

MONOGRAPH

Staff Department  
THE INFANTRY SCHOOL  
Fort Benning, Georgia

ADVANCED INFANTRY OFFICERS COURSE  
1949-1950

LOGISTICAL OPERATIONS OF THE XIV CORPS (INDEPENDENT)  
DURING THE NEW GEORGIA OPERATION 10 JULY - 6 AUGUST 1943  
(NORTHERN SOLOMONS CAMPAIGN)  
(Personal experience of an Assistant G-4)

Type of operation described : AN ARMY CORPS TAKING  
OVER AND CARRYING TO COMPLETION THE OCCUPATION  
OF AN ISLAND BASE IN THE SOUTH PACIFIC

Lt. Col. Henry F. Taylor, Infantry  
ADVANCED INFANTRY OFFICERS CLASS NO. 2

TABLE OF CONTENTS

	<u>Page</u>
TITLE PAGE.....	Cover
INDEX.....	1
BIBLIOGRAPHY.....	2
ORIENTATION.....	4
Introduction.....	4
Army and Service Organizations in Solomon Area.....	5
Disposition and Plans of Next Higher Units...	6
General Disposition of Enemy Units .....	6
Japanese Defenses of Munda.....	7
Terrain.....	8
Mission and Plan of Attack New Georgia Occupation Force.....	10
Initial Operation of New Georgia Occupation Force.....	12
Northern Landing Group.....	15
NARRATION.....	16
XIV Corps Assumes Command.....	16
Resumption of the Attack.....	17
The Supply Situation.....	19
Organization and Operation of Rear G-4 Staff.	23
Review of Transportation Requirements.....	25
Evacuation, Hospitalization and Medical Supplies.....	29
Supply Shortages and Effects on the Operation	31
Ration Situation at Termination of Period....	40
ANALYSIS AND CRITICISM.....	42
LESSONS.....	45

## BIBLIOGRAPHY

- A-1 Journal File New Georgia Island, North Solomon Islands Campaign 22 July - 5 August 1943  
U. S. Army, 37th Division  
Film D-182 (Item 1669) (TIS Library)
- A-2 Report of Action New Georgia Islands, North Solomon Islands Campaign, 24 July - 10 August 1943  
U. S. Army, 37th Division  
Film D-182 (Item 1674) (TIS Library)
- A-3 G-4 Journal New Georgia Islands, North Solomon Islands 24 July 1943 - 2 September 1945.  
U. S. Army, 37th Division  
Film D-174 (Item 1366) (TIS Library)
- A-4 G-4 Operations Report New Georgia Island, North Solomon Island Campaign  
24 July - 16 August 1943  
U. S. Army, 37th Division, G-4  
Film D 182 (Item 1671) (TIS Library)
- A-5 G-2 Summaries, New Georgia Island, North Solomon Island Campaign  
2 January - 29 October 1943  
U. S. Army, 37th Division  
Film D-181 (Item 1666) (TIS Library)
- A-6 Field Orders and Periodic Reports Munda (New Georgia) Campaign  
16 June - 25 August 1943  
U. S. Army, 43rd Division  
Film D-180 (Item 1657) (TIS Library)
- A-7 Journals Munda (New Georgia) Campaign  
2 June - 22 August 1943  
(G-1, G-2, G-3, G-4 Journals)  
U. S. Army, 43rd Division  
Film D-180 (Item 1656) (TIS Library)
- A-8 Operations Report, Munda (New Georgia Campaign)  
16 June - 25 August 1943  
U. S. Army, 43rd Division  
Film D-180 (Item 1655) (TIS Library)
- A-9 Operations Report, Munda (New Georgia Campaign)  
30 June - 5 August 1943  
U. S. Army, 43rd Division Artillery  
Film D-180 (Item 1658) (TIS Library)
- A-10 Operations Reports (New Georgia)  
30 June - 19 July 1943  
U. S. Army, 103rd Infantry Regiment (43rd Division)  
Film D-180 (Item 1659) (TIS Library)
- A-11 Operations Reports (New Georgia Campaign)  
30 June - 27 September 1943  
U. S. Army, 169th Infantry Regiment, 3rd Inf. Division  
Film D-180 (Item 1660) (TIS Library)

- A-12 Operation Reports with S-1 Journal, New Georgia Campaign  
July - September 1943  
U. S. Army 172nd Infantry Regiment  
Film D-180 (Item 1661) (TIS Library)
- A-13 The War With Japan, Part 2 (August 1942 to Dec. 1944)  
(Restricted) U.S. Military Academy (TIS Library)
- A-14 The Great Pacific Victory by Gilbert Cant  
Chapter V) (TIS Library)
- A-15 25th Division in World War II  
by U. S. 25th Division (TIS Library)
- A-16 Logistics in World War II (page 49)  
Final Reports of the Army Service Forces (TIS Library)
- A-17 World War II. A Concise History, Sugg and DeWeerd  
Pages 231 and 232) (TIS Library)
- A-18 General Marshall's Reports (page 66)  
1 July 1943 - 30 June 1945 (TIS Library)
- A-19 Letters Hq. XIV Corps, AG370.2 T (1-21-44), dated 21 Jan-  
uary 1944, subject "Lessons Learned from Joint Operations"  
By M. W. Griswold, Maj. Gen. U. S. Army (TIS Library)
- A-20 Infantry Combat: New Georgia (Part Eight)  
U. S. Infantry School (Pamphlet) 31 Aug. 1944 (TIS Library)
- A-21 Conference presented by Col. Temple C. Holland, Inf.  
"The New Georgia Operation" (Infantry School Document  
(TIS Library)
- A-22 The 37th Infantry Division in World War II  
Stanley A. Frankel (TIS Library)
- A-23 History of the 43rd Infantry Division 1941-1945  
Joseph F. Zimmer (TIS Library)
- A-24 New Georgia Occupation Force, G-3 After Action Report  
(XIV Corps Hq.)  
10 July - 10 October 1943  
Film 252 (Item 1996) (TIS Library)
- A-25 The Field Artillery Journal (August 1944) "Artillery Oper-  
ation of the New Georgia Campaign by Brig. Gen. Harold R.  
Barker, USA (TIS Library)
- A-26 Report of C. G. XIV Corps, Confidential Document  
Major General Oscar W. Griswold (TIS Library)
- A-27 Logistics as seen from a Corps Level, by Lt. Col. J. W.  
Smith, page 958  
Military Review, October, 1946 (TIS Library)

LOGISTICAL OPERATIONS OF THE XIV CORPS (INDEPENDENT)  
DURING THE NEW GEORGIA OPERATION 10 JULY - 6 AUGUST 1943  
(NORTHERN SOLOMONS CAMPAIGN)  
(Personal experience of an Assistant G-4)

ORIENTATION

INTRODUCTION

In April, 1942, the Joint Chiefs of Staff designated that portion of the southern sphere of operation, which lies south of the Equator and east of the 159° meridian, as the SOUTH PACIFIC AREA.

Vice-Admiral Robert L. Ghormley was given command of this area and serving under him was Major General Millard F. Harmon, as commander of U. S. Army Forces in the SOUTH PACIFIC AREA (USAFISPA).

Our first real offensive against the Japanese was planned and executed in the SOUTH PACIFIC AREA. After many naval engagements, air strikes, and land operations, comprising two Army divisions and two Marine divisions, the battle of GUADALCANAL was concluded 21 February, 1943. Thus the U. S. Forces had gained a foothold from which to begin a campaign of relentless pressure against the Japanese.

The partially completed airfield on GUADALCANAL, later named HENDERSON FIELD, was quickly placed into full scale operation. GUADALCANAL was converted into a supply base for future operations, and TULAGI-GAVUTU HARBOR became a naval base for the servicing of PT boats and the U. S. Navy battle fleet.

On 21 February, 1943, elements of the 43rd Infantry Division landed on RUSSELL ISLAND, some sixty miles northwest of GUADALCANAL. This landing was unopposed. Within a week 9,000 men had been ferried to the Islands and work begun on construction of fighter strips, radar stations, a PT boat base and facilities for Army, Navy and Marine supplies.

The 43rd Division was designated to lead the next offensive against the Japanese by an operation in the NEW GEORGIA ISLANDS GROUP, some two hundred miles to the northwest. The XIV Corps was placed in the operation after it's beginning. The logistical operations of this organization for the period 10 July - 6 August, is the subject of this monograph.

#### ARMY AND SERVICE ORGANIZATIONS IN SOLOMON AREA

During the course of the GUADALCANAL Campaign, Major General Alexander M. Patch was given command of the Island Garrison, which approximated 58,000 men by January, 1943. The main tactical unit was the newly activated XIV Corps and was comprised principally of the Americal and 25th (Army) Division and the 2nd Marine Division.

During this same period there had been activated the Service of Supply, SOUTH PACIFIC AREA (SOS SPA), with headquarters in NOUMEA, NEW CALEDONIA. This new command was under the direct control of USAFISPA and was given responsibility for logistic support of all army elements within the SOUTH PACIFIC. SOS SPA organized a Service Command at each island to which were assigned all service units arriving within the Area.

On GUADALCANAL a Service Command was organized, which was not a part of the XIV Corps, the senior tactical command on the Island. Reports on status of supply, originating with Service Command, went direct to SOS SPA in NEW CALEDONIA. XIV Corps kept abreast of the status of supply by liaison with local Service Command Headquarters.

Upon termination of the GUADALCANAL Campaign, the Americal Division was re-organized into a triangular Division.

Surplus units were reorganized as service units and assigned to the Service Command on GUADALCANAL.

The Americal Division and the 2nd Marine Division were withdrawn from the area for a rest and preparation for use in future operations. Meanwhile, the 37th Division had arrived at GUADALCANAL and was placed under the tactical jurisdiction of the XIV Corps. In April, 1943, Major General Oscar W. Griswold succeeded to the command of this Corps.

#### DISPOSITION AND PLANS OF NEXT HIGHER UNITS

In May, 1943, the Joint Chiefs of Staff determined to step up the pace of the advance on JAPAN in spite of the CASA-BLANCA Conference, wherein agreement had been reached for concentrating all forces against the European Axis.

The western boundary of the SOUTH PACIFIC AREA had been reached with the occupation of RUSSELL ISLANDS. It was next decided that the operations under the control of the SOUTH PACIFIC would continue across the boundary into the SOUTHWEST PACIFIC AREA and would include the NORTHERN SOLOMONS, under strategic command of General MacArthur; whereupon, COMSOPAC (Admiral Halsey) organized a new Navy task force, an amphibious force, and a provisional Army organization known as the NEW GEORGIA OCCUPATION FORCE, with a mission of driving the enemy from the NEW GEORGIA ISLANDS, and preparing the defenses of the area and constructing air fields from which U. S. forces could continue the attack on RABAU. (1)

#### GENERAL DISPOSITION OF ENEMY UNITS

Japanese air fields in the NEW GEORGIA GROUP of ISLANDS continued to be a threat to the SOUTH SOLOMON bases and their neutralization became the primary mission of the air arm

---

(1) A-14 and A-16

stationed on GUADALCANAL and RUSSELL ISLANDS.

The principal enemy air field on the NEW GEORGIA ISLANDS was at MUNDA POINT, some 200 air miles from HENDERSON FIELD. They had a secondary base at VILA, on KOLOMBANGARA ISLAND, a short distance north of the MUNDA airstrip. Other more distant enemy air fields located at BUIN and KIETA on BOUGAINVILLE and at RABAU on NEW BRITAIN continued to receive the attention of our air arm as primary targets.

In November, 1942, the Japanese Eighth Area Army Headquarters, under General Hitoshi Imamura, had been set up at RABAU to command both the Seventeenth Army and newly activated Eighteenth Army, which took over the operations in eastern NEW GUINEA. By the beginning of 1943 heavy troop reinforcements were on the way to their outposts in the SOUTH and SOUTHWEST PACIFIC ISLANDS, and preparations were being made for large-scale defensive warfare in those areas.

A reinforced Japanese regiment of the 38th Division garrisoned the NEW GEORGIA area. Elements of the 6th Japanese Division were on BOUGAINVILLE. Miscellaneous Japanese naval personnel manned a number of supply installations along the islands from RABAU to NEW GEORGIA. The principal means of supplying their garrisons was by barge-transport, which they operated at night. These would be pulled into a protected cove during daylight hours. (2)

#### JAPANESE DEFENSES OF MUNDA

The Japanese had been at MUNDA, NEW GEORGIA, approximately fifteen months prior to July, 1943. Since there were no harbors, wharves, nor roads, they were unable to get heavy equip-



ment to the area. By use of materials at hand, they effected a most formidable series of fox holes and emplacements on the perimeter of their MUNDA air field. Materials utilized were coccoanut palm logs and native coral sandstone. Fox holes were excavated four or five feet deep by manual labor and a few sticks of dynamite; then the walls were buttressed with coccoanut logs, which projected above the ground only a foot or two. Firing slits were obtained by simply cutting some logs a foot shorter. The roof consisted of a layer of logs covered by lumps of coral sandstone, and sprouted coccoanuts were then thrown on top of this as a camouflage. Within two or three months after construction, rapid growth of vegetation in the tropics made these positions indistinguishable from a mere hump in the floor of the jungle.

Pillboxes of this type were dispersed at an average of fifty yards in every direction aroundMUNDA air field, and were so arranged that fields of fire from each would intersect the fire from neighboring fox holes. The fibrous nature of coccoanut logs renders them almost indestructible and pillboxes constructed of them required a direct hit by a heavy shell or bomb to knock them out.

The Japanese only abandoned these positions principally because our bombardments destroyed their communications and all installations above ground. (3)

#### TERRAIN

The NEW GEORGIA GROUP of ISLANDS are basically of coral formation, heavily forested, except for a few grass plots on the higher points. Rain averages above one hundred-eighty inches per year and feeds the entangled jungle growth without

the intervention of a "dry season." In time past the British and Australians have used native labor in the planting of cocconut plantations in a few places along the beaches, where there is sufficient flat area to justify an installation. These plantations invariably proved to have a good coral base and if large enough are usually considered a good site for an airfield.

In the NEW GEORGIA GROUP of ISLANDS the only harbor which can directly support the MUNDA area was in KULA GULF, between NEW GEORGIA proper and KOLOMBANGARA. The Japanese had begun a road from BARIOKO, on the KULA GULF to MUNDA, which was to have been their main supply route. This road was never completed by them.

The Lagoon on the south of MUNDA FIELD is rimmed with coral reefs, so that ships of twelve foot draft or larger cannot enter. This fact, likewise, forced the American forces to utilize small landing craft in their operations against the Japanese.

There were no roads on any of the NEW GEORGIA ISLANDS; trails connected native villages, either overland through the interior or along the beach. These trails normally used by the natives were natural routes through the jungle and were mere undeveloped foot trails, which the natives kept open by whacking away the vines and vegetation with a machette as they walked the paths from one point to another.

On the north and east side of MUNDA airfield there is a mass of low hills, seldom over two hundred feet high, with no recognizable shape or pattern; they spread out in concentric rings, each a defensive strong point, or they sprawl aimlessly in all directions. This makes the jungle a maze

of blind alleys and dead-end corridors, which taxed the skill of the infantry scout and made him easy picking for Japanese hunters.

#### MISSION AND PLAN OF ATTACK NEW GEORGIA OCCUPATION FORCE

The 43rd Division was relieved from the jurisdiction of the XIV Corps in June, 1943, and the Commanding General (Major General John Hester) was placed in command of the newly organized NEW GEORGIA OCCUPATION FORCE. He and his new staff dealt directly with USAFISPA and COMSOPAC in the planning of the coming operation. The Commanding General XIV Corps came into the picture only through the medium of liaison.

The composition of this Force was to consist of:

NGOF Provisional Headquarters  
43rd Infantry Division  
136th Field Artillery battalion (37th Division)  
4th Marine Raider battalion.

Field Order No. 1, NGOF, states the mission as follows: (4)

1. Land on RENDOVA ISLAND; destroy any enemy encountered; secure a beachhead for the landing of the remainder of the occupation force, and prepare for the defense of the Island.

2. Land at WICKHAM ANCHORAGE, SEGI and VIRU HARBOR; destroy any enemy encountered and prepare the defenses of the area.

3. Be prepared on D+4 days to capture in succession MUNDA, KOLOMBANGARA and other enemy position in the NEW

---

(4) A-6 and Map A

GEORGIA GROUP. (5)

D Day was set as 30 June, 1943. At the time of receipt of orders the 43rd Division (less 172nd Combat Team) was stationed at the RUSSELL ISLANDS. The 172nd Combat Team was stationed on GUADALCANAL. Special amphibious training was conducted by units of the Division, transport was assigned, Division service troops established Division supply dumps, redistributed equipment, and co-ordinated transportation facilities and embarkation point operations.

Acting on a threatened enemy occupation of SEGI, Companies O and P, 4th Marine Raider battalion and Companies A and D, 103rd Infantry, were moved during the period 18-22 June, ahead of schedule to SEGI, effectively securing it for uninterrupted execution of the general plan.

Company B, 103rd Infantry, (reinforced) designated as the attacking force for seizure of VIRU embarked aboard APDs 25 June for training preparatory to landing.

The general plan called for the simultaneous occupation of WICKHAM, SEGI, VIRU and RENDOVA on the morning of 30 June. Preliminary reconnaissance by officers of all combat elements of the Division had disclosed considerable enemy strength at WICKHAM, with strong points at VIRU and at UGELI on RENDOVA. Reconnaissance also indicated the advisability of initiating a land advance on VIRU two days earlier than originally contemplated because of the hazards of the terrain. Hence, Companies O and P, 4th Marine Raider battalion, occupying SEGI, started marching on VIRU 28 June, preparatory to co-ordinating their attack with the

amphibious landing of Company B (reinforced), 103rd Infantry on 30 June.

The 172nd Combat Team, with the mission of seizing RENDOVA, rendezvoused with Hq. 43rd Division Artillery, 43rd Signal Company, and 43rd Reconnaissance Troops on 28 and 29 June at GUADALCANAL preparatory to the operation. Units of this force were loaded aboard LCIs, LCTs and transports, which were accompanied by naval escort.

While the RENDOVA Forces were loading in GUADALCANAL, the WICKHAM, SEGI and VIRU Forces, elements of the 103rd Combat Team, were loading aboard ARDs, LSTs, LCIs, and LCTs in the RUSSELL ISLANDS.

The 103rd Combat Team (less two battalion Combat Teams and one reinforced company) was ordered to occupy and defend SEGI and secure the area for an air and naval PT base.

One battalion Combat Team from 103rd Combat Team was ordered to land at OLEANA BAY and attack WICKHAM ANCHORAGE.

*to move*  
A 3rd battalion Combat Team from 103rd Combat Team was moved to RENDOVA and was scheduled for duty as security for the Division left (southwest) flank from vicinity POKO PLANTATION, RENDOVA ISLAND.

The 169th Combat Team in division reserve was prepared to move to RENDOVA immediately upon completion of the landing of the first echelon.

#### INITIAL OPERATIONS OF NEW GEORGIA OCCUPATION FORCE (6)

The first echelons for the four initial objectives arrived without unusual incident on schedule (morning 30 June). Air cover intercepted and destroyed substantial

enemy air strength before the transports were threatened. Enemy shore defense guns at MUNDA, attempting to interdict the RENDOVA landing force, were engaged by screening destroyers and partially silenced.

A beachhead was secured on RENDOVA, at RENDOVA PLANTATION (RENDOVA HARBOR) with minimum difficulty. Approximately fifty Japanese were killed, some fifty escaped. The 172nd Infantry Combat Team suffered minor casualties. Transports were able to unload their cargo and troops within a five-hour period, although hampered by an air alert, which caused the transports to disperse and later reassemble.

As a part of the occupation of RENDOVA, two rifle companies landed from APDs at ONLIVISI ENTRANCE prior to daybreak 30 June, and with minor opposition secured the passage for possible future use, denying the enemy one of the three approaches to ROVIANNA LAGOON. (7)

On 1 July the 43rd Reconnaissance troops seized BANIETA POINT, on the west coast, and UGELI, on the east coast, of RENDOVA ISLAND, each of which had been manned by enemy naval forces. With minor opposition both these positions were occupied and provided outposts on the flanks of the main RENDOVA dispositions.

Artillery and infantry dispositions in defense of RENDOVA PLANTATION were completed 1 July and subsequent combat echelons of the Division (less outpost elements) closed on RENDOVA 4 July. All available personnel not occupied in the defense of the area were employed in unloading cargo craft during the period. On 2 July enemy dive bombers attacked without warning, causing extremely heavy casualties

and damage to materiel in the congested beach area. Subsequent attacks on RENDOVA were frequent but not effective. (8)

Occupation of WICKHAM, SEGI and VIRU consisted of patrol activities and setting up a base for security of the area and action to protect and conserve supplies landed with the forces. The enemy gave these outposts less difficulty than was anticipated.

The next mission faced the 43rd Division, that of landing on NEW GEORGIA ISLAND, capturing or destroying all enemy encountered and securing the MUNDA AIRFIELD. (9)

Preliminary reconnaissance for suitable landing beaches, routes, water supply, enemy fortifications and disposition on NEW GEORGIA were completed prior to 5 July. Meanwhile, ZANANA BEACH was selected as the most suitable beach for the initial landing. (10)

Landing was made via ONIAIVISI ENTRANCE on ZANANA BEACH without opposition on 2 July and patrols were pushed out to the MUNDA TRAIL, where enemy patrols were encountered. Artillery was moved up to positions on SASAVELLE and BARAULOU (BARAMANI) ISLAND, were registered and prepared to furnish direct support to the advance. (11)

Division engineers constructed a jeep trail from ZANANA BEACH to MUNDA TRAIL and west on the MUNDA TRAIL in close support of the infantry.

The plan for the attack on NEW GEORGIA designated the line of departure as the BARIKE RIVER, with the 172nd Infantry on the south and the 169th Infantry on the north. Jump off time was set as 0630, 5 July.

- 
- (8) A-8  
(9) A-8, A-9, A-11, A-12  
(10) Map B  
(11) Map B

The attack proceeded as planned. The heavy jungle and deep swamps of the BARIKE VALLEY denied rapid advance. The enemy fought a persistent delaying action throughout the area, employing automatic weapons astride corridors and trails. Sniper action and light artillery and mortar interdicted our lines of communication. They made many night raids and took other harassing actions.

The excessive amount of traffic over the one road, together with heavy rains and poor drainage conditions, kept it so torn up that it was almost impossible for the engineers to maintain it with the small amount of equipment available. Within a week the condition of the road was so bad that virtually all vehicle transportation ceased and fully fifty per cent of the combat elements were required for hand carry of supplies and for evacuation. Shortage of equipment, particularly bulldozers, precluded the building of a second parallel road to relieve the situation.

#### NORTHERN LANDING GROUP

The capture of MUNDA had been planned by COMSOPAC as a double envelopment. The second arm was to sweep around from the north at a later date, when presumably the Japanese would have committed their available forces in the defense of MUNDA. This second arm had a minimum objective, that of cutting the enemy supply trails from the north shore of NEW GEORGIA to the MUNDA AIRFIELD.

This North Landing Group consisted of the 3rd battalion, 145th Infantry (37th Division), the 3rd battalion, 148th Infantry (37th Division), and the 1st Marine Raider battalion, all under the command of Colonel Harry B. Liversedge, USMC.



This force was to be landed at RICE ANCHORAGE, some thirteen miles from MUNDA, and was to fight it's way down the coast to ENOGAI INLET and on south to BARIKO HARBOR, and to meet the New Georgia Occupation Force in behind MUNDA AIRFIELD. (12)

Since there were no roads of any type on NEW GEORGIA, this force had difficulty in making advances over the few trails which existed, and it's progress was further impeded by the enemy in preventing adequate resupply.

The Japanese Navy was still active in KULA GULF and on the same day of the landing (5 July) the first battle of KULA GULF ensued, followed by a second engagement on 12 July (Battle of KOLOMBANGARA). (13)

While these naval battles were successful, our Navy did not feel justified in openly running in small craft to re-supply the Liversedge Force, thus making supply sporadic in that the situation required destroyers to make deliveries. The schedule for the destroyers coming into the area was determined by requirements of the Navy for their priority use as naval fighting ships. Needless to say, without an adequate supply system this force of twelve hundred men was greatly hampered in the accomplishment of it's mission.

#### NARRATION

#### XIV CORPS ASSUMES COMMAND

It had been anticipated that the forces assigned to the New Georgia Occupation Force and North Landing Group would be sufficient to complete the seizure of NEW GEORGIA within a thirty day period. Elements of the Japanese 6th Division at BUIN had reinforced the defending garrison on NEW GEORGIA.

---

(12) A-14 & Map B.  
(13) A-14

Japanese stiffening resistance, mud, dense jungle and inaccurate maps, all combined to slow down the advance.

Due to the increasing scale of ground operations, COMSO-PAC on 10 July, 1943, ordered the Commanding General XIV Corps. with forward combat echelon Corps Staff, to proceed to RENDOVA and evaluate the situation in preparation for assumption of command of NGOF. The 37th Division on GUADALCANAL was committed to immediate participation in the operation, and the 25th Division on GUADALCANAL was placed in reserve, available for the operation if required. One ordnance ammunition company, plus his own Corps Headquarters, and a Signal Operating Company were the only service units available to the Corps Commander when he assumed command of NGOF and North Landing Group, midnight 14-15 July, 1943.

#### RESUMPTION OF THE ATTACK

Upon arriving at RENDOVA, the Corps Commander made a reconnaissance of the area and held conferences with Major General John Hester and his staff concerning the current tactical situation. At his suggestion, Commanding General 43rd Division ordered the establishment of a new beachhead at LAIANA in order to provide a base for an additional road to the interior and thus help relieve the combat situation by shortening of supply and evacuation routes. This action would be beneficial to the combat elements whether or no they were able to build another road with any degree of speed. It would at least provide a shorter hand carry route. The new beachhead was established without serious enemy opposition, and patrols made contact with the left flank of the 172nd Infantry.

After making contact, the combat line was to be shifted south so that the left flank anchored on ROVIANNA LAGOON.

Both regiments were to shift toward the beach, a distance of some two thousand yards. During this southward movement the Japanese caught our forces with an unprotected salient between the 169th and 172nd Infantry and for a time cut off the 169th from their only road to the rear. Three days later, however, our forces were able to re-establish contact and successfully bottle up the Japanese, who had penetrated to the trail in rear of the line.

Air drops of supplies were initiated to the 169th Infantry and were completed with reasonable success.

After assuming command of NGOF, the Corps Commander made plans for the re-grouping of his forces so as to give a measure of relief to the elements of the 43rd Division in the line and to speed up the operation.

During the period 18-25 July this reorganization and re-grouping took place. The 37th Division was assigned the right sector, and the 43rd Division was given the beach, or south sector. The sectors were divided by a line from LAIANA BEACH in the direction of BIBOLO HILL, 267° magnetic azimuth.

While this re-grouping of forces was going on, the Corps Commander turned his attention to the organization of the rear areas on RENDOVA and adjacent islands, the organization of provisional service units, the clean-up of beach areas, and the designation of an island as a supply base and staging area for the 37th and 25th Divisions. See Map B.

He ordered a co-ordinated attack by two divisions to begin 25 July. They were to be supported by artillery, under Corps control, from battery positions on DAVALI, SASAVELLE, ROVIANNA, KOKORANA and BARABUNI ISLANDS. Sixty-eight 105 m.m. howitzers and twenty-four 155 m.m. howitzers were used to

support the attack. (14)

The outer taxi-way on MUNDA AIRFIELD and the eastern peak of BIBOLO HILL (right) was reached on 1 August. Between 1 August and 5 August the attack continued. By using artillery to fell the forest, the infantry was able to fight on dry open ground for the first time since the operation began. Bombs, flame throwers and a platoon of tanks supplemented artillery as supporting weapons in dislodging the Japanese from his well-prepared coconut log and coral pillboxes on east and north side of MUNDA AIRFIELD. On 5 August at 1410 occupation of MUNDA FIELD was complete.

On 6 August the Corps Commander issued his second field order. The 43rd Division was assigned the mission of preparing the defenses around MUNDA FIELD; the 37th Division was to continue it's attack up the coast toward BARIOKO HARBOR. Elements of the 25th Division, which had been brought into the area, were to rout the enemy from ARUNDEL and KOLOMBANGARA ISLANDS.

#### THE SUPPLY SITUATION

Along with a new battle to be won, the Corps Commander had inherited a supply plan based on the assumption that the operation would be concluded in thirty days by one reinforced division.

Prior to the beginning of the operation, Commanding General 43rd Division and his G-4 had been made acquainted with the unfavorable status of supply then existing on GUADALCANAL, (15) However, at a conference held the second week of June at NOUMEA, NEW CALEDONIA, they were given assurance by Commanding General, SOS SPA, that ample supplies were on hand at

---

(14) Map B  
(15) Personal knowledge

NEW CALEDONIA and that they would be shipped in sufficient time to support this operation. (16) The XIV Corps was appraised of this promise upon the return of G-4, 43rd Division, to the RUSSELLS.

Past experiences on the receipt of supplies on GUADALCANAL had shown that it took an absolute minimum of twenty-five days to get a cargo ship of supplies from NEW CALEDONIA. The G-4, 43rd Division, was encouraged to attempt to get cargo ships loaded in NEW CALEDONIA for direct delivery to NEW GEORGIA without the necessity of staging the supplies on GUADALCANAL. This request was made but the plan was denied by the War Shipping Administration, who controlled cargo ships, and by the Navy, who had the requirement of protecting cargo vessels while in dangerous waters. (17)

This denial left the only remaining means of getting supplies into the operation, that of utilizing vessels from the Landing Craft Flotillas based in the RUSSELL ISLANDS to load out from GUADALCANAL.

All the amphibious landings made in the NEW GEORGIA Operation were based on the standard procedure developed by U. S. Marine Corps of having each echelon take with it and land on the beach a specified number of days' rations, a minimum of five units of fire of ammunition, and ten days' gasoline supply for the vehicles landed, plus a specified amount of Class II and IV supplies. Each succeeding echelon was to carry a similar amount of supplies for themselves, and in addition ten days' supply for personnel, who had previously been landed. Thus each succeeding echelon carried an in-

---

(16) Comment of Lt. Col. Press, G-4, 43rd Division  
(17) Personal knowledge

creasing amount of supplies over the personnel carried.

The 43rd Division had been issued sixty days' Class II and IV supplies, which they had placed in their supply installations on the RUSSELL ISLANDS with plans to utilize transportation as it became available to move these supplies forward as needed. (18)

Fortification materials, as recommended by the Division Engineer, were carried by all units in the initial and succeeding echelons. The plan upon arrival at the beach area was that the Division supply agencies would be landed with the second echelon and would be responsible for beach operation and the operation of supply points.

Beginning on D/1, all rations and Class III supplies arriving with combat units on each beach would pass to the control of the supply agencies and would be placed in dumps for subsequent issue to the troops. (19) The initial plan for evacuation called for casualties to be evacuated through aid stations to the beaches and to the rear by the same water transportation which unloaded cargo.

When the Corps Commander took over this supply plan, he was immediately faced with it's inadequacy to meet the tactical situation.

Due to shortage of shipping space, 43rd Division had been able to ship only a fraction of it's Class II and IV supplies. The evacuation plan had fallen down and supplies were so piled up on the beaches on RENDOVA and KOKORANA that ships had difficulty in discharging their cargo.

The Corps Commander had only one service organization,

---

(18) Personal Knowledge

(19) A-6, A-7

an ammunition company readily available to assist in any way in the support of the action from a logistic standpoint. Not a single item of beach clearing equipment was available. He was faced with fighting a battle, where it was necessary to control usage and issue of many materials on a priority basis, and with utilizing a high percentage of his combat personnel to supplement the service elements of the divisions in performing services necessary on the beach and in the supply dumps for the entire operation. Man-handling of supplies was especially costly in manpower.

There were not sufficient rations, ammunition, engineer equipment, nor medical supplies readily available in the SOLOMON area to support an operation involving three divisions. Commanding General SOS SPA was asked to speed up delivery of supplies ear-marked for SOLOMONS and to set up a ration and Class II and IV shipment by cargo ship direct to NEW GEORGIA as soon as WSA and Navy would agree.

As has been previously stated, the situation called for the organizing of provisional service units from among combat personnel and the requiring of the division service units to perform services greatly in excess of their anticipated usage. Keep in mind that all these service units still had a rear echelon on either GUADALCANAL or the RUSSELLS, which had not been able to join the forward echelon due to the shortage of shipping.

On 14 July the Corps Commander asked that priority be given on all available shipping for the rear echelon of the 43rd Division and its stockpile of supplies.

Personnel of Corps Special Staff and provisional beach control organizations were stationed at each unloading beach

with a specific mission of clearing the beach areas and organizing the supplies already within the area in an effort to determine exactly what was on hand and available. While this reorganization was going on, many calls were made on Service Command, GUADALCANAL, for special shipments of items later found to be already on hand.

Next the Corps required each of the outpost units to make appropriate reports as to their strength and status of supply. Strength reports and disposition of units indicated that the following personnel were involved in the NEW GEORGIA Operation on 12 July, 1943:

<u>Place</u>	<u>Army</u>	<u>Navy</u>	<u>Marine</u>	<u>Total</u>
WICKHAM.....	1332	542	368	2142
SEGI.....	2372	1372	---	3744
VIRU.....	353	313	181	847
RENDOVA.....	7405	954	1604	10141
RICE ANCHORAGE..	800	---	400	1200

ORGANIZATION AND OPERATION OF REAR G-4 STAFF

In as much as I had maintained liaison with the 43rd Division on matters of supply prior to the entry of the XIV Corps into this operation, the Commanding General designated me to head a G-4 rear echelon staff composed of special staff personnel with the mission of supervising the loading out of supplies at GUADALCANAL and to perform the necessary liaison between the Service Command, Commander Naval Base, SOLOMONS, and Commander Air, SOLOMONS, in order to control shipments of supplies and personnel on priorities to be set by him as Commanding General NGOF.

Again keep in mind that the XIV Corps had but one service element under it's direct jurisdiction, and that all other service elements available in the area were under the direct supervision of the Service Command (GUADALCANAL). The task then of G-4 rear echelon staff became a matter of liaison, by making



known to the Service Command the requirements of the combat area and constant supervision of the loading to insure that priority supplies were placed aboard the first vessel out and that they were suitable for combat.

The Corps Commander permitted the writer to select from his G-4 and special staff as many personnel as was considered necessary to accomplish this mission.

The following representatives, in addition to the writer, were selected for this staff:

- Quartermaster Class I Officer
- Quartermaster Class III Officer
- Quartermaster Class II and IV Officer
- Ordnance Ammunition Officer
- Ordnance Maintenance & Supply Officer
- Engineer Supply Officer
- Assistant G-4 Administrative Officer.

The first task of this staff was to secure the echelon loading plans for the resupply of forces at WICKHAM, SEGI, VIRU, RENDOVA and RICE ANCHORAGE, and to augment that plan by the necessary additional shipping to meet the requirements of the increased number of personnel and units scheduled to go into the operation and to impose the Commanding General's priority of supply.

In setting up the new schedule of shipping, we were continually faced with the shortage of water transportation to accomplish the mission and with reluctant co-operation of the Navy and Air, when priorities set by the Commanding General restricted shipping space for items considered essential by their services.

High on the priority list was a call for 3160 tons artillery ammunition for use in the attack to begin 25 July. It was not possible to allot shipping exclusively to ammunition; a plan was agreed upon for the average shipment of 200 tons daily. This quantity, together with ammunition already

on hand, was estimated as adequate to meet the tactical situation.

The only covered storage for supplies on GUADALCANAL was canvas cover and that over a very small percentage of the supplies. Conditions of open storage in the tropics over a period of only a few months forced upon this staff the necessity of constant surveillance of everything loaded aboard. It was surprising the quantity of items, which were refused shipment, as being unserviceable. In spite of this surveillance, many supplies and much equipment of limited service value arrived in the combat area.

The report of the difficulties of this operation and recommendations for correction resulted in a plan later carried out, whereby the supplies for a combat operation in the tropics would be loaded State-side or in HAWAII for direct shipment to the combat area without being unloaded and stock-piled in an area, where it could not be protected from the elements or from pilferage.

#### REVIEW OF TRANSPORTATION REQUIREMENTS

With a supply base two hundred miles to the rear and with only one major means of transportation (water), with scattered forces some seventy-five miles apart, all requiring supply and evacuation by water, and with all beach supply installations in the mud and on a number of small islands, use of limited water transport could be a deciding factor. (20)

The Navy had organized a Landing Craft Flotillas, South Pacific, under the command of Rear Admiral George H. Fort, for the purpose of providing transportation for the NEW GEORGIA and subsequent operation. This flotilla was harbored in the RUSSELL ISLANDS. It consisted of LSTs (landing ship, tanks),

LCTs (landing craft, tanks), LCIs (Landing craft, infantry).

The Navy also organized a Naval Base in RENDOVA HARBOR, to which was assigned all available small craft, such as LCMs, LCVs, LCPs (Higgins Boats). The quantity of shipping available was based on the original requirements for one reinforced division.

The plan for resupply of the landing forces was to be predominately by LSTs and LCTs, which plied between RENDOVA, SEGI, VIRU and WICKHAM on as fast a shuttle as was possible, consistent with the enemy air situation and the availability of naval escort.

LSTs were especially vulnerable to enemy air craft and since these ships were secured for combat landing of troops in the next operation, they were zealously guarded and not permitted to stay on an unprotected beach if there was danger of enemy air attack. LSTs have a normal capacity of approximately 500 ship tons and can haul as many as fifty 2½-ton vehicles.

When cargo has been laid on the floor of an LST the unloading operation requires cargo to be reloaded onto a vehicle inside the ship, which is then driven onto the beach. This procedure required some four to six hours. It was most desirable to devise a loading plan which would shorten this time. Much attention was given to different plans of loading and unloading and before the end of the NEW GEORGIA operation, we had secured a number of large trailers on to which all the cargo hauled on a LST was loaded. This permitted unloading as fast as the trailers could be pulled out to the beach by a tractor. While this process was much faster, it did, however, reduce the load carried by approximately one-third the

tonnage and was not an economical use of the transport. The ships did not make more trips as a result of the speeded-up unloading. The plan was not used in succeeding operations in the SOUTH PACIFIC.

LCTs have an open and unprotected deck on which is stacked an average of 150 ship tons of supplies. This craft was usually utilized in small fleets without naval protection. Since they had no navigation instruments aboard, they required an APC for use as a guide.

Since the operation from RENDOVA to NEW GEORGIA was made by hopping from one island to another, the boats of the small boat pool, belonging to the Rendova Naval Base, were all required in the movement of units from their island staging area to the beach on NEW GEORGIA. All supplies were transported inter-island by this craft. Due to the fact that so many troop elements in this operation were so widely scattered and since the only means of transportation from one element of a command to another was by water, the number of small boats available proved wholly inadequate.

It was necessary for the Corps Commander, through his transportation officer, to daily ascertain from the Naval Base the exact quantity and type of boats which would be made available for Army use on the following day and to set a priority on their use and establish necessary control, so as to be assured that boats were utilized in both directions, not permitting them to stand idle at any one beach during a long wait.

After the seizure of the Airfield on 5 August, it was considered safe to use LCTs within the waters of ROVIANNA LAGOON, between SASAVELLE and MUNDA. They were used as ferry boats in ferrying loaded trucks rather than have troops

load and reload from truck to craft and vice-versa. While this was not an economic use of landing craft or truck, it did permit more trips to be made and required only twenty-five per cent as much labor in handling supplies.

As has been pointed out, the roads from ZANANA AND LAIANA BEACHES inland were at best only jeep trails into the jungle and were not capable of standing up under heavy truck traffic. For this reason a Corps order was issued prohibiting use of vehicles larger than three-quarter ton trucks until the MUNDA AIRFIELD had been secured. The motor transportation of the 43rd and 37th Divisions, however, were utilized at the service installations on RENDOVA, SASAVELLE and ROVIANNA ISLANDS and on the two beachheads on NEW GEORGIA. The limited use of truck transportation in the operation had been recognized from the beginning, so the major proportion of the division motor transportation had been left at the RUSSELLS and on GUADALCANAL, where it was used for the loading of supplies aboard ship.

Supplying of the Liversedge Group at RICE ANCHORAGE could only be made by destroyers until after 1 August, and since they were constantly in demand for naval combat missions, their resupply trips were sporadic and the amount of supplies delivered was less than bare necessities. This Group actually suffered from the lack of food, clothing, and shoes, and quite often ran short of ammunition.

It was necessary to attempt parachute drop of supplies to Liversedge Group and to units on the (interior) right flank of the line approaching MUNDA. Request for air transportation of supplies was relayed to rear echelons of the Corps on GUADALCANAL through air combat channels. Army Air Corps

(13th Air Force) had made available one squadron of cargo planes and such parachutes and supply containers as could be assembled in the SOUTH PACIFIC. Parachutes were extremely limited and the majority of available drop containers were so deteriorated that they would not stand the weight of supplies placed in them. This situation necessitated a number of air drops of supplies in original containers. Troops receiving parachuted supplies were requested to use great care in salvaging parachutes and containers for return to the rear area for use in succeeding drops. Those that were returned did not arrive at the rear areas until after the necessity for their use had ceased.

On the whole, air drop of supplies was not satisfactory since it was most difficult to identify the proposed drop area on account of heavy foliage. These areas had to be indicated twenty-four hours in advance. In the patrol action, which took place around RICE ANCHORAGE and ENOGAI INLET, often the Japanese would be in control of the designated drop area. Our parties on the ground had difficulty in sending up flare signals through the dense jungle to indicate the Drop Zone. Consequently, the Japanese received fully fifty per cent of supplies dropped.

A number of Navy PBY planes based at TULAGI were used for air transportation of personnel and for emergency evacuation of wounded.

#### EVACUATION, HOSPITALIZATION and MEDICAL SUPPLIES

The original supply plan of the 43rd Division called for evacuation of sick and wounded through aid stations to the beachhead, thence to GUADALCANAL, by first available water transportation. Such personnel were hospitalized at the Station Hospital, operating under the jurisdiction of the

Guadalcanal Service Command. The system of evacuation was not satisfactory; it was not practical to ship wounded soldiers on a twenty-four to thirty-six hour water journey on an LCT or LST under tropical conditions. These craft did not have medical personnel organically aboard to care for the sick; neither did they carry sufficient medical supplies to meet any such requirements.

The net result was that when personnel were evacuated by such means it was necessary to put medical personnel and supplies on both these crafts to care for the wounded. LCTs are an open deck-type vessel, and as such permit the sick and wounded being carried to be subjected to the elements during the entire journey. The Navy system of pulling landing craft away from a beach during an enemy air raid in order to prevent the craft from becoming a "sitting duck" quite often results in the craft being sent to the rear without returning to the beach to complete its unloading and without picking up its scheduled load of sick and wounded for evacuation. This meant that those who had been transferred to the beach for evacuation must be returned to the clearing station. This occurrence happened too often.

The situation was only partially relieved by the assignment of additional medical personnel for service in the evacuation process and the issue by the Corps to all ships within the Landing Craft Flotillas a quantity of medical supplies.

Emergency evacuation of personnel from RICE ANCHORAGE, WICKHAM, SEGI and VIRU was performed by PBVs. For local evacuation with the RENDOVA-MUNDA area, it was a priority mission for all boats of the naval boat pool, which report-

ad to any and all beaches with supplies or personnel, to pick up any sick or wounded at the beach and evacuate them to the clearing station on RENDOVA. Enemy action on the right flank of the MUNDA attack repeatedly ambushed litter-bearers with their wounded personnel on the trails. It was necessary to send armed patrols up and down the trails as escorts for carrying parties. Litter-bearers and medical service personnel were not reluctant to carry arms under these circumstances.

As early as 11 July the line of evacuation had become so long that the medical units of the 43rd Division ran short of litters and issued an emergency call for additional supply. This situation was later investigated by Corps G-4 and it was found the major portion of the 43rd Division's medical supplies including extra litters, had been left in the rear echelon of the division in the RUSSELLS, and that the evacuation system which called for sick and wounded being evacuated on litters from the front lines to the beaches, thence onto LCTs or LSTs to GUADALCANAL, had utilized all available litters as beds aboard ship, with the result that there was a dearth of litters in the combat area before they could be returned by subsequent cargo ships coming from GUADALCANAL.

With travel on the roads of NEW GEORGIA restricted to 1/4-ton vehicles, it was necessary to modify 1/4-ton trucks with angle iron or pipe framing for use as ambulances as a vehicle expedient. These proved to be very versatile and were used extensively in preference to the more cumbersome and closed 3/4-ton ambulance.

#### SUPPLY SHORTAGES AND EFFECTS ON THE OPERATION

The responsibility for levels of supply within the SOUTH PACIFIC Area belonged to the Commanding General SOS



South Pacific and to the various service commands under his jurisdiction.

Since the conclusion of the Guadalcanal Campaign a very definite effort had been made by all responsible headquarters to complete the outfitting of all units arriving in the area and to build up the area level of supply to the prescribed number of days for each base. (21)

With the conclusion of the RUSSELL ISLANDS occupation, the geographic limits of the SOUTH PACIFIC had been reached and the combat operations within the theater thus concluded left the SOUTH PACIFIC low on the priority list for supplies.

"Only minimum requirements were allotted for the occupation and build-up of Pacific bases. Difficulties arising from the shortage of shipping in the Pacific was aggravated by difficulties in the assignment of shipping priorities between the Army and Navy and by lack of co-ordination in the development of bases in the Pacific areas. Critically needed shipping was tied up for long periods in overseas ports, particularly NOUMEA, NEW CALEDONIA, while the inadequate cargo-handling facilities were occupied with shuttling vessels for piece-meal unloading. It was necessary to dock vessels, search them for urgently needed items and then replace them with other ships for the same type of selective unloading in order to make available even the minimum essentials." (22)

Limited service personnel and lack of dock facilities at GUADALCANAL permitted not more than five ships to unload simultaneously. With the beginning of the NEW GEORG-

---

(21) A-16

(22) A-16

LA operation, with it's resultant requirements for loading out vessels as well as the unloading of ships coming from the rear, the low level of supplies was further accentuated by the new demands on service troops for loading ships.

(23)

Prior to the NEW GEORGIA operation the Service Command at GUADALCANAL had been constantly faced with establishing new supply dumps in which to place the incoming supplies in the program of build-up for support of future operations, and also to get the installations out of the mud. In so doing the Service Command utilized all road equipment and bulldozers arriving on the base even though this equipment had been consigned for a specific combat division as organic equipment. The local diversion of this equipment, of course, had it's effect on the combat units and with the opening of the New Georgia operation, Corps ordered this equipment delivered to the combat elements, as they left the base for the combat area. This procedure left the Service Command virtually without equipment to maintain their supply installations and the road into them.

In bringing the 37th Division into the operation on 15 July and ten days later the addition of the 25th Division, the demands on shipping space were strained to such an extent that it was necessary for the Corps Commander to exercise the greatest control possible on the distribution of critical items of equipment in order to set priorities on the use of available shipping space.

Several items of supplies and equipment, which directly featured in the picture of strict control, required special attention and are enumerated here as illustrating the problems

encountered when carrying out an operation without an adequate supply plan and ready source of equipment:

#### HOWITZERS

The 90th Field Artillery (155 m.m.) Howitzer battalion, organic to the 43rd Division and the attached 136th Field Artillery battalion (155 m.m. Howitzer) were emplaced on islands at the entrance to RENDOVA HARBOR with a support mission which called for firing with the maximum charge. The constant use of howitzers at their maximum range brought to light certain difficulties with their recoil mechanism, which required that they be replaced. A survey of the supply status of the Service Command of GUADALCANAL and the RUSSELL ISLANDS revealed that only two surplus 155 m.m. howitzers were available for immediate issue. This situation left only one solution, that of taking howitzers from the 25th Division, in Corps reserve, and shipping them to RENDOVA for use until replacements could be brought up from NEW CALEDONIA. This Division did not receive its replacement weapons until practically the end of the NEW GEORGIA Campaign. Two battalions of medium artillery required a total of eight replacements, six being caused by recoil mechanism failures. (24)

#### BULLDOZERS

At the end of the GUADALCANAL Campaign strong recommendations had been made through channels to the War Department for an increase in the number and size of bulldozers available to divisions fighting in the SOUTH PACIFIC. These additional bulldozers had not yet arrived at the time of commencement of the New Georgia Campaign. As units arrived in the RENDOVA HARBOR area and tried to work themselves away

---

(24) Comment of Col. Chas. M. Crawford, Corps Ord. Officer

from the beach into the interior in order to find a place to bivouac and to emplace guns, they found themselves hopelessly bogged down in mud. Their 2 1/2-ton trucks would not move. The 4-ton trucks also did not prove capable of pulling howitzers and guns into and out of battery positions under the conditions. For each hour of use of a bulldozer in the beach area it meant that this equipment could not be used in the building of roads so vital to the advance of the infantry into the jungle of NEW GEORGIA.

The bulldozer was the most highly valued individual piece of equipment and was used to clear gun positions, dig out operational dugouts, drag guns into positions, pull all types of vehicles off the beach or out of the mud, clear the jungle, make roads, repair and maintain roads, and bury Japanese dead. Every unit wanted one or more bulldozers and made constant requests on the Corps for them.

#### AMMUNITION

The ammunition arriving in the SOUTH PACIFIC had been unloaded at NEW CALEDONIA, where the atmospheric conditions did not deteriorate it as much as would have been the case had it been stored on GUADALCANAL or one of the other islands nearby. The theater plan for supplying this item to any future operation was that the required ammunition would be loaded in NEW CALEDONIA and shipped direct to the operation. The supply kept on GUADALCANAL was limited to not more than five units of fire for the divisions staging there. This five units of fire was a composite of ammunition salvaged from the Guadalcanal Campaign and some additional ammunition which had been sent up to balance the base stockpile. Needless to say, since the majority of this ammunition had been

in the tropics for approximately six to eight months before the NEW GEORGIA operation, the effect of jungle humidity had already begun to take it's toll.

An early request on SOS in NEW CALEDONIA for the shipment of ammunition directly to NEW GEORGIA met without success due to a Navy decision that enemy air craft was too active in the area and that there was insufficient naval escort vessels to protect cargo ships in the NEW GEORGIA waters for the required eight to ten days unloading them, and, too, the War Shipping Administration would not release ships for voyages into these waters. Such a decision meant that the ammunition on GUADALCANAL and RUSSELLS would necessarily have to be used in the early stages of the operation. Due to the limited number of Ordnance ammunition personnel in the area to make detailed inspections, ammunition of questionable servicability was shipped to the battery position on the islands approaching NEW GEORGIA.

In one shipment the Corps Ordnance Officer counted thirty-one different powder lots. A number of lots were back-traced and found to have been handled in excess of thirty-five times since leaving the port of embarkation. (25)

This situation made it impractical to register each lot and caused considerable amount of erratic shooting. Appropriate orders were issued requiring each battery position to accumulate a quantity of ammunition with a common powder lot number, which was saved for firing when the artillery was used in close support of the infantry. The other ammunition was utilized for harassing missions. (26)

A Japanese comment found in a captured document on MUNDA

---

(25) Comment of Col. Chas. M. Crawford, Corps Ord. Officer  
(26) A-25

in mid-August, 1943, relates: "The enemy, with complete material superiority, shelled and bombed heavily night and day and at times added naval fire to this. Enemy laid waste the battlefield and then ordered an infantry advance." (Japanese Comments on American Tactics). After having an average of a little less than 350 tons a day for 11 days thrown into a battle position of 3000 yards front, it is easy to realize what the Japanese writer was talking about.

Another difficultly encountered which proved a demoralizing factor was a situation regarding mortar ammunition. After numerous rounds of it had been hand carried miles into the interior of NEW GEORGIA it was found upon opening that the pasteboard shot gun shell cartridge used as an igniter and the propellant ring charges had absorbed so much moisture that they often failed to function. Since there were no additional cartridges provided with the packages of ammunition, this resulted in the rounds being cast aside as unusable. Upon receiving a report of this, a survey of ammunition dumps disclosed that no extra serviceable cartridges were available in the SOUTH PACIFIC. The short supply was somewhat relieved by an air shipment from U. S. of additional igniter charges. Since propellants on the mortars were seldom used at maximum range, mortar squads were usually able to find ample good propellant charge from among the ammunition to fire their mission.

Shipments of small arm ammunition had been made on the standard unit of fire basis with proportionate amounts packaged for separate loading, belted for machine gun and banded in 5 and 8 round clips.

This operation proved the necessity for ammunition

fitting the needs of the troops. The cartridge belt was used very little but 8/clips and 5/clips in bandoleers were very popular. Ammunition carrying parties often tired of carrying a 115 pound box of small arms ammunition and would take out what they wanted or felt like carrying and discard the remainder of the case beside the trail. (27)

#### SIGNAL ITEMS

Combat wire for communication was not sufficiently insulated to withstand the excessive moisture conditions found in the jungle. The enemy, in making raids on our lines of communication between our troops based on ZANANA BEACH and LAIANA BEACH, frequently cut telephone lines. In an effort to reduce the difficulties of communication from this type of patrol action to the minimum, all units invariably strung two wires over two different routes.

The majority of the artillery supported the action from their maximum ranges, thus requiring longer lines of communication and more wire than commonly necessary. Again the amount of supplies estimated as being required for the operation was based on a reinforced division; whereas, the requirements ended up as a three division supply problem. Consequently, every extra spool of W-110 wire available in the SOUTH PACIFIC at the time was utilized in this operation.

Since units were separated by bodies of water, an additional requirement for under-water cable also existed. To get sufficient quantities of this item required special shipping from base stocks at NEW CALEDONIA and the procurement of all available supplies in NEW ZEALAND, but it's use did relieve personnel boats from having to make many

---

(27) Comment of Col. Chas. M. Crawford, Corps. Ord. Officer

trips across bodies of water in order to permit staffs to co-ordinate the efforts of combat and service elements.

The heavy demand for signal wire was further accentuated by the difficulty experienced with dry batteries in the tropics. Batteries then available had been on the shelf in the area no less than six months and due to this excessive shelf-time and atmospheric effect on batteries themselves, radio communication was very definitely reduced to the minimum. Telephone communication was normally used in lieu of radio by all units.

#### CLOTHING

By 19 July all HBT clothing (except sizes "too large and too small") available on GUADALCANAL had been shipped to NEW GEORGIA for issue to troops. Prior to the campaign the troops had been issued complete allowance of clothing, yet it had been necessary due to shortage of shipping space to leave their "B" bags in the rear division areas. However, since supply of replacement HBT clothing was extremely limited, it was now necessary to make provision for the shipment of all "B" bags to the combat area and make disposition to troops so that they might have dry clothing occasionally. The principal difficulty of clothing in the tropics is the fact that they are continually wet from humidity, rain and perspiration.

Since uniforms were laundered by the soldier, usually without soap, under combat conditions, there was a tendency for them to contract a fungus growth, commonly known as "jungle rot". No laundry facilities were available for this operation, and experience dictated that some means of providing a complete change of clothing should be made available to the soldier at least every two or three days



when he is fighting in the tropics.

The Guadalcanal Service Command operated a provisional replacement depot. As replacements arrived from NEW CALEDONIA or personnel was released from the hospital for return to their units in NEW GEORGIA, they were processed through this replacement depot. Their return to units was usually made on LCIs.

On 29 July a shipment of approximately 150 replacements was sent forward without their individual clothing or equipment. Since the XIV Corps had no provisional organization or means for equipping replacements, these individuals became an additional burden on the combat supply elements. Corps G-4 representatives on GUADALCANAL, in conference with Commander Service Command established an SOP, which would insure that all personnel going forward would be re-equipped with individual clothing and equipment even though he may have all of his equipment somewhere within his own organization's bivouac.

#### RATION SITUATION AT TERMINATION OF PERIOD

After an appraisal of the ration dump situation on RENDOVA and other islands it was determined that the loss from pilfering of rations due to their dispersion was greater than any probable loss from enemy air action. Corps Commander approved a plan for establishing Corps ration point on SASAVELLE, where there would be only the beach parties and a limited number of units operating, so that a minimum of personnel would actually have access to the ration dumps. The Corps organized a provisional Quartermaster company to operate this installation.

The supply of rations posed a particular problem unique to this operation. Again let us back track and cover the

original situation in the rear areas before the beginning of the operation.

The many trans-shipment of rations, the required dispersion in storage areas as protection against enemy air action, and the use by troops of the most desirable items during a period of combat, are all factors which tend to unbalance the items available for issue from the ration dump.

There is a tendency on the part of all military personnel to help himself to rations, which are readily accessible to him in beach or roadside dumps without any feeling of necessity for going through the issue process. This action on the part of soldiers was considered nothing more than getting a meal to which he was entitled. Officially, however it can only be considered as pilfering.

When combat troops are used for unloading rations from a ship to a beach, the same box of rations may be lifted or handled as many as eight times from the hold of a ship until it is finally deposited in a ration dump. Since the dump is usually in an unprotected area due to the lack of police or fencing, it is readily understandable how the preferred items of the ration will disappear. Add to this handling and exposure the fact that the rations for this operation had to be reloaded aboard ship at GUADALCANAL and again be unloaded on a beach at SASAVELLE, where they were stockpiled awaiting small boat transportation to ZANANA and LAIANA Beaches, where they were finally issued to using troops.

From this account of handling and re-handling of rations, it is readily seen that it is most difficult to deliver to the front line soldier a ration which does not have a preponder-

ance of "SPAM" and "dehydrated potatoes". While each echelon of the supply establishment seeks to balance the ration each time it is handled, it merely means the rations remaining on hand at all points are all the more unbalanced as time goes on.

In April, 1943, the Guadalcanal Service Command had sought to correct the ration deficiency by requisitioning for specific items found to be short. Since the same causes had existed with respect to the loss of the most desirable items in the ration throughout the Guadalcanal Campaign, the rear base at NEW CALEDONIA was faced with requesting shipment of items from SAN FRANCISCO or procuring them in NEW ZEALAND. Either of these methods of replacing special items required some six to eight months for delivery, even with priority shipping. Suffice it to say for our present situation that the unbalanced condition of the rations available in the SOLOMONS had not been corrected until after the conclusion of the NEW GEORGIA operation. On 10 August thirty-three per cent of the ration could not be provided when making an issue.

Not until 5 August (more than thirty days after the original landing) was it possible to make distribution of fresh meat to the front line troops on NEW GEORGIA; the quantity available did not permit distribution to other than the combat element. (28)

#### ANALYSIS AND CRITICISM (29)

##### 1. SUPPLY PLAN

The Corps Commander inherited a supply plan which was wholly inadequate from the standpoint of supplies available, shipping priorities, organization of beach operation, avail-

---

(28) Personal knowledge

(29) A-19

ability of service personnel and the evacuation of sick and wounded. His staff was faced with the adoption of a plan already underway and with taking action to make the most of it by modification due to the over all supply situation and shortage of service personnel in the SOUTH PACIFIC AREA. As a whole it was not possible to augment the plan by securing additional service units. The only apparent solution available was the organization of provisional service units, reorganization of beach operations, and the establishment of priorities on use and distribution of certain critical supplies and equipment.

## 2. PRIOR STUDY AND PROCUREMENT OF ESSENTIAL EQUIPMENT

An appraisal of terrain, beach areas and approaches to the field of combat in this operation indicate that water transportation, road clearing and building equipment and cargo handling equipment at the beaches would be the most essential items to it's success. The quantity of these items provided was wholly inadequate. It must be admitted that this operation was begun without the theater being fully prepared for it from a supply point of view, but the situation dictated early action to attack the enemy before he completed his program of strengthening his outposts. Additional small boats, LCTs, LSTs, road building equipment were not available in the SOUTH PACIFIC AREA. Roads cannot be built through the jungle without a great quantity of equipment and if this is not available provisions must be made for supplying combat units by hand carry or small vehicles. Such a supply plan would call for special packaging of supplies and a reinforcing of the normal service elements available within a division.

### 3. PUBLICATION OF SUPPLY PLAN FOR ADHERENCE BY ALL COMMANDERS

It does not sound reasonable to say that the service personnel within a rear area would process for shipment and actually ship to the combat area supplies, which are obviously unserviceable, but that is what happened. The surveillance by a limited number of staff officers in this operation could not assure that all supplies loaded into critical cargo space were serviceable. Difficulty was also encountered with certain unit commanders in the correct utilization of allocated cargo space. They repeatedly neglected to comply with priorities set. Frequently the Navy and Air Corps sought to circumvent the priorities set by the occupation force commander.

### 4. NECESSITY FOR SERVICE TROOPS

The Corps Commander took over an operation without having available essential service elements. The 43rd Division originally went into the operation with fully fifty per cent of its service personnel left in the rear areas for lack of water transportation. This forced the use of some twenty-five per cent of all combat elements into service functions at a time when they should have been pressing their attack against the enemy in order to take advantage of the element of surprise. The Corps Commander could not add anything to the service troops' situation. His solution was one merely of organizing the efforts of combat troops already involved and the setting of higher priorities in the bringing forward of service elements of the 43rd Division and the newly committed 37th Division. When adequate service units are not provided in an amphibious operation, the beaches become cluttered with supplies and equipment of all kinds, which of necessity are thrown on the beach in a hurry in order to release landing

craft and permit them to get out of the combat zone. Lacking laundry units, more changes of combat clothing must be readily available to troops. Without adequate service personnel, labor troops and materiels handling equipment at a beach, the area soon becomes so disorganized that it is impossible to located specific items or know the status of supply. Such a condition soon precludes the use of the beach for future unloading operations.

#### 5. RESPONSIBILITY FOR EVACUATION

In the current situation arrangements for evacuation of personnel was made directly with the captain of each LST, who was obligated in accordance with the plan, to evacuate all sick and wounded from the beach. Often enemy air attack and orders from the Naval Escort Commander precluded the landing craft from carrying out it's evacuation mission. The craft were not provided organically with medical personnel and supplies, and, too, they were not available on a 24-hour basis, resulting in needless delay in the evacuation system. In the initial stages of an amphibious operation where evacuation is required from a beach before field installations have been established, some type of floating hospital should be provided to receive sick and wounded on a 24-hour basis and the full responsibility for evacuation should rest with the services controlling the means of transportation.

#### LESSONS

1. The supply plan for an operation merits the same careful planning as the tactical operation itself.
2. Acomplete study should be made prior to an operation to determine what supplies and equipment are essential to

the success of the operation.

3. All units involved in the operation should be thoroughly acquainted with the complete supply and evacuation plan, and it should be strictly adhered to by all commanders.

4. Logistic facilities should include sufficient service troops to unload ships, to establish and maintain dumps and transport supplies as far forward as possible prior to their use, should be allotted to the ground force commander of an amphibious operation.

5. When the means of evacuation is by transportation available to only one particular service (as is the case in all amphibious operations) the responsibility for medical evacuation should rest with that service.