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Narrative of Events, Asiatic Fleet
 Leading up to War and
 From 8 December 1941 to 15 February 1942

by

Admiral Thos. C. HART
 Commander in Chief, Asiatic Fleet

Note:- The source of material for this narrative is largely a diary and a file of unofficial letters which were saved. The only official Asiatic Fleet documents available for the preparation of this narrative were a few despatches and the correspondence contained in the file marked "Enclosure (A) to ComSouWesPac Secret Serial SA-24 of March 27, 1942". Since this narrative and the file just referred to are complementary in context, the reading of both will furnish a more complete picture than can be gained from either one alone. All other Asiatic Fleet files (as well as all 16th Naval District files which contained much information on this subject) were lost due to enemy action.

Notes on turning over of command as secret

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A background to any operational narrative for the Asiatic Fleet's preparation for war and of the events during the war's first two or three months needs be supplied by outlining the steps which were taken toward joint operations with the N.E.I. forces and the British forces,- particularly the latter.

It can properly begin about mid-January, 1941, when Commander McCrea came to Manila and acquainted us with the outlines of a new War Plan. At the time of his visit, the Chief of Staff, Rear Admiral Purnell, (then Captain), was at Singapore engaged in the second conference with the British. (First one was 8 - 15 November 1940). Incidentally, Admiral Purnell attended all of the conferences, four in all, with the British and the Dutch, directly representing CinCAF, and hence became the officer of that Fleet who was best in touch with what would probably face us in case of a war with Japan while we were allied with the British and the Dutch.

The main lines of the cooperative position which our Asiatic Fleet occupied, vis-a-vis the British and the Dutch, were briefly as follows:-

Under the first plan, which Commander McCrea brought out, the intention was that we would reinforce our Asiatic Fleet with at least a Cruiser Division, one Carrier, and a Squadron of Destroyers, while the British Navy would continue mainly engaged in the Atlantic,- and perhaps the western part of the Indian Ocean. Later, February to April, 1941, the position became reversed in that our Asiatic Fleet was to receive no surface ship reinforcements, whereas the British Fleet would be reinforced heavily, with Battleships and Carriers included. The question of unified command of Naval forces never became at all definite. At first the trend was toward American command, and then later toward British command, corresponding to the relative preponderance of Naval forces available. All through the negotiations and conferences the Dutch Naval command occupied a position quite subordinate to the British; they tended to be in closer touch with the British command than were we, particularly so as time went on and exchange of visits between Java and Singapore increased.

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A characteristic of the aforesaid negotiations, conferences, etc., was that the British Navy seemed always to primarily feature the control of trade routes over broad areas, (with particular regard to ocean escort of the Empire's troop and supply convoys), whereas we tended to minimize the requirements in that respect to the consequent availability of naval concentrations prepared for direct combat. Consequently, there was a rather basic conflict between British and American views; this not only obtained in the Far East, but is also understood to have existed in Washington, - so there was no disagreement on this major point within our own service. One result was that, all through the period leading up to the war, there never was any agreement with the British, (and Dutch), under which strategic control of the Asiatic Fleet was to pass out of American hands. Therefore, only "cooperative action" was provided for.

The British Naval authorities at Singapore, with the Dutch participating, made considerable progress with joint war plans, (known as "PLENAPS"), based upon the forces available but also useful if naval forces were considerably increased; they always supplied CinCAF with copies, one of which went to OpNav. The British Naval authorities were never able to obtain concrete commitments from either the Australian or New Zealand Navies, both of which held out and retained the idea of concentrating their own ships in their home waters in case of a war with Japan.

As far as the Asiatic Fleet was concerned, the war began with no commitments toward the British or the Dutch except for one minor one:- To supply the British Far Eastern Fleet with Destroyers, up to two Divisions, if and when that Fleet grew to the intended dimensions, comprising Capital Ships, Carriers, etc. We still were in the position of otherwise exercising complete strategic control of the Asiatic Fleet when the war began.

Looking back at this time, the lack of preparation for joint action between the three Navies in that area was really seriously disadvantageous in only two particular factors;- the personnel of the Asiatic Fleet had acquired no familiarity with the N.E.I. and Malayan waters and preparations for joint tactical

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operations were quite incomplete. There was also the lack of personal acquaintance as among officers of the three Fleets; but the most disadvantageous circumstance was American lack of familiarity with the waters in which they later had to fight. Fortunately, however, considerable preparations had been made in the field of joint communications with the British and Dutch. As a result of two very comprehensive conferences on this subject, and with the benefit derived from a fairly lengthy practice period, in the use of the special cryptographic aids and radio channels, radio procedure, etc., the outbreak of war found us reasonably well prepared in the field of joint communications.

It will be recalled that Admiral Tom Phillips, R.N., arrived in Singapore with REPULSE and PRINCE OF WALES about 1 December 1941. The new British Commander in Chief came to Manila almost immediately, (and before conferring with either the Australian or New Zealand Navies, or with the Dutch Commander in Chief); he arrived there on 5 December. Before that time I felt that the situation had become such that there would be no objection in going to Singapore for conference myself, but Admiral Phillips moved first. We conferred through 6 December, with Lieutenant General MacArthur present until the conference became strictly naval and in detail. (Incomplete stenographic record is available). A joint despatch to the respective Governments was agreed upon and sent, late on 6 December. Admiral Phillips then returned to Singapore, (flying both ways), to follow up by conferences with the Dutch, the Australians, and the New Zealanders, but the war came on before such conferences were held.

Note:- Chief Air Marshall Sir Robert Brooke-Popham visited Manila early in April, 1941 and once or twice subsequently. The first visit had no result and I doubt that the later ones did. There was a good deal of attendant publicity which I considered to be quite undesirable inasmuch as all the Allies still had much building-up remaining. It was not timely from the standpoint of International Relations to forewarn enemies by such show of conferences. Those between Navy officials were kept secret, whether held in Singapore, Batavia or Manila.

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DECLASSIFIEDEVENTS UP TO 1 JUNE 1941

Commander in Chief, Asiatic Fleet, arrived Manila Bay 21 October 1940, and thenceforth none of the Fleet was north of Philippine waters, with the exception of the China Gunboats and the occasional scheduled visits of the Navy Transports. There had already been discontinuance of forwarding Marine replacements into China for the detachments at Tientsin and Peking. This was later extended to the Fourth Marines at Shanghai, so that all the Marine detachments in China ran down in numbers, to the consequent increase of the Marines in the Philippines. Also, either TULSA or ASHEVILLE were being kept in Philippine waters, leaving only one of those two vessels with the South China Patrol.

Upon arrival in Manila, Commander in Chief soon found that the Commandant of 16th Naval District was in unsatisfactory mental and nervous state and he dropped out from illness on 12 December. This entire period was characterized by personnel difficulties in the 16th Naval District which, indeed, endured to the end. After an interim of five or six weeks, another Rear Admiral arrived to take over the District; but after six months he also was invalidated home. After another interim of some weeks, during which the second-in-command of the District carried on, a third Rear Admiral arrived, about four weeks before the outbreak of the war. There were, therefore, in all, five officers who acted as Commandant of the District within one year. This in itself was a source of inefficiency, at a time when the demands upon the District incident to increased work in serving the Fleet, plus the handling of a good many "projects" in preparation for war, placed a heavier load upon the personnel of the District than had ever obtained before.

The Naval establishment in Manila Bay was, of course, most inadequate and difficulties of an industrial nature were very great. Unfortunately, the best personnel obtainable, which in such a situation might have improved matters to a great extent, was not available. The Department had for far too many years sent officers, line officers in particular, to the 16th District who were not of the quality that the conditions called for. Olongapo did run very well; its Commander and the Constructor, (for the DEWEY), were excellent.

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The situation, which is very briefly sketched above, was always a handicap to the correct functioning of the Asiatic Fleet command as a whole. Nevertheless, in upkeep of material, we were usually able to meet the most important demands and, since the Naval facilities at Cavite and elsewhere in Manila Bay were mostly put out of action very early after the outbreak of the war, these deficiencies did not constitute a serious handicap after hostilities actually began.

During the period, and subsequently, a mass of directives involving alterations to ships was received from the Navy Department. Most of them showed no differentiation over similar ships on other stations, some seemed not to fit Asiatic Fleet's own special requirements and the total involved was so great that available industrial facilities would have been swamped if it had all been taken on. In consequence, Commander in Chief established priorities to control the character and quantity undertaken, of these alterations which had been ordered by the Navy Department. A number of them were of such low priority on that list that Cavite never even approached undertaking them.

The industrial force at Cavite became expanded to the limit of the plant. In order to better care for immediate needs and to increase potentialities for future Navy Yard work, various small plants in Manila were given contracts for work within their capacity which resulted in some alleviation of the congestion at Cavite. This practice did also set up sufficient organization for utilization of those commercial facilities.

During the period, in addition to various small 16th District "Projects", looking toward better preparedness, there were underway three large ones:- Extension of underground Navy facilities on Corregidor; the Section Base at Mariveles; and the Naval Air Station at Sangley Point, (Cavite).

The underground work, Corregidor, was instituted in the Spring of 1940 and it was a vastly important project:- Invulnerable radio communications, torpedo and ammunition storage and handling and storage for spare parts, general supplies and provisions. The work was done by the Army, proceeded

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rather slowly and was still incomplete in November, 1941. But the installations were of great use, nevertheless; for instance, essential radio communication was never interrupted for long, even under heavy bombardment.

The Section Base was started with very primitive construction facilities and went very slowly at first. It was well conceived and included storage and some maintenance facilities as well as those for operations. The work had gotten far enough along, by December, 1941, for the establishment to be very useful, except for the Net Depot which never got started; such net planting as was accomplished was done with very primitive facilities. The construction of the Ammunition Depot, Mariveles, scarcely got started, - the Contractor had only just finished his usual rather elaborate living and working establishments for his own personnel.

The Naval Air Station, Sangley Point, never even approached completion and, anyhow, it was mostly burned out by the first bombing attack. Of course it was in a location quite vulnerable from the air - and it was likewise so in conception and design. That Base was a \$5,000,000.00 project, as conceived and designed under control of the Navy Department. The CinCAF had proposed a \$2,000,000.00 Air Station, which would have meant fewer eggs in one basket, but his principal argument was that the less elaborate - and semi-permanent - establishment could be completed earlier. However, it may be said here, but for general connection and as applying to all plane and preparations, that CinCAF had insisted upon a policy of concealment and dispersal within his own command, as an essential defensive measure. That policy had obtained from the Winter of 1939-40 and it applied to the entire command.

There was set up, (Autumn of 1940), an auxiliary operating air base at Olongapo; it had been continuously occupied and used for many months before the war began. Preparations had also been made for operating from Los Banos, on Laguna de Bay, where concealment of planes along the foreshores was somewhat practicable; the facilities there were extemporized and at practically no expenditures.

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From the Winter of 1939-40, the words AS-IS came to be applied to Asiatic Fleet war plans. This was because of insistence upon having in readiness operating plans which were based upon going to war with the forces and facilities which were actually in hand. There had been too great tendency to build plans around forces, etc., which had been recommended, requested, or only hoped for. Parenthetically, it may be mentioned that said tendency was fostered somewhat by the Department's basic plans and its instructions for preparing contributing plans. As applying to the 16th District, those instructions complicated matters and the trend was toward too much theory. The time had arrived, (1940), when plans had to be practical and with readiness to use what actually existed, - apart from efforts to build up in forces and facilities. The AS-IS policy increased the labor of planning because changes had to be made as reinforcements were received or as facilities increased. The format and the compliance in detail with the Department's instructions probably was not good. Even with our short-cuts, the plans were usually not strictly correct or up to date but the AS-IS idea did pay when the time came.

During the period, there was close touch by CinCAF and by Commandant, 16th Naval District, with the Commanding General, Philippine Department, Major General Grunert, who was entirely cooperative and willing to come half-way. Despite that fact, little progress was made toward cooperative action between the arms where it was most needed, - the respective air detachments. The main reason was that Army Air was building up rapidly, in fighters particularly, absorbing many partially trained pilots and was, in general, in such a preliminary state that cooperation seemed not yet timely. A Brigadier arrived to take over the Army Air command but he soon went off on mission to China, Malaya, Java, etc., and his arrival did not promote cooperative arrangements.

In conjunction with the Army, the plan for mining the entrance to Manila Bay was extensively revised. For years that plan had been defective in that extremely little attention had been given to navigating the entrance by our own shipping after the mine-fields were laid. (Under the old plan such navigation would have been so difficult and dangerous that egress and ingress would have been impracticable under most weather and visibility conditions). Furthermore,

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Army's fields had previously been planned with no thought of enemy submarines. The plan for the Army's mine fields was extensively changed and Navy's somewhat. Arrangements for moving the DEWEY and for mooring her in operative condition at Mariveles were completed.

CinCAF also entered into a verbal agreement with General Grunert under which the mining of Manila Bay could be done in part: - Army to plant either its inner or outer field - or both - and Navy only to make a bluff at planting its mines; but we were to send out warning notices to the effect that all entrances were dangerous and to put into effect the regular arrangements for patrol and for taking shipping in and out through the gates. It was estimated that some time would elapse before it could be known that the Navy mine fields were a bluff and that we would get the effect of a full closure for a period. Then, if the mining turned out to be unnecessary, there would not be much loss because the Army mine is recoverable; the Navy mine, of course, is not. Furthermore, planting the Army fields was bound to be a long process whereas, when the time came the Navy fields were supposed to be planted very quickly. There was frequent consideration, over many months, as to whether or not the situation called for planting but this arrangement never was effected. Navy and War Departments eventually ordered all the fields planted.

During this period, Commander in Chief, Asiatic Fleet, was somewhat too often in a disadvantageous position because of untoward delays in obtaining necessary information from Washington. This was due, in part, to a lack of understanding of Far East conditions by subordinates in the Navy Department. The most prolific source of the difficulties lay in failures to transmit secret documents with necessary despatch.

This period was also marked by the beginning of publicity, including speeches, which were directly threatening against the Japanese. Commander in Chief viewed this tendency with considerable alarm because nothing is ever gained by threatening the Japanese, their psychology being such that threats are likely to wholly prevent their exercise of correct judgment. Furthermore, such threats appearing in the press, etc., (though naturally most of it was from wholly unauthoritative sources), tended to put the Japanese too much on guard against the preparations

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for war which were then being made in the Far East or which shortly followed.

In late 1940, all Naval dependents were sent from the entire station, including the Philippines; there were over 2000 women and children. At Guam there was an additional 100 but, (reason unknown), they were not evacuated until late 1941. The Army's dependents followed the Navy's in a few months. Dependents of other Federal officials in China were evacuated at the same time as the Navy's but the same practice was not extended to such dependents in the Philippines. That was unfortunate.

The Fleet, under the Department's direction, took four Danish freighters into "protective custody". They were Diesel ships; all deck officers and sufficient engineers to run them were found on board. A considerable effort was devoted toward retaining that personnel intact and in a proper mental attitude so that the ships could be readily put into operation when so directed.

There was established, in Manila, an enlisted men's club in a building constructed for the purpose by the Commonwealth and used by us on a rental basis. This filled a long felt need in that it contributed greatly to the men's comfort and health and tended to reduce disciplinary offenses by liberty men.

The "Neutrality Patrols", which were established in the Autumn of 1939, were continued through the period. But the administration of those patrols was such as to feature our own war training. The objective of such flights, moreover, became the Japanese rather than nationals of the participants in the European War.

The Asiatic Fleet based at Manila Bay from its arrival in the Autumn of 1940 through the ensuing Winter and carried on usual schedules of type exercises, etc. Also, there were inserted some periods of exercises which involved all types. There had been a dearth of such work because of the usual peacetime duties which had to be met on the Asiatic Station.

The Asiatic Fleet submarines had been increased in number from 6 to a total of 17, without any increase in tender facilities. This is a condition

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which is not particularly disadvantageous unless extended over long periods. However, the shortage in tender facilities on that station did exist for a long time and was a source of privation for personnel, and of difficulties in maintenance. The Fleet should have received another tender at the same time as the submarines, instead of being required to fit out a merchant ship, as a tender, on the station. There were even great delays in getting the ship, (the OTUS), in hand and no very great progress was ever accomplished toward converting the ship into an adequate tender. One of the Danish freighters would have been fully as suitable as a tender and she lay in Manila from July, 1940. We made an effort to have her purchased for the purpose but the deal fell through, in Washington.

The greater part of the Fleet spent about six weeks, April and May, 1941, in the southern islands, (Tutu Bay, Tawi Tawi, etc.). Scheduled exercises were continued from those southern harbors over the period, and the Fleet returned to Manila Bay at the end of May.

Looking forward to the possible loss of Manila Bay as a base for the Fleet, we took the following measures:- There was loaded into PECOS, TRINITY and the large tenders as much spare ammunition, torpedoes, spare parts, general supplies and provisions as the ships could carry. This meant a considerable quantity, (2500 tons), and though the conditions for storage, particularly as regards explosives, were reasonably safe they were not in accord with usual Naval requirements. These measures still left good supplies of all such material in Manila Bay with the exception of certain machinery spares for the combatant surface ships. Not many Submarine spares were included - only what CANOPUS could stow. It was all planned in detail, extended even to the spare propellers and some shafting and did generally put the Fleet into a much better position to meet serious eventualities than would otherwise have obtained. Additionally, about 150 of the largest aircraft bombs were put in charge of the British Navy at Singapore through a quite unofficial arrangement, intended to conceal the fact. The auxiliaries consequently were loaded rather deeply and the two tankers had to be limited somewhat in their future cargo fuel capacity; this, however, was not great because in the good weather which usually prevailed, they could be safely loaded down below the usual marks.

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DECLASSIFIEDFROM 1 JUNE to 15 JUNE 1941

Early in June, the Commander in Chief decided that the time had arrived to set up his Command Post on shore, where strategic command could be readily exercised and to thus place the Fleet in a better condition of readiness for its initial deployment for war. The reasoning was briefly as follows:-

The estimates of the situation as heard from Washington and as seen from our narrower field, but in closer proximity to Japan, had been in general concurrence. In November, 1940, CinCAF had submitted an appreciation which concluded that the Japanese intended further aggression and that such would most likely be to the southward. Later, during early Spring, opinion changed - no signs of building up for a southern advance had become manifest - and the Department was informed that we thought that a Japanese invasion of Siberia had become the more likely. That opinion prevailed for only a few weeks. During the Spring it was seen that the Japanese were becoming more squeezed economically. They were not getting oil out of the N.E.I. at anywhere near the 1,800,000 ton per annum rate and were being more and more restricted in obtaining other raw materials, from the south the southwest, by the measures of our own Government as well as by the British and Dutch. Parenthetically, the people of the United States seemed to have become more anti-Japanese than before and the press was indicating a sentiment against anything in the nature of appeasement. Since an inability to obtain replenishment of oil supplies would alone, and soon, mean a desperate condition for the Japanese the situation bade fair to become menacing.

By May, 1941, it had been settled that Asiatic Fleet would not be reinforced with surface ships but that there was intention to very heavily increase the British Fleet in the Far East. The natural sequence would be that if a joint Naval commander was established he would be British. The little joint planning which was being actually accomplished was between the British and Dutch local fleets - with an informal understanding that any of our Naval forces which went south would expect to fit into their tactical plans. Our war plan for initial deployment placed

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our surface ships toward the south but the various considerations in the picture effectively prescribed that those ships should be under a Task Force Commander; and also, apart from facility of radio communications, that the Asiatic Fleet administration and strategic command should be from on shore, Manila Bay. Authority for moving the Fleet Office ashore was obtained from the Navy Department.

Consideration was given to establishing the Fleet Command Post at Cavite or Sangley Point, but that idea was discarded. Commander in Chief's presence would have tended to interfere with the proper status and functioning of the offices of the 16th Naval District. All space and facilities there were already taxed and an added activity in that space would have been disadvantageous from all standpoints. Moreover, it was seen that it was most desirable for Commander in Chief to be located for easy and convenient conference with U.S. Army authorities, looking toward improved arrangements for cooperation. The same applied as regards the American High Commissioner, but to lesser degree. Since, also, the Fleet anchorage was naturally near to Manila, (for leave, liberty and supply purposes), it was decided to establish the shore Command Post in Manila City. There was no Army office space available to us and provision for a Joint Command Post was still in the planning stage.

The most suitable place was in a building on the waterfront which the State Department was planning to use for the U.S. Consul and the Trade Commissioner. An effort was made to obtain this space, but the State Department was entirely non-cooperative and, though the needs of its officials were of quite minor importance and already fairly adequately looked after, the Foreign Service did not recede from its position.

Accordingly, some space was rented in another building, also on the waterfront. This space was sufficient and was suitable except that it was in a commercial office building where maintenance of secrecy and security of papers, etc., was difficult and required strong guards.

During the period, there was disclosed other instances of important documents being badly de-

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laid on the way to CinCAF from Navy Department. The difficulties seemed to lie in the great slowness and the mistakes in operating the system for transmission of secret mail. In the end, no real damage resulted but the repeated failures caused uneasiness, to say the least.

Received a personal letter from Vice Admiral Layton, R.N., indicating that his command now had authority over the British oil industry in northwest Borneo and would institute preparations for demolition. This was a sequence of considerable "conversation", briefly as follows:-

During the Winter of 1939-40, it became apparent within the Asiatic Fleet command that the Far East petroleum supplies constituted the one strategic raw material that would be absolutely vital to Japan in war. In late 1940, all of the high officials of the "Stanvac" Company, (whose holdings were mostly in Sumatra), were in Manila, - following attendance during the N.E.I. - Japan conference on oil which had recently been completed in Batavia. CinCAF obtained from the Stanvac officials some up-to-date data concerning the industry and certain "inside" information on the general picture surrounding that situation. On all occasions thereafter, - and particularly during Captain Purnell's various conferences, at Singapore or Batavia, - every opportunity was taken to urge upon such authorities as could be reached the necessity for readiness to deny the N.E.I. petroleum to an invading enemy. We represented that common knowledge to the effect that thorough preparation and resolution, to that end, existed would serve as a deterrent to the prospective enemy.

Naturally, the vast importance of the subject was apparent to all who would think about it and our prospective Allies had it in mind all along. It was at the same time clear that commercial and business interests, and rivalries, were very much in the picture, - hence our urging and even insistence about a readiness and a will for destruction. The order of good faith in which the various oil companies met the requests for said preparations seemed to be:- (1) Stanvac. (2) Dutch-Shell. (3) The British company in northwest Borneo. The latter seemed to make little progress toward this "scorched earth" preparation until the British Commander of the Fleet acquired authority.

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DECLASSIFIED16 JUNE to 30 JUNE 1941

The Russo-German war began and it was definitely a surprise for we had received no indication that the Russians would not grant a sufficient number of the "requests" which we had heard the Germans were making on them. This event caused CinCAF to again consider the probability of a Japanese aggression into Siberia rather than to the south. There was indication that the German attack on Russia was also a surprise to the Japanese, which was naturally a factor in the picture. All things considered, it seemed likely that the Japanese would direct any new aggression into the channel that seemed most profitable to them, irrespective of what the rest of the Axis wanted. Therefore, a southern advance still seemed likely and, whichever way things turned, it was seen that our own plans should primarily be on that basis. Consequently, we made no change in either our plans or in our mental attitudes.

During the period, word was received from the Navy Department that Washington had withheld approval to the report of the last Singapore Conference, as not meeting the purposes of the prospective Allies in the Far East theatre. Incidentally, that last Conference had really ended only at about the point at which it should have begun and had not produced a practical, realistic plan which would carry through. There were so many conferees present that difficulties were great, without prior agreements, agenda, etc., and it was too hard a task for the presiding officer to handle.

However, there was not much cloudiness as regards the Asiatic Fleet's situation and what was expected of it. There was agreement and understanding with the Navy Department on the general lines of a war plan involving the Far East. It was clear that the Initial Deployment of surface combat ships and of large Auxiliaries was to be to the southwest, most probably to base on Singapore, - but the Department continued to leave much to the discretion and initiative of CinCAF. In his hands remained the decision as to what ships would deploy to points outside the Philippines and what ships, if any, were to pass to the strategic direction of any other commander.

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At the end of the period, the Fleet Offices were established in the Marsman Building, on the Manila Harbor waterfront. A Task Force was established with the Chief of Staff, (Purnell), commanding, and assisted by an operations staff only. All files, documents and Fleet flag equipment which would not be needed by the Task Force Commander were moved off HOUSTON, - into storage or to the Fleet Office. Henceforth, all fleet administration and all operations of units not included in the Task Force, (which became designated Task Force Five), were from on shore.

No extra officers, other than some V-7 Ensigns for coding boards, were taken in, for fleet or task force staffs. That meant harder work for the staff officers but their working conditions became improved; HOUSTON had been very crowded and hot. The Fleet Office was continuously open, with watches established as on board ship. Radio communications were established in the Fleet Offices; there was also a visual signal watch, with adequate equipment, so that rapid communications were as good as when the Fleet Flag was ship-borne. As soon as these arrangements were completed, the Asiatic Fleet command was stream-lined for war. There would remain, at most, only the transfer to HOUSTON of less than one patrol plane load of administrative staff personnel with equipment. The Fleet Office eventually became quite adequate and satisfactory. Its establishment and its work would have required much less effort if it could have been in the Tourist Bureau Building, in the space which the State Department insisted on having for its Consul.

During the period, the Fleet held a goodly number of those gunnery exercises which require the most in the way of equipment and services. The Fleet's work was somewhat interrupted by typhoons.

1 TO 15 JULY

The ASHEVILLE was totally disabled off Swatow, China, during bad weather. MARBLEHEAD was sent to the rescue and towed this gunboat to Manila; she as well as TULSA was henceforth retained in Philippine waters. The MARBLEHEAD again showed high

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efficiency in that mission; she was an old ship but her personnel always made the best of what they had and this Cruiser could always be depended upon.

The Task Force, (the surface ships, including large Auxiliaries, and also the Submarines), left Manila Bay and operated in the southern waters. The harbors of the Sulu chain were most used but the ships visited other ports as well. Task Force Five Commander's directive was to return ships, in small detachments, to Manila Bay for 2 to 3 day visits, in order to replenish stores as needed and to give liberty. The two Tankers continued their rather frequent voyages to N.E.I. oil ports for cargo. The Fleet had for some time been getting most of its fuel from those fields and it was obtained from at least three ports in order to work up latitude and elasticity in supply. We began administration toward keeping all Navy-owned tankage filled and also began working on the commercial fuel companies to the end that they would keep as heavy reserves as possible, particularly in Manila tanks.

From this time onward, 3 to 6 patrol planes operated continuously along the southern boundary of the Philippines. These operations were in part "neutrality patrols" and in part for general security. Later, an unofficial understanding was entered into with the Dutch Navy under which there was some linking up with the air patrol which they had long maintained along the northeast boundary of the N.E.I. The patrol planes based on their Tenders. Certain minor basing facilities were also extemporized on shore on Balabac Island and in the Gulf of Davao.

A damaged British Battleship passed through bound for Bremerton. This was the second British man-of-war to visit Manila for fuel, etc., while bound to a U.S. port. We made every endeavor toward secrecy and avoidance of publicity but the British personnel showed no great interest to that end.

In an excellent public speech, on 4 July, the American High Commissioner, the Honorable Mr. Sayre, showed a decided change in mental attitude toward the possibilities in the international situation. A few months previously he had thought that the possibility of our becoming involved in a war in the Far East was quite remote. The American High

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Commissioner had by now changed his views and, with his full establishment, had become quite active in promoting, fostering and directing the local measures under the category of "civilian defense".

During the period, rather definite indications were received that the Japanese were about to begin a much more inclusive occupancy of Indo-China. Moreover, that they were projecting a build-up in their military strength as well as an increase in economic control of that country. On 15 July, the Commanding General and CinCAF received directives to proceed with laying the Army and Navy mine fields.

16 TO 31 JULY

There were a considerable number of changes in the Japanese Cabinet during the period which was, however, mainly marked by their military occupation of all of Indo-China. The Naval seizure and prospective use of Tourane, Kamranh Bay and Saigon was of course included and became a matter of great interest to the other Fleets in the Far East. The flying fields which thus came into Japanese use did not bring Japanese aircraft any nearer to Luzon but did constitute a serious advance toward Malaya. The Indo-China French, (Vichy), surrendered their country to the Japanese, after some little demurring, and the latter's powerful amphibious expedition did not come into action. The Jap ships hung fire in the vicinity of Hainan for some days. As a matter of exercise as much as a precaution, Navy patrol planes made some flights in that direction but did not get into contact.

We obtained news of certain financial and economic steps which our Government was instituting against Japan. On the 27th, the induction of the Philippine Army into the Federal service was announced, with Lieutenant General Douglas MacArthur to command the mixed forces which were to be known as the U.S. Army Forces in the Far East, (USAFFE).

Mine laying by the Army and the Naval District began at once - too hastily in the case of the Navy - and notices of the fact and of the navigational dangers were issued immediately. Steps were at once taken to patrol off the fields with our small vessels

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and to conduct the normal sea traffic through the gates. The warning notices were issued repeatedly but keeping ships out of danger consumed much effort; all small craft available were assigned to the duty and even Destroyers had to be used occasionally. There was loss of one or two small vessels and some lives despite all precautions.

The plan was to defer laying the mine field at Subic Bay and the outer Navy field off the north Manila Bay entrance until the dry-dock DEWEY was moved. The dock arrived at Mariveles on 22 July and was there moored in condition for docking ships; she was made self-operating and self-sustaining. Much material and several tools, as well as personnel sufficient for operations, were brought down from Olongapo. Conditions were difficult and the many obstacles to operations were overcome by efficient and devoted effort of the personnel. Lieutenant C.J. Weschler was in charge and was both untiring and very able. The DEWEY later accomplished a great deal of ship work at Mariveles and continued in operations even after the siege of Bataan was well along. By the end of this period, Olongapo was abandoned except as an auxiliary air base and for occupancy by Marines and some Navy personnel.

Two weeks elapsed after the Department's order before CinCAF was able to report to Washington that Subic and Manila Bays were closed by mines; and the fields were far from complete even then. It was previously known that the Army's planting would be slow but the Navy's was expected to be rapid. One reason for the slowness did lay in adverse weather for it was the season of the year's worst weather along the west coast of Luzon. Moreover, it was somewhat evident that the type of mine supplied the Navy was so delicate in certain features that very highly specialized personnel was required. The Naval District either did not have the requisite personnel available or did not properly administrate it because the mining went badly. In addition to technical errors, there was also deficient seamanship and poor arrangements for handling the planters. The Fleet Gunnery Officer and the personnel of two, (Bird), Sweepers, which had recently arrived on the Station, eventually solved the technical and the planting difficulties. But so many mines were lost that the integrity of the fields was considerably depreciated.

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The Task Force continued exercises in southern Philippine waters. Maintenance and alterations were being carried on by Cavite and the normal number of ships under overhaul was continued. The OTUS's conversion to a Submarine Tender was partly completed and she joined the Task Force. Very little had been accomplished in addition to the "hotel accommodations" and provision for storage. There was nothing available for her shop equipment and the conversion of this ship never got any farther. OTUS did help somewhat with the Submarines but a fully adequate Tender, in addition to CANOPUS, continued to be badly needed.

Authority and final arrangements were completed for putting the four Danish freight ships into the carrying trade under American President Line management. Their total capacity was 33,000 tons and the Far East had long been full of freight awaiting shipment. The delays in utilizing those four ships was exasperating, from the local standpoint. The reason was not really known but there were signs that too much formalism and too many legalistic factors had been in the picture. As heretofore stated, one of these four ships was physically available for conversion into a Submarine Tender for months before OTUS arrived at Manila.

1 TO 15 AUGUST 1941

The mine laying continued and approached the point of fair security against entry into Subic or Manila Bays of anything except small Submarines and shallow draft surface craft. The various difficulties within the Naval District continued - accentuated by sickness of key personnel - and the affairs there consumed much time and effort of the fleet command and staff. The fleet staff was being very hard worked.

The Commanding General, USAFFE, and CinCAF exchanged official calls and held brief conferences. CinCAF set forth his personal position as regards the methods of commanding his own forces and explained any possible relationship with the other two Fleets. He stated that he did not think the time had yet arrived to disturb the cooperate relationship as between the Naval District and Philippine Department of the Army and that such cooperation between District

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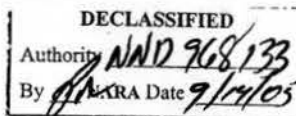
and Coast Defense, Manila Bay, should continue to be direct and immediate in any case. However, CinCAF stated that he had established his offices in Manila rather than at Cavite in order to facilitate conference, etc., and that he would always be available for such, on any subject. A little later, on account of the recurrent illnesses of the District Commandant, CinCAF informed Commanding General, USAFFE, that he rather than the Commandant would be the Commanding General's opposite number in all respects. The induction of the Philippine Army and the building up of the USAFFE was being accompanied with much publicity, which condition continued throughout.

During the period, we heard that current opinion in some quarters was to the effect that the Japanese would attack Siberia but we made no modification in our own preparations or attitude. CinCAF informally called the Department's attention to the vulnerability of the Marines and Gunboats which were in China. He also advised, informally, that another Flag Officer be sent to command the Naval District so that the industrial activities could be separated from the District Command. (This was before the current Commandant was invalidated).

The operations of Task Force Five continued as before. Its commander was in Manila for two days, in HOUSTON which had returned for supplies. It was entirely apparent that the Task Force and its training were being efficiently handled.

15 TO 31 AUGUST

The period was uneventful as far as the Asiatic Fleet was concerned. It included the completion of understandings on certain points in war plans, which were not of major importance. CinCAF prepared an "appreciation" concerning the continued retention of his forces in China which set forth his opinion that they should be withdrawn to the Philippines in the near future. An election of Commonwealth officials was pending and was the subject of greatest current interest within the Philippines.



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1 TO 15 SEPTEMBER 1941

This period also was unmarked by events or decisions of any considerable importance. The large projects looking toward larger scale readiness of the Naval District began moving along at a better rate. Cavite continued routine work on ships. The Task Force continued its training in southern waters, with ships returning to Manila every 4 to 5 weeks, in detachments. Because of the very great shortage in Submarine Tenders, the six S-class Submarines were being based at Manila as well as was possible. The first of the Pacific Fleet cruisers which had begun to escort important west-bound ships arrived. Many more American and British officials than usual were stopping off at Manila as they travelled on their various missions.

Little information concerning the Japanese was being received from any source. Such news as did arrive indicated that the financial and economic measures which had been effected against them were resulting in such pressure that the Japanese would have to effect adjustment in the not far distant future.

15 TO 30 SEPTEMBER

The press indicated that there was a rather wide-spread belief in the States that the tension in the Far East was becoming eased. More authoritative advices did not agree and while there seemed hope that there would be a peaceful settlement of the outstanding difficulties with the Japanese, there was no definite ground for optimism. However, the Japanese Fleet was found to be returning to home bases and there was no evidence of increasing occupation of Indo-China.

The HENDERSON made a routine transport voyage, including calls at China ports. No replacements were sent to our Forces in China and there were some withdrawals additional to short-timers, so that the remaining Forces were:- At Pekin and Tientsin, 200 Marines and Navy. At Shanghai, 800 Marines and Navy. Also three Gunboats on the lower Yangtze and one in South China. The Navy Department had rejected

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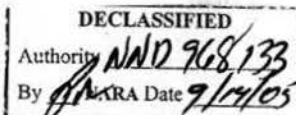
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the recommendation that those Forces be withdrawn concurrently with this voyage of the Transport. CinCAF had, aside from his concern about personnel in the vulnerable locations, hoped to obtain the Commander of the Yangtze Patrol for other duty. Another Flag Officer was badly needed in the Philippines.

Information received indicated that strong Army reinforcements were arriving in the Philippines, or enroute, and that about 80 modern pursuit planes were already on hand. There occurred, (23rd), a protracted interview between the Commanding General, USAFFE and the CinCAF, - at the latter's instance. It was learned that the USAFFE was going far beyond the war plans, by including in the Defense Zone virtually all of the Philippines except Mindanao and Palawan. The plan envisaged a fully equipped ground army of 200,000, (eleven divisions), and a powerful air detachment. The date of complete readiness was to be about six months in the future. CinCAF put forward the necessity for cooperation, - generally, but more specifically as between Army and Navy aircraft. He also made known to the Commanding General the major points in all the conversations with the British and Dutch Fleets and explained our current situation as regards joint action with those forces.

The Rear Admiral commanding 16th Naval District was invalided home. There were continued instances of failure to receive important information from the Navy Department and CinCAF was constrained to make an official protest. The fuel situation was improving in that increased stocks of boiler and Diesel fuel were being kept on hand. The situation was less satisfactory as regards high-test gasoline. All fuel storage was vulnerable from the air. Much of the Navy's gasoline was in drums which were kept dispersed as much as practicable.

The Fleet received six modern Motor Torpedo Boats which were transported on the deck of the GUADALUPE. Such transport required extensive deck fittings and, while so fitted, it is to be regretted that the ship was not employed to carry out another half squadron of the PT boats. We had expressed the belief that the Philippine waters would be the most favorable location possible for that type of weapon. Was informed that another Submarine reinforcement, for the Asiatic Fleet, was under consideration. The CinCAF



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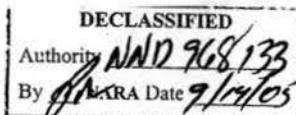
emphatically urged that an adequate Submarine Tender accompany, or precede, any reinforcing Submarines. He also urged upon the Department that an additional Patrol Plane squadron be despatched to the Philippines. It was also strongly recommended that a full squadron of Navy Dive Bombers be sent out, forthwith, for reconnaissance purposes in the dangerous Formosa sector as well as for their offensive power. We had a tentative promise of availability of Army aerodromes in north Luzon.

1 TO 15 OCTOBER 1941

The numerous visits of high officials during this period continued and included Dutch Army officers. Air Chief Marshall Sir Robert Brook-Popham also came to Manila, from Singapore, for a second visit - ostensibly for conferences on Army affairs. There was considerable attendant publicity, to which the Air Chief Marshall was not adverse, and CinCAF advised the Navy Department that such was an undesirable feature; that in view of our vast defense preparations, in hand but far from complete, time was in our favor and that nothing unessential should be done to precipitate matters. CinCAF conferred very briefly with Sir Robert,- there seemed to be little to talk over.

CinCAF conferred with the Commanding General, USAFFE, and informed him of the current and prospective dispositions of the Fleet and on the reinforcements which had arrived, or were pending. The subject of aircraft cooperation over the sea was also discussed and CinCAF stated that he would produce an official letter which would set forth his own proposals and hence serve as a concrete basis for further discussion.

Task Force Five returned to Manila and was temporarily inactivated, the command and staff moving to the Fleet Office but leaving all in readiness for re-activation of the Task organization and command. The ships had been away from Base, for the most part, over a period of three months and needed to return for more supplies and various other attention. Such information as was available indicated that although the situation vis-a-vis Japan remained tense, there was not great immediate danger of a rupture and that the time was as favorable for the ships' return as would likely be afforded. Another important matter for port attention concerned the loads of munitions



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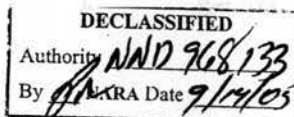
and material in the large auxiliaries. The conditions of storage had been unfavorable for four months and some rehandling of it was required. Furthermore, a good deal of Fleet administration was in arrears and required the presence in port of ships, Unit Commanders, and full Fleet Staff. The CinCAF also had in mind discussions of broad scope and the possible reconsideration of the Fleet's Operating Plan.

The departure of the Task Force from Manila was not scheduled during the period:- The southern Philippine harbors were open to Submarine attack, whereas there had been provided at least some mine-field protection in Manila Bay. We were not at the time in position for the use of harbors in the N.E.I. or Malaya. There was no 100% solution which would give security against surprise attack.

16 TO 31 OCTOBER

During the period, the underground work on Corregidor and the building-up of the Section Base at Mariveles made good progress. The Fleet's work in harbor continued and some underway exercises were held. Two Destroyers collided during night exercises and were thereby disabled for several weeks; (PEARY and PILLSBURY). Information was received that HOLLAND and 12 large Submarines were being transferred from the Pacific to the Asiatic Fleet. CinCAF wrote a formal letter to Commanding General, USAFFE, as a basis for more concrete understandings concerning air operations over the water.

The Japanese Cabinet underwent a re-organization. The news of it was reason for concern and new decisions as regards added security precautions. We established an off-shore air patrol over about 100 miles of the west Luzon coast, with particular coverage for exercise areas, and also set an anti-submarine sound patrol by Destroyers. Much consideration was given toward return of the Cruisers, Destroyers and large auxiliaries to more southern waters and CinCAF decided against that step. A far-reaching proposal was under study at the time and:-



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On 27 October, CinCAF proposed to the Navy Department that an Initial Deployment of any ships to the south and west be abandoned as a basic part of the war plan; and that, instead, the Fleet plan to fight the war with all ships based on Manila Bay. The considerations were:-

No real progress had been made toward agreement on joint Naval operations with the British and Dutch and there were no commitments except our promise to supply some Destroyers when the British Fleet acquired capital ships.

There was some question as to the effectiveness of operations, under the circumstances, as based along the Malay Barrier.

Assuming reasonable harbor security, the Fleet could be more effectively employed from Manila Bay, on account of its strategic location; also surface ships, submarines and patrol planes would be, severally, more effective when handled in conjunction with each other.

Lastly, and collaterally, all U.S. Forces would be definitely employed in defending the Philippines,- or in conducting offensive operations from there. (There was little said about this particular consideration, which was largely psychologic).

The Fleet command and staff was by no means unified and in agreement on the correctness of that proposal of 27 October. There was much argument which hinged, of course, on the real situation as regards the probable security and integrity of Manila Bay as a Naval Base. The proponents argued that the situation had already greatly changed by the building up of the USAFFE which would very soon be strong enough to withstand a heavy amphibious expedition; and that although an enemy would probably get his bombers through at times, the U.S. Army pursuit squadrons had become so strong that there would be no sustained bombing attacks on Manila Bay. The opponents argued that USAFFE would not be built up into sufficient strength for some months; and that while pursuit planes were available in considerable numbers, (said to be 100 plus), there would not therein be sufficient opposition to provide anything like the security that we needed. The opponents of the proposal were headed by the Chief of Staff. He was right.

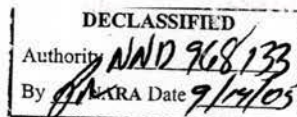
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DECLASSIFIED1 TO 15 NOVEMBER 1941

The period was somewhat marked by uncertainty and indecision. As heretofore recorded, CinCAF had previously felt a lack of timely information from the Navy Department and grave delays had been experienced in the transmission of what was sent. In those earlier instances no disadvantage resulted which was of considerable importance. Although request for decision on the important despatch of 27 October was made on 6 November, no reply had been received by the end of this period and that circumstance was quite disadvantageous. Some despatches, particularly one received about 12 November, contained the Department's instructions on comparatively minor matters and unfortunately the CinC thought there was contained certain indication that his proposal to fight the campaign from Manila Bay with the entire fleet was meeting some favor. No definite steps were thereupon taken toward implementing that proposal but, on the other hand, the detailed preparations for an initial deployment to the southward were not pressed; certain munitions, supplies, etc., were not hurried back into the large Auxiliaries. The combatant ships were maintained in sufficient readiness, (normal maintenance continued), but such was not altogether the case with the Auxiliaries; the extreme congestion of Cavite's waterfront made handling stores a slow matter, which added to the seriousness of losing time.

The War Plans Officer from Singapore, Captain Collins, R.A.N., and our observer there, Captain Creighton, U.S.N., were in Manila 2 to 3 November. The CinCAF informed them concerning the broad lines of his proposal of 27 October. The subject of loaning Destroyers for operations with British capital ships was also discussed as a separate issue. The Department had been informed that under certain circumstances such loan up to two Divisions could be made.

The effort at entering into adequate arrangements for joint operations of Army and Navy aircraft, over the seas, met with a decided rebuff from the USAFFE. Toward the end of the period, some disposition developed toward meeting us but there seemed to be unwillingness to go as far even as the arrangements which for some time had been in effect in the



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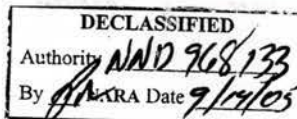
Hawaiian Islands; and no great progress was ever made in the Philippines toward unified air operations. During the period, PatWing Ten photographed Spratley and Itu Aba Islands. Little development was found on Spratley but considerable was discovered on the other Island.

A few sets of Radar equipment arrived for the USAFFE and one set was received for the Marines, which was put at the disposal of the Army. It was unfortunate that this highly important equipment did not arrive sooner, and in greater quantity, so that an adequate air-warning system could have been in full being. The CinCAF, with Commanding General, Philippine Department concurring, had urged early in the year that a few Navy sets be sent out and set up at appropriate locations on shore. No defense equipment was more important.

The Section Base, Mariveles, progressed more rapidly and arrived at the point of some utility. We began assembling provisions and general supplies in its storehouses. There was some progress in laying the torpedo baffle nets across Mariveles entrance; the planting methods employed were very primitive. We completed plans for improving the security of that anchorage, as against Submarine entry, with mines. Also began placing permanent moorings - buoys and dolphins - to increase the berthing capacity of the enclosed space.

Eight large Submarines arrived from Pearl Harbor on 8 November and brought word that HOLLAND and the remaining four Submarines were starting later; also that the Squadron Commander, who was slated to take command of all the Asiatic Submarines, would arrive with the last detachment. Heavy Cruisers were calling with greater frequency, - as ocean escorts of transports from Hawaii.

The CinC received the Department's directive to withdraw Marines and Gunboats from China. Since the N.E. monsoon was now at its height, the voyage of the river Gunboats was foreseen to be a feat of seamanship. Decided that, in any case, we would get the Marines out of Shanghai ahead of the Gunboats but they immediately began assembling. Two President Liners were chartered for earliest possible despatch to Shanghai, where the Marines would be able to load at



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short notice. Those at Peking and Tientsin had to proceed to Chinwangtao for embarkation and their movement to that port was likely to be slow. (The withdrawal order was received embarrassingly late).

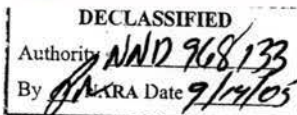
Mr. Kurusu passed through Manila, en route to Washington, and CinCAF saw him at a reception given in his honor. The conversation was brief; Kurusu remarked that his "mission was to keep our Asiatic Fleet idle" but he evinced no real hopefulness of succeeding in whatever his mission really was.

The Philippine election was completed, permitting some abeyance of politics. Most of the travel by the clipper was being under "prior preference", controlled at Washington. Many writers were travelling in that category. Officer messengers coming straight by plane from that city and bringing the latest information could have been very helpful at this time.

16 TO 30 NOVEMBER

There was definite information during the period that the Japanese Army was engaged in considerable movement along the China and Indo-China coasts. Those movements could be estimated as presaging only increased occupation of southern Indo-China or of an advance into Thailand; a few held opinions to that effect. There was no definite information of Japanese Naval movements that carried much significance. The Fleet Staff was busy during the first few days of the period in revising the Operating Plan on the basis of fighting a campaign from Manila Bay with all the Fleet, - less any forces loaned to the British Fleet. No further information or instructions on that point having been received from the Department, the CinCAF on 18 November informed a full conference of Unit Commanders concerning the proposals which he had submitted and stated that, although approval had not been received, time did not permit further delay in definitely undertaking the corresponding preparations.

The Department's despatch definitely withholding approval was received on 20 November. The Department's estimate and instructions were correct and the proposals of CinCAF, 27 October, were wrong. No harm would have ensued if CinCAF had not been allowed

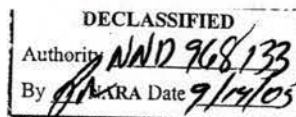


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to persist in his error over a vital period of three weeks. As things eventuated, the damage was not so very great anyhow and perhaps was offset by the fact that the Fleet did "stand-by" the USAFFE more persistently than a cold-blooded estimate of the real situation called for. (If there is benefit therein it is of course psychologic only).

Upon receipt of the Department's despatch, all plans and preparations were immediately thrown back upon the original basis,- with initial deployment of surface forces to be to the southward. (As before mentioned, the inadequacies of facilities ashore slowed up changes in the loading of Auxiliaries, etc.) The CinCAF did, however, decide to retain all Submarine Tenders in Manila Bay. That turned out to be an incorrect decision. The 29 Submarines themselves constituted most of the potentiality of the Fleet; they could be most effective if they operated with the strategic advantage of Manila's location and they needed all the services which the Tenders could supply if the boats were to retain their effectiveness over any considerable period. Therefore, as seen at the time, that risk had to be taken.

Since the availability of ComYangPat, (Glassford), could by then be foreseen, it was decided to put him in command of Task Force Five, upon his arrival. The CinCAF adhered to his decision of June 1941, to maintain his own command post in Manila and also decided to directly command the Coastal Frontier,- which had far outgrown its original dimensions and by then comprised the greater part of the Philippine waters. Only the original sea defensive zones, in and off Manila and Subic Bays, were kept under Commandant 16's jurisdiction and only enough surface craft for that coverage was permanently assigned to the District; however, the small ships were switched back and forth between Fleet and District as the day-to-day demands called for. In consequence of these arrangements, the CinC retained personal command of Submarines, the Patrol Wing, the Motor Torpedo Boats and some of the small surface craft which were to operate within the Sea Frontier. A larger staff was therefore required than had been contemplated in June. Rear Admirals Glassford and Rockwell were both "new" in the duties which were to confront them. Rear Admiral Purnell was fully experienced and was variously in demand; the CinCAF decided that he must be retained

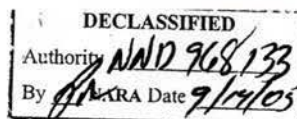
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for the duties of Chief of Staff. Preparations for a Joint Army and Navy, (including Air), Command Post had been underway for months. It was being constructed by the Army, underground at Camp McKinley, which was not an advantageous location for the Navy but the Army considered the underground spaces at Corregidor unsuitable on account of the location. However, the preparations at McKinley were months from completion and that installation never got into the picture.

During the period, we began moving explosives out of the casemates of the Naval magazine, Cavite, and placing them in a large ammunition dump established in the open along a beach a few miles from Cavite. The greater part of such inflammables as paints, dryers, etc., also was moved out of Cavite. The large quantity of filled gasoline drums was further dispersed; by this time we had gasoline widely scattered about in the Manila and Subic Bay areas as well as small caches at various outlying points. The CinCAF directed that certain projects for elaborate bomb-proof structures be discontinued and that available effort be directed toward extensive provision of bomb shelters giving reasonable security against fragments and blast but not against direct bomb hits.

On 24 November, CinCAF sent BLACK HAWK and four Destroyers to Balikpapan; MARBLEHEAD and four Destroyers to Tarakan. Those were the two east Borneo oil ports; the detachment commanders' instructions were to go to them for fuel but to "have difficulty" in obtaining full loads - with a view to occupying the ports, or vicinity, for a protracted period if necessary. HOUSTON was directed to further hasten the completion of mounting four 1.1 inch quadruple machine guns, then to proceed to Iloilo or vicinity and await the arrival of Commander, Task Force Five.

The CinCAF received, on 26 November, a Navy Department despatch which indicated very serious developments in the American-Japanese relations. The American High Commissioner received a similar despatch on the following day and, in consequence, called into conference the Commanding General, USAFFE, and the CinCAF. All three conferees set forth the current situation, as concerned the activities and responsibilities in their own fields, and discussed any additional measures which seemed possible. One of the



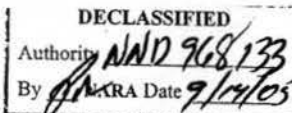
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three expressed greater optimism than did the other two; all were fully aware of the necessity for promoting an optimistic spirit in the lower echelons.

The HOLLAND and four Submarines arrived. The two Squadron organizations were inactivated, washing out that command and administrative echelon so that the chain of command was direct from Commander Submarines to the Division Commanders. The latter, five in number, assumed staff duties in addition to their nominal command functions,- which latter were not to be exercised at sea except under circumstances calling for special orders to that effect. The Division Commanders were specialized in their staff capacities,- two for operations, etc. One Squadron Commander took over duties as Chief of Staff to Commander Submarines and was especially charged with operations and training. The other Squadron Commander had the Department's orders as Commander Submarines and the date for turn-over was set as of 1 December. (When the turn-over actually occurred, the outgoing officer - Captain Wilkes - was held at Manila,- for eventualities). The Commander of Destroyers was informed that a war would be a Division Commanders' war and that it was unlikely that he would command Destroyer formations at sea.

The two President liners loaded the Fourth Marines, and attached Naval personnel, at Shanghai, with the greater portion of their movable equipment and supplies and sailed, separately. Four large Submarines had been sent to escort them from a point to the northward of Formosa. Of the three Yangtze Gunboats, the smallest was laid up at Shanghai, pretty well stripped down and equipped for demolition; (when the time came, the personnel failed to destroy her). The other two then sailed for Manila; PIGEON and FINCH were sent north to escort the Gunboats down because there was no experience to show the effect of rough water on them; the "Bird-Boats" themselves got into trouble on account of the bad weather on the way north. The South China Gunboat, MINDANAO, was held at Hong Kong until the developments with the other two were known. Inasmuch as it had previously been represented that she could be useful in defending Hong Kong it was unwise to subject her to too much weather risk.

Toward the end of the period, a valuable Army convoy was nearing Manila, under escort of BOISE. The LANGLEY was just arriving to replenish stores and



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revise cargo, having been held in the southern islands for a long period,- tending the air patrols and establishing two extemporized air bases. TRINITY and PECOS were arriving with full loads of fuel which they had taken on in the N.E.I.

On 29 November, received a definite War Warning from the Navy Department. Additional to the disposition of ships previously listed, in the foregoing, the forces of the Fleet were occupying the following stations 29-30 November:-

Three Destroyers were on listening and general patrol off the Manila-Subic Bay entrances. The remaining two of the Squadron were still at Navy Yard, repairing collision damages.

Three Submarines were in Navy Yard hands. The remainder were in Manila Bay or were training in the vicinity. The three Submarine Tenders were scattered from Mariveles to Manila Harbor. The practice of berthing Submarines alongside Tenders in large numbers, or in large "trots", had been discontinued. Not more than two were being alongside or together and all berthing was considerably dispersed.

There was one aircraft detachment based on Balabac and one in Davao Gulf. Each comprised one small Tender with patrol planes in the eastern detachment and utility planes at Balabac. The planes were patrolling off-shore and linking up in an informal arrangement with the Dutch planes. One full squadron of PBV's was basing on Sangley Point, the remainder of the large planes at Olongapo; in each case a certain degree of localized dispersal and concealment was being practiced. An auxiliary and extemporized base at Los Banos, (in Laguna de Bai), was ready for use.

The remaining small craft were in Manila Bay or vicinity. The inshore patrol and guarding of the mine fields continued to absorb much effort of small craft; and more of them than was usual were in Navy Yard hands.

1 TO 7 DECEMBER 1941

The Marines arrived from Shanghai and were disembarked into Olongapo, via tugs and lighters, with

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weapons, munitions, field equipment and all supplies. The Fourth Marines immediately set about reorganizing as a 3-battalion Regiment, equalizing the strength from the 600 to 700 Marines of the battalion that was already in the Philippines, etc. The Regiment was told to occupy the Bataan Peninsula for the present, - from Mariveles to Olongapo and somewhat to the northward of the latter. Having mostly long service men and a full complement of regular officers, the Marines were the strongest infantry regiment in the Philippines; it was not equipped for rapid movement.

One of the President Line ships was turned around as quickly as possible and sailed for Ching-wangtao to embark the remaining Marines. She never arrived there. The Army convoy arrived on the 4th; its escort, BOISE, was fueled and supplied and sailed for Cebu to await further orders. The MINDANAO sailed from Hong Kong about 3 December and arrived at Manila on the 9th, having encountered considerable difficulty with the N.E. monsoon seas.

The two Gunboats from Shanghai had less difficulty and, with the two "Bird Boats", arrived at Manila on the 4th; all three river Gunboats joined the inshore patrol. Rear Admiral Glassford set about getting in touch with the situation and at constituting a staff preparatory to assuming command of Task Force Five. It was regrettable that he could not have started such preparation some time before. Actually he reached Manila at virtually the last minute and at a time when all activity was particularly intense.

LANGLEY, TRINITY and PECOS arrived and prepared for departure. Tankage on shore was nearly full and there was difficulty in disposing of the cargoes of the two Tankers. None of those three large Auxiliaries had left Manila by the end of the period. ISABEL was despatched to an outpost patrol station off the Indo-China coast. A small sailing yacht with auxiliary power was taken over and fitted out for a similar mission but the preparations were only just completed by 7 December. (This vessel was eventually sailed to Java and then to Australia by Fleet personnel, - including the Flag Lieutenant, - who were evacuating to the southward).

The CinCAF, the Commanding General of USAFFE and certain of their subordinates held a conference, on 1 December, on joint operations of aircraft

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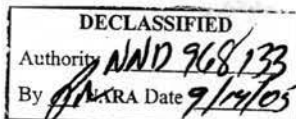
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over the seas. Preparatory conferences had been held by the Air Commanders and progress resulted on this date. It was agreed that Army heavy bombers would take over the patrol of the two northern sectors which touched Formosa. Their speed and ceiling better fitted them for coping with any enemy fighters that might come out from the Formosan landing fields. We obtained no enemy information from those planes during the period.

The Navy Patrol Planes made a considerable number of long reconnaissance flights during the period. Those which went to the Indo-China coast were not routine flights but were at the personal, day-to-day, direction of CinCAF. The instructions were to avoid being sighted from the coast, or by Japanese ships, if practicable. The PBY's were sighted and at times by Japanese planes but they were not attacked. The patrol planes did sight a large number of transport and cargo ships in harbor or at sea. In Kamranh Bay alone there were over 20 large or medium sized ships, - with an air patrol over them, - and numerous small craft. Not much enemy information was received, during the period, from other than the Fleet's own sources. But it became very clear that strong Japanese amphibious expeditions were prepared to move.

Admiral Tom Phillips, R.N., the new CinC of the British Far Eastern Fleet, visited Manila, for conference, on 5 and 6 December. This was at his own initiative and he had arranged to make the journey by air, prior to his arrival at Singapore. Inasmuch as the conditions and circumstances which had previously prevented a visit by CinCAF to Singapore no longer existed, Admiral Hart would have proceeded to that port for the conference if the British authorities had given the necessary information. Admiral Phillips left Singapore prior to any meeting with Dutch or Australian Naval authorities. The CinCAF proposed to him that Admiral Helfrich be included in the conference at Manila but the despatch got lost somewhere at the British end.

Admiral Phillips arrived at noon, 5 December, and departed during the evening of the following day; his presence in Manila was a carefully guarded secret. The afternoon and evening of the fifth was taken up with informal conversations which were followed by a somewhat formal conference that lasted well through the following day. The Commanding General of USAFFE



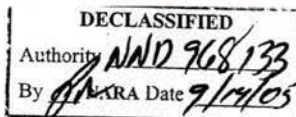
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and his Chief of Staff were present during all the periods that involved other than Naval subjects. During the conversations, CinCAF learned for the first time that the British had been assured of American armed support in any of four contingencies having to do with Japanese aggression against Thailand, the N.E.I., etc. It should be said that Admiral Phillips showed himself to be a remarkably able officer, - possessing very broad knowledge, with keen intuition and judgment. Even though our association with him was brief we sensed that he was the best man that we had encountered.

Admiral Phillips was made acquainted with the general Naval and Military situation as for the Philippines, and he set forth the British situation and prospects. He had brought out PRINCE OF WALES and REPULSE and had just sailed the latter to Port Darwin - largely for political considerations. Additional British Battleships were promised at a rate which would have built up the capital ship force in the Far East quite rapidly. Admiral Phillips however did not have in sight a commensurate force of Destroyers or of Carriers.

During the discussions it appeared that, as yet, there had been no decided change in the British Naval attitude in that protection of their sea supply routes as well as of the troop convoys was still primary. There was still the trend toward dispersal of forces. However, the new high command was obviously seeking combat and a coming offensive attitude was clearly seen. The immediate British Naval concern was lack of Destroyers; four had accompanied their heavy ships to the Far East but more were wanted at once. Consequently, Admiral Phillips requested the immediate loan of the two Destroyer Divisions which had been eventually promised. There was considerable argument between the two CinC's, on various subjects, but the main point of differences hinged upon that disposition of Destroyers:-

The CinCAF declined to send his Destroyers to Singapore immediately. He represented that the British had only two capital ships in hand and had four Destroyers with them; that there were two or three other British Destroyers assigned to the local defense of Hong Kong which were the approximate equal of the



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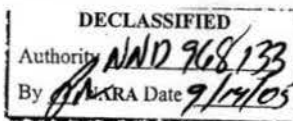
American Destroyers and which were currently not assigned to very good advantage; that the American Cruisers needed Destroyers for their full effectiveness and that the results from our large force of Submarines could be promoted by the association of a few Destroyers with them; finally, that though the promise for loan of American Destroyers would be kept - and we had disposed them somewhat to that end - the time had not arrived to give up two-thirds of them.

Toward the end of 6 December, joint despatches were drawn up in the conference and sent to London and Washington. While the smooth copies were being made, word came from Singapore that a Jap amphibious expedition had been sighted in the Gulf of Siam, heading westward; there was a suggestion that its objective was an anchorage in Thailand. Admiral Phillips immediately recalled REPULSE and said that if he were in Singapore he would go to sea with such ships as he could collect. Arrangements were made to send him in an American PBV if his own plane should, for any reason, be unable to make a night flight; he started for Singapore during the evening.

PatWing Ten's patrol flights did not go close in on the Indo-China coast on 6 December and did not see any expeditions on the move. As soon as the British information of the enemy in the Gulf of Siam was received, BLACK HAWK and one Destroyer Division was directed to sail from Balikpapan to Batavia "for supplies and liberty". That order started them to the westward and while en route the Destroyers were directed to proceed toward Singapore and placed under the orders of the British CinC. Admiral Phillips was so informed as he was departing, by the CinCAF, with a remark to the effect that the differences as disclosed by the day's arguments were rapidly disappearing if still existent.

8 TO 10 DECEMBER

Received notification of the attack on Pearl Harbor slightly after 3:00 a.m., (L.M.T.), 8 December. Informed the GHQ of the USAFFE and the Asiatic Fleet, - with a directive to the latter to "govern yourselves accordingly". Recalled ISABEL. The first landing on the Malay Peninsula occurred at

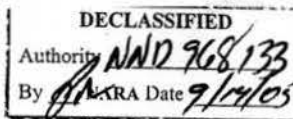


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about the same hour but we did not hear of it for some hours. The first attack on the Philippines was at day-break, by air, upon two PBV planes on the water at Malalag in Davao Gulf; those two planes were destroyed - the other two had taken off for patrol. The PRESTON, anchored at Malalag, saw four enemy Destroyers pass, steaming toward Davao, slipped out astern of them and escaped. At about 10:30 a.m., we received word that enemy planes were in the vicinity of Baguio. Later in the day we learned that enemy planes had made powerful and well-executed attacks on U.S. Army landing fields in north-central Luzon, at midday, and had destroyed numerous planes as well as severely damaging the ground installations.

The respects in which the Asiatic Fleet was caught unprepared, - additional to incomplete shore and harbor installations, - has been set forth in the foregoing. The Fleet made a good recovery. Rear Admiral Glassford and staff left for Iloilo by plane, during forenoon of 8 December, to hoist his flag in HOUSTON as Commander Task Force Five. His orders were to rendezvous HOUSTON and BOISE with LANGLEY, TRINITY and PECOS which latter ships left the Bay soon after dark that evening, screened by two Destroyers; the Destroyers eventually returned. While crossing the Sulu Sea, bound for Makassar Strait, the detachment encountered one enemy Light Cruiser, probably carrying a Flag and screened by Destroyers. Our ships drove them off and they were lost in the darkness. It is probable that this was a fortunate encounter in that the enemy estimated that our forces were likely to be encountered in that general locality in strength too great for the forces which he had available for fighting them. Anyhow, no enemy forces were met by the long string of merchant and other ships which were running south toward and through the Makassar Strait for several days afterward. Commander Task Force Five proceeded into Makassar Strait, assembling his forces and obtaining full loads of fuel at the Dutch oil ports.

The Submarines sailed for patrol stations as per plan:- One-third off enemy harbors; one-third stationed for intercepting enemy expeditions advancing on Luzon; one-third in reserve stations which were somewhat scattered and concealed. The Submarines which were sent on directly offensive missions arrived after



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the enemy shipping had, for the most part, moved out and found only poor hunting for some time. They probably would have been more effective if they had been partly armed with ground mines instead of torpedoes only. The mines had only recently arrived and BuOrd had informed us that a defect had to be corrected before they were to be used. The Submarines in reserve stations soon began to be fed into the defensive-intercept patrol lines,- as the Japanese amphibious offensive developed against Luzon.

On 9 December, CinCAF decided to restore the relieved Commander of Submarines, (Captain Wilkes), to that command on account of his experience and familiarity with the conditions obtaining - and his excellent ability, including health. It was also decided to send the thus displaced Submarine Commander south in OTUS to have ready an alternative command post for Submarines. On the following day, it was decided to also send HOLLAND south with OTUS,- which meant the realization of the mistake of attempting to use all the Tenders for servicing Submarines in Manila Bay for a protracted period.

The air patrol obtained no information on enemy ship movements during the 8th and 9th. From this time onward an extraordinary crop of incorrect enemy information flowed in over the Warning Net. Too many reports came in of enemy sightings when nothing actually was sighted and when a vessel really was seen she was usually reported in one of two categories;- irrespective of size, she was either a Transport or a Battleship! We received word of the capture of the WAKE at Shanghai and of the surrender of the 200 Marines in North China.

The Naval Station, Cavite, was destroyed at noon, 10 December, by Japanese bombers which bombed with deliberation, from above the range of the nine 3-inch 50 guns that we had installed for its protection. The enemy attack was not interfered with by our Army pursuit planes and the bombing was very accurate. The damage was mostly from fire which effectively burned out the entire establishment, less the aircraft shops. Also, the fire was kept away from the Naval Magazine which still contained propellants and a small quantity of high explosive.

The OTUS was alongside a Cavite wharf loading torpedoes, spare parts and some equipment which had

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recently arrived for her own conversion. The ship got away, during the attack, with only slight damage but most of the material to be loaded was lost; it was only a small portion of the total available. PEARY was completing repair of collision damages; she got away with minor damage but several personnel casualties. One Sweeper was disabled, mainly through loss of machinery parts which were in the shops. The most serious loss was one of the large Submarines which received two direct hits which entirely disabled her; she was later stripped of considerable gear and then fully wrecked with explosives. The other of the two Submarines, at Cavite, received minor damages which were later made good by the Tenders. The two Submarines were just completing some of the numerous alterations which were on order.

The attack of 10 December made it entirely clear that, as far as security of ships and installations in Manila Bay was concerned, the enemy had control of the air. The HOLLAND, OTUS, ISABEL and two Destroyers were sailed that evening, for the south. Another, (9-knot), detachment consisting of TULSA, ASHEVILLE and two Sweepers also sailed; all to join Task Force Five. It is unfortunate that two or three additional small ships were not sent south at this time. Those two detachments also encountered no enemy on their voyages to the Borneo oil ports.

11 TO 15 DECEMBER

During the attack of 10 December, a few bombs were dropped among the merchant ships just outside Manila Harbor. One medium sized ship was burned and sunk thereby. An extraordinary number of ships had fled for refuge in harbors and collected in Manila Bay:- Most of the small inter-Island ships had come into the Bay which also contained about 40 deep-sea ships, of various ownerships; there were no very large ships but there were many medium sized ships that were valuable, some with valuable cargoes.

On 11 December, CinCAF called a conference of Masters, Owners and Agents and advised as follows:-

- a) That the inter-Island ships were likely to be as safe while in ports or on voyages in the central portion of the Islands and might

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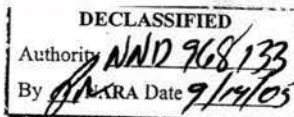
as well work there; that they could thus in some measure assist the USAFFE's effort.

- b) That the deep-sea ships would eventually be destroyed if they remained in Manila Bay and that there was a fair chance of escape if they sailed to the southward. The Fleet could not at once undertake direct convoy or escort, but was in position to cover, that some of its own ships had sailed the preceding night and that no enemy ships were being found to the southward.

The CinC's advice was accepted and ships began departing that evening. The movement continued for several days, with ships going out singly just after nightfall. All are believed to have escaped except one which was burned by a minor air attack. We were lucky.

It had been apparent for some days that our Pacific Fleet could make no westward movement in force. The loss of PRINCE OF WALES and REPULSE and indications that the British defense of Malaya was not going too well gave little ground for hope in that direction also, - as far as any diversionary effect on the enemy was concerned. Clearly the U.S. Forces in the Far Eastern theatre were on their own and the chance of getting reinforcements into the Philippines via the Torres Strait was not favorable. The mission of our Naval forces remaining in or near the Philippines remained as before, - to support the USAFFE's defense while damaging the enemy as much as possible. He was already meeting success in landing forces in southeast and north Luzon. On 13 December advised the Navy Department that the situation of Luzon was very serious.

The air patrol discovered enemy men-of-war off north and northwest Luzon on 11 December and a half squadron of PBYS attacked a ship of the HARUNA class, which was accompanied by Cruisers and Destroyers. It was a good attack, coming in from astern, made through thick anti-aircraft fire, but unfortunately, the salvo was dropped a fraction of a second too soon and the hits made were on the extreme stern. The attack at least disabled the enemy's steering gear and the damage may have been quite extensive. This was the last body of enemy combat ships that was found at sea by our air patrols.



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On the following day PatWing Ten's luck was bad:- A half squadron took off from Olongapo, on unjustifiably bad information, to attack "a Battleship" nearby. The planes found nothing, were seen by enemy fighters which were not themselves seen and which attacked after ours had landed; seven PBY's were burned by incendiary bullets, two enemy planes being shot down in their attack.

By 13 December, our Army planes were no longer keeping the air except for one or two fighters, at a time, flying for reconnaissance purposes. We then had a little less than one squadron of patrol planes operable and with little prospect of gaining further results commensurate with losses. The CinCAF therefore directed, (14 December), that ComPatWing Ten proceed to N.E.I. waters with remaining planes, all three small Tenders and such extra personnel and remaining spares as could be carried. The voyage was made successfully and the Tenders were ready to service a reinforcing squadron of PBY's when it arrived, in January, via a southern route to Darwin. After this movement south, there remained in the vicinity of Manila some damaged planes from which four were eventually made operable.

By the end of the period, we had withdrawn our four Destroyers from Singapore and so much of the entire Fleet had gone into Task Force Five that more staff assistance was there required. Therefore the Chief of Staff, and six key officers in operations, communications and maintenance, were transferred to ComTaskFor Five. Admiral Hart decided to remain at Manila as long as the Submarines could be operated and serviced from there. The Chief of Staff and one communication officer, carrying a letter of introduction, proceeded by plane, the others in one Destroyer and the Submarine which was damaged when Cavite was destroyed. There then remained in or based on Manila Bay:-

Two Destroyers,- one still repairing.
Six Motor Torpedo Boats.
Twenty-seven Submarines.
CANOPUS and PIGEON.
Three River Gunboats.
Three Sweepers and one Fleet Tug.
Various District small craft.

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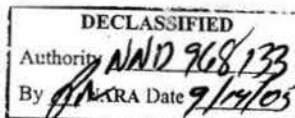
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Nearly all the Submarines were patrolling or in advanced stand-by stations and when they were in Manila it was only for short periods. With the destruction of Cavite, we were thrown back on CANOPUS for all services to Submarines. In the interest of facilitating her work and of reducing damages from future bombing, CANOPUS was moored at the Manila Harbor front, in shoal water, and covered with camouflage nets. The torpedoes, spare parts, supplies and stores were moved into dumps - dispersed among the freight sheds in the vicinity. The Submarine Command Post was established in the nearby Men's Club which also took on a large task of berthing and subsistence; some provision for bomb shelter was accomplished. This was the best that could be done for the Submarines under the conditions of menacing air attack and it was hoped that the set-up could last for some time.

A few hide-outs were arranged - against the Breakwater, among junks, lighters, etc. - which it was hoped the Submarines could occupy without discovery while resting. The efforts at concealment were probably ineffective in view of the activity of enemy photographic planes - which seemed to hover about at will - and quite possibly our dispositions were being radioed from on shore anyhow.

The Motor Torpedo Boats had arrived with experienced and trained personnel but the news of their addition to the Fleet and information about their requirements had not been received in time to arrange for their basing or to lay down the outlying fuel caches which their short radius called for. Arrangements for basing them at Cavite had gotten fairly well along but it was all ruined on 10 December. Consequently, the employment of the PT's for combat had been thrown back, even if the enemy had come within their reach. They continued preparations for combat; (actually some use had to be made of them for messenger service between Manila and Mariveles, over several days). At the end of the period, the PT's - backed by one of the two available Destroyers - were stationed to cover against a night advance of the enemy toward the Batangas-Tabayas wharves and beaches.

The three Philippine Motor Torpedo Boats, which according to plan were to operate with ours, did not join up with them or report to Com 16. Those



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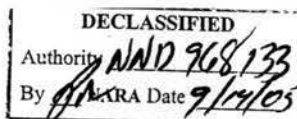
three boats never accomplished anything in operations involving combat. The American boats were highly successful during the later stages of the campaign.

16 TO 20 DECEMBER

The enemy's invading expeditions in north-west and southeast Luzon continued to advance and became well established. The Submarines operated against them thickly, particularly in the vicinity of their landing points, and did damage but evidently not enough to disrupt the enemy's effort.

The Naval District was doing its best at recovery from the bombing of Cavite:- As many of the industrial personnel as could be used were shifted to the various small plants in Manila and progress was made toward carrying on supplying and repair work. The District Commandant established a Command Post on Sangley Point and controlled operations from there. On 19 December, that area in turn received an accurate, high-altitude bombing attack which burned much of the gasoline that remained there in drums and ruined the radio installations,- the latter by direct hits of large bombs. The Naval Hospital, which directly adjoined, was not touched; it had been abandoned because of its location in the midst of military objectives. Com 16 then moved his Command Post to the prepared underground position on Corregidor. Cavite and Sangley Point were thereupon virtually abandoned except for handling salvaged supplies and making the preparations for complete demolition.

Two French merchant ships had been taken into "protective custody", somewhat earlier. During this period, one of them, an old-type freighter, loaded with a considerable quantity of flour and other provisions was sent to Mariveles to unload. She was bombed and burned, somewhat later, before the provisions were fully discharged. The other one, the MARECHAL JOFFRE, was a modern and valuable ship and, since she could not be "protected" in Manila Bay it was decided to try to get her away. About 100 Navy personnel were thrown aboard and she sailed for Makassar Strait the same evening, being one of the last merchant ships to escape; she eventually proceeded to an east Australian port. The Commander was a young Lieutenant



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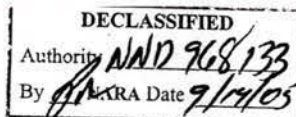
who must have done extremely well to surmount the difficulties encountered.

21 TO 25 DECEMBER

The Japanese expeditions had been getting on very well with their invasion of Luzon. The enemy force in southeastern Luzon seemed to have a subsidiary mission but it had been making steady progress to the northward. The expedition on the north-west coast seemed the more dangerous one and it was coming down the coast fairly rapidly. It was clear that the enemy was doing a good job, that he understood amphibious war, could employ its natural advantages and could overcome its difficulties, - including the coordinated use of all the varieties of forces and weapons needed. It is to be noted that in the entire campaign in the northern half of Luzon the Japanese landings were on open beaches and their transports were never dependant on wharves. The enemy's ground equipment could not have been heavy and it probably was not elaborate.

Early in the period it became likely that the enemy would soon attempt landings in or near the Lingayen Gulf. That would be most dangerous to our defense and Submarines were concentrated in that area - and its approaches - without regard to individual patrol stations. The instructions were to get at the enemy without thought of neighboring Submarines which also might be attacking. Nevertheless the Submarines again did not succeed in disrupting the enemy at sea. The best chance was in one incident off Cape Bolinao where one large Submarine found herself in front of a convoy of large ships, with strong anti-submarine screen, in the late afternoon. She got off a contact report but did not succeed in attacking as the enemy passed - or by running in from astern that night. Next morning a considerable number of medium or large ships were at anchor in shoal water on the south side of Lingayen Gulf, and with a mine field to the seaward. They were attacked and probably damaged. In that difficult task, one S-boat touched off a mine or two and was hunted and depth-charged for over 24 hours. She barely escaped but had no serious injuries.

There had been conversations with the USAFFE concerning the employment of the Marine Regiment but



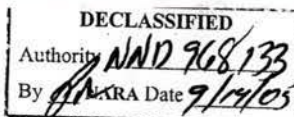
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resulting in no definite arrangements or understanding. On 20 December, the CinCAF made mention of the subject in a formal letter and subsequent staff conferences resulted in the following arrangement:-

That the Marines, plus a Naval Battalion which was forming, would be brigaded with a regiment of Constabulary, under a Marine Brigade Commander. The Constabulary regiment was composed of fairly well experienced men but lacked good officers and non-coms which the Fourth Marines would supply from its wealth of experienced personnel. There was never time to carry out the project; the Marine Regiment, as such, passed under the direct control of USAFFE and was mainly employed on Corregidor.

On 23 December, the CinCAF saw a copy of a USAFFE despatch which predicted an early retirement of all Army forces to the Bataan Peninsula and Corregidor. On the following morning he received definite information that such movement was in progress, that the Government and the GHQ of USAFFE would move to Corregidor that day and that Manila was to be proclaimed an open city, containing no combat elements. This eventuality had been foreseen but its coming so soon was a surprise - as was the fact that no mention of such a step had previously been made, formally or otherwise, since the war began. We immediately proceeded to uproot CANOPUS and the other Submarine installations from the Manila Harbor front and to shift all such activities to Mariveles and Corregidor.

It was decided, in a full conference, that the Submarines would continue to operate from Manila Bay and keep it up as long as possible. It was hard to decide whether CinCAF should also shift his Command Post to Corregidor or accept the probability that even the Submarines would have to shift base to the southward in the near future,- and make one jump of it to the N.E.I. The latter alternative was chosen. We had three patrol planes, hidden in the mangrove off Los Banos, available for transport; also one Submarine which had by then "worked up" after a main battery renewal. It was planned to send out one plane on the evening of the 24th, with the acting Chief of Staff and seven other commissioned and enlisted staff. (At the last minute we gave up half the places to the top-ranking Army Air Officers). We planned to sail the



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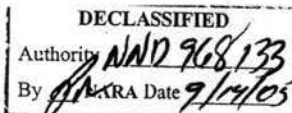
remaining two planes the following evening and also the Submarine, carrying a load of personnel and the heavy communication equipment, files, etc.

During the forenoon of 25 December, the CinCAF turned over to Com 16 full command of all Naval activities remaining in the Philippines, with a formal letter of instructions. This became effective at noon that day whereupon CinCAF's Command Post and radio station in Manila discontinued to function. The CinCAF had intended to take off after sunset, on 25 December, with 15 others in two PBY's and to make a night flight to Soerabaya; thereby being out of action for less than 24 hours. Unfortunately, the enemy discovered the two planes and burned them up in their hide-outs in the late afternoon. Consequently, only the Submarine, (SHARK), was available for transport; she left the Bay at 2:00 a.m. on 26 December.

26 TO 31 DECEMBER

The SHARK's voyage to Soerabaya occupied the period and was uneventful. Com 16 directed the two Destroyers which had been left in Manila Bay to proceed south, - on the night of 27 December. A little later he also directed Commander Submarines to shift his Command Post south and to discontinue attempting to carry out normal service to Submarines from Manila Bay. It had become too late to get CANOPUS and PIGEON south. The ships were old and not of great value but the personnel was highly valuable. They did serve usefully in contributing to the defense of Bataan, etc., during the remaining months.

As indicated in the foregoing, the Submarines did not succeed in disrupting the enemy's invasion of Luzon, even though two-thirds of them were employed on the task. Those results were disappointing to all concerned including the Submarine personnel themselves. The personnel was long-service and experienced in peace-time training but - like everyone else - were not experienced in the kind of war that they faced; only war proves what is correct and what is wrong, - who is effective and who is not. It can also be said:-



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That our peacetime training was not realistic in certain respects.

That we also had not been realistic as regards the material which was too complex in installations that did not contribute directly to offense, or defense, and was lacking somewhat in the absolute essentials.

That the enemy's mastery of amphibious war, by virtue of which he could land most anywhere, made interception of his expeditions very difficult.

That the enemy employed large numbers of small ships, difficult to hit and that there was scant return when they were hit.

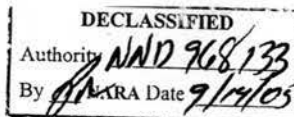
That the enemy employed large numbers of anti-submarine craft; they seemed to be good at detection but not at attack, though it required time to learn that the hundreds of depth charges which they dropped were not very dangerous.

That the last stage of the voyage of their invading expeditions was always at night, - and during the dark of the moon at the critical periods. The enemy being in full control of the air, the Submarines could be given no information of his ship movements approaching Luzon.

During the period, Task Force Five completed its assembly, fueling, etc., and moved the Auxiliaries for occupation of Port Darwin as a main base. Its command completed organization, set up a Command Post at Soerabaya and held preliminary conferences with appropriate Dutch authorities. The merchant shipping by this time had all escaped, mostly via Makassar Strait.

PEARY sailed for the south via Molucca Strait and there experienced considerable air attack; she was undamaged by the enemy attack but had some casualties from an attack by Australian dive-bombers, from Ambon. HERON went north to assist PEARY and was herself severely attacked; she held the advantage in the engagement, however.

By the end of the period the enemy was establishing at Jolo and at Davao for a further advance. Our Submarines were tending toward a more southern theatre, for their patrols, and opposing the enemy at those points. The damaged Submarine, SEADRAGON, had been repaired and sent on patrol.



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31 DECEMBER 1941 to 6 JANUARY 1942

Commander in Chief, Asiatic Fleet, arrived at Soerabaya, Java, during the evening of 1 January and found the Command Post of Task Force Five established in the outskirts of the city in buildings which had been commandeered and supplied by the Dutch Navy. The accommodations were sufficient and the Post satisfactory except that radio facilities were inadequate. The Fleet personnel did splendidly in extemporizing a main radio, from apparatus obtained locally and some taken out of ships, but the difficulties in handling the radio load were very great.

By this date Navy Department and War Department had fixed upon Port Darwin as a potential base of considerable magnitude and the trend was toward demands upon the place which its very poor facilities could not meet. Following the movement - and also because security from enemy attack was at the time better there than at Soerabaya - ComTaskFor Five had sent all Naval Auxiliaries to Darwin. These voyages and also the escort of Army and other shipping using the Torres Strait route employed Cruiser and Destroyers to such an extent that their center of gravity was, at the time, well to the eastward. The Department was informed of the deficiencies of Darwin as a port and was also advised that the Torres Strait route might become too dangerous for our convoys at an early date.

There were ample fuel supplies at Soerabaya and at Darwin and all of our ships, including Tankers, had filled to capacity at Balikpapan on the way south. The Dutch had made their base facilities at Soerabaya available and were accommodating in all respects. Those facilities were considerable but the Base was congested and quite vulnerable from the air. All spares, munitions and special supplies were at Darwin, - a long distance away.

It was found that all ships of the Fleet which were sent south had reached the waters of N.E.I. without much damage. PEARY and HERON were air-bombed, during the period, in the Molucca Strait and both had some personnel casualties. In the case of the HERON, the action was protracted; the ship did splendidly, - destroying one large enemy seaplane.

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All but one of the numerous merchant ships which went south from Manila Bay had reached N.E.I. waters and were being managed by their own agents as regards disposing of and receiving cargoes. It was fortunate that the enemy had not been able to intercept this shipping, - the aggregate value was great.

The Japanese had established themselves at Davao and at Jolo, from which points they later invaded the N.E.I. Patwing Ten sent six PBV patrol planes to make a daybreak bombing attack on shipping while the enemy was still in the building-up phase at Jolo. The section found the enemy off the north side of the Island but were intercepted by fighters and lost four planes; luckily, about 65% of the personnel were saved. Japanese Submarines had appeared as far south as the Java Sea, - and were thereafter present most of the time for the remainder of the campaign.

We were informed that the enemy had completed his occupancy of Manila City. From the end of December onward, very little further information and practically no reports were received from Com 16 and the subsequent history of that area is not included herein. A considerable force of small craft had been left in Manila Bay under Com 16's command; by this time it became clear to CinCAF that he should have sent three or four more of them south before, say, 18 December - including two of the Sweepers. Similarly, too many officers and men of the Navy were left in Manila Bay; 400 to 500 others might well have been brought out while it was still possible, even if risky; they were experienced and could have been more profitably employed in theatres other than Manila Bay. This error of judgment probably came from the idea of not going too far in withdrawing the Navy from the defense of the Philippines. From Java things looked different!

On 2 January, received a despatch from Opnav which indicated some disappointment in the amount of damage which Asiatic Fleet had inflicted on the enemy. Also a despatch from Cominch, the last of which stated that the Fleets would soon be placed under a Joint Command. CinCAF proceeded to Batavia on evening of 3 January and returned the following night. Purpose was to call on the Governor-General and to confer with Vice Admiral Helfrich, Commanding the N.E.I. Navy.

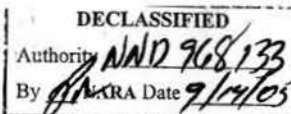
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The Honorable Mr. Van Mook and Vice Admiral Helfrich were present at the interview with the Governor-General. His Excellency stated that if the Japanese proposed that the N.E.I. withdraw from the war, and resume commercial relations, their proposal would be denied. The Governor-General then proceeded to read a press report announcing the agreement to set up General Wavell as a Supreme Commander, with GHQ on Java, Admiral Hart to command the three Fleets, etc. He pressed Admiral Hart to set forth his basic ideas on the forthcoming campaign; he was told that the news came as a surprise, that considerable thought and interview with General Wavell would be required first, etc. His Excellency then presented his own views,- clearly, concisely and showing excellent knowledge and understanding of broad strategy and of the character of war which confronted us. His most cogent idea was that the campaign would be one in which the importance of ships and of aircraft would transcend everything else.

There was considerable time for interviews with Admiral Helfrich, the American Consul General and others. It appeared to be the sentiment among the Dutch that the American reputation was badly damaged as a result of the events of the war in the Philippines. The Dutch Navy was particularly cocky, principally because two of its Submarines had each sunk four enemy ships in the South China Sea. Their attitude modified when SEAWOLF arrived at Soerabaya, (7 January), and likewise brought in a bag of four enemy ships which she had sunk off Hainan.

The Dutch Navy had lost three Submarines and the remainder was mostly in port, resting and overhauling. The Dutch Cruisers and Destroyers were being employed as Covering Forces for Singapore convoys, and in A/S escort of their own shipping. Vice Admiral Helfrich had already provided space for a U.S. Command Post at Batavia, next door to his own, and strongly urged that we move into it - and away from Soerabaya. He informed us that Admiral Layton was also preparing space at Batavia for a similar shift of the British Fleet's Command Post from Singapore. Admiral Helfrich was told that we were not likely to move because our Fleet's operations would probably continue to be in the central and eastern part of the theatre,- hence Soerabaya would be the better location; anyhow it now appeared that the new Supreme Command GHQ would be in or near Batavia - and it would control.



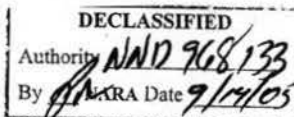
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Upon return to Soerabaya, CinCAF requested information from Navy Department concerning any prospective reinforcement of his Fleet and any likely offensive movement by Pacific Fleet. This information was to be in preparation for the forthcoming conference with the Supreme Commander; it was not received.

Admiral Hart, lacking any instructions on the point, assumed that he would continue to command his own forces and proceeded to set up the Soerabaya Command Post to that end. It seemed necessary to have one of the two Rear Admirals at sea, to command a Striking Force, and arrangements were immediately made to re-embark Rear Admiral Glassford in HOUSTON, with an adequate staff. The Fleet Command was to be exercised through, (and somewhat by), the Chief of Staff, Rear Admiral Purnell who was fully informed and indoctrinated and who, also, was the American officer who by experience was best informed concerning the N.E.I. area and all matters pertaining to the Allied Fleets.

It may well be said at this point that the Asiatic Fleet Staff was a highly efficient and very adequate organization. It was mainly composed of officers who had enjoyed no previous staff experience. They had been together for a long time, had encountered many unusual conditions, had shown that they could rise to occasions and could always function efficiently despite poor working conditions.

At the end of the period, we definitely learned that the British Far East Fleet Command Post had vacated Singapore; that a Post was being occupied at Batavia by a junior Admiral who would command the three D-class Cruisers, few Destroyers and lesser craft which now composed that Fleet; and that Admiral Layton would soon proceed to Colombo with most of the Fleet Staff and there await heavy reinforcements, including capital ships. A Rear Admiral, R.N., (Spooner), was remaining in command of H.M. Dockyard at Singapore and would command Sweepers and small local craft.



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TO 12 JANUARY

The Commander Submarines arrived from Manila, with Staff, and set up his Command Post within the Fleet Offices. Captain Wilkes reported that the Japanese aircraft had become so active over Manila Bay and over such of the basing facilities as remained at Corregidor and Mariveles that it had been impossible to service Submarines there any longer. Therefore he had been obliged to shift his base to the southward. It was not possible to bring out CANOPUS or PIGEON, of the Submarine Command. Also, a considerable amount of spare parts and torpedoes had consequently been left behind. Most of the torpedoes and some of the spare parts were brought out later, in Submarines, but it was a mistake not to have brought out the two ships when it could have been accomplished.

Patrol Wing Ten also set up its Command Post at Soerabaya where it functioned for the remainder of the campaign under one of the Squadron Commanders, - the two senior officers of the Wing were taken into the Supreme Commander's H.Q. during the period. The Wing's duties henceforth were altogether reconnaissance, which was mainly over the central and eastern part of N.E.I. waters. The patrol planes were basing over wide areas, making full use of the three small Tenders, and hence were difficult for the enemy to locate and destroy on the water. By this time, what remained of the Wing had become highly experienced and efficient; the pilots contrived to maintain reconnaissance in the face of strong enemy air forces - by virtue of their skill in using cloud cover and ability in air combat, even against fighters. We had extra crews for which we began overtures toward obtaining some new PBV's which the Dutch Navy had bought but for which they had no trained personnel. After considerable controversy, five of them were obtained.

During the period, we completed new Operating Plans, re-constituted the Cruisers and Destroyers as a Task Force, (Rear Admiral Glassford), and organized a Base Command at Port Darwin, (Captain Doyle). The Cruisers and Destroyers continued some escort and convoy work but were also assembling for covering the Makassar and Molucca Straits. The Submarines were continuing to shift their patrol areas to the southward, to work against the advancing enemy,

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but were also on his communication lines and off as many of his Indo-China ports as their numbers would permit. The Submarines' results were improving but still there were occurring too many failures from torpedo defects and other causes. CinCAF was continuing to receive despatches over various routes, about getting ammunition, etc., into Corregidor. Army authorities were trying to collect enough to load a submarine, - 20 tons.

On 9 January, Admiral Hart arrived at Batavia and thenceforth was able to visit the Fleet Offices at Soerabaya, or his ships, only for brief periods. He interviewed Mr. Elliot, of the Stanvac Co., and obtained late information concerning the oil industry and its situation, - generally, as applying to the entire area, and particularly to the Palembang area. Mr. Elliot possessed an entirely correct war psychology and is very able. Through him we began fostering a commission to handle all the oil situation. Also, Admiral Hart conferred with Lieutenant General Brett and Major General Brereton, and stated his views as regards ship-and-aircraft cooperation to which they expressed no disagreement. General Brett was not optimistic about holding the Malay Barrier and pointed out that Burma and Australia were the vital points - in his estimation - and that perhaps Burma could be held.

Admiral Layton had arrived from Singapore and there was a long conference between him, Admiral Helfrich and Admiral Hart. It was found that the British Naval interests and activities were entirely centered on guarding troop convoys into Singapore; they were using the few small ships of their local command as well as the Cruisers of adjacent commands which came into the area as ocean escorts. The British had a well-organized system for handling those movements and Admiral Layton proposed that it continue to operate independently and outside of the Joint Naval Command which was about to be initiated. Admiral Hart stated that such a method would mean responsibility without commensurate authority and hence would be unacceptable to him; that, of course, for any measure taken toward guarding anything as important as troop convoys he would be most unlikely to disturb a going concern; but that he must have cognizance and full authority. There was considerable argument but Admiral Layton eventually conceded that Admiral Hart was correct.

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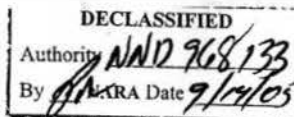
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With this meeting there began the personal conferences and cooperation which carried through during the interim up to the time that General Wavell assumed the full command of what became known as the "ABDA" area. Admiral Helfrich advised against setting up the Joint Naval Command Post elsewhere than at Batavia and Admiral Layton was disposed to agree with him.

On 10 January, General Wavell arrived by plane with several Army and R.A.F. staff officers. A general conference was held that afternoon at which General Wavell expressed some general views, quite simply and directly, and set forth the situation in Burma and Malaya, - rather optimistically. The various conferees were called upon to state their views. Admiral Layton had little to say except as regards escort and convoy of reinforcing troops and materials through the Soemba Strait to Singapore. Admiral Helfrich expressed considerable optimism over the prospects of combined Cruiser and Destroyer operations, with all available ships, against the enemy's expeditions. Admiral Hart pointed out, on that subject, that IF the enemy controlled the air over the sea areas his surface forces would have the advantage of better information about our forces than ours would have of his; that, in addition, our surface forces would have to cope with air attack - which they would do but that we should be realistic in measuring those disadvantages. Admiral Hart expressed his belief that the cooperation of ships and planes, including land-based planes, was of even more importance than the cooperation between troops and planes - to which view no exception was expressed. Admiral Hart also stated that thus far the Submarines, though inflicting damage on the enemy's amphibious expeditions, had not succeeded in breaking any of them up; and he finally pointed out that it remained to be decided how much of the effort of the Allied Cruisers and Destroyers was to be devoted to Striking Forces and how much to protecting convoys. General Wavell, - at this or perhaps a later conference, - said that the two missions were of about equal importance, - that at least the convoy-escort task was not secondary.

The Supreme Commander then said that his short title would be "ABDACOM" and announced similar titles for his subordinates, - including "ABDAFLOAT". He then stated that the GHQ would be at LEMBANG, 10 miles from Bandoeng which was the secondary seat of the N.E.I. Government. When asked his views about the location, Admiral Hart stated that there were objections



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to placing a Naval Command Post up in the hills where the officers of ships could not reach it, etc. But, that since a combined Headquarters was wanted, the only proper course was to try it, - which ABDAFLOAT would be prepared to do as soon as rapid communications could be assured.

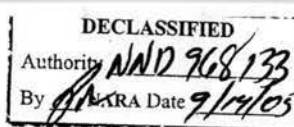
ABDACOM then presented the outline of his command and staff organization, all of which, including assignments of individuals, had been decided upon before his arrival in Java. There were to be five sections:-

Intendant General	-- Lt.Gen. Brett, U.S.A.
Intelligence	-- Col. Field, R.A.
Navy (Operational Command)	-- Adm. Hart, U.S.N.
Air (Operational Command)	-- Air Marshall Pearce, R.A.F.
Army (Operational Command)	-- Lt.Gen. Ter Poorten, N.E.I.A.

The Air Marshall was still in Britain. General Brett was to take over this command in the interim, as additional duty; he was also the Deputy ABDACOM and was, in consequence, bound to be seriously over-loaded. The Chief of Staff was Major General Pownall, R.A., recently CinC, Malaya, vice Brook-Popham. His Chief of Staff in that latter billet, Major General Playfair, R.A., was assigned as Chief of Staff to General Ter Poorten; the latter continued to actively command his own Army and was at GHQ for only a brief period each day, - at the most.

After the conference, Admiral Hart gave Admiral Helfrich an opportunity to assign his own Chief of Staff, Captain Van Stavaren, as Chief of Staff to ABDAFLOAT. Admiral Helfrich replied that he could not spare Van Stavaren, whereupon Admiral Hart announced that he would take Rear Admiral Palliser, R.N. The latter had come out as Chief of Staff to Admiral Tom Phillips but had just taken over the British Navy command at Batavia; he was immediately relieved as such by Captain Collins, R.A.N., - Admiral Layton's War Plans and Operations Officer.

Admirals Hart and Layton received despatches from their respective Governments asking their opinions on the qualifications of Admiral Helfrich for the command of the Joint Naval Forces and both replied favorably - on the 11th. Admiral Helfrich expressed his dissatisfaction with his own prospective position,-



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as a relatively subordinate commander, in an echelon below that of his own Army vis-a-vis, General Ter Poorten: Admiral Hart immediately communicated the above facts, and everything else which he knew about this subject, to General Wavell.

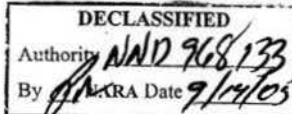
A second full conference was held at Batavia, by ABDACOM, during the afternoon of the 11th at which the principal business was on details and arrangements for setting up the Command Post. ABDAFLOAT reported the formation of his operating staff, - one Captain and one Commander from each of the three Fleets, - and that he would be prepared to shift to Lembang as soon as the considerable arranging of communications was completed. He reiterated his views about ship-plane cooperation, (in view of the inclusion of all aircraft under one, (R.A.F.), command). Incidentally, Captains Wagner and Stump had been called to Batavia in order to have them on the spot and available for the Reconnaissance Command.

Up to this point, the major point of discussion and consideration within the ABDACOM Staff had been the Malaya campaign and the arrival of reinforcements, looking forward as far as two months. Little thought was expressed about the eastern half of the ABDA area and the speed at which amphibious warfare progresses seemed not well realized. The Japanese jumped off from Jolo and Davao and landed at Tarakan and Menado on 11 January. This was the first blow against the N.E.I. The event did direct more attention toward the eastern part of the theatre.

Working conditions at Batavia were being very difficult for the British and Americans and getting things done took undue time and effort.

TO 18 JANUARY

The Japanese rapidly completed their occupation of Tarakan and of Menado and the vicinities of both. At Menado they made their first use of paratroops, which seemed to work but there was little opposition. The Dutch reported that they did a good job of destruction of the petroleum installations at Tarakan. These two enemy operations well illustrated



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the methods which all their amphibious expeditions followed:-

The expeditions formed at Jolo and Davao, at both of which points landing fields were seized and prepared. From those fields, the first step was to use their Navy planes to knock out the Allied aircraft, - over the country and the landing fields in the general vicinity of the next objective. That accomplished, the troops followed, guarded by numerous anti-submarine craft and strong forces of surface ships. The troops usually constituted a divisional organization and they were equipped for beach landings; apparently the Jap expeditions generally did not have to depend upon wharves and alongside unloading even for the heaviest equipment which they used. After seizure of a port, the next step of the enemy was to repair its air fields and move his own aircraft in on them, - in preparation for the next advance.

The Allied Fleets continued the operations of the preceding period and two important convoys were passed into Singapore. General Wavell, who was at Singapore 13-14 January, finally took over formal command of the ABDA area on the evening of 15 January. Up to that time, the three Fleet Commanders continued to work at Batavia, on the cooperative principle. There was always agreement in the end but frequently preceded by efforts to "get the others to do it". It was plainly difficult for the British Flag Officers to relinquish control but their attitude was correct. Admiral Layton departed, (16th). No information came from Washington about prospective reinforcements. The Commanding General USAFFE sent ABDACOM additional despatches about supplying him at Corregidor. The installation of a communication system from Lembang was proving very slow and the move to the new GHQ was being delayed in consequence. In the meantime, it was difficult to carry on the work from Batavia.

On 14 January, CinCAF ordered his Forces to make a Cruiser-Destroyer night attack on Kenia which, it was learned, was being used by the enemy ships of the expedition which took Menado. The Striking Force, (Destroyer torpedoes were to be the primary weapon), formed up quickly and made two-thirds of the long run, through unfamiliar and narrow waters, when it received word from a U.S. Submarine that the

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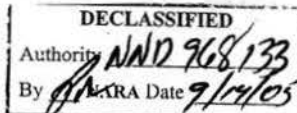
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enemy had moved out of Kema and the vicinity. This was the first one of several attempts of the sort. H.M.S. JUPITER sank a large enemy Submarine south-west of Java on the 16th; recovered two prisoners.

Although by the end of this period ABDAFLOAT was in full operational command, the co-operative principle had carried over and to some extent that condition obtained throughout. This fact was fully realized, - and it was believed the correct way. Rear Admiral Palliser was Chief of Staff, - and he was also the best informed concerning the state of the British Naval forces, and of its shore installations. It was therefore natural that his advice should carry great weight and to permit him to make all minor decisions concerning the British, including the actual arrangement of convoys. It is considered that Admiral Palliser was fully loyal. For instance, some time after arriving at Colombo, Admiral Layton attempted to withdraw the four best British Destroyers from the ABDA area; he had certain valid grounds upon which to make that attempt. It would have been a serious error - at the time - as Admiral Palliser saw at once and he valiantly fought out the question on which, in the end, he won. Admiral Hart similarly handled the U.S. Naval Forces - quite directly.

It was, at least from the political and psychological angle, advisable to, similarly, give Admiral Helfrich as much latitude as possible as regards his own forces and it was done as far as minor operations were concerned. The Dutch surface ships continued in use in covering the Singapore convoys for the remainder of January. As will appear later, there was one occasion when Admiral Helfrich permitted a misunderstanding that had a serious aspect. At the time it looked as if the basis for it lay in language difficulties. However, there is one circumstance which requires recording:-

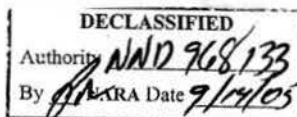
Admiral Helfrich had long worked in a dual capacity for he was, in effect, the Minister of Marine to the Governor-General, N.E.I. As such he was really a cabinet officer with much to do concerning N.E.I. merchant shipping and commerce and there was a political tinge to those duties. Admiral Helfrich was also the Commander of the Fleet which, incidentally, had a different status from the Army of the N.E.I., in that



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the Fleet was "Royal", and the Army "Territorial". It was rather natural for Admiral Helfrich to be somewhat dual in his attitude toward the Allies because of these circumstances. He was always under the Governor-General's authority and was required to inform him on everything he knew, including secret ship movements, in consequence of which there was danger of compromise.

In his relations as a subordinate commander under ABDAFLOAT, Admiral Helfrich at times seemed to be motivated somewhat from the political angle and at other times altogether from the standpoint of a Naval commander in war. At times he would be entirely frank and open in any matters which were under discussion, while at other times he acted more as in a civil capacity. The difficulty was that in the latter role, he seemed to wish to get Naval forces other than his own to take on an undue proportion of escort duty and anti-submarine work in connection with the relatively unimportant movements of Dutch merchant shipping. The last conference with Admiral Helfrich prior to ABDAFLOAT's departure for Lembang, from Batavia, was entirely satisfactory and in a spirit of full frankness. Upon the whole that condition continued.



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18 JANUARY

On this date, ABDACOM moved from Batavia to Lembang into a mountain-resort hotel which is ten miles north of Bandoeng. The choice of location there, rather than in or near Bandoeng, lay in the idea of spreading out and, consequently, the better concealment of the GHQ from the air. Facilities were far from adequate, but upon the whole were good enough, with the exception of radio and land wire communications; (they improved as time went on, in consequence of much work, including addition of temporary buildings). ✓

ABDACOM had a very complicated command involving four Army, four Navy, and six Air organizations. Consequently, there was a great deal to do in organizing and equipping a GHQ, which naturally required time. In the face of an advancing enemy there of course was not time. The command function had to be exercised; but we never reach a condition under which it could be so exercised that there would be certainty that information and clear directives would be transmitted with despatch.

Despite the period over which the move from Batavia was delayed in the interest of establishing communications, those facilities were still quite unsatisfactory. In the first place, the equipment and the methods for rapid communications within the N.E.I. had always been rather limited;- sufficient for their own purposes but very difficult of expansion.

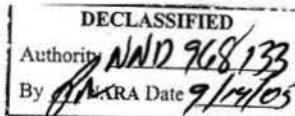
ABDACOM's GHQ was set up with the idea that the codes and ciphers would be mainly British, but using Dutch equipment and channels as much as was necessary. Inasmuch as CinCAF still commanded his own forces at this time, (through his Chief of Staff at Soerabaya), a Navy radio unit and coding board was set up at Lembang. However, these units had to be retained throughout and were an important part of ABDACOM's communication system. Without their services, communications with ships would have been very slow and hopelessly glutted. The Navy communication system was called upon to do much for the U.S. Army forces, which in the beginning had none of their own. The mass of Army communications became so great that we were obliged to restrict and force them into N.E.I. commercial channels in order that Navy personnel could keep their own heads above water. Also, there was much danger of incurring compromise by handling Army traffic.

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By this time it had become apparent that ABDACOM and his immediate advisors, who were mostly of the British Army, was still thinking mainly of Malaya (Singapore),- and somewhat of Burma. ABDACOM had not shown much interest when I discussed our eastern areas and the dangers of enemy penetration to the Malay Barrier on that side. As for the Naval side of things, ABDACOM's interest was primarily the safety of the reinforcing convoys going into Singapore. His trend was to promote employment of cruisers and destroyers on that mission without great thought to the consequent weakening of any possible Striking Force. At the same time, he was amiably critical of deficient Naval opposition to the direct advance of the enemy's amphibious expeditions.

ABDACOM's set-up for air operational command called for an Air Marshal, (Pérce), to head the unified air command which had to control the six air organizations. The officer chosen had to come out from England; in the interim, General Brett, with General Brereton assisting, exercised such command as existed. General Brett being also the Intendent General, as well as Deputy ABDACOM, was over-loaded,- particularly since he had to pay considerable attention to U.S. Army affairs in Australia, with which he had been charged prior to the inception of ABDACOM. However, his actual air command duties during the period, (additional to work in connection with U.S. Army air reinforcements coming through Australia), was mainly confined to handling his own small detachment of heavy bombers. The R.A.F. air was all in Malaya and being directly commanded from Singapore. The immediate concern of CinCAF, as regards air, was the efficient operation of reconnaissance over water, for which his own remaining planes, with tenders, were available in addition to an approximately equal force of Dutch seaplanes. That particular air function was concrete, somewhat separated from the rest, and in the interest of best use for naval purposes, it was so maintained. General Brett at first chose Captain Wagner, U.S.N., to command the American and Dutch seaplanes; but eventually, and incident to Dutch opposition, he had to change that and put the head of the Dutch Naval air service in command. However, Captain Wagner was kept in the Reconnaissance Command post, (at Bandoeng), as Deputy, and the joint operation of seaplanes was carried on quite efficiently throughout. Captain Wagner had his three small seaplane tenders which were invaluable in providing flexibility of basing and, consequently, was in a strong position in his associations with the Dutch Naval air.



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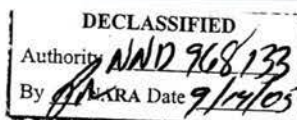
The Air Reconnaissance Command was established well ahead of anything else, had its own communication system, and, in general, its performance was better than that of the other air units seemed to be.

TO 25 JANUARY

During the period the British Army and R.A.F. were being defeated and pressed southward in Malaya at a discouraging rate. ABDACOM visited Singapore and also Rangoon, (two separate journeys). His absence on journeys of that sort seemed to create the impression that he was not taking enough interest in the affairs of the N.E.I. This was unfortunate and was probably due only to suspicion among the Dutch, as Malaya was the principal fighting front at the time. While in British circles there was talk of their Army being shoved all the way down to Singapore Island and of an evacuation of Malaya by the R.A.F., the opinion was repeatedly expressed that Singapore itself would hold out indefinitely, even if the dockyard and port could not be used at all by our shipping.

We completed assembly of the ABDAFLOAT staff with Rear Admiral Palliser, R.N., as Chief of Staff, and with two British, two American, and two Dutch assistants, - all of command rank. Additional to them was Lieut. Commander Mason, U.S.N., who, next to Colonel Field, had come to be the most important member of the Intelligence Section. It had already become apparent that, other than by direct observation by reconnaissance planes, we would be getting very little information about the enemy from sources other than Corregidor. The Naval unit there continued to be of the utmost value, and without its services ABDAFLOAT would have had to carry on very much in the dark. The American Naval communication unit at Lembang increased in importance and grew to a total of something over twenty officers and men.

During the period, the Japanese continued some activity in the Molucca Strait but its character was not clear. There were signs of a build-up and of activity toward Ambon and Kendari but there was insufficient information for proper estimate of enemy



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intentions. I advised ABDACOM that the Fleets could not be depended upon to break up an expedition against Ambon. I said that it would be well covered by Submarines but that previous experience showed that they could not be relied upon to do enough damage to break up an expedition embarked in many ships, according to the usual Jap practice; and that only under an unusual combination of favorable circumstances could we hope to get the few American surface ships available into action against the transports before they discharged. I also stated that if ABDACOM intended to withdraw the troops from Ambon he should act in the near future. The impression was gathered that the forces at Ambon should remain there and "fight it out".

The enemy completed his capture and occupancy of Tarakan and advanced south through Macassar Strait to Balikpapan, which he occupied without much opposition on the land. The Dutch reports were to the effect that all of the oil industry installations at both those places which were above ground were totally destroyed; moreover, that some or all of the wells were so plugged that the enemy would have to start drilling operations from the beginning in order to get fuel out of the fields. The demolition job at Tarakan was a smaller task than at Balikpapan but more time was available at the latter port, where the demolition began sometime before the Japanese appeared. While there is no doubt that the Dutch did accomplish a great deal of destruction at those places, we can by no means be certain that Dutch wells of considerable capacity did not fall into the hands of the Japanese. In any case, at Tarakan, which field gives a very high grade of petroleum, the oil is not at great depth. (Incidentally, the British field at Seria is said to be a very extensive one and the oil is very near the surface. In that field also, the oil is of a very high quality, - good enough for boiler fuel as it comes from the ground).

CinCAF had long believed that as far as natural resources were concerned, the oil fields were by far the most important strategic factor in the entire Far East area. On the possibility that the Japanese might capture some of the oil-bearing territory, CinCAF had urged the fullest possible preparations for destruction and had continued to press in that way insofar as befitted his position. Soon after the outbreak of war, he suggested that a certain amount of plugging of wells be started at once. There had seemed to be more reluctance on the part of the British owners of the Miri-Seria area than by the others. It was evident that very little preparatory work was done at Miri and Seria until the matter was finally put into the control

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of the British Commander-in-Chief, Eastern Fleet, in the Autumn of 1941.

The Striking Force, (American cruisers and destroyers), jumped off on 21 January to attack into Macassar Strait. The movement was based upon a Dutch Army report which was incorrect for the Jap advance was not made until later. This false move threw the Striking Force badly out of gear;- burned up a lot of fuel, MARBLEHEAD developed defects on one shaft, and BOISE was lost to the Asiatic Fleet for the remainder of the campaign by striking an uncharted pinnacle rock which ripped a long gash in her bottom near the keel. There was incomplete recovery of readiness to strike when the Jap expedition did proceed to Balikpapan.

However, four destroyers did attack off Balikpapan during the night of 23-24 January, with no loss, and succeeded in doing much damage. The results cannot be known but the destruction of four large valuable ships is certain and that of four others is most probable. The destroyers made either five or six known torpedo hits and between thirty and forty 4-inch hits at close range, generally along the waterline, with the projectiles exploding inside, and known to have started some fires. As far as the Division Commander knew, he was in the presence of superior enemy forces. He ran past four powerful Jap destroyers, and our destroyers held full speed during the 1½ hours that they were weaving in and out of the Japanese transport formation. In consequence, there were many misses by torpedoes which were launched at close range, while passing the targets at high speed. The staff work which set up the attack, (from Soerabaya), was excellent; weather conditions fitted; the destroyers were efficient, and they were also lucky in that they suffered practically no damage. The Japanese expedition down the Macassar Strait also suffered from submarines and from the attack of Dutch and American Army planes. The sum total of the damage inflicted proved to be such that the enemy stalled at Balikpapan and did not come farther by itself.

The S-36 was lost about thirty miles west of the city of Macassar, through grounding on an open sea reef, during thick weather. It should be said here that much of the waters of the N.E.I. are difficult from the navigational standpoint and since all aids to navigation had been discontinued as a war measure, the condition constituted a handicap at best. There was the

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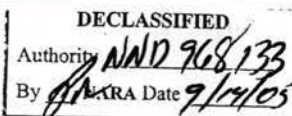
still greater handicap of almost total lack of familiarity with the operating areas on the part of our personnel. The Dutch charts and sailing directions are much better than the English publications but our officers could not read them. Effort was made to supply the deficiency by obtaining pilots but the required Dutch personnel was said to be unavailable.

Our surface ships had been nearly continuously at sea since the war began and the adverse effects as regards material efficiency of those old vessels were becoming apparent. Even when they were in port usually only a little could be obtained in the way of services. The tenders were at Darwin and their availability was reduced for that reason. The same circumstances existed for the Submarines. Several of them were already several weeks out and, in fact, to find more than three or four in port at any one time was a rare occasion. It was well understood in our own Fleet Command that ~~we were over-working our submarines~~, particularly for their first patrols, but so many emergencies kept developing on account of the necessity for resisting the enemy's southern advance to the utmost that there was nothing else to do.

Our submarines were continuing to shift their patrol areas to the southward in order to stay in front of the enemy advance. They continued, however, insofar as numbers available would permit, to patrol exits from the enemy ports and bases and to work on the enemy's lines of communications when information disclosed same.

It developed to be a mistake to have sent practically all our large auxiliaries all the way to Darwin, because that removed them so far from the center of gravity of operations of our ships which they existed to serve. A westward movement was consequently projected. During the period, American destroyers sank a submarine off Darwin. Examined the wreck by divers, 165 feet of water, no opportunity to get detailed information.

HOUSTON and two destroyers were being continually used in the Darwin-Torres Strait area for escorting American troop ships and auxiliaries. Also, we were having to meet some of the many demands for anti-submarine escorts in Java waters by using American destroyers.



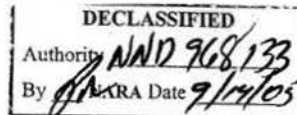
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Two more British convoys were sent to Singapore during the period and British and Dutch surface ships still were mainly engaged in that task. The Dutch surface ships remained fresh, - not in over-worked condition. The same condition applied to the Dutch submarines. They had been very active during December and two of them had sunk four ships each; three had been lost. But for some time the remaining Dutch submarines had operated most leisurely, usually with not more than two at sea at once.

During the period, ABDAFLOAT visited Soerbaya in order to generally regain touch and also to arrange to bring Admiral Glassford on shore so that command could be turned over to him, as ComSouthWestPac, under conditions such that he could properly exercise that command. This was a difficult change to carry out in the face of an advancing enemy and was a subject of considerable embarrassment at the time.

Since about 8 January, there had been received several communications about getting supplies into the Philippines. At first it was a direct call, from USAFFE upon ABDACOM, in meeting which we sent anti-aircraft ammunition into Corregidor. Somewhat later, but as soon as a cargo could be collected, a submarine carried small arms ammunition into Mindanao. This ammunition was sent in as soon as commensurate loads of the required components could be collected from Australia by our Army authorities. A third submarine for which an ammunition load was not primary, also went to Corregidor from Java - somewhat later. These supply voyages of course took the submarines away from their primary war missions for considerable periods. However, this was not all loss from the strictly Naval standpoint because upon their return the submarines brought out of Corregidor torpedoes, spares, and a certain number of key personnel, all of which was badly needed in the southern areas.

The project of getting food into Corregidor and Bataan was placed with the Army by the President, who made available a considerable sum to be employed for chartering merchant vessels and paying high wages to their personnel for attempts to run the supplies in from Australia or points along the Barrier. The Naval authorities of all three Nations in Java gave what assistance was possible but the full results are not known. CinCAF detailed a Commander to assist our Army authorities in Java.



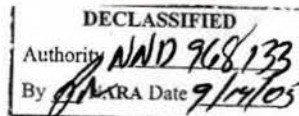
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The CinCAF also turned over to the Army a 2000-ton freighter, (Philippino flag), which it had under charter from November, 1941, and sparked up the ship's personnel into full willingness to undertake the venture. This ship was the most promising of those which were heard of as employed on the project from within the ABDA area; but it is understood that the food components for her cargo were collected too late for the ship to get loaded and well started before the Japanese advance was pretty well on top of Soerabaya. She is understood to have been caught while still well south.

The most promising venture of the lot was another Philippino ship, DON ISIDRO, a fast Diesel-engine inter-island ship which was sent south from Manila Bay during the early days of the war. This ship was loaded by the Army, in Australia in time to get through to the Philippines before the enemy had gotten very far into the N.E.I. waters. The CinCAF, after careful study, gave the ship a routing which seemed most promising and involved going through the Torres and Dampier Straits. Something miscarried, however, because the ship went south about Australia, to Fremantle, and was next heard of while approaching Batavia! DON ISIDRO was caught on the way north from there. Had she been properly directed from Australia, there was a very good chance that she would have reached Corregidor.

TO 31 JANUARY

The returning Submarines were by now reporting larger results than before but still were also reporting too many failures;- warheads not exploding on hits, torpedoes missing on account of bad runs, and too many attacks failing for various other reasons. A considerable number of the failures was still the fault of personnel. As could have been expected, first war patrols of Submarines are relatively inefficient and time is required to get into stride. The official reports of the Asiatic Submarines will, for the most part, be available and should cover this subject thoroughly.

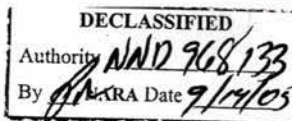


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By this date, the Submarines generally had been keeping the sea for unduly long periods; that is, upwards of 50 days for the large boats and 30 to 40 for the small boats, all in tropical waters at that. Many of the patrols were much longer than was intended because, in so many cases, Submarines which were on the way to base had to be turned back to increase opposition to the enemy's advance. It was being found, however, that, in spite of the very great hardships and strain over long periods, the personnel was standing it surprisingly well. Many were in rather bad shape upon return but appeared to recover in a very short period of rest.

CinCAF visited Soerabaya during the period and set up the new command arrangement under which he remained nominally CinCAF but with that office practically inactivated. Vice Admiral Glassford, with Rear Admiral Purnell as Chief of Staff, became Commander, U.S. Naval Forces in the Southwest Pacific. The Command Post remained at Soerabaya but was tending to shift out of that city on account of the threat of the pending enemy advance. By now, the forces under Commandant, Sixteenth Naval District, had officially come under USAFFE operational command; in practice, this arrangement had been in effect for some time. The Asiatic Fleet Intelligence work did remain altogether under CinCAF and there was certain cognizance as regards communications but, in most all other respects, the Naval and Marine forces, Manila Bay, were assisting the Army. In this role their services are known to have been of great value.

During this visit at Soerabaya, it was seen that some days would elapse before an American Striking Force of much potentiality could take the sea; the Destroyers had many empty tubes and no Cruiser was available, except MARBLEHEAD, which was completing temporary repairs to main power plant. ABDAFLOAT visited Batavia upon return and conferred with Vice Admiral Helfrich and Commodore Collins, R.A.N. (He usually saw eye-to-eye with the latter officer and had come to rely very greatly upon his judgment and general attitude). Vice Admiral Helfrich was still found disposed not to be entirely frank as regards the state and readiness of his forces. At this conference he did not disclose that he could get a considerable force of his own Cruisers and Destroyers to sea, - which would have strengthened our current weakness to the eastward of Java. (Without informing the ABDAFLOAT office, he had



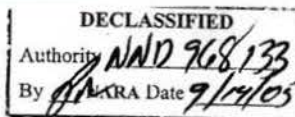
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ordered these forces into the Karimata Strait. It was a proper action, as instituted, but at the time of the conference the information upon which it was based had been found to be incorrect and the order had been cancelled. This latter was not disclosed for a little time afterward).

Started moving American auxiliaries westward from Darwin. (Directed it 29 January but first sailing was not until 3 February). This was necessitated by the requirements for servicing the Destroyers and Submarines in Java harbors. However, by now Darwin, as might have been expected, had been found most inadequate and unsuitable as a harbor and base. Moreover, being located in a bight of the ocean and free for approach from the north or west, it was becoming too easy for the enemy to cover Darwin and lock up anything inside. This decision amounted to our Navy's moving toward discontinuance of the use of Darwin as a base and did not conform to the general attitude which the United States administration had adopted a month or more previously. ABDACOM did not personally approve of moving American auxiliaries away from Darwin but he accepted the idea since British and Dutch Naval thought also agreed upon it.

At one of ABDACOM's conferences during this period ABDAFLOAT stated that the Allied Naval forces could have accomplished much more in the way of direct opposition to the enemy advance if no Cruisers and Destroyers had been used for escort duty; that the past history showed that we would have lost nothing at sea if convoys had gone "bare", with the possible exception of one fuel ship, TRINITY, which might have been lost in the vicinity of Darwin had she been unescorted. Those statements were unwelcome but were true.

During the period, (29th), the decision was made by ABDACOM to concentrate the British Army, which had been opposing the Japanese on the Peninsula, on Singapore itself. Included in that decision was the virtual withdrawal of the R.A.F. from British territory and projecting its future operations from the air fields of Sumatra. Formal orders were issued closing the naval dockyard at Singapore,- a step which was a very hard thing for the British to have to take in view of the Empire's policy over many years. It was understood that Rear Admiral Spooner, R.N., in command at Singapore, was himself considerably surprised at the suddenness of the British Army's retreat. In consequence of the decision, all ship movements involving



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Singapore now became a matter of bringing personnel and material out, rather than in, with general destination Java. Evacuation of women and children from Singapore had been in progress for some time but more or less on a go-as-you-please basis.

During the period, the Japanese were building up east of Celebes Island but their other expedition was still stalled off Balikpapan, - where it continued to present some attractive targets. Preparations of American Destroyers and MARBLEHEAD were pressed as rapidly as possible and MARBLEHEAD got out with four Destroyers, (with some empty tubes, however), and made another jump-off into the Makassar Strait. However, they were shadowed by Japanese air during the afternoon and since it was a bright moonlight night the Commander, very properly, decided not to drive home the attack in the face of the superior Japanese Naval forces which air reconnaissance reported.

Chief Air Marshall Pearce finally arrived. ABDAFLOAT did his best to get on good personal terms with him, looking toward promoting cooperation between planes and ships, but never made much progress. The new Air Commander had not been trained for such cooperation. One of his assistants was Group Captain Darvall, R.A.F., who had been long in Malaya; he was one officer of that service who seemed able to understand the problems over the water and, fortunately, he was available at the GHQ nearly all the time.

General Wavell again visited Singapore and upon his return stated in conference that he expected the Island to hold out indefinitely though, of course, its port would not be usable. A Jap expedition attacked Ambon on the 31st and took the entire place within two or three days. The Allied air force still remaining there at the time was meagre. The Dutch and Australian planes which had been stationed at the place had been well used up during preceding enemy air attacks. Our PatWing Ten lost two planes on account of inexperience - belonged to the squadron which had recently arrived. The Allies lost a strong battalion of Australians and some of the best units of the N.E.I. Army.

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During the period, the Japanese remained inactive in the Macassar Strait. They continued to build-up in Molucca Strait and on the east side of Celebes Island;- at Ambon probably but particularly at Kendari. There were very good Dutch landing fields at that point which had also been used by U.S. Army heavy bombers. They had hoped to continue such use and called for transportation of fuel supplies to that front. In compliance, 30,000 gallons of 100 octane gasoline were sent in by a destroyer plane tender which barely got clear just as a Japanese expeditionary force arrived to occupy Kendari. The Navy did considerable running in order to lay down gasoline along the Malay Barrier for use of Army planes which were to be ferried from Darwin to Java.

Sent LANGLEY to Freemantle to load Army P-40 pursuit planes, assembled, under an agreement to transport them north if conditions were propitious when the ship was loaded and ready. In the interest of secrecy of the movement, requested Army authorities to send no despatches whatever concerning this movement other than to direct that their planes be sent to Freemantle to be there loaded on a ship.

On 2 February called all three Naval Commanders, (Admirals Helfrich, Glassford, and Commodore Collins), to Lembang for conference with the objective of setting up a stronger Striking Force; most of the Cruisers and Destroyers were by then being relieved from escort duty into Singapore. Moreover, the enemy's next advance would be bound to bring his forces into easier reach of our forces, acting from the points from which they had to jump off. All the Dutch Cruisers and Destroyers had become available and there was prospect of soon using the British Destroyers, of which two were very strong, modern ships; also there was possibility of using one, or even two, very good British Cruisers, which were temporarily in the ABDA area.

During the conference, it was decided to set up the Striking Force with Rear Admiral Doormann, (Dutch), in command, - with Rear Admiral Purnell as second in command if found advisable to have two Flag Officers in the Force. It was also decided to first assemble the Force at sea, east of Java, as soon as possible and to strike at first opportunity. The

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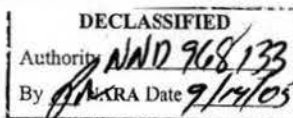
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tactical handling of the mixed forces was discussed. Since there would be little or no chance for training, there were bound to be difficulties but it was held that they would not be great because the force would be small and the tactics simple. The ship-to-ship communications were to be by short-range, high-frequency voice radio. General Wavell looked over the agreements and approved. The Striking Force got assembled on the 3rd and was sighted that P.M. by enemy air units which attacked Soerabaya.

Soerabaya experienced its first bombing attacks on February 3rd and, according to the usual Japanese procedure, it was directed at the air installations. The Dutch fighters in the vicinity were beaten and mostly lost in the air. The Japanese caught and destroyed a considerable number of planes on the ground, but all U.S. Navy planes got away. By then they had fully learned about dangers on the water, if they were where the enemy might expect them to be. The small Airplane Tenders permitted frequent changes of base, - which was their salvation and permitted them to continue their invaluable reconnaissance work for so long in the presence of strong enemy forces.

On the 4th of February, the Striking Force was caught by a powerful Jap bombing attack while on the way out to a jump-off point for another attack. Two Dutch and two American Cruisers, with a mixed force of ten Destroyers, were in the formation. MARBLEHEAD was knocked out of the campaign by three bombs, and would have sunk at sea but for an unusually courageous and efficient personnel. HOUSTON lost her after turret and her main radio and had heavy personnel casualties; - sixty killed. Both cruisers went to Tjilapjap. Admiral Doormann still had a considerable force intact, even after providing escorts for the damaged American Cruisers, but he immediately withdrew all his ships to the south and west. That movement was not known at Lembang for over half a day on account of the very defective Dutch ship-to-shore communications. The Striking Force was, therefore, thrown out or taken out of action for the time being. Henceforth, the only American Cruiser available in the area was the damaged HOUSTON. The BOISE sailed for Colombo 1-2 February. On 10 February, sent HOUSTON on a troop escort mission, Darwin to Koepang. Although with after turret disabled, HOUSTON was still the most powerful cruiser available in the area and quite capable of escort duty, at least. It was tentatively decided that when PHOENIX arrived in the area, HOUSTON would return to a home port.



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This last jump-off of the Striking Force was about three days later than it would have been if the Dutch Navy had acted with entire frankness in disclosing its state of readiness. The reason for such misunderstanding is still not known, but a natural tendency to hold back and expect American surface forces not to hold back had been more or less present for some time. I doubt that any individual is particularly to blame for that situation. Rather, it was a matter of failure to begin personal associations of American, British, and Dutch Naval officials soon enough.

The westward movement of the Striking Force after receiving the bombing attack was, probably, quite unfortunate. It later developed that an enemy expedition had milled around in waters south of Celebes for nearly a day, - 7-8 February, probably awaiting something. We had information of it - from patrol planes - but no surface ships were in position to strike it.

TO 10 FEBRUARY

During the period, General Wavell visited Burma and later Singapore. By the date of the latter visit, the Japs had already invaded Singapore Island and occupied considerable ground on its western end. ABDACOM directed four fast ships sent up to evacuate 3000 R.A.F. personnel to Java.

The period was marked by an increasing number of Allied planes lost in the air. Most of the losses were British and it was said that nearly all of the 100 new Hurricanes which were gotten into action around 30 January, through risky and expensive movements of ships, had been "used up". U.S. Army and Dutch Army air had also suffered and Allied power in the air was diminishing at an alarming rate. The Reconnaissance Command was also losing planes but was still keeping up a fairly good flow of information of enemy movements at sea.

During the period, ABDAIR disappeared from Lembang and was found to have established his Command Post at Bandoeng. This move was made without notice to

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ABDAFLOAT and when facts were made known to ABDACOM he indicated that he himself had not previously known of the move. There was continuing indication that the comparative weakness of the Allies in the air had been more a matter of unseasoned personnel than in an inadequacy of planes, in numbers or in types. This seemed to particularly apply to all squadrons of the R.A.F., and to the pursuit squadrons of the U.S. Army.

As soon as Admiral Doormann's withdrawal movement after receiving the bombing attack on 4 February was known, he was directed to reverse his movement and reform the Striking Force for use in the quadrant northeast of Java. He thereupon issued a directive setting up two rendezvous about 300 miles south of the Malay Barrier from which to fuel, assemble and jump off. This was a quite impracticable project in that the rendezvous were too far away and the sea there too rough for dependence on fueling at sea. Consequently, Admiral Doormann was directed to proceed to Tjilapjap for conference.

ABDAFLOAT visited Tjilapjap on the 8th, finding a considerable portion of the Striking Force in port, and conferred with Admiral Doormann. The latter was found to be rather over-apprehensive of enemy bombing attacks. Shortly after the meeting began information came in indicating a Jap expeditionary movement to be coming around the southeast end of Celebes and the Island of Bouton. From previous information, there was belief that the enemy's next move would be directed at Banjermassin, (southeast Borneo), or on eastern Java. (Actually, the enemy's next step was to take Makassar, - 9-10 February). ABDAFLOAT represented in the conference that if such developed, at least a night attack must be made. He directed Admiral Doormann to draw up plans for it and to take up position in readiness as soon as it could be done. The plan was issued very quickly and ships of the Striking Force began leaving port; the plan was to assemble just south of the Barrier and west of Bali. (By this time, it had become apparent that Admiral Doormann was naturally a very cautious sea commander and not inclined to take commensurate risks. Thought was given to relieving him but ABDAFLOAT decided against the step at that time. There was no Cruiser available upon which to embark an American Admiral and there was no British commander available; additional to which was the prevalence of feeling among the Dutch that their officers were not being given enough of the command positions, over the ABDA theatre - in all areas).

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At about the end of this period, there were indications of another Jap expedition forming at a group of Islands about 300 miles south of Saigon. It was not ABDACOM's practice to keep up running Estimates of the Situation, or "appreciations", - as the British call such documents. ABDAFLOAT kept up only very rough running estimates which usually were not preserved. On or about 9 February, the general strategic picture, as it appeared to him, was about as follows:-

The British in Singapore had already been rendered innocuous and there was question of the destination of the new enemy expedition referred to just above. The indications were that it was being directed at Banda Island or its vicinity, with ultimate destination either western Java or central Sumatra, - probably the latter.

There was at the same time to be considered the Jap movement through Molucca Strait; (and perhaps the remains of the detachment which came through Macassar Strait). It was known that the Japs had built-up strongly around Kendari and to the south of it, particularly as regards air fields and air power, so that it was a considerable base. That area having been relatively quiescent for some time, the assumption had to be made that there would be a push from those eastern Jap forces in the near future. While it later developed that they first made a short step only to Macassar, and generally occupying all of southwest Celebes, it was at this time estimated that a straight jump to Madura Island or Bali was quite likely. Also that if such jump were made, the Striking Force would have a fair opportunity for breaking it up. Unfortunately, for about 48 hours at this time, either bad weather or heavy enemy air opposition prevented our reconnaissance planes from getting any information. This fact caused ABDAFLOAT to hold to his estimate about 24 hours longer than would otherwise have been the case, during which time the Striking Force was retained to the eastward, whereas it should have moved west for use against the other invading expedition.

ABDAFLOAT also visited HOUSTON and MARBLEHEAD at Tjilapjap on 8 February and saw at first hand the damage to HOUSTON and MARBLEHEAD. Both ships had been severely punished, but the morale and courage of the officers and men seemed in no way impaired. It was finally decided that HOUSTON would remain in the area

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for the present and that her next employment would be in covering a troop movement, which ABDACOM was forming up, from Darwin to Koepang or Timor, for the better protection of the landing field there.

MARBLEHEAD was seen to be badly wrecked. By virtue of a high degree of technical ability on the part of a Dutch Naval architect, the ship's bow had been lifted out of water so that the hole in the bottom could be roughly patched. There was total lack of steering power but it was considered less risky to send the ship to sea steering with her engines than to attempt to get the stern out of water with the limited lifting power available in the Tjilapjap dock. It was decided that MARBLEHEAD must be gotten out of the ABDA area as early as possible, and she sailed for Ceylon, OTUS accompanying, within a very few days. Only unusually efficient and tenacious officers and men could have saved this ship in the first instance, or have continued to keep the sea with her over such long periods.

The Tankers and Tenders arrived at Tjilapjap and began giving long-deferred service, (including torpedoes), to Destroyers and Submarines which had long needed it. Thenceforth, Tjilapjap was the principal base for American ships; it was a most inadequate harbor but the only one with much of any security; said security lay entirely in the location.

The Submarines continued to be active, - Dutch boats in the western part of the theatre, American boats in the central and eastern parts. Since their splendid performances during December, the Dutch Submarines had not been effective. The American boats were by now bringing back larger "bags" than before and the total had become considerable. But there were still occurring too many lost opportunities to inflict severe damage on the enemy. It was still the case that the enemy could advance his amphibious expeditions in the face of Submarines without suffering enough loss to stop or break him up. However, the Submarines are thought to have caused the enemy greater losses than did everything else in the ABDA area. |||

8th Feb.
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During the period, the Japanese invasion of Singapore Island made ground very rapidly, against what was the equivalent of three full British divisions, and the surrender occurred on 15 February. During the last days of Singapore, evacuation of material and personnel - including women and children - was carried on as well as it could be done in the immediate presence of an invading enemy. Conditions were very chaotic. Ships of all types were subjected to considerable bombing attack, while loading and while at sea for quite a distance south of Singapore.) The R.A.F. was operating from Java and the south-central fields of Sumatra and offering opposition to the Japanese aircraft in their operations which began to extend well south of Singapore.

The Japanese invasion of the Palembang section of Sumatra got underway, - a paratroop attack at first followed by landings on the east coast and movements up the rivers. The success or failure of this invasion was not clearly known in Java as the period closed. Neither was it known what steps, if any, had been taken toward denying the enemy petroleum from this, the most valuable oil property of the N.E.I.

There was a large influx of shipping into Java ports - particularly into Priok, the port of Batavia. Conditions had become badly disrupted at all the ports; their facilities would have been over-taxed at best, additional to which was the desertion of much of the Malay laborers as soon as they heard the first bombs explode.

The Japanese forces in Celebes and the surrounding territory made no move during the period. By the evening of 11 February, ABDAFLOAT decided that the menace to the west of Borneo was the greater and the Striking Force was directed to shift to the westward to oppose. As previously stated, about 24 hours were lost by the belatedness of this decision. However, the loss was more apparent than real, because when the Striking Force did jump off for the waters north of Banka Island, (13th), Admiral Doormann had just been strongly reinforced by the addition of EXETER, HOBART, and most of the British Destroyers. That made a force of four very good light cruisers adequately supplied with destroyers, and Admiral Doormann

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was in consequence told that:- "He should consider the advisability of an attack upon enemy expeditions by day as well as by night in view of the considerably increased power of his force".

The Striking Force got into the waters northeast of Banka Island during the night of 13-14 February, leaving one Dutch Destroyer aground on the way. The Force passed through several bombing attacks the next day without injury and then it returned to Batavia in the early morning of the 15th, having accomplished nothing. The Japanese expedition was already into Banka Strait, and the Sumatra rivers, with the advance elements of their expedition,- with Palembang as their objective. The Striking Force arrived too late to defeat at sea the landing of the enemy's first waves, but it probably could have inflicted considerable damage had Admiral Doormann pressed into Banka Strait from the north or swept to the northward. There were several Jap detachments in the vicinity and there were some signs that just the appearance of the Striking Force in those waters considerably disrupted the Jap movements.

It became too dangerous to continue to send Tankers into Palembang for cargo. The producing capacity on Java, which was all that remained available to the Allies, was only 22,000 tons per month, which could be handled by a small number of Tankers. Accordingly, ABDAFLOAT ordered all Tankers sent to the Persian Gulf as soon as they were ready for cargoes. He directed that the two American Tankers be sent out as soon as practicable.

On 14 February, ABDAFLOAT directed that a large Submarine be sent to Corregidor to evacuate the American High Commissioner, the Honorable Mr. Sayre,- and four other civilians who were with him,- and to fill the rest of the passenger capacity of the boat with Naval personnel selected for their potentiality for carrying on the war.

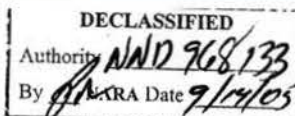
On 12 February, ABDACOM received a directive under which Admiral Hart was to turn over operational command as ABDAFLOAT to Vice Admiral Helfrich. The turn-over was made on the 14th at Lembang. Admiral Hart represented to ABDACOM that with a Dutch Admiral as ABDAFLOAT and a British Admiral as a Chief of Staff, the American Navy did not have at Lembang a representation commensurate with its power,- which still

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was about half the total strength of the three Allied Navies. Making no progress toward any remedial action in this line, he reported the facts to Washington but at the same time urged ABDACOM that Vice Admiral Glassford be placed either in or near ABDAFLOAT's H.Q. This seemed very necessary in order that the Asiatic Fleet would have proper representation and have its interest and welfare looked after to the best advantage which seemed possible under the circumstances. Efforts of this sort, completing the turning over of Asiatic Fleet's affairs to Vice Admiral Glassford, etc., consumed the time up to late afternoon of 15 February, when Admiral Hart departed from Lembang bound for Washington.



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U.S. Senate
Washington, D.C.
8 October, 1946.

The Honorable James Forrestal
Secretary of the Navy
Navy Department
Washington, 25, D.C.

My dear Mr. Secretary:

During the spring of 1942, in response to an oral directive from Admiral King, I wrote a "Narrative of Events" for the Asiatic Fleet up to 15 February 1942, the date on which I left the Far Eastern theater of the war. It was primarily an operational narrative. The Office of Naval History of the Navy Department has asked that I revise or supplement that document, utilizing material now on hand which was not available in 1942. There is considerable of such material which has been collected from various sources and which is additional to the unofficial file mentioned on the cover of the Narrative.

I have examined that material and have again gone over the "Narrative." I think the errors of commission in that document are quite minor. It was written while engaged in other duties and, as stated, from scant source material. There are, however, a number of downright omissions and various places where somewhat important features are so briefly mentioned that their significance is not prominent.

However, all things considered, I think it best not to revise the Narrative. I prefer to let it stand as originally produced. The following is submitted as a supplement and, in certain respects, it is a summary. Rather than following the chronological form of the Narrative, this supplement is written under certain pertinent headings.

Very truly yours,

Thos. C. Hart

TCH*MSC

Enclosures - 2.

CC - Secretary Forrestal, 2; Captain Heffernan, 2; Senator Hart, 1.

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I. THE WAR PLANS

General Considerations.

The Basic War Plans were Joint Plans of the War and Navy Departments. When it came to Contributory War Plans in the Far East which embraced allied effort, there had to be a difference between those of the Army and Navy.

Our own Army in the Philippines had exactly the same mission as did our Allies in Malaya and Java. Those missions were relatively simple:- to hold their own essential areas against invasion. There was no thought of concentrating allied Army forces on one or more of those vital areas. Each was on his own.

The respective Fleets had more complex situations as regards plans. The mobility of sea forces permitted combinations and such were quite properly expected. Naval plans therefore had to provide at least for such combined operations, with all the entailed complexities. Additionally, there was the usual difficulty which allies have in coming into agreements on war plans. Moreover, under the political situations which existed prior to our entry in the war, the Far Eastern Fleets of the Americans, British and Dutch could not train, and otherwise prepare together. Like the others, our own Army could plan its simple mission with assurance and realistically train to meet it. Our Asiatic Fleet's mission had to be less concrete and it could train only by itself, and not in all the waters which the situation indicated would be likely theaters.

In the background of the War Plan under which we engaged in World War II lies a long-standing difference in our Army and Navy

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attitudes toward holding the Philippines in a U.S.-Japanese war. Between the wars, the Army was entirely pessimistic while, at times, the Navy took the position that it was possible to hold. However, the realistic concept that Japan would initially take Luzon generally prevailed. The Army provided for only a holding action, (citadel defense), at Manila Bay entrance, and the Navy made no provision for maintaining considerable forces in the theater. Instead, the plan was to fight our way across the Pacific and retake the Philippines.

In 1935, the Philippine Commonwealth employed General McArthur as Military Advisor and began preparations for its own defense. The thesis was that the Filipinos would build up a ground army with air components which could defeat any force which the Japanese could transport and land in the Philippines -- the estimate being that such force was bound to be quite limited in strength. The target date was 1946 and it does not appear that the effort progressed far enough for inclusion in our basic war plans. By 1940, President Quezon had decided that the thesis was wrong and the Commonwealth began to relax its effort.

Prior to the outbreak of World War II in 1939, the Asiatic Fleet War Plan was to retire forthwith its deep-sea ships at the outbreak of the war. It was intended to pass through the Malay Barrier, with all except local defense components, attempt to remain somewhere in the Indian Ocean, until our main fleet's westward advance had progressed, and to operate against Japanese shipping. (The surface forces at the time were about what they were in December 1941). That plan had stood for some years before 1939 and was generally understood and agreed to by all concerned.

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With the outbreak of the war in 1939, I soon concluded that at least the fleet should not have to flee past the Malay Barrier, that we were almost bound to be welcomed by the British or the Dutch, and that we could do better than hide in the Indian Ocean. A more favorable outlook built up from there onward, helped along by some submarine and air reinforcements, though there was little increase in our Army's potentiality until mid-year of 1941.

In the winter of 1940-41, WPL 44 took shape, contemplating a direct American-British-Dutch alliance, and staff conferences were instituted, (held at Singapore and Batavia). The conferences were for planning and making arrangements for joint effort by the three "fleets." At the time, my own surface force was about half the total and my submarines were two-thirds. WPL 44 contemplated a U.S. cruiser-destroyer reinforcement which, if it had ever arrived, would have about trebled the surface power of our Asiatic Fleet. I was advised (7 February 1941) to put myself forward as prospective commander of the allied fleet but I did not raise the point.

The results of the staff conferences were issued as the "Plenaps." The dominant concept conformed to WPL 44 and the idea was that the basic objective was at least to hold the Malay Barrier, thus denying the Indian Ocean to the Japanese. My own conferee, (Purnell), also emphasized that denial must extend to the petroleum fields. The Dutch had been skittery about contacts with us but went into the Conferences wholeheartedly, though usually acceding to the British, with whom they had been in better touch. There was a basic disagreement in all the conferences:- the first thought of

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the British was usually the convoy and escort of shipping. We held to the position that the essential was to make the most of our combat power by concentrations of our ships and maintaining readiness to attack. The disagreements were not specific or concrete -- there could be no clear line of demarcation -- but the difference in attitude was always present. It should be said in passing that we looked upon the British intention of retiring the Anzac ships to defend their own territorial waters as wholly wrong. We thought that they should work on the fighting front.

WPL 44 was replaced by WPL 46, in which a principal change for us was that the Asiatic Fleet would not receive the strong cruiser-destroyer reinforcement. The new plan contemplated a much more powerful British Fleet, including capital ships, which would give the British the preponderant naval power. (The advance element, two strong, fast ships, arrived at Singapore with a new commander, Admiral Phillips, just as the war began.) The basic strategic idea of WPL 46 was the same -- that the Malay Barrier must be held.

The Planaps which resulted from the last Staff Conference, before Pearl Harbor, was disapproved by Washington (11 September 1941) because it proposed to employ so much power in convoy and escort and not effect a fighting potential along and north of the Malay Barrier. We entered the war, therefore, in a slightly hazy situation as regards our relationships and commitments toward our Allies. However, I was given a very free rein by the Chief of Operations, in that the British and Dutch Admiralties had been told that the strategic direction of the Asiatic Fleet was in my hands. That highly important

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Opanav dispatch thus meant that the WPL 46 provisions placing strategic direction in the hands of the British Commander-in-Chief were in abeyance. That was not changed but it was clear, just the same, that after the British Fleet did receive the contemplated reinforcements, a unified command would be again proposed. I thought it correct and proper, as soon as the British Fleet became preponderant -- particularly if the attitude changed. I should say that after I had sized up Admiral Tom Phillips (R.N.) in Manila, 6 December 1941, I concluded that he would be entirely adequate for the unified command, as soon as he and his fleet could get "set." My innermost thought was that I would be entirely content to serve under him and embraced the hope that my considerable seniority would not get in the way of doing so.

However, I was in a quandry. WPL 46 also said that the Fleet's mission was to support the defense of the Philippines and it was up to me to decide what components to deploy initially to that end. The main question, as regards combat elements, concerned the use of cruisers and destroyers in direct all-out defense of the Philippines, in which I estimated they would soon be lost, and the possibility of their more profitable employment as combined with the British and Dutch.

On 17 September 1941, I proposed to Opanav that the initial deployment of the cruisers, two-thirds of the destroyers and all large auxiliaries except submarine tenders be well to the southwest. The proposal was approved (25 September), the dispatch also pointing out that heavy British reinforcements were coming and mentioning that Manila Bay might become very important in the full picture as a base

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for all the fleets. So we continued to speculate, the while USAFFE was building up, with plenty of attendant publicity, until:-

As appears in the Narrative, (page 25), on 27 October 1941, I proposed that the entire fleet fight the coming war from Manila Bay, which would have meant employing all our potentiality in direct defense of the Philippines. The Navy Department disapproved the proposal -- and that was an eminently correct decision. It is to regretted only that the decision was nearly a month in coming forth. The loss of time had an adverse result only in that we could have been somewhat better prepared for the Java campaign from the logistic standpoint. The surface ships were deployed to the southwest in time.

Plans Relationships With Commanding Generals In Philippines:

About February 1940, I talked matters over with the Commanding General, then Major General Grant, an old friend and associate for two years at the Army War College. We agreed that the positions of our commands were not happy, but I said that at least the fleet would not go as far from him as had been planned! General Grant told of his efforts to get reinforcements. I said that from my own standpoint his most important defensive weapon would be fighter airplanes. He seemed to agree.

When WPL 44 arrived, General Grunert was in command and, like his predecessor, he was always frank and outspoken, with the cards on the table. I outlined the Staff Conference results to date. I also represented that WPL 44 spelled for me that, until Manila Bay was more strongly held, the Fleet must make logistic preparations

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farther south, at the very least to the extent of having the auxiliaries there on D-Day; and that while the submarines -- which constituted most of the power -- would be fighting in direct Army support, it did not look like a profitable employment for a cruiser-destroyer detachment which had such limited ship characteristics as did ours. General Grunert ~~demurred~~ demurred, as I expected he would. It was natural that he should want all possible support, from our arms, in his own area. I outlined the considerations which were before the Staff Conferences with our prospective Allies and the possible commitments into which we might enter.

General Grunert turned over to General MacArthur in July - August 1941. At long last the War Department began building up strength in the Philippines. A strong detachment of fighter planes had arrived previously. On 22 September, I arranged an interview with General MacArthur and recounted all that had transpired concerning war plans and in allied conferences up to that date. I went on to say that we would make an initial employment, when the time came, with submarines around Luzon and off enemy ports, but that for surface ships the deployment had to be defensive, that the ships would have to move about, even disperse, and in general would be well to the southward. Also that whether or not the cruiser-destroyer detachment got back north would have to fit the situation as it developed.

At the end of the rather long recital, General MacArthur replied that the Navy had its plans, the Army had its plans and that we each had our own fields. He had no questions whatever, made no suggestions and offered no objections.

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During this and other discussions that I had with General MacArthur appeared his statement that he "would meet them at the beaches where they would be weakest and fight to destruction." The citadel defense previously planned was expanded to include all the Philippines less Mindanao and Palawan and some small outlying islands.

Inasmuch as I did not learn about the considerable changes which the USAFFE made in the plans for defense until they were in effect, the impression was that the Commanding General thought that close collaboration was not vital. The Fleet was unable to accept that, as regards air craft at least.

Plans Relationships While In Java.

As far as formal war plans are concerned, there were none while I served under General Wavell's command in the ABDA area. Neither were any formal operation plans issued from the ABDA Headquarters. There were conferences at which the situations were discussed and occasional agreements reached. It was primarily a British Army Headquarters, at which the all-absorbing interest was in the progress of the Jap attack toward and on Singapore. Sea and air operations and other portions of the ABDA theater were matters in which nature rather took its course -- with such cooperative action as General Wavell's subordinates achieved.

The foregoing statement is not made in criticism, because when we all arrived in Java the situation was already a hand-to-mouth affair and nothing could have been planned which would have materially altered the course of events. The cooperative principle worked well

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enough except that there seemed to be no cooperation by the RAF -- and there was only a little by the (very small) air components of the American and Dutch Armies. It was only by careful inquiry that we could find out anything about the activities or the potentialities of those organizations. There was no occasion on which operations at sea received any cooperation or assistance from the aforesaid air components of General Wavell's command. The few sea planes of the American and Dutch Navies performed excellent reconnaissance service over the seas. Particularly was that the case with our own Patwing Ten which continued to gain information with the skies full of Japs. Incidentally, those slow PBY's made two very gallant attacks, for which they were not built.

The ABDA Naval plans fell into a pattern as follows:- The date of setting up ABDA found all British ships on escort duty into and out of Singapore with most of the Dutch ships "covering" such movements. That activity was held to be the most important job, which could not be interfered with. (In fact, there was an effort to keep it out from under any command.) Therefore the British and Dutch operated north of Java -- entirely on defensive missions -- mostly out of Batavia. Our Asiatic Fleet operated out of Soerabaya, at the other end of Java, to the north and east. (See my Operation Order 1-42 of 7 January.) While the American ships also had to do some escorting, they did carry out offensive missions. It was not until Singapore was falling that the British and Dutch ships could be used for attack on the advancing Japs. By that time, planning had to be pretty sketchy.

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II. BASES AND LOGISTICS

This subject is most intimately connected with strategy and with all planning because of the limitations therein. Actually the Asiatic Fleet was not limited because of any deficiencies in supplies in the Far East. It had been amply supplied with all necessities and the difficulties were a matter of distribution. The supplies had been accumulated in Luzon over the years when there was no other place for them. There was not time to accumulate materiel in British and Dutch ports after the changed political situation made that possible.

The Fleet had been assigned an adequate number of large auxiliaries -- except for a shortage in submarine tenders -- and their aggregate cargo capacity was considerable. A goodly quantity, (2500 tons), of many items of supply was loaded into four of those ships in the summer of 1941, but some of it had to be off-loaded later, ~~to~~ to overcome deterioration. We did not get it all reloaded -- plus additions advisable -- because of the time lost when it was thought that Washington would approve our proposal to fight the war from Manila Bay. Consequently we made the mistake of leaving a quantity of torpedoes, ammunition, special and general supplies in Manila Bay which the large auxiliaries might have added to their loads. As the campaign developed, our operations were very little hampered by shortages, but they soon would have been.

A base provides for repairs as well as supplies, and we had in Cavite a fairly adequate though a shaky installation. It was lost on 10 December in a bombing attack, which encountered no opposition

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whatever from our own fighter planes. That was a big accomplishment for the Japs. It came very quickly, and from that date onward Manila Bay could not be locked upon as any sort of base whatever except for the underground installations, on Corregidor. The first of those was a communications intelligence unit which got into full operation quite a time before the war broke on us and became highly efficient. The unit continued its work until long after Java fell and was the best informational source to General Wavell's Intelligence Division. Following that idea, in the winter of 1939-40, I pressed Washington strongly for an extension of underground facilities. The funds were supplied and by December 1941, we had a torpedo shop and store, some spare parts and stores and complete radio sending and receiving equipment underground. The radio sets had their own power source and communications were maintained right up to the surrender of Corregidor.

As an alternative to Cavite as a base, we did not for long even consider Singapore. Java possessed three adequate harbors, of which Soerabaya had good repair facilities, though much of its capacity was needed by the Dutch Fleet. However, it served us well and we should have sent our own large auxiliaries there when they arrived from the north. At the time, Port Darwin, (northwest Australia), was much in the minds of the War and Navy Departments and the indications were that Washington favored its occupancy by us. Our tenders were accordingly sent there, as I learned upon my own arrival, after being six days incommunicado en route from Manila. Port Darwin is a poor place, even as a harbor, and its use by our

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ships was disadvantageous in most respects. I felt that the movement had been a mistake but made no change until Darwin began to be menaced by sea and air attack, toward the end of January. General Wavell demurred at our making the change but acceded to the unanimity of naval opinion.

The general situation was that, from the beginning of the war, our ships were very inadequately based. They were run very hard and long and when they were in port the time available and the capacity of repair facilities was so limited that necessary upkeep was impossible. The old ships in particular ran down rapidly and combat efficiency of material became lowered.

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III. FEATURES OF OPERATIONS.Surface Ships:

It seems advisable to make mention of ship characteristics -- though all of it should be already known in Navy circles. There were three cruisers -- including BOISE, which was caught on the station. She was the strongest one. She had to be sent out of the area after a grounding in January. HOUSTON was ten years old, a good ship in high visibility but on the slow side. MARBLEHEAD and all thirteen destroyers were old ships -- old enough to vote! Formation speed for them had to be under thirty knots. The destroyers were weak in guns and very strong in torpedoes, (twelve in each).

Those qualities meant, very definitely, that the best chance lay in night action. Now making a night assault meant making a day-light run of several hours to a point at which the Japs were known to be. The ever-present difficulty lay in the enemy control of the air. In the face of it, our own ability to locate a target at which to strike was low, whereas the chance that the enemy would sight our striking force while running in was much better. Apart from the danger of getting caught, there was the probability that our striking force would find nothing to strike. In short, we could know little about the enemy's movements, and he could know much about ours. Those were important factors for any of our commanders, who had to balance risks as against possible gains.

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The small force of PT boats were likewise a night weapon -- of short radius. They did not arrive in time to get set to jump off from any point other than Manila Bay. The PTs had not become familiar with the possible "hide-outs" and we had not laid down caches of supplies of the special fuel which they required.

The Initial Deployment still looks to have been correct, except that 8 December 1941 found too many auxiliaries and destroyers (5) in Manila Bay. That mistake was corrected during the two succeeding days and the southern detachment, (Task Force Five), covered the movement. It likewise covered to some extent the escape of 200,000 tons of merchant shipping -- though those ships do not appear to have been a Jap objective. They would have made a fine "bag." Of course, we thought over bringing the cruisers and destroyers back for a strike into North Luzon waters. By the end of the fatal day of 10 December, it was clear that the enemy dominated the air, thus creating the situation briefed above. Furthermore, that situation was at its worst on the west side of Luzon, where the weather in December is always clear. Our estimate was that the chances were much too poor and that the time for such great risk of expenditure of ships -- with low chance of gains -- had not arrived. Admiral Phillips' two fine ships were lost on 10 December, we had learned the true situation at Pearl Harbor, and we saw that the allied fleets in the area were on their own. So the decision was for Task Force Five to go on to the Barrier and get set to work from there -- which would take some doing.

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There was one feature of the deployment which we never understood. About 1 December 1941, Opnav sent an unusually peremptory directive to send three small ships in on the Indo-China coast, as pickets. We were already scouting that coast by air, (as cautiously as one can get airmen to act!), and that is a more efficient method. It was a very minor movement but it ran counter to the directive that our forces were to make no menacing moves, and we on the spot could not understand it.

In N.E.I. Waters: There is little need to supplement the narrative. The weather conditions in the area gave the Japs less return from their control of the air. Our own reconnaissance planes, (particularly the American), operated by using cloud cover and shifting their bases -- though with much loss. The ships could find cloud cover at times -- on some days quite good cover. The chances were better for those reasons; and also, the enemy was more extended, had more troubles and was not so hot as he began. Despite all that, the initiative and most other advantages still lay with the Japanese.

As mentioned in the narrative, our cruiser-destroyer force jumped off to attack on seven occasions during my tenure of command. For the majority of the occasions, the force was all American. Most of those strikes failed and one of them was stopped in the beginning by heavy bomb damage to the two American cruisers. One of them, into Balikpapan, was quite successful. The last of those seven attempts was by an American-British-Dutch force which was the most powerful that we had collected and was the one from which I expected results.

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The strike was past Banka Island northward, while the enemy was moving against the Sumatra oil fields. It arrived rather late, went through some bombing attacks without damage, and retired without pressing in. I thought at the time that we might have persisted longer on the strike, but of course I was not the man on the spot. In retrospect, it appears to me that our own surface ships accomplished as much offensively as could have been expected of them.

As narrated, escort and convoy duty absorbed much of the total cruiser-destroyer effort available. Convoys were given fairly strong escorts from Suenda Strait to Singapore, about 500 miles. In all, ten reinforcing convoys were taken into and out of that port in about five weeks.

The Submarines.

This type comprised a large part of the Asiatic Fleet's power — twenty-nine boats, all but six being large, modern ones. I expected large results but, in common with the submariners themselves, was disappointed. That is still the case, for the American submarines as a whole did, over the years, sink more tonnage than all the rest of our arms put together. Our Asiatic boats sank their share in the end and, during the period of my incumbency, put down or knocked out a considerable tonnage. However, they failed to cause much disruption to any of the enemy invasions, and that is what was most hoped for.

Prize was with one-third

The initial deployment plan for submarines
 (on directly offensive missions, off enemy ports, and two-thirds in) defensive, intercept positions near Luzon. The eight boats detailed

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to the offensive positions did not start for their stations before the war began because Washington ordered a "defensive" deployment. We probably would not have started them anyhow, in the political atmosphere which prevailed, because some one of the submarine captains might make a mistake and be seen. In consequence, those eight boats arrived late. The offensive missions were continued but, as time went on and the campaign moved down to N.E.I. waters, the defensive-intercept policy was continued against the enemy's successive invsionary movements. There was continued paucity of results against such enemy bodies of ships.

The Dutch submarines were a sizable force of small and medium sized boats, well adapted to the area. At first they obtained good results, two of them making very damaging attacks during the first few days. That was their high-water mark, for results then fell off. They achieved further results, but by the time I arrived in Java, few of them were on the firing line, and during my time there the Dutch boats did not keep the sea in anything like the proportion of time that ours did.

The reasons for not obtaining the expected results from the American submarines have been sought by many. To my own mind those reasons are mainly as follows:-

The Japanese expeditions used excellent tactics and counter-measures -- very small ships when such would answer, perfect timing for advantageous visibility conditions, routing into shallow waters, strong escorts of anti-submarine craft for large ships, and they made no mistakes. Probably all had been planned long before and special

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training undergone. All in all, the Japs were hard to hit. They had the initiative and, in the beginning, they were hot.

Our own personnel was not caught flat-footed, but it took some time to warm up, feel out the enemy's methods and get our hands in. During that period some submarine captains missed chances which they later would have cashed in upon easily.

Most unfortunately, our submarines went into the war with defective torpedoes; and there is nothing more soul-destroying to a submarine crew than to go through the difficulties and dangers of getting into firing position and having the torpedoes fail. With such a complicated weapon, there is always a percentage of bad runs. The twelve boats which joined shortly before the war are reported to have had a high percentage because their torpedoes had been held charged and ready for a long time. However, the main trouble was much more deep-seated. The torpedoes as issued ran several feet below their set depth and the war-head exploders often failed to function when the torpedoes did hit. It took time even to diagnose the disease, longer to get it corrected; and in the interim many submariner heartbreaks occurred.

Lastly, the Asiatic Submarine Commander, (Wilkes), thinks the High Command erred in requiring so much defensive-intercept employment. He may well be correct in that. If the boats had not been so stationed, where their bags actually were small, they might have gotten bigger ones elsewhere. Granting that, it can only be said that the intercepts of invasion expeditions had to be attempted, because nothing else stood between the Japanese and success of the invasions. That had to be the primary mission.

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C O P Y

Personnel.

This supplement must not pass without mention of the men of the fleet who fought well and suffered -- severely. There were around 11,000 Navy and Marine personnel, and no man ever commanded a better lot. The officers, from the Commanders and my excellent Staff down to the last V-7 Ensign, met their tests and performed at a high average. Naturally, the quality was not uniform, but as a whole they were good, very good. Like their officers, the men were regulars and were of longer average service and experience than had the rest of the Navy. For instance, the Fourth Marines were not a large regiment but they were veterans of the regular Marine type and constituted a strong regiment. The men of the entire Asiatic command were splendid. They must have realized fairly early what the outcome of the campaign would be. But, like their officers, they never faltered and kept their fighting edge to the end. I remember Captain Rooks' last words to me. His HOUSTON took a severe bomb hit which wiped out one of the three turrets. Rooks had just been to the burial of the sixty dead and we were discussing what his ship should do next. I was thinking of sending her out of ABDA area but decided it would be wrong, with which he agreed. After telling me that he would take his ship out again in a few hours, Rooks pointed to the wreck of his after turret and said, "A Jap cruiser will have one strike on us, but with the two remaining we will try to break up his game." Such was the spirit. Rooks died in combat a few days later, with two-thirds of his crew.

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Many more died -- in combat or during three and one-half years of brutal imprisonment. They were just the sort to have been of great value in leavening the huge numbers of new officers and men which the Navy recruited. We left about 4,000 Navy and Marines in Luzon. The Marines had to stay, as did much of the Navy personnel. But there were some hundreds that could no longer be used for the purposes for which they were trained. By acting in time, I might have sent them out and it is my greatest single regret that I did not. In the end they all fought, afloat or ashore. The last days of Corregidor found nearly 1,000 Navy in the beach defenses with the Marines.

We also lost heavily in the Java campaign. Since most of the losses of life occurred after I turned over command to another, it is not altogether ethical for me to say such about it, but one thing I cannot pass. We lost about eight hundred who were in ships of no combat value and which could have been sent out of danger in time without reducing the fighting strength. Their loss in that way should not have occurred. Those officers and men were of the same quality as those in our fighting ships, and the number approximates our total losses at Tarawa.

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IV. COMMAND AND COOPERATIVE RELATIONSHIPS

Sometime in early 1941, I wrote that the best solution of prospective difficulties would be Unity of Command in the Far East. The statement was mostly from the Naval viewpoint, but it was also a generality. It would have been best if the entire Far East area, including the Philippines, had been under one command -- provided that fortunate choice could have been of the commander and of the important members of what would have been a mixed staff. It would have been necessary to a successful performance to have set up that command several months before war came to the Far East, and for the Allies to have made timely decisions as to the size and character of the fighting components which they would each supply to the Supreme Commander.

Such decisions in themselves were impractical under the political conditions which preceded our D-Day, but they would have been essential, because a great deal of staff work would have been necessary if the best was to be made of the allied potential. That such circumstances were impossible is demonstrated by the fact that the Staff Conferences, (as herein called), at Singapore and Batavia did not get on too well. One reason was that same primary difficulty of uncertainty as to the forces which would be available.

We found ourselves in the war committed to the cooperative principle and that was generally the method which prevailed. There were, of course, difficulties in working together and, as is well known, the Allies did not work to the best advantage over the area. In my own opinion, the final result in the Far East was not affected thereby, save perhaps as regards the timing.

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With the forces which the Allies possessed, we would have lost the Far East theater, even if the best conceivable Command, Staff and Plans had been entirely ready before December, 1941. Our best would have been to make it harder for the Japs to achieve their victory. They would have suffered heavier losses, would perhaps have been obliged to use more of their war potential in conquering that vast area, and might have been somewhat slower in that accomplishment. As I see it, the ultimate result would have been exactly the same as far as the Far East was concerned, though the Japanese would perhaps not have had the power to project themselves quite so far to the South Eastward as they did reach. The Japs would have gone all-out to win in the Far East area, because they had to gain possession of the petroleum and other natural resources which were there.

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A unified command was finally set up for all of the area except the Philippines. General Wavell was chosen for the Commander, and he was a man with a well-deserved "name." He was an experienced commander of the rugged, hard-fighting, persistent type, and as a man he is an extremely likeable individual. The action of the Allied governments came far too late, for the Japanese were on the way and the command had to be set up, starting from zero, in the face of an enemy who from the start was pressing to the southward with all the power he needed.

The order setting up General Wavell's command was issued on or about 3 January, General Wavell and the British members of his staff arrived in Batavia on the 10th, and the command became effective on

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or about 16 January. The war had to go on, (the Japs saw to that), and during the interim before 16 January the Allies continued to act on the cooperative principle. Actually, events pressed so rapidly upon Java that a great deal of the cooperative system carried over and really applied to the end. There simply was not enough time!

General Wavell appointed as his deputy Lieutenant General Brett of our Army Air Corps, who was also "Intendant General," a full-time job, and who also acted as nominal Commander of the Air Forces until Air Marshal Pierse arrived from England on 29 January. Of the three Operational Commanders in the next echelon, only the Naval Commander seemed to be from the beginning in the position called for. The third, the Army Ground Commander, was General TerPoorten, who was also commander of the Dutch Army. He continued actively to command his own Army, appeared at Headquarters only infrequently, and was represented there by a British General, (Playfair), who it was understood was assigned as his Chief of Staff by ABDACOM. The staffs for the Operative Command echelon were, of course, mixed. (I had two Americans, two Dutch, two British and a British Chief of Staff).

General Wavell's Chief of Staff was Major General Pownall, (excellent), and ABDACOM was intimately surrounded by members of his own service which, under the circumstances, was only natural. The American ground troops were very few. The Dutch Army being represented at Headquarters by a British General, the result was that the Command in the ABDA area was primarily a British Army command. In view of the great importance which the British attached to Singapore, that

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situation and those circumstances were only natural and to be expected. The Supreme Commander's greatest interest was, had to be, the tenure of Singapore, and the Malaya theater was the portion of the entire area which was most in mind. General Wavell travelled considerably during the very few weeks of the ABDA set-up, and most of it was to Malaya and Burma. It was hard to get much interest shown in the situation to the eastward of Java. Singapore was looked upon as the all-essential bastion and perhaps that was the strategic situation.

The Naval command never received any direct orders from General Wavell except as regards continuance of escort of shipping into and out of Singapore. Naval operations to the eastward and possibilities therein were discussed and, when necessary, approval of intentions was obtained. The only difficulties that I recall were incident to delays in obtaining the General's decisions concerning reduction of forces in Ambon and increases in forces in Timor.

As previously recounted, the Naval forces never received any assistance from land-based aircraft, employing the cooperative principle carried over after ABDACOM was set up at Lebang. On one or two occasions after failure to get a promise of air cover for sea operations, the matter was brought in to General Wavell's daily conferences, but never went to the point of appealing to him for any reversal of the Air Commander's decisions. It was very evident that ability to supply fighters for air cover was low.

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It should perhaps be said that during the period when the cooperative system was entirely in effect, (the first half of January), Admiral Helfrich and I combined the air detachments of our respective fleets into one command, and thereby soon established a going concern for the use of all the sea planes, the function of which was mainly reconnaissance. That set-up carried over and the sea planes did not come under General Wavell's air commander.

Looking back from the present, I would say that, under ABDACOM, situations and operations were handled fully as much under the cooperative principle as under the unity of command principle. As stated, there was a full conference almost daily, into which the latest information was brought, at which verbal reports were made, and current situations talked over. A feature of those conferences was the optimistic atmosphere which pervaded them. It was not fashionable baldly to state facts which were adverse and bad news. While always of the firm belief that it is essential that optimism flow from the top down to the last man, I also thought that in the Supreme Commander's Council it was necessary to be entirely factual, lest we be simply fooling ourselves. When bad news and alarming situations in the Naval sphere were set forth baldly and bluntly, the information was not received in the spirit in which it was given. Although nothing very adverse came of it, I think that all of us were at times misled by expressions of too much optimism, and in that perhaps all of us participated. It is certainly true that General Wavell himself almost always set forth the best face of the situation, and it may be well to illustrate that by one instance:-

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When the decision was made to retire all ground forces in Malaya to Singapore, the Naval establishment on that island, of course, passed out of the picture. It was across a narrow strait from Jahore and would be under Japanese bombardment which could not be prevented. Otherwise, at least as conditions were reported, the situation at Singapore held favorable aspects. Singapore is a considerable island, 15 to 20 miles across, and it was understood to be well stocked with provisions, munitions, weapons, fuel, and with an assured water supply. On or about February ninth, General Wavell stated during his conference that the retirement to Singapore was complete, that there were on the Island the equivalent of three full divisions, and that it would hold out indefinitely. The Japanese crossed the Strait at night, almost as soon as they reached it, came to grips with the British Army almost immediately, and Singapore surrendered on 15 February. General Wavell was up there on 10 February, but I at least was never told anything which differed from his statement.

As mentioned in the narrative, a great difficulty at the ABDA GHQ lay in communications, which constitutes the essential tool of command, and it was a particularly adverse condition for the Naval command function. The slowness and unreliability of the "channels" alone compelled leaving wide areas of discretion to the British and Dutch Naval Command Posts at Batavia and to our own at Soerabaya. Other circumstances contributed to the practice, particularly as regards the Dutch Navy. The channels between Batavia and Soerabaya were

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better and that fact promoted the continuance of the cooperative principle in minor operations and decisions.

Admiral Helfrich advised that I establish my own command post at Batavia instead of going forty miles into the mountains. General Wavell clearly desired that I accompany him, but I do not think he would have so insisted. Looking back upon the matter now, I incline to the belief that Admiral Helfrich's idea was correct.

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Relationships in the Philippines Area.

The prewar arrangement, as for Naval forces assigned to local defense, was for cooperation with the Army forces defending Manila Bay entrance. After the USAFFE command post moved to Corregidor and the Fleet command post left Manila, it became a unified command, under General MacArthur, informal at first and later formalized by Washington.

Prior to that and as affecting the deep-sea Fleet, there was not unity of command. Because of existing or prospective understandings with our Allies, to say nothing of the strategy involved, my opinion is that a unified command for all U.S. forces would have been less satisfactory than the cooperative principle which did obtain.

There was a marked difference, between the Army and Navy, in the degree of readiness on 7 December 1941. The Fleet, as always, had things remaining to be done, but it had received virtually all the reinforcements which Washington had planned for it. On the other hand, the Army was building up, with 1 April 1942 as the target date for readiness, and its attention was necessarily centered on the vast work which the build-up entailed. It was hard to get full attention for cooperative considerations.

The one field in which better agreements, cooperative understandings and command arrangements seemed necessary concerned the Army and Navy air components. I started the endeavor to that end in September and it later became the subject of official letters between General MacArthur and myself, (copies in the Navy Department.) My endeavor was to effect the same agreements as had been entered into at Hawaii and it was strongly rebuffed. However, a conference, on

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1 or 2 December, arranged the amount of cooperation then essential and, since the enemy obtained air control over Luzon so very quickly, the failure to come to full agreement had no adverse effect.

While, from the Navy point of view, all failures in the cooperative system had only very minor effects, I feel bound to say that I heard of the decision to evacuate the city of Manila only a little before the world knew of it; and the decision required a good deal of changing things around for the Navy. The subject was not mentioned on 22 December, when I went to the Commanding General, (which was my last conference with him). The subject of U.S. cruiser and destroyer activities also failed of attention, yet it is understood that there was Army criticism because they were not sent into action in Luzon waters. We never heard any such criticism voiced at any time, and neither was any exception taken to the Fleet's war plans and initial deployment.

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Command Features Of The Asiatic Fleet.

In July, 1941, the ocean-going ships, except the Submarines, were formed into an organization later to be known as Task Force 5 and placed under command of the Chief of Staff, Captain Purnell, who in November was made temporary Rear Admiral. It was a mistake ever to have disturbed that arrangement. In addition to his all-around excellent qualities, Captain Purnell was the senior officer of the fleet who was in best touch with the entire situation. In addition, as our representative in all the staff conferences, he had become acquainted with the British and Dutch commanders and was highly respected and liked by all of them.

The only other flag officer in the command, in addition to the District Commandant, was Rear Admiral Glassford, who for over two years had been at Shanghai or up the Yang-Tse River. That detail was on specialized work, really diplomatic rather than naval, which had kept him out of touch with all the rest of the situation on the station and had not permitted him to keep his hand in for sea-going duties.

As appears in the narrative, the surface ships were returned to port in late September, the Task Force temporarily deactivated, the Fleet Staff recombined, and Captain Purnell returned to his duties as Chief of Staff. (It was necessary that the ships be in Manila Bay for some time for repairs and replenishment, and the administrative staff work was in arrears at the time.)

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As will be remembered, a little after that the proposal was made to the Navy Department that our war plan be changed, with the idea of fighting the war from Manila Bay. The Navy Department delayed nearly a month in rejecting the proposal. Had that not occurred, Task Force Five would have been reactivated, with Rear Admiral Purnell in command, despite what would have been great reluctance to get on without him as Chief of Staff.

By the time the decision was made by the Department, the withdrawal of our forces from China had been directed, which would make Rear Admiral Glassford available to command the Task Force. Since he was next in rank to me, the post was his due and I decided to give it to him, with the hope that there would be time for him to arrive from China, reorient himself, and get shaken down into the position. The movement from China came so late that Rear Admiral Glassford had to be flown to Task Force Five, then initially deployed to the south, after the war had really begun. Had the foregoing events gone otherwise, we would have begun the war with Rear Admiral Purnell in command, the staff thoroughly shaken down and in training, and the same command set-up would have endured throughout. Although it would have been difficult to manage politically, the chances are that, as the Dutch and British were fed in when they began to be released from escort duty, Purnell would have come to command the whole Allied ~~squadron~~ of surface ships.

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Rear Admiral Glassford was taken out of the position of ready availability to fill that post by an action of the Navy Department. When I first set up as General Wavell's Naval Commander, I retained command of my own Fleet, though it was somewhat nominal in that Purnell, as my Chief of Staff at Soerabaya, was carrying on the work in my name and making all except the broad decisions. The only possible place to command the entire Asiatic Fleet was on shore, not on a ship, because of the communications. Admiral Glassford remained commanding Task Force Five at sea until the Department ordered that I turn over the entire command to him. That order was received 27 January, in the face of Japanese pressure which was daily becoming more intensive. The Asiatic Fleet's command set-up thus had to be entirely changed; and it was not a good time for such a disruption. The sequence of events was such that the Dutch sea commander, Rear Admiral Doormann, was rather bound to become the Allied commander of the surface combat ships.

Other than the foregoing, command and command relationships within the Asiatic Fleet went along smoothly and efficiently. There were only two exceptions to our usual and regular ways of organizing and doing business. They were in the destroyer and submarine echelons, as recounted in the narrative, and the departures proved successful.

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V. GENERAL.

The following is an expression of opinions. It is trite to repeat that the early Japanese successes flowed from their control of the air. I seek a narrower focus -- our own shortcomings of defensive aircraft -- and at the same time to draw a parallel in the occurrences at Oahu, Luzon and Malaya.

The greatest achievement of the RAF in the whole was the defeat of the German in their attempt to bomb out England. That defeat was accomplished by relatively few planes -- and a relatively small personnel -- following tactics for which a radar system was a major feature. We were told and shown how the British did all that -- well before we were attacked. The radar was not new to us anyhow. In 1936, Bellevue Laboratory had a radar set in operation which was tracking aircraft over long distances, and land radar installations could have been in production soon after that year.

In January, 1941, when a goodly number of P-40's had become in prospect, I discussed this subject with General Grunert. Upon learning that he had no radar sets in prospect, I proposed to try to get some Navy equipment sent to Luzon and asked if we could mount it on shore. Quite characteristically, Grunert replied that we not only could but that he would employ his command, all out, toward helping us. The Navy Department said that the equipment would not be supplied.

A fighter plane and radar system was not only the best way to repel a heavy bombing attack; it was also the ideal system in that it was the most economical in effort while standing on guard. The system requires

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only a small personnel to be constantly on guard at the radars, and the fighter planes may stay on the ground, with no wear on men or machinery. That kind of defensive equipment perfectly fitted the situation in November - December, 1941, when the Americans and British had to stand and await the Japanese attack.

Both Allies knew all about such systems in plenty of time. The radar equipment arrived late on Oahu and Luzon. The fighter planes, however, were at the front in good time -- considerable numbers of P-40's. Early in the war, the P-40 was being said to be not a suitable type to oppose the Japanese air planes. I know only that they were used by General Chennault's AVG organization. Using only one squadron at the front, the AVG entirely turned back the Japanese early attempts to bomb the British out of Burma. Chennault was also successful in other localities. His force was not aided by radar -- the pilots were excellent.

The parallel between the first days in Oahu and Luzon is very close. In both areas, the fighter planes were there in quantity and quality sufficient at least to make a good fight of it. They failed to do so and the result was -- disaster. The Japanese bombed freely over Oahu and within two days they were also bombing Luzon, as far south as Manila, entirely unopposed in the air. To avert or at least delay those disasters was the sole raison d'etre of the fighter planes.

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As for Malaya, the record is quite similar. I don't know the initial fighter strength of the RAF in Malaya. I do know that a reinforcement of 100 modern fighters was delivered to Singapore. Yet there also the Japanese won the air without great difficulty. The RAF also did not do too well.

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Since the circumstances of my being relieved as "ABDAFLOAT" by Admiral Helfrich have been the subject of some discussion, I will state what I know about them. It is well realized that I have not been told all the considerations in the case.

In the spring of 1941, when I was informed that I would be continued in the Asiatic command beyond the normal date for my retirement, (June), I contracted to keep the Navy Department informed if I found myself running down in health. Almost no one had ever been retained in a sea-going command beyond the age of 64, and, throughout the Navy, there was at the time a movement toward youth in all sea commands. In my own case, I took the obligation seriously, from time to time informed the CNO of my estimate of my own condition, and knew that he made inquiries of others.

I arrived in Java tired and worn, on 2 January, and was met by a dispatch saying that I would probably be assigned to command all the Allied Fleets. I replied to the effect that, inasmuch as there was some doubt as to my future endurance, another might well be chosen. The first that I knew I actually had been so assigned was when the Governor General of the N.E.I. read it to me from press reports in the presence of Admiral Helfrich and Mr. Van Mook. The surprise had been staged. I stated that I had not sought the position and had gone so far as to suggest that someone else should be chosen. I felt that the set-up of the conference with the Governor General had placed me in an embarrassing position, and I further said that I did not like to be commanding Admiral Helfrich on his own home ground. Mr. Van Mook explained for Washington where, as I was told long afterward,

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he gave out quite adverse statements about my state of preservation. If my information is correct, I can only say that I had a six-day passage in a submarine, then a long day's work at Soerabaya, followed by a nearly sleepless night on a train to Batavia. Now, Mr. Van Mook is much younger, but if his preceding week had been like mine he would not have been in very good trim for that interview either -- and his recovery might not have been much quicker.

After General Wavell had arrived in Batavia, (some days later), the British Admiral, (Layton), and I received dispatches from our respective "Admiralties" asking our estimates of Admiral Helfrich's qualifications. Both of us replied that we estimated him to be excellent in all respects. General Wavell's intended Command set-up had already been announced, and Admiral Helfrich had told me of his personal dissatisfaction, in that his Army vis-a-vis, (TerPoorten), had been placed in the same eschelon with me, whereas he, Helfrich, was in a lower eschelon. Since the Dutch fleet had Empire status and the army had only a Colonial status, Helfrich plainly felt not only disappointed but even somewhat set down. There was nothing I could do about it except to inform General Wavell of all the foregoing, say to him that I had not sought the top command position, and that I was ready to serve in any other capacity whatever. Nothing more transpired at that time which I know about.

Several days later, a dispatch from Opnav expressed disquietude over having heard that the Dutch were dissatisfied about Admiral Helfrich's position. I showed the dispatch to General Wavell and repeated a part of what I had told him before. He said nothing at

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the time; but two days later -- possibly after he had been with the Governor General -- the General called me in for a private talk. He seemed very ill at ease and began by saying that he had understood that I thought I was too old for my job. I interrupted to say that I joke about my advanced years, but whether or not they are too great was not for me to say. I recalled our previous conferences and said that the time for action or non-action had been at that time, before his command was set up. I pointed out that to be taken out of my position after having been put into it was another matter. There was nothing else said of a definite nature, the General continuing to show some embarrassment, and the conversation closed by my saying that I would bring in all the dispatches mentioned as soon as there was opportunity to resume the interview.

On 28 January, I went to General Wavell with all those dispatches. I then said that if he felt he should act in the matter, he might well request the Governor General to provide a basis for such action, in the form of a letter; that it seemed to be a political matter rather than my age, since no complaints of dereliction appeared to have been made. The General had very little to say in reply, and I left him with the impression that the subject was closed. But it was not.

On February first, a dispatch from Opnav said that news from London was to the effect that I had been saying that I did not feel able to carry on. I carried the dispatch straight to General Wavell, and he was obviously very much embarrassed when he read it. He then said that he had sent a "strictly private" dispatch to the Prime Minister, who had disappointed him by using it as he had. (The General

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subsequently said that the Prime Minister had told him that he had been obliged to communicate the dispatch about me to President Roosevelt.) He continued to talk in an embarrassed and somewhat disjointed manner, mentioning that the Dutch were dissatisfied with me, now and then muttering something about my age; and I think that at one point he said that the Dutch did not place great confidence in me. On other occasions I had sounded the General out as to whether he himself had any criticism as to the way that I had handled the job, and on this occasion I asked him the question directly. His answer was muffled, but contained the word "whatever," and I thought that he meant to convey that he had no criticism.

I then composed a dispatch to Opnav, reporting the interview and briefing part of what led up to it. I stated that I estimated my health as satisfactory, but that it appeared to me that General Wavell did not wish me to continue in the job. I showed the draft of the dispatch to the General and asked if he desired that it be sent. He replied that he did.

On 5 February, I received a dispatch from the CNO saying that he was reluctant to lose my services in Java, but that we had been forced into a bad position in Washington, and that it would be well if I requested detachment on account of my health. It was naturally complied with, but with great misgivings, because the situation was becoming hotter daily, and quite apart from the general picture, I was decidedly worried about the future of my own forces. On 12 February

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we received the dispatch directing that I turn over to Admiral Helfrich, which was done on 14 February, P.M. Inasmuch as General Wavell received his own order to give up his command on 23 February, the preliminaries to that action must have begun soon after I was taken out.

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Admiral Hart's Supplementary Narrative

1. War Plans.

Navy knew before war must have combined operations with Royal Navy and Dutch but political considerations prevented training with them. U. S. Army's mission simple, to hold Philippines. Needed no combined operations.

Army plan -- hold at Manila Bay entrance. Navy plan, retire and then fight across Pacific to retake.

Commonwealth relaxed defense efforts with Philippine forces in 1940.

Navy plan -- retire to Indian Ocean and operate against Jap shipping until Pacific Fleet well advanced toward the Philippines, then come back.

At outbreak of war in '39 Hart decided not to retire to Indian Ocean but join the Royal Navy and Dutch. In winter 1940-41 WPL-44 took shape. WPL-44 contemplated reinforcements which would have trebled the Asiatic Fleet surface power. Staff conferences started, result called "Plenap". *Basis* objective to hold Malay barrier. Purnell said must deny Japs oil fields. Dutch "skitting" about conferring at all. *Basis* disagreement in all conferences.

British No. 1 objective, convoy and escorts to Singapore.

U. S. Navy No. 1 objective make most of our combat power by combination attack, and looked on British intention of retiring Anzac ships to defend territorial waters as bad.

WPL-44 replaced by WPL-46 -- no U.S. Navy reinforcement but powerful RN reinforcement, including BBs, but basic idea same, hold Malay Barrier.

Admiral Hart's Supplementary Narrative -- Page 2

"Plenaps" were disapproved "by Washington" 11 September 1941 so we entered the war hazy as to relationship with and commitments to Allies. OpNav, however, gave Hart free rein. After Hart sized up Tom Phillips at Manila 6 December decided to propose him as unified commander. Thought very well of T. P.

Hart had to decide whether to use his CL and DD for all-out defense of the Philippines and lose them or combine them with British and Dutch. Proposed letter to OpNav on 17 September 1941. Approved 25 September and told heavy Royal Navy reinforcements convoy, suggesting Manila Bay might be a good base for combined fleet. Hart proposed this on 27 October. Navy Department disapproved, and they were right. But it took them a month to decide. Navy would have been better prepared for Java campaign, especially logistically, had prompt decision been made in Washington.

2. Relationship with Generals.

In February 1940 talked things over with Grant, and later Gurnett, who demurred from withdrawal of CL and DD. When MacArthur took over, War Department began building up VF strength in Philippines. MacArthur made " long recital" in interview of 27 September. Said "would meet 'em at the beaches." Expanded citadel defense to include all Philippines less Mindanao and Palawan. Apparently thought close collaboration with Navy not vital to success; not interested in it.

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-----**3. Plans Relationship in Java.**

No formal op. plans issued from ABDA headquarters. The British were absorbed in defending Singapore. No cooperation by RAF and little by AAF and NAF. Seaplanes, especially Patwing 10, did fine reconnaissance.

ABDA naval plans fell into this pattern. Nothing allowed to interfere with Royal Navy escorting in and out of Singapore or Dutch covering same. So RN and Dutch operated out of Batavia to the north of Java; U.S. Asiatic fleet out of Surabaya. See Hart's op order 1-42, 7 Jan. Not till Singapore was falling could British and Dutch ships be used offensively.

4. Bases and Logistics.

Asiatic fleet not limited by any want of supply. Luzon well supplied. But not time to accumulate any in British and Dutch ports. Had four large auxiliaries in 2500 tons of supplies loaded summer of 1941. Partly discharged to prevent deterioration and then reloaded; because of time lost thinking Washington would approve fighting war from Manila Bay, not all reloaded. Many tons of ammunition and general supplies left behind at Manila, but not enough to hamper later operations. Asiatic Fleet would have been short of supplies if campaign had lasted much longer.

Bombing Cavite on 10 December was a big victory for Japs. Left only the underground at Corregidor.

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Hart should have sent large auxiliaries to Surabaya. But Washington preferred Port Darwin and sent them in there unknown to T.H. when incommunicado en route. A poor place. When Port Darwin menaced by air attacks, end of Java, T. Hart persuaded Wavell to transfer them to Surabaya. All ships inadequately based. Poor upkeep facilities. Old ships ran down rapidly, run so hard.

5. Features of Operations.

Boise strongest but grounded in January and had to be sent home.

Houston ten year old, on slow side, but a grand fighting ship.

Marblehead and British DDs "old enough to vote." Couldn't make 30 knots. DDs weak in gunpower but had 12 fish each. This meant night action best chance. And this meant a daylight run to the spot -- Jap air a handicap. Danger of getting caught or finding nothing to strike when they got there.

PTs didn't come in time to get set, didn't know hideouts and had no caches of special fuel.

Initial deployment OK except too many auxiliaries and DDs (5) at Manila Bay. That mistake corrected in two days and escape of 200,000 tons of shipping covered by U.S.N. -- but admits Japs weren't out to get them. By end of 10 December clear that Japs cominated air, so didn't bring back CL and DD for strike on north side of Luzon -- weather always clear in December on west side of Luzon. What with Pearl, loss of two British BB, etc., decided to send TF 5 to Makay Barrier and work from there.

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Never understood why around 1 December 1941 Opnav directed him to send three small ships to Indo-Chinese coast as pickets.

In NEI waters clouds made air operations less easy for Japs, less difficult for us. Our CL-DD force jumped off to seven attacks, most of them failed. Last, in combination with RN and Dutch was expected to give results but missed Jap force moving in to Sumatra and retired without doing much damage.

Subs -- 29, all but six new -- a disappointment. Deployed eight (2/3 of them?) in defensive intercept positions near Luzon. Didn't start for positions till war began because Washington ordered a defensive deployment. Arrived late. Same policy continued down the line.

Dutch subs best in first few days of war. When we got to Java they weren't keeping the sea as long as ours.

Reasons for subs insuccess: 1. Japs excellent countermeasures, shallow water, many A/S craft; no mistakes. Hard to hit, and "hot." Took our men time to warm up. Missed many good shots. 2. Defective torpedoes. Nothing more soul-destroying to a sub crew than to go thru difficult and danger of getting into firing position and having torpedoes fail. Ran several feet below set depth and exploders failed to function. 3. Admiral Wilkes says high command erred in requiring so much defensive-intercept employment of subs. Probably right, but had to be tried.

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6. Personnel.

11,000 Navy and Marines in his fleet force. 4th Marines a crack regiment.

Captain Rocks of Houston after a bomb hit which wiped out one turret and 60 men said "One strike, but with two remaining we'll try to break up Jap gains," a few days before his death.

We left about 4,000 Navy and Marines in Luzon. Greatest regret he didn't act in time to get 'em out. Nearly 1000 Navy in beach defense with Marines at the Rock.

In Java campaign lost 800 men in ships of no combat value which would have been sent out of danger in time.

7. Command and Coop Relationship.

Should have been done months before war started, so staff work could be done. Couldn't be for political reasons. With forces available would have lost anyway. Could only have inflicted heavier losses on Japs.

Wavell an experienced soldier of rugged, persistent type and likeable personally. But his command came too late -- order was 3 Jan., they arrived Batavia 10th and command effective 16th. Gen. Brett AAF his deputy. Ground commander was Gen TerPoorten. Appeared at headquarters infrequently. Chief of Staff, Gen. Pownall was excellent. Few U.S. ground troops. Wavell not intent on situation east of Java. All for Singapore. Wavell never gave direct orders to U.S. Navy. No assistance from land-based air.

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Bret combined Naval planes with Dutch.

Whole thing done by cooperation rather than command principle.
 Daily conference. Wavell always optimistic. Bad news by Navy not well received. Wavell too optimistic. On 9 February said Singapore could hold out indefinitely. But surrendered 15 Feb.

Great difficulty in communications.

Circumstances of his relief as "Abdafloat" by Helfrich. A lot of dii-dii that I don't understand. Done 14 February. Sore about it. Blames Wavell.

8. Relationships Philippine Area.

Army's target *London* date 1 Apr. 1942. Hart rebuffed by Mac Arthur.

Command features of Asiatic Fleet. Why Glassford not used.

9. General Remarks.

January 1941 discussed radar with Gen. Grunnet. He didn't say. Grunnet glad to have Navy radar but department wouldn't apply it. We knew all about system of defense of England, but not set up here. Radar saves planes. Exactly filled situation. Enough P-40s Chenault had turned back Jap bombers with those in Burma with no radio.

Both in Oahu and Luzon VF present in quantity and sufficient quality to make a good fight. Failed in both instances. This then was their job -- to stop bombers and in Singapore British had 100 such fighters.