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THE OPERATIONS OF THE 7TH INFANTRY  
DIVISION IN THE CAPTURE OF  
KWAJALEIN ATOLL, 31 JANUARY - 5 FEBRUARY 1944  
(EASTERN MANDATES CAMPAIGN)

Type of operation described: DIVISION LANDING AND ATTACK

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INTRODUCTION

This monograph covers the operation of the 7th Infantry division in the battle for Kwajalein Atoll, January 31 - 5 February 1944.

For the sake of orientation let us look at the status of the Pacific War as it was during the closing days of January 1944.

The American Forces had assumed the offensive in Guadalcanal and had finished that operation on 11 February 1943 (1). The Pacific attack had then moved swiftly and victoriously through the Aleutians, New Georgia and other Javanese held Pacific outposts.

At the beginning of 1944 our American leaders found that the Japanese had established a perimeter defense of the home islands. This defense consisted of groups of small fortified islands which provided bases for naval and air forces. These islands were located so as to be mutually supporting. Bombers from these islands could protect against any strikes made at the Japanese mainland. These island groups also formed a line of communication and supply from Tokyo to the Japanese Pacific possessions (2). The front line of this perimeter defense extended along a line generally east from Guam, through the Caroline Islands, to the Marshall Islands, then south to the Gilbert Islands (map A) (3). Each of these island groups consisted of many small coral islands each forming a pattern not unlike a string of odd sized beads.

There were five main reasons why the American Command

decided to attack this Central Pacific outpost line:

1. To retain the initiative and momentum of the previously assumed offensive (4).
2. To eliminate this portion of the perimeter defending the Japanese mainland (5).
3. To deny to the enemy the use of naval and air bases in this area (6).
4. To secure for our use these forward air and naval bases (7).

The first section of these outposts to feel the might of American forces was the Gilbert Islands. Of this group Tarawa was selected as the most important. United States Marines landed on Tarawa, 21 November 1943, and after a battle, unsurpassed for bloody, and hand to hand fighting, secured this flank of the Central Pacific line (8) (9).

#### THE GENERAL SITUATION

Four main courses of action now appeared open to the United States Forces:

1. An attack could be made on Guam, the west flank of the line.
2. An attack could be made on Truck, a heavily defended island in the Caroline group.
3. An attack could be made against any one or several of the islands in the Marshall group.
4. Any combination of the above actions.

The decision was to hit hard and fast at the focal point of the Marshall Islands, Kwajalein Atoll. This decision was based on the following facts:

1. The capture of Tarawa provided protection for one flank.

(4,5,6,7) A-3 (8,9) A-4

2. The Marshall Islands were grouped closely enough so as to allow available sea and air power to isolate Kwajalein Atoll during the ground operation.

3. An attack focused at one point would allow a strike of tremendous mass.

4. Kwajalein was the headquarters for the entire Marshall group (10).

#### KWAJALEIN ATOLL

Kwajalein Atoll consists of a group of islands on a coral reef. The lagoon formed by the reef is nearly completely enclosed and at only a few places can any type surface craft cross this sharp-toothed, irregular barrier. This Atoll was mandated to Japan at the close of World War I, and in 1944 had about eleven islands which were garrisoned by troops. The closed lagoon served as a base for surface and submarine craft while the largest islands provided air bases for fighters and bombers. The islands are level with the highest point of elevation being only about twenty feet above the sea. Kwajalein Island is at the south part of the Atoll. It is from 600 to 1000 yards wide, about 5000 yards in length, forming roughly a half circle in shape (11) (Map B).

#### THE DIVISION SITUATION

Following the Aleutian Campaign the 7th Infantry Division had been sent to the Hawaiian Islands and here had been given extensive amphibious training. This type of training was not new to the 7th, as it had made actual landings on Kiska and had taken amphibious training in California under the supervision of (then) Major General Holland Smith USMC (12).

(10,11) A-1 (12) A-4

Very little was known about the islands of Kwajalein so it became necessary to institute extensive air reconnaissance. Many air photos were taken and a tentative map was made. The 7th Division was to move into the Atoll in conjunction with an attack by Marines. The first air photos were obliques and subject to distortion. A plan based on these photos called for the 7th and the Marines to attack the northern portion of the Atoll and later seize the then supposedly weak Kwajalein Island. Later reconnaissance showed that Kwajalein was much stronger than originally thought so a new plan was implemented. This second plan called for the capture of the northern islands by the 7th Division and then a joint 7th-Marine assault on Kwajalein from inside the lagoon. This plan was discarded when further air photos showed that, because of the shape of the Atoll, any force inside the lagoon would risk coming under cross-fire from the most heavily fortified islands. The final plan, the one followed, assigned the northern islands to the Marines and the southern portion to the 7th Division. The Division zone extended around the Atoll south from Chance Island to Bigej Island inclusive.

An operation plan labelled, "Flintlock," was prepared and training was instituted on the Hawaiian beaches. The plan called for a tremendous air and naval preparation to begin one week prior to D-Day and to continue until the actual landing was accomplished. After the landings naval and air bombardment would be available to ground troops on call. The plan also included the capture on D-Day of Ninni and Gea Islands thus giving the American ships a deep water passage into the lagoon. Another D-Day requirement was the capture of Ehubuj Island so that the Division Artillery could be in position to

support the main landing on Kwajalein Island. Enubuj Island was about 5000 yards north of Kwajalein on the west leg of the Atoll (Map B) (13) A-8.

To accomplish this plan Army and Navy aircraft pounded the Atoll for a week, following this, all islands were submitted to a shelling from surface craft ranging up to and including several battleships. The over-all amphibious commander was (then) Rear Admiral R. K. Turner who had been assigned this responsibility by Admiral Raymond A. Spruance. The mission of the 7th Division was then distributed as follows:

1. The Division Reconnaissance Troop reinforced by two rifle platoons, to be divided equally to land and secure Gea and Ninni Islands on D-Day, 31 January 1944 (Map B).
2. The 17th Infantry to send two Battalion landing teams ashore on D-Day. One battalion to capture Enubuj Island, the other to take care of Ennylobegan Island.
3. Division Artillery plus one attached Battalion of 155s, to land on Enubuj and to be ready to support the Kwajalein Island landing on D plus 1.
4. The 184th Infantry and the 32nd Infantry to land on D plus 1 on the south-west tip of Kwajalein Island and to attack north along the entire island. Kwajalein was divided roughly in half from south to north (Map C). The lagoon half was assigned the 184th, the ocean side going to the 32nd.
5. Depending on the situation as it developed the islands Ebeye, Loi, Gugegwe, and Bigej would be captured by units initially in reserve or by those most quickly accomplishing their primary missions (14) (Map B).

#### D - DAY

D-Day followed a three day sustained preparation by air and surface craft. During this time ships fired 2671 tons of shells ranging in caliber from five to sixteen inch. The planes dropped 98 tons of high explosive bombs. Targets for



this bombardment were mostly along the beaches where the assault waves were to land (Map C) (15). Before dawn the 17th Infantry loaded their two battalion combat teams. One headed for Enubuj Island, the other for Ennylobegan (Map B). Both of these islands fell with scarcely any resistance and were secured in a few hours. Immediately following the capture of Enubuj, four battalions of 105s and one battalion of 155s, loaded in DUKWs, which were in turn carried on LSTs, began to move toward shore. The LSTs moved in as closely as possible then rolled out the DUKWs which carried guns, ammunition, and crews, onto the beach. Each DUKW was fitted with an "A" frame for handling the heavy pieces. This method of unloading Field Artillery was an innovation and had been developed by the 7th Infantry Division Commander, Major General Charles H. Corlett. (16)

NOTE: -  
IDENTICAL  
METHOD USED  
BY GENERAL  
CORLETT, 1943.  
(1943-1945)  
C.H.C.

All five Artillery Battalions were in position by 1340 hours D-Day, all were registered in before darkness. Forward observers were to control the fire of the 105s while cub planes directed the fire of the 155s (17).

While the landings on Enubuj were taking place the Division Reconnaissance landing teams loaded into rubber boats and were towed toward the islands of Ninni and Gea (Map B). Captain Paul B. Gritta, commanded the group headed for Ninni. They landed in the dark, quickly sweeping the entire island, killing four Japanese and capturing two without any casualties of their own. As Captain Gritta finished the sweep on the island he was informed by Division Headquarters that he had captured the wrong island, in the darkness they had landed on the well named Chance Island, about one mile north of their intended destination. Captain Gritta, and his men immediately reembarked and by 1430 hours had secured Ninni Island. Meanwhile Lieutenant Emmett L. Tiner had led the other half of the

Reconnaissance Troop ashore on Gea Island. A brisk but brief skirmish was fought on Gea, one American was killed, one wounded and thirty Japanese defenders were killed. These two victories secured Gea Pass so that the transports could safely enter the lagoon (18). At the close of D-Day all missions had been accomplished, the deep sea passage to the lagoon was open, and the Field Artillery in position to support the landing on Kwajalein Island (19).

#### D PLUS 1

It had been decided to delay the main landing on Kwajalein Island until an observed artillery preparation could be placed in the area designated for the landing of the 32nd and 184th Infantry Regiments. Promptly at 0800 hours all guns opened up on an area 600 yards wide and 250 yards in depth. This fire was delivered at the maximum rate for forty-five minutes then lifted for twenty-five, for an air strike. Again the Artillery pounded the beaches for eighteen minutes, shifting inland at 0928 hours. The first wave of assault troops hit the beach at 0930 (20) (Map C).

Between Kwajalein Island and Enebuuj the reef is broad and sharp. Seagoing ships cannot cross it at any tide. The two beaches selected for the landing of our troops fronted on this reef. This made it necessary to approach the beaches by following along the reef.

On D-Day the assault troops had loaded on LSTs, these ships now moved within about 5000 yards of Enebuuj where the LSTs unloaded the landing teams in "Buffaloes," and "Alligators." These amphibious vehicles moved in two columns south to the beaches of Kwajalein. The landing beach had been divided between the two Infantry Regiments, each having a

(18) A-5 (19) A-2 (20) A-8

zone about 300 yards wide. The landing itself was uneventful and no resistance was encountered on the beaches. Contrary to reports no obstacles or mines were found in the landing area. The shell fire had torn large craters and tanks had difficulty after they were put ashore. Before noon DUKWs were dumping supplies some 250 yards inland. From this time until the end of the operation no unit was ever short of ammunition, food, or demolition.

Due to the narrowness of the island the 32nd Infantry was advancing with one rifle company in assault position extending completely across their 300 to 500 yard zone. After advancing about 900 yards the 32nd reached the edge of a large clearing which included the air strip, this strip had been included in the zone assigned the 184th. Company E of the 32nd was in the assault position and side-slipped to the right in order to stay in the regimental zone. In accomplishing this side-skip a slight traffic jam occurred which slowed down the 32nd right flank and was later to cause some difficulty. By 1700 hours the 32nd had advanced about 1000 yards and was ordered to halt for the night. During the first day the 32nd had killed fifteen Japanese and had two casualties of their own. They had met only scattered resistance which had been quickly overcome.

The 184th moving parallel to the 32nd had been finding very few enemy and had moved along steadily until they reached the south end of the air strip. The Regiment had been advancing with two assault companies, I and L leading, upon reaching this clearing and seeing that the 32nd's left flank was temporarily held up it was decided that I Company would cover the clearing until L Company had advanced 200 yards then

I Company would swing around right of the air strip and again move up abreast of L. This was done and K Company was then ordered into the position vacated by I Company. K Company's order also instructed that they were to maintain contact with the left flank of the 32nd and the right flank of the 184th. By 1525 hours the leading Companies of the 184th had pushed 200 yards beyond Wilma road (Map C). They had found and reduced several enemy pill-boxes and shelters. The construction of these installations was such that each one required individual attention. The bazooka and flame thrower proved ineffective, each one had to be reduced by demolition teams. K Company was still in position at the air strip and stretched out so thin that it held an untenable position when the 184th halted for the night at 1625 hours.

Battalion realizing K Company's position ordered the companies to shift their defense. L Company was to defend across the Battalion zone, straddling Will road with two platoons, the third platoon was to extend at an angle back to the air strip joining I Company (Map D). I Company was to move back into a position along the west side of the strip thus relieving K Company. The redistribution had to be made after darkness and no reconnaissance could be made of the areas in front of the units. Early in the night there was much confusion as men moved to new locations and began to dig shallow trenches. During the moving of positions a forward machine gun crew went to the rear to repair their gun. Shortly afterward an advanced radio team received permission to return to the Company CP, these men went through Company L's area at a run and the men who saw these two teams hurrying to the rear mistook these actions for a general falling back. First one man then another jumped up and headed for the rear, in a few minutes the front

line had disappeared. A small group of Japanese had been in the immediate area and taking advantage of the situation began to infiltrate behind our lines. Greatly exaggerated reports were carried back to the Regimental CP by the men who had left the front lines. A very dangerous situation was averted when Lieutenant Gauger of L Company brought up a machine gun, sited it across the Battalion zone and so closed the Japanese door into our lines. The line was reestablished about 0230 hours. The balance of the Division spent an uneventful night and very few men realized that a very delicate situation had threatened.

(21)

D PLUS 2

Beginning this new day both the 32nd and 184th moved out on schedule and began to slug their way along the island. The air strip was taken, the advance continued meeting scattered but stubborn resistance in the rubble and wreckage of the cement emplacements that had been demolished by naval and air bombardment.

During the second day on Kwajalein it became apparent that the Japanese had expected the attack from the lagoon side of the island. The zone of the 184th was fairly well organized around strong points. Each strong point consisted of a cement tower about seven feet high surrounded by well camouflaged fox holes. Many of these towers had been hit by shell fire but still provided adequate protection for automatic weapons. The fox holes were so well concealed that the leading companies had to probe the ground to locate them then eliminate each one individually so that the enemy would not be left behind our front line. Despite this slow going the two Regiments had advanced about half

(21) A-9

P. 32 34

the length of the Island at the end of the second day (22).

### D PLUS 3

The 1st Battalion, 17th Infantry had seized the island of Ennylobegan on D plus 1. Meeting practically no resistance they had spent D plus 2 cleaning equipment and resting.

Early on D plus 3 this Battalion reembarked with the mission of taking Ebeye Island, located about 5000 yards north of Kwajalein on the east leg of the Atoll. This island had been well reconnoitered by the Battalion Executive Officer, Major M. E. Weaver, he had looked the Island over from the deck of a destroyer and had also spent two hours in the air trying to locate possible strong points. Major Weaver saw that the Japanese were building hasty defenses from cement blocks therefore it was decided to attach some medium tanks to this landing party.

The 1st Battalion landed unopposed but found that the enemy was prepared to defend every yard from behind cement shelters and from foxholes. The medium tanks were brought up but coordination, between tankers and rifle units, was lacking. The tankers had been assigned general missions by higher commanders and this led to confusion when front line units attempted to have specific targets taken under fire however the 75 mm. gun proved very effective in eliminating hasty Japanese defenses. At the end of the day, Lieutenant Colonel Albert V. Harl, commander of the 1st Battalion could announce that Ebeye Island had been secured.

During the planning stage of the attack on Kwajalein it was decided that, due to the narrowness of the island, the 184th and 32nd would not maneuver but would keep the crushing

(22) A-9

weight of these two Regiments abreast moving straight along the island until they had swept all opposition into the northern tip and there to force surrender or face elimination.

The first two days of battle proved this plan sound as the advance moved on schedule with few casualties to the assaulting units. It was also proven that any attempt to maneuver would not speed the advance. Organization among the Japanese had been broken up by naval and artillery fire which had combed the island from end to end. Small groups of Japanese had formed and dug in where the shelling caught them but there was no unit organization. To outflank or surround these strong points had no effect unless the movement brought direct on the enemy. Most of these strong points enjoyed good cover so it was necessary to actually come hand to hand with the defenders in order to accomplish the mission of securing the ground. Another factor which kept maneuver at a minimum was the danger of confusion between units. Visibility averaged about fifty yards and the terrain was so strewn with wreckage that squads and platoons were quickly lost from view, also there was great danger of becoming separated and coming under fire of some friendly unit that was moving abreast.

On the afternoon of D plus 3 the two Regiments were continuing their advance along lines as planned except that B Company of the 184th had been stopped late in the morning by a well defended cement works extending along the lagoon side of the island. Company A, the other assault company, had advanced rapidly along the right side of the 184th's zone and by noon was becoming over extended. Time was an element as the over-all Central Pacific plan called for Kwajalein Island to be secured by 2400 hours, 4 February (D plus 4). More units put in the line with B Company would not solve the time

problem as the Japanese were well protected and the front was very narrow. There was one solution; since narrowness prevented maneuver, the direction of the 184th's attack could be changed, the 32nd could then stretch out completely across the island then continue toward the north. The Division Commander ordered the 184th to pivot on Company B and attack east. Companies A and C were to move into a westward facing line, the 2nd Battalion was to move ahead and form in prolongation of the 1st Battalion, the 184th would then attack toward the lagoon.

At 1330 hours the 32nd was ordered to continue its attack, it was to widen its zone at Nob Pier so that the entire island was covered then continue pushing northward (Map C).

Several minor incidents took place which were to interfere with the execution of this sound plan. Leading units of the 184th had reported that they had reached Nob Pier although in reality the Pier was still some 300 yards north. This report was made in good faith as B Company 184th had been making good progress early in the day and it seemed as if they would certainly reach the Pier before noon. Never the less the report was false and caused higher Commanders to believe that the 32nd would have no interference when it became time to widen its line. The 2nd Battalion 184th's, began to move up in order to swing toward the lagoon, during the march the guide officer was killed and the Battalion Commander plus his liason group became separated from the main body. In order to advance around wreckage, burning shacks, and large craters, the 2nd Battalion moved under Company control, units lost contact with each other and were forced to halt. By the time the Battalion had reassembled darkness was near and it was decided to halt for the night. The Battalion still faced north and had not yet reached Nob Pier. Between the left flank of the 2nd Battalion and the right flank of the 1st Battalion there was a gap of about 100 yards. This



gap exposed the left rear of the 2nd Battalion.

Being unaware of the change in disposition of the 184th, leading elements of the 32nd had continued to advance. These elements were pushing to reach the end of the Island before dark. Pockets of resistance were by-passed as unit commanders thought that these resistance points would be eliminated by mop up detachments of the 32nd and 184th. These assault units moved too fast for mop up teams to keep up, they also pushed north of the 184th thus leaving enemy to their rear and exposing their own right flank. During the night these by-passed enemy subjected both Regiments to fire from the front, flank and rear yet our units were unable to return the fire all believing that they were surrounded by friendly units (23).

#### D PLUS 4

All indications now pointed toward a quick finish on Kwajalein Island. The 32nd was only approximately 650 yards from the end of the Island. The 184th had only a few acres of enemy between them and the lagoon. At 0230, C Company 32nd was ordered to move to position along the east side of the Island and to form a line extending inland from Nob Pier. This order was given in the belief that the 184th had already moved to Nob Pier as reported. C Company moved out slowly through the darkness and at 0430 hours found that they were in rear of the 2nd Battalion 184th which was preparing to move north also to Nob Pier before turning east. Company C followed the 2nd Battalion for a short time but was soon being squeezed between the 2nd Battalion 184th and the 3rd Battalion of the same Regiment. C Company then returned to the 32nd zone and was thought lost until later in the day.

Colonel Marc Logie commanding the 32nd had decided to move the balance of the 1st Battalion through the 3rd as the latter

Battalion had suffered considerably during the night. The 1st was to relieve the 3rd and to jump off at 0715 hours. Company A was formed into a skirmish line followed by B Company in column. These companies began to move forward but A Company was soon stopped by Japanese who had been by-passed the previous day, Company C was forced to halt and wait for A Company to clear out this resistance. This delay held the entire operation back for over an hour. The entire Regimental plan was being thrown off balance. The 1st Battalion had lost its' initial spark during the hours skirmish, the 3rd had put in a bad night and was now its' relief was three hours overdue. Colonel Logie moved the 2nd Battalion up behind the 1st and pulled the 3rd into reserve. The 2nd Battalion was fresh and appeared to want to go places so at 1345 hours the 2nd assumed the assault, Companies F and G moving abreast on a line extending from lagoon to ocean (Map E).

As the day passed G Company began to meet fairly stiff resistance from the lagoon side. As the advance continued G Company moved more and more to the beach, the right flank moving faster finally changed the direction of the attack until the whole company was advancing at an angle of about forty-five degrees from its' original direction. At 1515 hours G Company reached the beach at what they thought was the northernmost tip of the Island. Lieutenant Colonel Finn 32nd Executive Officer came forward and was assured that all resistance had ceased. This information was quickly flashed to higher headquarters thus it was announced in the United States at about the time F Company was fighting one of the toughest battles of the campaign. Company F had kept its' right flank on the ocean beach and did not know that G Company had moved off exposing F Companies left flank. About 150 yards from the Islands tip the Japanese had gathered all remaining personnel into eight

underground cement emplacements, these were in two groups, five connecting in one group, three in the other. All were on F company's right flank and pinned the Company down when their advance brought them on line. Company G was resting on the beach, congratulating themselves on the victory when F company came under fire. Elements of Company G were quickly formed along the lagoon and attacked west against the pill-boxes. Under the fire of F and G companies the Japanese held out until American soldiers crawled forward and dropped demolition charges into the holes. The last active enemy died at 1920 hours. The Island had been secured with four hours ahead of schedule (24).

#### D PLUS 5 (MAP B)

This was clean-up day. Elements of the 184th with elements of the Division Reconnaissance Troop landed on and quickly captured Bigej Island. The 17th Infantry turned its attentions to the Islands of Gagegwe and Lei, only token resistance was met on these Islands. During the Battle on Kwajalein the ratio of casualties was 28 Japanese for each American, costing our forces 177 killed, 712 wounded, the Japanese lost more than 5000 killed, including Rear Admiral Akiyama, island commander (25).

#### ANALYSIS AND CRITICISMS

In retrospect it appears that several mistakes were made during this successful operation. Most of these errors were made by small unit commanders, however they should all be considered as they are appropriate to all echelons of command. The following errors are most apparent:

1. There was a lack of communication both laterally and from front to rear. This resulted in front line commanders being unaware of conditions in their own or flanking units.

(24) A-10 (25) A-1

Company commanders were not informed of battalion changes in plan. Battalion and regimental commanders did not know how to best assist assault units.

2. Battalion and regimental commanders did not always have an accurate picture of the situation confronting the leading elements. Despite a lack of communication, staff officers must keep commanders up-to-date at all times. Inaccurate reports from front line troops are common, commanders can not make correct estimates unless reports are correct and timely. The responsibility for this work rests on the shoulders of the staff.

3. Halts were made when it was impossible to reconnoiter the terrain to the immediate front. This is not a profitable practice as the most brilliant leader cannot efficiently dispose his force when he does not know the nature of the enemy and terrain immediately confronting him.

4. Local security dispositions were made over strange terrain during darkness. If at all possible security plans for halts should be made and troops in location before darkness. This avoids confusion and adds to an individual feeling of security.

5. On several occasions leaders took for granted that some other unit was protecting its' flanks or rear. Commanders at all levels are responsible for their units' protection, they must keep continually informed of the situation to front, flank, and rear. The uncertainty of combat precludes the assumption that any unit is exactly where it is supposed to be at any given time.

#### LESSONS

This operation stressed the following basic principles which are generally well known yet which may well be repeated in order to fix them more firmly in our minds.

1. Importance of cover by fire during the landing

of an amphibious assault force. Here we see an entire Infantry Division making a landing unopposed because of the naval, air and artillery bombardment that lifted only two minutes ahead of our first wave of troops.

2. The success (of) possible from close teamwork.

Our troops found the Japanese on Kwajalein disorganized, not a unified fighting force. These conditions were the direct result of naval and air preparations that preceded the landing of ground forces. This preparation undoubtedly made possible the rapid advance on the Atoll and also saved many American lives. On the other side this bombardment did not capture the Islands. It was still necessary for ground troops to go ashore and physically drive the enemy out, thus all members of the team assisted each other in the accomplishment of the mission.

3. Victory over a stubborn, determined, enemy cannot be obtained merely by maneuver. The Japanese were continually out maneuvered, they were inferior in fire power and in number. These factors however did not result in surrender, the Infantry soldier must close with the enemy and destroy him.

4. The employment of mass reduces casualties and assures victory. The Japanese were first disorganized by a mass of firepower, this was followed by mass in number keeping him from reorganizing. Had the pressure been eased the enemy could have regained his balance and so been able to delay our advance and exact a much higher price in American lives.

Admiral Turner speaking of the operation said, "some may criticize us for using too many men and too many ships for this job. To this I have only one answer, we accomplished our mission on schedule with a minimum number of casualties. I definitely prefer to do things this way" (26).

5. Plans must be flexible enough to allow for eventualities. The 7th Division intended to employ the 184th and

32nd Regiments abreast during the entire operation. When it became evident that this plan would not accomplish the mission on schedule an alternate plan was ready and was immediately put into effect. This flexibility of plan helped make possible a timely victory.