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Part I, May 42 - Feb 43.

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PREFACE

Through Instruction No. 126 to Japanese Government, 12 Oct 45, entitled "Institution for War Records Investigation", steps were initiated to exploit military historical records and official reports of the Japanese War Ministry and the Japanese General Staff.* Upon the dissolution of the War Ministry and the General Staff, and the transfer of their former functions to the Demobilization Bureau, the general research job continued and resulted in the development of a series of historical monographs. Detailed instructions covering the preparation of these monographs were included in Memoranda 15 December 1945 and 21 November 1946, subject "Japanese Operational Histories".

The basic material contained in this operational record was developed by former officers, on duty in command and staff units within major units during the period of operations. It should be noted at once, that the enormous destruction by aerial bombardment and fire has practically wiped out the Tokyo records; much of this material was reconstructed from memory.

The paucity of original orders, plans and unit journals, which are normally essential in the preparation of this type of record, most of which were lost or destroyed during field operations or bombing raids rendered the task of compilation most difficult; particularly distressing has been the complete lack of official strength reports, normal in AG or G-3 records. However, while many of the important orders, plans and estimates have been reconstructed from memory and therefore are not textually identical with the originals, they are believed to be generally accurate and reliable. Further data as a result of continuing research and the occasional recovery of hitherto unavailable original documents will be covered in the subsequent publication of "supplements" by the Demobilization Bureau.

* The action under this memorandum and incidental detailed instructions, which followed, were initiated by the Assistant Chief of Staff, G-2, GHQ, charged with responsibility for execution of the program under G.O. No. 9, SCAP, 2 October 1945.

In order to protect the interest of the United States, in the exploitation of Japanese Military Information, sub-paragraph 4 of G.O. No. 9 further provided for the screening of enemy documents and established inventories in Japanese Governmental Archives. Careful examination of the first records submitted by the Japanese Government in the summer of 1946 detected a misconception on the part of the Japanese as to what should be included in comparative histories; in a memorandum issued by Assistant Chief of Staff, G-2, on 21 November 1946, the Imperial Japanese Government was directed to record the operations of the Japanese forces more extensively. The G-2 Section thereafter assumed coordination of the entire program, including the establishment of a small historical research section within the ATIS (Allied Translator and Interpreter Section.)

Monograph 98

**GENERAL HEADQUARTERS
FAR EAST COMMAND
MILITARY INTELLIGENCE SECTION, GENERAL STAFF
Allied Translator and Interpreter Section**

Translation Requested by G-2 Historical

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Southeast Area Naval Operations

Part I

Prepared 31 Jul 47

by 2 Demobilization Bureau

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**Southeast Area Operations (from about May,
1942, to the first part of February, 1943)**

General Progress

In the initial phase of the Greater East Asia War, the main bodies of our Army and Navy forces were rapidly pushing forward to the Southwest area operations. Taking advantage of this tactical opportunity, the 4 Fleet, in co-operation with the Army's South Seas Detachment, took advantage of the enemy's unpreparedness and, without any serious losses, captured strategic points on NEW BRITAIN, NEW IRELAND, BOUGAINVILLE, and Eastern NEW GUINEA, which were key positions in the Southeast area.

In order to strengthen our strategic position in the Southeast area, operations were underway in May, 1942, to capture PORT MORESBY, strategic point in NEW GUINEA, and TULAGI, the strategic point in Southern SOLOMONS, in preparation for subsequent operations.

The enemy's counter-attack on GUADALCANAL occurred in August, 1942, and in early February, 1943, our forces were forced to withdraw from

the Guadalcanal area.

The progress of operations during this period is reported herein:

I. Port Moresby Invasion Operation. (initial)

Plans and preparations for this operation had been considered since the end of January, 1942, but could not be initiated until the latter part of April, although reconnaissance showed that the enemy was strengthening the Port Moresby area. The reason was that it was not possible to allot carriers for this operation until the completion of the striking operations in the INDIAN OCEAN, in which carriers were being used.

Operations in the INDIAN OCEAN having ended, carriers were not so severe in mid-April. The 5 CarDiv (ZUIKANU, SHOKAKU), supported by the 5 CruDiv joined the command of 4 Fleet commander, Vice-Admiral IINOUE, Shigeyoshi.

Using the greater part of his force, Vice-Admiral IINOUE planned to invade FORT MORESBY by sea, in co-operation with the Army's South Seas Detachment. This necessitated the beginning of operational movements in the latter part of April. During this operation, Vice-Admiral IINOUE moved his command post from TRUK to RABAU, and endeavored to raise the morale of his men.

The invasion of TULAGI, strategic position in the SOLOMONS, and the capture of NAURU and OCEAN were planned as supporting operations for the Port Moresby invasion operation.

TULAGI was successfully invaded on 3 May, but on 4 May, the invasion force sustained heavy losses when an American task force made a sudden attack on the area.

Our carrier force at that time was transporting fighter planes from TRUK to RABAU, and could not participate in this battle.

With reports of an enemy task force, the Port Moresby invasion force, its patrols alerted, left RABAU on 4 and 5 May, and proceeded southward. On 7 May, an enemy task force was sighted proceeding north, which would have meant pushing south through the sphere of attack by the enemy task force.

In view of this situation, the commander, Vice-Admiral IINOUE, decided to take the course of first destroying the enemy task force, then pushing subsequent operations forward. He immediately ordered the convoy to withdraw northward, and, at the same time, ordered the task force

and the entire base air force to attack the enemy task force. He also ordered the greater part of the surface units to mop up enemy remnants.

On 7 May, while moving north of LOUISIADÉ ARCHIPELAGO, the convoy, through enemy task force action, lost the SHONO, engaged in air security, but the remaining force succeeded in escaping northward.

On the night of 7 May, our surface units were determined to carry out night action, but the possibility of such action developing was small. Vice-Admiral INOUE cancelled the operation, and ordered the postponement of the Port Moresby invasion to 12 May. The convoy was temporarily sent back to RABAU.

Our task force failed to encounter the enemy task force on 7 May, but in the early morning of 8 May, the enemy task force was discovered in the CORAL SEA. A bold attack was executed, and a carrier of the Saratoga class and another of the Yorktown class were sunk.

Our force sustained damages to the SHOKAKU, necessitating its withdrawal from action. In this situation, Vice-Admiral INOUE decided to discontinue the planned decisive action with the enemy task force.

As preparation for the Nauru-Ocean invasion, he ordered our task force to advance to the area northeast of SOLOMON ISLANDS in order to provide indirect support of this invasion. As a result, the desire for a decisive battle was abandoned, and the two forces were disjoined. However, on 8 May, Admiral YAMAMOTO, commander-in-chief of the Combined Fleet, ordered that every effort be made to annihilate the enemy remnants.

Accordingly, the task force refueled for another sortie southward, and departed on the evening of 9 May. The enemy, however, was not sighted even on 10 May, and the opportunity to annihilate the enemy was lost.

On 11 May, the task force returned to its position for the Nauru-Ocean invasion. While maneuvering for the invasion operation scheduled for 17 May, the enemy task force was sighted 475 miles east of TULAGI on 15 May. It was decided, therefore, to suspend the Nauru-Ocean invasion operation and to attack the enemy task force with our task force, supported by base air units. However, contact with the enemy could not be reestablished, and the entire operation was discontinued on 17 May, without any fighting.

II. Search Operation for Overland Routes for the Port Moresby Invasion.

Since our principle naval strength was destroyed by the single defeat of the Battle of Midway, our forces had no choice but to suspend the scheduled invasions of FIJI, SAMOA and NEW CALEDONIA, and concentrate on immediate restoration of fighting strength.

In the Southeast area, however, Imperial Headquarters Navy Staff Section Directive No. 103, dated 11 June, was issued during this interim, which ordered a search operation for an overland route for the Port Moresby Invasion.

This operation was a joint Army-Navy affair, based on arrangements between the 4 Fleet (8 Base Force, 18 SEWFL), 11 Air Fleet (25 Air Flot), and the 17 Army (South Seas Detachment).

On 20 July, a surface force, built around the 18 Cru Div and the TSUGARU, and supported by the 25 Air Flot. and 8 Base Force, escorted the convoys (one Navy, two Army) carrying Army troops.

The troops were composed mainly of engineers (one engineer regiment, one infantry battalion, and one company of mountain artillery), who were to search for and open up a Port Moresby operational route. Also among the troops was one company of the Sasebo 5 SEALF, which was to establish a base in the Buna area. The surface force succeeded in landing these elements near BASANUA without encountering any serious resistance.

III. Port Moresby Invasion Operation.

With the beginning of the search operation for the overland Port Moresby invasion route, Imperial Headquarters decided still further to execute the Moresby Invasion and issued Imperial Headquarters Navy Staff Section Directive No. 115, dated 28 July, pertinent to mopping up of strategic points in Eastern NEW GUINEA, as well as the invasion of PORT MORESBY.

Pursuant to this directive, Army and Navy forces in the area (11 Air Fleet, 17 Army, 8 Fleet, which had been organized on 14 July, and assumed operational command of the Southeast area from the 4 Fleet on 25 July) concluded the following arrangements:

1. The Navy shall advance its base air force to BUNA. Following the capture of SAMARAI and RABI, it shall, in cooperation with the Army, launch a sudden attack on PORT MORESBY from the sea.
2. The main force of the Army shall penetrate the STANLEY Mountain Range on the BUNA KOKODA Trail, and launch a sudden attack on PORT MORESBY.
3. Forces to be employed:
 - Navy: Full complement of the 8 Fleet; one air flotilla of the 11 Air Fleet.
 - Army: South Seas Detachment.

This operation was planned and executed to follow up the search operations for overland routes for the Port Moresby Invasion. However, as a result of the counter-thrust on GUADALCANAL by American forces on 7 August, and interference by enemy aircraft in the New Guinea area, Army strength could not be mustered as scheduled.

In the latter part of August, however, taking advantage of the tactical opportunity offered by both opposing surface forces maneuvering in the Guadalcanal area, our forces forced a convoy through and succeeded in transporting the South Seas Detachment, which was the PORT MORESBY invasion force, to BUNA in one effort.

Also utilizing this opportunity, naval units landed at RABI on 25

August. Thus, operations in the New Guinea area gradually got underway, although they tended to lag behind schedule.

In view of the situation in the Guadalcanal area, Imperial Headquarters, on 31 August, decided to make GUADALCANAL the principal operational zone of the Southeast area, and issued Imperial Headquarters Navy Staff Section Directive No. 127, ordering postponement of the Port Moresby invasion operation, and boosting of the RABI invasion operation.

It also ordered suspension of the South Seas Detachment's advance on attaining STANLEY Mountain Range and resumption of operations after development of the Guadalcanal operations.

IV. Guadalcanal Counter-offensive Initiated on 7 August by American Forces and Our Interception Operation.

A. Situation estimate by Imperial Headquarters on 7 August.

1. Judging from the enemy's boasts and their indication of counter-attacking, (the number of planes raiding the Tulagi area suddenly increased in August), some quarters predict that an aggressive enemy counter-attack in the Southeast area is imminent.
2. However, judging from the extent of enemy preparations, particularly in carriers, this counter thrust will probably be no more than a reconnaissance landing.
3. Even if it turns out to be a full scale landing, recapture of the island should be easy if our picked troops are sent in and supported by naval strength.
4. Should the enemy succeed in landing, he can immediately utilize the airfield just completed on GUADALCANAL, thereby greatly influencing future operations. Therefore, the immediate recapture of GUADALCANAL is very urgent.

B. Situation on GUADALCANAL at the time of enemy landing.

Construction of the Guadalcanal airfield was begun hastily in early June and roughly completed in early August.

The 8 Fleet believed in the necessity of moving up land attack plane units immediately upon completion of the airfield, and of reinforcing patrol flights, but the 11 Air Fleet and the 25 Air Flot. expressed the difficulty of detaching their planes because of inadequate strength. Consequently, no planes were moved to the airfield when the enemy landed.

Because the weather was poor on 5 and 6 August, patrol flights from RABAUl could not be conducted. It was during such an interval of deficient patrolling that the 7 American Force, supported by naval vessels and aircraft, suddenly executed a surprise landing on GUADALCANAL and TULAGI at early dawn on 7 August.

The 11 and 13 Construction Battalions and a few security troops were on Guadalcanal at that time, and the defensive strength was

entirely inadequate. A message was sent immediately after the enemy landing, reporting a retreat into the mountains. All contact was lost after that, and the Tulagi area apparently fell, without time for organized resistance.

G. Surprise counter-attacks by naval units and concentrating of strength.

Vice Admiral MIKAWA, commander of the 8 Fleet, learned of the enemy landings on TULAGI and GUADALCANAL at 0530 hours on 7 August. He decided immediately to counter-attack. Concluding that an initial counter-attack with every ship he could muster was exigent, he personally commanded such a force, and moved into GUADALCANAL on the night of 8 August.

This force engaged the enemy escort fleet while it was maneuvering in the vicinity south and east of SAVO ISLAND. It realized a great victory, sinking eight cruisers and six destroyers, thus raising the morale of all our forces. However, since attacks were not directed at the enemy convoys, the landings could not be checked.

Imperial Headquarters called this the First Naval Battle of the SOLOMONS.

Confronted with the surprise enemy landing, Vice Admiral MIKAWA decided to dispatch land combat unit reinforcements to GUADALCANAL at once. Preparations were pushed immediately after the enemy landing, and land combat troops which could be released were picked from various areas.

While these troops were being transported on the KHEIYŌ Maru, TSUGAHU, SŌYA and three other ships, the KHEIYŌ Maru was torpedoed and sunk by an enemy submarine south of CAPE ST GEORGE on 8 August. Consequently, this attempt was abandoned.

On 7 August, the commander of the 11 Air Fleet, Vice Admiral TSUKAHARA, led the elites of his base air force from SAIPAN to RABAU, where he became supreme commander of naval forces in the Southeast area.

Admiral TSUKAHARA immediately mobilized the entire base air unit in his command, and staged an attack on enemy naval vessels and convoys at GUADALCANAL. It was reported that two heavy cruisers and two destroyers

were sunk, and three medium cruisers and 11 transports damaged on 8 August, and that one battleship was sunk on 9 August.

Admiral YAMAMOTO, commander-in-chief of the Combined Fleet, decided to muster the major part of the Combined Fleet's surface force for a decisive battle in the Solomon area in order to annihilate the enemy. On 7 August, he ordered preparations for a sortie.

During the initial phase of the enemy landing, the situation on the island remained unknown. Finally on 12 August, a submarine succeeded in contacting a lookout station on GUADALCANAL, and learned that all lookout stations on the island were safe. However, the battle situation on the island was still unknown.

To meet this new situation, on 13 August, Imperial Headquarters promulgated the strategy for operations in East NEW GUINEA and the SOLOMONS in Imperial Headquarters Navy Staff Section Directive No. 120. The essence of this policy was the recapture of strategic areas, especially airfields, on GUADALCANAL and TULASI by annihilating the enemy in these areas with the major strength of the Combined Fleet and the 17 Army (about 13 infantry battalions). The capture of PORT MORESBY, in accordance with pre-determined plans, was also included in the policy.

B. Operations Covering the landing of Ichiki and Kawaguchi Detachments and Rabi area operations.

The Army decided to dispatch part of the 17 Army, which was ready for departure, to GUADALCANAL, and recapture strategic areas, especially the airfield. In support of the Army's operation, the Combined Fleet planned to concentrate its main strength in the waters north of GUADALCANAL. The Army's main strength was standing by in the western Inland Sea.

The 2 Fleet (advance force) under Vice-Admiral KONDO, the 3 Fleet (task force) under Vice-Admiral HAGURO, and the YAMATO, Flagship of YAMAMOTO, commander-in-chief of the Combined Fleet, sortied south from the western Inland Sea on 11, 16, and 17 August, respectively. At the same time, the 7 Cru Div and the 3 Des Ron, operating in the INDIAN OCEAN, were ordered to rejoin their parent units.

The Southeast area forces, pursuant to the operational policy of

the Combined Fleet and the High Command, as well as the agreement with the 17 Army, decided to ship two detachments to GUADALCANAL. These detachments were the Ichiki Detachment (8th infantry regiment commanded by Col ICHIKI) and the 5 Yokosuka SMLF, both of which had been alerted on GUAM.

To establish contact with the units on GUADALCANAL, the greater part of the Ichiki Detachment combat unit and an element of the 5 Yokosuka SMLF were to be sent ahead on destroyers, while the remainder of the Ichiki Detachment and the greater part of the 5 Yokosuka SMLF were to embark on two transports, escorted by the entire fleet, and land on GUADALCANAL on 21 August.

On 17 August, an element of the 5 Yokosuka SMLF landed at TASS FARONG, and on 18 August, the Advance unit of the Ichiki Detachment landed at TAIVO Point. Both landings were made without opposition, and the 5 Yokosuka SMLF succeeded in contacting the naval garrison unit on the island.

As soon as it landed, the Advance unit of the Ichiki Detachment moved forward to recapture the airfield.

The enemy continued to converge on GUADALCANAL and strengthen its forces there. On 17 August, the enemy made a surprise landing on MAKIN Island with two submarines, attempting to divert our efforts at mustering surface forces in the GUADALCANAL area.

In view of this situation, the commander-in-chief of the Combined Fleet ordered the commander of the Inner South Seas Force, Vice Admiral INOUE, to recapture MAKIN and to occupy NAURU and OCEAN Islands.

An enemy carrier force was sighted maneuvering in the waters southeast of TULAGI on 20 August. The commander of the Southeast Area Force, Vice-Admiral TSUKAHARA, postponed the landing of the main body of the Ichiki Detachment until 24 August, by which time the Combined Fleet's surface force would have completed its support.

In the interim, Vice-Admiral TSUKAHARA ordered a light support force to attack enemy units at anchor in LUNGA ROADS on the night of 21 August. A strong base Air unit was ordered to attack enemy reinforcements and to destroy military installations on 22 August.

The Kondo and Haguro Fleets were moving southward on 21 August, at a point southeast of TRUK. Admiral YAMAMOTO was also proceeding south at a point west of TRUK.

On GUADALCANAL, the Advance unit of the Ichiki Detachment had en-

countered powerful enemy forces west of the MATANIKAU River, and was engaged in desperate fighting, and hopes of recapturing the airfield vanished.

The enemy increased the facilities on the airfield, and by 21 August, five medium planes and six light planes were deployed on the field. Moreover, the enemy was briskly unloading.

HAUHU and OCEAN Islands were bombed by our air force on 22 August. In addition, destroyers shelled HAUHU and encountering no resistance, confirmed the lack of military installations.

Our air base unit's attack on the enemy in the Guadalcanal area was impossible because of inclement weather, but enemy planes continued to track our convoys.

On 23 August, both the Nagumo and Kondo Fleets reached the designated points 200 to 400 miles north of the SOLOMONS. The Kondo Fleet had been sighted by the enemy, but the Nagumo Fleet remained undetected.

The convey carrying the Ichiki Detachment began retiring after being tracked at a point 350 miles north of GUADALCANAL. The attack for this day by the air base unit was again delayed due to inclement weather over GUADALCANAL.

The enemy's land-based air force was thus able to prepare for our approaching convey without suffering any casualties.

Enemy shipborne planes were flying in the area east of the SOLOMONS, making it highly probable that an enemy task force was cruising in the waters southeast of the SOLOMONS.

Thereupon, the commander-in-chief of the Combined Fleet postponed the landing of the Ichiki Detachment until 25 August. On 24 August, he ordered the Combined Fleet, with its full complement of ships and planes, to engage and destroy the enemy task force and neutralize the enemy base air power.

An attack on enemy bases was planned with the KIJUJŌ in order to ensure a total attack on their bases and also to engage the enemy air strength. Furthermore, by taking advantage of this tactical opportunity, it was planned to effect a Guadalcanal landing on 26 August, with the Kawaguchi Detachment (two transports escorted by four destroyers), which had been on an embarkation alert on TRUK.

On the other hand, the Southeast Area Force decided upon the contemplated capture of the Rabi Airfield while the main force of the Combined Fleet operated in the Solomon area. The invasion force was ordered to leave RABAU on 24 August, and to land at RABI on 25 August.

Operations for the recapture of GUADALCANAL and the invasion of RABI were meant as preparatory operations for the capture of FORT MCHESBY on the assumption that they would eventually be necessary.

On 24 August, the Nagumo Fleet was stationed at a point about 300 miles north to northeast of TULASI, and the Kondo Fleet at a point about 60 miles east of the Nagumo Fleet. They were maneuvering to seek out the enemy's task force, and destroy his air units and ships in the Guadalcanal area.

At dawn on 24 August, HYUJŌ left the main fleet to operate independently with the support of a cruiser division, and to attack the enemy-held airfield on GUADALCANAL.

In the afternoon, two enemy task forces were sighted south of SEWARD ISLANDS. The Nagumo Fleet immediately launched an attack on the enemy, sending the first air attack unit at 1300 hours, and the second at 1400 hours.

The first air attack unit succeeded in inflicting an offensive blow on two enemy carriers, heavily damaging one ship and lightly damaging the others. The second air attack unit returned without locating the enemy.

In following up the attack by the Nagumo Fleet, the Kondo Fleet planned night action to expand the victory. At 1945 hours, a burning carrier was spotted by a reconnaissance seaplane; thereafter, contact with the enemy was lost. The night combat had to be abandoned in view of the relative distance and the remaining fuel.

The Ryujo Unit, which had been detached previously, took off from the attacking force at 1030 hours and succeeded in attacking the Guadalcanal Airfield at 1230 hours. The HYUJŌ sustained continuous attacks from enemy land and carrier based planes after 1800 hours, and sank at 1800 hours. Nevertheless, this unit diverted the enemy planes and enabled the Nagumo Fleet to take the initiative against enemy carriers.

Imperial Headquarters designated this battle the Second Battle of the SOLOMONS.

Meanwhile, the Ichiki Echelon, escorted by the 2 Des Ron, was attacked by enemy planes from GUADALCANAL while moving southward north of MALAITA ISLAND. As the JINTSU was hit, the 2 Des Ron commander was forced to change his flagship to the KAGEBO. Thereupon, the 8 Fleet commander ordered the Ichiki Echelon to retreat to the northwest.

Inasmuch as the success of the Ichiki Echelon's landing depended upon the freezing of the enemy's Guadalcanal airfield and the annihilation of the enemy's surface force, Commander-in-Chief YAMAMOTO, on the night of 24 August, ordered the Ichiki Echelon's escort force to bombard the Guadalcanal airfield. He also ordered the Kondo and Nagumo Fleets to reconnoiter the enemy situation on the morning of 25 August.

The shelling on the night of 24 August was executed by five destroyers, but enemy planes became active in the early morning of 25 August. From 0600 to 1200 hours, the Ikki Echelon was bombed continuously.

The KINRYU Maru, MUTSUKI, and UZUKI were hit in succession. The KINRYU Maru was severely damaged (disposed of by the MUTSUKI); the MUTSUKI was sunk; and the UZUKI sustained minor damages. As a result, no hope for a landing remained.

The Ichiki Echelon bearded destroyers and anchored in the SHORTLAND ISLANDS on 26 August. Plans were revised to a Guadalcanal landing on the night of 28 August.

Both the Nagumo and Kondo Fleets were unable to ascertain the enemy position after an early morning search on 25 August. On the same day, a report was received that an enemy task force was moving south in the area southeast of the SOLOMONS, where our submarines were deployed, and were lying in wait.

It was decided that the fleets would refuel at point A (160°E, 2°S), and support our attack on GUADALCANAL by maneuvering in the waters east of GREENWICH ISLAND.

In view of the damage sustained by the Ichiki Echelon, the Kawaguchi

Echelon, which had been moving southward from TRUK, abandoned plans for a convoy landing and decided to move in on the destroyers. The main strength of the echelon would be sent to RAMAUL, while a section would effect a Guadalcanal landing, with the Ichiki Echelon as the advance unit.

The first Lce landing unit, which had moved to SHORTLAND ISLAND by destroyer, succeeded in landing in MILNE BAY on the night of 25 August, taking advantage of the activity of enemy and friendly forces in the SOLOMONS. In the Inner South Seas area, NAURU ISLAND was captured on 25 August, and OCEAN ISLAND on 26 August.

On 26 August, the commander-in-chief of the Combined Fleet issued future operational orders for each unit, and deployed the units as follows:

1. Southeast Area Force: To engage in operations to recapture GUADALCANAL.
2. Supporting Force (2 and 3 Fleets): To cruise within a zone 30 miles north of the STEWART ISLANDS and to support the operations of the Southeast Area Force.
3. Submarine Force: Part to be deployed near GUADALCANAL in order to intercept enemy reinforcements and supplies; main force to wait in readiness in waters southeast of the SOLOMONS.
4. Main Force (Combined Fleet commander): To cruise north of the SOLOMONS and support overall operation.

The combat strength of the base air force on 26 August consisted of only 19 fighters, 29 medium attack planes, and four flying boats; reinforcements were sluggish.

Both the Ichiki and Kawaguchi convoys were subjected to neutralising attacks by enemy planes and were unable to accomplish their missions.

In view of this situation, the Combined Fleet took every measure to reinforce its air arm. At the same time, until our reinforced air force neutralized the enemy base air strength, the strategy to land troops on GUADALCANAL by convoy was abandoned. The strategy was adopted whereby troops were landed by fast ships and craft, chiefly under cover of night, while avoiding enemy air raids. This method of transportation was termed "Rat" landings. On 27 August, Commander-in-Chief YAMAMOTO

reinforced the southeast area with fighters from the Marshall sector through the use of escort carriers. It was decided to support the air operations in the Solomon sector for about two days by landing at Buka Airfield, thirty fighters from the carriers of the Nagumo Fleet.

The YAMATO moved to TRUK temporarily. Both the Nagumo and Kondo Fleets completed refueling on 26 August, and were to cruise the waters northeast of HUKA, while their carrier fighters participated in the land fighting.

After the Second Battle of the SOLOMONS, the enemy surface force operated for the most part in the waters southeast of the SOLOMONS, showing no signs of sailing northward.

However, enemy reinforcements of planes and supplies to GUADALCANAL were accelerated, and the enemy, instead of succumbing to the repeated attacks of our base air units, engaged in determined aerial combat. On 27 August, the enemy made new landings by boats to the area west of our Guadalcanal defense force.

Our Army units operating in the New Guinea sector were fighting beyond KOKODA, but because supplies were discontinued, they engaged in a desperate struggle. (This information was withheld by the Army, and was not known to the Navy.)

Furthermore, the land combat units which had landed in the Rabi sector were also fighting desperately, and land operations in the Guadalcanal, Kokoda, and Lae sectors were in dire circumstances. Retrieval of the situation became very difficult.

Under these circumstances, the commander-in-chief of the 8 Fleet decided to relieve RABI with the land combat units held in readiness at RABAU, and succeeded in landing these units on 29 August.

The initial "Rat" landings on GUADALCANAL were to be executed on 28 August with seven destroyers. Poor weather conditions that day prevented the neutralization of enemy planes on GUADALCANAL, but as shipment of these units were very urgent, it was pushed through without air support.

While enroute to GUADALCANAL, the destroyers were attacked by more than ten enemy planes about 70 miles north of TILASI. One destroyer

was sunk, and three sustained minor damages. The landing attempt for that night was abandoned.

Failure of this transport operation prompted the Kawaguchi Detachment commander to suggest landings on GUADALCANAL by small craft. The Army and Navy decided to conduct a joint study of this method.

With the weather favorable on 29 August, six of our destroyers, under cover of a neutralizing attack on GUADALCANAL by our air units, succeeded in reaching the island and in landing troops near TAIVO POINT.

Through the success of this landing, a tangible method for reinforcing GUADALCANAL was established, and thereafter, "Rat" landings became the standard method of landing troops on GUADALCANAL.

Imperial Headquarters was troubled over operations in the southeast area. The headquarters unofficially announced the following policy as a solution on 29 August, and on 31 August made it official as Imperial Headquarters Navy Staff Section Directive No. 127:

1. The recapture of GUADALCANAL shall be emphasized and the Fort Moresby operation, with the exception of the Rabi Operation, shall be suspended after the South Seas Detachment reaches the OWEN STANLEY MOUNTAIN RANGE. It shall be continued after the Guadalcanal operation makes progress.
2. One flotilla of the air base force shall be transferred from the southwest area to the eastern New Guinea area in order to participate in operations there. For this reason, the Army shall temporarily handle air operations in the INDIAN OCEAN.
3. As many submarines as possible shall be assembled immediately in the southeast area.

It was decided to assume defensive strategy in NEW GUINEA for the time being, and to concentrate in the SOLOMONS.

The weather continued in favor of aerial warfare on 30 August. Two air attacks on GUADALCANAL, one in the morning and the other in the afternoon, netted 12 enemy planes shot down, and either one cruiser or one destroyer was sunk. With the locally-stationed planes successfully neutralized, landing of reinforcements on GUADALCANAL were successfully

carried out the same night with three destroyers and one patrol boat.

On 31 August, successful landings were again accomplished with eight destroyers. Thus, "Rat" landings (of reinforcements) finally gained momentum, although enemy reinforcements were being speeded up further.

A submarine operating in waters southeast of the SOLOMON ISLANDS sighted a Saratoga-class carrier at dawn, and succeeded in attacking it, but the results could not be ascertained since the submarine was attacked by enemy destroyers. This was the first attack in 15 sightings of carrier units since the start of the enemy counter-attack.

On the same day, a submarine fired 10 rounds of incendiary shells at the enemy seaplane base in GRACIOSA Bay, NOENI ISLAND, but the result could not be confirmed.

Inclement weather on 1 September made air neutralization operations on GUADALCANAL impossible, although a troop landing on GUADALCANAL was attempted with four destroyers, as planned. As expected, enemy aircraft attacked at midnight, and landing operations and destroyers were compelled to withdraw without completing the debarkation.

It was decided on 2 September to initiate the boat transportation of the Kawaguchi Detachment, which was being prepared according to plans. The remaining strength of the Kawaguchi Detachment, numbering 1,000 troops, embarked on 48 large and small landing barges, and departed on the night of 2 September from the northern part of ISABEL ISLAND. Hiding during the day and advancing by night, the force was scheduled to leave the southern tip of ISABEL Island on the night of 4 September, and land on the northwestern tip of GUADALCANAL at early dawn of 5 September.

On 4 September, the Kondo and Nagumo Fleets, which were cruising in the waters north of the SOLOMON ISLANDS and supporting the operations in the Southeast area, collected their fighter units, which had been detached to BUKA. These fleets withdrew to TRUK on 5 September in order to prepare for operations coordinated with the general offensive by the Ichiki and Kawaguchi Detachments on GUADALCANAL.

On 4 September, 15 fighters and 27 medium attack planes of the base air unit headed for GUADALCANAL, but were unable to attack because of heavy overcast. However, since six destroyers were maneuvering to land

troops on GUADALCANAL, reconnaissance seaplanes attacked enemy supply dumps and the airfield at LUNGA Point in order to support this landing.

The "Rat" landing force succeeded in landing without any enemy interference. After debarking the troops, the destroyer division advanced on the enemy anchorage, and engaged and sank one enemy destroyer and one auxiliary cruiser. It then shelled Guadalcanal Airfield, causing fires which lasted an hour, and then returned without any losses.

The boat amphibious force of the Kawaguchi Detachment left the southern coast of ISABEL ISLAND on the night of 4 September, escorted by the SENDAI and three destroyers. The amphibious force separated at a point 21 nautical miles north of the designated landing point in the early morning of 5 September, and proceeded independently.

Part of the landing force erred in their landing point, and approximately 300 men landed on SAVO Island. About 300 men landed on the northwest tip of GUADALCANAL, while about 400 are believed to have perished at sea.

In the Rabi area, reinforcements succeeded in landing on 29 August, and immediately merging with the advance unit, undertook the capture of Rabi Airfield. This force reached the eastern extremity of Rabi Airfield on the night of 30 August, but the enemy, besides resisting stubbornly from strong positions, attacked with a number of planes at early dawn of 31 August, causing heavy casualties.

Our force, which was forced to a stalemate with the enemy, was supported by fighters without effect, and it became necessary to send for reinforcements. On 2 September, it was decided to dispatch Capt YASUDA to assume unified command of ground combat. The enemy reinforced RABI with a transport and a cruiser, and an aerial counter-attack was carried out immediately, but contact could not be made because of inclement weather.

At the same time, the ground fighting gradually became desperate, and the following message was received from the local commander:

"Situation most desperate. Everyone resolved to fight bravely to the last."

Vice-Admiral NIKAWA, concluding that the situation could not be retrieved by piecemeal reinforcements of land combat units decided, after conferring with the Army, to send part of the Army's Aoba Detachment (about 1,000 men) as a reinforcement.

With the Aoba Detachment scheduled to land on 12 September, Japanese forces in the Rabi area were to avoid serious combat and were to adopt holding tactics. However, the ground fighting in RABI became even more desperate and was deemed irretrievable.

On 4 September, Vice-Admiral NIKAWA cancelled Capt YASUDA's landing, and planned the mass evacuation of all personnel. The wounded was to be collected first on 4 September, with the total complement to be evacuated by a light cruiser and three patrol boats on 5 September.

The evacuation proceeded smoothly, and 1,400 of the 1,900 troops landed were successfully evacuated. The condition of the evacuees, was such that every one of them was afflicted with a skin disease caused by inadequate equipment; they were in no condition for combat.

Aerial combat in the Solomon area entailed a flight of 600 nautical miles from RABAU to GUADALCANAL. The weather changes completely enroute, and pilots encounter unexpected weather over GUADALCANAL, which hamper their operations. For this reason, preparations were pushed for an immediate construction of a staging base between RABAU and GUADALCANAL.

As an emergency measure, it was decided to establish a seaplane base at REKATA on ISAREL Island. A patrol boat was assigned this mission on 5 September.

On 6 September, Submarine I-11 detected an enemy force built around an Enterprise class carrier at 300 miles SSE of TULAGI, and succeeded in attacking, but was unable to confirm results since the submarine was hunted tenaciously by enemy destroyers.

Inclement weather over GUADALCANAL on this day prompted the base air force to raid Port MORSEBY, but airborne enemy planes were not detected.

On 7 September, the base air unit again raided MORSEBY and bombed the airfield thoroughly without incurring any losses.

On the same night, six destroyers succeeded in landing the last of

the Kawaguchi and Ichiki Detachments on GUADALCANAL. After the start of an enemy counter offensive on GUADALCANAL, about 4,500 troops were shipped by warship, and about 700 by small crafts. This completed the shipment of the Kawaguchi and Ichiki Detachments, which were assigned to the first general offensive on GUADALCANAL.

V Supporting Operations for the First General Attack of the 17 Army

A. The recapture of the airfield on GUADALCANAL was a pressing necessity, and the Army, with confidence, decided to launch the first general attack immediately, despite the inadequate troop strength on GUADALCANAL.

The intention at first was to initiate a general attack on 9 September, but the Navy, having to refuel, could not be ready until 11 September. After a conference between commanding officers of the Combined Fleet and the 17 Army, it was decided on 6 September to set D-day for the Guadalcanal general attack on 11 September.

B. Operational Plans of the Combined Fleet (issued on 7 September).

1. The base air units, in cooperation with surface units, will destroy the enemy air power in the Solomons area by 12 September, and search and destroy flying boat bases in the islands south of the SOLOMONS.

2. Seaplane units, based at REKATA and 6120, will conduct patrols and support air and ground operations. They will engage in enemy search after 13 September by refueling from a submarine based at INDISPENSABLE REEFS.

3. Swift ships and small craft operating in the Guadalcanal area will infiltrate the anchorages, as soon as air control over the area has been gained, and will engage and annihilate the enemy after cutting off its retreat.

4. The 2 and 3 Fleets, comprising the support force, will advance on 13 September, to a point 600 miles north of GUADALCANAL in order to await the appearance of the enemy fleet. With two destroyers, they will conduct night attacks on the enemy flying boat base of HENRI ISLAND in order to destroy the flying boats and the base.

5. A seaplane tender will be deployed approximately 400 miles northeast of SANTA CRUZ ISLAND to conduct enemy search east of the support force.

6. The air strength will be advanced immediately should the airfield on GUADALCANAL be captured.

G. Outline of Progress.

On 8 September, the enemy began landing near TAIVO POINT with four transports, escorted by a cruiser and four destroyers. To destroy them, a night attack was planned with a light cruiser and eight destroyers, led by the 3 Destroyer commander.

This force advanced into the Lunga anchorage, but the enemy had already left. Our force, having lost the enemy, moved up just outside of Tulagi Harbor, where it discovered two enemy mine layers, one of which was sunk; the other was heavily damaged with the aid of star shells. The force then returned.

The Army, in view of the new enemy landings of 8 September, decided immediately to land a battalion of the Aoba Detachment on GUADALCANAL. The purpose was to reinforce our ground force there, and divert two battalions of the 2 Division from the Batavia area to the Guadalcanal area as reserves for the Guadalcanal general attack.

The attacks of our base air force against GUADALCANAL were gradually stiffened, but because the enemy plane reinforcements were rapid, more than 50 planes were counted on GUADALCANAL at that time.

The strategy of the Combined Fleet coordinating with the Guadalcanal general attack of 11 September was as follows:

1. The seaplane scouting unit attached to the 8 Fleet and the greater part of the land-based planes of the 11 Air Fleet will cooperate with the Army force by attacking the enemy on GUADALCANAL, hindering enemy reinforcements, and cutting off their retreat.

2. The decoy transport convoy (two empty transports escorted by two destroyers) will discretionally cruise in the proximity of 200 miles north of GUADALCANAL on 12 and 13 September in order to lure the enemy. Our task force will attack when the enemy falls for this decoy.

3. The Kondo Fleet (advance force), cooperating with the above operation, will advance to the proximity of 600 miles north of GUADALCANAL by early morning of 12 September, and, while conducting an air search, will proceed south to the proximity of 300 miles northeast of GUADALCANAL by early morning of 13 September.

4. The Nagumo Fleet (task force) will cruise discretionally about 150 nautical miles behind the Kondo Fleet.

5. The cruising area of the Kondo and Kagumo Fleets will be strictly patrolled and searched by large planes and reconnaissance seaplanes.

6. The submarine force will be deployed as follows: Six dispersed in waters southeast of SOLOMON ISLANDS to await the enemy; three in the channel south of GUADALCANAL (TW Between GUADALCANAL and SAN CRISTOBAL) to cut off enemy reinforcement and retreat; and one stationed at INDISPENSABLE REEFS to refuel reconnaissance seaplanes.

Another submarine will be assigned to reconnoiter the Santa Cruz Island area on 10 September.

7. On the night of 12 September, the 5 Fleet, cooperating with the Army's attack, will send its destroyer squadron as a raiding force to the Guadalcanal anchorage to attack enemy ships and conduct shore bombardment.

8. The 5 Fleet flagship CHOKAI and the 6 Cru Div (three cruisers) will advance to the proximity of 150 miles north of GUADALCANAL to support the Guadalcanal raiding force. If the situation permits, they will enter the strait (TW Presumably INDISPENSABLE STRAIT) to cut off the enemy's retreat, and to hinder reinforcement.

9. In the event the Guadalcanal Airfield is recaptured, the base air force will be moved up immediately to search and attack the enemy fleet.

10. 10. Two destroyers of the 27 Des Div will enter GRACIOSA BAY on the night of 12 September, and destroy the enemy air base.

In the above strategy, the Combined Fleet had centered their course of action around the general attack on GUADALCANAL, but the general attack of the Army units on GUADALCANAL was delayed until 13 September because the troops were interrupted in their advance through the jungles. This change in operations was not reported to the naval force.

During this period, the Combined Fleet had difficulty in maintaining control over the force, but on successive days, starting on 9 September, the base air unit attacked enemy airfields and positions on GUADALCANAL with much success.

On the night of 11 September, three destroyers landed a battalion of the Aoba Detachment on GUADALCANAL. On the night of 12 September, two destroyers transported ammunition to GUADALCANAL and, on the same night, a cruiser and three destroyers of the raiding force entered the Lunga anchorage and shelled enemy positions with the aid of searchlights.

On 13 September, the 11 Air Fleet Headquarters, summarizing various reports, reported to all forces that the capture of Guadalcanal Airfield by Army units was imminent, but this was later rescinded when reconnaissance planes reported that the Guadalcanal Airfield was still in enemy use.

On the night of 13 September, despite the fact that the situation on GUADALCANAL was unknown, the raiding force, cruisers, and destroyers repeatedly assaulted the Lunga area, without discerning any changes on land.

It was learned that on 14 September the Kawaguchi Detachment took up attack positions in the jungle south of the enemy airfield for an advance at 2000 hours.

Accordingly, the 3 Des Ron, constituting the raiding force, plunged into the Lunga anchorage, and supported the land fighting with four destroyers. At the same time, it landed 1,700 troops of the Aoba Detachment at KAMINBO with seven destroyers.

The Kondo Fleet, cruising in the area north of the SOLOMONS, was sighted and tracked by the enemy, but the Haguro Fleet was still undetected by the enemy. The commander-in-chief of the Combined Fleet postponed the operation of the decoy convoy because the enemy surface force, still cruising outside our effective sphere of attack, showed no signs of proceeding north.

On the morning of 15 September, the enemy, with eight transports under carrier-included fleet escort, was advancing northwest in the proximity of 200 miles southeast of GUADALCANAL as if to reinforce GUADALCANAL.

All of our submarines and land-based planes were sent out to attack the enemy, but our air force, hindered by the weather, failed to attack. In the morning, one of our submarines made a close-quarter attack

on an enemy carrier (believed to be a large converted carrier) in the proximity of 260 miles southeast of GUADALCANAL, inflicting four torpedo hits.

On 15 September, Detachment Commander KAWAGUCHI first learned of the situation on GUADALCANAL upon receipt of a dispatch dated 14 September. According to the dispatch, the east position artillery unit of the Army unit launched a scheduled attack on the evening of 12 September, but the main body was unable to advance rapidly through the jungle, and launched an attack at 1200 hours on 13 September.

However, enemy resistance was unexpectedly strong, and the main body sustained heavy losses, including the battalion commander, and was forced to retreat and assemble west of the NISHI KAWA to make subsequent plans.

Thus the first general ground attack on GUADALCANAL ended in failure, and there was no course open but to pour in ground troops and re-attempt the attack.

VI Supporting Operations in the Movement of the Aoba Detachment and the 2 Division to GUADALCANAL.

A. Our first general attack to recapture GUADALCANAL failed as the enemy defense was stronger than we had anticipated. Moreover, the enemy was firmly determined to hold the island. It became evident that the recapture of the island through any mediocre fighting would be impossible.

Deciding to send adequate ground forces, our forces endeavored to send the entire 2 Division and the Aoba Detachment, both heavily equipped, to GUADALCANAL. We also decided to gain control of the air at any cost, so as to facilitate the transport of our own reinforcements, and to check the arrival of enemy reinforcements. Our other objectives were to forward heavy artillery which could resist the enemy, and to supplement any shortage of such artillery with strong land support by naval vessels.

In view of the absolute necessity of recapturing GUADALCANAL, our forces began preparations for the second general attack with great determination.

B. Outline of Imperial Headquarters' Strategy for GUADALCANAL.

When the first general attack on GUADALCANAL failed, Imperial Headquarters on 15 September issued Imperial Headquarters Navy Staff Section Directive No. 135, "Supplement to the Army-Navy Central Agreement on Operations in Eastern NEW GUINEA and the SOLOMON ISLANDS to Meet the Situation," and stressed the following points:

1. Reinforcement of Army troops on GUADALCANAL.
2. Execution of holding tactics in the New Guinea area until the recapture of GUADALCANAL and the capture of the Rabi Airfield, if the situation on GUADALCANAL permits.
3. Further strengthening and equipping of airfields in the Solomon and New Guinea areas.

C. Combined Fleet Operational Plans.

Pursuant to Imperial Headquarters Navy Staff Section Directive No. 135, the Commander-in-Chief of the Combined Fleet on 16 September deployed the units as follows:

1. Southeast Area Force shall rapidly transport Army reinforcements, carrying heavy artillery; they shall check enemy reinforcements,

continue operations to destroy enemy air power; and prepare Buin Airfield at the southern tip of BOUGAINVILLE ISLAND.

2. The submarine force shall assemble in the vicinity of GUADALCANAL ISLAND and cut off enemy reinforcements.

3. Kondo and Nagumo Fleets shall continue supporting operations of the Southeast Area Force, and on special orders, shall proceed to TRUK to wait in readiness.

D. Outline of Progress.

The enemy made steady progress in the preparation of the Guadalcanal airfields, and indicated its intention of moving in reinforcements on large convoys as soon as the airfields were enlarged and equipped. The balance of power on land became steadily unfavorable for us; our heavy artillery in particular was very inferior.

The Combined Fleet stressed the support of heavy artillery landing operations. Timing its action with the landing support of tanks and heavy weapons by the NISSEIN on 20 September, the Combined Fleet planned the following operations and issued the order on 16 September:

1. On 19 and 20 September, the base air unit and its main force shall attack GUADALCANAL and destroy enemy air power, and reconnoiter the waters southeast of the SOLOMON ISLANDS.

2. In concert with the above, the support forces (2 and 3 Fleet) shall move southward, and engage and annihilate the enemy fleet and reinforcements.

3. Prior to the southward movement of the support units, two destroyers shall be dispatched to attack and destroy the enemy flying boat base on EBENI ISLAND on the night of 19 September.

4. The seaplane carrier, KUNIKAWA MARU, shall cruise to the east of the support force for reconnoitering and patrolling the eastern flank.

5. The seaplane force (11 Car Div) shall patrol south of the line, connecting the INDISPENSABLE REEFS and the SOLOMON ISLANDS.

6. The submarine force shall conduct searching and mopping up operations southeast of the SOLOMON ISLANDS.

The air base units in the southeast area, which earlier had begun mastering in the Solomon area, had nearly completed its advance by 16 September. The main strength of the reinforcements amounted to 45 medium attack planes and 36 fighters.

Thirteen submarines were cruising near the Solomon combat zone and 10 more were expected to arrive in the area within several days.

Early on the morning of 18 September, the enemy infiltrated Lunga anchorage with six transports, and began landing under strict security. One enemy destroyer shelled our ground force west of the MATANI-KAU River. This was the first of such action by an enemy destroyer, and its effect on the morale of our ground force was great.

The 3 Des Ron commander planned an assault on the enemy convoy anchorage with its flagship, SENDAI, and four destroyers. It plunged into the Lunga anchorage on the night of 18 September, but the enemy, having left, could not be engaged, and after shelling the cargo landing at LUNGA POINT, it withdrew.

The air force did not attack the convoy because of inclement weather. Two destroyers of the support force moved into GRACIOSA BAY on NDENI ISLAND on 19 September, according to plan, and searched the entire bay with searchlights, but were unable to locate any enemy vessels or flying boats. Since 16 September, shipments to GUADALCANAL had been executed nightly with several destroyers and despite interference from enemy planes, the landing operations were generally successful.

The NISSEIN was scheduled to land heavy equipment on GUADALCANAL on 20 September, but since air operations bogged down due to inclement weather, the Southeast Area Force commander changed the date of landing to 30 September, and waited for completion of the Bain Airfield.

For this reason, the commander-in-chief of the Combined Fleet postponed the operation scheduled for 20 September, temporarily withdrew the support force to THUK, and decided to reinforce the Southeast Area Force with swift vessels, and to activate a destroyer transport. On 20 September, enemy air interference against our destroyers which were engaged in Guadalcanal landing operations, was intensified and on 21

September, our destroyers had to abandon half-completed landing operations, and return to their base.

This after the moonlight landing of 22 September, the commander of the reinforcements decided to suspend these landing operations temporarily.

On 25 September, it was decided, after a conference of local army and navy high headquarters on troop shipments to GUADALCANAL, that large numbers of troops with heavy weapons would be transported under support of the Combined Fleet on the next moonless period. It was also decided that on successful completion of this operation, the second general attack on GUADALCANAL would be launched without losing delay.

Attacks on GUADALCANAL by the base air unit gradually improved and became increasingly effective. However, the enemy intensified his air attack on the Rabaul area and the new Buin Airfield on SHORPLAND ISLAND, and persistently obstructed the transport of supplies to GUADALCANAL.

For some time, the commander-in-chief of the Combined Fleet had been studying and conducting preparatory training for the joint use of surface vessels in the neutralization of the Guadalcanal Airfields. He decided to execute a neutralization attack on the Guadalcanal airfields with battleships, cruisers, and destroyers, on the same day as the scheduled convoy reinforcement of GUADALCANAL.

On 4 October, the Commander-in-chief of the Combined Fleet designated the date of landing for the high-speed convoy as X-Day, and the date for the second general attack on GUADALCANAL as Y-Day, and issued the following operational order:

1. Army-Navy Joint Operations.
 - a. Air raids and shelling of bases on GUADALCANAL (11 Air Fleet, 3 Bat Div).
 - b. Shipment and landing of Army units (8 Fleet).
 - c. Obstruction of enemy reinforcements with surface strength (2 Fleet, 3 Fleet).
 - d. Recapture of base on GUADALCANAL as soon as preparations for land operations are completed.

e. The major strength of the Combined Fleet surface forces shall proceed to the Solomon area and wait for the enemy fleet.

2. Support forces.

a. The advance force (2 Fleet) shall support the recapturing operations from the waters north of the SOLOMONS.

b. The task force (3 Fleet) shall maneuver on the east flank of the advance force and engage and destroy the enemy fleet and reinforcements at the opportune moment.

The various units carried out their different missions according to the Combined Fleet's operational plans.

At the beginning of October, during the new moon, destroyer transport was resumed, and progressed smoothly with KAMINBO as the principal landing point.

On 3 October, the 2 Division headquarters personnel, provisions, and 15 cm howitzers were transported by the HISSHIN and six destroyers, and successfully landed at TASS FARONG, despite interference from enemy planes.

On the other hand, the base air units favored by continuous fair weather in the early part of October, conducted repeated attacks on GUADALCANAL and were successful each time in smashing reinforced enemy air strength. However, enemy planes gradually learned to elude our powerful attacks, and it became difficult to engage them.

For the purpose of increasing the length of aerial combat over GUADALCANAL and of strengthening air cover over convoys, the construction of an airfield as close as possible to GUADALCANAL was decided upon. In the meantime, the completion of the Buin Airfield was rushed, but, the situation was such that the airfield could not be used until after 7 October. Therefore, the transport operations using high-speed convoys and scheduled for early October were postponed to 15 October. On 9 October, the following operations were planned to insure the success of the transport operations, with high-speed convoys scheduled for 15 October:

1. Bombardment of GUADALCANAL (mainly the airfield) by the 3 Bat Div (two battleships) on 13 October, by the 8 Fleet (flagship, CHOKAI,

KINUGASA) on 14 October, and by the 5 Cru Div (two cruisers) on 15 October.

2. The support force (2 and 3 Fleets), shall sortie from TRUK on 11 October, and shall adopt support dispositions to the north of the SOLOMONS.

3. While the high-speed convoy is enroute, the base air units shall provide strong air cover and destroy enemy aircraft on GUADALCANAL.

During the night of 9 October, the FENRYU and six destroyers effected a successful landing at TASS FARONG, and the 17 Army Headquarters safely moved to GUADALCANAL on this trip.

Ground troops, heavy weapons, and ammunition were to be landed on the night of 11 October at TASS FARONG by the NISSHIN, CHITOSE, and six destroyers. To insure the success of this transport operation, an attack on the Guadalcanal Airfield by the 6 Cru Div (three cruisers) and two destroyers was planned.

The transport force proceeded toward the landing point ahead of the bombardment forces. When the bombardment force reached a point approximately eight nautical miles northwest of SAVO ISLAND, ships were sighted off the bow. While approaching cautiously in the belief that they might be the returning transport force, the force was suddenly attacked at 2145 hours. Thereupon, a meeting engagement ensued between the two fleets.

The bombardment force, upon sustaining the initial attack, was momentarily confused. However, the KINUGASA, the third ship in the 6 Cru Div, put up a furious fight, and succeeded in sinking one enemy heavy cruiser and one destroyer, and heavily damaging another cruiser.

Our forces sustained heavy losses, the flagship AOKA being moderately damaged; the commander, Rear Admiral GOTO, being killed; and the second ship, FURUTAKA, and one destroyer being sunk. Because of this, the bombardment of the airfield finally had to be called off. The Imperial Headquarters called this naval engagement the "Night Battle Off SAVO ISLAND".

The transport force succeeded in landing at TASS FARONG while the bombardment force was engaged in battle. On the following day, 12 October, the 9 Des Div, enroute to rescue the bombardment force, was attacked by enemy carrier bombers and sustained losses of one destroyer

sunk and two moderately damaged, resulting in the rescue mission being abandoned. However, an air unit located enemy remnants two miles north of SAVO ISLAND and planned to attack, but due to inclement weather, the planes were forced to turn back.

Throughout the "Night Battle off SAVO ISLAND," providence abandoned us and our losses mounted. Especially since the enemy used radar which enabled them to fire effectively from the first round without the use of searchlights, the future looked bleak for our surface forces, whose forte was night warfare. This experience caused us to give serious study to methods for future night warfare.

On the night of 12 October, two destroyers reconnoitered GRACIOSA Bay in HDENI ISLAND, but the enemy was not sighted.

On 13 October, the high-speed convoy of six ships, upon whose success depended the second general attack on GUADALCANAL, left SHORTLAND escorted by the 4 Des Ron, and proceeded southward, taking the route north of ISABEL ISLAND.

The deployment which the Combined Fleet took up to support the convoy on this day was generally as follows:

1. In the morning, the support force was proceeding southward 1000 miles north of GUADALCANAL.
2. The commander of the 5 Fleet was scheduled to depart at midnight with two cruisers and two destroyers in order to support the convoy.
3. The commander of the 3 Des Ron was proceeding southward over the central route with three cruisers and four destroyers for transport to GUADALCANAL.
4. The air base unit was attacking GUADALCANAL day and night.
5. The 3 Bat Div (KONGO, HARUNA), which planned to bombard GUADALCANAL, was scheduled to penetrate LUNGA at midnight, accompanied by a number of destroyers from the 2 Des Ron.

On 13 October, the enemy appeared to have intensified its activities for in the morning, two naval units, with one carrier each as a nucleus, were sighted 190 miles and 260 miles south-southwest of GUADALCANAL. Another unit, also with a carrier nucleus, was sighted 190 miles

35

southeast of GUADALCANAL.

During the day of 13 October, the base air force successfully neutralized the airfield on GUADALCANAL. The bombardment force moved up off LUNGA without opposition at 2330 hours on schedule, and bombarded the airfield for approximately one hour and ten minutes (918 rounds of 36 cm shells were fired.) The entire area was turned into a sea of flames, resulting in heavy losses.

During the bombardment, four enemy PT boats moved in for air attack from the Tulagi area, but were avoided. From shore, the enemy returned the fire, using giant searchlights, but all were near misses and no damage was suffered.

Enemy communication on land was disrupted for a number of hours by the bombardment, and it was not until 0330 hours on 14 October that they sent a plain language message to the effect that they had sustained fierce enemy naval bombardment. However, the bombardment did not stop the enemy from using the airfield, and they resumed operations on the airfield early on 14 October.

The enemy did not have more than ten-odd planes on the field. The 8 Fleet commander deciding to neutralize the airfield by naval bombardment, executed effective neutralization fire against the airfield with two cruisers (752 rounds fired) on the night of 14 October.

During the day of 14 October, the convoy was attacked twice by 50 enemy planes, but escaping damage, it entered the TASS FARONG Anchorage at 2200 hours, and began unloading immediately.

The night landing progressed smoothly, but enemy air activity was gradually intensified since the morning of 15 October. Air cover by our base air units and carrier planes, as well as the anti-aircraft fire of our destroyers, had very little effect. During a three hour interval, after 0530 hours, three transports had to be beached, one after another, because of serious damage caused by enemy air attacks.

By 1000 hours, approximately 50 percent of each ship's cargo had been unloaded. In view of the severity of the enemy air attack, the escort force commander decided at 1350 hours to withdraw his force temporarily to

the north, and reattempt unloading operations that night.

Immediately after the 3 Bat Div succeeded in shelling Guadalcanal Airfield, the commander-in-chief of the Combined Fleet, taking advantage of the opportunity, ordered the support force to proceed south at full speed and attack the enemy surface force. The support force moved south at full speed, and arrived at a point 200 miles north of GUADALCANAL by the morning of 15 October, but was restricted in its maneuvers since enemy planes started tracking before the enemy could be located.

At about 1000 hours, an enemy cruiser and transport, proceeding southward about 100 miles east-southeast of SAN CRISTOBAL ISLAND, and two destroyers and two transports, proceeding southwest 80 miles further south, were sighted.

The task force decided to attack them despite the distance of 300 miles, and sent out an air unit.

A medium cruiser was sunk 70 miles southeast of SAN CRISTOBAL ISLAND. A medium cruiser, destroyer, and two transports were discovered 30 miles southeast of Guadalcanal Airfield, and direct hits were made on the cruiser and two transports.

On 15 October, the commander-in-chief of the Combined Fleet, recognizing the need for repeated shelling of the Guadalcanal Airfield in support of the landing on the night of 15 October, ordered the 2 Fleet to carry this out. Commander KONDO thus bombarded Guadalcanal Airfield (1500 rounds) with the 5 Cru Div (2 cruisers) and several destroyers of the 2 Des Ron on the night of 15th October. Results, however, could not be confirmed.

Another attempt at unloading was scheduled for the night of 15 October, but due to liaison discrepancies between the Army and the Navy, two vessels of the high speed convey returned to SHORTLAND ISLAND without accomplishing their mission.

The commander-in-chief of the Combined Fleet was planning to cease operations of the support force if the enemy could not be contacted by 1900 hours on 15 October. Since the enemy was not observed to be within its sphere of operations, the support force proceeded northward.

The enemy made a daylight bombardment of TARAWA in the GILBERT ISLANDS with a Houston class cruiser on 15 October. This action was adjudged to be a diversionary operation, and the forces operating in the SOLOMON Area were not withdrawn to meet this situation.

The enemy surface force in the Solomon Area kept maneuvering in order to avoid contact with our support force, making it difficult to engage them. On 16 September, as our support force headed northward, the enemy surface force approached GUADALCANAL.

At 0500 hours on 16 September, an enemy force with three battleships, as a nucleus, was sighted 350 miles east of Guadalcanal Airfield, and another force with a battleship as a nucleus was detected 50 miles further west. Again at 0910 hours an enemy force, with a carrier as a nucleus, was sighted 110 miles south of Guadalcanal Airfield. The interval between our task force proceeding north and the enemy force was approximately 600 miles, making an attack impossible.

The base air unit carried out coordinated attacks with fighters and bombers, but the enemy carrier force could not be sighted because of inclement weather conditions over the area. The planes attacked an oil tanker and a destroyer, and either severely damaged or sunk them.

On the morning of 17 September, the enemy bombarded the supply landing point at TASSFARONG, with two destroyers using air observation. One ship was sunk by our attack; the other was repulsed toward Lunga Point area, but we lost large quantities of ammunition and rations which had been landed by the high speed convoy.

The enemy bombed the Tassfarong landing point with seven large planes on the afternoon of 17 September, inflicting losses.

On 17 September, it was decided to make a final landing of reinforcements, ammunition, and provisions at TASSFARONG with three cruisers and eight destroyers, and at CAPE ESPERANCE with five destroyers. The operation was supported by the base air unit and the main strength of the 8 Fleet.

Without meeting any enemy interference, the landing force arrived at the landing point at about 2200 hours and completed landing operations.

Four destroyers bombarded Guadalcanal Airfield (with approximately 400 rounds) during the landing operation, but results were not ascertained.

The 17 Army, which had received the scheduled reinforcements and supplies on 17 September, sent a dispatch that it would commence the second Guadalcanal general attack with confidence on 20 September. The Navy had mustered its total force in supporting the second Guadalcanal general offensive and conducting the transport and supply operations. It had transported the 2 Div and the Aoba Detachment, and had continuously shipped supplies to the Ichiki and Kawaguchi Detachments. During this period, six high speed transports, a total of 11 warships, and a total of 121 destroyers had been allotted to these operations.

Plans were drafted for suicide shipments (TEISHIN YUSO) (called "ant" landings) to GUADALCANAL with 16 large landing barges, supported by six destroyers and two submarines. These shipments were to be made during the period from late September to late October. Only two large landing barges reached KAMIMBO from SHORTLAND ISLAND due to surface conditions and enemy air activity, and "ant" landings were suspended thereafter.

VII. Supporting Operations of the 17 Army's Second Guadalcanal General Offensive

A. General Outline of the Second Guadalcanal General Offensive.

The plan was as follows:

The Army would divert its main force from the upper reaches of the LUNGA RIVER to south of the airfield and seize the airfield in a night attack on 20 September.

To support this main force's action and to divert the enemy to the west, a strong element would make a frontal attack on the enemy on both banks of the lower reaches of the MATANIKAU RIVER. Another element would carry out a surprise night attack.

A pincer attitude would be adopted, one unit taking positions west of the MATANIKAU RIVER; another unit would be in the OUSUVER Mountains.

B. Supporting Disposition of the Combined Fleet.

The Combined Fleet would continue strengthening its attitude, supporting the landing operations of the high speed convey. As in the first general offensive, the Combined Fleet would rapidly move up its air bases when the airfield was successfully recaptured, and completely cut off enemy reinforcements and retreat.

C. Outline of Progress of Operations.

Before the start of the general offensive, enemy strength was estimated as follows: Ground forces, about 15,000; combat fit planes, about 40; aircraft carriers, four; battleships, two; cruisers, seven; destroyers, about 20.

An enemy force with a carrier as its nucleus maneuvered north of the REMBELL ISLANDS on 16 September, but was thereafter replaced by a force with a battleship as its nucleus. After 17 September, the carrier disappeared from our search radius.

It was adjudged from the activity of the enemy surface force that they planned to divert our forces to the south with their battleship group, and then attack our flank with their carrier group. Our task force kept a vigilant search for the enemy to the east, and took pre-

cautions not to play into the enemy's hand.

The Guadalcanal land operations did not progress according to the force's schedule of advance. The scheduled general attack for 20 September was postponed to 22 September and later to 23 September. The advance of the main force bogged down on 23 September, and it was finally decided to conduct the general offensive on 24 September.

With such changes of schedule, the surface force was not only using up fuel, but was also being tracked by the enemy. Finally on 24 September, our entire force was exposed to the enemy, but our force still had not located the enemy carrier position.

In such a strategically inferior position, our task force refueled quickly at a point 450 miles northeast of GUADALCANAL on 24 September, and moved southward.

The first report of the Army's capture of the GUADALCANAL Airfield was received at 2100 hours on 24 September; the Lunga Assault Force, one of the units under the command of the 5 Fleet, immediately maneuvered for assault.

Early on the morning of 25 September, after receiving the report that enemy planes were grounded, Vice-Admiral MIKAWA ordered five destroyers and the 3 and 4 Des Ron, which were not engaged in the transportation of reinforcements, to attack LUNGA. At the same time, he himself decided to attack GUADALCANAL at 1600 hours and support the land operations. However, it soon became clear that the Guadalcanal Airfield had not been occupied.

By that time, the assault force had already penetrated deeply into the effective attacking radius of the small planes on the enemy base. The YURA, AKISUKI, and four other destroyers, led by the 4 Des Ron commander, were attacked by enemy small planes and B 17's on the sea east of INDISPENSABLE STRAIT. The YURA was sunk, while the AKISUKI sustained moderate damage.

In view of such circumstances, Vice-Admiral MIKAWA decided to assemble his forces in rear areas until the recapture of the Guadalcanal Airfield was definitely reported.

On the morning of 25 September, the Army captured a section of

the grassland south of the Guadalcanal Airfield, but because it was unable to take the field, the entire force was ordered to resume the attack after sunset.

The base air unit mustered its total force in vigorous attacks on the enemy airfield, in gaining air control over the enemy and in supporting the land combat, thereby seriously restricting the activities of enemy planes.

While our support force was maneuvering with enemy search planes tracking, it was bombed by six B-17's on about noon of 25 September.

A little after 0000 hours on 26 September, enemy tracking planes suddenly dropped bombs near the ZUIKAKU, and the task force turned and temporarily moved northward to avoid an enemy trap.

About an hour and a half before dawn, a search plane was dispatched; about an hour after sunrise, it discovered a large enemy force at 125°, and 210 miles of the 1 Car Div. The ZUIHO was attacked by two enemy carrier bombers at 0540 hours, starting a fire and rendering it impotent to send or receive planes.

Between 0710 and 1515 hours, both the 1 and 2 Car Div's dispatched attack units in three waves, and repeatedly attacked the enemy. First (one carrier, two cruisers, and four destroyers), Second (one carrier, one battleship, two cruisers, and eight destroyers), and Third (a force with one carrier as nucleus) Groups. Three carriers, one battleship, three cruisers, and one destroyer were reportedly sunk and 51 planes were shot down.

During this period, our force was also attacked by enemy planes and at 0727 hours, the SHOKAKU received four direct hits amidships, becoming impotent to send or receive planes. At 0726 hours, the CHIKUMA received several hits, and her engine room was flooded; the TERUZUKI sustained minor damages, and 69 planes failed to return.

In an effort to increase the success of the carrier force, Vice-Admiral KONO, commander of the advance force, began an immediate advance toward the enemy after its discovery. He combed the estimated enemy location, but except for an enemy carrier (the HORNET), which

was discovered afire at 2230 hours in the area of enemy carrier activity during the day and disposed of by two destroyers, the enemy could not be discovered.

Early on the morning of 27 September, the support force searched for the enemy, but no enemy vessels were in sight. With our fuel reduced to 20 percent, it was decided to return to TRUK for repair and refueling. The enemy remnants were to be pursued by the submarine force (fourteen submarines) which were deployed and awaiting the enemy in waters southeast of the SOLOMON ISLANDS.

The submarine force patrolled from a point south of the SANTA CRUZ ISLANDS to a point north of ESPIRITU SANTO ISLAND over the route from the battle zone to SUVA, but was unable to discover the enemy.

Imperial Headquarters called this naval engagement the Battle of the South PACIFIC. In this battle, a great victory was achieved without losing a single vessel.

The land fighting on GUADALCANAL still made no progress, and in the morning of 26 September a report was received to the effect that the general attack would be abandoned and future measures planned.

The second general attack on GUADALCANAL, which had been carried out with confidence by the Army had failed, casting a dark shadow over future operations on GUADALCANAL.

The units of the Combined Fleet returned to their different bases for the time being for repairs and refueling. However, with the increased number of land forces on GUADALCANAL, the supplying of provisions could not be neglected for even one day. For this reason, the Southeast Area Force took over and continued the task of transporting supplies, and the commander-in-chief of the Combined Fleet dispatched elements to strengthen the Southeast Area Force.

VIII. Buna Area Operations and Supporting Operations Involving the Supply and Transport of 38 Division (Including Attached Units) to GUADALCANAL

A. Strategy for Guadalcanal Land Operations

The Army forces, which had failed in the first and second general attacks on GUADALCANAL, abandoned their past surprise attack tactics centering around night assaults, and decided to conduct steady driving operations from the downstream region of the MATANIKAU RIVER, in which large forces using heavy weapons would use frontal attacks. The troop strength was scheduled employment as follows:

1. The 2 Division would be transferred from the upper reaches of the LUNGA RIVER to the west, but the four mountain guns would be left at their positions south of the airfield. Ammunition for these guns would be increased, and they would continue their neutralization fire.
2. The unit (approximately 500 men) which had advanced south of KQBI POINT would continue its guerrilla warfare in the sector as long as its rations held out.
3. Convey transport shall be executed swiftly, and enough ammunition and provisions for 60,000 men for 20 days would be stored up for the 38 Division.
4. The 51 Division and one mixed brigade would be transported to GUADALCANAL in December.
5. The offensive would be resumed after the above reinforcements were made and the 2 Division regained its combat power. A steady push would be made over the front extending from the left bank of the MATANIKAU River to the mountains, and the airstrip would be captured. The offensive was scheduled for the latter part of December.

Meanwhile, the sector on the left bank of the MATANIKAU RIVER would be retaken and held as a front for the future offensive.

To achieve such an Army operation, 30,000 troops, 300 artillery pieces, and 30,000 tons of military supplies would have to be transported.

If transports were used, 150 vessels would be needed, whereas if destroyers were used, more than 800 would be necessary, thus presenting a giant problem in logistics. The solution of this problem would decide the land operations on GUADALCANAL.

B. Navy's Strategy

Since the recapture of GUADALCANAL would have a great influence on future operations, the Navy decided to adhere to its past policy of supporting the operation with everything it could master in order to ensure the success of this operation.

To strengthen the defenses near the Guadalcanal landing point, the Navy organized the 8 Combined SELF, equipped with heavy artillery, and prepared to move this unit to GUADALCANAL.

C. Outline of Progress

In order to repair the vessels damaged in the Battle of the South PACIFIC and to restore the carrier plane units, the commander-in-chief of the 3 Fleet led his 1 Car Div and other elements back to JAPAN proper. For the time being, the remaining elements were to operate under the Commanders of the 2 and 8 Fleets.

After the Battle of South PACIFIC, the enemy further increased their Guadalcanal reinforcements and continued daylight landing operations with naval vessels and transports.

Prior to the convoy transport operations scheduled to begin in mid-November, our forces continued to destroy landings. On six days 2, 5, 7, 8, 9, and 10 November, a total of two warships and 65 destroyers succeeded in landing operations. However, interference from enemy PT boats and planes necessitated a change from the existing unloading procedure to shorter interval unloadings.

To support the 35 Division convoy scheduled to unload on 13 November, the commander-in-chief of the Combined Fleet on 8 November deployed his units as follows:

1. After 10 November, the air base unit shall intensify its air attacks on GUADALCANAL, patrol the areas north-east, east, and southeast of the SOLOMON ISLANDS, provide

air coverage for the convoy, gain air control over the landing point, and be ready for attacks from enemy vessels.

2. A force, with the 11 Bat Div (two battleships) of the advance force (Kondo Fleet) as a nucleus, shall lay neutralization fire on the Guadalcanal Airfield on the night of 12 November.
3. The Outer South Seas Force (Mikawa Fleet) from the southeast area shall provide convoy escort and anchorage patrol. After 13 November, it shall send heavy cruisers to lay neutralization fire on the Guadalcanal Airfield. In the event that an enemy fleet appears, an element shall join the command of Vice-Admiral KONDO for a decisive fleet action. After 10 November, it shall conduct short range patrols over the area to the east and west of the INDISPENSABLE REEF, and convoy security with its reconnaissance seaplanes. It shall also support the air base force in the Guadalcanal air battle.
4. The main body of the advance force shall advance to a point north of GUADALCANAL by 12 November to support operations in the southeast area and prepare for a decisive battle with the enemy fleet.
After 13 November, this force shall, by special order, send its heavy cruisers to lay neutralisation fire on the Guadalcanal Airfield.
5. The submarine force will intercept enemy reinforcements to GUADALCANAL and patrol the waters near NOUNEA and SUVA. After 10 November, one submarine will be assigned to the reconnaissance seaplane base on INDISPENSABLE REEF. Another will attack the enemy flying boat bases on HEBI and VANIKORO ISLANDS.

Units of the Combined Fleet maneuvered in concordance with the above and took their stations. The crux of this operation was the inadequate air base strength and the weak

carrier force since all but one carrier were returning to JAPAN proper for repairs and replacements, necessitated by the Battle in the South PACIFIC.

The enemy apparently also suffered from a great loss in carrier strength as since the Battle of the South PACIFIC, regular carriers were not spotted in the battle zone. However, the enemy sent new battleships and cruisers which, working together with the air base strength from GUADALCANAL, protected the convoys to GUADALCANAL.

On 11 November, five transports and three destroyers anchored and unloaded at LUNGA. On the same day, three transports, escorted by three battleships, two heavy cruisers, and six destroyers, were sighted 190 miles southeast of GUADALCANAL.

On the early morning of 12 November, six transports, escorted by six cruisers, and 11 destroyers anchored off LUNGA and started unloading. Our air base unit attacked the enemy convoys on these occasions, but each time, the enemy continued to unload their cargo despite the heavy damages sustained.

Our convoy (11 transports escorted by 12 destroyers) left SHEETLAND ISLAND on the afternoon of 12 November, under the indirect escort of the Mikawa Fleet, and took the central route, expecting to reach its destination at 2000 hours on 13 November.

Two battleships, one light cruiser, and 14 destroyers, led by the 11 Bat Div commander, had left the Kondo Fleet at 0330 hours on 12 November to shell GUADALCANAL. Having received reports that 10 or more enemy ships were anchored off LUNGA, this force moved in off LUNGA from INDISPENSABLE Strait via the area south of SAVO ISLAND. That night, it suddenly encountered a powerful enemy fleet with a nucleus of nine cruisers.

Because visibility was poor, the battle developed into close-range duels and fierce melees with each ship taking independent action. When the desperate battle was over, five enemy heavy cruisers, two AA cruisers, eight destroyers, and one PT boat had been sunk, and two heavy cruisers and one destroyer had been moderately or lightly damaged.

Most of the enemy had been destroyed, but we lost the battleship, HIEI, and two destroyers. The original mission of shelling the enemy airfield on GUADALCANAL remained unaccomplished.

Under the circumstances, the commander-in-chief of the Combined Fleet extended the date of the convoy landing by one day, and stationed submarines around GUADALCANAL from east to west in order to prevent infiltration of the enemy fleet. At the same time, he ordered our fighter unit to neutralize the enemy air strength on GUADALCANAL.

On 13 November, the enemy pushed its surface force close to GUADALCANAL and had a force consisting of two groups, each composed of one carrier and two battleships, disposed south to southwest of GUADALCANAL. Under these conditions, the shelling of the Guadalcanal Airfield and the destruction of the enemy fleet became absolute necessities.

Vice-Admiral KONDO decided to lead the 4 Cru Div (two heavy cruisers), the 11 Bat Div (one battleship), two light cruisers, and nine destroyers in shelling the Guadalcanal Airfield on the night of 14 November, and began preparations immediately.

Vice-Admiral MIKAWA's 7 Cru Div (two cruisers), one light cruiser, and four destroyers, led by the 7 Cru Div Commander, succeeded in bombarding the Guadalcanal Airfield on the night of 13 November. Approximately 1,000 20 cm shells were expended in the bombardment.

On 14 November, our convoy was attacked by an aggregate of 108 enemy planes at a point northwest of RUSSELL ISLAND. In five raids lasting from early morning to 1530 hours, seven of the convoy's 11 transports fell behind; only four continued ahead.

The Mikawa Fleet, which was engaged in indirect convoy escort, was attacked three times by enemy carrier bombers during the morning of 14 November, each attack being executed by a dozen or more planes. The KINUGASA was sunk, ISUZU moderately damaged, and two heavy cruisers slightly damaged.

On 14 November, the enemy was patrolling the waters southwest of GUADALCANAL with one group built around a carrier and two battleships, and another group built around four cruisers.

Since the point had been reached where the bombardment of GUADALCANAL

and support of the convoys could be delayed no longer, the Kondo Fleet on 14 November moved resolutely south within range of small enemy planes during the day, and entered INDISPENSABLE Strait at night. Upon reaching the vicinity of SAVO ISLAND at 2010 hours, the fleet encountered a superior enemy fleet built around several modern battleships, which had been lying in wait for our fleet.

Night action was adopted immediately and through good direction of night action, the fleet was able to inflict tremendous losses on the enemy. The action was followed up by a pursuit of the retreating enemy, thus clearing a route of advance for the convoy and allowing four transports to ground at TASS FARCHO. The battleship, KIRISHIMA, and destroyer, AYAHAMI, were lost in this night action.

On 15 November, while the convoy was unloading, the Kondo Fleet cruised north of GUADALCANAL and the Mikawa Fleet cruised north of SANTA ISABEL Island, offering indirect coverage for the convoy. At the same time, the base air unit patrolled over the convoy.

After 0600 hours, the convoy was shelled by enemy land batteries, bombed by a total of 30 planes, and attacked by a cruiser and a destroyer. The transports caught fire, one after another, and only 2,000 troops, 260 cases of field and mountain gun ammunition, and 1,500 bags of rice were unloaded. Imperial Headquarters called the naval battles fought near GUADALCANAL between 12 and 14 November the Third Battle of the SOLOMONS, and announced a great victory, but the principal operational objective of landing a great convoy remained unaccomplished.

As a result, there remained little hope for a development in the Guadalcanal land fighting for supplies of ammunition and provisions, which were running extremely low.

The enemy, on the other hand, planning an aggressive push in NEW GUINEA made new landings at a point seven miles south of NUNA on the morning of 16 November. Our troops in the KOKORA area were put to rout by swift enemy pursuit. A grave crisis had developed in the Southeast area on both the SOLOMONS and NEW GUINEA fronts.

The Combined Fleet decided to withdraw the Kondo Fleet to TRUK

for drafting of future strategy, and to direct its efforts toward the support of the Buna area.

To meet the critical situation in the Southeast area, the Army created the 5 Area Army and appointed Lt. Gen. IMANURA, Hiteshi as commander. The 5 Area Army was composed of the 17 Army (the army in charge of operations in the Guadalcanal area) and the 18 Army (the army in charge of the operations in the New Guinea area).

On the same day, Vice-Admiral OKAMA was appointed by His Majesty as the new 3 Fleet Commander, succeeding Vice-Admiral HAGURO in command of the task force. Coincident with the organization of the 5 Area Army and the 18 Army, Imperial Headquarters in Imperial Headquarters Navy Staff Section Directive No. 159, dated 18 November, disseminated the strategy for South Pacific areas, to be followed by local commanders. The essentials of the directive were as follows:

1. In an effort to break the deadlock of the general fighting in the Southeast area, air bases will be built or repaired so that powerful air operations can be effected, and enemy base air strength will be neutralized with a reinforced air force.

When this is accomplished, landing operations will be carried out with convoys and a rational operation conducted with adequate heavy weapons, ammunition, and provisions. Meanwhile, a minimum supply necessary for maintaining the status quo will be guaranteed.

2. Operations to recapture the SOLOMON Islands will be continued persistently.
3. Strategic areas in NEW GUINEA will be secured and preparations pushed for the invasion of RABI and PORT MORESBY, the execution of which shall be ordered later.
4. The strengths of the Army and Navy air forces and their operations will be specified.
5. Staging bases will be readied on the northern coast of NEW GUINEA.

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The following concrete instructions were sent to operational areas by the high command in connection with the above directive:

1. Solomon Operational Plans

- (a) For air operations in the SOLOMON area, the Navy will establish an airfield near SHORTLAND ISLAND by mid-December. The Army and Navy will jointly establish at least two operational fields on SANTA ISABEL Island or NEW GEORGIA Island, and, if possible, another field on the western section of GUADALCANAL.
- (b) The AA defense of strategic areas, especially airfields, will be strengthened.
- (c) During this preparatory period, an essential minimum of troops, personnel, and provisions will be shipped to secure bases for future operations, to revive combat strength, and to lay neutralization fire on enemy airfields, thus pushing operational preparations as much as possible.

In the meantime, the Navy will exhaust all possible means to check enemy reinforcements to the SOLOMONS, and the Army and Navy will co-operate in blocking enemy air activities.

- (d) When the air bases are completed, air operations will be stepped up at a convenient time. With the enemy air strength neutralized, the 51 Division and supplies for organic units will be forced into GUADALCANAL, operational preparations will be accelerated and expanded, and attack preparations will be completed by extending footholds as far east as possible.
- (e) The completion of attack preparations will be set for the end of mid-January, 1943. However, this deadline for preparations is alterable, depending upon the general situation. The forces also will endeavor to concentrate the main strength of the 6 Division near RARAU. The 6 Division is directly attached to the

Area Army.

- (f) When the above plans are completed, the direction of the main attack will be selected so that the coordinated combat strengths of the components of the Army, Navy and Air Force can be exhibited, and the offensive resumed as soon as possible upon completion of attack preparations.

B. New Guinea Area Operational Plans

1. During the Solomon operation, strong, operational bases will be secured jointly by the Army and Navy in the New Guinea area near LAE, SALAMANA and BUNA. More operational and staging airfields will be completed jointly by the Army and Navy at necessary places on NEW BRITAIN and NEW GUINEA in preparation for subsequent operations.
2. The Army and Navy will jointly occupy, as swiftly as possible, MADANG and WENAK, airfield sites along the northern coast of NEW GUINEA.
3. The sectors surrounding the strategic grounds near LAE, SALAMANA and BUNA will be mopped up.

The above was intended as the basic plan to break the existing stalemate in the Southeast area operations, but because this strategy is dependent upon the enemy's plans, drastic changes in attitude, caused by enemy strategy during our battle preparations, were to be expected.

As expected, the enemy began an aggressive advance near BUNA, the strategic point in NEW GUINEA, and was completing three airfields in the interval seven to 40 nautical miles south-southwest of BUNA.

Also in the Guadalcanal area, the enemy was sending heavy reinforcements and rapidly enlarging and equipping the airfield. Two airfields already completed were being further enlarged. The situation was developing so that operations would soon involve every type of aircraft. The suspension of our aggressive operation, which had lasted until about 20 December in the face of this situation, entailed further abrupt changes, and allowed the enemy time to complete invincible bases.

There were pros and cons for aggressive strategy in the Buna area. The 8 Area Army took a negative attitude on grounds that we lacked the potential power to direct aggressive operations in this area, although recognising its strategic importance. However, the 8 Area Army's view prevailed and it was decided to send a minimum of troops necessary for holding action in the Buna area, and to provide air coverage for shipment of reinforcements and air support for land combat. It was also decided to strengthen swiftly LAE, the rear base for Buna.

The base air unit, feeling pinched for strength even to combating the enemy in the Guadalcanal area, was forced to resort to defensive operations in all areas since part of its strength was further diverted for the Buna area.

On 22 November, a picket ship, patrolling the waters east of the mainland, sighted two unidentified planes. To maintain strict search and patrol in that area, planes of the outer combat force, which had been training in JAPAN, were alerted on 23 November. Consequently, reinforcements for the front, especially the Southeast area, were postponed temporarily.

The Guadalcanal operation was momentarily interrupted due to new development in the Buna area operation and an alteration in the Southeast area operational plan, thus allowing the enemy sufficient time to recover its losses sustained in the Third Naval Battle of the Solomons.

At the same time, our supplies on GUADALCANAL gradually became acute and shipments had to be effected in drum cans, transported by destroyers and submarines for lack of other means. Submarine transport was started on the 24 November, with KAMINBO selected as the debarkation point.

Debarcation was extremely difficult because this was the first attempted, and the submarines were unable to contact the actual place, and were helpless against enemy interference. Enemy reinforcement of GUADALCANAL gradually improved, and an average of two transports were being anchored daily at LUNGA. The 17 Army Headquarters on GUADALCANAL made urgent requests for provisions, but since the majority of the ships

were being used to relieve the critical situation in the Buna area, and since preparations were being made to supply GUADALCANAL by the new drum method, it was difficult to comply to the requests of our forces on GUADALCANAL.

The first shipment of drum cans finally began on 30 November with eight destroyers under direct command of the 2 Des Ron commander. While advancing over the central route that day, the destroyers were tracked by enemy planes, but with direct air coverage, reached the anchorage without being attacked.

A powerful enemy surface unit (one battleship, four cruisers and 12 destroyers) was encountered at 2115 hours, just before debarkation was to begin at TASSAFARONG. The drum cans were abandoned at once, and a fierce battle ensued for about an hour. An enemy battleship, cruiser and destroyer were sunk and three enemy destroyers set afire, but our force withdrew after losing the TAKAWAMI, and failed to fulfill its mission.

The Imperial Headquarters called this battle the Night Engagement Off Langa.

The supplying of GUADALCANAL by submarine was progressing favorably through improved land-sea communication and unloading methods. After 3 December, however, enemy PT boats began interfering and the debarkation method, whereby a large landing barge was carried on a submarine, gradually became ineffectual.

The supplying by destroyers was also hindered by superior enemy surface forces, and the transit of 30 November ended in failure. Thereupon, it was decided next to enforce a landing operation under close support of our surface and air units. On 13 December Vice-Admiral MIKAWA executed a Tassafarong landing with a personally-led force of two heavy cruisers, one light cruiser, and one destroyer, supporting a reinforcement force of 11 destroyers led by the 2 Des Ron commander.

En route, a destroyer was damaged in an enemy air raid, but the enemy planes were repelled through the bold actions of our direct support planes. All ships succeeded in the drum shipment, and approximately

one-third of the 1,500 drum cans dropped overboard were retrieved on shore. This proved that with a few improvements in the unloading method, drum shipments were feasible.

The situation in the Buna area suddenly became acute and shipment by destroyers entailed heavy losses and proved ineffectual. Finally, the situation became such that supplies had to be dropped by air.

Submarines operating near GUADALCANAL were being closely neutralized by enemy planes and subchasers, and were thereafter ineffectual, but submarine-launched midget submarines, based in the Kaminbo and Cape Esperance areas since early November, attacked enemy ships in the Lunga area anchorage and succeeded in attacking a transport on 7 and 27 November and 3 December.

On 7 December, another attempt was made to supply GUADALCANAL, with 11 destroyers, but two destroyers were damaged by enemy planes en route, so the damaged destroyers, escorted by two other destroyers, withdrew. The remaining seven destroyers reached the debarkation point, but immediately encountered stubborn interference from eight enemy PT boats. They finally abandoned the unloading operations and withdrew.

This failure was primarily attributable to the fact that it was not possible to curb enemy air action and also to the fact that it was the first time enemy motor torpedo boats attacked in a group. Thereafter, it was necessary to divert destroyers as look-out ships for PT boats during debarkation operations. This resulted in a further reduction in the amount of supplies transported. Moreover, air security for the transport force was inadequate due to operations in the Buna area.

On 9 December, Submarine I-3 was attacked and sunk by enemy PT boats immediately upon surfacing to unload supplies. In view of this interference, it was decided to abandon supplying by submarines carrying large landing barges, and temporarily suspend supplying by submarines until such time that a new method using rubber floats or drum

cans could be perfected, and the enemy security determined.

On 11 December, mine destroyers, led by the 2 Des Ron Commander, attempted to land supplies on GUADALCANAL. The destroyers reached the anchorage after eliminating interference by enemy planes and PT boats, and succeeded in transporting 1,200 drum cans despite the sinking of the flagship SHOGETSU after severe damages through enemy PT boat action while unloading. However, not more than 200 drum cans were retrieved on shore.

Under these supply conditions, it was impossible to meet even minimum requirements of the more than 30,000 troops on GUADALCANAL, much less supply them regularly. The situation became such that the combat potentialities of the men on GUADALCANAL gradually deteriorated. Instead of being prepared for subsequent operations, they were faced with starvation.

In view of the bitter experience in supplying GUADALCANAL and BUNA, the commander-in-chief of the Combined Fleet, in a move to ensure future supplies, planned to continue experimenting with shipments by powerful sailing vessels and small boats through linked fortified bases. He ordered the establishment of series of supply bases along the southern coast of NEW BRITAIN and the north coast of NEW GUINEA.

The Munda Airfield, which was being constructed in a move to break the stalemate in the Guadalcanal area operation, was completed on 15 December, and became capable of accommodating small-type planes. The frequent enemy plane attacks, however, made its use as an operational base difficult, unless AA defenses were strengthened.

A close search for an appropriate airfield site was being conducted and finally on 15 December, one was discovered in the southern part of KOLOMBANGARA ISLAND. It was decided to establish an airfield there at once. Construction preparations took longer than were expected, and convey shipments expected by the end of December naturally could not be realized.

Because of the rapid strengthening of the rear bases in the New Guinea area which were practically devoid of troops, activities in

these areas became pronounced, and as a result, the Guadalcanal area operation became temporarily stagnant. There were bitter discussions in both the central and local commands on the disposition of GUADALCANAL.

On 16 December, the MARANG, WENAK and FIESCHENAFEN invasion forces left RAHAUL and, on the night of 15 December, occupied these areas without much enemy resistance. Preparations for airfields were initiated at once in the Madang and Wewak areas.

The enemy had intensified its activities in the Buna area and had accelerated shipments to GUADALCANAL. Reinforcements were being sent daily to GUADALCANAL on five or eight transports. The enemy steadily prepared a group of airfields on GUADALCANAL, completing six by the first part of December.

Shipment by destroyers and submarines became very difficult for the Japanese forces. As a result, air drops were started on 20 December.

To restore our strategic positions in the Southeast area, where the relative positions had been completely reversed, concentration of ground troops was a matter of the utmost necessity. The commander-in-chief of the Combined Fleet decided to mobilize the secondary forces and supply ships in transporting elements of the 6, 20, and 41 Divisions, which were scheduled to move up to the Southeast area. On 19 December, Transport Force C was organized and assigned this transport mission.

Both the front and rear echelons in the Southeast area became tactically important, necessitating the organization of a higher command which would vigorously direct the naval forces operating in this area.

On 24 December, the Southeast Area Fleet was organized, comprising the 11 Air Fleet and the 8 Fleet. The 11 Air Fleet commander held the post of commander, Southeast Area Fleet.

On 25 December, HOLLANDIA, a strategic point on the northern coast of NEW GUINEA, was occupied without encountering any armed resistance, and the airfield was secured. Submarine shipments to GUADALCANAL were halted after 9 December, but were revived on 26 December

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with the establishment of a new transportation method utilizing rubber bags. WICKHAM was occupied on the night of 27 December with six destroyers, and a link supply base for supplying GUADALCANAL was established.

The situation in the Buna area deteriorated by the hour, and had reached the final stage. The Southeast Area Force commander ordered the naval force defending the area to withdraw and join the army forces in the Girawa area, but the enemy had already cut off retreat. The naval force defending the area, excluding some liaison personnel, resolved to defend the sector to the last with Naval Captain YASUDA.

On 29 December, the force destroyed the code books and ceased radio contact. On 2 January, this force charged into enemy positions and its men died gloriously.

Naval Capt. YASUDA became the exemplary model for the Imperial forces, teaching those units in isolated and supportless fronts the course of action to adopt. By his death, he served to encourage all commanders.

In the New Guinea area, the Japanese forces suffered their second defeat at BUNA following their first at RABI. Even in the Guadalcanal area, shipment of the J5 Div and continuous supplying of forces on the island failed through interference from enemy air and surface craft.

Finally, on 4 Jan 43, it was decided to evacuate the island pursuant to Imperial Headquarters Navy Staff Section Directive No. 23.

IX. Evacuation of GUADALCANAL and Reinforcement of NEW GUINEA.

- A. The Guadalcanal evacuation would not only make our strategical position exceedingly disadvantageous in the future, but would also demoralize our entire forces; moreover, it would give the enemy increasing confidence in their operations and enable them to seize the initiative, and to commence operations against our vulnerable points with audacity.

It became vital for us to secure the island at all cost, but despite various means adopted, it proved unsuccessful. Under these circumstances, there remained no hope for retrieval of the Guadalcanal operation, and after a careful study at a cabinet meeting, evacuation of the island was ordered in Imperial Headquarters Navy Staff Section Directive No. 184, dated 4 January.

The Imperial Headquarters Army and Navy Departments conducted a joint study of the evacuation procedure, and decided to reinforce the New Guinea area rapidly with Army units and to withdraw troops from GUADALCANAL under a policy of active defense in the SOLOMONS and aggressive offensive in NEW GUINEA. On this decision, the operational plans of the Southeast area operations were set forth in Imperial Headquarters Navy Staff Section Directive No. 184, dated 4 January. The plans for the Guadalcanal evacuation were as follows:

1. Plan:

The Army and Navy shall jointly exhaust all possible means in evacuating the Guadalcanal forces under cover of night from late January to early February.

2. Procedure:

- (a) The offensive preparations underway at present for a renewed attack on GUADALCANAL shall be speeded up, thereby hastening evacuation preparations and facilitating plans for concealment.
- (b) First, the 17 Army's front lines shall be consolidated quickly and then retracted to strategic rear lines.

- (c) Until the evacuation operations start, the combat strength of Guadalcanal forces shall be maintained by continuing and increasing supplies through different methods. On these supplying trips, every effort shall be made to evacuate patients and other personnel on the island. The Navy shall handle such shipment of supplies and evacuation of patients.
- (d) The Army and Navy shall jointly prepare air bases in the SOLOMONS and intensify air attacks at the proper time.
- (e) Co-ordinated with this air operation, the evacuation of Guadalcanal forces to strategic rear areas will be executed with all types of vessels and by exhausting all possible means.
- (f) Special precautions must be taken to keep this operation secret.

B. Deployment of Combined Fleet in Accordance with Imperial Headquarters Directive.

1. Most of the base air units shall be concentrated in the southeast area.
2. Twenty-two destroyers shall be assembled in the southeast area for evacuation purposes.
3. A submarine force shall be stationed southeast of GUADALCANAL to reconnoiter the enemy and intercept reinforcements.
4. The 8 Cru Div (2 cruisers) shall operate east of the MARSHALLS and engage chiefly in noncombatant and diversion missions.
5. The advance force shall wait in readiness in the Truk area and sortie at the opportune time.
6. The Southeast Area Force shall carry out the Guadalcanal evacuation.

C. Guadalcanal Evacuation Plans of Southeast Area Force.

The following is an outline of the Guadalcanal evacuation plans agreed upon by the headquarters of the 8 Area Army and the Southeast Area Fleet:

1. Deadline for completion of evacuation will be about 10 February. The Army and Navy shall work closely for the success of the evacuation.
2. One infantry battalion (500 to 1000 men) shall be landed on GUADALCANAL about 15 January to construct covering positions.

Each of the four destroyers which will carry this unit shall load 10 collapsible boats or a total of 40 boats. After these boats are employed by the unit in landing, they shall be left on shore and later utilized for evacuation.

3. A 23 day supply of rations shall be sent ahead to GUADALCANAL by 15 January.
4. The Army shall plan the rallying lines as follows and assemble in the fourth line position at KANIMBO within three days after the start of rallying:
 - 1st line --- MATANIKAU River
 - 2nd line --- MANALA* River
 - 3rd line --- West of TASSAFONG
 - 4th line --- West of Cape ESPERANCE

* TE: Transliterations

A final landing of 500 to 600 men may be necessary for constructing the 4th line positions.

5. Air Operational and Covering Plans.

- (a) Air operations will be initiated on 15 January, with night raids to be continued for the first week. Coordinating with these raids, ground forces will gradually be assembled to the rear.
- (b) The ground forces will be evacuated by destroyers on three occasions, 1, 5, and 10 February. Any remaining troops will be evacuated completely by submarine.
- (c) On or the day before 1 February, an all-out, daylight raid will be conducted, and enemy small planes lured out and destroyed. Thereafter, the emphasis will be on air coverage of the retreating forces. Super-

fluous exhaustion of planes will be avoided.

- (d) The Army will use its total plane complement in the Guadalcanal withdrawal operations. The air strengths which can be diverted for these operations are the following:

Type of Plane	Navy	Army
Large	72	
Small	140 (among these, 108 are fighters)	about 100 (among these, 74 are fighters)

- (e) Use of Destroyers.

Twenty-two destroyers are available. Fourteen of these carry 10 collapsible boats. Each vessel is capable of carrying about 700 persons. Two large landing barges, three small landing barges, and 140 collapsible boats available.

- (f) Army's Plan for Strengthening Strategic Rear Line of SOLOMON ISLANDS.

The Southeast Area Force planned three additional destroyer shipments prior to the withdrawal from GUADALCANAL. Drum or rubber bag shipments with ten destroyers on 2 January and with nine destroyers on both 10 and 14 January were executed successfully despite interference from enemy PT boats and planes.

With construction proceeding on our airfields at NUNDA and SHORTLAND; the enemy had been intensifying their attacks against these fields, but finally on the night of 4 January, they bombarded NUNDA Airfield with several cruisers and destroyers. The air force immediately planned that elements of the 6 Division should be moved forward to Central SOLOMONS, and placed under the command of the Navy.

In anticipation of replacement by naval land combat units after the withdrawing operations, Army troops shall reinforce the following sectors:

Place	Reinforcements	Remarks
REKATA	2 battalions	After 14 January, four destroyers will be assigned to each locality with shipments on alternate days scheduled completion in eight days.
CHOISEUL	2 battalions	
NUNDA	2 battalions	
WICKHAM	1 battalion	

D. Outline of Progress.

Shipment of supplies to Guadalcanal ground forces was continued until 30 January by submarine transportation, which was resumed on 26 December. However, only 20 tons could be hauled on each trip by the rubber bag method, which was by no means sufficient to meet the needs of the land forces. For this reason, the forces retaliated and waited in readiness. On the morning of 5 January, six cruisers and several destroyers, proceeding southeast, were sighted and raided at a point 30 miles south of GUADALCANAL, inflicting considerable damage to two large cruisers and another vessel.

The enemy, intending to sever our rear supply lines, deployed many submarines near RABAU, KAVIENG, and SHORTLAND, and was making steady progress for their objective. Our greatest concern during this phase was the enemy's large planes, such as the B-17 and B-24. These planes were very difficult to shoot down even though our fighters engaged them in better combat.

The only convenient means for destroying them were through surprise attacks while they were grounded. However, the enemy had six or seven airfields on GUADALCANAL, six at PORT MORESBY, four to six in the Buna sector, and two in the Rabi sector. In view of our existing air strength, neutralization of these airfields was impossible. The main strength, therefore, had to be mustered for night raids on Guadalcanal airfields, for troop shipment escort and enemy patrol and search missions; all-out raids on enemy airfields were sporadic.

The urgent need for improvement of the strategic position in NEW GUINEA necessitated the assignment of a strong element of the surface and air units to this area.

Army and naval units moving from the Buna sector were assembling in the Giruwa sector. They were scheduled for withdrawal to north of MAMBARE RIVER, and then to the Lae-Salamua sector. For this reason, rear strong points in the Lae-Salamua sector were rapidly strengthened. The plan was to move the 20 Division from PALAU to NEWAK during January and to send the 41 Division and the attached units of the 18 Army to the Madang sector.

In an effort to strengthen the Army units in the Lae sector immediately, elements of the 51 Division and a few naval units boarded five trans-

ports and left RABAU on 5 January with strong air coverage and a five destroyer escort. Despite persistent interference enroute from enemy planes, landings were made on 7 January at LAE, but while three vessels were anchored and unloading, two received such damages that they were sunk or grounded. Thus, future operations and shipments in the New Guinea sector were expected to be very difficult.

The enemy reverted to offensive tactics on GUADALCANAL after 12 January, and at one time 17 Army headquarters even resolved on a final stand. The Army requested that the date of withdrawal be advanced, but the Navy could not comply with this request because of the moon and progress made in strengthening the strategic rear lines.

Night raids on GUADALCANAL were begun on 14 January with several medium attack planes, but until 20 January, these raids had to be sporadic attacks by few planes because of other operations. The enemy harrassed our transportation to the New Guinea area by using airfields at RABI, PORT MORESBY, and BUENA.

On 17 January, enemy plane concentrations were discovered in the Rabi sector, and a surprise raid was carried out with more than 20 medium attack planes and 40 fighters, obtaining considerable success. Our force lost only one fighter.

On 18 January, the 2 Base Unit commander advanced to WEWAK to cooperate with the army in surface escort and the self-sufficiency of the area. After 20 January, night raids were increased with gradual successes.

Our flying boats raided the air bases on ESPIRITU SANTO on 20, 21, 25, 29, and 30 January, intending to cut off enemy plane reinforcements. These night raids were successful, and several fires were observed after each raid.

At the request of 8 Area Army Headquarters, it was decided on 20 January to advance the date for the withdrawal operations by one day and to carry out the first evacuation on 31 January.

At dawn on 23 January, an enemy force built around four heavy cruisers was discovered 230 miles southeast of GUADALCANAL. On the prediction that MURDA would most likely be shelled, a night assault was planned with the base air unit, but the enemy escaped. At 0000 hours on 24 January

At 0000 hours on 24 January, the enemy, with two heavy cruisers, one

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medium cruiser, and three destroyers, attacked KOLOMBANGARA and withdrew after a 30 minute bombardment of the airfield under construction. In this attack, our forces sustained losses of personnel and fuel. Immediately, counterattack with planes was planned, but the enemy could not be located.

On the 23 January, one of our submarines reconnoitered and shelled CANTON ISLAND in co-ordination with the 8 Cru Div's feint operation in the waters east of the MARSHALLS. The submarine left YALUIT ISLAND on 23 January and returned on 27 January.

Intent on destroying enemy planes, 18 medium attack planes and 73 fighters carried out a daylight attack on GUADALCANAL on 25 January. They engaged 10 or more enemy light aircraft without any great success. On their return, they encountered inclement weather, and most of the fighters made emergency landings in the Buin and Ballale area. Only a few planes returned to RABAU.

This impeded future air operations, but in order to support the first evacuation of 31 January, it was decided to carry out a general air attack on 30 January, despite all obstacles. Accordingly, preparations were accelerated.

On 25 January, our submarines, engaged in transportation operations, succeeded in shipping the first cargo tube (released from a torpedo tube).

On 27 January, Army fighter units, deployed at Ballale Airfield, carried out the first air attack on GUADALCANAL. Hereon, joint air attacks on GUADALCANAL by naval and army air units finally materialized.

On 28 January, the Russell Islands invasion force (300 troops) was landed by six destroyers. The force immediately began construction of a base for the boat unit which was to engage in the Guadalcanal evacuation. With this landing, troop movement to the strategic Solomons rear line was generally finished, thus completing a temporary measure to counter enemy steps to sever our strategic rear line.

Early on the morning of 29 January, a powerful force with four battleships and three heavy cruisers as a nucleus and a convoy, consisting of four transports, were sighted about 40 miles south of SAN CRISTOBAL Island by a search plane. Another plane sighted a separate force built around two battleships (or heavy cruisers) and three cruisers. The air units

immediately decided upon a night torpedo attack with 31 medium attack planes, and reported the sinking of two battleships (one unconfirmed) and one cruiser, and the damaging of two light cruisers.

Again on the following morning, 30 January, two battleships, three heavy cruisers, two medium cruisers, and six destroyers were sighted near the scene of battle moving southeast at low speed. Before dusk, 11 medium attack planes attacked them fiercely midway between SAN CRISTOBAL and RENWELL ISLAND, and reported the sinking of a battleship and a cruiser.

The battle results for the two days totalled three battleships and two cruisers sunk and one cruiser heavily damaged, but, we also lost ten planes. The submarine force which had been waiting near the scene of battle, pursued enemy remnants but were eluded.

Through these attacks, enemy plans to counterattack with surface units were temporarily disrupted. The general air attack on GUADALCANAL scheduled for 30 January could not be carried out due to inclement weather. The schedule for withdrawal was set back one day, with the date for the initial withdrawal changed to 1 February.

Again on 31 January, the general air attack on GUADALCANAL could not be realized due to inclement weather. Instead, an enemy air raid on RABAUl the same night caused heavy damage, including loss of 10 planes, heavy damage to 10, and lesser damages to 30. The commander of the Southeast Area Force decided to carry out the initial withdrawal as scheduled, without awaiting the general air attack.

On 1 February, the first withdrawal was conducted with 20 destroyers under command of the 3 Des Ron commander. Enroute, this force was attacked by enemy planes and the flagship, MAKIHAMI, suffered considerable damage, and had to be towed back to SHORTLAND Island by another ship.

At 2350 hours, when evacuation of troops was begun at KANINBO, the MAKIGUNO struck a mine and had to be sunk. Without further losses, the force returned to the Shortland Island base on the morning of 2 February.

In support of the withdrawal, 15 carrier bombers and 41 fighters attacked two enemy cruisers and two destroyers maneuvering in the SEALARK Channel on the afternoon of 1 February. One cruiser was sunk, one slightly damaged,

and 16 enemy fighters were destroyed. Escort planes covering the transport force engaged over 30 enemy planes, shooting down 13.

During the morning of 2 February, an enemy task force, built around one carrier and five cruisers, was discovered at 128 degrees of and 250 miles from TULAGI. An air attack was attempted on the task force but enemy contact could not be established because of inclement weather.

A submarine force, which had been deployed and lying in wait in the area, attempted to contact the enemy task force without success.

On the morning of 3 January, an enemy force, with a nucleus of two battleships and four cruisers was discovered 270 miles southeast of TULAGI, and another force, composed of one carrier and five destroyers, was sighted 70 miles further east.

On 4 February, 19 destroyers, led by the 3 Des Ron, sortied from SHORTLAND ISLAND at 0930 hours for the second trip, and while enroute was attacked by enemy planes.

The destroyer MAIKAZE floundered after hits and was towed back to SHORTLAND by another destroyer. Subsequently, two other destroyers were hit but being only slightly damaged, they were able to proceed to KAMINBO, where they completed loading at 2300 hours. They returned to SHORTLAND on the morning of 5 February.

A strong enemy surface force continued to manuever about 300 miles southeast of GUADALCANAL, out of range of torpedo attacks. On 7 February, the commander-in-chief of the Combined Fleet ordered the advance force, which left TRUK on 30 January and returned to TRUK on 9 February and had been supporting the GUADALCANAL withdrawal operation to the east of GREENWICH ISLAND, to send an element to a point 350 miles north of GUADALCANAL for a diversion mission. He then ordered the submarine force to attack enemy ships in the HOUNEA-ESPIRITU SANTO Area after mopping-up operations southeast of ESPIRITU SANTO ISLAND.

The 18 destroyers led by the 3 Des Ron commander left SHORTLAND ISLAND on the morning of 7 February for the third evacuation and was attacked enroute by enemy planes. Except for one destroyer which was moderately damaged and fell behind (a destroyer was assigned to escort the damaged ship), the force picked up the troops on KAMINBO and RUSSELL ISLAND.

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The destroyers began their return trip at 2200 hours and reached SHORTLAND ISLAND on the morning of 8 February. This withdrawal completed Operation "KE." The number of personnel evacuated was as follows:

Trips	Army	Navy
1st	5,164	250
2nd	4,458	519
3rd	2,576	63
Total	12,198	832

On 9 February, the commander-in-chief of the Combined Fleet ordered the advance force to return to TRUK. He also ordered the Southeast Area Force to accelerate the strengthening of the strategic position in the New Guinea Area, and to continue operations in the SOLOMONS.

E. During the interval between the enemy invasion of GUADALCANAL and Operation "KE," the Navy's results in transporting reinforcements to GUADALCANAL were as follows:

1.

Total number of ships	Total personnel and material landed
Warships 16	Special Navy Landing Force Approx. 800
Destroyers and patrol boats 340	Army personnel Approx. 23,000
Submarines 38	Large quantities of provisions and ammunition
Transports 28	

2. Losses sustained by ships and personnel engaged in the shipments.

Sunk: Destroyers 5
 Submarines 2
 Transports 16

Moderately and slightly damaged:

Warships 3
 Destroyers 19

Killed:

Approximately 600

Wounded:

Approximately 300

Losses incurred in the Battle off SAVO Island, the Third Naval Battle of the SOLOMONS, and the Night Battle off LUNGA are not included in the above.