

D 793.52 History of the "TA" Operation  
.U 314 (Bougainville)  
dU

The following  
image(s) may be of  
poor quality due to  
the poor quality of  
the **original**.

DECLASSIFIED.  
DOD DIR 5200. 9

~~CONFIDENTIAL~~

HEADQUARTERS XIV CORPS  
Office of the A. C. of S., G-2

21 April 1944

\*\*\*\*\*  
\*  
\*  
\* HISTORY OF THE "TA" OPERATION \*  
\*  
\*  
\*  
\*\*\*\*\*

UBOU GAINVILLE

March 1944

~~CONFIDENTIAL~~

DECLASSIFIED.  
DOD DIR 5200. 9

*Colmayer fwd to*

DIST. BY	
PACIFIC BR. M. I. D.	
DATE	DATE
REC'D	FWD'D
PAC-1	STATE
R/S	SEA
FE <i>ap E-1</i>	SB
EUR	AAF
DISS	AIR
QMG	GOO
CWS	OB-1
ENC	CPDS <i>Pac-1</i>
MED	AGF
JANET	CG-3
CIG	<i>Int Sch-1</i>
IDASF	<i>Int Bd-1</i>
SIG	<i>FA Bd-1</i>
T/C	<i>FA Sch-1</i>
ORD	<i>ADIC-1</i>
OSRD	<i>MT+WW Bd-1</i>
ONI	<i>ADIC-1</i>
OSS	<i>hist Br-1</i>
COM	<i>Marine Corps-1</i>
PROP	<i>Miltutell Training Center, Camp Ritchie</i>

~~CONFIDENTIAL~~

LIST OF CONTENTS

SECRET.  
DOD DIR 5200.9

1. Units Involved in the Operation and Estimated Strengths.
2. Movement of Units to the TOROKINA AREA
  - a. General Plan of Assembly
  - b. Approach Marches of Major Components
    - (1) 13th Infantry Regiment
    - (2) 23rd Infantry Regiment
    - (3) 45th Infantry Regiment
    - (4) 53rd Infantry Regiment
    - (5) 81st Infantry Regiment
    - (6) 6th Field Artillery Regiment
    - (7) 4th Medium Artillery Regiment
3. General Plan of Attack.
4. Execution of the Attack.
  - a. Major Attacks
    - (1) IWASA BUTAI
    - (2) MAGATA BUTAI
  - b. Secondary Attacks
    - (1) MUDA BUTAI
  - c. Diversionary Attacks
    - (1) 3rd Bn, 81st Infantry Regiment
    - (2) 2nd Bn, 4th Garrison Unit
5. Withdrawal from Action
  - a. Major Elements
    - (1) IWASA BUTAI
    - (2) MAGATA BUTAI
    - (3) MUDA BUTAI
  - b. Minor Elements
    - (1) 3rd Bn, 81st Infantry Regiment
    - (2) 2nd Bn, 4th Garrison Unit
6. Composition and Estimated Strength of withdrawing Units
7. Observation and Comments
  - a. Movement of Troops and Supplies
  - b. Tactical Operations
8. Appendices
  - a. Artillery Annex
  - b. Map of BOUGAINVILLE showing Approach Routes.

~~CONFIDENTIAL~~

DECLASSIFIED  
DOD DIR 5200.9

- c. Map of Perimeter Area showing Assembly Areas
- d. Overlay illustrating enemy plan of Attack

LIST OF SOURCES

- 1. Combat Intelligence Center South Pacific Force
  - a. Estimated Enemy Order of Battle
- 2. XIV CORPS
  - a. Prisoner of War Interrogations
  - b. Translations of Captured Documents
  - c. Captured Maps
  - d. Daily Summary, AC of S., G-2
  - e. G-2 Periodic Report
- 3. 1st Marine Amphibious Corps and 3rd Marine Division
  - a. Prisoner of War Interrogations
  - b. Translations of Captured Documents
- 4. Americal Division and 37th Division
  - a. Prisoner of War Interrogations
  - b. Translations of Captured Documents
  - c. Captured Maps
  - d. Periodic Reports, AC of S., G-2

HISTORY OF THE "TA" OPERATION

The "TA" Operation is the name by which the March 1944 attack against the XIV CORPS perimeter was known to the enemy. The campaign was initiated by the assembling of the 6th Infantry Division and elements of the 17th Infantry Division, commencing about the middle of February 1944. The campaign ended with the retreat of the defeated remnants of the force to their former defense areas during the first part of April.

1. Units involved in the Operation and Estimated Strengths

The principal units participating in the attack against the XIV CORPS perimeter were elements from the following organizations. The strengths given was that estimated present.

<u>Organization</u>	<u>Estimated Strength</u>
6th Infantry Division	7,800
13th Infantry Regiment	1,700
23rd Infantry Regiment	2,800
45th Infantry Regiment	3,300
17th Infantry Division	1,400
53rd Infantry Regiment	400
81st Infantry Regiment	1,000

Total estimated strength of Principal Infantry Units 9,200

The principal supporting units for the operation were elements of the following organizations:

<u>Organization</u>	<u>Estimated Strength</u>
6th Infantry Division	3,600
6th Field Artillery Regiment	1,700
6th Engineer Regiment	600
6th Transport Regiment	500
6th Medical Unit	400
6th Division Signal Unit	100
6th Division Ordnance Unit	100
4th Field Hospital	200
Non Divisional Units Attached	2,600
4th Medium Artillery Regiment	400
10th Ind Mtn Artillery Regiment	300
3rd Infantry Mortar Battalion	500
1st Ind Machine Cannon Company	150
23rd Machine Cannon Company	150
31st Machine Cannon Company	150
19th Ind Engineer Regiment	200
2nd Field Hospital	100
39th Fd Road Construction Unit	50
4th Garrison Unit	600

Total estimated strength of Supporting Units 6,200

Total estimated strength of all Units participating 15,400

2. Movement of Units to the TOROKINA AREA

a. General Plan of Assembly

The projected plan of operations called for the assembly of the attacking force into four major components. These groupments were called: the IWASA BUTAI, the MAGATA BUTAI, the MUDA BUTAI, and the ARTILLERY GROUP. The principal elements of each of these groupments are listed below with their estimated strengths.

<u>IWASA BUTAI</u>	<u>Estimated Strength</u>	
13th Infantry Regiment	500	
2nd Battalion	500	
23rd Infantry Regiment	250	2,750
1st Battalion	500	
2nd Battalion	1000	
3rd Battalion	1000	
3rd Infantry Mortar Battalion		150
2nd Company	150	
6th Field Artillery Regiment	100	500
1st Battery	200	
2nd Battery	200	
6th Engineer Regiment	100	250
2nd Company (less 1 Plat)	150	
Total estimated strength of the IWASA BUTAI		4000

<u>MAGATA BUTAI</u>	<u>Estimated Strength</u>	
45th Infantry Regiment	250	3300
1st Battalion	1050	
2nd Battalion (less 8th Company)	950	
3rd Battalion (less 11th plus 8th Co)	1050	
3rd Infantry Mortar Battalion	50	350
1st Company	150	
3rd Company	150	
10th Independent Mountain Artillery Regiment	100	300
1st Battery	200	
6th Engineer Regiment		100
3rd Company (less 2 Platoons)	100	
31st Independent Machine Cannon Company	150	150
2nd Field Hospital (less 1/2)	100	100
Total estimated strength of the MAGATA BUTAI		4400

<u>MUDA BUTAI</u>	<u>Estimated Strength</u>	
13th Infantry Regiment	100	1200
1st Battalion	500	
3rd Battalion	600	
6th Engineer Regiment		150
1st Company	150	
Total estimated strength of the MUDA BUTAI		1350

<u>ARTILLERY GROUP</u>	<u>Estimated Strength</u>	
6th Field Artillery Regiment	200	1200
1st Battalion Headquarters	100	
3rd Battery	150	
3rd Battalion Headquarters	110	
7th Battery	160	
8th Battery	160	
9th Battery	160	

# CONFIDENTIAL

2nd Ammunition Train	80	
3rd Ammunition Train	80	
4th Medium Artillery Regiment		
1st Composite Battalion	80	450
Independent 10cm Howitzer Platoon	130	
2nd Battery	120	
3rd Composite Battery	120	
1st Independent Machine Cannon Company	150	150
23rd Machine Cannon Company	150	150

Total estimated strength of the ARTILLERY GROUP 1950

Total estimated strength of Principal Components 11,700

The general plan of assembly prescribed that the IWASA BUTAI should occupy the area in the rear of HILL 1111 under the command of Major General IWASA, the Commander of the 6th Division Infantry. All troops belonging to this force were scheduled to arrive on or before February 26.

The MAGATA BUTAI was to assemble to the northwest of the perimeter in the vicinity of NAMPEI MOUNTAIN, above the junction of JAVA CREEK and the LAUMA RIVER. This force was to be under the command of the commanding officer of the 45th Infantry Regiment, Col. MAGATA.

To the east of the perimeter, the MUDA BUTAI under the command of Col. MUDA, commanding officer of the 13th Infantry Regiment was to assemble in the vicinity of PEKO.

Also the east of the perimeter in the vicinity of HILL 600, the ARTILLERY GROUP was to assemble under the command of Col. SAITO, commander of the 6th Field Artillery Regiment.

## b. Approach Marches of Major Components:

### (1) 13th Infantry Regiment

The 13th Infantry Regiment was located in the Southern Sector of BOUGAINVILLE prior to the opening of the operation.

The 1st Battalion had participated in the attacks against the United States forces in the TOROKINA RIVER sector in November and early December. Indications are that the Battalion withdrew to NABOI and vicinity, remaining attached to the KAWANO DETACHMENT until its dissolution on the 26th of February. At this time, it reverted to the command of Col. MUDA and became part of the MUDA BUTAI. It is believed that this Battalion was assigned the mission of protecting the left flank of the attacking forces and the supply line from NABOI to HILL 1111, as well as serving as the regimental reserve unit for the MUDA BUTAI. During late February and early March the 1st Company was stationed at NABOI, the 2nd and 3rd Companies were patrolling the area between the SAUA and TOROKINA RIVERS south of the EAST-WEST Trail, and the 4th Company was probably in the vicinity of Battalion Headquarters at PEKO.

About the 15th of February, the 2nd Battalion was located in the vicinity of the mouth of the SAUA RIVER below PEKO, having moved up from the vicinity of MOSIGETTA earlier in the month. From here, it is presumed that the Battalion advanced behind the 23rd Infantry Regiment over the NEW TRAIL to the IWASA BUTAI assembly area behind HILL 1111. It arrived at the assembly area on or about the 26th of February.

It is known that the 3rd Battalion was stationed at MUGAI as late as the 14th of January. By the 1st of March, the Battalion had travelled as far as HILL 150, and by the 7th it had advanced to the area 2500 yards northeast of HILL 608.



~~CONFIDENTIAL~~

(2) 23rd Infantry Regiment

The 23rd Infantry Regiment was located in the Southern Sector prior to the start of the "TA" operation. The regiment, less the 2nd Battalion, had been the main force in the November-December attacks against the eastern front of the United States perimeter. The force was known as the KAWANO DETACHMENT, under the command of Lt. Col. KAWANO, Commanding Officer, 23rd Infantry Regiment, who relieved Col. HAMANOUE who was killed in action in the latter part of November. In addition to the elements of the 23rd Infantry, there was attached the 1st Battalion to 1st Battalion, 13th Infantry Regiment, the 2nd Company, 45th Infantry Regiment, the 1st and 2nd Batteries of the 1st Battalion, 6th Field Artillery Regiment, a 10cm Howitzer Platoon, two unidentified batteries of the 4th Medium Artillery, the 2nd and 3rd Companies of the 3rd Infantry Mortar Battalion the 2nd Company of the 6th Engineer Regiment, and the 3rd Company of the 39th Field Road Construction Unit. All of the components of this force later appeared in the "TA" operation.

After the attacks were broken off in the early part of December, the force withdrew, and the 23rd Infantry Command Post was located in the vicinity of HILL 150. Indications are that the 7th Company, the only element present from the 2nd Battalion, and the 1st Battalion, remained in the same general area.

The 2nd Battalion was stationed at MUGUAI as late as the 10th of February and by the 24th had proceeded to MAIKA. The 6th Company had been detached on the 19th of January and attached to the KAWANO DETACHMENT. This company reached the SAUA RIVER area about the 1st of February, and from the 8th to the 25th of the month was employed in reconnoitering HILLS 1111 and 700 and in the establishment of ammunition and supply dumps along the main route of advance. By the 3rd of March, the balance of the 2nd Battalion had reached the appointed assembly area in the vicinity of HILL 1111.

The 3rd Battalion returned to MUGUAI following the cessation of the early December operations, probably for the purpose of re-equipping and reorganizing the troops. The Battalion was located at MUGUAI as late as the 15th of February, and by the 24th of the month was in MAIKA. In the following few days, this unit accomplished the journey from MAIKA to the designated assembly area at HILL 1111, arriving about the 1st of March.

(3) 45th Infantry Regiment

This was the strongest, best trained and equipped regiment in the "TA" operation. In August, September, October, and again in the early part of February, special training was held in jungle warfare, stressing small unit tactics. Training in infiltration methods, use of the compass, and night movement was also given.

The 45th Regimental Headquarters was located at KIETA from May 1943 until early February 1944 when it moved to NUMA NUMA in preparation for the movement to the TOROKINA AREA. The 1st Battalion accompanied the Regimental Headquarters from KIETA to NUMA NUMA and from there proceeded directly inland over the NUMA NUMA TRAIL, reaching SHIOMAPAIA by the 5th of February. By the 12th of February, the advance company of the 1st Battalion had reached and occupied NAIPEI MOUNTAIN.

The 2nd and 3rd Battalions assembled at BUIN about the 1st of February to participate in maneuvers in preparation for the projected campaign. Commanders down to squad leaders were given instruction on the terrain in the TOROKINA AREA by means of a terrain model of the perimeter which showed all United States installations including the airfields and the road net. Combined training and maneuvers ended on the 12th of February, but the 2nd Battalion remained at ERVENTA to practice landing operations. Plans for the attack against the perimeter called for possible

CONFIDENTIAL

C O N F I D E N T I A L

sea borne invasion in the vicinity of the TOROKINA FIGHTER STRIP. The 2nd Battalion at this time was less one company, as it had been attached to the 3rd Battalion to replace the 11th company which was on guard duty at KIETA. The 11th company, 45th Infantry Regiment was identified as participating in the TOROKINA attack of late November. Loss sustained in this contact may be the reason for its relegation to a guard-duty assignment. On the 8th of March, the 2nd Battalion left ERVENTA and marched via TAI TAI and MOSIGETTA to NABOI where it arrived on the 19th of the month. From here to the assembly area in the vicinity of BLUE RIDGE required another three days. Captured documents as well as the time of arrival indicate that this was the reserve Battalion of the 45th Infantry Regiment.

The 3rd Battalion completed training in the BUIN area about the 12th of February and returned overland to KIETA by the 14th. From here it went to ARIGUA, arriving by the 21st. The Battalion reached NUMA NUMA by the 25th of February. It joined Regimental Headquarters and the 1st Battalion which had preceded it from KIETA. From here, probably following the 1st Battalion, the 3rd Battalion marched inland over the NUMA NUMA TRAIL and arrived at NAMPEI MOUNTAIN shortly after the 1st of March.

(4) 53rd Infantry Regiment

In February, the 3rd Battalion, 53rd Infantry Regiment was probably stationed at TINPUTS in the Northern Sector of BOUGAINVILLE. Sometime during the month, it left there and marched to NUMA NUMA where it arrived about the 25th of February. Here it joined forces with the 1st and 3rd Battalions of the 45th Infantry Regiment and the 2nd Battalion of the 81st Infantry Regiment and moved inland with them over the NUMA NUMA TRAIL. At KASUGA MOUNTAIN the Battalion was left behind by the 3rd Battalion, 45th Infantry. It is thought to have remained in this vicinity until the middle of March when it moved up to participate in the fighting after the 22nd of March.

(5) 81st Infantry Regiment

The Regimental Headquarters of the 81st Infantry was located at KUNAPOPO where it is believed to have remained during this operation. The 2nd Battalion, 81st Infantry Regiment was stationed at PUTO, but moved to KUNAPOPO during the month of February. The Battalion left here on the 12th of the month and arrived in TINPUTS MISSION on the 16th. From here it marched to NUMA NUMA where it arrived sometime before the end of the month. Joining forces with the 3rd Battalion, 45th Infantry and the 3rd Battalion, 53rd Infantry, the Battalion started inland with them about the 27th of February. When this Battalion reached KASUGA MOUNTAIN, it was left behind together with the 3rd Battalion, 53rd Infantry. This Battalion probably stayed in this vicinity until mid March when it moved up to participate in the action.

The 3rd Battalion, 81st Infantry was probably stationed in the vicinity of KUNAPOPO in February. This unit composed of Battalion Headquarters, 3rd Battalion Gun Unit, 3rd Machine Gun Company, probably the 10th Company and 12th Company, with the 6th Company attached, moved down the coast by way of PUTO, SARINE PLANTATION, and HALUN to KURAI MISSION where it arrived by the 1st of March. By the 7th of March, the force had arrived on the West Bank of the LARUMA RIVER, from which position it was to operate as a diversionary force in conjunction with the main attack on the 8th of March.

(6) 6th Field Artillery Regiment

The Regimental Headquarters and 3rd Battalion Headquarters were located at MAIKA during the month of February. The 2nd Battalion was still on guard duty on FAURO ISLAND. The Regimental Headquarters together with 3rd Battalion Headquarters, the 6th, 7th and 8th Batteries,

and the 2nd and 3rd Ammunition Trains, left MAIKA on foot on the 14th of February. Each firing battery carried two 75mm Mountain Guns and two reserve weapons for the Battalion were also taken. A total of 2100 rounds were transported to a supply dump east of HILL 600 prior to the arrival of the Regiment. The march was accomplished in ten stages, the longest day's march being 19 km and the shortest 12 km. The route was well planned and the logistics were sound as the Regiment arrived at PEKO on the date planned. It is interesting to note that after leaving MOSIGETTA an inland trail was used over exceptionally rugged terrain, probably because the main supply route near the coast was being hit almost daily by artillery fire and bombings. Upon arrival at PEKO, the Regiment was divided into a provisional 1st Battalion, consisting of the 3rd and 8th Batteries, which was presumably stationed at MAWARAKA during February, attached two guns and gun crews to the WEST SECTOR GUARD UNIT, one at MAWARAKA and the other at MOTUPENA. The 2nd Battery also furnished one gun for the WEST SECTOR GUARD UNIT, sending it from PEKO to JABA. The personnel in both batteries was replaced from reorganization within the Battalion. The 3rd Battery left MAWARAKA in time to be present at the assembly area near PEKO on the 26th of February when it was assigned to the provisional 1st Battalion. During the next few days reconnaissance of the position areas was conducted, and the batteries moved up and were in position by the 8th of March.

The 1st and 2nd Batteries were at PEKO during February being an element of the KAWANO DETACHMENT. These batteries left the PEKO area and marched to HILL 1111 where they were attached to the IWASA BUTAI for the operation, effective the 26th of February. It is believed that these two batteries had a total of four guns.

#### (7) 4th Medium Artillery Regiment

The 4th Medium Artillery Regiment was stationed at ERVENTA during February. For the "TA" Operation, the Regiment formed a Composite 1st Battalion, consisting of one 2 - 10cm Howitzer Platoon, a 2nd Battery of 2 - 15cm Howitzers, and a Composite 3rd Battery of 2 - 15cm Howitzers. About the 25th of January the Battalion Headquarters had moved up to MAIKA probably to facilitate coordination with the plans of the 6th Field Artillery Regiment. As early as the 26th of January, plans were drawn up and orders issued covering preliminary reconnaissance and survey necessary for the projected operation. The Battalion Commander was present in the position area behind HILL 500-501 in mid-January for reconnaissance and the formulation of preliminary plans.

On the 31st of January the advance parties left ERVENTA by barge, arriving at MAWARAKA the same night. After staging here for several days because of bad weather, the party left on the 4th of February and landed in the vicinity of NABOI the same night. The remainder of the Battalion was divided into two parts, one traveling overland and the other accompanying the matériel which was shipped by barge. Five tractor prime movers, four trucks, and four 15cm Howitzers were shipped to MAWARAKA by means of 6 large landing barges and 2 small ones, which shuttled between ERVENTA, MAWARAKA, and NABOI apparently at night. Shipment started on the 17th of February. At MAWARAKA one prime mover tractor was put off and the remainder was delivered to NABOI. Also at MAWARAKA, 2 - 10cm Howitzers were loaded and transported to NABOI. By the 27th of the month all matériel had been delivered to NABOI, and the barges reverted to the carrying of provisions and supplies. With the aid of track laying prime movers and the presence of a serviceable road from NABOI to the position area, it is presumed that the Battalion was in position by the 28th of February.

### 3. General Plan of Attack

The plans for the attack called for two major thrusts to the north of the perimeter, and a secondary attack on the northeast front.

# C O N F I D E N T I A L

## Scheduled Plan of Operations

Day Planned	Date	Unit	Place and Objective
D Day	March 8	IWASA BUTAI	Attack and secure HILL 700 and CANNON HILL
D plus 1	March 9	IWASA BUTAI MAGATA BUTAI	Continue attack Advance to assembly point preparatory to launching attack on D plus 4
D plus 2	March 10	IWASA BUTAI  MUDA BUTAI	HILL 700 and CANNON RIDGE secured. Reorganize and prepare for advance to PIVA UNCLE. Attack and secure HILL 260.
D plus 3	March 11	IWASA BUTAI MAGATA BUTAI MUDA BUTAI	Advance to a point 1000 yards Southeast of HILL 700. Make final preparations for a dawn attack. Continue attack against HILL 260, and begin secondary attack against HILL 309.
D plus 4	March 12	IWASA BUTAI  MAGATA BUTAI  MUDA BUTAI	Right element continue attacks in the direction of PIVA UNCLE; left element attack HILL 608 from the Northwest in cooperation with attack of MUDA BUTAI from Southeast. Launch attack against the 129th sector and advance to BOMBER LOOP ROAD to West of PIVA YOKE HILL 260 secured; attack and secure HILL 608 in conjunction with IWASA BUTAI and establish contact with them; attack in direction of EVANSVILLE.
D plus 4	March 13	MUDA BUTAI	Advance and secure EVANSVILLE.
D plus 9	March 17	IWASA BUTAI MAGATA BUTAI MUDA BUTAI	PIVA UNCLE secured; advance to within 2000 yards North of TOROKINA FIGHTER STRIP completed. PIVA YOKE secured; reorganize for continued attacks to the South. Continue advance in cooperation with the IWASA BUTAI.

Plan for diversionary attacks included operations against the extreme West flank of the perimeter by a force composed of elements of the 3rd Battalion, 81st Infantry Regiment. On the extreme East flank, a similar diversion was to be created along the lower TOROKINA RIVER by the 2nd Battalion, 4th Garrison Unit. A possible landing operation against the TOROKINA FIGHTER STRIP was also planned.

#### 4. Execution of the Attack

##### a. IWASA BUTAI

On D day, as scheduled the artillery commenced interdiction fires

on the PIVA AIRFIELDS and on key road junctions within the perimeter. The 23rd Infantry did not attack as scheduled but advanced its foremost elements into a position for the assaults. Close-in reconnaissance of the United States defenses and installations was made in the vicinity of CANNON HILL by the 2nd Battalion, while the 3rd Battalion reconnoitered the slopes of HILL 700.

On the night of D plus 1, the 2nd Battalion jumped off in its attack against HILL 700, committing the 65th and 8th Companies in the initial assault. When these were repulsed, the 5th and 7th Companies were sent into the action. This full strength attack effected a local success in seizing the outer shoulder of HILL 700 and in enfilading the main supply route (SKYLINE DRIVE).

Although the original plan called for the attack with the Battalions abreast (3rd Battalion on the right), all evidence points to the fact that the Battalions attacked in column, with the 3rd Battalion behind the 2nd Battalion. The 3rd Battalion is believed to have been decimated by artillery fire, as no elements are known to have reached the objective.

On D plus 2, the enemy attempted to reinforce his troops on the shoulder of HILL 700 and simultaneously launched an attack on CANNON HILL. Reinforcement was effectively interdicted by artillery and mortar fire and the attack against CANNON HILL was sharply repulsed.

On D plus 3, United States forces counterattacked the enemy on the shoulder of HILL 700 and by D plus 4 the HILL had been cleared of the enemy.

On D plus 5, the Regiment withdrew its forces leaving a screening force to the immediate front. As a result of these assaults the strength of the Regiment had been greatly depleted and the withdrawal was necessary for reorganization. It is probable that the remaining effectives did not exceed 800.

The Regiment remained out of action except for patrol activity until the 23rd when it joined forces with the remnants of the MAGATA BUTAI for the last determined effort of the campaign against "F" Company and "G" Company front of the 129th Infantry. The 2nd Battalion, 13th Infantry Regiment, the last reserve force of the IWASA BUTAI was committed at this time. This attack lasted throughout the 24th and 25th but was defeated with heavy losses. On the 26th the action was broken off gradually and what was left of the IWASA BUTAI started to withdraw. It is estimated that the remaining elements of the force combined did not exceed 500 effectives.

#### b. MAGATA BUTAI

On D day, the advance elements of the 1st and 3rd Battalions, 45th Infantry Regiment moved up to the immediate front of the perimeter in the 129th Infantry Sector. During D plus 1 and D plus 2, active patrolling and close in reconnaissance of the United States defense was conducted.

On D plus 3, a general attack was launched by the force, with the 1st Battalion on the left, the 3rd Battalion on the right, and the 2nd Battalion in reserve. The attack lasted all day but no material gains or break throughs were made.

On D plus 4, a United States counterattack eliminated the few advance strong points that had been established on the day before. The force occupied itself with minor attacks during the day, as it was recuperating from the results of the initial effort.

On D plus 5, the Regiment withdrew to reorganize, prepare new plans, and to obtain much needed rest from their efforts. From D plus 5 to D plus 7, active patrolling was maintained but no attacks were launched.

On D plus 7, realizing that the initial force was insufficient to accomplish the mission, the reserve unit, 2nd Battalion, 81st Infantry Regiment was attached to the command for employment in the next attack. This was launched in the early afternoon on D plus 7, preceded by small scale efforts all along the line. The formation placed the 2nd Battalion, 81st Infantry in the center, the 1st Battalion, 45th Infantry on the right, and the 3rd Battalion, 45th Infantry on the left. The 2nd Battalion, 45th Infantry was apparently still retained in reserve. The advance elements succeeded

in penetrating the forward defenses of "F" Company, 129th Infantry, with some individuals penetrating to 2nd Bn CP. Before this breakthrough could be exploited, however, the United States forces launched a counterattack which overwhelmed the advance positions and pushed the force back outside the perimeter.

On D plus 8, the force rested again, maintaining an appropriate screen by active patrolling.

On D plus 9, another all out attack was underway by dawn in the "F" Company Sector, 129th Infantry. During the hours of darkness advance positions were taken up immediately in front of the lines, and the attack was launched at daylight. Dispositions for this effort were basically the same as for the attack on D plus 7. The effort as a whole was repulsed, and a few advance positions were driven out by United States counterattacks before sundown.

The Regiment now withdrew for reorganization and to await the arrival of further reinforcements before making another attempt to penetrate the United States front lines. On D plus 15, the remnants of the 2nd Battalion and 3rd Battalion 13th Infantry, the 23rd Infantry Regiment had come up to join forces, and the 3rd Battalion, 53rd Infantry Regiment was committed in the effort to amass sufficient strength to make the next attack successful. It is estimated that the assault strength of these units did not exceed three thousand.

Early in the morning on D plus 16, the advance was started in the "F" and "G" Company sectors of the 129th Infantry. The formation for this attack put the 45th Infantry in the center, 2nd Battalion of the 13th Infantry on the right supported by the 2nd Battalion, 81st and the 3rd Battalion 53rd on the left. It is believed that the 23rd was retained in reserve, especially as all Battalions of the 45th were committed in the attack. The force advanced during the night 24/25 March and attempted to establish strong points within the United States lines before daylight. This was discovered and completely disorganized by an intensive concentration of United States artillery and mortar fire, but strong points directly in front of the lines were established and maintained. In the course of the action, the 2nd Battalion 23rd Infantry was committed but without any apparent effect on the situation. The main attack was broken up before it was launched by the artillery shelling, and on the 25th only piecemeal and disorganized attacks were launched. Infiltration efforts continued through D plus 18.

On D plus 19 the force began its withdrawal from action, and during the 27th maintained a screening force to cover its departure. By D plus 20, this screening force had pulled back from the immediate vicinity of the front lines and took up dug-in positions on the NUMA NUMA TRAIL.

c. MUDA BUTAI

On D day this force, consisting principally of the 3rd Battalion, 13th Infantry and the 1st and 2nd Companies of the 1st Battalion, advanced to a forward assembly area in the area N of the EAST-WEST TRAIL in the vicinity of TOROKINA FORKS, arriving by D plus 1.

At dawn on D plus 2, an attack preceded by infiltration was started against the Southeast slope of HILL 260. Fighting lasted all day, but by dark the most advanced elements had been driven back to the foot of the HILL where they dug themselves in. This initial assault was made by the 3rd Battalion, with the 9th Company in advance followed by the 10th and 11th Companies and the 12th Company being retained in reserve.

Continued piecemeal efforts were made through D plus 4 but without material gain and with some losses. On D plus 4, the force was augmented by the commitment of the 1st and 2nd Companies of the 1st Battalion.

On D plus 5, a coordinated attack preceded by infiltration was successful in driving to the southeast edge of the top of HILL 260. Here the attack spent itself and the advance elements dug themselves in. Repeated small scale efforts were made throughout D plus 6 without further gains.



~~CONFIDENTIAL~~

On D plus 7, a radical change in plans was made and it was decided to reinforce the MAGATA BUTAI with the MUDA BUTAI. The 3rd Battalion of the ARTILLERY GROUP, consisting of the 7th and 9th Batteries, the first of which had been converted to a mortar company, was attached to reinforce the fire power of the MUDA BUTAI. The main force of the MUDA BUTAI then withdrew from HILL 260 and proceeded to an assembly area in the rear of the MAGATA BUTAI, leaving only a screening force on HILL 260 to cover the movement and contain the enemy. On D plus 9, the 3rd Battalion of the ARTILLERY GROUP displaced and advanced to the North foot of HILL 1000 in preparation to support the combined assault on D plus 16.

By D plus 7, the operation for this reason changed from an offensive action to a stubborn defensive. Resistance was maintained until D plus 19, United States counterattacks slowly driving the force off the HILL and causing a high percentage of casualties. By D plus 20, all resistance on the HILL ceased with the elimination of the remaining strongpoints. At least 500 of the force were killed during the operation and it can be presumed that an equal number were rendered non-effective by wounds.

d. 3rd Battalion, 81st Infantry Regiment

This force was in position in the vicinity of the mouth of the LARUMA RIVER by D minus 1. The action of the unit throughout the entire campaign was confined to patrol activity in the 148th Infantry Sector. The force was composed of 3rd Battalion Headquarters, 3rd Machine Gun Company, 3rd Battalion Gun Unit, the 6th and probably the 10th Company. Patrols were not aggressive and plans were confused and ineffective. As a result very few contacts were made with United States Forces.

e. 2nd Battalion, 4th Garrison Unit

This force which was assigned the mission of creating diversion on the United States East flank was somewhat more aggressive than its counterpart on the United States West flank, but made no attacks worthy of the name. The unit was composed of 2nd Battalion Headquarters, 2nd Battery (2-75mm guns), the 6th, 7th, and 8th Companies and by the 15th of March had assembled at HEART-SHAPED HILL (144.3-212.6), preceded by the 7th Company which occupied a position in the vicinity of MAVAVIA about the same time. Ineffective efforts were made to reconnoiter the United States front lines in preparation for a general attack, orders for an attack were issued, revoked, and reissued with the results that none was made. In the effort to reinforce the unit and perhaps stimulate it to more aggressive action, the 1st Company of the 19th Independent Engineers was attached to the command about the 17th of March. Attacks were still being planned but not executed as late as the 24th of March.

4. Withdrawal from Action:

a. IWASA BUTAI

After the final assault on the 24th and 25th, withdrawal of the 23rd Infantry commenced on the 26th. The destination was MOSIGETTA and it is believed that withdrawal is being made over essentially the same routes used for the advance into the area. The 2nd Battalion, 81st was assigned the mission of covering the retreat of the 23rd and 45th, and the 3rd Company, 1st Battalion 23rd, was in turn to cover the retreat of the 23rd after it had cleared the zone of action of the 2nd Battalion 81st which was operating in vicinity of the NUMA NUMA TRAIL.

b. MAGATA BUTAI

Simultaneously with the withdrawal of the 23rd, this force withdrew up the NUMA NUMA and nearby trails on the 26th of the month. The main cov-

# CONFIDENTIAL

ering force of the 2nd Battalion, 81st, remained in position in front of the 129th Infantry line until the 1st of April, when it followed the main body up the trail. The force at this time consisted of the Headquarters, the Composite 1st and 3rd Battalions, the 2nd Battalion, the 3rd Battalion 53rd, and the 2nd Battalion 81st. By the 7th of April, the rearmost elements had retreated to a point two miles down the trail from the LARUMA-JAVA CREEK junction.

The destination of the unit is presumed to be NUMA NUMA, from where the 45th is scheduled to return to KIETA, and the 2nd Battalion 81st probably to its former station at PUTO over the same route by which it advanced during February. The 53rd will probably return to the TINPUTS area.

## c. MUDA BUTAI

Very little is known regarding the withdrawal of this force. The elements which had been left on HILL 260 had been either killed or had retreated by the 27th of March. The main body probably retreated in company with the 23rd Infantry Regiment about the 28th of March. The reported destination of the Regiment is ERVENTA, if this is correct it is believed that withdrawal will be made over the same route used by the 2nd and 3rd Battalion in coming up from MOSIGETTA.

## d. 3rd Battalion 81st Infantry Regiment

It is believed that this unit is retreating over its route of advance and has its former station at KUNAPOPO as its destination.

## e. 2nd Battalion, 4th Garrison Unit.

It is probable that this force with the 1st Company, 19th Engineer Regiment will remain in the SAUA RIVER area to the last as a covering force for other elements of the Division moving South.

## 6. Composition of Withdrawing Units

### a. IWASA BUTAI

	<u>Estimated Strength</u>	
13th Infantry Regiment		300
2nd Battalion	300	
23rd Infantry Regiment	50	450
1st Battalion	200	
2nd Battalion	100	
3rd Battalion	100	
3rd Infantry Mortar Battalion		50
2nd Company	50	
6th Field Artillery Regiment		300
1st Battalion (less 3rd Battery)	300	
6th Engineer Regiment		50
2nd Company	50	
Miscellaneous Units	100	100
Total Estimated Strength 1 April		1,250

### b. MAGATA BUTAI

	<u>Estimated Strength</u>	
45th Infantry Regiment	100	800
1st and 3rd Composite Battalion	400	
2nd Battalion	300	
3rd Infantry Mortar Battalion (less 2nd Company)	100	100
53rd Infantry Regiment		150



~~CONFIDENTIAL~~

3rd Battalion	150	
81st Infantry Regiment		150
2nd Battalion	150	
10th Independent Mountain Artillery Regiment		200
1st Battery	200	
6th Engineer Regiment		
3rd Company	50	50
31st Machine Cannon Company	100	100
Total Estimated Strength 1 April		1,550

c. <u>MUDA BUTAI</u>	<u>Estimated Strength</u>	
13th Infantry Regiment	50	450
1st Battalion (less 3rd Company)	200	
3rd Battalion	200	
6th Field Artillery Regiment	60	400
7th Battery	170	
9th Battery	170	
6th Engineer Regiment		50
1st Company	50	
Total Estimated Strength 1 April		900

d. <u>ARTILLERY GROUP</u>	<u>Estimated Strength</u>	
6th Field Artillery Regiment	100	400
3rd Battery	150	
8th Battery	150	
1st Composite Battalion, 4th Medium Artillery	50	300
Independent 10cm Howitzer Platoon	50	
2nd Battery	100	
3rd Battery	100	
1st Independent Machine Gun Company	100	100
23rd Field Machine Gun Company	100	100
Total Estimated Strength 1 April		900

Total Estimated strength of Principal Components on 1 April 4,600

Original Estimated Strength of Principal Components 11,700

Estimated Casualties (Difference) 7,100

Note: Actual counted dead for the operation approximates 5,500.

## 7. Observations

### a. Movement Of Troops and Supplies

Successful movement of large numbers of troops and equipment over routes which varied from good motor roads to poor Native tracks over rugged terrain indicates sound prior planning. Excellent appreciation time and space factors is indicated by the fact that, as far as it is known, the troops arrived at the appointed assembly areas in good shape and on time. The only apparent shortage of supplies during the campaign was that of rations, but it is believed that the shortage was not due to

~~CONFIDENTIAL~~

The following  
image(s) may be of  
poor quality due to  
the poor quality of  
the **original**.

~~C O N F I D E N T I A L~~

inadequacy of means of supply, but to the inadequacy of the actual stock available at supply points on the island.

b. Tactical Operations

(1) Estimate of United States combat strength was very poor. Though it was estimated that there was a total of 30,000 Americans present, about 10,000 of these were thought to be Air Corps ground personnel. The Army Ground Forces estimate was that of a single Infantry Division.

(2) The attack plan was, as a whole, sound, in that it was directed principally against key terrain features, the occupation of which would greatly facilitate the accomplishment of the mission. The locations of the three major efforts was such that the forces could be combined after the initial breakthrough for a final sweep through the perimeter. The timing of the attacks as planned was also sound, in that sufficient time was allowed between the assault against HILL 700 and the assault against the 129th Infantry, to permit the shifting of United States Reserves to the threatened HILL 700 area, thereby weakening and facilitating the penetration of the MAGATA BUTAI on the 129th Infantry front.

On the West, the attack on HILL 260 was planned to so occupy the attention of United States forces in that area, the IWASA BUTAI, after the capture of HILL 700 could more readily attack and carry HILL 608 from the flank and rear.

The plan of attack is adjudged sound only on the basis that the estimate made of United States strength was correct. The estimate of the situation only permitted one Infantry Division for the defense of the entire perimeter, which would necessitate, by reason of the frontage, very thinly held lines. It is also apparent that the estimate foresaw only local reserves, and that a heavily threatened sector of the perimeter would have to be reinforced by the withdrawal of troops from sectors under attack, with a corresponding weakening of the lines.

(3) Again considering the estimate made of United States troops on the line, the assignment of the mission of neutralizing the airfields to the artillery was sound, except in so far as it misjudged the ability of the artillery present to deliver a sufficient volume of fire to accomplish the mission.

(4) Excellent ability to conduct close in and thorough reconnaissance of the terrain daily patrolled by our forces was demonstrated.

(5) The inability to change plans to meet a change in the situation was demonstrated in very many instances. When the initial thrust of the IWASA BUTAI was repulsed, the following attacks were made in only slightly greater strength. When coordinated large scale attacks were delivered and defeated, the lower units were permitted to expend their strength in small scale local efforts that were invariably unsuccessful. This pattern of attack was followed almost universally. Appreciation of the strength of United States defenses came only after the forces involved in the attacks were badly beaten and greatly reduced in strength. It was not until after all three initial efforts had been frustrated time and time again, that a radical change in plans was made which called for the concentration of all the assault strength present. Had this concentration of forces been made immediately after the defeat of the initial attack against HILL 700, a penetration may well have been effected.

Another example of this inability to adapt plans to a changed situation is to be noted in the case of the Artillery. It became obvious after the efforts of the first day to neutralize the airfields that the mission could not be accomplished. In spite of this, the Artillery was permitted to expend its fire power on this mission throughout the campaign, and little if any support was given the assault forces. It was not until the concentration of the remaining forces on the 129th Infantry front, that part

~~CONFIDENTIAL~~

of the ARTILLERY GROUP was detached and assigned in direct support. If the fire power of all the Artillery present had been concentrated on a single objective early in the campaign, it would no doubt have greatly facilitated successful assault by the Infantry. For fire power of Artillery present, see Artillery Annex attached.

(6) Liaison and the exchange of information between forces was poor. In several instances information on the success of operations that was passed to higher Headquarters and to cooperating Units was erroneous and misleading. In other instances, there was a certain amount of confusion on the assignment of objectives, as in the case of HILL 608, where two forces were made partially responsible and each believed it the responsibility of the other to accomplish the mission.

(7) The absence of unified control and coordinated decisive action was characteristic of the operation in general.

E. J. TREACY JR.,  
Colonel, GSC,  
A. C. of S., G-2.

Prepared by:

EDWARD M. DODD,  
Captain, F.A.,  
Asst. AC of S., G-2.

~~CONFIDENTIAL~~

~~CONFIDENTIAL~~

ARTILLERY ANNEX

Table of Artillery Fire Power Present for "M" Operation

Unit Designation	Force to Which Attached	Weapons	Rate of Fire
<b>6th Field Artillery Regiment</b>			
1st Battery	IWASA BUTAI	2/75mm	6 RPM
2nd Battery	IWASA BUTAI	2/75mm	6 RPM
3rd Battery	ARTILLERY GROUP, 1st Bn	2/75mm	6 RPM
7th Battery	ARTILLERY GROUP, 3rd Bn	2/75mm	6 RPM
8th Battery	ARTILLERY GROUP, 1st Bn	2/75mm	6 RPM
9th Battery	ARTILLERY GROUP, 3rd Bn	2/75mm	6 RPM
<b>4th Medium Artillery Regiment</b>			
Independent 10cm Howitzer Platoon	ARTILLERY GROUP	2/105mm	4 RPM
2nd Battery	ARTILLERY GROUP	2/155mm	3 RPM
3rd Composite Battery	ARTILLERY GROUP	2/155mm	3 RPM
<b>10th Independent Mountain Artillery</b>			
1st Battery	MAGATA BUTAI	4/75mm	6 RPM
13th Regimental Gun Company	MUDA BUTAI	4/75mm	6 RPM
23rd Regimental Gun Company	IWASA BUTAI	3/75mm	6 RPM
45th Regimental Gun Company	MAGATA BUTAI	4/75mm	6 RPM
81st Regimental Gun Company	MAGATA BUTAI	1/75mm	6 RPM

**Summary of Fire Power available for massing of Artillery Fire:**

12/75mm Type 95 Mountain Guns at 6 rounds per gun per minute - 72  
 16/75mm Type 41 Regimental Guns at 6 rounds per gun per minute - 96  
 2/105mm Howitzers at 4 rounds per Howitzers per minute - 8  
 4/155mm Type 96 Howitzers at 3 rounds per gun per minute - 12

**Total Fire Power available for massed fires - 188 rounds per minute**

DECLASSIFIED.  
DOD DIR 5200. 9

~~CONFIDENTIAL~~