing the employment of tanks:

- (a) They were to be used as a surprise weapon. Their forward move to concentration area to be concealed as far as possible.
- (b) They were to be given adequate cover from air observation as a precaution against bombing.
- (c) Tanks at all times were to move with inf protection against Jap demolition squads, etc.

Relief of 20 Bde by 26 Bde units was to proceed in stages as laid down by Div HQ. 20 Bde was to take over the central sector and with 24 Bde to continue the role of offensive patrolling, to drive the enemy still further back and distract his attention from 26 Bde preparations. In the course of this active patrolling, arty was to be used wherever possible to blast the enemy from his positions with result/economy in inf casualties. PIP were to be used for long range patrolling to collect information about the enemy rearward dispositions and movements.

24 Bde was also to be prepared to send one bn northward to the track GUSIKA - WAREO, if ordered by Div HQ, in order to cut this enemy supply line and threaten WAREO from the east. Recces and planning were to proceed for this purpose, but the decision to order the move would depend entirely on tactical developments in the near future.

/supplying

HQ 2 Aust Corps was arranging large-scale operations with aircraft, PT boats, etc., against the enemy maintenance system, his troops in FINSCHHAUSEN area. This was to begin about D minus 5 Day. By this time, considerable information had been collected about the enemy's rearward supply system. NAMBAKIWA was known to be his main forward base, where submarines from NEW BRITAIN and barges from MADAGASCAR discharged their cargoes. From this point supplies and troops proceeded south down the coast in barges to staging points at SIALUM, KANOMI, WALINGAI, WANDOKAI and LAKONA, or overland via the inland track KALASA - WAREO. A summary of air operations in support of 9 Aust Div, which were mainly directed against the enemy L of C, is given in Appx "F"; a similar summary of PT boat operations by CTG 70.1 US Navy is given in Appx "G".

Administrative Planning

Supply and maintenance preparations for the attack were to continue as rapidly as possible. The tracks to JIVEVANENG and KUMAWA were still only dry-weather jeep tracks, although the engrs were working to convert the SATELBERG road to an all-weather surface. This meant that large forward dumps of supplies and ammunition would be required, from which 26 Bde units could be supplied by carrier line if necessary, so that wet weather would not halt the attack by making the supply routes impossible to traffic. It was decided to build up reserve dumps at KUMAWA (20 days for 500) and JIVEVANENG (20 days for 2000) by jeeps and trailers as long as the fine weather held, and the dumps were in fact completed by 14 Nov. The number of native carriers in the area was extremely limited, only 250 being available for allotment to 26 Bde. Arrangements were however made by HQF to have 1000 natives flown down the MARKHAM valley to L.E.; hence they were despatched to FINSCHHAUSEN in ESB craft at the rate of about 200 every 2 days. Eventually 600 were allotted to 26 Bde for the operation - sufficient to carry for the whole Bde on a one-day turnaround. It was not expected that water would be readily available in the SATELBERG area, and almost every 2 gallon container in the Division was withdrawn and held filled at JIVEVANENG for onward movement by jeep and trailers, or by native carrier, as required by circumstances. On 1 Nov, there were 12000 rounds of 25pr ammunition

in FINSCHLAFEN, but stocks were increasing by 2,000 rounds (two LCM loads) from G BEACH per day, less daily expenditure (average at this time approximately 500 rounds), and by D Day a satisfactory reserve would be built up.

Reorganisation

The tasks of the Div engs in simultaneously building 3 ton roads in FINSCHLAFEN and northward to SCARLET BEACH to enable development of the Base Sub Area, and maintaining fair-weather tracks to KUMAWA and JIVEVANENG, was a heavy one especially since 2/7 Fd Coy was still under Comd 5 Aust Div at LAE, and was not released and moved forward to FINSCHLAFEN until 17 Nov. Two coys 2/3 Par Bn had already been allotted to assist RAE in road construction on 24 Oct. The balance of the bn could now be released from FINSCHLAFEN area by the arrival of 4 Bde units, and the whole unit was placed under the direction of CRE for work on the supply routes, with the proviso that at all times they were to be on two hours notice to resume an operational role.

The arrival of 2/11 Aust Tk A Bty allowed the coast defence to be developed further; in addition to their 16 x 5 pr guns, the Bty also manned 16 inf 2 prs, and the guns were sited in pairs (one 6 pr and one 2 pr) at points on the coast from both incl SCARLET BEACH - LANGEMAK BAY. Some 40mm light AA guns were withdrawn from the beaches and allotted to the AA protection of 2/5 Fd Regt, and the system of coast watching and challenging stations was strengthened.

Between 30 Oct - 3 Nov the remainder of 4 Bde arrived by small craft from LAE. 22 Bn reverted to comd 4 Bde which was made responsible for the seaward and landward protection of area FINSCHLAFEN - LANGEMAK BAY, and had in support for this task three tp 1 Tk Bn, one tp 2/12 Fd Regt, one Bty 2/6 Fd Regt, D Coy 2/2 MG Bn and all the RAA coast defence and coast watching deta in the area. In the event, however, a principal share fell on 4 Bde of the provision of labour to unload ships on GODOWA BEACH and KEDAM. Demands were heavy, and in the absence of any considerable labour unit available to FINSCH Base Sub Area, not less than 1½ bns were continually engaged on this work. The subject is dealt with more fully in para on Maintenance 5 pages on.

Preliminary Moves

An essential preliminary to the inter-bde relief and the building up of reserve dumps at JIVEVANENG was the elimination of the enemy pocket astride the SATELBERG rd east of the village. This enemy position was by now very deeply dug in and had withstood almost continual hammering by arty and mortars since 18 Oct. On 30 Oct, 20 Bde began a "squeezing" process, 2/17 Bn exerting pressure and inching forward from the west, 2/18 Bn from the east. The enemy resisted strongly and fierce fighting resulted for 4 days in country made extremely difficult by precipices and thick bamboo. On night 2/3 Nov, however, the enemy remnants, being almost surrounded, evacuated the position, leaving many dead and much equipment. 2/17 Bn then attacked enemy positions north of JIVEVANENG and after bitter resistance drove the enemy out and cleared the whole area down to R SIKI.

The relief of 20 Bde by 26 Bde was completed without incident by 6 Nov and on 7 Nov the LUTILDAS began to move up to their assembly area near JIVEVANENG. They were ferried forward in LCMs from KEDAM to LAUNCH JETTY, under tarpaulins, and great precautions were taken to keep their presence hidden from the enemy. Sections of SATELBERG rd which were under enemy observation from SATELBERG HEIGHTS were traversed at night and the noise of the tanks' approach was covered by arty fire. The tanks were unable to climb several steep sections of the track made slippery by rain, but RAE D5 tractors accompanied them and successfully towed them through the obstacle,

By 9 Nov, the 9 MATILDAS were in position under cover in their assembly area. Intensive reces by inf patrols, and by arty, tank and inf officers, were proceeding on the whole 26 Bde front to locate the enemy positions, determine routes of approach, and maintain ascerancy forward of our positions to prevent enemy reces.

Meanwhile 24 Bde had been pushing patrols westward from their SCARLET BEACH perimeter without contact. Extensive patrolling to the north located enemy in the coconuts at BONGA and on PINO HILL, the feature 1 mile north of NORTH HILL. A very successful OP was established by a 2/43 Bn det with a few PIB, beside the GUSIKA - WAREO track, which counted all enemy moving both ways, and sent back regular detailed reports. It became clear that the enemy was sending out large parties to the coast, presumably for carrying in supplies, and numerous large working parties were seen toiling up the steep slopes towards WAREO carrying ammunition and supplies. Most were unarmed, but it was decided not to lay any ambush for the present, in view of the value of the information being obtained, as it would probably result in denying to us the future use of the OP.

The final Div Plan for the attack was as follows. 26 Bde was to capture the high ground running east and west through SATELBERG and exploit towards WAREO, beginning on a D Day to be notified by HQ 9 Aust Div. For the operation, C Tr Sqn less three tps (9 MATILDAS), 2/12 Fd Regt less one bty, 2/13 Fd Coy and B Coy 2/2 MG Bn were placed in support 26 Bde. 20 and 24 Bdes were to continue their present role of very active patrolling, and were to harass and try to distract the enemy by all possible means. 20 Bde was given responsibility for the defence of SATELBERG rd to exclude JIVEYANENG, so as to release 26 Bde as far as possible for offensive operations. 4 Bde in addition to defending FINSCHLAFEN was to patrol offensively to the west, and as a further diversion, to locate and harass the enemy southern flank area GURUNKOR - KWEMBUNG - MORENG. On D minus 1 Day 2/4 Cav Sqn was to come under comd 26 Bde, to take over KUMAWA area and free the whole 2/23 Bn for offensive operations.

For the purpose both of creating a strong diversion and of protecting the eastern flank of 26 Bde advance, 20 Bde was ordered to use one coy on D Day to move forward into GARABOW area and establish a base from which to patrol actively, particularly in the direction of FIOR and the R SONG crossing used by the enemy.

2/6 Fd Regt less 56 Bty had now arrived in the area and the Div arty was redistributed. At the time the attack began the arty plan was:-

2/2 Fd Regt (less one bty) in support 26 Bde
24 Bty 2/12 Fd Regt in support 24 Bde
11 Bty 2/6 Fd Regt in support 20 Bde
12 Bty 2/6 Fd Regt in support 4 Bde

In addition, the two btys supporting 20 and 24 Bdes were to make necessary preparations and be prepared to shoot in 26 Bde sector if required.

All preparations for the attack having been completed, 17 Nov was appointed by the Div Comd as D Day.

Enemy Situation and Intentions

In spite of the severe losses suffered in his counter offensive, which reduced most of his bns below half strength, and in spite of serious supply difficulties, the enemy had not abandoned his object of retaking FINSCHLAFEN. Reinforcements had arrived, consisting of II Bn 238 Regt from NIMBARIWA.

At the end of Oct, Cord 18 Army (Lt Gen ADACHI) visited SATELBERG, remaining there until 3 Nov. As a result of his visit, 20 Div issued new orders on 3 Nov :

1. The enemy in the FINSCHHAFEN area, approximately the size of a div and a half appears to consist mainly of 9th Aust Div. They have secured FINSCHHAFEN, LANGEMAK BAY and also HELDSBACH AIRFIELD. It appears as if they are planning to control the DAMPIER STRAIT. Their front line runs along both sides R SONG. It is certain that they have secured JIVEVANENG, KUMAWA and BUTAWENG.

The enemy at present is supplying its position and at the same time is trying to remove the strong pressure of HAYASHIDA Butai (79 Inf Regt) north of JIVEVANENG.

2. 20 Div, with the object of capturing FINSCHHAFEN, will attack locally and gradually annihilate the enemy. In order to accomplish this, a powerful force (80 Inf Regt) must occupy SATELBERG HEIGHT quickly and make it secure. Distribute units in vital points in the rear to meet enemy landings and endeavour to protect the supply simultaneously. Main body (79 Inf Regt, Div HQ, Div Troops) will assemble at NONGORA -----"

At the time of 26 Bde attack, therefore, the enemy was disposed with 80 Inf Regt holding the SATELBERG area, with III Bn on the SATELBERG rd and II Bn on the spur running east from SATELBERG to HILL 2200, and a mixed force holding the west flank MORENG - MARARUO. II Bn 238 Regt was in GUSIKA area, and the "main force" of 79 Inf Regt (I and III Bns, at least) concentrated in NONGORA area. The purpose of this concentration, as will be shown later, was to launch a further counter offensive, which the enemy called "Operation No 2". HQ 20 Div moved to NONGORA area from SATELBERG on 10 Nov.

Maintenance

Maintenance problems were exceptionally difficult during this phase. Resupply of FINSCHHAFEN by naval craft was expected to cease on 15 Nov, when USASOS LAE was to assume responsibility, and meanwhile higher authority desired to build up stocks in the area to the maximum while naval vessels were still available, and large numbers of LSTs and LCs began to arrive at GODOWA BEACH. Heavy demands for labour to unload and handle the stores were inevitable, and the task fell principally on fighting units under Comd 9 Aust Div, especially 4 Bde. At one period 800 men by day and 400 by night were continuously employed on GODOWA and KEDAM BEACHES.

Simultaneously, the development of a large air base for Fifth Air Force, and of a Naval Base for PT boats, was begun in the DREGER HALBOUR area. All construction units, AA units, and administrative sets, with their personnel, vehicles, equipment and stores, were landed on GODOWA BEACH, from LSTs. The beach became chaotically overcrowded because of insufficient means to clear it, and heavy rain for several days turned TIMBULUM PLANTATION behind the beach into a quagmire. Vehicles had to be dragged off the beach by bulldozers and left in the mud behind. Gradually, however, roads were built to DREGER and the congestion slowly abated.

There was considerable doubt at this time as to the limits of the US and Aust Base Areas. After many delays and changes of plan, it was eventually decided that the Aust Base Area should extend from both incl LAUNCH JETTY - R SONG. This involved the clearance of Aust dumps from the area developed at FINSCHHAFEN to the new area, and the further use of 9 Aust Div small craft and vehicles, since no other transport was available to Base Sub Area.

Administrative units for the Aust Base Sub Area continued to arrive and gradually took over the Base installations. On 26 Nov FINSCHHAFEN Base Sub Area ceased to be under Ccmd 9 Aust Div and became directly responsible to NGF. Available resources did not permit the calls on the Div to provide administrative deta, transport and labour to cease entirely, and even in Jan the Div was still partly supplying itself by small craft from the Base dumps at LAUNCH JETTY.

PHASE FOUR

THE ATTACK

16 NOV - 12 DEC

26 Bde Plan

In outline, 26 Bde plan for the capture of SATELBERG provided for simultaneous advances by all three bns. The first intermediate objective was the dominating STEEPLE TREE feature (2600 ft) and the junction of SATELBERG rd and NW track from KUMAWA; patrolling and recce would then determine the best route for the final assault on SATELBERG. 2/48 Bn was to advance west on the axis of SATELBERG road supported by all the tanks; 2/23 Bn was to advance north from KUMAWA along both the NE and NW tracks and link with 2/48 Bn on the SATELBERG road; 2/24 Bn was to move NW from JIVEVANENG, cross R SIKI and seize the HILL 2200, thence exploiting west up the spur towards SATELBERG.

A preliminary operation, timed for D minus 1 day, was the capture by 2/48 Bn of the enemy outpost position on GREEN RIDGE and the securing of the track junction SATELBERG road - NE track from KUMAWA through SISI. This attack was successfully carried out on 16 Nov by two coys 2/48 Bn with heavy arty support. GREEN RIDGE was captured and the enemy garrison routed, numerous weapons and much equipment were captured. On the same day, as previously ordered, 2/4 Coy Sqd came under 26 Bde, and relieved 2/23 Bn at KUMAWA, thus releasing the whole bn for the attack; 2/24 Bn moved NW and secured a bridgehead over R SIKI in preparation for its attack on HILL 2200 next day. For the ultimate maintenance of 2/24 Bn, Div engrs had already begun the construction of a jeep track from KATIKA, following the track used by the enemy in his October counter-offensive. For some days, however, 2/24 Bn was to be maintained/native carriers from JIVEVANENG.

/by

Development of 26 Bde Attack

At 0700 hrs 17 Nov, the attack began with heavy arty, mortar and MMG concentrations on enemy positions, especially on COCONUT RIDGE. The tanks advanced with leading troops of 2/48 Bn and fierce fighting immediately developed astride SATELBERG rd. The use of tanks obviously came as a surprise to the enemy who had no effective counter at hand; nevertheless, the enemy resisted bitterly, frequently remaining in his defences until literally blasted out by the fire of the tanks. The advance was made slow as much by the nature of the terrain as by the enemy. The road ran along a narrow ridge covered in thick bamboo which made inf movement difficult and the locating of enemy positions a long and arduous task. Four days of strenuous fighting and steady advance, followed by a final assault, secured STEEPLE TREE HILL and 2/48 Bn linked with 2/23 Bn who had overcome strong enemy opposition on the move along the NW track from KUMAWA. The enemy had already tried various means of stopping the MATILDAS - 37mm guns firing AP and HE; 75mm regtl guns firing HE at point-blank range; tank mines, and three ditches dug across the track. None was successful. The gunfire failed to penetrate the tank armour, the mines exploded harmlessly, and the

tank ditches caused only slight delay while inf and tanks combined to reduce the enemy's covering defences by fire, and the engs prepared a crossing with a bulldozer. Enemy losses in personnel and equipment were heavy; our casualties owing principally to the use of tanks, were light, in spite of the great natural strength of the enemy's positions and his tenacity in defence.

This ended Phase I of 26 Bde attack. 2/24 Bn to the north had secured HILL 2200 after some fighting, but so far had had little success in pushing west along the spur towards SATELBERG, owing to strong enemy defences, thick bamboo, and precipitous slopes. Nevertheless their presence constituted a direct threat to the flank of the enemy positions on SATELBERG and the Div Comd allotted a further tp of tanks to 26 Bde for use on this flank. The MANILDAS were to move along the KATIKA track to HILL 2200, as soon as the engs had completed the jeep track. The tanks arrived just before the fall of SATELBERG, in time to take part on 25 Nov in the final assault by 2/24 Bn on the enemy positions in this area.

The progress of the 26 Bde attack is shown on Map. Appx D.

Development of Div Offensive

/one of

The Div Comd also struck at the enemy held ridge and track GUSIKA - WAREO, with the object not only of cutting / the enemy's supply routes, but also of securing ground from which an attack could be developed against WAREO from the east; and of securing the right flank of a thrust at WAREO in the centre NW through NONGORA. 24 Bde was accordingly ordered, on 18 Nov, whilst still holding NORTH HILL - SCARLET BEACH high ground west of KATIKA, to prepare to advance with one bn (2/32 Bn nominated) to secure high ground at PABU, a timbered knoll astride GUSIKA - WAREO track, and to control all tracks in the area as far west as the LAKES. Div engs were to construct a jeep track to follow 2/32 Bn as rapidly as possible; 2/7 Pd Coy, which had just arrived from LAE, being allotted in support 24 Bde for this purpose. Meanwhile 150 native carriers were allotted for the maintenance of the Bn. In the event of the Bn's L of C being cut, tentative arrangements were made for supply-dropping by aircraft.

24 Bde Attack on PABU

19 Nov was appointed by the Div Comd as D Day for the 24 Bde advance. The move was a complete success. 2/32 Bn less one coy moved forward under cover of jungle, captured PABU after overcoming slight enemy resistance, and prepared it as a defended area dominating the surrounding country and the enemy supply route from GUSIKA. On all sides the approaches to PABU lay up steep slopes covered with open kunai. The enemy were obviously completely surprised, and next day several large parties of enemy were ambushed on the track and almost completely annihilated. The enemy reacted strongly, and a determined attack was made against PABU from the NW at midday, but repulsed with heavy loss. One coy 2/32 Bn then began to exploit westwards towards the LAKES area, but encountered strong opposition. It is now known that this sudden strike by 2/32 Bn, besides embarrassing the enemy's supply, also anticipated and partly dislocated his plans for a powerful counter-attack to relieve the pressure on his SATELBERG garrison.

The Enemy Counter Attack

On 22 Nov the enemy launched a three-pronged counterattack on our positions north of R SONG and at the northern end of SCARLET BEACH. One force (II Bn 238 Regt less two coys) attacked southwards from BONGA along the coastal track. This attack was met and defeated by one coy 2/43 Bn with enemy casualties 80 killed; a second and heavier attack was launched from the NW by two bns 77 Inf Regt, with the object of reaching the mouth R SONG along the north bank and linking with the coastal attack. This attack was made in difficult country for movement and coordination; and after initial

dislocation by heavy arty and mortar fire, never developed into a powerful concerted assault as planned. Nevertheless heavy fighting developed to the west of NORTH HILL, along the north bank R SONG and near the B/32 Bn jeep track, which the enemy had now cut, during the day, and it was not until the evening, when one coy 2/32 Bn made a well timed counterattack, that the enemy was finally defeated. A third enemy group crossed R SONG and attempted to reach SCARLET BEACH from the west, but were intercepted by patrols and harassed by arty fire, and finally driven off by heavy mortar fire from 2/28 Bn perimeter south of R SONG. On 23 Nov strong patrols, usually accompanied by FOOs, pursued and attacked the retreating Japs and engaged them with arty concentrations wherever located. Many dead were counted and much abandoned equipment were taken and 1200 enemy foxholes were found at the scene of the fighting. The enemy suffered very severely in men and equipment in this counterattack which ended in complete failure.

Capture of SATELBERG

While the enemy counterattack was being launched and defeated north of R SONG, 26 Bde had been pressing on towards SATELBERG. STEEPLE TREE HILL proved to be the main enemy defensive position on the SATELBERG rd, and Comd 25 Bde now decided to attack SATELBERG along the axis of the road, 2/48 Bn and the tanks leading, followed by 2/23 Bn. 2/24 Bn was to continue to exert pressure and try to advance and threaten the eastern flank of SATELBERG HEIGHTS.

B/48 Bn made rapid progress, surprising and routing several enemy groups in half-dug positions along the road, and by 22 Nov had reached the southern slopes of the SATELBERG feature itself, about 600 yards in a direct line from the summit. Here the enemy was again encountered in strength, and it was found that a tank had been completely destroyed the road and prevented further advances by the tanks. A halt was called while strong patrols probed the enemy positions and preparations were made for the final assault. The enemy was heavily engaged day and night by arty, mortars and AMGs. The 26 Bde plan was for 2/48 Bn to attack directly uphill towards the eastern end of the SATELBERG feature and the village, and 2/23 Bn to swing out westwards and seize the 3200 feature to the north-west. On 24 Nov the advance was resumed with heavy arty and mortar support and fierce fighting continued all day. By nightfall, elements of 2/48 Bn had outflanked the enemy to the east and were within 150 yards of the summit, while 2/23 Bn had made substantial progress in heavy going towards its objective, after repulsing three strong counterattacks. 2/4 Cav Sqn patrols reported the enemy on the west flank had withdrawn northwards from MORENG.

On 25 Nov the final attack of SATELBERG HEIGHTS was made by the three bns from the east, south and SW; enemy rearguards were routed and by 1300 hours the whole feature was in our hands. B/24 Bn occupied PAJANKO finding much abandoned equipment and B/4 Cav Sqn reached MARANKO where strong defences had been vacated.

Preparations to Attack WAREO

The next stage was to be the capture of the line GUSIKA - WAREO. 24 Bde was now ordered to secure GUSIKA and gain control of the area as far west as the LAKES, while 26 Bde was to exploit from SATELBERG north towards WAREO. Much depended on the progress of these moves. Both moves, apart from enemy resistance, were faced with extremely difficult country - especially the precipitous valley of R SONG which lay across 26 Bde axis - and plans were also prepared for 20 Bde to drive on WAREO in the centre NW through NONGORA.

Between 20 - 25 Nov, 20 Bde was concentrated in the area NW of KATIKA, and on 25 Nov a warning order was issued to 20 Bde to be prepared to advance and capture NONGORA area and the high ground to the north eastward track GUSIKA - WAREO, known as XIAS HILLS, with a

view to exploiting towards WAREO. Additional troops to be placed in support 20 Bde were 2/6 Pz Regt, 2/8 Pz Coy less one pl, 11 Pz C Coy PIB, Medical and AASC dets. Administrative planning for the operation was to be based on the construction of a jeep track before D Day along the south bank of R SONG for about 2500 yds, and the establishment of a forward base dump of supplies and ammunition at the jeephead. Subsequent maintenance was to be by native portage from the forward dump, for which purpose 600 natives were allotted. This would be supplemented by air dropping if necessary.

Development of 24 Bde and 26 Bde Advances

The enemy counterattack north of R SONG had cut communications with 2/32 Bn at PABU, though wireless contact was maintained. The native carrier line was unable to get through because of enemy elements in the area, and the Bn was maintained for several days by air dropping. Plans were now prepared to capture PINO HILL and open an L of C to PABU further to the east. 2/32 Bn meanwhile had ambushed several more parties of enemy and inflicted severe casualties, but was itself taking casualties from the direct fire of several enemy 75mm guns; on 24 Nov, one coy 2/32 Bn returned from PABU to NORTH HILL carrying the wounded.

On 26 Nov, at 0600 hrs, the enemy launched a very determined attack on PABU from the SW and NW. Documents captured later showed that this was planned as an attack from three directions to reopen the track to GUSIKA. Arty fire broke up the thrust from the east before it developed, but heavy fighting lasting 2½ hrs took place to the SW and NW before the enemy was finally repulsed with heavy casualties and the attack collapsed.

On the same day, at 0900 hrs, PINO HILL was successfully assaulted by two coys 2/32 Bn supported by three MATILDAS and heavy arty and mortar concentrations on the objective. On this occasion, the tanks were able to move in the open kunai where they had freedom of manoeuvre, and the inf moved along the jungle fringes, whence they were still able to give effective close protection to the tanks. A safe L of C was immediately opened to PABU for the movement of native carriers and the evacuation of wounded.

The next phase of 24 Bde operations was the securing of the right flank to the sea, by the capture of GUSIKA. This operation was carried out 27 - 29 Nov by 2/28 Bn, with one tp of MATILDAS in support, moving along the axis of the coastal track (see Map Appx D): The track was narrow and muddy, running through thick jungle, and intersected by numerous creeks; most of which were temporary tank obstacles. The inf therefore led the advance, followed by a pl of engs with a bulldozer, to construct creek crossings for the tanks and jeeps. When the inf struck solid opposition, they shelled and mortared the enemy and waited for the tanks to come forward. An inf assault, supported by the tanks, was invariably decisive, and in two days, 2/28 Bn had captured GUSIKA, reducing en route a series of enemy positions astride the track. 24 Bde was now ready to turn west and attack towards WAREO itself.

Meanwhile, 26 Bde had been making rapid progress in their exploitation north from SATELBERG. An attempt by an enemy force to hold the R SONG crossing at the suspension bridge NE of PIOR was broken by 2/23 Bn who crossed the river lower down on 30 Nov, and then proceeded to encircle and wipe out the whole enemy garrison. On 1 Dec KUANKO village was occupied. The principal problem of 26 Bde at this stage was maintenance. In spite of great exertions by the Div engs with bulldozers and a coy of 2/3 Pz Bn assisting, jeephead in dry weather had still only reached PALANKO, and in wet weather the whole route almost as far back as KATIKA became impassable, and jeeps had to be towed through by RAE tracked tractors. From PALANKO forward to KUANKO was a 3 day turn-round over very steep country, and as all the natives which could be spared for 26 Bde were insufficient, the whole of 2/24 Bn was engaged in carrying for 2/23 Bn. 2/48 Bn was holding the SATELBERG area, and 2/4 Cav Son patrolling wide

to the west from KIRARUO.

In view of the progress being made on the 24 and 26 Bde sectors, the Div Comd decided that it would not be necessary to commit whole of 20 Bde to a direct attack on WAREO via NONGORA. In order to confuse the enemy, and prevent concentration of his reserves, he ordered that one bn (2/15 Bn nominated) develop a third threat to WAREO by advancing to NONGORA, and employ strong fighting patrols forward against enemy positions. This was done on 1 Dec and 2/15 Bn continued to exert pressure in this area by active fighting patrols until the fall of WAREO on 8 Dec.

4 Bde Advance North of GUSIKA

Preparations were now made to launch 4 Bde in a drive northwards along the coast from GUSIKA. It was expected that this thrust, by threatening the enemy's coastal supply line, would force him to abandon the whole WAREO position; and in the event, this intention was realised. A warning order was issued on 29 Nov to 4 Bde to make plans for this advance, for which the following troops would be placed under command:

7 MATILDAS C Sqn Tks
9 Pl C Coy PIB
Dets AASC, Medical, 532 Regt 2 ESB, ANGAU

and in support 2/6 Fd Regt
2/7 Fd Coy.

The objective given 4 Bde was the high ground at FORTIFICATION PT. The advance was to be made by bounds from one beach maintenance area to another, only two of which were to be in use concurrently, and which 4 Bde was to protect until relinquished.

Dispositions were reorganised to provide for striking up the coast with 4 and 20 Bdes, while 24 and 26 Bdes remained to protect the FINSCHHAGEN area. The inter-bde boundary incl to 24 Bde was fixed as KEAS HILLS - NONGORA track. Both bdes were ordered to complete the capture of GUSIKA - WAREO line and then to organise their sectors for defence, to patrol actively all tracks leading into their areas and establish standing patrols backed by reserves in depth on all likely lines of enemy approach. On D Day 20 Bde was to come into Div reserve in area SCARLET BEACH - NONGORA, with one bn on 2 hours notice, and the rest of the bde on 6 hours notice, to follow 4 Bde in the coastal advance.

The concentration of 4 Bde in GUSIKA area was completed by 3 Dec, and 5 Dec was appointed by the Div Comd as D Day. "Q" required to develop the small beach at the mouth R KALUENG (GUSIKA) as an initial maintenance area for the advance; this involved engr work in the removal of underwater and landward obstacles. It was also necessary if tanks and jeeps were not to be left behind at the outset to construct a vehicle crossing of the steep-sided R KALUENG before D Day. On 3 Dec, therefore, 22 Bn crossed the river and secured a bridgehead within which the engr could work with bulldozers on the approaches and construct a log bridge. Strong enemy defences consisting of solid bunkers protected by a minefield, were located about 500 yds south of the LAGOON.

On 5 Dec the advance began. Again, the tanks moved in rear of the leading Inf, to be called forward when strong opposition was encountered. One pl of engr with a bulldozer preceded the tanks to make crossings over the numerous watercourse obstacles. The tanks proceeded to the edge of the first minefield, and by directing heavy fire at the bunkers assisted 29/46 Bn to break through the position. Thereafter, however, for some days the tanks were unable to catch up with the advance, because the enemy produced an effective delaying device in the shape of tank mines boosted with large prepared

charges of picric acid, buried deep in the ground. Neither mine detectors nor prodding with bayonets was successful in locating them, and several tanks and bulldozers had tracks blown off, and one tank was irreparably damaged. The only solution was to cut a new track.

Capture of GUSIKA - WAREO Line

On 9 Dec, 26 Bde captured WAREO, after a long outflanking movement by 2/24 Bn had secured PEAK HILL and dislodged the enemy from the difficult approach north of KUANKO. The same day 24 Bde which had been moving west up the steep jungle track towards WAREO, and driving the enemy from his positions by successive encircling attacks, captured XMAS HILLS and linked with 2/15 Bn patrols from NONORA. Both bdes continued their pressure on enemy rearguards covering the enemy withdrawal to the coast at LAKONA via the inland track running NE from WAREO and in spite of fierce enemy resistance on several razorback ridges, opened the GUSIKA - WAREO track on 12 Dec.

Development of Coastal Advance

The advance of 4 Bde continued steadily, under the heaviest arty support of the campaign (4700 rounds fired in one day). The enemy resisted strongly, mainly at creek crossings in the coastal jungle, but heavy arty and mortar fire blasted him out, and 4 Bde made continual encircling and by-passing attacks, which invariably forced the enemy to withdraw. Further, the enemy did not occupy the commanding ground to the west, which was covered mainly with open kunai, and a force moving along this high ground was continually outflanking his positions near the coast.

20 Bde followed close behind 4 Bde, with the responsibility of protecting the left flank and rear of the leading bde, by means of inf patrols moving on the high ground, and FIB patrolling in depth along the tracks leading inland; and of taking over the protection of the rear beachhead as new maintenance beachheads were developed forward.

On 13 Dec, the MATILDAS again demonstrated their value at LAKONA. 22 Bn on 14 Dec had surrounded a party of about 100 Japs in the coconuts at CAPE SIBIDA: the enemy resisted desperately for two days and caused 60 casualties to three attacking inf coys. Late in the evening, 5 MATILDAS, which had been held up at creek crossings, arrived and immediately attacked with one inf coy. Within an hour the entire position was overrun, the enemy force wiped out with the exception of a few who threw themselves over the cliffs of CAPE SIBIDA. Casualties to the attacking inf were 6 wounded, to the tanks, nil.

The enemy was by now in full retreat, but his rearguards continued to fight stubbornly. By 20 Dec, however, 4 Bde with powerful support by tanks and arty, had broken enemy resistance in R MASAWING area and occupied its objective - the high ground at FORTIFICATION PT. 20 Bde, which had been following 4 Bde in div reserve now prepared to move through and take up the pursuit.

Maintenance

Throughout the advance of 4 Bde the supply and maintenance organisation had worked as originally planned. ESB amphibious scouts moved with the leading troops and made a landward recce of each beach as it was secured. The 533 Regt 2 ESB recce craft was then called forward to make a seaward recce of a parently suitable

beaches. Suitable beaches were then selected and a beachhead group was brought in by craft, consisting of AASC, Medical and ESB detachments, to set up a DID, beach evacuating post, and other administration installations. 4 and 26 Bdes were maintained from successive beachheads. Div engs successfully kept the jeep track up with the leading inf, but subunits moving on the high ground to the west were supplied by native carriers. COCONUT, KILIGIA, LAKONA and MASAWENG BEACHES were all used, the leading bde closing up its beach dets from the rearward beach as the advance went on.

PHASE FIVE

THE PURSUIT

21 Dec 43 - 15 Jan 44

Between 20 - 26 Dec, a further reorganisation took place, to allow the advance to be continued with two bdes (20 and 26) leaving 24 Bde to hold area GUSIKA - WAREO - SATELBERG with responsibility for the area south to LANGEMAK BAY, and 4 Bde to hold FORTIFICATION PT - R MASAWENG area. 24 Bde relieved 26 Bde in the SATELBERG - WAREO and the latter moved down to the coast to be ferried forward in draft to MASAWENG.

On 21 Dec, 20 Bde took up the pursuit of the retreating enemy; from this point the advance proceeded rapidly in successive stages laid down by Div HQ, until the capture of SIO on 16 Jan 44. 20 Bde, leading, concentrated its main attention on the coastal strip and was responsible for the defence of beachheads in its area. 26 Bde, moving close behind in immediate div reserve was responsible for protecting the rear of 20 Bde and the left flank, by means of inf patrols moving from the coast by lateral tracks to the main inland track ZAGAHEMI - KILISA, thence searching the track for some distance and returning to the coast. FIB were used on deep inland patrols and made continuous coverage of the main inland track. 26 Bde was also responsible for the protection of the rear beachheads in its sector, assisted by ESB and RAM dets manning T.A. guns. The left rear of the advance was covered by 4 Bde patrolling the inland area north of R MASAWENG, linking at HOMPUA with 2/4 Cav Sqn patrols from WAREO under command of 24 Bde, which was made responsible for patrolling south of R MASAWENG.

The successive objectives set 20 Bde by Div HQ and the dates they were secured, were as follows :-

Line coast 520880 - spur 1000 in 5286	21 Dec
Spur 458933 - 431925	27 Dec
HANDA - spur running SW	31 Dec
Line R SANIGA	4 Jan
Line R DALLMAN	6 Jan
Line R BURI	9 Jan
Line R KAPUGARA	12 Jan
NAMBARIWA area, the line of track 447458 - 443426 thence SSW to foothills	15 Jan

The rate of advance was regulated by three factors :-

- (1) Maintenance of the force. Successive beachheads were opened as suitable beaches were secured. The Div Comd required at least 7 days supplies to be within reach of the forward troops, so that if bad weather prevented ESB craft running, there would be sufficient reserves forward.

- (ii) Necessity for providing continuous arty support. Guns were brought forward either by road or in LCMs, but on land the speed of arty movement did not greatly exceed that of the inf, since most of the personnel marched. The speed of the inf advance involved frequent changes of gun positions. The availability of LCMs, the state of the weather, and the proximity of suitable beaches were the main factors in planning sea moves.
- (iii) The Div Comd required the force to be kept concentrated and "Q" were instructed to clear the stocks from rearward beachheads forward as quickly as possible, since troops were required to protect the beaches in rear as long as they were in use, and the force - especially the rear bde - would tend to become strung out along the coast.

The advance was halted on several occasions for one or two days to allow reserves to be put into the forward beaches, and field guns to be brought up, and when KELANOA was reached a pause was ordered while all available craft and road transport were turned to clearing stocks at all rearward beachheads forward to SIALUM, which became a large forward Base for the Div, eventually holding 21 days' reserves of all natures.

Throughout the advance, the Div had been maintaining itself by means of its own 532 Regt ESB craft from Base dumps at LAUNCH JETTY.

When a Div Maintenance Area was established at SIALUM, this involved a turnaround of almost 100 miles, and in the rough weather caused by the continual NW monsoon the LCMs had great trouble with maintenance, and the use of LCVs became quite impracticable. On 8 Jun 44, 2 Aust Corps placed two trawlers at disposal of Base Sup Area to form a third-line supply first to SIALUM and later to KELANOA. These sufficed to carry the rations required by the force, in all weather, but all other supplies, including ammunition, had still to be brought forward in LCMs.

After the capture of NAMBARTIA, supplies were brought in by sea to KELANOA, and forward maintenance was done from SIALUM to clear and allow the closing of that beach. Until NAMBARTIA beach was opened, supply forward of KELANOA was by jeep, native carrier and DUKWA.

Demands for labour to unload ships at FINSCHHAFFEN and work in the Base Area dumps continued to be heavy, and were met by 24 Bde units, one shore coy ESB, and the retention for the purpose in the Div Reception Camp at KEDAM of several hundred "X" List personnel and reinforcements.

LCVs and LCMs of 532 Regt 2 ESB were used not only for the transport of guns, supplies and tanks but also for the carriage forward of troops, wherever possible, to save time and exhaustion to the inf.

On the coral coastal shelf covered with kunai, the engs were able to keep jeephead up to the leading bn, the main obstacles being small ravines and streams. The tanks were also able to keep with the forward inf, the only serious obstacles - deep ravines between HUBIKA and WAI DOKAI - being circumvented by ferrying the tanks in LCMs before the road was pushed through. Line communications were maintained continuously, by the Div Sigs moving with the leading bn to lay the main Div artery from jeeps.

On 2 Jun 44, an AMERICAN force landed at SAILOR, blocked the coastal track between SIO - DOGADJIM and increased still further the enemy's supply difficulties.

Enemy rearguards offered spasmodic opposition, almost invariably from timbered creeks, but inf pressure and arty and mortar concentrations always forced them to withdraw overnight. Along the coast, abandoned guns and dumps of equipment, ammunition, medical supplies and engr stores were found, and smashed enemy barges littered the beaches. As SIO was approached an increasing number of enemy dead were found along the track, and many sick and wounded who were unable to keep up in the retreat had been abandoned to their fate. On 13 Jan 44 the main enemy supply base at NAMBARIWA was occupied without opposition and showed the destructive effect of the heavy bombing it had received. On 15 Jan SIO MISSION was occupied, and the whole area was being thoroughly combed for Jap stragglers, and arrangements made for salvaging the very large dumps of enemy material throughout the area.

Under instruction HQ 2 Aust Corps, 4 Bde had been left in FORTIFICATION PT area, and on 4 Jan, 2 Aust Corps relieved 9 Aust Div of responsibility for the area south of R MASAWENG, and assumed command of 4 and 24 Bdes and of all 9 Aust Div troops in that area. Finally on 13 Jan 44 2 Aust Corps ordered that HQ 5 Aust Div take over comd of forward area as 8 Bde moved forward. By 20 Jan units of 8 Bde had relieved 20 Bde, and at 1800 hours 20 Jan 44 HQ 9 Aust Div handed over to HQ 5 Aust Div and prepared to concentrate the Div in FINCHHAFEN area preparatory to embarkation.

Results of Campaign

Enemy losses in the campaign were heavy. Enemy forces forward of SIO under Comd HQ 20 Div totalled 12,635. The enemy OOB and unit strengths are given at Appx "H". Of this total, about 7,750 became battle casualties, comprising :-

Counted enemy dead	3,099
PW	38
Estimate of wounded (3:2)	4,644
	<hr/> 7,781

This estimate is substantiated by captured documents and PW statements. No allowance has been made for casualties due to sickness, but of the remaining 4,885 it is known from captured unit strength states and PW that less than 4,300 survived to withdraw from SIO towards SAIDOR, of which the inf bns of 79 and 80 Regts totalled only 1,000. A large proportion of this force was by then ineffective owing to wounds, sickness and exhaustion. This is borne out by the large number of dead found along the routes of withdrawal, and by the fact that 8 Bde accounted for a further 1,200, mostly found dead, between SIO and SAIDOR.

Captured weapons comprised:-

		<u>WE Strength</u>
Guns 75mm	18	26
Guns 70mm	5	16
Guns 37mm	12	16
Mortars 81mm & 90mm	16	29
BMGs	28	36
Cannon 20mm	3	
AAAG 13mm (Naval)	17	
LMGs	125	
Grenade dischargers & light mortars	45	
Explosive thrower	1	
Flamethrowers	4	

12 615
2 51
0 8 50

Many other weapons are known to have been abandoned by the enemy, but being buried in the ground, or thrown into rivers or into the sea, were never recovered.

Our own battle casualties were as follows:-

			<u>Killed</u>	<u>Wounded</u>	<u>Missing</u>	<u>Total</u>
PHASE ONE	2 Oct - 15 Oct		3- 62	9-206	Nil	12-268
PHASE TWO	16 Oct - 28 Oct		3- 46	4-175	Nil	7-221
PHASE THREE	29 Oct - 15 Nov		8	4- 37	Nil	4- 45
PHASE FOUR	16 Nov - 20 Dec		9-144	82-229	- - 1	41-374
PHASE FIVE	21 Dec - 15 Jan		1- 7	1- 47	Nil	2- 54

			16-267	50-694	- - 1	66-962

(Sgd) G P WOOTTEN

Maj Gen
Comd 9 Aust Div

962
- 66

1028

267
16

283

694
150

844

It is desired to record an appreciation of the work of FIFTH Air Force and PT boats of Task Group 70.1 US Navy in their incessant attacks on the enemy I of C. Their willingness to cooperate and the determination with which they pressed home their attacks caused great difficulties in the enemy's supply and maintenance system and contributed materially to his final defeat.

It is also desired to make special mention of 532 Rept 2 ESB. This Rept served under command of the Div during the LAE and FI SCITAFEN operations, during which time it performed invaluable service in making possible the movement and maintenance of the Div. Their outstanding spirit of cooperation and, their courage and skill in the face of the enemy were of the greatest value.

SECTION II

LESSONS GENERAL

1. Separate reports have been made regarding:-

- (a) Employment of tanks
- (b) MT - Performance, types recommended to be adopted and recommended scale of issue.

2. Protection of Beach Head Area

As in operations for the capture of LAE so in subsequent operations at FINSCHHAFEN was the need felt for a fourth bde to hold the beachhead and main supply routes to the main force so as to free three inf bdes for offensive operations. Until the arrival of 4 Bde it was not feasible to operate far away from the beachhead area, with more than two inf bdes, thus rendering the retention of an adequate div reserve a constant problem.

3. Beach Group

- (a) To overcome the difficulties experienced in the initial development of FINSCHHAFEN Base Sub Area which placed a heavy strain on the Div, it is considered that in an amphibious operation the Beach Group which takes part in the original landing should be so formed that it contains the nucleus of a Base Sub Area.
- (b) It should contain units of all the services and should have its FSD, PAD, BIPOD, FOD, medical establishments, own labour and transport and provide local protection from within its own resources.
- (c) Shortly after D Day it should be responsible for all reception and holding in the beach and beach maintenance area, for forward distribution as far as the div rear dump area and for evacuation to and from the beach and beach maintenance area.

4. Movement Considerations within the Div

The Div's operations were governed to a large extent by the following factors affecting movement within the formations:-

- (a) Native Labour for carrying. Until additional natives had been brought from FINSCHHAFEN to LAE in Nov the Div was not able to operate to any appreciable extent beyond the restricted area that could be supplied by sea or road or by the very small number of natives available.
- (b) Numbers of and ability to use small craft. Too few craft were held for the tasks required of them and this frequently delayed operations for periods of a few days while units and necessary supplies could be shuttled forward with the craft available.
Until KELANOA was reached FINSCHHAFEN HARBOUR was the most northerly safe anchorage held. This added considerably to turn-round and difficulties of intercommunication during the advance up the coast.
When suitable beaches were not available along the coast the force became dependent on road communication for forward maintenance. Bad weather which prevented or restricted movement of craft emphasised the desirability of having MT (and roads) as an alternative. Bad weather also emphasised the need for building up forward reserves concurrently with the forward move of troops by sea.
- (c) Availability of sufficient numbers of suitable vehicles
The number of suitable vehicles available was below requirements. Often the one vehicle was driven continuously throughout the 24 hours in the day to move forward essential equipment and maintenance. On occasions moves had to be postponed because vehicles or prime movers were not available for load carrying or towing.

The advance of forward troops at times had to wait for arty to be brought forward and in those cases the guns could not have been ready as soon as the inf, had it not been necessary to move them forward by shuttling.

(d) Adequate engr units and mechanical equipment for essential tasks.

As at LAE the engr resources were below requirements. Three fd coys and one pl of a mechanical equipment coy were insufficient for the div alone and yet much of their effort and equipment had to be allotted for work on the large number of beaches used, the div maintenance area and for initial development of the Base Sub Area. This shortage had an adverse effect on availability of roads for operations.

Operations were frequently based on use of troops for carrying but there were never sufficient troops who could be spared for this task to allow it to be done except within a very circumscribed area. The attack from SATELBERG to WAREO, when the advance was on a narrow frontage until the objective area was neared, was made possible only by using the second bn to supplement the inadequate number of natives to supply the leading bn and build up sufficient forward reserves of ammunition and supplies to enable both bns to be used in the final attack. However, shortly after WAREO was captured it was supplied from GUSIKA, from which a jeep track ran a part of the way; and it was not many days before this jeep track was pushed through to WAREO itself.

5. Availability of Landing Craft

- (a) During the whole of the recent operations along the coast there has been a serious shortage of craft. This in itself has reduced the efficiency of all units by preventing such items as unit equipment, stores, vehicles and guns being readily available at all times.
- (b) It is considered that 90 LCM are required to maintain a div moving along the coast. This would enable all maintenance and operational requirements to be met without any serious delay.
- (c) In reckoning the availability of craft it has been found that only approximately 50% of craft allotted are available at any one time owing to heavy maintenance requirements.
- (d) When the turn round is over 100 miles it is essential that some means of transportation be arranged involving heavier craft. (i.e. LCT or Trawlers). With regard to trawlers, the two small crawlers allotted for AASC supplies from FINSCHHAFEN to KELANOA were a success and the boats could operate in weather too rough for LCV or LCM.
- (e) LCT are essential to enable stores, guns etc. to be landed on beaches where the surf is too high for the smaller craft.
- (f) The LCV, though used throughout the operation, is not considered a suitable craft for any purpose other than the landing of the assault troops. It cannot be used in rough seas, has small loading capacity and is slower than the LCM.
- (g) At least four fast boats are required for communications, both for beach to beach and beach to boat communication. On occasions missions have departed from a beach just prior to receipt of information which should reach the mission leader, e.g. change of destination operationally necessary. This information could not be passed to the

Mission leader until he reached his original destination. When beach recesses are carried out the information should be immediately available to the persons responsible for sending craft forward. With the present lack of a fast craft this information is usually not available until the following day.

- (h) As craft have frequently to beach within sight and small arms range of the enemy, some form of support craft is necessary as an escort, when ground opposition is expected, to engage the enemy and protect the craft afloat, and the working party, the crews and the craft when beached.

6. Boat and Shore Regt

US2 B & S Regt which was under comd of the Div gave excellent service and the fullest cooperation. Facilities such as it offered were indispensable to the prosecution of operations. However the organisation and equipment of the regt is not considered satisfactory for adoption. Alterations considered necessary are indicated in succeeding paragraphs.

The Boat Bn is recommended to be a self-contained unit. Whether or not a shore bn is necessary depends on whether the nature of future operations warrants it; and the same applies to a regt HQ.

7. Boat Bn

Suggested outline organization is:-

(a) Bn HQ

One comd craft, speed 20 knots. Not a landing craft.
6 Support craft, speed 20 knots. Armed with a 40mm gun.
6 Comm craft, speed 15 knots. Armed and able to beach.
1 Navigation craft, speed 15 knots. Armed and able to beach.

RADAR, ASDIC, good wireless communications.

(b) Three coys each

4 Support craft, speed 20 knots. Armed, not necessarily landing craft. Wireless to bn HQ and ground troops.
1 Communication craft

30 LCM

2 LCT

At least 2000swins, including one mechanic and necessary gun numbers per craft.

(c) Maintenance Section

Equipped to make all types of repairs to all craft.

8. Boat Bn - Allotment of craft

The following is in substantiation of the craft recommended to be allotted to a Boat Bn in support of a div operating along a coast.

(a) Bn HQ

(i) Comd Craft - to enable the commander to keep full control of his bn at all times.

(ii) Support Craft - 6. Two to be allotted to each coy and to provide protection to the missions both from the land and from small enemy surface craft.

(iii) Communication Craft - 3

One for use by Div Comd.

Two for use by various comds and their staffs for speedy touch with the various units and establishments along the coast when their duty requires it.

- (iv) Navigation boat - 1. Owing to lack of means of navigation on landing craft and the necessity of craft travelling at night it is essential that at least one boat be fitted with good means of navigation and to be able to pick up the approach of any craft or the location of reefs either above or below the surface.
- (b) Three coys - Each
 - (i) Support craft - 4. These would enable missions of a smaller size than a company to be sent to different beaches at the one time with their own means of protection.
 - (ii) Communication boat - 1. This would enable the coy cmd to have more efficient control of his missions and to keep in touch with both his Bn HQ and the land forces.
 - (iii) LCM - 50. Of these 30 craft approximately 15 - 20 only would be available at any one time. The total availability of the three companies should be capable of maintaining a div in operations up to a distance of 50 miles.
 - (iv) LCT - 2. LCT are required to supplement the LCM when the distance involved is greater than a 100 mile turn round. They would also be required during weather too rough for LCM and on beaches where the surf makes the landing of LCM impracticable.

9. Shore duties when a Boat Bn is used.

When the Div operated away from the Base Sub Area and opened new beaches for itself the need was felt for some organisation, temporary or permanent, to carry out the duties in the vicinity of each such beach without calling on the resources of the Div. Three shore coys organised on the following lines would have met requirements:-

- (a) Coy HQ, which should include Sigs, MLO and troops for local protective duties.
- (b) A labour pl.
At least 90 workers were necessary on the bigger beaches. Labour was generally the greatest difficulty at any beach and could often only be provided from combatant units, which is undesirable.
- (c) A supply pl of about 30 all ranks to man the beach dumps.
This pl was required to relieve Div AASC for maintenance forward of the dumps. AASC supply detachments had to be detailed from Div resources.
- (d) Transport pl of about 30 all ranks equipped with 10 jeeps and trailers.
Beach clearance was a constant problem. Vehicles had to be provided by Div AASC who were already forced to overwork what transport they had.
- (e) In addition to the above, engr assistance is required on the beach not only to prepare but maintain beach roads and traffic circuits. Dump sites too have to be prepared by engr.
Maintenance of roads in and around the beach areas was usually very necessary on account of the heavy traffic that had to be kept moving in all weathers. Tractors were frequently required on the beach to tow off guns and vehicles. The number of engr and the mechanical equipment with the Div was however insufficient to provide for constant attention to the beaches and the tactical requirements of the Div at the same time.

10. Labour on Beaches

Labour on the beaches made big demands on the fighting troops and it is recommended that labour should as far as possible be met by providing enough men to do it without interfering with the strength, dispositions or preparedness to fight of the unit or formation responsible for protection of the beachhead.

11. Naval Representative Ashore

The necessity for having a senior naval representative ashore at the beachhead was emphasised again through the change that occurred in the beaching of craft soon after a naval representative was allotted to FINSCHHAFEN. It was only through his initiative that naval resupply craft were able to be brought direct into FINSCHHAFEN, thereby reducing the strain that has been placed on craft and labour when GODOWA BEACH was the unloading point for naval craft.

12. Reserve of Staff Officers

Sudden losses of numbers of staff officers through illness point to the need for having reserve staff officers, either with the div or handy enough for bringing forward quickly. It also shows the need for having within the div officers, who are not holding staff appointments, trained as staff officers.

13. Observers

In mobile operations of this type when a large number of observers can be expected, special facilities are required, additional to the div's resources, for the reception, accommodation and conducting of observer parties. A small self-contained and mobile organisation is required with messing facilities, accommodation stores and transport - either or both jeeps and small craft. The camp staff should include sufficient officers to meet, arrange itineraries for and guide observer parties.

14. Air Photos

The one unsatisfactory feature about air photos has been the time taken, generally two weeks, to deliver extra prints requested after the initial issue has been made. It is recommended that a system be devised to permit such requests being met in a much shorter time.

For deliberate operations in difficult country neither maps nor photomaps have been able to show all the detail required. Consequently a fairly generous distribution of air photographs would have been of the greatest assistance. As an example, 25 Bde for its attack over the extremely broken country to SATELBERG wanted ten stereo pairs - 1 for Bde HQ, 1 per bn HQ and 5 for forward coys. Some sets, however, were not received before the attack had finished.

15. CW Equipment - Disposal

CW equipment was left in the beginning at BJNA and was not brought into the operational area. As this equipment is awkward to carry, takes up shipping space and deteriorates rapidly unless expertly cared for in this climate, it is recommended that in future CW equipment be issued only in the training period and then be withdrawn from the Div unless it becomes the policy for the Div to retain it.

15. Liaison with PT Boats, CTG70-1

The cooperation received from CTG70-1 was excellent, but until personal contact had been made the coordination of operations of PT boats and 9 Aust Div was not satisfactory. Then, messages between them had to be passed in cipher and through other HQ and were rarely received in time to achieve what was desired.

Soon after HQ 9 Aust Div moved to FINSCHHAFEN it was arranged that outgoing PT missions should call at FINSCHHAFEN. Thereafter, comds were able to confer and daily liaison was established, often with both outgoing and incoming missions. In addition, at appropriate periods, a naval officer of CTG70-1 lived at HQ 9 Aust Div. From the constant first-hand and early exchange of information and coordination of plans when they affected both parties, mutual benefit resulted.

17. Air Support

5 AF gave most helpful cooperation and effective support throughout the Div's operations.

The two difficulties found in arranging air support were

- (a) initiating requests for some uncoordinated attacks in time for action by 5 AF.

The difficulty lay in forecasting rate of advance of the inf which governed:

nomination of a bombline that would not restrict our ground operations or endanger our troops, and

a decision, when the airstrike might impede the advance, as to whether the strike should be carried out and our troops held in check or whether to forego the strike.

To submit requests by 1600 hrs, which was the normal requirement, entailed making an estimate, based on the situation as at 1400 hrs of the dispositions to be expected next day at the scheduled time for air attack.

Despite the late initiation of many requests for air support, all but two were fulfilled by 5 AF.

- (b) selecting targets warranting air attack yet able to be identified by attacking aircraft. This applied not so much on the coastal strip, where intelligence and tac R reports decided selection and where kunai, rivers, broken coastline and irregular occurrence of belts of forest aided location and recognition of targets, but particularly in the heavy jungle where most of the bivouac areas, defences, HQs and forward dumps were.

18. Army Cooperation Aircraft

Army cooperation aircraft of B Flight, 4 Tac R Sqn RAFF carried out tac R, arty R and some ph R for 9 Aust Div throughout the FINSCHHAFEN operations, and their work was of a very high standard. An average of two sorties daily were flown and tac R information was dropped to forward bdes and Div HQ. Throughout the operations only three messages were lost.

In tac R track information was always a valuable source of intelligence, but as different pilots carried out recon on successive days it was found that some basis for comparison of track usage was required. For this purpose a track within our own FDLs was usually nominated. In assessing such information it was essential to take into consideration the last fall of rain.

For opportunity targets not large enough for a heavy air strike and out of range of arty, tac R aircraft leading in fighters equipped with bombs in place of belly tanks proved successful. Such missions were easy to arrange at short notice, since the sqn providing fighter cover readily cooperated.

In arty R, the standard procedure produced the most satisfactory results.

In the early stages of the operations some unnecessary delays occurred when two way communication was not established immediately and the pilot failed to realise that, although he could not hear the ground station, the ground station could hear him. Under similar circumstances, after both pilots and gunners had gained some experience, pilots were quick in initiating one way procedure. The best intervals in this type of shooting were found to be 4 minutes for initial rounds and one minute for succeeding rounds.

For both tac R and arty R it was found necessary to operate a control wireless set at Div HQ for :

- (a) additional tac R briefing, made necessary by changes in the ground situation after the sortie was airborne.
- (b) warning of hostile aircraft in the area to pilots.
- (c) relay of arty R if necessary, or instructing pilots to carry out a "one way shoot".
- (d) notification of last minute changes of arty R targets or troops to engage.
- (e) monitoring of shoots to correct and supervise arty R procedure.

19. Liaison Aircraft

/required

The provision by 4 Tac R Sqn of a light liaison aircraft proved extremely useful. The PIPER CUB aircraft provided only a short landing strip and little difficulty was experienced in finding a site which could quickly be made into a serviceable strip with a little engr assistance.

The main tasks for which the aircraft was used were :-

- (a) liaison between GIII(Air) and 4 Tac R Sqn.
- (b) local recce including engineer recce for roads and river crossings.

Experiments using the aircraft as an arty OP were not completed due to minor difficulties with the wireless equipment provided for the aircraft. The defects in the wireless equipment were mechanical and not characteristic. From observations made as far as the experiment was carried out it appeared that this type of aircraft could be successfully used as an arty OP.

20. Stereoscopes

Due to the increased reliance which is being placed on air photos in inadequately mapped country, the recommended scale of issue of stereoscopes is :-

(a) Stereoscopes, Universal

HQ Div	2
HQ Inf Bde, HQ RAA and HQ RAE	1
Inf Bn, Pnr Bn, and MG Bn	1
Fd Regt RAA and Fd Coy RAE	1

(b) Stereoscopes, B5

HQ Div	2
HQ Inf Bde, and HQ RAE	1
Inf Bn	4
Pnr Bn and MG Bn	2
Fd Regt	3
Carr Coy	1

These scales were required in 9 Aust Div's operation.

21. Captured Enemy Equipment

It is desirable to spread knowledge of enemy equipment by the training of selected officers and NCOs from Div salvage unit, FS Sec and Intelligence Secs at a school where they can handle all known types of enemy equipment.

The attachment to Div during operations of a representative of Allied Enemy Equipment Board would also be desirable. All Intelligence personnel within the Div (except FS Sec) are mainly concerned with operational and topographical information, whereas a representative of Allied Enemy Equipment Board could concentrate on examination of enemy equipment. He would have the necessary technical knowledge to determine the importance for intelligence of various contents of enemy dumps and items of captured equipment. His advice would enable most effective use of limited resources of FS Sec and Div Salv Unit for recovery of enemy equipment and its despatch to the rear during operations. He would know the items of equipment specially required by Allied Enemy Equipment Board, and these could then be given high priority for despatch to the rear.

22. AAPIU Personnel Attached

The attachment of a WO 1 from 1 AAPIU to HQ Div proved most valuable. His services enabled interpretation of air photographs to proceed well ahead of operations. This was particularly important when advance along coast to SIO was being planned.

If a second WO or Sgt were attached to the Div, this would enable bdes to secure similar assistance when required.

The attachment of two AAPIU personnel to the Div is therefore recommended.

23. Fd Artv

Although in the LAE operations the 25 pr Short on Carriage Light (AUST) Mk I proved its worth, in the operations north of FINSCHLAFEN it proved a handicap.

The advance north of FINSCHLAFEN was a fairly quick one but shortage of road transport and shortage of small craft made the forward move of fd btys frequently a matter of shuttling. On one occasion, after a light bty had moved forward to support the advance it was able to fire only 60 rounds before it was out of range and on another occasion it was out of range by the time it had completed its move. In the end it became necessary to plan using only the 2 btys of Mk II guns to support forward operations.

It is recommended that in planning stage consideration be given to the holding well forward by Ord of reserves of either the Short 25 pr or 25 pr Mk II as applicable, so that any anticipated need for changing the type of gun manned by the forward btys can be quickly met.

24: Tk A Gun for coast defence

The Tk A bty with the Div manned in addition to its own sixteen 6 prs, sixteen 2 prs which had been withdrawn from the bns. These guns were used for beach defence and personnel from the bty also manned coast watching and challenging stations.

The Tk A bty is not satisfactorily equipped for this task. For communications ship to shore and from guns and challenging stations to Div and Bde HQ special equipment was required, such as telephones, cable, lamps daylight signalling short range and also mortars 2 inch, for bombs illumination, or SLs.

It is recommended that if in the planning stage Tk A guns are considered necessary for such tasks consideration be given to provision of adequate communications.

25: Engineer Resources

- (a) In this operation the lesson brought out most forcibly because every arm and service was affected by it, was that for operations in an undeveloped country it is essential that the proportion of engrs to other arms in the Div be increased. From the experience gained it is recommended that the number of fd coys in the Div be doubled and that mechanical equipment units be placed under command of the Div.
- (b) Efforts were made to double the strength of the engrs by placing under their command 2/3 Pnr Bn. This was only possible when pnr could be spared from essential operational tasks or from work labouring on the beaches. If the increase in engr strength is to be obtained by a permanent allotment of pnr then these pnr would have to be specially trained and equipped and could hardly be expected to be able to carry out an inf role, when required, efficiently. It would mean that pnr permanently allotted to engrs would in fact become engrs.
- (c) Two major problems would arise immediately with the increase of engr units.
One would be the question of organisation. The double fd coy has the advantage of flexibility in that it would ensure continuity of advice and work when the double coy was supporting the one formation or employed in the one sector. Further, it would simplify the control and allotment of work by the CRE if he had three instead of six fd coy comds to deal with in operations.
The second question is that of ability of HQ RAE as at present organised to command and administer not only an increased number of fd coys but also the fd pk coy, the engr sig sec, mechanical equipment units attached and any engrs attached to such units as tanks allotted to the div. While it is essential that the CRE spend a great deal of time away from his HQ, and the extra administrative duties caused by the additional units will entail more office work. This might perhaps be solved by appointing a 2 i/c to the HQ of the engrs and making the organisation more like that of a normal Bn.
It is recommended that the Div Engrs should be organized as an Engr Bn with adequate HQ establishment.
- (d) The amount of mechanical equipment required for operations similar to the recent operations of 9 Aust Div are considered to be:-

Angle dozer D8	3) To be 50% hydraulic and 50% cable operated.
Angle dozer D5	10	
Angle dozer D4	3	
Tractors D 6 with PCU	4	
Tractors D2	17	(To be WET on Pd and Pd Pk Coys if possible)
S		
Scoops carryall 6cu yd	2	
Scoops carryall 4 " "	2	
Autopatrols	2	
Trailer Graders	2	
Quickway shovel	2	
Ripper	2	
Plough	2	
Ditchers	2	(BUCYRUS Type)

Special workshop facilities for this would be needed.

The amount for any specific operation would naturally have to be based on the appreciation of its particular requirements. Mechanical equipment allotted for a particular operation should come to the division as an organised unit with its own specialised personnel for plant maintenance. The mere allotment of mechanical equipment would be unsatisfactory because sufficient operators would not be available from div engs nor would they have the necessary experience. A mechanical equipment coy lts certain plant would be a guide as to what is required.

(c) It is important that in an amphibious operation the engr resources of the Div as discussed above should be freed from any of the engineering work required by the Beach Group. The Beach Group has its own engr problems and its requirements should be decided in the planning stage and be allotted quite separately.

26. Traffic Control

It was found impossible to provide all-weather roads capable of taking heavy duty traffic initially in the operations and it became important to exercise strict traffic control on all roads and tracks. It was also found necessary to invest complete control of these roads and tracks in the CRE to ensure that full operational value was obtained from their limited life.

A section of 9 Aust Div Pro Coy. which was all that could be spared, was allotted to RAE to enforce control but although this sec did very good work it was considered inadequate and often formations had to supplement the policing of roads where they passed through their sectors or affected their operations intimately.

27. Sigs - Line Communication

- (a) Line was used as the primary means of communication forward of Div HQ.
- (b) To maintain line communication during a rapid advance it was found necessary to:-
 - (i) maintain nets building the line forward of the formation or unit which the line was intended to serve, in the case of Div & Bde line as far forward as forward infantry companies where possible.

- (ii) concentrate the efforts of line secs on forward lines. To this end it is necessary that div or bde line secs be relieved of all rearward commitments.

(c) Cable required:-

- (i) 20 miles of assault cable is required per bn, 10 for intra-bn use and 10 for patrols. For intra-bn work US assault cable is necessary, except in semi-static defensive positions when D III single should be laid. For patrol work, US assault cable being stronger, more durable and reliable is preferred to Aust enamelled assault cable. The latter can however be used and will be required when the former is not available.
- (ii) D III single is needed forward of bde HQ. It would be better for this cable to be issued on Reels No 1 (1/3 mile) than on Drums No 5 (1 mile) which are too heavy and unwieldy for forward inf.

- (d) Arrangements were made with div engrs that signal lines would be laid on one side of tracks while engr. development would be carried out on the opposite side. This necessitated a combined recce by engr and sig officers to determine which side lines would be laid.

- (e) Despite every care being taken by mechanical equipment operators damage to lines was inevitable. So that lines could be repaired with the minimum of delay, linemen were attached to mechanical equipment secs engaged in road construction. This arrangement proved satisfactory.

- (f) As cable routes were confined to existing tracks some congestion of lines resulted, particularly during the more static operations. Several methods of identifying lines were tried but the most successful was found to be labels as laid down in Signal Training All Arms Pamphlet 3 Section 34. The labels were cut from light tin plate and marked with the unit serial number punched with a nail.

- (g) Switchboards 6 line and 10 line are unsatisfactory due to

- (i) weight
- (ii) heavy maintenance and adjustments required due to delicate construction,
- (iii) susceptibility to damage by atmospheric disturbances even with normal protective devices.

It is recommended that a better and lighter 6 or 10 line magneto board be provided.

- (h) Telephones D5 have proved unsatisfactory due to:-

- (i) susceptibility of component parts to dampness, principally buzzer unit and key apparatus.
- (ii) constant mechanical adjustment required by buzzer unit.
- (iii) weight.

The British type L phone overcomes all the disadvantages of telephones D5 except weight. It is recommended that a lighter telephone, embodying the advantages of the British type L phone be provided.

23. Sigs - Wireless Communication

- (a) Wireless sets 46A and SCR 536A, by their excellent performance, have won the complete confidence of the div.
 - (i) Wireless set 46A. This set proved extremely reliable and most suitable for coy - bn link. The main advantages are lightness, robust construction, effective waterproofing and simplicity of operation.
 - (ii) Wireless set SCR 536B. Again this set proved reliable for pl - coy communications under varied conditions. Some difficulty was experienced from rain leaking through the aerial aperture in the top of the set. The set was successfully used for inter communication between forward inf and tanks, the Number 19 set being tuned to the SCR 536B. The SCR 536B type wireless sets are considered essential for forward inf in mobile operations and it is recommended that they be issued on the basis of one bn kit for each bn in the div.
- (b) Wireless sets AT5AR6 proved suitable for the div terminal of the Div - Corps link.
- (c) Wireless sets Number 32. This set has proved to be a suitable substitute for Number 11 sets, particularly in fd arty regts and inf bdes where its lightness gives it a great advantage over the Number 11 set.
- (d) Wireless sets Number 109 performed exceptionally well throughout though its weight restricts its use to conditions where jeeps can be used or adequate native porters are available.
- (e) Dry batteries for the lighter types of sets should be forwarded in containers sealed against damp to avoid the high percentage of wastage due to deterioration.

29. Rations

- (a) Once again the necessity for a "balanced pack" was emphasised. One of the greatest difficulties experienced was in maintaining balanced stocks in depots.
- (b) The "balanced pack" on similar lines to the American Jungle Ration so far as packing goes, would enable :-
 - (i) Depots to be always balanced.
 - (ii) Reserves to be held with forward units without items becoming unserviceable and thus requiring replacement.
 - (iii) Rations to be sent to any number of personnel in their original pack.
 - (iv) Supplies to be transported by either sea, air, motor vehicles or native carrier without necessitating repacking.
- (c) The commodities to be contained in the balanced pack to be similar to the present SWPA ration.

30. AASC Personnel allotted to a Div

- (a) Owing to the long distance over which the operations were carried out and the large number of AASC detachments which had to be made, there was always a shortage of both Supply Depot and Gen Tpt Coy personnel.
- (b) The following additional AASC personnel are required in the Div :
 - (i) Two additional Supply Depot Pls. - This would make 8 Supply Depot Pls per Div and would enable 2 pls to be allotted to each Bde and two to be used for Div troops.
 - (ii) One additional Gen Tpt Pl. - equipped with 2½ ton 6 x 6 GMCs. This would enable one pl equipped with jeeps and trailers to be made available to each Bde, and the additional pl to be available in the rear areas where the greater bulk of the transport would be required.

31. Mob Fd Bakery

A most welcome and popular unit was the mobile fd bakery. It is recommended that in future amphibious operations the fd bakery be one of the units sent forward early after the force is properly established ashore. If the Div becomes separated from the beach maintenance area by communications that will not allow bread to be part of the daily ration, then that or another mob fd bakery will be required forward in the Div area.

32. Medical Organisation in Beachhead Area

- (a) Experience has shown that medical units must be provided in a beachhead area for the following functions :-
 - (i) Transporting patients from Div medical units, by landing craft, vehicle or bearer.
 - (ii) Receiving casualties and sick from Div medical units.
 - (iii) Evacuating patients to ships, landing craft or planes.
 - (iv) Providing medical posts on subsidiary beaches.

- (v) Providing a medical service for personnel in the beachhead.
- (vi) Collecting medical stores unloaded from craft and conducting a medical stores dump.
- (vii) Providing sea ambulance transport personnel.
- (b) For the above tasks, the following medical units are required in a beachhead maintaining a Div.
 - (i) CCS
 - (ii) One fd amb
 - (iii) Det sea amb tpt.
 - (iv) Det medical stores depot
 - (v) Red Cross Stores Depot.
- (c) Evacuation arrangements should be in the hands of a beachhead SMO, who should be on the Beach Group Staff.

33. Medical Comforts Scale

It has been found that in an overwater operation, the percentage of casualties unable to take most items of normal diet is high; in addition many febrile cases are held and treated in the overseas area. For these reasons the medical comforts scale should be relatively lavish to supplement normal rations; for febrile cases the medical comforts scale must wholly replace the normal ration scale.

34. ADMS' Pool of MOs

A high rate of sickness prevailed among medical officers of the Div and fd amb and the CCS were at times seriously understaffed. Casualties by sickness to RMOs of units also caused great difficulty. It is recommended that a small pool of MOs should be made available to ADMS, as temporary replacements, and for allotment to beach posts and other small detachments which require an MO.

35. Stretchers

The standard ambulance stretcher is too narrow for use with patients held in MDS and CCS, as the body of the patient is in contact with both sides of the mosquito net and he is likely to be bitten through the net. A folding stretcher of sufficient width, and with scissor legs to prevent stretching or sagging of the canvas, should be issued to fd amb and CCS in malarious areas on a scale of 200 per unit.

36. Thiamin

Towards the end of the campaign, symptoms indicating Vitamin B deficiency were noted in numerous cases, and it is recommended that, except when the field operation ration is being consumed, a 3 mgm THIAMIN tablet be added to the daily ration scale.

37. Man-loads

It has been amply proved that fatigue and the MALARIA rate are directly proportional. This is an additional reason why equipment for the jungle should be as light as possible, and every expedient used to reduce man-loads.

EQUIPMENT

38. Barbers' Tools

Issue on the scale of one complete set to each subunit is recommended. The importance of keeping men shaved and barbered in tropical conditions cannot be overemphasized. Most units had their own equipment to begin with but replacement parts or new sets could not be obtained.

39. Propellant Charges - 3 inch Mortar

These have two serious defects:-

- (a) As at present packed, propellant charges, both primary and secondary, are susceptible to damp. Casualties may possibly have been inflicted on our own troops, and many misfires have occurred from this cause. It is strongly recommended that propellant charges should be packed separately from the bombs, in sealed waterproof containers.
- (b) Marked variations have occurred in different batches of propellant charges. This has limited the usefulness of mortars for very close support.

40. Grenades 35M

- (a) Wet weather causes deterioration, and numerous failures in detonation.
- (b) A waxed or cellophane envelope is recommended.

41. .303 Vickers MMG

- (a) Stoppages

Stoppages were very few, the majority being caused by badly filled belts. Lock springs and firing pins were the only breakages of any consequence and these were not serious. One interesting breakdown, which occurred on two guns, was caused by the sliding valve sticking when the guns were being fired at an acute angle of depression, thus allowing the water to boil off the rear end of the barrel where it bulged. When rounds were loose in belts, it was found that approximately a quarter of a gallon of water poured into the liner 5 minutes before use, tightened the belt and no stoppages occurred.

- (b) Suggested Alterations and Additions to Equipment

- (1) Yuban type packs be issued for carrying gun stores and ammunition. (see MGO Equipment Memorandum No 8 Para 31)
- (11) Better heat-resisting oil is necessary for LMGs. Present issue runs like water when really hot.
- (111) Ammunition box cradles (collapsible) be fitted on all guns to permit of free swinging traverse.
- (1v) Small pencil type electric torches, with remote control, capable of being fixed to bayonet slot as aiming lamp be issued. The present Box Night Aiming, is too bulky and fragile. Aiming posts are unnecessary as stud on bayonet gives a good aiming mark.

- (v) That better type condenser cans, with recessed handles, be issued. Present cans shed handles and break seams easily. Collapsible canvas containers would be suitable in some cases. If water were available in area they could be carried collapsed. This would save an immense amount of trouble in carriage. / readily
- (vi) Better type ammunition box liners be developed. Present liners frequently have broken seams thus damaging the ammunition. Carrying straps rot and break.
- (vii) Water proof covers for guns, range finders and binoculars be issued.
- (viii) New type slide rule be issued, similar to Mk VIII. Some rules split, become jammed and white ants eat them.

SECTION III

TACTICAL METHODS AND LESSONS

ENEMY METHODS

Attack

1. The following characteristics were noted, but enemy methods were not uniform.
2. Approach by night through thick vegetation to forming up are close to our FDLs. Enemy skilful in moving silently by night. PIB often heard sounds of enemy before these were detected by wh troops.
3. Actual assault sometimes made at night; more often about dusk. Sometimes silent but often preceded by much noise, bugles and shouting.
4. Enemy attacks and counterattacks costly failures. Troops came on bunched, without any real plan and apparently knowing little of our dispositions. Having failed once they would come again in the same way at the same place. It appeared that once the attacks were launched, the Comd had no reserves or was unable to control them or his forward troops.
5. (a) Fire support largely absent and never well coordinated. Supporting weapons when used brought up by night or through jungle to close range. On occasions 37mm guns were fired at ranged of 40-70 yards.
(b) Arty and mortars when used in support of attack relied on direct observation. No indirect fire was used.
6. Positions very close up to our FDLs or astride our supply routes were at times gained by infiltration through jungle. Even if no further attack was made, the enemy was able from these positions to harass our positions by snipers, and he was easily dislodged. His proximity to our positions gave him immunity from arty and 3 inch mortar fire. /not
7. Enemy approached by tracks or along streams. He did not make large movements across trackless country.

Defence

8. (a) Enemy field works were constructed more for protection against our fire than for coordinated use of weapons. Siting (except in respect of protection and concealment) bad. Many pits on reverse slopes not sited for fire except at a few yards and many others largely "unfightable" because of heavy overhead cover.
(b) Pillboxes, when there was time for their construction, were very strong, made of coconut logs, often proof against arty and mortar fire.
(c) Weapon pits were of the foxhole type - ground level with soil removed - connected by underground tunnels. Sometimes developed pl positions that resembled rabbit warrens.
(d) In defence the Japs appear to rely to a considerable extent on the use of alternative positions.
9. Concealment and camouflage good. Defences were often a few yards back from edge of vegetation. This did not impede enemy's view of advancing troops but made his positions difficult to locate. Thick bamboo provided an obstacle to inf assault more formidable than barbed wire.

10. (a) Defensive layout generally uncoordinated and with little appreciation of the value of enfilade fire.
- (b) Positions seldom well sited for all round defence. Primary object apparently to cover track.
- (c) Positions often in some depth along track but not usual extending very far on either side of track.

11. Inland positions sited to control a track were normally placed where the track ran along a ridge. The site chosen was usually a narrow saddle where tributary gullies on either side made outflanking movements difficult. A standard layout was: a MG to fire down the track and a LMG on each side able to fire down gully; with usually one or two sentries up to 100 yds in front of the main position. The sentries were rarely alert and were usually dealt with by our forward scouts. But shooting them alarmed the post.

12. In several instances a fence made of a few strands of signal cable or pieces of light bamboo was erected across the track a short distance in front of an enemy post. The fence was not often extended beyond the edges of the track and was therefore no real obstacle. The purpose of these barriers was not clear. Probably they were intended to cause our forward scouts to pause so that they could be easily shot.

13. Defences found in places on the coast, sited to protect beaches, were more solidly constructed than most of these inland and were of the pillbox "bunker" type, e.g. those at SCARLET BEACH. They were often better sited than those inland but mainly for frontal fire. The advantages of fire from headlands seems to have been little appreciated.

14. (a) Fire was withheld until attack reached close quarters. It was difficult to estimate the strength or extent of enemy positions by drawing their fire, e.g. when one position was attacked it was found to be occupied by a coy with several automatics; yet no more than three rifles and one LMG had fired from it in retaliation to our fire over some days.
- (b) This control of ammunition expenditure may have resulted as much from shortage of supplies as from policy. Earlier at FINSCHHAFEN the enemy had not been so sparing in his use of LMGs.

15. Trip wires and booby traps rarely used.

16. In the event of the enemy withdrawing from close contact it was generally done after the application of fire and inf pressure or after his communications had been threatened. Almost invariably the withdrawal was made at night and was often covered by offensive patrolling early in the evening.

17. (a) In defensive positions enemy moves much by night in spite of the difficulties of the ground and jungle.
- (b) Tracks in rear of enemy FDLs were used freely by day with little provision for the protection of working and foraging parties, who were often unarmed. This carelessness gave great opportunities to our patrols.

18. When our leading scout was hit his body was invariably covered by fire. Attempts to rescue wounded or remove dead often resulted in further casualties.

OUR METHODS AND LESSONS LEARNED

General

19. The main lessons appear from the following paragraphs.
20. Well trained and lightly equipped inf in adequate numbers form the first requirement in a jungle campaign.
21. Our troops properly trained and resolutely led are more than a match for the Jap either in the jungle or in the open.
22. There is no mystery in jungle fighting. Success in battle there, as elsewhere, depends on the morale qualities of determined leaders and resolute, confident, disciplined and well trained men.
23. Operations in the jungle demand the correct application of normal principles of war. Specialised tactics or "drills" should not be allowed to take the place of quick appreciations and the tactics and dispositions proper and appropriate for any particular situation.
24. It is as possible in the jungle, as elsewhere, to give inf full aid of supporting arms; and they should have it from the air, arty, tanks.
25. Commanders must beware of overestimating the tactical strength of their dispositions. There are two dangers.-
 - (a) In close country a unit or sub-unit usually has complete control of less ground than in open country. Distances between its components (sections, pls, or coys) are less, as the gaps cannot be so readily controlled by observed fire. But circles drawn on maps to indicate dispositions often cover more than the small areas effectively held - and can be misleading.
 - (b) With restricted fields of fire it is numbers of fighting men which count, not the forms of their organisation. A coy reduced to the fighting strength of a pl - (as was at times the case) - cannot hold the same ground as a coy at full strength. To continue to describe it as a coy can be misleading.
26. Although the ground which can be effectively held by a unit or sub-unit is less in the jungle than in open country, a continuous front is not essential. A large area can be controlled by a limited force with its ~~bits~~ holding main tracks. Large stretches of unoccupied jungle must exist. Penetration between our positions will always be possible. It need not be serious provided:-
 - (a) The garrison of each position holds its ground and has adequate water, food and ammunition to hold out in isolation for several days.
 - (b) Each locality into which it is essential there should be no infiltration at all (e.g. dumps, installations, HQ areas etc) is occupied by a sufficient number of men to prevent this.
 - (c) Each body placed to control a route is strong enough to do so. Control of a track normally demands not less than a full coy, preferably more. A few strong positions from which offensive patrols operate are better than many small dets which are liable to be defeated in detail.
 - (d) In fighting the Jap it is more important than ever for all commanders of all arms and services to provide for their own security at all times.

27. When tanks are working in forward areas they should always, even when on the move, be provided with inf escort.

28. When arty can do the task, use of the 3 inch mortar is not recommended because of the physical difficulties in replacing mortar ammunition in forward areas.

29. In the jungle, difficulties of land communications make greater the restrictions on tactical mobility imposed by considerations of supply and transport.

30. (a) In attack, in the preparatory stage, pinpointing the enemy must be done thoroughly. The Japs excellent use of camouflage and concealment, his use of alternative positions and his practice of holding fire until attacked at close quarters, make proper pinpointing an essential if a sound plan is to be formed.

(b) If the enemy has been held in close contact and there is an overnight pause, before the attack is launched, it will, due to the Japs habitual choice of night for the breaking of close contact, often be necessary to test his positions early in the morning on which the attack is to be made. This applies also when delay in launching attack occurs in daytime.

31. Small arms pressure to be effective demands large expenditure of ammunition. Much harassing fire from MMGs at very close range is particularly effective. The enemy then seems to prefer tunnelling to retaliation. In one position which was captured after a period of close pressure, Japs were found at the bottom of their holes firing straight up in the air terrified to put more than their rifles above ground.

32. (a) Ground gained should be held however small the gain. On several occasions, attacks which at the end of the day seemed to have gained part only of their objectives were found in the morning to have been completely ineffective as the enemy had withdrawn from the whole of his positions.

(b) As the enemy is never prepared to surrender he has only two alternatives other than death when he feels his position untenable. He can break and run or he can sneak away by night. In attacking, our troops should all realise that if they resolutely hold the gains, however small, and keep up pressure on the enemy, then, if he does not do the former, he will in time do the latter.

33. When use of arty and 3 inch mortars is restricted by our forward troops being too close upon the enemy, high expenditure of grenades and 2 inch mortar bombs must be anticipated.

34. The main faults in camouflage were :-

(a) The sacrifice of camouflage for convenience in that some sleeping quarters were built well above ground level on ridges with little camouflage or dispersion.

(b) The obvious use of skyline tracks simply because the track ran along the top of a ridge. Detours are necessary and must be policed.

(c) Cooking in defensive positions and sleeping areas. Every effort must be made to reduce smoke to a minimum and where possible cooking should be done to a flank away from defensive positions.

(d) Positions not properly dug or constructed. Some overhead cover is essential to reduce casualties from shelling and mortaring. The material for overhead cover should not be cut within the area as the natural camouflage is destroyed.

- 25 -
- (u) Tendency to sunbake and sit about in groups in exposed positions with the knowledge that enemy posts are as close as 300 or 400 yards.
 - (f) Insufficient care with ^{recs}map and photo reading.

35. Advance Guard Against Enemy Rear Guard

- (a) Operations of this kind were generally orthodox during the pursuit phase of the campaign.
- (b) At this stage the enemy could often be driven from his positions by arty fire alone.
- (c) He did not hold the high ground on the flank of the coastal track or take advantage of the long fields of fire offered by extensive patches of kunai. He occupied narrow positions astride the track a few yards in from the edge of the ti ber where the track passed from kunai into patches of jungle and held his fire until the leading elements of the vanguard were close upon him.
- (d) In these conditions it was found best after contact was made to withdraw the vanguard to a safe distance and shell the area of the enemy position even if its extent was not fully known. In some cases tanks were brought into action.
- (e) These methods often caused the enemy to go without it being necessary to commit inf to an attack and casualties were thus avoided.

36. Positive steps must be taken to prevent the development of a "cut-off", "surrounded" or "tight perimeter" complex when a unit is forced on the defensive in the jungle.

- 37. (a) When there is any risk of a unit's normal supply route being interrupted by the enemy adequate reserves of ammunition and supplies should be in its posts.
- (b) It is important to make resort to these reserves for any length of time, unnecessary. Men who are expending their reserves because normal access has been cut off feel besieged. If an alternative route is opened and regular supply and evacuation resumed their confidence is increased.
- 38. (a) On occasions normal communications were cut by enemy parties establishing themselves across the track in rear of our positions and at the same time the enemy was established on our flanks. But no case occurred of a unit being literally surrounded; and it is thought that this is not very likely to occur.
- (b) When troops are apparently "cut off" aggressive patrolling is especially important. Morale is stimulated; the enemy's limits are discovered; new roundabout routes into our own positions are found; and it is realised that the "siege" is over.

39. When attacked and cut off the first determination of all commanders and troops in the jungle as elsewhere must be to yield no ground.

40. The common use of the word "perimeter" in jungle operations causes misconceptions which may prove dangerous.

- 41. (a) This term is generally taken to mean a closely manned, more or less circular area astride a track in which a unit or subunit bivouacs for the night when it is moving in contact or possible contact with the enemy.
- (b) But there is some tendency to regard such perimeters not as expedients for the security of a force temporarily bivouaced during mobile operations but as normal dispositions for a defensive battle in the jungle.

42. The disadvantages of close perimeter defences are :-

- (a) They tend to limit the ground held regardless of its tactical significance.
- (b) By limiting the ground held, they increase the risk of the force being in fact really surrounded and they restrict the opportunities for aggressive patrolling and internal freedom of manoeuvre.
- (c) They tend to be overcrowded and thus vulnerable to enemy heavy weapons and unsatisfactory for hygiene and administrative reasons.
- (d) They are bad for morale, as they tend to be essentially passive and to enhance the "cut-off" feeling.

43. Defences should be dug in and concealed where possible.

44. Lanes of fire and visibility are advisable in defence in order to regain and utilise the fire power of automatic weapons.

45. Wherever possible vegetation should be cleared to provide extensive fields, not merely lanes, of view and fire. Bulldozers will do this speedily; but if they cannot be used much can be done with machettes and axes to clear all light growth.

- 46. (a) This policy prevents the enemy getting so close to our positions that he cannot be safely engaged by arty and mortars.
- (b) It also enables a greater area to be held as ground between defended localities can be effectively covered by observed fire.
- (c) Surprise can still be achieved if clearings are correctly sited and the cutting of fields of fire which attackers must cross need not seriously prejudice concealment of actual firing positions.
- (d) Fewer men were needed forward when fire lanes had been cut and then weapon pits ten yards apart were in most cases, quite satisfactory. The economy in men permitted the holding of mobile reserves for fighting or for carrying etc.

47. The thicker the jungle in front of our position the more important it is that it be immediately explored. Thick growth obscures the conformation of the ground. Small rises and reentrants are not apparent. But their existence must be discovered if our weapons are to be sited to the best advantage. For example, it has been said of the MMG that it clears its own fire lane. That in a sense is true; but it cannot clear a fire lane through a bank of earth or coral.

- 48. (a) The selection of ground to be held in defence in jungle is dictated by the same considerations as elsewhere with emphasis on the following matters.
- (b) The main approaches are tracks which usually follow ridges and sometimes creek and river beds in their lower reaches.
- (c) The tactical value of high ground is diminished if it is in thick jungle as it offers no better observation than low ground. A hill feature on the flank or a track gives little control of the track if nothing can be seen from it.
- (d) The best places for controlling a track are where it follows a knife edge ridge.

- (e) Water is often difficult to obtain in the mountains. But provision should be made for holding a water point within every defended position. Springs must be looked for and cocks constructed as soon as the position is occupied. Some reserve of water in containers should be maintained in each post.

Patrols

49. (a) In general patrols should be of not less than one pl strength.
- (b) It is not easy for any white patrol however small moving in jungle to detect the presence of concealed enemy without being itself seen. The reason for keeping recon patrols small "to see without being seen", may often therefore give way to a policy of "safety in numbers".
50. The best composition for a patrol was found to be one pl with attached; a small group (three or four men) of PIB if available, one or two signalmen with light cable, antiarty and (depending on the range) three inch mortar FOOs. The keenest senses of the PIB made them invaluable when working with the forward scouts to give warning of the enemy.
51. Ground found free of enemy by patrols cannot be presumed to remain so. If it is of tactical importance that it be held it should be occupied at once and further troops sent forward to reinforce the patrol if necessary.
52. (a) The object of a patrol must be definite and quite clear to the leader before he starts. Indefinite missions are of no more value in the jungle than elsewhere.
- (b) In particular, if a patrol is to go to a particular place, it must be clear whether it if meets opposition on the track it is to remain and engage the enemy there or return, or break off contact and seek to reach its original objective by another route. Patrol leaders must not be deterred from their object by contact with the enemy..
53. Patrols moved slowly in close country and are at times out for two days or more. When possible, line communications should normally be maintained except in the case of land patrols.

Night Patrols

54. (a) Offensive night operations were not undertaken by us.
- (b) Movement by night in jungle is difficult; and because of the opportunities of concealed approach by day is of much less value than in open country.
- (c) Any large scale night operations are not recommended. but small parties might perhaps use night for placing ambushes or snipers for action at first light. This was not attempted. It might not be practicable in thick jungle but might be done in coconut plantations or kunai.

Appendix "F" to 9 Aust Dist
Report on Operations.
2 Oct 43 - 15 Jan 44.

AIR OPERATIONS

A/C ENGAGED	TARGET	REMARKS
11 Mitchells	Rail Coast - barge sweep	9 Barges attacked - results unobserved.
9 Bostons) 12 Vultees)	Enemy posns - SISI and SATELBERG	Rain and low clouds over SISI - results unobserved. Large explosions at SATELBERG, possible amn dumps. Buildings destroyed.
9 Bostons) 11 Vultees)	Close sp - enemy posns SATELBERG area.	Bombing and strafing reported accurate. Large explosion and column of smoke from rear of prominent building at SATELBERG.
27 Mitchells) 5 Marauders) 36 Mitchell)	Dumps and bivouac areas SIO - PESCHEL PT (west of SIO)	Fires started, otherwise unobserved due to heavy jungle.
5 Mitchells 9 Mitchells	" " " " " "	SIO MISSION and a number of huts destroyed.
9 Mitchells) 9 Bostons)	REISS PT (west of SIO) to NARRARIVA	Bombing and strafing bivouac areas and dumps. Huts destroyed.
9 Bostons) 10 Vultees)	Close sp - enemy posns SATELBERG area	Bombing and strafing reported accurate.
61 Liberator :) 19 Mitchells)	Enemy held villages PINENI-SATELBERG area. Supply lines west of SCARLET BEACH.	A/C maintained attack for 1 hour.
9 Bostons	SATELBERG area	Enemy dump and bivouac areas. WAREO and SATELBERG villages demolished. 30 tons of bombs dropped.
9 Bostons	" "	Bombing and strafing enemy posns - accurate.
2 Thunderbolts	Mouth of SATELBERG R	Suspected dump area. Bombing and strafing reported accurate.
	SIO - NO. 10. MISSION PT	Barge sweep - Two barges destroyed. NOMI. SIO MISSION strafed. 30 huts at SIALUM. Huts strafed. Fires started.

DATE	A/C ENGAGED	TARGET	REMARKS
8 Nov	12 Vultees 15 Thunderbolts	NABALIVA and track south	Suspected dump and bivouac area at NABALIVA. Dive bombing and strafing.
12 Nov	6 Marauders 11 Mitchells	ALARI area (west of SIO)	Barge staging point and bivouac area. Fires started in target area.
14 Nov		ALARI-WALINGAI	Barge hunt - nil sightings. Track WALINGAI-ZAGAHEMI strafed.
16 Nov		GUSILA-FIOR-MAREO-MASATENG R- WALINGAI-KELANO.	Enemy maintenance areas. Bombing and strafing.
18 Nov	6 Marauders 24 Mitchells	MASANGKOO area	Suspected dump area. 42 tons bombs dropped. Probable ammunition dump hit in centre of target.
19 Nov	9 Bostons 21 Mitchells 6 Marauders 8 Bostons	FATELBERG KULUNGTOFU GUSILA-MUZEN	Suspected dump and bivouac area. Bombing and strafing - results not observed. Dump area. 38 tons bombs dropped. Direct hits observed on huts and dumps. Bombing and strafing along coast track.
20 Nov	24 Mitchells 8 Marauders 9 Bostons	KULUNGTOFU area (centre of inland HUBE area) FIAR to HARDENBERG PT	Dump area. Direct hits were observed on huts and in the villages. Barge sweep. Coconut grove and tracks bombed and strafed. Results not observed.
21 Nov	11 Bostons	MASANGKOO-FIOR-KULANKO-MAREO- ZAGAHEMI	Enemy dump and bivouac areas. Bombing and strafing. Results not observed.
22 Nov	16 Mitchells 3 Bostons	MAREO-JOANGENG area WALINGAI and AGO	Bombing and strafing: tracks and dumps. Results not observed. Villages and coast track bombed and strafed.
23 Nov	15 Mitchells 6 Bostons	FATELBERG-MOTENG	Enemy bivouac areas. MOTENG accurately bombed - target indicated by arty smoke shells. Villages and tracks JOANGENG-KULUNGTOFU bombed and strafed.
24 Nov	9 Mitchells 10 Marauders	KELANO	Villages, dumps and bivouac areas bombed.

DATE	A/C ENGAGED	TARGET	REMARKS
24 Nov	9 Mitchells } 6 Bostons }	KALISA - SIALUH IS	Suspected bivouac and dump areas. Bombed and strafed villages and tracks. Fires started. A gun at HARDENBERG PT destroyed.
26 Nov	28 Mitchells } 8 Marauders }	MARABETH	Suspected dump area and barge hideout. Fires started. 54 tons bombs dropped.
27 Nov	18 Mitchells 6 Mitchells	BONGA	Enemy def position. 27 tons bombs dropped. One large explosion; fires started. Supply dropping to 2/32 Bn at P.B.U.
28 Nov	7 Marauders } 9 Mitchells } 18 Mitchells } 9 Bostons	BONGA SAILOR (west of SIO) - FORTIFICATION PT. KALISA - SIALUH	Enemy def position. 23 tons bombs dropped. Barge sweep - nil sightings. Coast defences bombed and strafed. Bombing and strafing along track. Some explosions at KALISA.
30 Nov	18 Mitchells 11 Bostons	KALISA BAZULUO - MASAWENG R	Dump and bivouac areas. 27 tons bombs dropped. accurate - several explosions in target area. Suspected enemy L of G. Bombing and strafing tracks BAZULUO-LAKONA-MASAWENG R.
2 Dec	9 Mitchells } 10 Marauders }	SOWI R	Barge off-loading points and dumps. Bombing accurate. 29 tons bombs dropped.
4 Dec	18 Bostons 19 Mitchells	BLUGHEE PT - WANDOKAI KALISA - SIO IS	Bombing and strafing coastal track and villages and suspected dump area at mouth of R SANGA. Some explosions and black smoke seen. . . . Suspected dump areas. Some explosions and black smoke seen at SIO IS.
5 Dec	6 Bostons	KILLIGIDU PT	Bombing and strafing enemy occupied areas.
6 Dec	9 Bostons 12 Mitchells	" " " " " " LAKONA - KILLIGIDU	" " " " " " Enemy dump areas. Bombing accurate. Escort strafed fuel dump LAKONA.
7 Dec	21 Bostons	WANDOKAI - NULU PT	Suspected dump areas and L of G. Bombing and strafing coastal track and village.

DATE	A/C ENGAGED	TARGET	REMARKS
8 Dec	10 Marauders 11 Mitchells	WANDOKAI MELAKA	Dump area. 15 tons bombs dropped. " " 13 " " "
9 Dec	9 Bostons 10 Mitchells	WANDOKAI - MASAMENG R HUBIKA	Dump areas and Loft. Bombing and strafing coastal track and villages. Dump area 15 tons bombs dropped.
13 Dec	4 Airacobras	FORTIFICATION ET - SAIDOR	Barge sweep. 10 barges strafed, believed destroyed.
14 Dec	5 Thunderbolts	" " "	Barge sweep. 2 barges strafed.
16 Dec	10 Mitchells 9 Marauders	SLO MELAKA	Dump and bivouac areas bombed. " " " " "
17 Dec	9 Mitchells	MELAKA	" " " " "
18	11 Bostons 12 Bostons	KANOKI WALINGAI	Dump areas bombed and strafed. " " " " "
19 Dec	12 Bostons 10 Mitchells 6 Airacobras	MELAKA-NUZEN NUZEN RAI Coast	Coastal track and dump areas bombed and strafed. Barge off-loading point bombed and strafed. Barge sweep.
20 Dec	12 Mitchells 5 Marauders	WANDOKAI MELAKA	Dump areas bombed. Suspected bn area; large explosion seen.
21 Dec	11 Bostons	WANDOKAI-WALINGAI-AGO	Bombing and strafing enemy occupied areas - bombing accurate.
22 Dec	12 Boston } 8 Marauders }	WANDOKAI - HUBIKA	Bombing and strafing suspected dumps. 14 tons bombs dropped.
23 Dec	24 Boston	MELAKA	Bombing and strafing barge hide-outs. 10 tons bombs dropped. Three barges destroyed, 2 damaged by strafing.
24 Dec	20 Boston	MELAKA	Bombing and strafing barge hide-outs. Three barges damaged.

DATE	A/C ENGAGED	TARGET	REMARKS
27 Dec	18 Mitchells 12 Bostons	AS-UNCAI-KANONI	Bombing and strafing suspected dumps. 29 tons of bombs dropped.
29 Dec	5 Liberators	310	Enemy bivouac area bombed.
30 Dec	12 Mitchells	NAMBARIWA	Bombing and strafing barge hide-outs.
4 Jan	10 Marauders 9 Mitchells	NAMBARIWA	Bombing barge hide-outs: 27 tons bombs dropped. Bombing accurate, fires observed.
5 Jan	8 Thunderbolts	Coast Patrol	One barge destroyed at NAMBARIWA, two off CHISSI IS and two in SCHLANGEN HARBOUR.
10 Jan	12 Bostons	NAMBARIWA - 310	Bombing and strafing bivouac areas.

NOTE: Air ops listed above are only those carried out in 9 Aust Div area of operations or adjoining areas directly affecting 9 Aust Div ops. Fighter interceptions by patrols and/or requests through FC Liaison Party 5 AF attached 9 Aust Div are not included.

Appendix "G" to 9th Aust Div Report on Operations
2 Oct 43 - 15 Jan 44.

WEL OES 2 OCT 43 - 15 JAN 44

x Destroyed includes craft probably destroyed. Damaged includes possibly destroyed.

Time	Vicinity	Destroyed ^x	Damaged ^x	Remarks
am	SIO	4 type A		Heading SE loaded with tps
night	KELANOA HARBOUR			1 beached barge strafed
"	NANDA	1 Type A 1 large MLC		4 barges encountered, all of which re- turned our fire. Some cas to MFB area.
"	BLUCHER PT	1 large MLC	1 Type A	MTBs were engaged by shore guns.
"	WALINGAI	2 Type A	1 Type A	Barges were heading south and appeared empty.
"	BLUCHER PT	2 Type A		Heading SE and appeared empty.
"	KELANOA HARBOUR	4 Type A	1 Large MLC	Heading SE loaded with stores. MTBs were engaged by shore guns.
2340	North of BLUCHER PT			Two type I submarines surfaced. Engaged with torpedoes, direct hits scored. Subs submerged. A large area of dis- coloured water seen, but no wreckage observed.
2300	WALINGAI	4 Type A		
night	"	3 Type A		
0112	CAPE KING HILLMAN	2 Type A		Loaded with tps moving north.

Date	Time	Vicinity	Destroyed ^I	Damaged ^{II}	Remarks
12 Nov	0900	KUZEN	4 Type A		Barges were beached when engaged. All set on fire. MTBs were engaged by shore guns.
13/14 Nov	night	KETANGA HARBOUR	2 Type A		
"	"	WALINGAI	1 Type A	1 Type A	
15/16 Nov	"	CAPE KING WILLIAM	1 Type A		Four barges encountered moving south. MTBs were engaged by heavy fire from shore guns.
16/17 Nov	"	SIAL'U	1 Type A		
22/23 Nov	"	SIOU	3 Type A		Barges were loaded
"	"	ELUCHER PT	5 Type A		Four barges encountered moving south. loaded. MTBs were engaged by shore guns.
24/24 Nov	"	HARDENBERG PT	2 Type A		Six barges encountered. loaded and moving south.
24/25 Nov	"	CAPE KING WILLIAM	2 Type A		Moving south.
4/5 Dec	"	NANPAIWA			Five bundles each of 200 bags containing rice etc. and three rafts with heavy boxes suspended below believed amn. All believed to be deck cargo of submarine. All destroyed.

Date	Time	Vicinity	Destroyed ^x	Damaged ^x	Remarks
6/7 Dec	Night	DORFER BAY (west of SHO)	4 Type A		Loaded and moving south. Two sank. Two destroyed on the beach.
7/8 Dec	"	REISS PT (west of SHO)	1 Type A 1 Type B		Unloaded and moving north. Type B sank, Type A destroyed on the beach.
9/10 Dec	"	REISS PT	2 Type B 3 Type A		Moving north.
"	"	HARDENBERG PT	1 Type A 1 large MLC		Barges were lying to 150 yards off HARDENBERG PT, all appeared empty. MLCs came under heavy fire from shore guns.
11/12 Dec	"	SANGA R mouth	3 Type A		1 x 70 ft enemy barge armed with 20mm gun escaped. Heavy fire from shore guns.
12/13 Dec	"	REISS PT	6 Type A 2 Type B 1x80/100 ft barge		All believed fully loaded.
18/19 Dec	"	REISS PT	7 Type B 2x80/100 ft barges		All moving north empty.
"	"	ZALINGAI	1 Type B		Loaded and moving south.
21/22 Dec	"	"	2 Type A		" " " "
22/23 Dec	"	REISS PT	4 Type A 2 Type B		Moving north empty.
"	"	SCHARNEGORST PT	1 Type A	3 Type A	Moving south loaded. MLCs came under heavy fire from shore guns.

Date	Time	Vicinity	Destroyed	Damaged	Remarks
24 Dec	0630	GNEISSNAU PT	1 Type A 1 Piquet boat 1 submarine barge		Submarine barge appeared to be designed for towing by a submarine, either surfaced or underwater. All craft were beached when engaged by MTBs. Moving SE empty
26 Dec	0650	NAMBARIWA	1 Type A 1 Type B 1 Type B 1x80 ft barge		Moving SE. Shore guns engaged MTBs.
1 Jan	2035	VINCKE PT (West of SIO)			Moving north, one loaded with tps. MTBs fired on by shore guns.
2 Jan	2200	NAMBARIWA	2 Type A		Moving west.
3 Jan	0030	REISS PT	2 Type B		Two rafts carrying food and medical supp. Both destroyed by MTBs.
7 Jan	2100	NAMBARIWA			One submarine 1½ miles offshore. Sub dived when attacked. No results observed.
"	2135	"			Destroyed on beach. Tps on beach engaged MTBs.
9/10 Jan	night	"	1 Type A		One loaded with 70/100 tps, one on beach loaded with amn. Moving east.
"	"	HERZWARTH PT (West of SIO)	4 large MLC		Loaded and moving east.
"	"	RIMBA (West of SIO)	3 barges		On the beach
"	"	MARAKUN (West of SIO)	3 barges		

Date	Time	Vicinity	Destroyed ^X	Damaged ^X	Remarks
9/10 Jan	night	POMMERN BAY			40/50 boxes of food adrift destroyed.
9 Jan	2318	BIBI (west of SIO)	6 Type A		Barges destroyed on the beach.
10 Jan	0030	DORFER BAY	1 Type B	2 Type A 3 Type B	Barges were moving NW loaded with tps. All were armed and attempted to fight off MTB attack.
"	0427	WEBER PT (west of SIO)	1 Special 1 Type B	6 Special	All loaded with tps heading NW. Armed and attempted to fight off MTB attack.
10/11 Jan	night	REISS PT	3 Type A		Moving NW loaded with approx 30 persons each. Armed with 37mm and small arms.
11 Jan	0730	SIO IS	2 Type A 1 Lifeboat		Beached and loading pers. mainly natives.
15 Oct to 11 Jan 44.		LANGELIK BAY to POMMERN BAY	84 Type A 21 Type B 7 Large MLC 4x80/100 ft b 1 special MLC 1 sub barge 1 piquet boat 1 lifeboat	8 Type A 5 Type B 1 large MLC 6 special MLC	

NOTES: The above summary includes only those MTB ops which had a direct bearing on 9 East Div ops. MTBs patrolled the east coast of the HUC PERMANLY every night except when the weather conditions made it necessary to cancel patrols. LOS from 9 East Div controlled patrols nightly and passed on any information gained by ground troops and at the same time received information of MTB patrols and results of previous night patrols. Records of lifeboats prior to 15 Oct 43 are not available.

TABLE SHOWING JAP UNITS EAST OF SIO INVOLVED IN
OPERATIONS AGAINST 9 AUST DIV 22 SEP 43 - 15 JAN 44.

(a) Units which arrived before our capture of
FINSCHHAFFEN 2 Oct 43 :-

<u>Unit</u>	<u>Strength</u>	<u>Remarks</u>
Naval troops incl 85 Garrison) Unit and 15 AA Defence Unit)	1,000	Only 300 effectives left after capture of FINSCHHAFFEN 2 Oct; probably with- drawn during Oct.
1 Shipping Gp HQ (Maj Gen YAMADA) with attachments:- One sec 30 Indep Engr Regt One Sec 36 Indep Engr Regt Portion 8 Shipping Engr Regt Stores Depot	100	Withdrew during Nov.
80 Inf Regt less I Bn and 5 Coy	2652	Movement Order Strength.
Reinforcements for I Bn 80 Regt	100	
238 Inf Regt: 2 and 5 Coys, Regtl Gun Coy, QF Gun Coy and 2 Bn Gun Pl	440	From 41 Div
III Bn 26 Fd Arty Regt less 7 Bty	250	
OKANO Coy, 102 Inf Regt	100	From 51 Div
One Pl 11 Coy 21 Inf Regt	30	From 5 Div
One pl 21 Indep Mixed Bde	30	
One coy 21 Lt Trench Mortar Bn	125	Probably 3 Coy
24 AA Unit (portion of 50 Indep AA Unit and of 19 Indep AA Unit attached)	100	May have arrived later.
20 Div Sig Sec	38	Movement Order Strength.
1 Fd Hosp 20 Div	84	" " "
41 Div Casualty Collecting Unit	80	
4 Fd Hosp 51 Div	80	
Total	5209	

(b) Units which arrived after 2 Oct :-

HQ 20 Div	100	Movement Table Strength:
79 Inf Regt	3196	" " "
8 Coy 78 Inf Regt	70	" " "
HQ and II Bn 26 Fd Arty Regt	580	" " "
7 Bty 26 Fd Arty Regt	60	Evacuees from LAE
20 Engr Regt	580	Movement table Strengths
20 Div Sigs	130	" " "
20 Tpt Regt less 3 and 4 Coys	440	" " "
33 Indep Engr Regt less 2 Coy	600	" " "
20 Div Medical personnel	470	" " "
II Bn 238 Inf Regt less 5 and 6 Coys with one pnr pl attached	500	
I Bn 80 Inf Regt	500	KANONI Defence Unit; evacuees from LAE.
Three coys of 51 Div	150	Engaged on tpt duties.

(b) Units which arrived after 2 Oct (Cont)

Elements incl 3 Coy, of 880 Inf	
Regt evacuees from LAE	100
HQ and 8 Coy 81 Lt Trench Mortar Bn	150
	<u>7486</u>

GRAND TOTAL	<u>18,086</u>
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NOTE: 80 Div also had under command 6 Shipping Engr Regt. This is not included above, because it was based on NAMBARIWA and was not engaged in land operations.

REINFORCEMENTS:

No allowance is made above for reinforcements. From PW statements, it appears practically no reinforcements reached units prior to retreat from GUSIKA & WAREO line. However, confirmatory evidence from PW captured both by 9 Aust Div and by SAIDOR FORCE indicated that 200 reinforcements for 80 Inf Regt and 800 for 79 Inf Regt reached GILI during Dec. It is known that some of these reinforcements moved east of SIO. 40 reinforcements for 80 Inf Regt got as far as HUBIKA, and 55 reinforcements joined II Bn 80 Inf Regt at KANSARUA on 27 Dec. As to the reinforcements for 79 Inf Regt, a PW stated an officer left from Regt HQ 4 Dec to bring them forward. Another PW from 8 MG Coy 79 Inf Regt claimed that about 27 Dec near SIALUM he spoke with a soldier who was a reinforcement for 2 MG Coy 79 Inf Regt. PW was told that about 70 reinforcements had arrived for this coy, and they were retreating along the coast, because 2 MG Coy was withdrawing inland and could not be contacted. On the whole, it appears a substantial proportion of the 1,000 reinforcements moved east of SIO but no allowance is made for this in above table.

Appx "J" to 9 Aust Div
Report on Operations 2 Oct 44 -
15 Jan 44,

ORDER OF BATTLE, 9 AUST DIV, AS AT 15 DEC 43

NOTE: FINNSHILLEN Base Sub Area was at this time under operational command of 9 Aust Div.

Order of Service

Unit

HQ

Adv HQ 9 Aust Div
Rear HQ 9 Aust Div
A Coy 2/1 Aust Gd Regt less 1, B; 4 Pz
B Sec FSW

QdV

8/4 Aust Cav (Commando) Sqn

ARMED

1 Aust Tk Bn, less B Sqn

ARMY

HQ 9 Aust Div
2/6 Aust Fd Regt
2/12 Aust Fd Regt
2/4 Aust Lt AA Regt
2/3 Aust Lt AA Bty (Airborne)
2/1 Aust Comp AA Regt
11 Aust Tk A Bty
M Aust Hy Bty
2 Aust Mtn Bty (less sec)
1 Fd Sec 2/3 Aust Svy Bty
5 Aust Svy Bty
9 Det 1 Mob Met Flt
84 Aust AASL Bty

BRQ

HQ 9 Aust Div
2/3 Aust Fd Coy
2/7 Aust Fd Coy
2/13 Aust Fd Coy
2/24 Aust Fd Pk Coy
2/22 Aust Camflg Unit
3 Op Pl 2/1 Aust Mech Egmt Coy
Det 5 Aust Fd Sqn

RSR

Sigs 9 Aust Div
2/43 Aust Cipher Sec
2/6 Aust Fd Regt Sig Sec
2/12 Aust Fd Regt Sig Sec
2/4 Aust Lt AA Regt Sig Sec
2/1 Aust Comp AA Regt Sig Sec
5 Aust Engr Sig Sec
4 Aust Inf Ede Sig Sec
20 Aust Inf Bde Sig Sec
24 Aust Inf Bde Sig Sec
26 Aust Inf Bde Sig Sec
2/1 Aust Beach Sig Sec
Det 25 Aust W/T Task Sec

INF

HQ 20 Aust Inf Bde
1 Pl 2/1 Aust Gd Regt
2/13 Aust Inf Bn
2/15 Aust Inf Bn
2/17 Aust Inf Bn
HQ 24 Aust Inf Bde
8 Pl 2/1 Aust Gd Regt
8/28 Aust Inf Bn
8/22 Aust Inf Bn
8/45 Aust Inf Bn

Infantry Service

Unit

Inf (Cont)

Hq 88 Aust Inf Bde
4 B1 2/1 Aust Gd Regt
2/88 Aust Inf Bn
2/84 Aust Inf Bn
2/48 Aust Inf Bn
Hq 4 Aust Inf Bde
28 Aust Inf Bn
29/46 Aust Inf Bn
37/52 Aust Inf Bn

9 Aust Div Carr Coy
A Coy PIB
H Coy PIB
B/2 Aust Md Bn

MO

PRR

B/3 Aust Pnr Bn

ASCO

Hq Comd ASCO 9 Aust Div
2/6 Aust Sup Depot Coy
2/156 Aust Gen Tpt Coy
Det 4 Aust Armd Bde Coy ASCO

AMBIDAN

B/8 Aust Fd Amb
B/8 Aust Fd Amb
B/11 Aust Fd Amb
4 Aust Fd Amb less A Coy
Det 6 Aust Lt Fd Amb
2/3 Aust CUS
B/3 Aust AMCU

DENTAL

D and E Secs 2/5 Aust Dental Unit
77 Aust Dental Unit

ORD

2/118 Aust Bde Ord Fd Pk
2/122 Aust Bde Ord Fd Pk
Det 2/123 Aust Bde Ord Fd Pk
1 Aust Tk Bn Ord Fd Pk

WKSHP

B/58 Aust LAD
B/59 Aust LAD
2/51 Aust LAD
2/67 Aust LAD
2/72 Aust LAD
2/76 Aust LAD
2/77 Aust LAD
2/78 Aust LAD
284 Aust LAD
2/4 Aust Lt Ad Regt Wkshp Sec
2/1 Aust Comp Ad Regt Wkshp Sec
84 Aust AAGE Bty Wkshp Sec
2/118 Aust Bde Wkshp
2/122 Aust Bde Wkshp
2/123 Aust Bde Wkshp
1 Aust Tk Bn Wkshp

MISC

9 Aust Div Pro Coy
9 Aust Div Fd Cash Office
9 Aust Div Postal Unit
9 Aust Div Salv Unit
9 Aust Div Sec Reception Camp

LHQ TROOPS UNDER COMD

Det 1 Aust AAPIU
Det ATIS
Det ANGAU
Det Public Relations
Det W/T Sec 4 AC Sqn
Det ADCS
GHQ LO Party

US TROOPS UNDER COMD

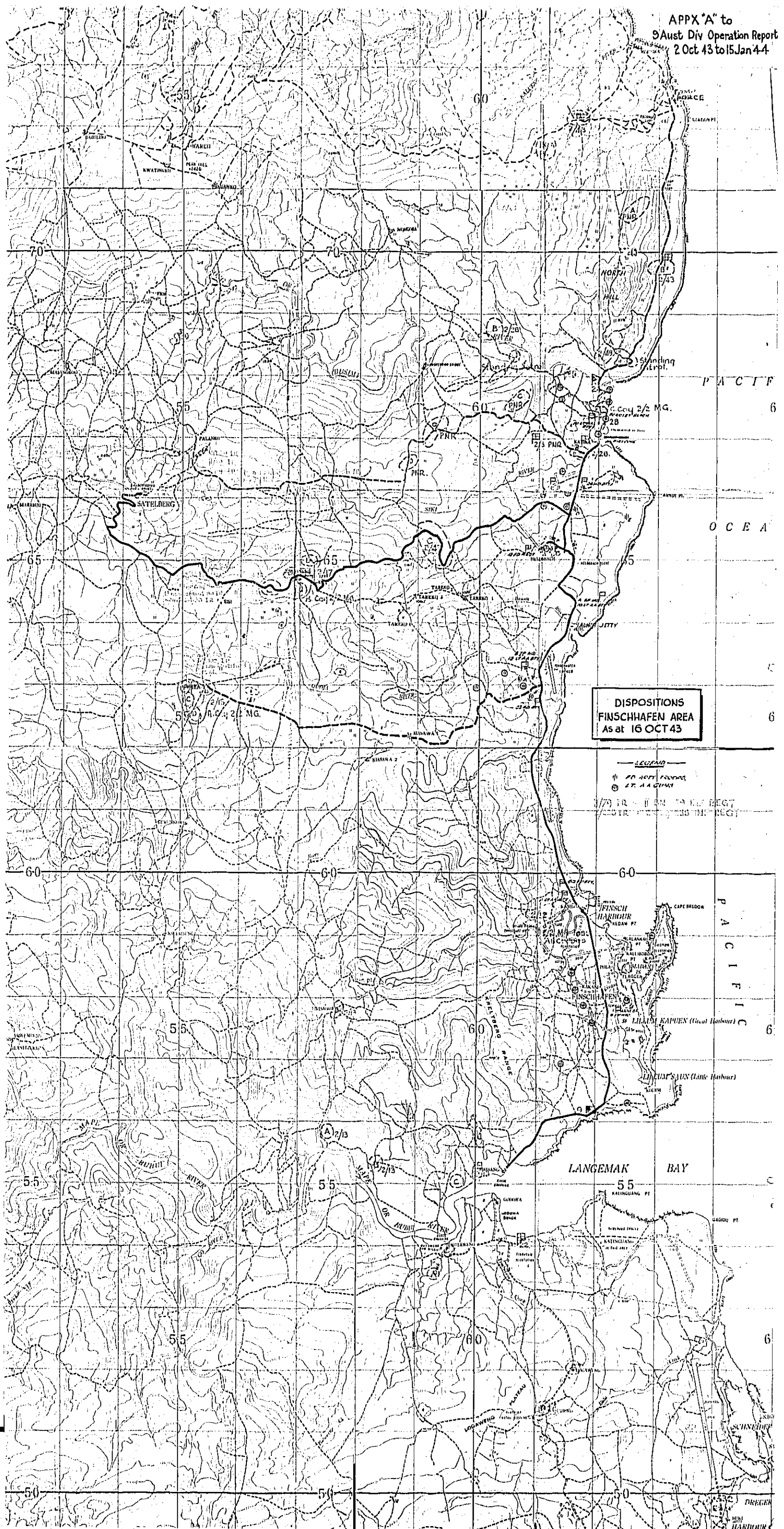
552 Regt 2 ESB less A and B Coys

US TROOPS IN SUPPORT

6 Air Liaison Party 5 AF

FINSCHLAFEN BASE SUB AREA

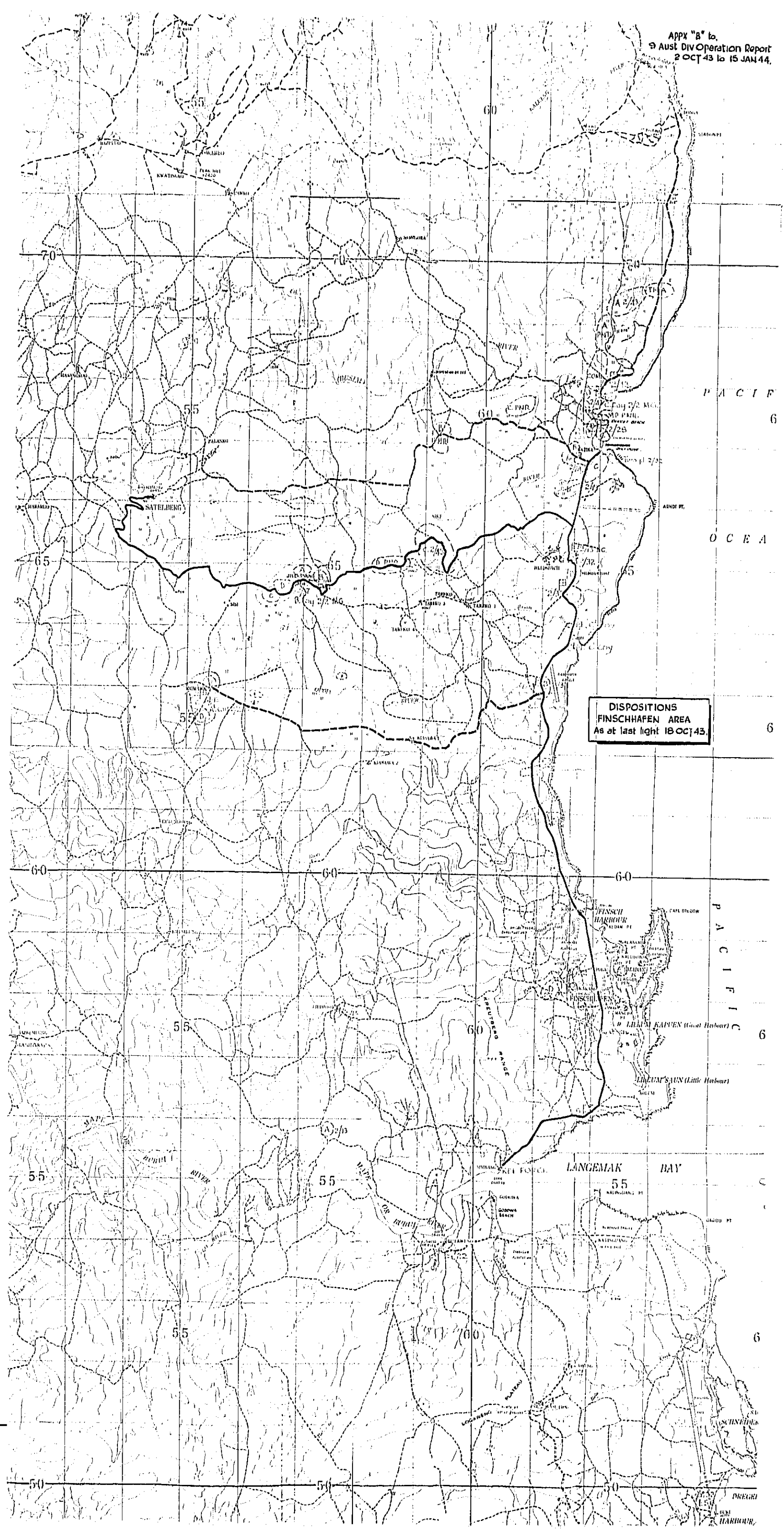
FINSCHLAFEN Base Sub Area HQ
18 Aust Fd Coy
7 Aust Docks Op Coy
2/25 Aust Corps Fd Pk Coy
Det 11 Aust Water Tpt Op Coy
2 Aust Fortress Sigs
19 L of C Sigs
HQ 23 Aust Sup Depot Coy
160 Aust Sup Depot Pl
161 Aust Sup Depot Pl
225 Aust Sup Depot Pl
56 Aust BIPOD Pl
2/104 Aust Gen Tpt Coy
4 Aust Fd Bakery
104 Aust FAD
44 Aust FOD
255 Aust LAD
2/65 Aust LAD
2/2 Aust CCS
Det 107 Aust Adv Depot Med Stores
Det ADCS
Det 2 Aust Corps Postal Unit
Det NG L of C Stationary Depot
Det 8 Aust Movement Control Op
9 Aust Graves Registration & Inquiries Unit
Det 2/1 Aust Army Topo Svy Coy
Loft 33 8 Aust Pigeon Sec
ANGAU



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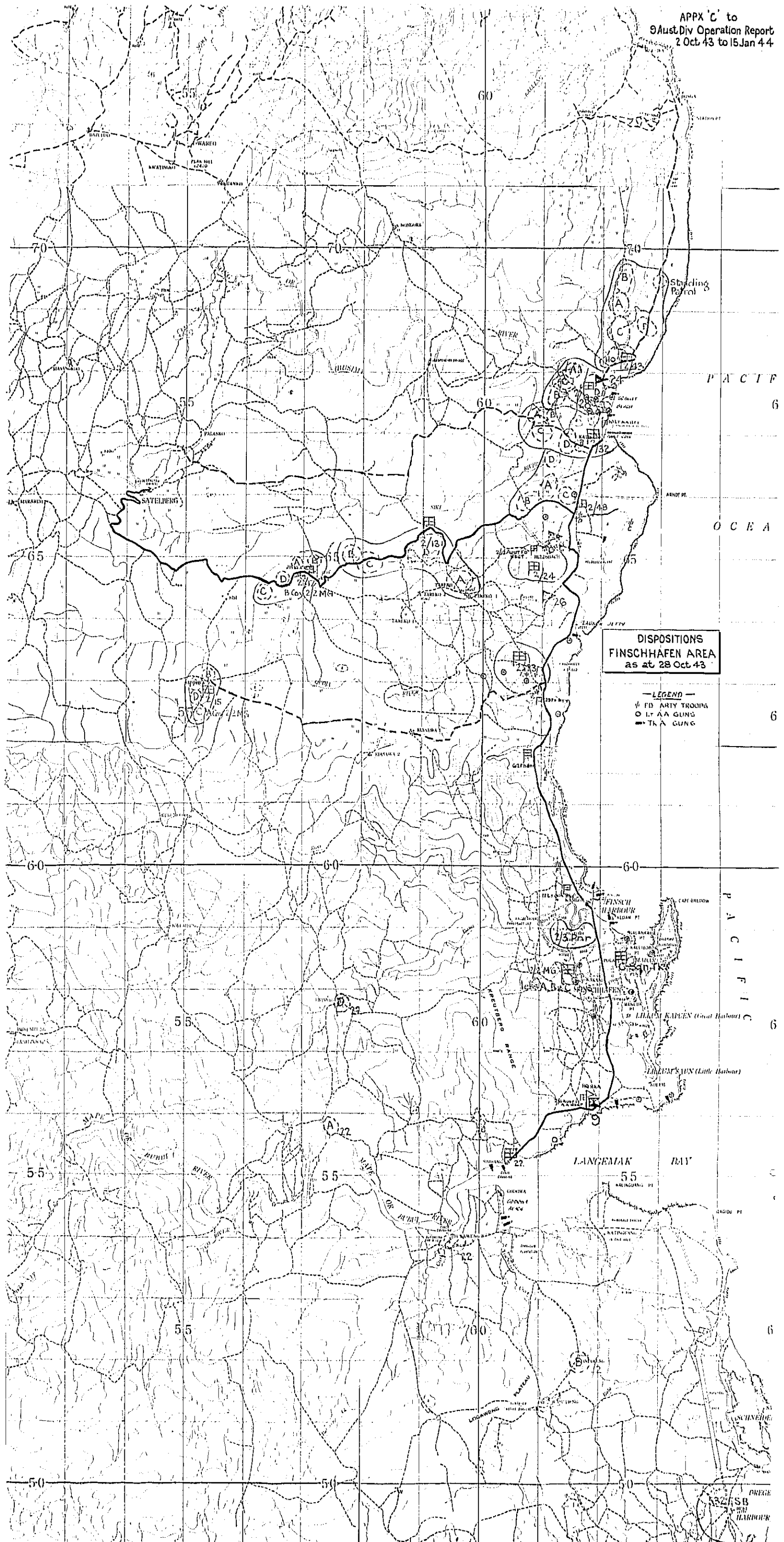
APPX "B" to
 3 Aust Div Operation Report
 2 OCT 43 to 15 JAN 44



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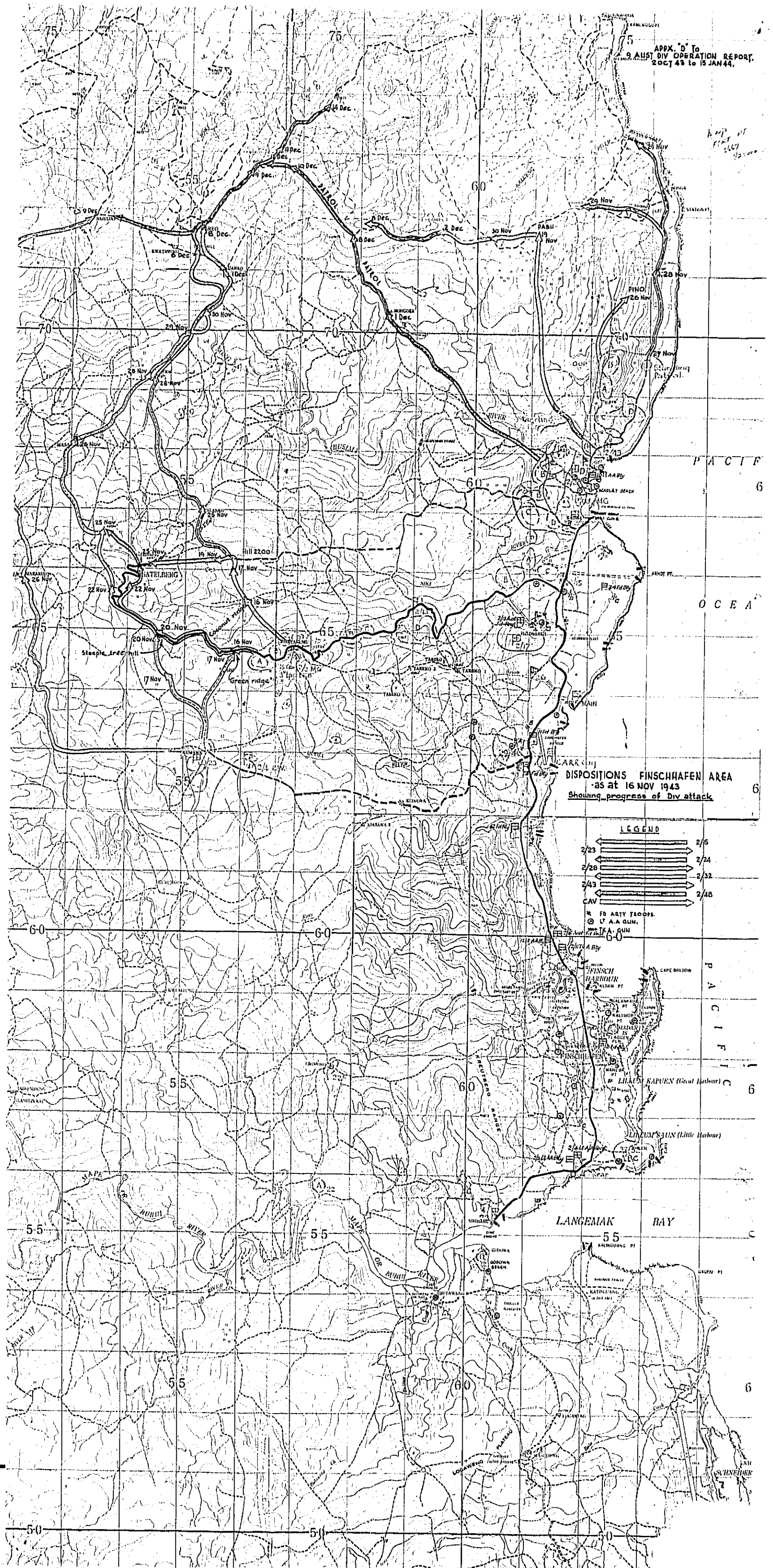
APPX 'C'



002186H



APPX 'D'



0021871



Appx 'E'

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