

Enclosure.

CENTRAL CHANCERY OF
THE ORDERS OF KNIGHTHOOD,
ST. JAMES'S PALACE, S.W.1.

The Secretary has the honour to transmit a Warrant of Appointment, under The King's Sign Manual, to the Most Excellent Order of the British Empire, and to request that the receipt of this Warrant may be acknowledged on the attached form.

The Secretary would be glad to receive notification of any change of permanent address, and in the event of the decease of persons holding such Warrants Executors are earnestly requested to notify the Secretary.

Francis George Leopold Holland Esq.,
OBE.

SERVICE, F.G.L. HOLLAND.

MILITARY.

- 1915 2nd. Lieutenant, Royal Field Artillery, S.R.
1916 Temporary Lieutenant, R.F.A.
1917 Appointed Adjutant (March).
1917 Lieutenant, R.F.A. (July).
1917 Acting Captain (August).
1918 Second-in-Command of a Battery.
1920 Resigned and granted rank of Captain.
1943 Temporary Major, Fiji Military Forces (August).
1943 Major, Gilbert and Ellice Islands Defence Force
(December).

EDUCATIONAL.

- 1920 Headmaster, Government Educational Scheme,
Gilbert and Ellice Islands Colony.
1931 Title changed to that of Superintendent of
Education, G. & E. I. C.
1938 Title changed to that of Director of
Education, G. & E. I. C.
1942-43 Director of Education, Tonga (on secondment).
1943 Resumed as Director of Education, G. & E. I. C.
1945 Retirement on pension, with effect from ~~24th~~
May, 1945. 3rd February, 1946.

ADMINISTRATIVE.

- 1928 Acting District Officer, Tarawa, (conjoint) for
period of 20 months, and later at various times
for total period of 4 months.
1929 A Deputy Commissioner for the Western Pacific
(Temporary and provisional).
1930 Acting District Officer, Ocean Island, (conjoint)
for period of 22 months.
1940 Acting Resident Commissioner, Gilbert and Ellice
Islands Colony (Sept. 1940 to Jan., 1941).
1940 A Deputy Commissioner for the Western Pacific.
1943 Acting District Officer, Abemama, (conjoint)
for period of 12 months.
1946 Administrative Officer, Fiji, for period of
2½ years, on re-employment.

1949. Retirement, effective from 30th June, 1949.

DECORATIONS.

- 1918 Mentioned in Despatches.
1931 M. B. E. (Civil).
1935 Jubilee Medal, King George V.
1937 Coronation Medal, King George VI.
1941 O. B. E. (Civil).
1942 George Medal.

GILBERT AND ELLICE ISLANDS COLONY.

Record of Service,

Francis George Leopold Holland, O.B.E. (Civil), G.M.

13 May,	1920	Headmaster, Government Education Scheme.
31 July,	1920	Full salary commenced.
15 Sept.,	1920	Assumed duty at Ocean Island.
26 Sept.,	1921	Vacation leave, 3 months; leave of absence, 20 days.
15 Jan.,	1922	Resumed duty.
15 May,	1922	Commenced teaching duties at Bairiki School; salary on incremental scale.
15 Sept.,	1923	Appointment confirmed.
20 Jan.,	1925	Vacation leave, 4 months 3 days.
23 May,	1925	Resumed duty.
1 Aug.,	1928	Travelling leave, 14 days; vacation leave, 2 months 23 days; travelling leave 14 days.
21 Nov.,	1928	Resumed duty.
21 Nov.,	1928	Acting District Officer, Tarawa and Southern Gilbert Islands (conjoint).
15 July,	1929	A Deputy Commissioner for the Western Pacific (temporary and provisional).
18 May,	1930	Relinquished duties of Acting District Officer, Southern Gilbert Islands.
22 July,	1930	Relinquished duties of Acting District Officer, Tarawa.
11 Aug.,	1930	Proceeded to Ocean Island on duty.
17 Sept.,	1930	Officer in charge, Ocean Island.
19 Sept.,	1930	Acting District Officer, Ocean Island (conjoint).
2 Oct.,	1930	Relinquished duties of Officer in Charge, Ocean Island.
1 Jan.,	1931	Title changed to Superintendent of Education.
10 March,	1931	Officer in Charge, Ocean Island.
24 March,	1931	Relinquished duties of Officer in Charge, Ocean Island.
26 April,	1931	Census Officer, Ocean Island.
29 July,	1931	Officer in Charge, Ocean Island.

4 Aug.,	1931	Relinquished duties of Officer in Charge, Ocean Island, and proceeded to Fiji on duty.
8 Sept.,	1931	Returned to Ocean Island.
8 Sept.,	1931	Resumed duties of Officer in Charge, Ocean Island.
24 Sept.,	1931	Relinquished duties of Officer in Charge, Ocean Island.
16 July,	1932	Relinquished duties of Acting District Officer, Ocean Island.
5 Aug.,	1932	Acting Administrative Officer, Tarawa and Southern Gilbert Islands (conjoint).
13 Sept.,	1932	Relinquished duties of Acting Administrative Officer, Tarawa and Southern Gilbert Islands.
19 Sept.,	1932	Travelling leave, 12 days; vacation leave, $4\frac{1}{2}$ months; commuted leave, 2 months 6 days; travelling leave, 10 days.
2 May,	1933	Resumed duty.
22 June,	1933	Officer in Charge, Tarawa (in absence of Administrative Officer).
31 Aug.,	1933	Relinquished duties of Officer in Charge, Tarawa.
26 Sept.,	1935	Travelling leave, 14 days; vacation leave, 3 months; commuted leave, 2 months 4 days; travelling leave, 14 days.
27 March,	1936	Resumed duty.
25 Oct.,	1938	Title changed to Director of Education.
5 Jan.,	1940	Travelling leave, 11 days; vacation leave, $4\frac{1}{2}$ months; commuted leave, 21 days; travelling leave, 7 days.
29 June,	1940	Resumed duty.
24 Sept.,	1940	Acting Resident Commissioner.
1 Oct.,	1940	A Deputy Commissioner for the Western Pacific.
3 Jan.,	1941	Resumed substantive duties.
12 March,	1941	Acting Administrative Officer, Northern Gilbert Islands District (conjoint).
10 April,	1941	Relinquished duties of Acting Administrative Officer, Northern Gilbert Islands District.
25 March,	1942	Vacation leave, 2 months 28 days.
23 June	1942	Resumed duty.

23 June,	1942	Director of Education, Tonga (on secondment).
3 July,	1943	Secondment to Tonga terminated.
3 July,	1943	Vacation leave, 37 days.
9 Aug.,	1943	Resumed duty at Suva.
14 Aug.,	1943	Returned to Colony at Funafuti.
18 Aug.,	1943	Temporary Major, Fiji Military Forces.
5 Sept.,	1943	Attached to United States Navy.
25 Nov.,	1943	Returned to Colony at Tarawa.
27 Nov.,	1943	Acting Administrative Officer, Abemama (conjoint).
27 Nov.,	1943	Attachment to United States Navy terminated.
16 Dec.,	1943	Major, Gilbert and Ellice Islands Defence Force.
26 Nov.,	1944	Relinquished duties as Acting Administrative Officer, Abemama.
22 Dec.,	1944	Proceeded on leave, prior to retirement.
<i>3rd Feb.</i>	23 Jan. 24 Jan.	<i>1946 Retirement on pension effective.</i>
	1 Aug.,	1946 <i>Adminis Inland Officer, Fiji</i>
	13 Aug.,	1946 <i>Assumed duty, as Danabau Advisor, Rambu.</i>
	4 Dec.	1946 <i>Magistrate, 2nd Class.</i>
	15 Feb.	1949. <i>Proceeded to Suva.</i>
	7 Mar.	1949. <i>Proceeded on leave, prior to retirement.</i>
	20 June,	1949 <i>Retirement effective</i>

WE WHO WERE LUCKY AT TARAWA, GILBERT ISLANDS

By Major F. G. L. Holland

TARAWA, one of the Gilbert group of 16 islands, never well known to many people, achieved world prominence during the Pacific War, particularly in November 1943, when the Japanese garrison there was annihilated by the American 2nd Marine Division, after a 8-days fierce battle in which 4,000 or more Japanese were killed and the American losses were 1,000 killed and 2,600 wounded. I was present at this battle and it formed for me a necessary but terrible preliminary to my homecoming. Tarawa had been my home since 1920. There had been one interruption. I had fled from it in 1942 after the Japanese net had dropped over others and me, but before the strings were drawn tight.

Tarawa had been at peace since 1892, when the cruiser "Royalist" planted the Union Jack. Before that time, civil war had raged, a war stopped only by the arrival of the cruiser. Tarawa then became the Headquarters of the Gilbert and Ellice Islands Colony, at first however a Protectorate, but later Headquarters was transferred to Ocean Island, where rich phosphate had been discovered in 1900. Now after many years Tarawa is again Headquarters of the Colony. Tarawa always had been the commercial and administrative centre of the Gilbert Group. I must mention here that Tarawa, like all other islands of the Gilbert and Ellice Islands Colony, had its own local Government with functions covering the whole domestic concerns of the island. This form of self-government had worked well, since its inception in 1892, and it can be reported that it withstood without even cracking the shock of the Japanese occupation when it came. Tarawa is a coral atoll, a mere ribbon of sand 20 miles long and a few feet above high water enclosing a deep and spacious lagoon. It has of course no hills and no bush, but is well planted with coconut trees. It is split into many islets, separated by shallow passages, which are covered at high water but are bare at low spring tides. This string of islets forms two sides of a sort of isosceles triangle, the base to the south, the long side to the east. The third side, that is the west, is there, but the great part is submerged and is pierced by a ship's channel, which affords entry to the lagoon. The main islet, that opposite the anchorage, is called Betio, and is the scene of much of my story. It was the Headquarters of the Medical Department, District Administration Department of which your President, Major Swinbourne, was head for many years, up to the time of his retirement, Marine Department and of Messrs. Burns Philp Gilbert & Ellice trading operations. A Treasury office was there, a Wireless Station, a Catholic Mission Station and a native village. The next islet to Betio was Bairiki, my home. Here was the Headquarters of the Education Department. The principal boarding school of the Colony was here also. North of Tarawa, 120 miles north, was Butaritari, which commercially came second to Tarawa. South of Tarawa, 75 miles south was Abemama Island, very interesting historically. These three islands became the focus of Japanese attention and after their re-capture by the Americans in 1943 were used as launching areas for large-scale air attacks on the Marshall Islands. The Americans had at Abemama alone, 140 bombers and 30 fighters. I shall be referring to Butaritari and Abemama, and will be mentioning Beru Island, south again of Abemama, and Funafuti, not a Gilbert Island, but the main island of the Ellice Group, which Group lies south of the Gilbert Group. Further south still is Suva. A line drawn from Butaritari, 30° north of the Equator to Suva, 18° south, through Tarawa, Abemama, Beru and Funafuti would be more or less straight and running roughly North to South.

Ocean Island, just south of the Equator, lies to the west of this line. The Japanese, when they came, lightly held Butaritari, Abemama and Ocean Island, but revealed their estimation of the military importance of Tarawa by turning the main islet, Betio, into a fortress and building an airfield there. I apologize for this rather lengthy introduction and hope the dovetailing of "after" and "before" has not been confusing.

The Japanese descent on Tarawa occurred 40 hours after the attack on Pearl Harbour. I had telegraphed the Resident Commissioner at Ocean Island five months previously, when things seemed to be warming up, that if Japan entered the war there would be an attack on Tarawa within 48 hours. I proved right in my forecast, with 8 hours to spare, but "attack" was hardly the right word. "Attack" connotes "Defence" generally. There could be no defence, with a few old rifles incapable of shooting straight, even if there was some one to fire them. These rifles were used by the police, the whole four of them, on ceremonial occasions. These rifles might have been brandished at the enemy with some effect, if he came during the daytime but, as it was, the Japanese landed in the dark of night. The Japanese among other things soon overran the wireless room and smashed the transmitter, but not before the senior operator, a Gilbertese, had attempted to send out a distress call. The call had not been answered. The operator then retreated to the Government vessel, "Nimanoa" which had returned to the lagoon some hours before. It had been engaged in transporting the wives of Government Officers, my wife and daughter among them, to Beru Island where the mission ship "John Williams" was about to sail for Suva. The wireless operator reached the "Nimanoa" and using the ship's transmitter continued to call, until he got responses from Beru and Ocean Island. The Japanese, knowing or guessing what was going on, opened fire with a machine gun on the "Nimanoa", but the operator finished his task before jumping overboard and swimming to the shore where he concealed himself successfully in a tree for the next 18 hours. The Europeans on Betio were rounded up in the darkness, but not before the Treasury Officer had punctured drums of benzine. They were placed under the guard of a "nice" Japanese, who followed a routine, that of glaring at his prisoners and then with wild yells running about and stabbing coconut trees. The human casualties that day were two Gilbertese men, who were shot and stabbed for ignoring orders. They were harmless inmates of the lunatic asylum, with one idea in their heads, poor fellows, that of being faithful to those who had cared for them. But I am speaking here beyond my knowledge at the time so must take you to Bairiki, where I was.

Some time previously 25 Gilbertese and Ellice young men had been brought to Bairiki to undergo a course in wireless communication, i.e. the maintenance and operation of wireless units. Their teacher was R.G. Morgan, an Australian. Some students had already qualified and were to go out to stations in the Colony then operated by New Zealanders, whom they would relieve in time. This class was such a recent event that the presence of the transmitter used in the instruction could not be known to the Japanese. Morgan and I discussed this point after the receipt of the news regarding Pearl Harbour and it was decided that the attempt would be made to take over the communication that would be broken, when the Japanese seized or demolished the main set at Betio. We could not expect to be successful for long, as Tarawa, having an average width of 400 yards, could easily be combed by the enemy. We could think no more than of getting news away, for

so long as possible. Morgan started immediately a 24-hour watch using the better students. All spare equipment was placed in drums and buried. Benzine and oil were buried, too. We had to find, and did find, methods of concealing the signs of digging and fresh earth. Rehearsals in getting away from the island, that is, Morgan with his class and taking with them the wireless set, charging engine, benzine, oil, water and food, mosquito nets, took place. The time involved in doing this was reduced by practice from one hour to 5 minutes. A dug-out canoe was kept standing by. As it floated in only a few inches of water it could be pushed along the reef at any time, with its load of equipment. The distress call I have already mentioned as given out from Betio was picked up by our student on duty at 3.30 in the morning. Morgan came to me with the simple statement, "Well, they're here". Nasty news at any time, but worse at 3 o'clock in the morning. The plan was followed and a few minutes later, Morgan and his class disappeared in the darkness up the island, i.e. away from Betio. Morgan on reaching a convenient spot, set up his wireless and started to call Heru. Having got a reply he gave a false call sign, ZJV.5, and asked for a 24-hour watch. He then travelled some miles further where he established his set again and awaited my messages, if any. Just before dawn I received the most terrible news brought by a native who had got through the Japanese cordon at Betio. His story was that all Government Officers and Burns Philp white staff were dead, that all European houses were being blown up and also all launches and boats. It turned out to be false news except that relating to the launches and boats, but this I was not to know until 18 hours later, so during the day that followed I carried with me the thought that all my friends at Betio had been murdered.

The light increasing, I walked to the end of Bairiki, where a good view of Betio could be obtained. There was the "Nimanoa", the Colony ship, a little out of position. The mate had slipped the cable, thus allowing the ship to run on the reef at high tide, much to the disgust of the Japanese who were robbed of a nice plum. The "Helena A", Burns Philp trading ship was at anchor. Two other vessels based on Tarawa were happily not there. The "KiaKia" belonging to the Medical Department was then on its way to Tarawa but received a warning in time and thus was saved. The "Santa Teretia", the Catholic Mission ship, then in the south was warned also and got away to Suva with the aid of a school atlas. It carried no charts of the seas south of the Ellice Group. There was much smoke rising from Betio bearing out, it seemed, the story that houses were being blown up. And there out in the Ocean were two destroyers, black and sinister, one drifting and the other moving about at incredible speed, the fastest destroyer I have ever seen. I began to report all I could see by sending coded messages to Morgan for transmission. The "Nimanoa" was blown up, with a demolition charge, a Japanese one, in the early afternoon just as one of the destroyers was entering the lagoon. The other destroyer not long afterwards turned and came my way. It was evidently my "turn" in the proceedings. At least I had not been rushed and had had time to do many things, last-minute items. I walked down towards the beach opposite the point where the destroyer was slowing up. Its intentions being clear, I sent off my sixth message of the day to Morgan for transmission together with a farewell note to him. I say "farewell" because it seemed probable that I would not see him again. A constable and three other Gilbertese were with me. These I put into hiding with instructions to stay there and be guided as to what to do by circumstances. I then stood alone on the beach. The destroyer lay broadside on, 400 yards away. I was a gunner in the last war

and I thought of the loveliest bag - one whole destroyer - if I could only have had a gun, but like Simple Simon, I had nothing to the purpose. The Japanese Marines were armed with rifles, revolvers, sub-machine guns, bombs and knives - heavy stuff against one unarmed man. My own revolver, a Webley from the 1914-18 War, had been buried in the fowl run. Well, there were the Japanese charging over the reef, with their 440 yards champion outdistancing the others. He evidently wanted the first thrust. To my surprise, however, he signalled to me to raise my arms, and for the first time in my life I did so. I found I could do it. The others joined him, and what an ugly looking lot, ugly in two senses. They banged my pockets in the search for hidden armaments and found two spectacle cases. The officer then came up. He wore gum boots, which had impeded his progress, as water got into them. He began questioning me, a process he kept up for the next two hours. After a time he said, "Where is your mansion?" The prestige of the British, "your mansion", I showed him the path, whereupon he barked an order and moved on. Half of his squad lingered and suddenly three bayonets were pointed at me and I was signalled to hand over my wrist watch. This watch was precious, as it kept perfect time and was most useful with wireless appointments. I was most unwilling to give it up and shook my head. The bayonets were then thrust closer, vicious faces looked even more bloodthirsty, so the watch was handed over and the bayonets were then withdrawn. Just then, the Gilbertese constable appeared at my side, quite against orders. I asked him why he had come. He answered, "I could not stand the sight of those bayonets. It looked as if you were going to be killed. If they try now, they will have to kill me first." This constable then stayed with me for the rest of the day. I still think of the wonderful honour that he conferred on me. A shove from a marine, how I hated that shove, indicated that I was to join the officer. It was at this point that I sadly noted the efficiency of the Japanese. Few orders were given, each man knew his work and the tactics adopted, absurd in the circumstances, were still the tactics of highly trained modern troops. I thought of what lay ahead, before Japan could be subdued. The officer and I walked through the coconut trees, while in front the attack on my "mansion" went on. Presently, we reached the pig styes, a line of six. Underneath the wallow of a large sow, a drum of bensine was buried. The officer moved down the line of styes and stopped at the large sow, who greeted me with her usual grunts. She looked fine, reposing in her favourite spot; the bensine was directly under her. The officer said, "A fine pig", to which I permitted myself to answer, "A fine pig, indeed". We then passed the fowl run where my revolver was buried. Fowls are marvellous at removing the traces of disturbed earth. My "mansion" and the carpenter's shop had now been overrun. In the latter was an electric light plant. This was attacked with hammers, sad to relate, "my" hammers. To complete the job, two bombs were placed ready, one under the magnets and one under the gear box, and detonated. The one under the magnets did not explode. A story about this follows later. There was a shout. My launch had been discovered. It was a lovely thing, built at Auckland under my personal direction. They put demolition charges in it and blew it to matchwood. There was some grim humour involved. It had taken me nearly 20 years to get this launch. I first asked for it in 1922. Approval to the expenditure was given in 1940. Thus, 18 years of requests, one year of use, and away went the launch. As the enemy prepared to destroy it, I was naturally upset and protested. I raised my right hand, as is my habit when I wish to be emphatic. A Japanese sergeant, the only one of the enemy who seemed to have any kindness written on his face, then came over to me and thrust his revolver against my chest. So much for my reading of human faces! The Gilbertese constable noted the

revolver, and made a move to push himself between it and me. I told you of his previous action. That's Gilbert's faithfulness and not an isolated example. The destruction went on; a bomb blew off the front of the sailing boat, two canoes were wrecked, the flagstaff, a pretty thing of latticed construction, was brought crashing to the ground. A sun dial went and my wireless poles. My two wireless sets were thrown on the concrete and jumped on. All mirrors, even that in the wardrobe, were smashed. My dog, most intelligent and a delightful companion, was bayoneted and died subsequently. There were three typewriters in the office, two belonging to the Government and one my own. They apparently needed only one and took mine. This among many other things, including a prismatic compass, fountain pens, wet and dry batteries, and so on. I said they were highly trained. The Japanese officer then began an intensive questioning of me regarding a wireless transmitter. This was a poser. Did he know there was one? Had someone been forced at Betio to "spill the beans?" I decided to assume that he was merely probing and denied all knowledge of any transmitter, adding "This is the Education Department." He pressed me, but I returned the same answers. He then asked, "Where is the other white man?" Whew, this was getting distinctly uncomfortable. Danger sharpens the wits, so I said, "You mean the assistant master?" When he nodded, I felt better, much better, and answered, "He ran away this morning". I did not add "with the wireless transmitter you are so keen about". He enquired, "why" and I said "He fears the Japanese." Not a smile, but a spasm of pleasure crossed his face. I had said something he liked. The situation however almost at once became critical again. A marine ran up with a third receiver, one belonging to the ship 'Kia Kia', which had been sent to Morgan for repairs. This I had not buried. The officer spoke threateningly again. "You said no transmitter". He called an expert (I told you they were well trained) who happily confirmed that it was not a transmitter. He then ceased to question me more about wireless. He however uttered warnings against attempts to leave Tarawa or to get messages of any kind away. This I heard with relief. It seemed to indicate that not only was my life to be spared but that I was to be left on Tarawa. The full import of his threat was not realised however, until I learned that a pole had been planted at Betio inscribed with this legend in English, "The Navy of Nippon occupied this island on the 10th December 1941". As evening was approaching, a bugler blew a call, very badly, too, and the party assembled. The officer repeated his threats and then marched away with his men leaving no one behind. In the meantime, the "Helena A" had been taken outside the lagoon, and the destroyer left also. My destroyer no doubt joined them, but I could not see, owing to the falling darkness. I then wrote my last message for the day, coded it and sent it to Morgan for transmission and asked him afterwards to return to me. He of course had not seen anything all day. A letter arrived at midnight from Betio with the glad news that the Europeans there were all alive and giving other news. Morgan returned later and I recounted the events of the day, particularly the Japanese threats, and reminded him that Tarawa by proclamation was Japanese territory for the moment. Morgan thought that our luck might hold and wished to go on. So was it agreed. We had now to do everything to defeat surprise raids, air survey and directional location.

Humour comes in. It is rarely absent. Next morning while I was inspecting the wreck left by the Japanese, I found a demolition bomb lying on the lighting-plant engine. I told you two bombs had been placed under the engine, but the one under the magneto had not exploded. This I had not known at the time. I knew now, here was the bomb. But how did it get on the wrecked engine. The senior prefect supplied the answer. He said, "I came here at daylight and found this under the magneto. It had evidently slipped down. I was interested

in seeing the inside of a magneto and got it out with the aid of a stick. I then called the other prefects who all inspected it." So there you are. Half-a-dozen Gilbertese youths solemnly passed the bomb from hand to hand. Satisfied they put it on the top of the engine. I told the surprised senior prefect what it really was. It was then carried carefully, oh, so carefully, into deep water. Another incident occurred, this time at Betio. The Japanese wished to open the money safe in the Treasury Office and asked for the key. Now the Treasury Officer's keys had been snipped off his belt during the night by a Japanese. A runner was sent round to find the man who had the keys. The search took some time, so the Japanese around the safe got fed up with waiting and started to hammer at the brass handles. Continuing, they managed to knock the handles off altogether. The keys arrived and the right key sorted out. It did its work all right, but as the handles were gone, the safe still could not be opened by the irritated Japanese. They left it. There were hundreds of pounds in it.

Morgan and I put guards around our islet, so that a warning might give us sufficient time to destroy the wireless set if a raid occurred. This precaution was a failure at night. A Gilbertese will do anything for you, even give his life, as you have heard, but he will not keep awake for you. We then abandoned this plan and substituted that of burying the set. When not in use it lay in my laundry hut, 18 inches under the laundress's feet. When in use, the set was in another hut close to my house. The aerial was lowered and lowered until it was found that with it only one foot above the ground, we could still get Beru. A Japanese plane came over us every day, flying very low. The wireless set was never used when this plane was about.

The Japanese returned, this time in a cruiser. It appeared off the north end of Tarawa. Morgan went out on the lagoon, as it looked as if we might be caught in a pincers drive. Nothing happening, he returned, and the next morning, Christmas Day, the cruiser anchored in the passage and sent a party ashore. The cruiser carried a plane, which went up and circled around and then returned. I decided to report the presence of this cruiser, in case it was leaving an occupation force, but was afraid of directional location, as I had been from the beginning. The Japanese no doubt could hear us, but would know no more than that we were on a line to Suva, but not at what point in that line. We were of course the nearest point to the Japanese, but they could not know that, unless they could get a cross bearing and thus pin point us. A cross bearing could only be obtained by an aircraft or submarine or surface vessel out at an angle to the line, Tarawa to Suva. This pin pointing takes 10 minutes at least, so no messages I sent out ever exceeded the figure of 4 minutes. This gave absolute safety. If a message was long it was broken up and despatched at long intervals. Here was the cruiser only 4 miles away and beautifully placed for the deadly cross bearing. Morgan before sending the message said to Beru in English. "No message for you. All very quiet here. Nothing has happened for a long time. Sorry, there is a message. Handed in last night and I nearly forgot it. Here it is. And then he send in code. "Japanese cruiser with plane in channel. Report will follow." and as I have said, the cruiser was only 4 miles away. The cruiser left in the afternoon after every device had been tried to discover if anyone was in receipt of news. One Government officer under the strain of questioning felt automatically but vainly in his pocket for a cigarette, whereupon he was presented with a packet of cigarettes, American cigarettes and from Wake Island. The Rising Sun now flew from the annexation pole. The cruiser

had done something very foolish, in the circumstances. It brought back the crew of the "Helena A". You will recollect my indicating that this ship was taken away by the two destroyers. Butaritari went off the air next day, so Morgan and I knew that the destroyers had gone there, after leaving us. Silence fell on Butaritari. But had the Japanese just done as they did at Tarawa, or were they occupying it, probably fortifying it and turning it into a seaplane base. London and Washington would like to know. The crew of the "Helena A" supplied the answer. They had not been allowed ashore at Butaritari, but could see a good deal from the deck of their vessel, as to ships, guns, seaplanes and troops. Butaritari clearly was being occupied and fortified. The news was reported and before long the Americans bombed Butaritari port with good results. Later, they raided it from a submarine. The day after the departure of the cruiser, when I was breathing, oh, so freely, my houseboy gave me a shock. He said that a Gilbertese named Tentau had betrayed the presence of the secret wireless to a Japanese officer on shore. The officer, not understanding what was being divulged, had sent for an interpreter but before an interpreter was found, the officer was recalled to the cruiser. The treachery therefore remained an attempt, and was a highly individual case. The population of Tarawa was 3,000 and loyalty and discretion of each person could be relied upon. It is a racial characteristic, also, to ignore other people's business. What does not concern you is nothing to do with you. It is difficult therefore to get evidence in court, but how wonderful is the tight mouth in war! This man, it was found, had a grudge against Europeans because he had recently been dismissed from commercial employment. What could we do with him, we being British? The gaols were open, the Japanese had opened them. I talked to this man, appealed to him and he promised never to betray us. It was his wife, however, who took the more effective steps. She ran off with another man. The houseboy came excitedly to me one morning saying, "Tentau has gone, after his wife. She has fled to the next island, with her lover. He won't go to the Japanese again. His mind is full of a new trouble now". And so it turned out. Even adultery came into our luck. Communication went on regularly and as many as five messages a day were got away on occasions. We received the news broadcasts, too, all at that time just a record of defeat after defeat. Our hopes of an early military rescue waned and disappeared. But I was suggesting other means in my messages. The natives were cheerful always. They had been disappointed that a British cruiser had not dashed up and sunk the Japanese warships out of land. A British warship used to visit Tarawa every year. Where was it now? But their faith in the British Empire shone as strongly as ever. They mistook a Jap plane one day for a British plane, owing to some freak of colouring. A beautiful but pathetic scene followed. I can see it always. Well, the next big event had both tragic and miraculous aspects and occurred on the 17th January. A lifeboat with eight men in it came ashore, a mile east of my house, late in the afternoon. I saw it and thought it must be Japanese making an attempt to capture our wireless set. A student, disguised as an ordinary native, was sent up to observe and report. He came back to say that the men in the boat were Europeans and in bad shape. They were then brought to our station, mostly by being carried. There were eight - 5 Danes, 2 Norwegians and 1 Australian. Their ship had been sunk at night on the very night that the Japanese destroyer came to Tarawa, by shell fire from a submarine. One shell had burst in the middle of one boat, as it tried to get away, killing all who were in it, some of them women. One boat only got away, and with 24 men in it, nearly all wounded, some of them terribly. The voyage that followed was outstanding among the many outstanding boat voyages of the war. Thirty-eight days in a shell-torn boat. For the first 24 hours the boat was actually submerged, but held up from sinking entirely, by the air tanks not

damaged. Sharks, attracted by the blood, had to be beaten off with oars. One shark actually swam into the boat, so much below water was it. Then the shell holes were plugged with clothing, wrapped around bits of oars, and the boat was gradually baled out, though during the 5½ weeks that followed, the boat made a foot or two of water a day. There was no chronometer and no sextant. Course was set north for 4 days in an attempt to reach Hawaii. The attempt failed and so the boat was allowed to drift and was carried in the general direction of the Gilbert Islands. No land was sighted. ~~No land was sighted.~~ The food consisted of 30 lbs of biscuits spoiled of course by the sea water when the boat was submerged, 40 tins of milk and 8 bottles of vitamin tablets. A few flying fish leaped into the boat and once shell fish were taken from a floating log. Two coconuts floated alongside, appropriately on Christmas Day. Rain fell every night, and though uncomfortable, this gave them sufficient drinking water. Fifteen of the 24 died, mostly from the effects of their wounds, and the captain was swept overboard, during a storm that lasted nearly a week. He was a man of strong character, I gathered, and would have prevented what happened subsequently, details of which I must pass over on this occasion. The Chief Officer was among those saved and he strongly advised me to let the boat float away, saying that it could not possibly do another voyage. I am standing before you this evening because I did not accept this advice. I felt that it was at least a boat and had it brought down and put ashore at high tide. A first survey by local experts decided against its repair but a second, some time later, decided that it could be made seaworthy, at least for one more voyage. The eight men made slow but steady progress towards recovery under the care of the medical officers. The Japanese came again, over 20 of them in a 4-engined seaplane. Among them was the Commandant at Butaritari. He stayed for some hours, gave many orders including one prohibiting anyone from leaving the lagoon, and stated that the Gilbert Islands were now merged with the Marshall Islands to form one Japanese Colony. Morgan and I were rather afraid of moving the wireless set in the daytime for fear that the canoe and party might be spotted in the passages between the islets, where the glittering white sand made moving objects stand out conspicuously. But all was in readiness for a move if the Japanese came our way. They did not. What a relief! I could not describe adequately that release each time of pent-up anxiety. You will no doubt by now consider the title of my talk, "We who were lucky at Tarawa, Gilbert Islands", as already justified. But I now proceed to deal with the larger miracles. You have heard only the small ones so far. You will recollect my telling you how the Japanese on their first visit destroyed launches, engines and boats. One launch hull at Betio however was capable of being repaired and was repaired. But an engine? Yes, there was one. All those visible had been wrecked, but in a case in Burns Philp's store there reposed an 18 H.P. Diesel engine recently imported from England. The Japanese opened most of the cases in this store, a sort of test check, but passed over the case holding the engine. Lucky! This engine was installed in the repaired launch. The aerial enemy patrol had declined in frequency for the reason I have given you, the bombing of Butaritari. This was helpful and a party of nine were to make a getaway in the launch. Only nine, there was not room for more. I was offered a place, but declined. Some would have to stay and I could not leave Morgan just then. Later he wished to stay. Bad weather intervened, so bad that the launch voyage was delayed, and before the weather moderated completely the lifeboat I have mentioned came ashore. Now there are 16 Gilbert Islands, strung down a line over 500 miles long. On one of these islands was a group of Europeans desperately in need of a lifeboat. A lifeboat comes ashore at that island.

More than that, this lifeboat had passed Tarawa and was close to the next island south, Maiana, when a change of current and wind occurred and it came back to Tarawa, landing practically at my doorstep. The second survey as I have said, proving favourable, repairs to the lifeboat were taken in hand. It had holes, fist size, in its sides, besides many smaller ones and the bottom was badly buckled. Plates cut out of tanks were rivetted over the holes, the buckles were hammered out, air tanks were put right and wood work renewed. Now there was a launch and a large boat. All could get away, including the 8 shipwrecked castaways, when they were strong enough to endure the journey. This and other causes of delay were harassing. The Japanese, when they returned, and they were due any time, would discover our plans, make short work of them and of us. Three men decided not to wait longer and sailed away one night in a small sailing boat, obtained recently. Seventeen days later, we, the remainder of "Who were lucky at Tarawa", left also. But in the meantime, a wonderful intervention. A ship, its name, "Denger" was being sent north from Suva to replenish stores at certain wireless stations and would make an attempt to meet us, at a rendezvous. The crew of this vessel were all volunteers. We left Tarawa on the evening of the 27th February 1942, the launch towing the lifeboat. Our intention was to travel by night and hide by day. Morgan, Cleary the Government dispenser, and Captain Handley, a retired sea-captain, stayed behind. We reached the next island in the early hours of the morning and remained ashore until the time for the Japanese patrol plane was past and then embarked for the next stage. Wind and sea were less favourable, and next morning the island that should have been in sight could not be seen. We did not reach it until the afternoon, but all was well. Luck held. No Japanese plane that day. How we had scanned the skies! Bad weather kept us fastened to this island. The lifeboat was hidden against an eroded bank and overhanging trees screened it well. The launch could not be hidden, but lay on its side. A Japanese plane came over and as I learned later did spot it, but mistook it for a local craft. Our next lap was a lengthy and the final one, and we were to meet the ship at dawn. Dawn came and we lagged again. The ship hung on, our advance guard of 3 were already on board, and at noon we sighted the "Dengei" coming towards us; land had been sighted some two hours before. No plane vital that day and yet the next day, the very next day, a Japanese reconnaissance plane searched up and down that island, scanning every part of it. The Magistrate gave me this news in December 1943, adding, "You were lucky. How that plane flew up and down!" Well the title of this talk is, We who were lucky at Tarawa, Gilbert Islands. The good ship "Denger", with us on board, steamed away from the line of the usual Japanese patrol and nine days later it arrived at Suva. I conclude this section on the saddest possible note. Morgan, Cleary and Handley, and nineteen others brought to Tarawa from islands south, were all murdered on the 15th October 1942, in revenge for the shelling of the island by an American cruiser. Morgan, four months before had been informed of the award to him of the George Medal. The wireless set, that had served so well, was never discovered by the Japanese and lies at the bottom of Tarawa lagoon.

Now comes the return to Tarawa. I alone of those who made the boat voyage had the honour of returning with the attacking force. But Captain Harness, our navigator for the boat voyage, was present with the separate American force, which attacked and captured Butaritari. But there is much to relate before I find myself walking around Betio once more. In 1943, I was allowed to return to the Ellice Group where at Funafuti the

Americans were now in occupation and had built an airfield. I volunteered to make a survey in a "Ventura", that is, to spy out the land in the Southern Gilberts for signs of Japanese. There followed a delightful seven hours in the air, with the plane splendidly handled, never going higher than 500 feet. Often it flew below the level of the coconut trees so as to give me the very best view. There were no signs of any Japanese activity and all the signs that the Gilbertese were leading normal lives, under the self-government system. The extent of the Japanese occupation was thus shown not to be below Abemama. Another "Ventura" was pounced on by Zeros and shot down, near Beru, over which I had been flown safely in my survey a few days before. Well, you did not expect me to get shot down, did you, after all I have told you? I now went on by ship to the next island north of Funafuti, where there was a boarding school similar to the one at Bairiki. But a Patrol Torpedo Boat shortly afterwards took me back to Funafuti. Patrol Torpedo Boats are used in rescue work of airmen and are to be avoided generally. The craft I was on was said to be capable of 49 knots. I can only describe my journey back to Funafuti as a sort of marine "rodeo". I gripped a stanchion and hung on. The captain, having duties to perform, tried to do them, was thrown heavily to the deck and later removed to hospital. I have been told the maximum life of these craft was 18 months and could believe that the maximum life of those who work in them to be much less. From Funafuti, I was taken by air, via Wallis and Palmyra islands to Pearl Harbour. Soon I was joined by Mr. H.E. Maude, O.B.E. who is here tonight. Mr. Maude later became Resident Commissioner of the Gilbert and Ellice Islands Colony. He and I were interrogated at Admiral Nimitz's Headquarters as to the features of Tarawa, Butaritari and Abemama. I must tell you of an amazing feat of accuracy. The Intelligence Section of the Amphibious Force, which was to attack Tarawa, had prepared a relief plan of Betio - trees, houses, wharf and Japanese additions. I was asked to point out any mistakes. I examined it and then said in admiration. "There is one mistake, only." The post office at Betio was a long building running north and south. The Intelligence people had it in its right place but running east and west. Nothing else was out of place, nor omitted. After 5 weeks of telling all I knew and writing reports I was sent to Wellington, New Zealand, by sea to join the American 2nd Marine Division which within a week embarked on 16 transports. These transports and their escort sailed north, destination of course unannounced. At Efate, there joined us 3 battleships and the whole task force eventually consisted of 3 battleships, 2 heavy cruisers, 5 aircraft carriers, 2 mine sweepers, 16 destroyers and the 16 transports. At the conclusion of the rehearsals, the place and date of the attack were announced for the first time, a booklet on the Gilbert Islands containing notes on the people, their language, customs and way of life, together with appropriate advice, was issued to the troops. This booklet had been written at Pearl Harbour by Mr. Maude, and most useful it proved, as an aid to good relations and discipline. With the date selected for the attack I could not agree and made my protest. At Wellington, I had proposed an alternative plan of attack to the one then adopted. My plan was ruled out, for one apparently overwhelming requirement, yet as events revealed, this plan would have proved the better. For the rest, I can only voice my admiration of American logistics, gunnery, energy and fighting qualities. We left Efate for Tarawa and some days later the task force going to Butaritari joined us and this made the Pacific look like one ground harbour, incredibly active. The two forces then separated and on the night before the battle we passed round the south end of Tarawa and every ship was perfectly in position before dawn. The scene was at dawn as follows:

At Efate in the New Hebrides rehearsals were held, the whole manoeuvres of attack on a Coral island being gone through twice.

Battleships, cruisers and destroyers are clustered around the west and south-west end of Betio. Carriers are over the horizon, well guarded. Transports are grouped north of the ships' channel and mostly at the north of the atoll. A Japanese patrol boat sighted and shelled during the night is burning fiercely inside the lagoon. Troops are all ready for going down the landing nets. It was guns of British Manufacture that opened the Battle of Tarawa; a battery of two 8 inch guns probably moved from Singapore. They fired at the battleship "Maryland" and ^{then} turned their fire on the transports. One shell fell near my transport. I was down below. I rushed up to the starboard side where an anti-aircraft gunner said to me, "You should have been here a few seconds ago. A shell went over." I walked to the port side where the gunner said, "You should have been here a few seconds ago. A salvo went over" The "Maryland" knocked out these two guns with two 14 inch salvos. I saw these guns afterwards. One had half the barrel shot away. The other gun had been capsized. During the early morning 2,000 tons of naval fire was showered on Betio. During the 3 days previously over 1,000 tons of bombs had been dropped, and all this on one square mile. The site selected for the marines' attack is shown afterwards to be the best one. It had less obstacles. The site most studded with wire and concrete was that over which the Japanese had come in December 1941, but this site was now being avoided. The battle lasted 4 days and was one of the toughest in history, having regard to the small area involved. There could be no retreat for the Japanese. It was a case of beating off the attack, surrendering or dying. The first being impossible, the Japanese fought to the last man. Details of the battle were given fully to the world at the time. I shall therefore proceed to a few personal experiences. The Tokyo report of the first part of the battle caused much amusement to the fleet around Betio. The Americans suffered no naval casualties, neither to ships or to men. The Japanese report said, "One battleship sunk, 1 carrier sunk, 2 heavy cruisers badly damaged, 4 other ships damaged." Once I really wanted to utter three words and three only. A plane from the battleship, "Maryland", flew over the battle area up and down for hours each day giving reports of progress made and of resistance points. All of us could hear his words through the ship's receivers. The pilot was magnificent at his work. One time he flew away from Betio to have a look at Bairiki, my old home. When he got there, it took only a minute, he exclaimed, "Say, this a dandy place. Make a swell Headquarters" How I wished to answer back, "You're telling me." It had taken me 20 years to finish laying it out. Incidentally, the Americans did make it their Headquarters after the battle. I moved from the transport to a minesweeper and later was allowed ashore. The battle was now over, except for a few snipers, who were finally disposed of next day. Betio was a scene of indescribable desolation - mangled pill boxes, smashed vehicles, riddled aircraft, debris, silent siege guns with silent crews, bomb craters and shell holes, and no shade. The trees were gone, too. The stench of enemy corpses moved one on rapidly but only to other equally repulsive places. Very few of the old landmarks were left. I had by this time met some of my old students, and learned from them of the fate of Morgan and the others. I found the tragic spot and saluted it. After I left Morgan in February 1942 I had written him letters regularly which I retained for delivery the day we shall meet again. There was a letter written at Java, one at Nukunono, Tonga, another ^{at} Tinian Island and others from Honolulu, Wellington and Funafuti. These letters could not now be delivered. I spent a night in a fox hole at Betio. The earth kept caving in: Betio had been literally ploughed with bomb and shell. I was now ordered to Abemama for the coming

attack on that island. There was no attack. The Japanese at Abemama committed suicide on learning of the fate of Tarawa. So the landing was done without trouble. At Abemama I stayed on as District Officer. There were 9,000 American troops. A fine airfield was built. Bulldozers pushed down and moved away the coconut trees. Carry-alls then moved into the lagoon reef at low water and each scooped up 16 tons of reef mud, 16 tons at a time and then carried it to the airfield. In 18 days a fighter plane landed, in 18 days a bomber landed. Finally as I said at the beginning of this talk, 140 bombers and 50 fighters operated from Abemama. Butaritari and Tarawa had similar numbers. In pre-war days, you could get away from Abemama by ship only about 4 times a year. Now, you could pay return visits twice daily to Tarawa. The Americans placed a small amphibious plane at my disposal and I was able to visit islands at which no plane had landed previously. Go in the morning, do 4 or 5 hours of work and return in the afternoon. But in 18 months, nothing was left. Ships, troops, guns and planes had all gone. The front line had moved much nearer to Tokyo.

I cannot help but conclude with a story or two. Americans boast, as you know, but also, they usually carry out their boasts. I met one at Betio who was different. He was a wounded marine. Wounded were brought out to our transport and naturally were eagerly questioned. Most gave graphic accounts of success in killing Japanese. This one however, when spoken to said, "Had no water for 48 hours" and again, "Had no food for 48 hours," "Yes," said a ship's officer, "but you killed some Japs, didn't you? Everybody else did, how many did you kill?" "None, I never even saw a ----- Jap". And of course very often few Japanese were seen, except in counter attacks or suicide charges. They were hidden in pill boxes or dugouts. Story, number two. The Gilbertese can reason well, too well for Japanese logic. At Abemama they wooed the natives in this way: "Your skin is brown, ours is brown, too, so we are brothers by colour. We are brothers in other ways. We eat rice and fish, so do you. Moreover, we eat our fish sitting on the floor just like you." But the Abemama old men said among themselves. "If the Japanese act as we do, they are no better than we are, and can have nothing to teach us". Story number three is remarkable. The scene is at Tarawa, during the Japanese occupation. A group of soldiers visited an islet where lived a teacher, one of mine. He was asked, "which do you like more, the Japanese or the British?" A nasty question in the circumstances. He fended by saying, "I like both". The group went away, but one man lingered behind and said fiercely "Never say again that you like the Japanese. They are devils, all of them - liars and cheats, cruel and pitiless. I am half American, my mother was a Japanese. I was forced into the Japanese army and no doubt will die at Betio. But remember my words. Good-bye." And no doubt this poor chap did die at Betio.

(17)
Notes on Escape from Tarawa.

Pearl Harbour bombed on 8th December, 1941. (Victim Pacific Line).

First action against Tarawa occurred two days later, when marines from two destroyers landed in early hours of the morning. They smashed all wireless transmitting equipment, seized all radio sets, blew up the Government vessel "Kimanou", and either destroyed or rendered unseaworthy all launches, boats, lighters and canoes. They spared one small ship, the "Helena" belonging to Messrs Burns Philp & Co, and this vessel was towed away by one of the destroyers the same evening, on the departure of the enemy force. No European was removed, though each was warned against attempts to escape or to communicate with the outside world.

The day's events and subsequent events for months were reported by Lt R. S. Morgan on a portable transmitter. See paras 2 and 3 of letter to Sir Harry Luke.

The Japanese returned 15 days later, on Christmas Day, this time by a cruiser. In addition to conducting a search, they tried various devices, which failed, to discover if the island was in receipt of overseas news. They left the island the same day. The cruiser, unwisely for enemy interests, repatriated the native crew of the "Helena", and from these natives was obtained the full story of Japanese activities at Butaritari, occupied on the 11th December, which led to the bombing of that island by the Americans at the end of January, 1942. See para 12.

The next visit of the Japanese was by seaplane on the 23rd January, 1942. See P.S. para. 4. Government officers were asked if they would prefer to be taken to Japan or to remain on Tarawa. Visits at intervals occurred afterwards until the Japanese landed troops for the actual occupation in September, 1942.

Soon after the first Japanese raid, the hull of one of the damaged launches was put secretly under repair by the Europeans, assisted by half-caste and native carpenters. The engine, like all others, had been wrecked by the Japanese, yet one was miraculously available. The enemy marines in going through Burns Philp store had opened many cases but not all, and in one of those untouched was a new launch engine. This was installed in the repaired hull. An attempt was to be made by a few Government officers to get away, but bad weather intervened, and as will be seen, "Laffely" intervened for the rest of the Europeans.

A ship, the "Doverail" had been sunk by the Japanese on the 9th December near Hawaii. Twenty-four men, nearly all wounded, had got away in one lifeboat, itself badly holed by shellfire. This lifeboat, after a 2,000 mile journey, came ashore over the reef at Tarawa 38 days later, after having almost gone well south of Tarawa, and

having been turned north again by a change of current. See pages 2 and 3 of the R.T. Eight men only were still alive. They were given medical treatment and the eight recovered health and strength. The senior officer of these survivors advised that the lifeboat could not endure more days ^{at sea} ~~ago~~, even if repaired, but the decision made was to repair it. This was successfully done, and the lifeboat towed by the launch left Tarawa on the afternoon of the 27th February, 1942. The American bombing attacks on Butaritari (and the Marshalls) already mentioned had reduced the aerial patrol over Tarawa and the rest of the Gilberts from a daily event to an irregular one. The intention of the escaping party, composed of 18 Europeans, inclusive of the eight Downair survivors, plus 7 natives was to travel by night, in order to dodge the aerial patrol, reach an island by dawn and hide for the day. Marina was gained safely the first night. The run to the next island, Kuria, was not so lucky, and the party was at sea until 2 o'clock in the afternoon. No enemy plane however came over. Bad weather kept the party at Kuria for some days, and while there a Japanese plane flew very low over the island. As was ascertained afterwards, it ~~had~~ observed the launch but mistook it for a local craft. The next stage of the journey was to be Abemama, but owing to the delay it was decided to make the full run to Komoiti, where a rescue ship was to come in at dawn. The hope of reaching Komoiti so early was not realized, and it was midday before land was sighted. The ship hung on, no Japanese plane appeared, and during the afternoon all the escaping party were embarked on the "Wegzi", the rescue ship mentioned, which had come up from Fiji. Nine days later, the "Wegzi" arrived at Suva. As was also known afterwards, a Japanese plane circled over Komoiti the day after the "Wegzi" left. By that time, the "Wegzi" was well away from the line of the Gilberts.

Mr Morgan remained on at Tarawa to continue his transmission with the secret wireless set. His operation of the set was never discovered by the Japanese, but he was murdered by them on the 25th October, 1942, along with 21 other Europeans, 17 of them New Zealanders brought from other islands to Tarawa.

Gilbert and Ellice Islands Colony

WAR DIARY, MAJOR F.G.L. HOLLAND.

Period August - November, 1943.

August, 1943. Left Auckland, New Zealand, by air on morning of 9th August, and reached Suva, Fiji, the same afternoon. Into uniform without delay. On the 14th, arrived at Funafuti, Ellice Islands, via Wallis Island. Travelled by air. Delayed at Funafuti for the further stage to Vaitupu. On the 21st, I flew in 7-hour journey over the Southern Gilberts. Plane was a Ventura, piloted by Lieut.-Commander J.A. Cooper, U.S.N. This flight represented to me a kind of fulfilment of my promise made to the natives in 1942, just before and during my escape from Tarawa in a boat, that I would return. My report submitted on this flight indicated that Tamana, Onotoa, Tabiteuea and Beru Islands were normal in all visible aspects, with no signs of Japanese occupation, ~~or of the Japanese themselves~~, except for a certain subdued atmosphere at Tamana. Months later, after the conquest of the Northern Gilbert Islands - Butaritari, Tarawa and Abemama - the report was confirmed, as it was found that no Japanese had been stationed at any of these islands, in fact at any island south of Abemama. I arrived at Vaitupu on the 23rd August, having left Funafuti the previous day in the "John Williams". My stay at Vaitupu was intended to last for several months, but was suddenly curtailed. His Honour, The Resident Commissioner, Lieut.-Colonel V. Fox-Strangways, visited Vaitupu on the 30th and 31st, travelling in the "John Williams".

September, 1943. A Patrol Torpedo Boat took me from Vaitupu to Funafuti during the late afternoon and evening of the 3rd September. This craft, under certain conditions, could attain a speed of 49 knots. The run to Funafuti, owing to the rough sea, proved to be a sort of marine "rodeo". The captain was thrown heavily to the deck and injured, and on the little vessel's arrival had to be removed to the hospital on a stretcher. At dawn, the Resident Commissioner and I boarded a "Coronado" (4-engined sea plane) for Pearl Harbour. The first day's run was a three-hour one to Wallis Island. The second day's run of 1,450 miles was accomplished between 7 a.m. and 5.30 p.m., and we ~~joined~~ ^{shared,} in the first dinner served in the new hotel at Palmyra Island. Leaving next morning at 7 o'clock, we landed at Pearl Harbour, 1,100 miles distant, at 2.30 in the afternoon. During my stay in Honolulu, which lasted for 5 weeks, I lived in a hotel ~~situated~~ at Waikiki, making almost daily visits to Pearl Harbour, generally to the Headquarters of the Fifth Amphibious Force. Mr H.E. Maude arrived at Honolulu soon afterwards, followed later at different intervals by Lieut.-Commander G.H. Heyen, Lieutenant G.J. Webster, Captain D.C.I. Wernham, Captain E.D. Harness, Captain Tschaun, Lieutenant S. Page, Captain Forbes, and Mr G.E. Hard - all with local experience of the Gilbert Islands. Between the 7th, which was spent at Admiral Nimitz's Headquarters, and the 16th, I, along with others, was under what might be called "third-degree" questioning by groups of officers at Intelligence and at the Headquarters of the Fifth Amphibious Force. The subjects related to the Gilbert Islands, and in my case particularly to Tarawa, and covered such matters as climate, rainfall, water supply, coastal features, tides and reefs, roads, vegetation and undergrowth, and so on. Perusal of aerial photographs and of topographical representations were also prominent matters. The latter I found to be amazingly accurate.

accurate. Some of the interviews were recorded by dictaphone. A visitor to Pearl Harbour at this time was the High Commissioner for the Western Pacific, Sir Philip Mitchell, K.C.M.G. The Resident Commissioner left Honolulu for Fiji by plane on the 16th. Between the 16th and the 20th, I was called for interviews with doctors and engineers. I prepared a medical survey of the Colony, and handed it in on the 22nd. On the 24th, four of us visited the battleship, "Maryland", where Admiral H.W. Hill and staff discussed with us the land and sea features of Abemama. For the rest of the month, I was on call at the Headquarters of the Fifth Amphibious Force.

October, 1943. From the 1st to the 9th, there were two important meetings, one very important. This one was with Admiral Hill, Major-General Julian Smith, Colonel M.A. Edson, and other high officers. At this meeting hints were dropped of the scale of the forthcoming attacks on Butaritari and Tarawa. The second meeting was at Schofield with Major-General Ralph Smith and his senior officers, of the 27th Infantry Division. Butaritari was the subject. On the 10th, Captain Wernham and I boarded the U.S.S. "Doyen", which sailed next day for Wellington, New Zealand. There was very calm weather throughout, and the only excitement was a strenuous crossing-the-equator ceremony, when over 400 officers and men were initiated. On arrival at Wellington, Captain Wernham and I repaired at once to the Headquarters of the 2nd Marine Division. We met Colonel Edson, Chief of Staff, and I requested consideration of a plan of attack on Tarawa. The plan I put up was as follows: No infantry assault on Betio to take place for some days, after the commencement of the naval bombardment. Naval and air attack on Betio to be augmented as early as possible by land artillery fire. Part of the infantry force would proceed over the western reef, as soon as the Japanese guns had been knocked out, and would fan out to capture the rest of the atoll, known definitely to have little or no defences. This would forestall an expensive mopping-up operation, should the Japanese have planned to retreat from Betio, when the situation there became desperate for them. Guns were to be placed on Bairiki, and these would join in the bombardment of Betio, giving of course the most accurate fire of all. The enemy food and water position would early become serious, and in this connection, if time allowed, the enemy could be starved out. I pointed out the one apparent weakness in Japanese strategy at Tarawa: all the eggs were in one basket. Betio was simply a fort, and an isolated fort, and such forts were notoriously vulnerable in modern warfare. And, in any case, if an infantry assault was imperative, then let it occur after a few days, when the maximum destruction had been inflicted on the enemy. I was informed that such a plan had ~~to~~ be ruled out because of one paramount consideration: the airfield at Betio had to be captured within 24 hours. To that end, such a weight of air attack and naval fire would be delivered that the prospect of serious resistance to the infantry attack was believed to be remote. That ended the interview. I cannot help but mention here, though certainly in no "I-told-you-so" spirit, that if my plan had been followed a high percentage of the 3,600 casualties that were suffered might have been saved. The airfield was not captured within 24 hours, nor even completely within 72 hours.

I spent three days at the Headquarters of the 2nd Marine Division. Two days' leave in Auckland were then granted me. On the 29th, I returned to Wellington, and immediately boarded the U.S.S. "Zeilin".

November, 1944.

Continued Island Mem.

unlikely.

November, 1944. The "Zeilin" and 15 other transports, convoyed by seven destroyers, left Wellington on the 1st, and reached Efate in the New Hebrides on the 7th. Smooth seas existed throughout the journey, as was the case in the continuation to Tarawa. Rehearsals of landing operations followed at Efate. I now learned for the first time of D-day, i.e., the 19th November. This information filled me with distress. The date selected was most unfortunate, as regards height of tide, and the 20th, which ultimately became D-day was no better. Boats with troops would not be able to cross the reef on those days, however shallow their draft. My warning led to my being called to the "Maryland", before Admiral Hill, General Julian Smith, Colonel Edson and others. Lieutenant Page, Captain Tschaun, Lieutenant Webster and Captain Forbes were called also. A discussion containing painful surprises ^{to me} followed. I drew attention to the official "Notes on Tarawa", prepared at Pearl Harbour, which gave 3 or 4 feet of water on the reef at Betio for about 4 hours, during high water springs, but only 1 or 2 feet during high water neaps. I added that often during neap tides before the war, Burns Philp at Tarawa could not work cargo, and had to await higher tides. I stressed my 20 years' experience of Tarawa conditions. I pointed out that neap tides would be at their very lowest, on the 19th and 20th. Two feet in my opinion was the maximum depth possible, not an inch more, and there was the likelihood of less than this. It was true, I added, that I had not given any special warning beforehand, but sufficient warning was surely contained in the "Notes on Tarawa, Tides and Working Conditions", and the whole emphasis of talks at Pearl Harbour in this matter had been on spring tides. Moreover I had not been consulted as to the actual D-day. Admiral Hill then spoke at length, and most interestingly at that, on the phenomena that affected tides. He added that while not wishing to doubt my word, he still expected there to be about 4 feet of water on the reef at Betio, and referred finally to his luck, which had never deserted him. Those with experience of Tarawa were then asked to give an opinion. Lieutenant Page declined to do so, on the grounds of his not being fully qualified. Captain Tschaun agreed with me, though weakly, but Lieutenant Webster and Captain Forbes unhesitatingly agreed with Admiral Hill. I made my final protest, begging all to believe me, that 4 feet of water on the reefs of Betio at the time stated was a rank impossibility. (Note: The infantry attack on Betio occurred on the 20th, just before the time of high water. The boats could not take their personnel nearer than the reef, and from there the marines had to wade across the reef, under heavy fire. Newspapers afterwards ^{wrote} that, "a sudden wind lowered the water over reefs, grounding the landing boats and forcing the marines to wade the last 800 yards to the beach". ^{In plain} terms, There was no "sudden wind", ^{& no any other abnormality.})

I was transferred back to the "Doyen". Our fleet of warships and transports, now increased by three battleships, the "Maryland", "Colorado", and "Tennessee", left Efate on the 13th. Soon other ships joined, until the whole task force consisted of 16 transports, 3 battleships, 2 heavy cruisers, 5 aircraft carriers, 2 mine-sweepers, and 16 destroyers. The preliminary daily air bombardment of Tarawa, Butaritari, and of enemy bases in the Marshalls began on the 13th. On the day before we reached Tarawa, an enemy 4-engined plane was shot down 40 miles ahead. The task force bound for Butaritari ^{came in} joined with our force during the day and this made the Pacific

natural

Anchored

terms,

Pacific look like one grand harbour. ^{Islands} That night our force passed between Maiana and Tarawa, and every ship was in position well before dawn.

21st November (20th). Battleships, cruisers and destroyers are clustered around the west and south-west end of Betio. Carriers are over the horizon. Transports are grouped north of the Channel, mostly towards the north of the atoll. A Japanese patrol boat sighted and shelled during the night is burning fiercely inside the lagoon. Troops are all ready for going down the landing nets. Landing craft are in the water. Such was the scene at dawn, and soon afterwards the warships opened fire - 2,000 tons of naval shells are to be poured into Betio. When H-hour comes, amphibious tractors fitted with grapnels for destroying wire will open a way for the boats. The site selected for the attack is shown afterwards to be the very best one. This was the lagoon beach, which the Japanese evidently regarded as the one least likely to be the point of attack. It was wired much less than the other coasts. Troops are to follow the tractors, in their landing boats, accompanied by light and medium tanks. High tide is at ten or thereabouts. The day is an ideal one, a ^{gentle} light, but steady breeze coming from the east, the normal quarter; brilliant sunshine. An air observer gave some of the notes that follow. He was up at intervals, and his reports were clearly heard on the "Doyen": At 9.15, landing boats had reached the lagoon reef, found the water too low to proceed further, and the troops begin the long wade ashore, the water being below their knees. At 9.50, the 3 waves of ~~troops~~ troops, by now terribly decimated, had arrived at the beaches, east and west of Betio pier. Landing boats still unable to move forward. Tractors are out of action, with 3 on fire. At 10.45, full-scale naval fire was resumed, accompanied by heavy attacks from the air. Coco-nut trees much battered during the early bombardment, began to look more and more bedraggled everywhere. The transports had been shelled at the outset of the attack, without damage, but all enemy guns with one exception had been quickly silenced. The exception reported from the air was a ^{small} gun situated at the west-end of Betio, which did ~~great~~ damage until knocked out about 11 o'clock. At 2.45, two destroyers entered the lagoon, preceded by a minesweeper. By the evening, only a few yards in depth of the beach defences had been overcome. At dusk, most ships opened up anti-aircraft fire against supposed enemy air-torpedo attack.

22nd November, (21st). Weather calm, light easterly breeze, cloudless sky. Cruisers began bombardment of Betio at 6.30. Aeroplane observer still giving wonderful reports on the situation. At noon, he reported that troops were across the western end of the island. Fresh troops now moved in to join in the drive eastwards. By 4 o'clock, it appeared that progress had been made up to the airfield. The observer reported 2 Zeros and ^{large} dump of bombs intact near the centre of the airfield. He said that a large pill box just left of the wharf was giving considerable trouble. The doctors had been busy since noon, operating on the wounded brought out to the ship. Their work continued night and day without intermission for the remainder of my stay on the "Doyen". Bairiki was occupied at 5 p.m. The progress over the reef of the troops was described as "a nice impressive little walk". No resistance was encountered.

23rd November, (22nd). Reported that Japanese planes bombed western end of Betio just before dawn. Heavy naval fire opened early against central and eastern parts of

of island. This was followed by dive-bombing attacks. Frank Highland, formerly Government Storekeeper, had been brought off from Eita village during the night, and from him I learned of the events of Tarawa, since my departure in 1942. He it was who informed me of the fate of the Europeans left behind at Tarawa, and of those stationed in the islands south of Tarawa. The "Doyen" entered the lagoon at 9 a.m., and anchored opposite the scene of the day's principal attack, for which from now on I had a grandstand seat. A destroyer near us was doing some excellent shooting with time H.E. The fire from ships outside the lagoon was however not always so accurate, and several shells fell uncomfortably near boats going to Bairiki. The bombs as released from the planes could be plainly seen. This pounding was followed by an attack of tanks, carrying flame throwers. At night however the Japanese in this area were still holding out. Rota, a native assistant master, Domingo and Nataua, two ex-students of the King George V School, arrived at the "Doyen" during the day. They had been brought off the centre of Tarawa by a reconnaissance patrol. Later, they were taken ^{to the pier} ashore for interrogation. The marine guard, which accompanied them, caused amusement by asking me if they were friendly.

^{in the afternoon} 24th November, (23rd). Naval fire again against eastern end of island, but not intense. End of operation appeared as possible today. About 200 more wounded men were brought aboard the "Doyen". I moved to the minesweeper "Pursuit" during the afternoon. A plane from Funafuti landed in lagoon, and later took off. Reported at 3.30 that Japanese resistance ^{was} practically at an end. A tremendous procession of supplies then began to move shorewards. Betio bombed twice during the night that followed.

25th November, (24th). I began to harass people requesting permission to go ashore. Shortly after midday, got ashore at Betio, and reported to Divisional Headquarters. Betio, a scene of indescribable desolation! A terrific stench from enemy corpses moved one on rapidly only to other equally repulsive places. Few of the old landmarks were left. One I noted early was a small part of a hedge that fronted the Old Residency, now supplanted by a formidable pill box. The dispensary at the hospital had survived, mostly in fragments. Some of the Lunatic Asylum was left and some of the wire enclosure. Hereabouts, according to reports, were decapitated the 22 Europeans collected from Tarawa and the islands south. I saluted the scene of this terrible tragedy. All officers' quarters were gone. Tennis Court, little trace. District Office, Store, Post Office, no trace. Everywhere mangled pill boxes, smashed vehicles, riddled aircraft, debris, silent siege guns with dead crews around, bomb craters and shell holes. The airfield was already under repair. The wharf had survived in fairly good order. It was in the main a new wharf, built over the old, with thousands of coco-nut logs. Japanese snipers were still busy, and were not finally disposed of until the next day. I was ordered to report to Brigadier-General Hermle, commanding the Abemama attacking force. Spent the night in a fox-hole.

26th November, (25th). In early morning, I walked over Betio again, but was again restricted by snipers. Some casualties occurred at the time, inflicted mostly on incautious souvenir hunters. The Japanese Paymaster's office had been found, containing a huge amount of "yen". Left shore at 9 o'clock, taking Rota, Domingo and Nataua with me. On board "Harris", by means of landing net. This ship

ship sailed at 5 p.m., bound for Abemama, with the force to capture the island. In company were the battleship "Maryland", 4 destroyers, and one submarine chaser. The battleship looked so squat and stable, which made the journey feel so safe, but the wonder of it was to have this feeling, in waters, which for months before were dark, forbidden and dangerous.

27th November, (26th). Ships arrived off south end of Abemama at dawn. Captain Jones, in charge of the submarine reconnaissance patrol, which had landed 3 days before, came out to the "Harris" and reported the Japanese - 24 of them - as all dead, mostly by suicide. The "Harris" thereupon proceeded to the north end of the island, preparatory to putting troops, equipment, and supplies ashore. I landed in an amphibious tractor, at a place not far from the site of the present airfield. It was an area with scattered coco-nut trees, one single pandanus tree, all sand and no grass, and with some scanty scrub, but it looked very beautiful to me, after my enforced absence of 20 months from the Gilbert Islands. General Hermle, his Chief of Staff, and I drove down the island road, meeting a joyous, but, in some cases, dazed people. Among those encountered was the Native Magistrate (deposed by the Japanese) and he was directed to call the people for a full meeting the next morning.

28th November, (27th). Left camp with General Hermle, and his senior officers, and drove to the Government Station. Introductions to a full "Maneaba" followed, and my speech dealt with the features of the occupation, the many aspects of cooperation, the restoration of local and the central Government, the recent operations in the Gilberts, and the progress of the war at large. A drive to the Japanese position was then taken, where a burial party was already at work. During the afternoon, I talked to the people again, this time alone, going into the details of the cooperative war effort. The Union Jack was hoisted on a coco-nut tree, the former flagstaff having been cut up and removed by the Japanese.

For the remaining days of the month, I was busy with inquiries regarding the activities of various persons during the enemy occupation of the island, and in dealing with urgent military calls, and in completing arrangements for over 100 Abemama men to start work on the site of the airfield.

GILBERT AND ELLICE ISLANDS COLONY.

WAR DIARY, MAJOR F.G.L. HOLLAND.

December, 1943. 1st. Cycled to Catholic Training School. Arranged with Principal for his students to join in war work, for limited period. On return to Government Station, reviewed prisoners' sentences; released all of them owing to their conviction in an improperly-constituted court. Arranged at request of military doctors, for certain sanitary measures to be carried out by natives. Island Commander, Captain W.P. Cogswell, asked for two interpreters to be attached to his headquarters, so gave him nota and Domingo. This leaves me with no clerical assistance whatever, as Scribe to Native Government has already been placed in charge of records connected with Labour Company. 2nd. One weak-minded native has become demented, owing to the noise of road and air traffic. He was not violent however until he heard the first tractor, whereupon he declared that "the end of the world has come", and proceeded to assault all those near him. Very difficult to control him humanely, with no suitable equipment on hand. 3rd. Lunatic still noisy and violent, but towards evening had a lucid period, and became very contrite. Visited an LBT in evening, being delivered and taken off by an amphibious "Jeep". To make this visit I had to travel to north end of island, and was amazed at changes wrought in landscape in such a short period. 4th. Received report from various natives of conduct of three sailors the previous afternoon. They desecrated a grave, wrecked the pictures in an empty house, afterwards forcibly entered two houses and took away articles of value. These were loaded in a canoe and taken away north. Wrote to Island Commander, but men could not be traced, nor any articles found, except the canoe. General Kemble and staff visited the Government Station, for purpose of obtaining official photographs of the "Mancaba", the scene of their meeting with the Abemama natives on the 23rd November. 5th. Admirals Spruance and Bernhardt called on short visit. The former remarked that there was no intention of capturing either Ocean Island or Nauru Island by direct attack. At request of senior officer concerned, I selected site for a Base Hospital. 6th. An artillery unit has its temporary location in the Island Hospital, which is part of the Government Station, and the men are causing much trouble by pestering native women at night. Women are threatened with death, if they attempt to inform me. All able-bodied men are now on regular war employment, every able-bodied woman is busy with washing; old men have had to be put on casual work. More requests today for assistance by different units. It is obvious therefore that labour will have to be drawn from other islands. 7th. Important meeting with whole of Native Government. Subjects gone into were: areas being taken over for military use; making of slit trenches near villages; sale of native articles; fishing restrictions and other aspects of the black-out; schools and churches; sanitary measures; distribution of native population. Continued with inquiries regarding activities of half-castes and the high chief during the Japanese occupation. Drew up price list of native products. 8th and 9th. Receiving visitors in large numbers, many with requests, though some calls were courtesy ones. 10th. Wrote report to resident Commissioner on Abemama. Apart from an introductory section

section and a concluding historical paragraph, it contained reports on enemy action, on the former coast-watching unit, on the Japanese treatment of the natives, on American action, on present liaison with the occupying force, and on the Native Government, Government Records, Health and Education. 11th. Visited defences in north of island. Interviewed Island Commander reference serious case of attempted rape, and received assurance that all villages and hamlets would be placed out of bounds. 12th. First wind from west. This day and next two days marked by heavy rain. The westerly wind then blew itself out. 13th and 14th. Very wet days. Typing most of the time. 15th. Monthly meeting of Native Government. I attended in order to deal with following subjects: American currency, filling in of unused ponds, cultivation of taro, non-sale of chickens and pigs to the troops, work on native crafts, the working of the out-of-bounds rule, medical provision, and prohibition of sour-toddy manufacture. 16th. Inquiry into reports of thefts from natives and interference with native women. Interviewed Island Commander and requested tightening up of military police patrol. An hourly shore patrol was then instituted. 17th. Civil Affairs Officer, Lieutenant F.B. Lasell, reported here today. As he has conflicting orders, i.e., those received by me, and those he received, I fear he will prove of little help on my side. I have promised him all assistance in his study of administrative methods. 18th. Spent most of the day in drilling the Island police. This drill will continue daily until the squad is made presentable. 19th. Held inquiry into conduct of natives who worked as servants to the Japanese. Nothing tangible unearthed. 20th. Saw two planes land on airstrip. Paid native labour in script money, which is to be redeemed later. Took part in opening of store for natives. The Bishop of the Sacred Heart Mission and Brothers Engelhardt and Konrad arrived on the scene, having travelled from Butaritari by ship. 21st. Electric light from the adjacent Base Hospital now extended to my house, which enables work in the evening, up to the time of the black-out. Hitherto I have been without light. Visited Catholic Headquarters, in order to interview the Bishop, and to inquire into situation of staff and students. 22nd. Preparation for visit to Nonouti Island. Boarded PC. 599 during evening. 23rd. Arrived off northern part of Nonouti at 1 p.m. Entrance not found and ship made a dangerous passage into lagoon, anchoring about 10 miles north of the Government Station. The LCVF which had accompanied us took the Civil Affairs Officer, the Captain of ship, myself and armed party to the Government Station. Natives who came out in canoes informed us that no Japanese were on the island. Got ashore at 5 p.m. Union Jack hoisted by native police, as we waded over the reef - an affecting sight. Native Government and I saluted the re-hoisted flag, after the landing preliminaries had been concluded. The American officers took a stroll while this was being done. I talked lengthily with heads of the local Native Government, in the evening. 24th. American officers and I proceeded to the central "Mansaba", where I addressed the assembled people. As the natives of Nonouti Island had gathered at the Government Station to celebrate Christmas, there was a very large attendance. Recruitment of labour took place and over 100 men were selected for service at Abemama. The day concluded on my part with as much administrative work as could be done. 25th. On board ship at 9.30, with 105 labourers. Ship anchored in Abemama lagoon at 6 p.m. 26th. Found Island

Island Hospital and Gall area had been re-occupied in my absence. It had been decided that the 6-inch battery should give up its scattered positions in south of island and concentrate the four guns here. Stream of visitors again. Had to make known that I could no longer deal with distribution of laundry, and parties concerned must arrange direct with natives. 27th. Native Government held big feast, in celebration of return of British rule. 28th - 30th. Visiting defence points of island, and native labour parties. 31st. Lieutenant T.R. Cowell, Secretary to Government, arrived from Tarawa with Captain of ship proceeding to Nonouti in order to investigate story received from Tabitouna that some Japanese were still on former island. I ridiculed the story, as I have just come from Nonouti, but ship nevertheless had to obey orders. Submitted to Resident Commissioner my report on Nonouti Island, with headings on the lines of the Abamua deport.

January, 1944. 1st. Inspected Government Station in morning. In afternoon attended native dance in central "Maneaba". Very large attendance of American officers. 2nd - 3rd. In office most of the time, arranging for employment of casual labour on house building mostly, at headquarters of various units. On evening of 3rd, bombs dropped on air-field. One Liberator destroyed, others damaged, 1 gun pit demolished and two of crew killed. Bombs dropped also on south end of island, near Kabangaki village. No casualties, but crowd of natives in shelter had narrow escape. There is no military equipment nor personnel at this end of island. 4th. Air raid exactly repeated. At north, 4 trucks and one tower damaged. At south, no casualties nor damage again. 5th - 10th. Spent these days (a) investigating complaints against the troops and seeking means to protect the natives more adequately (b) in inspecting villages, house by house, in order to improve sanitation and reduce overcrowding. Chief Kaubure is to become more a peripatetic officer. 11th. Sailed at daylight for Kuria Island in YMS. 100. Took medical supplies with me for both Kuria and Aranuka. Ashore at 11, to meet excited and applauding natives. Addressed people in "Maneaba". Found island had loyal record during Japanese visits. As reprisals, enemy had destroyed by burning a considerable proportion of the fruit trees. Recruited 35 labourers for Abamua. Sailed at 4 for Aranuka. Got ashore well after dark, after risky journey in ship's dinghy. Lieutenant Ihrig, Commanding Officer of YMS. 100, accompanied me. Another hearty greeting from the natives. 12th. Meeting with natives at 8 a.m. Dismissed enemy-sponsored Native Government, and re-instated former Magistrate, Chief Kaubure and Scribe. Recruited 37 labourers for Abamua. Visited hospital, restored Dresser to his post, and inspected village and near-by plantations. Returned to ship at sunset. 13th. Ship sailed at dawn and reached Abamua anchorage at 11. Spent rest of the day in distributing newly-recruited labourers in villages. 14th. Selected site for Labour Camp, after having rejected two sites put up for confirmation. Arranged for collection of building materials. 15th. Visited Island Commander and offered him Engea, a wireless student, in place of Keta. Have now some of the office help, I have needed for so long. 16th. Meeting with whole labour force at 10 a.m., to explain about institution of rations in place of meals at camp kitchens, provision of new native

native store, payment of wages, etc. On board HMS. 100 late in afternoon, when it sailed for Nonouti Island. 17th. Ship anchored at 1 p.m., after having negotiated the Archer Passage. During afternoon and evening, busy with Native Government, and Dressers to whom I handed large stock of medicines. 18th. In "Manaba" at 8. Recruited 117 labourers for Abemama, and loaded 1,000 pieces of pandanus thatch, for use at Labour Camp. Visitors during afternoon included Father Quirier and Branstett, and Sister Elizabeth. The three looked well, in spite of their being for so long without European foodstuffs. 19th. Left shore at 7 a.m. Ship returned to Abemama at 5 p.m. 20th. To Labour Camp and stayed there supervising its construction. 21st. To Labour Camp, supervision of which rendered difficult by my having no car. It is now nearly 8 months since I was first promised a "Jeep". Prepared the necessary books for the ration record. 22nd. Cycled to Labour Camp. Progress with building satisfactory, and Nonouti men may now occupy it progressively. 23rd. Safe belonging to Native Government has been repaired and money can now be kept under lock and key. Received 3,200 dollars. 24th. Native Co-operative Society handed me its money for safe-keeping. Talked with principals about revival of activities, copra prospects and present position. 25th. Visited south end of island, to observe effects of bombing. Stayed for an hour at Catholic Training School. 26th. Meeting with village teachers, and drew up modified programme for village schools. 27th. Prepared plans for new dispensary and new Government office, both badly damaged during bombardment by an American destroyer. Promised new buildings by Commander of C.B.'s. 28th. Discovered that ship, taking a party of labourers, had visited Kuria Island, without my being informed of visit. Wrote to Island Commander, and asked for courtesy of being prior informed. 29th. Meeting with Aranuka labourers and office work filled the day. 30th. Meeting with whole labour strength to discuss their problems. Later visited Labour Camp. 31st. Unusually large number of visitors - stamp collectors, curio hunters, and the merely curious.

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

NOTES ON TARAWA AND ABEMAMA ISLANDS

Notes prepared by the Intelligence Section

FIFTH Amphibious Force

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Notes on Tarawa and Abamama.

General, Gilbert Islands.

The group consists of sixteen (16) atolls and islands contained in an area between latitude $3^{\circ} 30' N$ and $2^{\circ} 45' S$ and longitudes $172^{\circ} 30' E$ and $177^{\circ} E$. The islands vary in size, from small reef islands to large atolls enclosing lagoons, some of which are navigable by ocean going craft.

All islands and atolls are of coral formation, the land is sandy and low, the highest elevation above high water being twelve feet, and all are thickly covered with coconut trees.

Navigational.

The group is as yet imperfectly charted, and some of the positions of the islands have not been accurately fixed. The ~~condition~~ ^{CONTOUR} of the land areas is also incorrect, and navigational bearings cannot be relied upon.

The fringing reefs on the eastern, or weather sides of all the islands, are steep-to, and may safely be approached by large ships to within one mile of the breakers.

Submerged reefs extend from one-half to one mile seaward from the ends of the islands and atolls and carry from 5 to 20 fathoms.

On the western sides of the atolls the sunken reefs extend as far as 12 miles seaward from the nearest point of land. When navigating these waters at night it is preferable to pass to the eastward of any island. Foul ground exists on the submerged reefs to the northward of Kuria, and to the north and westward of Aranuka. Caution should be observed when passing between these islands.

It has been observed, when approaching the land at night, that lookouts at deck level normally sight the land before those stationed at higher levels. Aids to navigation shown on charts are not permanent, and are liable to be washed away^{or} out of position.

Weather and winds.

The year is divided into two seasons, the fine weather period, from March to November, and the westerly season, from November to

March. These divisions are not arbitrary, as the westerly, which is the rainy season, has been known to remain in force all the year round. Such long, rainy seasons appear to occur in cycles of approximately 10 years, and were experienced in the early "1920's again in 1930-31, and the last in 1940. Some years pass without westerly winds at all. These are usually drought seasons.

During the fine weather season steady trade winds from SE to NE remain in force. Average wind velocity is force 4 Beaufort Scale. Normally the wind freshens in the morning, attains its greatest strength from 1000 to 1900, and is considerably weaker at night. Hard squalls, with wind at times reaching force 6-7 and accompanied by heavy driving rain, sometimes occur during this period. They are of short duration, usually lasting from 30 minutes to an hour, and normal weather conditions resume immediately after the disturbance is past. Their approach is easily recognized. They appear to windward as large masses of cumulus cloud with a dark, well defined base. This becomes arched, and the squall breaks fiercely as the clouds come overhead. Strong westerly winds, sometimes reaching gale force, occur in the westerly season. Wind velocity averages force 7 and the storms, which last from 3 to 7 days, are accompanied by heavy and almost continuous rain. The disturbances approach from the westward apparently originating to the northward of New Guinea, and usually occur at Ocean Island 24 hours before reaching the Gilberts. Locally the weather signs of a westerly approaching are a westerly swell, which begins to run from one to two days before the gale sets in, and a high bank of cirrus or cirro-stratus clouds working slowly from west to east. A distinct coppery haze to the westward in the late afternoon, and a heavy bank of cloud rising on the western horizon, often with lightning, and breaking in a hard squall, marks the commencement of the blow.

Between westerlies exceptionally fine weather usually prevails with light easterly winds, calms and smooth seas.

The prevailing swell is from the SE, and is usually heavy from May to August, moderating slightly during the rest of the year. A

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westerly swell precedes and follows westerly gales, but usually subsides within two to three days after the storm has passed.

Currents.

The general set is to the westward, between WSW and WNW. Average drift is 20-30 miles per day, although a rate of 3 knots may be experienced during strong SE trades.

Near the islands the set is not true, but is deflected by the reefs. The main stream splits at the SE ends of the land, separate currents flow around the islands parallel to the shore, and meet and resume the true set from 10-20 miles northwest of the island concerned.

Between Nonouti and Abemama a northerly set may be experienced. The counter current, setting to the eastward, is occasionally in force between the islands of Abaiang and Makin. During, and for several days after westerly gales the current may run to the eastward at a rate of from 12 to 40 miles per day. This is a surface drift and occurs, normally, only during the westerly season, from November to March.

Tides.

High water full and change occurs at 1600 hours, zone time 12 hours E of Greenwich at Tarawa.

In Makin and the southern Islands of the group it occurs from 14 to 30 minutes later. Tides may be affected by westerly winds, high water under these conditions being usually earlier than the normal establishment.

During neap tides, a "dodging" tide has frequently been observed when the water ebbs and flows several times in 24 hours.

Mean spring range is 6 ft. and neap range 4 feet throughout the group.

Lagoon Passages.

Ship passages, which may be used at any state of the tide by vessels drawing up to 25 feet exist at Tarawa and Makin only. At Abaiang, Abemama and Nonouti, vessels of a draught of 15 feet

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may enter the lagoons at any time. South Tabiteuea lagoon may be used by vessels up to 14 feet, but as the outer reef is foul, and the lagoon passage intricate, it should not be attempted without a local pilot. The lagoons at Marakei, Maiana, Aranuka, Onotoa and Beru can be used only by boats, although a 70 ton vessel drawing 8 feet has entered Onotoa Lagoon, at high water. Little Makin, Kuria, Nukunau, Tamana and Arorae have no lagoons.

Anchorage.

Safe anchorages may be had in all the navigable lagoons mentioned in the preceding paragraph. Holding ground is good, sand and coral clay. The lagoon anchorages at Makin, Abaiang, Tarawa and Abemama are extensive, with swinging room for a large number of vessels. Temporary anchorages for use during settled fine weather are situated off the western sides of Tarawa, Maiana, Kuria, Nonouti, Tabiteuea North, Onotoa and Beru. At these places it is advisable to anchor soon after reaching soundings as the bottom quickly becomes foul. Ships are liable to drag off these anchorages as the bottom is of coral and is poor holding ground. There are no wharves for ocean going ships.

Climatology.

The climate is good. Warm to hot conditions prevail, but the heat is tempered by the prevailing trade winds. Nights are cool and pleasant. The southern islands are drier than the northern part of the group. Little seasonal change is experienced and the temperature range is from 72° - 92° fahrenheit. Mean barometric pressure is about 29.92 inches and the range only 0.50 inches. The barometer does not give any warning of approaching westerly disturbances. Cloud cover averages about 25/30 per cent, usually light cumulus.

Population.

A census in 1931 established the native population at 26,199. About 200 half-castes and 90 Europeans were in the group at that time.

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The natives are of Melanesian/Polynesian type, are of good physique, intelligent and friendly. They make excellent laborers, seamen, and boatmen.

Supplies and Water.

No supplies of food are available. The only native fruits and vegetables are the coconut and "Bobai", a coarse species of taro which is not palatable to Europeans. Fish abound in these waters, both inside and outside the lagoons.

Water supplies are limited. Cisterns to hold one hundred ton of rain water were situated at Makin, and on Betio Island at Tarawa. Smaller cisterns were at Abaiang and Abemama. The natives depend on well water which is drinkable. Wells can be sunk anywhere, but preferably near the middle of the broad parts of the land. In some islands it is slightly blackish, but in all places it has a peculiar taste which is not usually relished by Europeans. Chickens and pigs are kept in most islands but not in sufficient quantity to provide food for a large body of troops.

TARAWA

General.

Tarawa atoll is triangular in shape and about 20 miles long. A series of islands lie along its southern and eastern sides. The western side consists of a barrier reef, the greater part of which is submerged. The islands and islet's comprising the land area are separated by shallow passages, which are covered at high water, but bare during low tide. At low water, spring tides, it is possible to walk from the end of Betio Island, at the south west corner, to the end of the land at the northern most point of the atoll. Betio is the most important of the islands on Tarawa, and was formerly the headquarters of the Colony Government in the Gilberts. The native population in 1938 numbered 2700.

Navigational.

The fringing reef on the seaward side of the island bares at

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low water and varies in breadth from 100 to 250 yards. It is steep-to, and large ships can heave to in safety within half a mile of the breakers. From the west end of Betio the barrier reef extends about 400 yds. seaward. There is always a break on this point. Beyond this the reef is submerged and extends about 1,000 yds, further to the westward, with depths of from five to fifteen fathoms. Strong current rips frequent occur off this point. The lee barrier reef trends northerly from the west point of Betio for about 3 miles and ends in a sand spit at the southern edge of the ship channel into the lagoon. This reef bares for about one-half its length during low water springs. The middle of the channel with Tarawa is approximately $3\frac{1}{2}$ miles to the northward of the west end of Betio Island. It is about a mile long and 300 ft. wide at the narrowest part, between the five fathom lines. The passage has been well surveyed and can be easily navigated by vessels up to 10,00 tons, with a maximum draught of 25 feet, and up to 500 feet in length. A coral patch carrying $4\frac{1}{2}$ fathoms lies in the entrance to the channel. This can easily be seen and avoided. Several coral patches lie near the fairway inside the lagoon, but all are visible in a good light. To enter the lagoon from the southward give the west end of Betio a wide berth and steer to the northward until a buoy on a patch of coral inside the entrance is on with the beacon on Bikeman Islet, bearing 382° E magnetic, (108° Mag.). Alter course to bring these leads ahead, and round the sand spit at the south side of the passage to bring the two lead beacons at Betio in line and ahead 36° E (183°). Steer this course, and anchor to the eastward of the line of leads when about half a mile from the outer beacon. Anchorage is in 5-8 fathoms, sandy bottom. From the ship passage, the western barrier reef trends northerly, and carries from 3 to 8 fathoms. There are many coral heads and reefs on the inner side of this reef, but boats drawing four to five feet may cross almost anywhere, care being taken to avoid shallow patches which exist near the lagoon edge. A reef, which bares at low water, and has some extensive sand banks on it, extends about 3 miles SSW from the northern end of the atoll.

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On this reef, near the land is one Tree Islet. A boat passage through the reef is near the island. It is considered that many of the coral patches near the ship channel could easily be removed, and with a certain amount of dredging the channel could be navigated, under favorable conditions, by much larger vessels than can now use the port. Within the lagoon, apart from the main channel to BETIO Anchorage, the lagoon must be navigated by eye. It is not surveyed and such navigational aids as were erected by local Shipmasters were of a temporary nature and may have disappeared. The lagoon is comparatively clear south of a line drawn west from ABAOKORO village and west of a line due north from BAIRIKI Islet. Existing dangers in this area show up well and may easily be avoided. The remainder of the lagoon is thickly studded with reefs and rocks. Narrow passages lie between these dangers, and small ships up to 14 ft. draught may navigate any part of the lagoon, but the services of a pilot with local knowledge are essential.

Anchorage.

The main anchorage is immediately to the northward of Botio Island. Five vessels of 8,000 tons have anchored here with ample swinging room, within 1200 yards of the shore reef. A much more extensive anchorage lies immediately to the northeast of the working anchorage. This area is approximately 2 miles in length, E and W, and about one mile broad. Depth ranges from 5 to 18 fathoms. Holding ground in both anchorages is good, coral clay and sand, and vessels in ballast have ridden out westerly gales in safety. The prevailing winds, fresh E'ly trades, frequently raise a choppy sea which hinders small boat work, although large cargo lighters can be worked without difficulty.

A further anchorage exists to the northward of Bikeman Islet, off the village of Abaokoro. This is seldom used other than by small craft, although large vessels could be accommodated there. The shore or lagoon reef is very broad at this point and is not suitable for landing stores or equipment.

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Temporary anchorage may be had anywhere off the western reef, but it is advisable to anchor in not less than 8 fathoms, as the reef becomes foul as the water shallows. The bottom is of coral, and vessels are liable to drag during squalls. During westerly weather small vessels may anchor on the eastern side of the island at Buota and Abokoro in 7 to 10 fathoms. The submerged reef forming these anchorages is not very broad. Bottom is of coral, and ships may drag. It is not advisable for large vessels to anchor at these places, and it is not necessary, as such ships can ride with safety in the main roads.

Tides.

High water full and change, is at 1600 hours local time, which is 12 hours E of Greenwich. The mean spring range is 6 feet although occasional tides range to 6½ feet. These occur near the equinoxes and also during strong westerly winds. Neap range is 4 feet. No reliable tidal data has been collected, all information is based on observation made by master mariners who have sailed around the group. No tide gauge has been established but Datum was taken as being the bottom of the seaward end of Betio pier.

Working Conditions.

The lagoon reef at Betio is covered to a depth of from 3 to 4 feet for the period two hours before to two hours after high water springs. Boats or barges can then be taken right up to the lagoon beach. At low water springs the reef bares to its seaward edge, which is fairly steep, and falls away quickly to 2 fathoms of water. This reef edge is fairly smooth and should not cause damage to boats. The reef is flat, and barges or boats may be grounded and left stranded without danger of damage. During high water neap tides the reef is covered by from one to two feet of water and is three quarters dry at low water.

Being of firm hard coral the reef at low water, may be used for transportation and will bear medium tanks. It is considered landing craft could approach the edge of the reef sufficiently close

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to drop ramps on the coral to enable the safe and easy landing of vehicles. Along the western side of the pier at Betio a boat channel has been excavated. It carries six inches of water at L.W.O.S.T. and could be deepened without difficulty, to enable boats and barges to reach the shore at any state of the tide. The lagoons reefs at the other anchorages mentioned are similar in character, although in most cases, broader than that at Betio.

Landings.

A stone and concrete wharf 420 yards long extends northward from the north shore of Betio to the edge of the lagoon reef. It is used for landing at low water.

The ocean reef on the South side of Betio and extending as far as Bairiki is generally flat and can be crossed at high water springs by boats drawing up to 3 feet. A moderate surf breaks at the outer fringe of the reef, and patches of light broken water may be encountered over the shallows. The surf on the shore is light. The edge of the reef here is sharp and jagged, being dangerous for landing craft at low tide.

On the southeastern and eastern sides of the atoll the fringing reef is generally flat, but coral rocks and boulders are usually found extending seaward from points of land. The smoothest parts of the reef are generally in the bights between these points. Width of the reef varies from 100 to 250 yards. On the outer edge the surf is heavy, especially during strong easterly winds. The edge of the reef here is generally sharp and jagged, being dangerous for landing craft at low tide. See Page 6 for more information on reefs.

TERRAIN

General

The islands composing the atoll vary in length and are from one quarter to three quarters of a mile wide. The highest elevation of the land is approximately 12 feet above high water level. All the islands are sandy strips, thickly covered with coconut trees and are separated at high water by shallow passages, which dry at low

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water. During low water springs it is possible to walk from one end of the atoll to the other.

Soil

Is of Coral sand, loosely packed but bound by a species of coarse sedge. ^{GRASS} The soil on the lagoon side is generally firmer than the weather side. In any part of island it is considered that the soil would support traffic up to light tanks.

Roads

One main road extends from the end of Betio to the village of Na, at the extreme north of the atoll. Broadly, it follows the line of the lagoon beaches, being a little inshore on the lagoon side of the land. Where the land is broken by passages the road is picked up opposite the point left on the preceding island. The road is tightly packed and constructed of coral clay. It averages 15 feet in width and could be used by jeeps. It is considered that light tanks could use the road but would soon churn up the surface. The worst part of this road is around the SE elbow of the atoll, where it is ^{MORE} ~~wave~~ like a bush track, although the surface here is firm and the cleared width is also about 15 feet. A number of salt swamp areas are near the road at this point. The passages between the islands and islets are of hard coral base, in some places covered lightly with coral sand. These places would easily support tanks, and there is no danger of vehicles being bogged at the crossings.

Trees and Undergrowth.

The greater proportion of the land is covered by coconut trees. These have grown naturally and the distances between trees varies from 3 to 12 feet in general. Occasional clearings occur, and these are generally covered with a light undergrowth, usually a type of saltbush. Occasional clumps of pandanus and softwood trees may be encountered. The undergrowth may be cleared easily, and would be no obstruction to advancing troops.

Extensive Bobai (Taro) pits are to be found usually near the middle of the land at its broadest part, especially near villages. The pits vary in size. In the south they average from 20

to 100 feet in length and 10 to 30 feet in width. On the eastern and northern islands some pits are 300 feet X 100 feet in area.

The average depth is four feet. The bottom of the pits is usually covered with water from 3 to 12 inches deep, and the soil is soft and muddy. Vehicles bogged in these areas would have difficulty in getting out. The pits may easily be seen by approaching traffic, as the excavated soil is banked around the holes to a height of two or three feet.

ABEMAMA

General

This atoll is roughly oval in shape and is approximately 15 miles long from SE to NW and about 5 miles wide. It contains a large, well protected lagoon, with extensive anchorage space, which is one of the best in the Gilbert group. The land on the eastern side is almost continuous, being broken only by shallow passages at Binoinano and near Kabangaki. It affords excellent shelter for ships in the lagoon. On the western side the barrier reef is high and affords an effective breakwater for westerly seas. There are two islands on the western reef. Entrance Island, which is small and situated immediately to the south of the south passage, and Abatiku which is much larger, and separates the south and west passages. It is considered that in view of the excellent shelter provided, the smoothness of the water inside the lagoon and the long unencumbered stretches of water, ABEMAMA is the most suitable island for a seaplane base. There are no cutting dangers anywhere near this atoll, and ships may circumnavigate it in safety by keeping a mile off the breakers.

For its land area it is the most sparsely populated of the Gilbert Islands, population in 1937 totalling about 1,010.

Navigational.

The south passage is the main ship channel into Abemama lagoon. It carries from 3½ to 14 fathoms, may be used at any state of the tide by vessels drawing up to 15 feet, and up to 300 feet long. It is considered that if the end of the Sand spit projecting northward

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from Entrance Island and the Sand flat to the eastward of the entrance were dredged, and a number of coral boulders blasted away, the passage could be used by ships drawing up to 20 feet and up to 400 feet long. The entrance to this passage is clearly defined. It is about half a mile to the northwest of Entrance Island, and there is always a break on the reefs to the north and south of the passage. To enter, ships should steer fair between these reefs, with the beacon on Henson rocks (which lie just inside the entrance) right ahead and on with gap in the land at Binoinano. Transit bearing of these leads is 054° . Caution is necessary when proceeding through the entrance as the ebb & flood do not set true, and eddies may set a ship either way. A clearly defined Sand spit, carrying 1 to 3 fathoms marks the inner end of the south side of the passage. Between it and Henson Rocks the channel is only 200 yards wide. It is advisable to turn sharply around this spit, giving Henson Rocks as wide a berth as possible, and then steer 100° for the gap in the southern end of the land, between Tobanga and Kabangaki, this will bring the north end of Abatiku Island right astern. Continue on this course over the Sand flat, which varies from $3\frac{1}{2}$ to 5 fathoms until deep water is reached when a course may be steered to any anchorage required. Navigation in the lagoon is easy, and all reefs and patches show up clearly.

The West passage lies about one and a half miles to the north of Abatiku Island. It is much wider, but considerably shallower than the South passage, and can be used only by vessels drawing less than 13 feet. A considerable ground swell occasionally runs at the entrance to the channel. It is not recommended for any but small craft, up to 500 tons, and then only in a good light and with a local pilot. Just inside this entrance there are considerable patches of shallow water and foul ground. In the lagoon, E. of Abatiku Island and between the S. and W passages is a large expanse of shallow reef and foul ground. Boats may pass over it, but ships should not attempt to cross it.

TIDES:

High water full and change has been observed to occur approximately 5 minutes later than at Tarawa. No authentic tidal infor-

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mation is available, but the establishment may be taken as 1605 zone time 12 hours E of Greenwich.

Rise and fall is approximately 6 feet at springs and 4 feet at neap tides. Tidal streams set generally fairly through the passages, but are deflected by the reefs and shallows. At the South passage the tidal stream during springs attains a rate of 4 knots. Considerable eddies are formed, and a strong tide occurs outside the passage at the height of the spring ebb. In the West passage the tidal stream runs at $2\frac{1}{2}$ knots during springs.

ANCHORAGES

Anchorage may be had almost anywhere in central and south part of the lagoon in from 6-15 fathoms. A large number of medium sized ships may be accommodated. Holding ground is good, and vessels may ride out any weather in perfect safety. Temporary anchorage may be had off the South passage, but owing to the strong tidal streams the anchorage is not considered safe. It lies immediately off the entrance, in 10-15 fathoms. The bottom is of coral, and not good holding ground. It is not practicable during westerly winds. A more extensive anchorage lies off the West passage. It is of the same nature as the foregoing, but there is ample swinging room in 15 fathoms. The tidal stream here is not as strong as at the South passage, but the anchorage is not practicable other than in settled Easterly weather. Anchorage may also be had in fine weather, just to the westward of the NW. end of the land. Small ships have anchored close to the reef on the Eastern side of the island, immediately off Binoianano Gap, but this is of no use to ocean going vessels.

The anchorages in the lagoon used by local trading craft up to 13 feet draught, are off Tebanga, Binoianano and Baretaa villages, in 3 to 5 fathoms, and close to the edge of the shore reef. In the N.E. corner of the lagoon, north of the West passage, there are extensive shallows. Anchorage here is restricted and may be used only by small craft.

LANDINGS

Landings may be made anywhere within the lagoon. A fairly good landing on the Eastern side of the atoll is immediately off

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Binoianano village. A fairly heavy surf breaks along the greater part of the Eastern side of the island, where, as at Tarawa, the reef varies from 100 to 250 yards in width, and dries to its outer edge at low water springs. It is of firm coral, fairly flat, with occasional outcrops of boulders near projecting points. It carries from 5 to 3 feet of water at H.W.O.S.T. and it is considered that during these conditions landing craft drawing up to $3\frac{1}{4}$ feet could safely run the breakers at most places, and get close to the sandy beach. The best landings are just to the westward of the south east end of the land and along the northeast and northwest coasts of the northermost point of the atoll. The reef extending to the southward from the land to the northward is very high, and there are a number of sand banks and boulders over it. Landing craft proceeding into the lagoon near this point should use the west passage. Landings may easily be made on Entrance Island and Ab-atiku. The reef joining Entrance Island and the south part of the main land bares at low water but can be crossed by boats at high water.

WORKING CONDITIONS

Owing to the sheltered nature of the lagoon working conditions are excellent, especially at high water springs. The lagoon fringing reef is wider than at Betio, the average width being about 600 yards. It is flat, and covered to a depth of several inches with fine sand and coral clay. It carries from 3 to 6 feet at high water springs and dries at low water. Neap tides cover it to a depth of from 1 to 3 feet for about $\frac{3}{4}$ of its expanse.

As at Tarawa, landing ships could approach close to the outer edge of the reef during low water and drop ramps for vehicles to land. The reef is sufficiently firm to support light tanks. Although the reef between Entrance Island and the mainland ^{BARES} bears, it is covered with numerous banks of soft sand and contains many crevices in the coral. This might afford some difficulty to transport vehicles landed at Entrance Island although by keeping close to the lagoon side of the reef such transportation might get across.

TERRAIN

The land is similar to that at Tarawa. Coarse sand, loosely packed, and bound with coarse sedge grass. The land on the eastern side is not split up as at Tarawa, and as already mentioned, is only broken between the villages of Kabangaki and Tebanga in the South and at the village of Binoinano near the center of the atoll.

The southern passage dries at low water and is covered to a depth of 3 feet at high water springs.

Binoinano passage carries from 1 to 3 feet at low water and from 6 to 9 feet at high water. It is spanned by a light wooden bridge, of native construction which will carry a limited number of foot passengers only.

The land varies from $\frac{1}{4}$ to $\frac{3}{4}$ of a mile in width and attains a maximum elevation of about 12 feet above high water.

ROAD

A native built road skirts the lagoon beach and runs practically parallel to it. It is of hard packed coral clay for the most part, and averages about 12 feet in width. Occasional loose sandy patches may be encountered, especially near the narrower parts of the land. In many places coconut trees may be found growing on the road itself. It is considered that it could be used by jeeps, but heavier traffic would probably destroy the surface.

TREES AND UNDERGROWTH

The atoll is more thickly wooded than Tarawa. The coconut trees do not grow so closely together but there are more thick clumps of softwood and hardwood trees. Vehicles could not get through the more densely wooded parts near the Sea beaches, but could get through near the lagoon side.

The undergrowth is mainly soft saltbush, and presents no difficulties for advancing troops. As in all these islands, ^{BOBAI} "bobou" pits have been dug near the villages. These should be avoided as vehicles would be seriously hampered should they get into one of the pits. Near the SE corner of the land there are several flat clay-pans, which are normally hard and firm, and may be crossed without difficulty.

GILBERT ISLANDS

Period Nov/Dec 1943

CALCULATED FOR ZONE TIME 12 HRS. E. OF GREENWICH

Phases of Moon: Full Nov. 12th. New Nov. 27th. Full Dec. 12th

TARAWA

HW T and C 1600 L and S
 DATUM LWOST - Bottom of Seaward end of Betio Pier.

NOTE: NEAP Tides are variable and occasionally ebb and flow several times in 24 hours, but variation from heights given should not be greater than one foot.

DATE 1943	HIGH AM Time	Feet	HIGH PM Time	Feet	LOW AM Time	Feet	LOW PM Time	Feet
Nov. 10	0232		1454		0842		2103	
Nov. 11	0312		1530		0922		2137	
4 1/2 Nov. 12	0345	5.7	1600	6.0	0952	0.0	2207	0.0
4 1/2 Nov. 13	0415	5.7	1630	6.0	1022	0.1	2239	0.1
4 1/2 Nov. 14	0448	5.6	1706	5.8	1057	0.2	2317	0.3
5 1/2 Nov. 15	0527	5.5	1748	5.7	1137	0.4	0000	0.5
3 1/2 Nov. 16	0612	5.3	18 ³⁶ 36	5.5			1224	0.7
3 Nov. 17	0703	5.2	1930	5.3	0049	0.8	1317	0.9
2 1/2 Nov. 18	0800	5.2	2030	5.1	0145	0.9	1415	1.0
2 1/2 Nov. 19	0903	5.1	2136	5.0	0247	1.0	1519	1.0
2 Nov. 20	1009	5.0	2242	5.0	0353	1.0	1625	0.9
2 Nov. 21	1115	5.0	2348	5.1	0459	0.9	1731	0.9
2 1/2 Nov. 22			1218	5.3	0603	0.8	1833	0.8
2 1/2 Nov. 23	0048	5.2	1318	5.5	0703	0.7	1931	0.8
3 Nov. 24	0145	5.3	1412	5.7	0757	0.4	2021	0.5
3 1/2 Nov. 25	0232	5.5	1454	5.8	0842	0.2	2103	0.3
3 1/2 Nov. 26	0312	5.6	1530	6.0	0921	0.1	2137	0.1
4 1/2 Nov. 27	0345	5.7	1600	6.0	0952	0.0	2207	0.0
4 1/2 Nov. 28	0415	5.7	1630	6.0	1022	0.1	2239	0.1
4 1/2 Nov. 29	0448	5.6	1706	5.8	1057	0.2	2317	0.3
Nov. 30	0527	5.5	1748	5.7	1137	0.4	0000	0.5
Dec. 1	0612	5.3	1836	5.5			1224	0.7
Dec. 2	0703	5.2	1930	5.3	0049	0.8	1317	0.9
Dec. 3	0800	5.1	2030	5.1	0145	0.9	1415	1.0
Dec. 4	0903	5.0	2136	5.0	0247	1.0	1519	1.0

GILBERT ISLANDS

(continued)

DATE 1943	HIGH AM		HIGH PM		LOW AM		LOW PM	
	Time	Feet	Time	Feet	Time	Feet	Time	Feet
Dec. 5	1009	5.0	2242	5.0	0353	1.0	1625	0.9
Dec. 6	1115	5.1	2348	5.1	0459	0.9	1731	0.9
Dec. 7			1213	5.1	0603	0.8	1833	0.8
Dec. 8	0048	5.3	1318	5.3	0703	0.7	1931	0.9
Dec. 9	0145	5.5	1412	5.5	0757	0.4	2021	0.5
Dec. 10	0232	5.6	1454	5.7	0842	0.2	2103	0.3
Dec. 11	0312	5.7	1530	5.8	0922	0.1	2137	0.1
Dec. 12	0345	5.7	1600	6.0	0952	0.0	2207	0.0
Dec. 13	0415	5.7	1630	6.0	1022	0.1	2237	0.1

TARAWA DATUM: L.W.O.S.T. Bottom of Lagoon End of Betio Pier. NEAP Tides are variable and occasionally ebb and flow several times in 24 hours, but variation for heights given should not be more than one foot.

NOTE:

These tables differ from the predictions as calculated from the tide tables using Constant's on Apia as a Standard Port.

The authorities for this action are:

Lieut. Comdr. G.H. Heyen, RANR (3)
 Lieut. G. J. Webster, RNZNR
 Major F.L.G. Holland, Director of Education,
 Gilbert and Ellice Islands Colony.

From independent calculations by these three observers, the establishment of TARAWA was fixed at 1600 hours, zone time of 180° E. Meridian.

The grouping of times of H.W. at Springs, and the corresponding lag between times of H.W. at Neaps has been well established by observations over a period of 10 - 15 years.

ABEMAMA

TIDE TABLE

Phases of Moon: Full Nov. 12th. New Nov 27th. Full Dec 12th.

DATE 1943	HIGH AM		High AM ^{High Pm.}		High PM ^{Low Am.}		LOW PM	
	Time	Feet	Time	Feet	Time	Feet	Time	Feet
Nov. 10	0237	5.5	1459	5.8	0847	0.1	2108	0.1
Nov. 11	0317	5.6	1535	5.9	0927	0.0	2142	0.0
Nov. 12	0350	5.7	1605	6.0	0957	0.0	2212	0.0
Nov. 13	0420	5.7	1635	6.0	1027	0.1	2247	0.1
Nov. 14	0453	5.6	1711	5.8	1102	0.2	2322	0.3
Nov. 15	0532	5.5	1753	5.7	1142	0.4	-	
Nov. 16	0617	5.3	1841	5.5	0005	0.6	1229	0.7
Nov. 17	0708	5.2	1935	5.3	0054	0.8	1322	0.9
Nov. 18	0805	5.2	2035	5.1	0150	0.9	1420	1.0
Nov. 19	0908	5.1	2141	5.0	0252	1.0	1524	1.0
Nov. 20	1014	5.0	2247	5.0	0358	1.0	1630	0.9
Nov. 21	1120	5.0	2353	5.1	0504	0.9	1736	0.9
Nov. 22			1223	5.3	0608	0.8	1838	0.8
Nov. 23	0053	5.2	1323	5.5	0708	0.7	1936	0.8
Nov. 24	0150	5.3	1417	5.7	0802	0.4	2026	0.5
Nov. 25	0237	5.5	1459	5.8	0847	0.2	2108	0.3
Nov. 26	0317	5.6	1535	6.0	0926	0.1	2142	0.1
Nov. 27	0350	5.7	1605	6.0	0957	0.0	2212	0.0
Nov. 28	0420	5.7	1635	6.0	1027	0.1	2244	0.1
Nov. 29	0453	5.6	1711	5.8	1102	0.2	2322	0.3
Nov. 30	0532	5.5	1753	5.7	1142	0.4	-	
Dec. 1	0617	5.3	1842	5.5	0005	0.6	1229	0.7
Dec. 2	0708	5.2	1935	5.3	0054	0.8	1322	0.9
Dec. 3	0805	5.1	2035	5.1	0150	0.9	1420	1.0
Dec. 4	0908	5.0	2141	5.0	0252	1.0	1524	1.0
Dec. 5	1014	5.0	2247	5.0	0358	1.0	1630	0.9
Dec. 6	1120	5.1	2353	5.1	0504	0.9	1736	0.9

TIDAL INFORMATION

ABEMAMA
(Continued)

DATE	HIGH AM	HIGH PM	LOW AM	LOW PM
1943	Time : Feet	Time : Feet	Time : Feet	Time : Feet
Dec. 7	: ----- : --	: 1223 : 5.1	: 0608 : 0.8	: 1838 : 0.8
Dec. 8	: 0053 : 5.3	: 1323 : 5.3	: 0708 : 0.7	: 1936 : 0.8
Dec. 9	: 0150 : 5.5	: 1417 : 5.5	: 0802 : 0.4	: 2026 : 0.5
Dec. 10	: 0237 : 5.6	: 1459 : 5.7	: 0847 : 0.2	: 2108 : 0.3
Dec. 11	: 0317 : 5.7	: 1535 : 5.8	: 0927 : 0.1	: 2142 : 0.1
Dec. 12	: 0350 : 5.7	: 1605 : 6.0	: 0957 : 0.0	: 2212 : 0.0
Dec. 13	: 0420 : 5.7	: 1635 : 6.0	: 1027 : 0.1	: 2242 : 0.1

Note:- The heights of tide at ABEMAMA are assumed to be the same as TARAWA, as no definite information is available.

TARAWA

1° 30' N - 173° E

Sunrise and Sunset

Computed for Zone Time 180° - 12 hours East of Greenwich

DATE	BEGINNING MORNING TWILIGHT	SUNRISE	SUNSET	END OF EVENING TWILIGHT	TOTAL DARKNESS
Nov 43					
1	0458	0609	1814	1926	9.32
2	0458	0609	1814	1926	9.32
3	0458	0609	1814	1926	9.32
4	0458	0609	1814	1926	9.32
5	0458	0609	1814	1926	9.32
6	0458	0609	1814	1926	9.32
7	0458	0609	1814	1926	9.32
8	0458	0609	1814	1926	9.32
9	0458	0609	1814	1926	9.32
10	0458	0609	1815	1927	9.31
11	0458	0610	1815	1927	9.31
12	0458	0610	1815	1927	9.31
13	0458	0610	1815	1927	9.31
14	0458	0610	1815	1927	9.31
15	0458	0610	1815	1927	9.31
16	0458	0610	1815	1928	9.30
17	0458	0610	1815	1928	9.30
18	0458	0611	1816	1928	9.31
19	0459	0611	1816	1928	9.31
20	0459	0611	1816	1929	9.30
21	0459	0611	1816	1929	9.30
22	0459	0611	1817	1930	9.29
23	0459	0612	1817	1930	9.29
24	0459	0612	1817	1930	9.29
25	0500	0612	1818	1931	9.29
26	0500	0613	1818	1931	9.29
27	0500	0613	1818	1932	9.28
28	0500	0613	1818	1932	9.28
29	0500	0613	1819	1933	9.27
30	0500	0614	1819	1933	9.27

1° 30' N - 173° ESunrise and SunsetComputed for Zone Time 180° - 12 hours East of Greenwich.

DATE	BEGINNING MORNING TWILIGHT	SUNRISE	SUNSET	END OF EVENING TWILIGHT	TOTAL DARKNESS	
Dec 43						
1	0501	0614	1819	1934	9.27	
2	0501	0615	1820	1934	9.27	
3	0501	0615	1820	1935	9.27	
4	0502	0615	1821	1935	9.27	
5	0502	0616	1821	1936	9.26	
6	0502	0616	1821	1936	9.26	
7	0502	0617	1822	1937	9.25	
8	0502	0617	1822	1937	9.25	
9	0502	0617	1823	1937	9.26	
10	0503	0618	1823	1938	9.25	
11	0503	0	0618	1824	1938	9.25
12	0503	0619	1824	1939	9.25	
13	0504	0619	1825	1939	9.25	
14	0504	0620	1825	1940	9.25	
15	0505	0620	1825	1940	9.25	

ABEMAMA0° 20' N - 173° 51' ESunrise and SunsetComputed for Zone Time 180° - 12 hours East of Greenwich

<u>DATE</u>	<u>BEGINNING MORNING TWILIGHT</u>	<u>SUNRISE</u>	<u>SUNSET</u>	<u>END OF EVENING TWILIGHT</u>	<u>HOURS OF TOTAL DARKNESS</u>
Nov. 43					
1	0454	0604	1811	1922	9.32
2	0454	0604	1811	1922	9.32
3	0454	0604	1811	1922	9.32
4	0454	0604	1811	1922	9.32
5	0454	0604	1811	1922	9.32
6	0454	0604	1811	1922	9.32
7	0454	0604	1811	1922	9.32
8	0454	0604	1811	1923	9.31
9	0454	0604	1811	1923	9.31
10	0454	0604	1812	1923	9.31
11	0454	0605	1812	1923	9.31
12	0454	0605	1812	1923	9.31
13	0454	0605	1812	1924	9.30
14	0454	0605	1812	1924	9.30
15	0454	0605	1812	1924	9.30
16	0454	0605	1812	1924	9.30
17	0454	0605	1812	1924	9.31
18	0455	0606	1813	1925	9.30
19	0455	0606	1813	1925	9.30
20	0455	0606	1813	1925	9.30
21	0455	0606	1813	1926	9.29
22	0455	0606	1814	1926	9.29
23	0455	0607	1814	1927	9.28
24	0455	0607	1814	1927	9.28
25	0455	0607	1815	1927	9.28
26	0455	0608	1815	1928	9.27
27	0455	0608	1815	1928	9.28
28	0456	0608	1815	1928	9-28
29	0456	0608	1816	1929	9-27
30	0456	0609	1816	1929	9.28

ABELAMA0° 20' N - 173° 51' E

Sunrise and Sunset

Computed for Zone time 180° - 12 hours East of Greenwich.

<u>DATE</u>	<u>BEGINNING MORNING TWILIGHT</u>	<u>SUNRISE</u>	<u>SUNSET</u>	<u>END OF EVENING TWILIGHT</u>	<u>HOURS OF TOTAL DARKNESS</u>
Dec. 43					
1	0457	0609	1816	1930	9.27
2	0457	0610	1817	1930	9.27
3	0457	0610	1817	1931	9.27
4	0458	0610	1818	1931	9.26
5	0458	0611	1818	1932	9.26
6	0458	0611	1818	1932	9.26
7	0458	0612	1819	1933	9.26
8	0459	0612	1819	1933	9.26
9	0459	0612	1820	1934	9.26
10	0500	0613	1820	1934	9.26
11	0500	0613	1821	1935	9.26
12	0501	0614	1821	1935	9.26
13	0501	0614	1822	1936	9.26
14	0502	0615	1822	1937	9.25
15	0502	0615	1822	1938	9.25

TARAWA

Moon Rise & Moon Set

Computed for zone time 180° -1

this E of Greenwich.

Lat. 1 30' N Long. 173 B

Date	Moon Rise	Moon Set	Phase of Moon
Nov. 1	0837	2103	1/6 moon
" 2	0933	2200	1/5 moon
" 3	1030	2258	1/4 moon
" 4	1128	2356	1/3 moon
" 5	1225		1st quarter
" 6	1321	0054	Half moon
" 7	1415	0146	7/12 moon
" 8	1507	0239	2/3 moon
" 9	1558	0331	3/4 moon
" 10	1648	0421	Almost full
" 11	1738	0514	Almost full
" 12	1829	0604	Full moon
" 13	1920	0653	Almost full
" 14	2011	0744	Almost full
" 15	2103	0835	3/4 moon
" 16	2153	0927	3/4 moon
" 17	2244	1017	2/3 moon
" 18	2329	1105	7/12 moon
" 19		1151	Half moon
" 20	0014	1236	3rd quarter
" 21	0059	1320	1/3 moon
" 22	0143	1404	1/4 moon
" 23	0226	1447	1/5 moon
" 24	0311	1531	1/6 moon
" 25	0356	1618	Crescent moon
" 26	0443	1707	No moon
" 27	0533	1759	New moon
" 28	0627	1853	No moon
" 29	0723	1950	Crescent Moon
" 30	0822	2050	1/6 moon

TARAWA

Moon Rise & Moon Set

Computed for zone time 180° -1

this E of Greenwich.

Lat. 1 30' N Long. 173 B

Date	Moon Rise	Moon Set	Phase of Moon
Dec. 1	0921	2149	1/5 moon
" 2	1020	2248	1/4 moon
" 3	1117	2344	1/3 moon
" 4	1212		1st quarter
" 5	1304	0037	Half moon
" 6	1354	0128	7/12 moon
" 7	1443	0218	3/4 moon
" 8	1532	0307	3/4 moon
" 9	1621	0356	Near full
" 10	1711	0445	Almost full
" 11	1802	0537	Full moon
" 12	1853	0627	Almost full
" 13	1944	0718	Near full
" 14	2034	0808	3/4 full
" 15	2122	0857	3/4 full

ABEMAMA

Moon Rise & Moon Set

Date	Moon Rise	Moon Set	Phase of Moon
Nov. 1	0833	2059	1/6 moon
2	0929	2156	1/5 moon
3	1026	2254	1/4 moon
4	1124	2352	1/3 moon
5	1221		2nd quarter
6	1317	0048	Half moon
7	1411	0142	7/12 moon
8	1503	0235	2/3 moon
9	1554	0327	3/4 moon
10	1644	0417	Almost full
11	1734	0508	Almost full
12	1825	0558	Full moon
13	1916	0649	Almost full
14	2007	0740	Almost full
15	2059	0831	3/4 moon
16	2149	0923	3/4 moon
17	2238	1013	2/3 moon
18	2325	1101	7/12 moon
19		1147	Half moon
20	0010	1232	3rd quarter
21	0055	1316	1/3 moon
22	0139	1400	1/4 moon
23	0224	1443	1/5 moon
24	0307	1527	1/6 moon
25	0352	1614	Crescent moon
26	0439	1703	No moon
27	0529	1755	New moon
28	0623	1849	No moon
29	0719	1946	Crescent moon
30	0818	2046	1/6 moon

ABEMAMA

Moon Rise & Moon Set

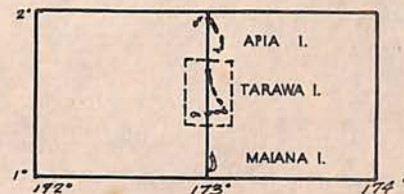
Date	Moon Rise	Moon Set	Phase of Moon
Dec. 1	0917	2145	1/5 moon
2	1016	2244	1/4 moon
3	1113	2340	1/3 moon
4	1208		last quarter
5	1300	0033	Half moon
6	1350	0124	4/12 moon
7	1439	0214	3/4 moon
8	1528	0303	3/4 full
9	1617	0352	Near full
10	1707	0441	Almost full
11	1758	0533	Full moon
12	1849	0623	Almost full
13	1940	0714	Near full
14	2030	0804	3/4 full
15	2118	0853	3/4 full

ADDITIONAL INFORMATION
COMPILED BY INTELLIGENCE
SECTION-FIFTH AMPHIBIOUS
FORCE - SEPTEMBER 17, 1943.

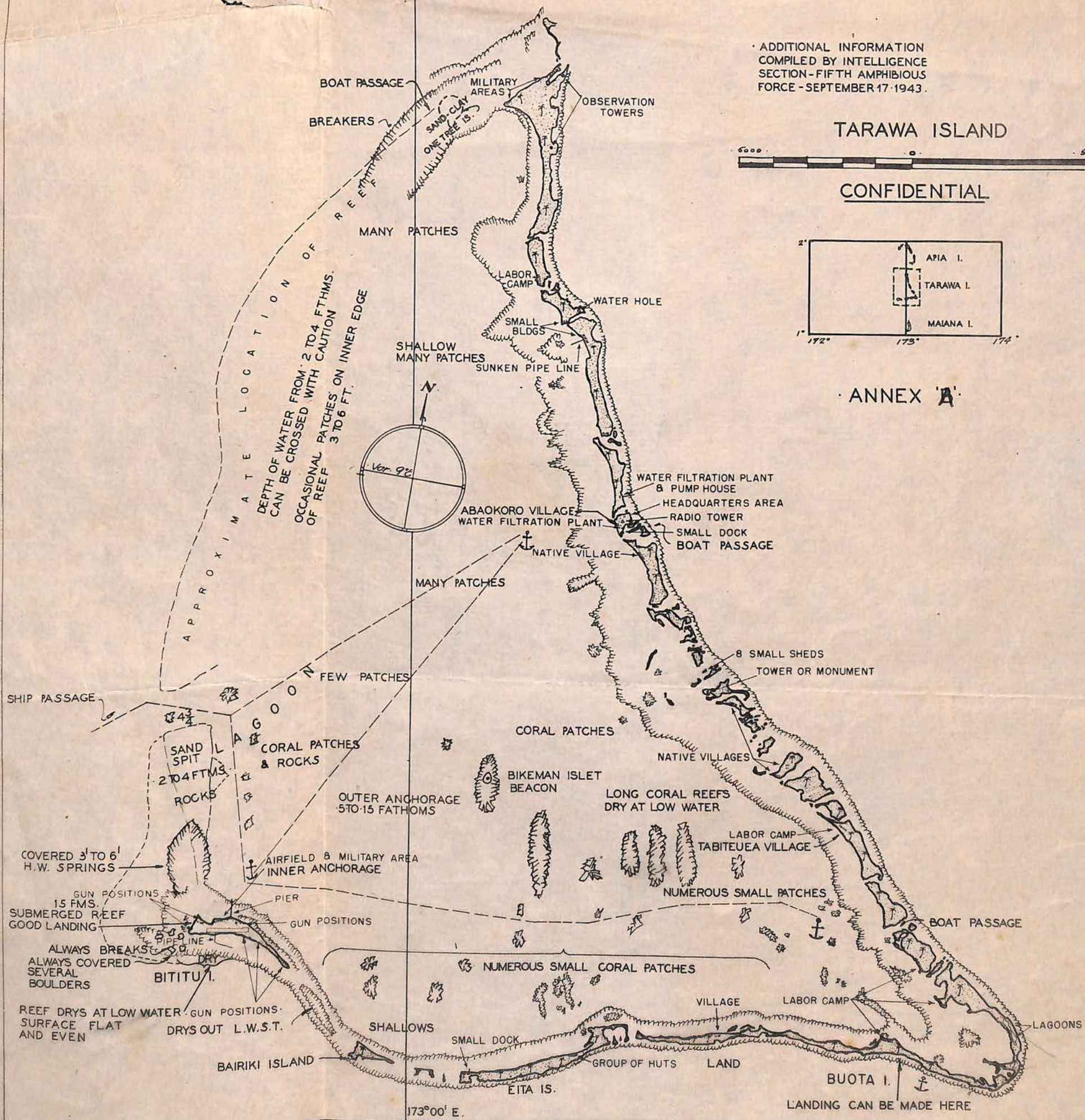
TARAWA ISLAND



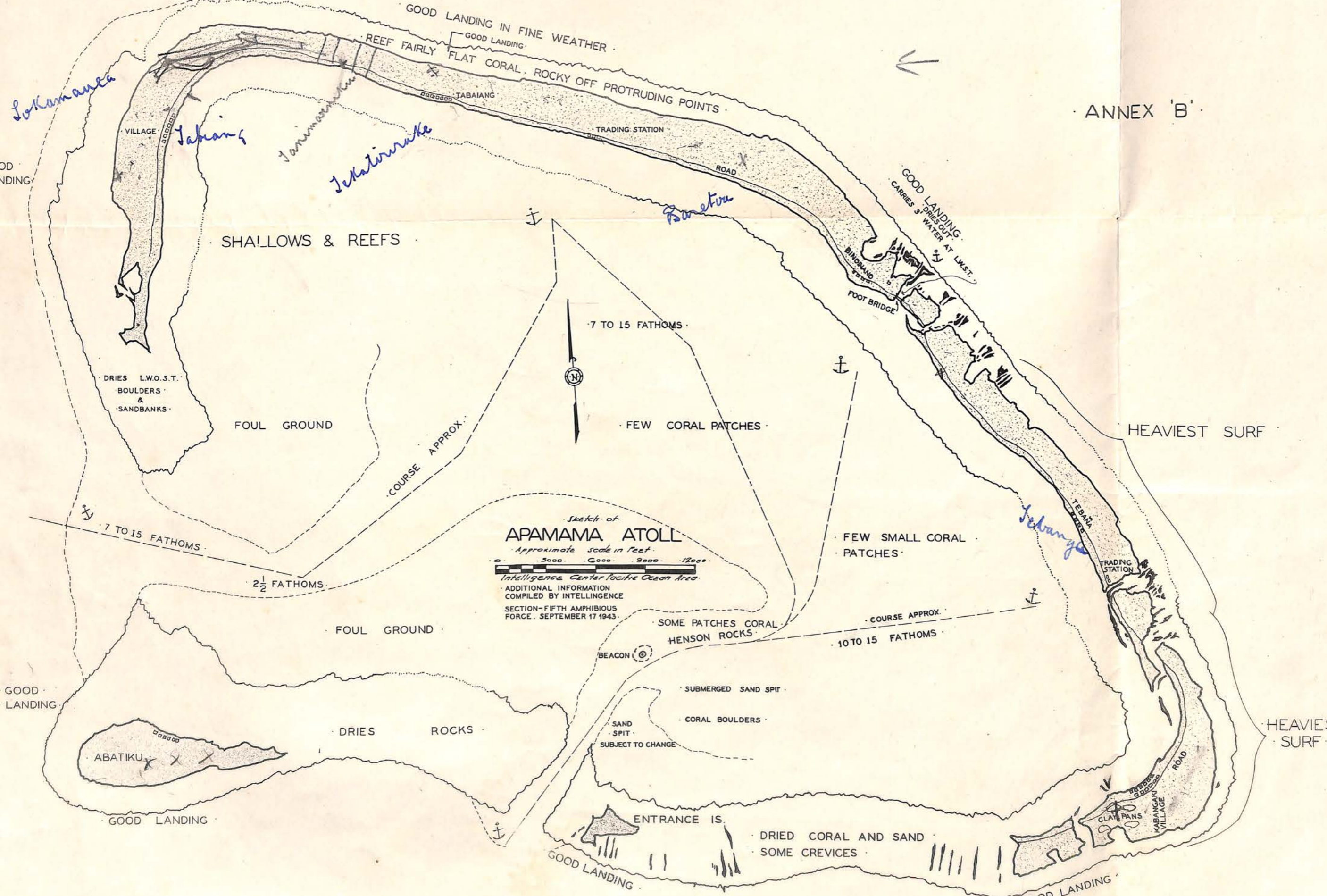
CONFIDENTIAL



ANNEX 'A'



173°00' E.



GILBERT & ELLICE ISLANDS COLONY

TARAWA ISLAND is now the main Japanese defensive position in the Gilbert Islands. It was raided on the 10th of December, 1941, by a Naval and Marine force, and proclaimed as occupied by the Navy of Nippon, but though visited at intervals later by enemy ships and flying boats, was not actually occupied until early in September, 1942. Most of the Europeans stationed at Tarawa escaped by boat at the end of February, 1942. BUTARITARI ISLAND (lately and erroneously called Makin), the northernmost atoll of the Gilbert Group, was occupied on the 11th of December, 1941, and became a seaplane base. The white residents were made prisoners. OCEAN ISLAND, which is the Headquarters of the Gilbert and Ellice Islands Colony, was bombed on the 9th of December, 1941, and subsequently. The Residency was destroyed by a direct hit. Most of the Europeans and all the Chinese laborers on the island were removed in a French destroyer during February, 1942. Ocean Island was occupied by the Japanese during September, 1942. All the other islands of the Gilbert Group came within the sphere of enemy control at various times, mostly during the period August - September, 1942. The degree of occupation in many cases is not clear, but it would seem that little more than coast-watching units exist at the places not underlined above, with the possible exception of Abemama.

HOSPITALS & ASYLUMS

At OCEAN ISLAND (native name: Banaba) there were two hospitals. One was a large and well-equipped institution run by the Phosphate industry for the benefit of white residents (about 120) and the indentured Chinese and Gilbertese laborers (totalling about 1200). The other hospital provided for the indigenous natives (about 700) called Banabans, and was in charge of a native medical practitioner, who, like others elsewhere in the Colony, had qualified at the Central Medical School, Suva, Fiji.

At TARAWA ISLAND, on the islet called Betio, was the central hospital for the Gilbert Group. Here lived the Senior Medical Officer, and another medical officer, both Europeans. Serious cases of sickness were brought to the Tarawa hospital from the Gilbert Group, though not from Ocean Island, for operative or other treatment. Near this hospital was the mental asylum, where patients came from the whole colony, including Ocean Island. Japanese marines killed two of the patients during the raid of 10 December, 1941, for being unheedful of military orders. Five miles up the lagoon from Betio was a clearing station for lepers. All lepers were despatched to Makongai in Fiji, as occasion offered. The Japanese began early to remove hospital supplies and kerosene refrigerators from Tarawa

hospital to the Marshalls, and aerial photographs show much of the hospital as having disappeared to make way for an airfield.

At FUNAFUTI ISLAND is the third main hospital, its field the Ellice Group. It is in charge of a native medical practitioner. The Japanese did not extend their operations to the Ellice Islands, and Funafuti, since October 1942, has been an American base.

At the other islands of the Gilbert Group, island hospitals were established, each in charge of one (in some cases, two) native dresser(s). Native medical practitioners were periodically resident at these hospitals, when the scope of treatments was extended. The dressers performed minor operations, gave intravenous injections for yaws, and treated injuries and ailments. Severe cases of sickness, as has been said, were removed to Tarawa by ship for advanced treatment.

CLIMATE

The climate generally is healthy, even for Europeans. The temperature varies but little throughout the year and ranges from 76° to 90°. The lower temperature is experienced only when heavy rain and wind occur together, and the higher temperature, on still, cloudless days. The night temperature is about 82°. There are no seasons in the usual sense of the word, but a wet season, or westerly season as it is called, occurs (not every year however) from November to April. During this period, strong winds, accompanied by heavy rain, blow from the west. These winds are intermittent, and followed by calms and breezes. The prevailing wind is from the east. The rainfall, apart from that of the westerly season, is fairly light, except at Butaritari Island, where it is consistently satisfactory. Rapid evaporation and the porous soil makes the rainfall everywhere appear lighter than it really is. Droughts are experienced between 2° north and 3° south of the Equator, but no dry period may be expected for two or three years yet. Sunstroke is unknown, but protection against sunburn is most advisable. Mosquitoes are common on every island.

WATER

A small amount of rain water in cisterns is usually available at Butaritari and Tarawa, but not at any other islands, with the exception of Ocean Island. Troops will be compelled to use well water for a time, until catchments can be provided. Drinkable well water can be obtained in most places, especially in the thicker or broader parts of the islands. Wells should be sunk in the middle of the land, between the two coasts--the lagoon coast and the weather side. At six feet, fresh or very slightly

brackish water will be found. This water has a disagreeable smell on being uncovered, but this smell disappears on exposure of the water to the air. The U. S. Medical Corps will regard well water with much suspicion, but it is not unwholesome. The natives drink no other, and actually prefer it to rain water. Europeans have drunk it for lengthy periods, without ill effects. An analysis of well water shows it to be necessary to boil it or chlorinate it before using as drinking water. It would be wise not to use water drawn from wells situated in native villages, nor to sink wells in or near native villages.

Well water, of course, is not unlimited in quantity, for the reason that if wells are abnormally drawn upon, they tend to become brackish, owing to seepage from the ocean. Troops, therefore, should be provided with other water supplies, firstly, by a special ship and later by the provision of catchments and tanks. It must be repeated, however, that as an emergency measure, water from wells may be freely used, subject to its being sterilized as recommended.

As is known, the semi-matured coconut provides an excellent drink. But the food supply in the Gilbert Islands often borders on famine conditions, unless coconuts are allowed to mature, and troops should be warned to leave drinking nuts alone, as these are required in their fully-developed state as food. On some Gilbert Islands, the natives refrain entirely from cutting down immature coconuts, because of the effect this would have on their food supply.

It should be noted that on Ocean Island, as distinct from other Gilbert Islands, there are no wells. There are a large number of cisterns on that island, and a condensation plant supplemented that supply. In times of water shortage, the natives drew water from underground ponds reached through tortuous descending tunnels. The quantity of water held in underground ponds is distinctly limited.

HEALTH

Malaria is unknown. Filariasis and Elephantiasis occur rarely, if at all, in the Gilbert Islands, but these diseases are common in the Ellice Islands. The incidence of Yaws has declined greatly, owing to the intravenous injection of silver-san and similar compositions. A steady campaign against yaws has been fought for years. The natives have come to put so much faith in the injections that they readily present themselves at hospitals to receive this treatment. Such is their faith that many who feel run down will ask for an injection, which they state, makes them "strong" again. Tuberculosis still

remains the most fatal of all the maladies which affect the natives. Tubercular adenitis in children is believed to have diminished, owing to operative measures, combined with the administration of malt and cod-liver oil, and other vitamin-containing substances such as "ostelin". Venereal disease is rare. Syphilis is unknown in the Colony, but a few cases of Gonorrhoea occur, which, however, respond readily to simple treatment. Europeans manage to miss Conjunctivitis and Ring-worm. Chickenpox is endemic, and appears at times from no traceable source. Dysentery is endemic also, but is kept in check by a system of drop latrines. A gangway from the land leads to a latrine shack over the reef, and excreta is washed away by the tide. Both forms of dysentery are found. An epidemic of measles four years ago caused many deaths not from this disease but from dysentery which supervened.

(A note on latrines may be pertinent at this point. These should be of native type for the troops (see above) or, if of the trench pattern, should be dug near the shore, and not far inland, or the underground water supply will be fouled, and the natives affected accordingly. As has been said, this subterranean water is found only a few feet below the level of the top soil).

Influenza has declined in severity and incidence, owing to the immunization process, but European fresh arrivals still often start an epidemic of influenza. Fish poisoning is rare among careful people, and occurs mostly because the fish has been kept ungutted too long, or is eaten after decay has set in. The natives are the best guide as to the fish that are actually poisonous. Shellfish are never unsafe to eat. Leprosy has been strongly controlled, and new cases are not numerous, but the Japanese occupation will have resulted in new cases remaining on their islands instead of being removed. Infantile paralysis has been known. Septic sores give much trouble. The writer wishes to emphasize his opinion that this will be found to be the most serious affliction among the troops. Coral cuts, in particular, but other cuts and abrasions, even a rubbed mosquito bite, rapidly go septic, even dangerously so, and yield most stubbornly to treatment. Healthy newcomers are not exempt at all. The use of iodine is often ineffectual. Salvarsan injections are effective, and so are methiolate and acriflavine applications, but the best remedy is frequent antiseptic dressings, say every three or four hours. Twice a day is not enough. Early treatment is indispensable.

TODDY

Toddy deserves a paragraph to ^{itself.} keep. Toddy is a nutritious drink, which serves as food also, and is obtained from ~~the~~

coconut spathe, by skillful bleeding. The spathe is the unopened cluster of flowers, within its sheathe, and the top is delicately sliced twice daily. Only a wafer is removed, but this encourages the flow of sap or liquid long enough to fill a coconut shell after each operation. Toddy is drunk either neat or mixed with well water. Excellent molasses can be obtained from it by boiling. The troops should be warned to leave toddy alone for several reasons, the principal of which is that it often induces symptoms almost exactly like those of gonorrhoea. The native name for gonorrhoea and its apparent counterpart is the same. The cantharides beetle is the cause of the trouble. It often gets into the toddy receptacles, as they hang from the coconut spathe. Toddy ferments 24 hours after it flows from its source, and then becomes a powerful intoxicant. Troops should be expressly prohibited from accepting sour toddy from the natives, as it renders men fighting mad; serious disturbances with the natives and among the soldiers themselves are sure to follow sour-toddy drinking bouts.

Nauru Island has not been separately treated in the foregoing. The attached paper contains pertinent information on the subject. Much of the foregoing, however, will serve adequately as a general guide to Nauru. Its conditions are very much like those of Ocean Island, with the exception that the Nauruans have been more controlled medically, and, also have suffered considerably more detribalization.

F. G. L. HOLLAND,
Major, FMF

Written at Honolulu.

C O P Y.

" IT'S THE BRITISH WHO WILL PAY FOR RUINED PALMS ON TARAWA. "

By DAN McGUIRE

(United Press War Correspondent).

APAMAMA, Gilbert Islands, June 8 - (UP) - At least once a week for the past three months, someone has sidled up to me and whispered out of the corner of his mouth.

"Say, did you hear that we have to pay the British \$10 for every palm tree ruined at Tarawa during the invasion? Those blasted Limeys!"

The story has been circulated from Samoa to Eniwetok and from Pearl Harbour to Majuro via "scuttlebut" sessions, with the alleged price per tree ranging from \$3 to \$15.

At the risk of being disowned by the Pacific chapter of the Ancient Order of Hibernians, I can testify that the oft-repeated tale is nothing but the rankest prevarication. The man who gave me the true facts of the situation is shy, quiet-spoken Maj. F.G.L. Holland, a New Zealander, who directs colonial affairs on this picturesque island.

"Yes," he said "It is true that the palm trees destroyed during the Gilberts invasion or in construction operations later must be paid for. But it is the British Government that reimburses the natives, at approximately eight shillings a tree. Naturally, the damage was done by United States forces when they invaded and occupied the Gilberts. But don't forget you were taking them back for us."

Family Ownership.

"The Gilbertese have an ancient system of land ownership. Each family has at least one strip of land on its home island. Land to them means everything. A family has complete ownership of the trees in its strip".

Holland related that Britain also is paying the native stevedoring battalions which are helping to construct installations.

"We pay them in American money, so they believe they are being reimbursed for their labor by the United States". Holland chuckled.

Necessities purchased by the Gilbertese in the order of their importance are tobacco, soap and clothing. When the war started and exports of copra were cut off, the natives did without the last two items to maintain a limited supply of tobacco."

=====

High Commissioner has instructed European personnel of Mission and Coode to leave Beru for Funafuti, if suitable craft is available Beru stop. I have suggested that Harness party transfer a qualified navigator to Beru party on arrival Beru if boat available there.

No planes reported yesterday stop. While I leave decision entirely to Harness, there is some reason to suppose that planes have withdrawn from Gilberts for attacks on Rabaul but this is only supposition.

High Commissioner has telegraphed. Begins. I suggest unwise for Harness and party to delay departure from Tarawa. To avoid aerial observation could not most voyages from island to island be done at night, starting late afternoon when aerial activity less likely and remaining ashore during day time? Some risk seems unavoidable anyway. Ends.

I leave decision to party but do not consider delay serves any purpose as reconnaissance flight can not be forecast.

Following submitted. Butaritari may be held as screen for Jaluit and not as part of offensive plan. Enemy may fear hostile move coming by way of Gilbert Group. Note extra attention to Abemama. Once this fear goes and for other reasons patrol may decrease in extent and number. Second part follows.

Kiakia might then proceed to Funafuti to await best chance removal of Europeans from Beru and even Tarawa. Morgan could leave with final party as native operators fully competent to carry on by use of material now buried in Teleradio captured. Third part follows.

One more raid possible here for removal remaining Burns Philp stocks principal of which are eight thousand gallons diesel oil and fourteen hundred tons copra. Bishop and priests and twenty out of twenty one sisters assembled here desire not repeat not to be evacuated. Finis.

Plane heard yesterday morning to the east beyond Tarawa. It kept to that one area for unusual period.

Your suggestion regarding safe conduct of Europeans has been submitted through Luke to Secretary of State, Prime Ministers New Zealand and Australia. Latter replies that he considers proposal impracticable and unwise. Other views not yet received.

Bishop states threatened with local food shortage and wishes attempt send eleven sisters to Maiana and Abaiang. The launch would be used.

Yesterday morning plane circled down close over the launch which was outside lagoon north of entrance. Launch not molested and plane then flew towards Maiana.

Morgan bitterly complains of Beru. Native operators have failed to answer after calls at intervals covering some hours. Several instances of this during last ten days.

Luke states that it is not possible to predict what enemy may do and repeats that party is ill - advised to remain at Tarawa one moment longer than necessary. He states that Morgan should remain at his post and says that risk of sending Kiakia to Tarawa or Beru can not be undertaken while Japanese are operating in group.

Bishop's proposition is being referred to Suva. Suva pressing for early reply from Bishop on my 2335/30.

As launch is only means of escape, I consider every effort should be made to keep it concealed.

Have presented position to Beru and instructed Coode to insist on maximum care being taken, but at the same time difficulty may be unavoidable as Beru now has to act as parent station for whole Group including Ocean Island.

Plane reported over Maiana yesterday morning and over Abemama this morning.

Stenson requests payment to his wife monthly remittance of forty pounds. Harness to his wife similarly twenty pounds. Both wives to be instructed pay insurance premiums at once.

17. 1. 42.

Bishop states as follows. Essential repairs to Santa Teretia to be carried out.. Fiji Government may use vessel if desired. He would welcome return of vessel here owing present condition of mission personnel if such a course possible by international arrangement.

18. 1. 42.

Eight survivors from ship "Donerail" reached here yesterday. Were in open boat since ninth December. Request news of "Donerail" may remain secret in every particular owing grave danger to us if divulged. Second part follows.

19. 1. 42.

"Donerail" sunk by gunfire from submarine when south east of Hawaii. One boat badly damaged got away with twenty four persons. Fifteen of these died during voyage and captain was drowned. Survivors expected to pull through. They all belong to crew and consist of four Danes, two Norwegians and one Australian.

18. 1. 42.

Immediate. Your 033 /10. Luke gave instructions that copra and oil should be destroyed but I remonstrated on obvious grounds. Matter referred to Secretary of State and he states that unless Europeans in Tarawa gave parole or definite undertaking regarding non-destruction of stores, they must now be destroyed as present position is that Japanese are not in effective occupation and can not rely on rights of occupying power.

Telegraph whether parole or other undertaking given. If not instructions of Secretary of State as to destruction of oil and copra must be carried out forthwith.

20. 1. 42.

"Donerail" five Danes not four. All survivors now moved from Bairiki to Betio. Later they will be established at Aboakoro.

20. 1. 42.

Please telegraph names of "Donerail" survivors and confirm whether seven or eight.

20. 1. 42.

Your telegram oil and copra there was such an undertaking. Moreover Japanese threatened death penalty for Europeans if stocks not kept intact.

21. 1. 42.

"Donerail" survivors. Karl Gejl chief officer, Anthon Petersen third officer, Aage Christensen second engineer, Sigfred Bruun wireless officer, Erik Hjersted seaman, Murray Chambers seaman, Kaare Solberg oiler, Erling Kanstrup cook.

21. 1. 42.

Flying boat flew around Tarawa yesterday afternoon and then went north.

21. 1. 42.

Launch trip abandoned for following reasons: Enemy air reconnaissance; Impossibility of concealing launch which is heavy and cannot be manhandled; Unfavourable weather; Eight only out of twenty-four Europeans that desire get away could be taken.

21. 1. 42.

Luke instructs that launch should not repeat not proceed Abaiang and suggests Bishop send sisters there by canoe. He desires however launch take as many sisters as possible Malana and recommends remainder of party accompany launch to Malana in canoes to avoid necessity of return trip to Tarawa.

He is disturbed by continued delay in leaving Tarawa especially in view of sighting of launch by plane.

How long is it expected "Donerail" survivors will require to recuperate and what is condition of their boat? Provided competent navigator can accompany them this will offer means of evacuating them and several other Europeans. No other means appear likely.

22. 1. 42.
Boat is steel lifeboat twenty-six feet long. There are shell holes in sides and bottom. Plates in centre and at one end badly buckled and one plate is cracked. Chief Officer advised its abandonment owing serious damage. Other expert opinions will be obtained and submitted.

Morgan wishes to discontinue practice drawing salary here.²² He requests Treasurer to deal with matter of his salary as from first of current month.⁴²

0155z/22. Am most disappointed that trip abandoned and do not consider fact that only eight can get away is valid argument since additional whale boat now available. I see no other possible chance of escape for anyone.

↑ What is Harness's reaction to my 0205/21 ?

23. 1. 42.
Flying boat landed at anchorage this morning and stayed over four hours. Plane over island yesterday.

24. 1. 42.
All Europeans here less mission personnel already reported join in appeal to Luke that they may be evacuated if and as soon as possible. Evacuation of Morgan matter of life and death. Both he and I are in same position owing to threat uttered tenth December against use of a transmitter suspected to be still on island and general threat regarding any act contrary to Japanese authority. Any defence put up would be vitiated to Japanese minds by this fact supported by facts of annexation pole and hoisting of their flag. My anxious request is that Morgan may be allowed to leave island with other Europeans. Second part follows. original 0900 1/23

Native operators who would carry on if necessary have certain degree of safety. As last resort they can mix with villagers and thus cover identity.

European roadstuffs will be exhausted seen after end of February. Details seaplane visit later. 23 30 1/23

25. 1. 42.
Flying boat brought Commandant of Butaritari on inspection. Among other things he ordered all trading to cease prohibited travelling outside lagoon and threatened native looters with death. Said Gilbert Islands being merged with Marshalls. Letter handed to him asking for safe conduct for vessel from Fiji. 0900z/24.

25. 1. 42.
Reaction Harness. He states no change of views and adds that launch engine lately has proved unreliable.

Survivors "Donerail" making good progress. Date of return to health cannot yet be given.

Other opinions about lifeboat are not encouraging. Second engineer "Donerail" more hopeful but is still in hospital. 0015z/25.

Beru to Zit

25. 1. 42.
vsz only coast-watching traffic. We can't allow private messages only coast-watching messages.

Gardner to Ocean Island.

Long message in code for S.M.O., Tarawa.

26. 1. 42.
Send messages for us between nine and three daytime repeating each group twice. Instruct Beru not send on. Transmission from here suspended. Reasons later. 2100z/25

28. 1. 42.
Navy requests that wireless operator be asked what distress signals were made by "Donerail".

22.10.0 (Dec) 32.19.7 (Jan) 18.0.0 " 18.0.0 " 28.1.42

Telegraph whether any payments have been made in cash to Morgan, Sinclair, English, Cleary, Stead and Hunt since end of November and if so what amounts. I am arranging for credit of their salaries less any deductions to deposits (through?)

30. 1. 42.

Reasons submitted. Officers at Betio consider Teleradio no longer militarily useful and that calamity will follow its discovery by Japanese. They urge that set be demolished or that transmission should cease entirely.

Beru to Zit on twenty-fifth quote vsz only coast watching-traffic unquote. This repeated both times enclair. Same day Gardner sent out message addressed S.M.O. Tarawa.

Yesterday Beru called asking for messages and adding there were none for us. 1800z/30

30. 1. 42.

"Donerail" none at all. 1800z/30

30. 1. 42.

Morgan thirty two ten nought Sinclair sixty five nineteen two English twenty seven eleven four Cleary forty seven nought eight Stead ten two one Hunt thirty six nought nought. 1800z/30

31. 1. 42.

Your 0900z/23, Luke replies that he has discussed question of evacuation of Europeans from Tarawa with New Zealand Chief of Air-Staff now visiting Suva and has enlisted his good offices in assisting to find solution to problem. 0400z/30

2. 2. 42.

At request of Navy Luke instructed resumption of transmission through Beru but I am warning Beru against indiscretions. Have approved contents of your 0800 to Luke. It would be borne in mind that evacuation by air may be impossible if wireless communication is abolished. 0210z/1.

4. 2. 42.

Plane over here Tuesday. Last one before this on twenty ninth. 2100z/4

6. 2. 42.

I suggest change of Keywords. First Christian name and surname your father-in-law. Plane yesterday. Thursday 1900z/6

8. 2. 42.

Glad if local coast-watching stations could maintain ten minute watch on six eight four nine kilocycles for V.P.D. three at end of each schedule with parent station. This would increase our chances of getting Beru. 2000z/1.

10. 2. 42.

Stead Jenner and Chambers left here last night in sailing boat. First call Maiana. Plane yesterday. 0600z/9

10. 2. 42.

Have passed on request in your 2000z/7 to Maiana, Abemama, Kuria, Nonouti. But have instructed them not to call or reply to you as that appears unsafe. 0500z/9.

10. 2. 42.

Morgan states he will not call these stations. He wishes them to warn Beru that it is being called.

All survivors "Donerail" now recuperated. 0330z/10.6

11. 2. 42.

Regret to complain but Beru now worse. Average of four lately to obtain response. This destroys chances getting urgent messages through. Also multiplies enemy chances of detection.

In December Beru was excellent. Immediate answer to every call. Could this service be given again? 0030Z/11

12. 2. 42.

Weather and enemy patrol more favourable to launch venture. "Doneraill's" boat ready within a week. About twenty Europeans could get away in this towed by launch.

Harness in circumstances unwilling risk proceeding further than Southern Gilberts. His choice is Nonouti because of lagoon and radio. All concerned request assurance before departure from Tarawa that their evacuation beyond Nonouti will be arranged. English and Morgan do not wish leave Tarawa unless ordered to do so.

Grateful for instructions. 1900Z/11

12. 2. 42.

Please telegraph Sub-Accountant's cash balance at 31st January. Are all officers prepared to authorize Secretary, W.P.H.C., to draw their salaries and credit them to trust account?

12. 2. 42.

Luke telegraphs that he has discussed evacuation of Europeans with New Zealand Chief of Air Staff and also with United States Admiral Commanding Anzac squadron, but that they regret they cannot undertake evacuation and consider it unlikely that future opportunity will occur.

Luke therefore desires you consult Tarawa residents with view to each person deciding for himself whether he is immediately prepared to travel southward or to Ocean Island by launch or canoe, or whether he will remain with the probability of being interned by Japanese. Luke emphasises necessity for each to make his own decision without being influenced by those who prefer to remain.

If any decide to travel south he will arrange for "Kiakia" to proceed Funafuti.

13. 2. 42.

Five two three thirteen and eight. English, no, all others, yes, subject to the family remittances being continued.

Clearly now unwilling go on voyage unless ordered. 1932Z/12.

14. 2. 42.

Action taken as instructed by Luke. Harness prepared to proceed Onotoa and hopes "Kiakia" can remove party from there. Date of departure submitted later. 1900Z/13.

14. 2. 42.

Your 1800/30. Following telegram has been addressed by New Zealand Naval Board to Naval Reporting Officer, Suva. Begins. As reports from Tarawa may be of extreme value propose following if possible reception. Teleradio set normally to be well hidden and only exposed when required to pass important intelligence. Arrange periodical time, if considered reasonably safe, for transmission to Beru to which Desmond (Suva) should listen. Ends. Luke recognises unpleasant position at Tarawa. But he does not support suggestion to demolish or cease working set as reports are potentially very valuable.

Please telegraph times you decide on.

Your 0030/11 owing illness Beru NQK (Ocean Island) has now taken over Beru watch from six a.m. to nine a.m. and two p.m. to five p.m. Ocean time, but regret cannot keep watch on your frequency as no receiver available. 0842Z/13.

15. 2. 42.

Measures adopted December and still maintained for protection Teleradio. Set kept in seclusion. Set buried all and every night. Watchers on coast. Personal appeals to dangerous natives against treachery. Minimum number of messages. Short messages. Reduced power directional transmission. Use of a Suva call sign. In addition set removed to remote parts of island whenever Japanese have arrived. The above for information Navy, if necessary.

Times suggested are nine, ten thirty, two and four. Ten minute watch at these hours without contact except for traffic. Necessary all messages be via Beru in order maintain impression aimed at that we are south of that island. 0500 L/14

15. 2. 42.

Shall I endeavour take some wireless-trained for employment at certain coast-watching stations as assistants? Harness not yet consulted. Proposed itinerary is Abemama, Nonouti, Onotoa. 2330 L/14

15. 2. 42.

Your telegram 270 to Bevington. Tabunawati employed here since tenth December. He has proved very capable and has given me valuable assistance. No salary paid. I wish to record above for consideration when normal times return.

18. 2. 42.

Grateful to learn progress Stead and movements patrol planes. No plane over Tarawa since tenth but natives living eastwards have heard them. 2100 L/17.

18. 2. 42.

Harness proposes leaving twenty-seventh as tide and moon then suitable. He now favours route Maiana, Kuria, Nonouti, Onotoa. 2330/17.

19. 2. 42.

I approve proposal in your 2330z/14, provided there is sufficient room and voyage is not delayed. 0045/19.

19. 2. 42.

Urgent. Luke telegraphs that Harness and party should proceed Beru repeat Beru without delay, where it may be possible for ship to call for them, but they will require to hasten as vessel will not be able to wait there.

Plane over Tamana 14th, Beru 16th, and Nonouti today. Also over Ocean 10th, 11th, 12th and 17th. Reports do not indicate any systematic patrol.

Stead awaiting weather Maiana. Am advising Stead proceed Beru urgently. 2345z/18.

19. 2. 42.

Party should proceed Nonouti and not Beru as stated in my 2345/18 and should proceed via coastwatching islands and await further orders at Nonouti. 0340z/19.

20. 2. 42.

I suggest that Willie Schutz be transferred to duty at Beru. Schutz has confirmed in his work my former good opinion of him. 2100z/19.

21. 2. 42.

Harness reports as follows. Night travel and concealment boats during daylight dependent on tides. Speed of launch towing about three knots. Suitable tides for departure will not occur until twenty-eighth. If weather continues favourable earliest date arrival Nonouti third March. 2100z/20

21. 2. 42.

I approve transfer Schutz to Beru. If evacuation vessel does not call Beru after Nonouti, he can remain Nonouti where operator is in poor health. 2345z/20.

22. 2. 42.

I am telegraphing Luke to find out latest permissible date arrival Nonouti. Meanwhile party should be ready for immediate departure in case third March is too late. 0445z/21.

22. 2. 42.

Luke telegraphs party must reach Nonouti without fail by 4th March. Relieving vessel is Fiji Government ship "Degie" ends. 0100z/22.

23. 2. 42.

Following will leave. Three Niமானoa and seven Denerail. Steenson, Isaac, Doughty, Clarke and self. Schutz and four wireless trainees. Two other natives. English, Cleary, Morgan, Handley and mission personnel remain. 2100z/22

23. 2. 42.

Wireless trainees are for Maiana, Kuria, Abemama and Nonouti. Two will be left at Kuria. One of these will make his way to Abemama. Perhaps boat from Abemama could call for him.

May I arrange pay each two pounds advance of salary? They will need make purchases on arrival especially kit as they will travel very light. 2100z/22.

23. 2. 42.

Two planes today. Both going north the second ninety minutes after the first. Otherwise none heard since eighteenth. Party will leave probably on Friday. Grateful for news of planes day by day until then.

26. 2. 42.

Please instruct Maiana have canoe with pilot waiting for us in northern passage Friday evening from nine o'clock onwards. 2100z/25

26. 2. 42.

Luke telegraphs that as Cleary is staying he does not consider English will serve any useful purpose by remaining and states that he should leave with party in view of his responsibilities as a married man and as his wife is in state of great anxiety regarding his safety. 0630z/25.

27. 2. 42.

Beru not observing schedules as arranged and is till most difficult to raise. Morgan upset as he feels position at Tarawa not realized elsewhere. He states that while prepared to perform indefinitely his rightful duties he is not prepared to tolerate further the avoidable attitude of Beru.

I may add that Beru is called only during its free periods from transmitting. Recently I observed Morgan call Beru twenty-one times spread over many hours before answer received.

Tarawa,
Gilbert and Ellice Islands Colony.
12th January, 1942.

Dear Sir Harry Luke,

Your Excellency will have learned most of the story of the Japanese raids on Tarawa from the telegrams despatched from here, but I thought you might like to have some details and comment from me.

² On the outbreak of war with Japan, I discussed with Mr Morgan, Instructor in Wireless Telegraphy, the part he and his wireless class could play in the maintenance of wireless communication. Morgan assured me that he was very willing to open the communication that would be stopped on the Japanese invasion of Tarawa and to maintain it for so long as was possible and to give other assistance. Plans were then made for his flight, when necessary, with the school's Teleradio set and all essential equipment. Every student in the wireless class had his allotted task, and a rehearsal showed that the wireless set, batteries, engine, benzine, oil, food, and other things as being ready for removal within a few minutes.

³ As the Japanese attack on Tarawa on the 10th December was a raid only and limited to the Central Government areas, Morgan's flight with the Teleradio early in the morning proved to be a very useful action. A stop was made at the first village eastwards and touch obtained with Ocean Island and Beru. A false call sign was used. The teleradio was then moved progressively to more distant villages. I remained at Bairiki.

⁴ Marines from two destroyers landed on the weather side at Betio in the early hours of the morning. The weather was unusually calm and thus favoured this operation. A native fleeing up the island brought us the first news, and then the wireless distress call was intercepted. The plan noted above was then followed. No authentic news could come from Betio, as all the Europeans and half-castes had been rounded up and kept under guard until the evening. I could therefore report only what could be seen, which was serious enough, especially the blowing up of the Colony vessel. The "Nimanoa" was saved from falling into Japanese hands, by the action of the mate in slipping the cable. The vessel drifted on the reef, and the state of the tide prevented any chance of her being refloated and removed that day. The Japanese therefore destroyed the vessel with a demolition charge.

⁵ Late in the afternoon my part of the raid took place. One of the two destroyers steamed towards Bairiki on the weather side. The weather was still regrettably calm, and the boats from the destroyer easily made the shore. I sent my last message to Morgan as the raiding party left the destroyer's side. I say "my last message" because I did not believe for a moment that I should be left on the island, or alternatively that Morgan would not soon be captured. I went to the western end of the island to meet the enemy party, thinking they might take me away and be satisfied, thus leaving property intact. This was not to be. A party of 30 marines came ashore where I stood waiting. They were armed with rifles, sub-machine guns, revolvers, bombs, and fuses. After they had pulled me about, the officer in charge assured me that private property would not be touched. He then marched ahead with most of his party of marines, but a number remained around me, and with bayonets pointing at me from all sides, I was ordered to hand over my wrist watch. So much for the assurance! It was a watch I treasured, being a precision one and

keeping almost perfect time. Later on they took my noiseless typewriter, my compass, my fountain pens, and many other things, though not my stores. Glass seemed to annoy them, and they smashed every mirror they could find, even fixtures. In the meantime the grievous destruction of school property went on. The implements were hammers, crowbars, and demolition charges. The latticed flagstaff went first. Some contrition was expressed over this, the Japanese officer saying it was a beautiful thing, but might of course be used for wireless communication. My comment that scores of coco-nut trees around might equally well be used was ignored. The launch was the next to go. It was destroyed with an extra large charge. The result was just matchwood. The launch might have been saved, but for very bad luck with the tide. The Japanese raid occurred at the lowest point of the neap tides, and there was not enough water on the reef to float it. A bomb placed in the sailing boat blew away the fore part. The sailing canoe was attacked with crowbars. Both the boat and canoe have since been repaired. Two bombs were placed under the electric-light engine. One proved to be a dud, and the other exploded fairly harmlessly. Other parts of the plant, however, had been wrecked with heavy blows from a large hammer. There was much wanton destruction of small things on the station, for example, the sun dial. Tins of flour and oil were punctured with bayonets, as a quick way of finding out what they contained. Mosquito rooms and safes were similarly treated. My dog was bayoneted and died afterwards.

I discovered afterwards that similar property at Betio had received similar treatment. Houses however were left untouched everywhere and furniture largely so, as also private stocks of foodstuffs. Personal effects other than foodstuffs did not escape, but the worst losses in this respect came not through enemy marines but through the natives, a section of which indulged in general looting. Two natives were killed at Betio for not obeying Japanese orders. Naturally they did not respond to orders quickly enough. The poor fellows were lunatics.

Early in my raid, I was asked - I presume purely tentatively - for the second Tarawa transmitter. The first one, that for traffic, had been captured at Betio, and carried off. I answered several times with the equivocal words, "It is not here". This seemed to satisfy them in the end though a threat was uttered and repeated regarding any act contrary to Japanese authority, and wireless communication outwards received pointed mention. The full import of this threat did not become apparent to me until I learned that a pole had been planted at Betio, with this legend inscribed on it: "The Navy of Nippon occupied this island on the 10th December, 1941." (Since the second raid, that on Christmas Day, the Japanese flag has been flown daily from this pole.) Their inquiry about Morgan - they seemed to know of a second man at Bairiki - I met by referring to him as an assistant master, and added that he had run away. This answer, unexpectedly to me, pleased the Japanese officer, and he ceased to bother me more with his questions on wireless matters. His marines however continued with an intensive search. I had spread rations, tools and equipment of all kinds over the island, covering everything with branches and leaves. This delayed their search. They did find some spare wireless parts, but nothing that was important to them. This lent colour to my story that I had no transmitting apparatus on the island. All such apparatus of course, except that in use and then located with Morgan some miles away, had been buried days before.

8. They left just after dark, and I sent my final telegram for that day. Morgan returned the next day, observing all precautions on the way, and with the exception of one short period has remained at Bairiki. I explained to Morgan on his return the Japanese threat regarding wireless communication, and of the possible consequences to him and to me, if our Teleradio was ever discovered by the Japanese. He unhesitatingly answered that he would continue to transmit my messages.

9. I established a system of runners for the whole of Tarawa, and at Bairiki the wireless trainees were placed on a 24-hour watch around the coast. The latter precaution was superseded later by the burial each night of the Teleradio. A box was made and a hole kept always ready in my ironing hut. Benzine was buried in the pig pens. It was still deemed advisable that the Teleradio should leave Bairiki for the period of any daylight raid on Tarawa.

10. The second raid occurred on Christmas Day. A light cruiser raided Abaiang Island on the 24th December, and the distress call was intercepted. It seemed certain that our Teleradio would be trapped this time, as no doubt the Japanese would seize the opportunity of landing on the north-end of Tarawa and working their way through the island towards us. Morgan went out on the lagoon to await developments, while I awaited reports from the island runners. However the weather this time was unfavourable for such a landing, and next day the cruiser was off the channel. The raid was a short one and limited to Betio. Our Teleradio therefore escaped again. It appears that one wretched native, a sycophantic degenerate, tried to betray the presence of the Teleradio at Bairiki, but did not succeed in making himself properly understood. This attempt at treachery may be considered as a highly-individual case. Native loyalty has so far been unaffected by Japanese activities.

11. The cruiser carried obviously a better class of officer and man. The destruction wrought by the two destroyers to boats of all kinds was deprecated by them, so I am informed. There was little purloining by individual sailors. This was much in contrast with the methods of the men from the destroyers. The natives of Betio unfortunately again did some looting.

12. The "Helena" (Burns Philp's little auxiliary ship) had been loaded with appropriated stores during the first raid and towed away to Butaritari. The cruiser brought back the native crew to Tarawa, and these men had much to tell. Everybody thought they had been primed by the Japanese, but this apparently was not so, and the men came through all tests. Their information was very important and was duly reported. It showed that Butaritari, the Colony's most northern island, was being prepared as a naval port, and that among the vessels there at the time were two destroyers, two light cruisers, and two cargo ships - a nice catch for a British heavy cruiser. Flying boats had been observed also by the crew of the "Helena". Tarawa may not be occupied and fortified like Butaritari for some time, or possibly not at all. The channel is shallow, 4 fathoms at the lowest water as against 7 fathoms at Butaritari, and the room to manoeuvre in the case of air attack is very limited. But a return for more plunder is certain: local oil stocks amount to 8,000 gallons of diesel oil, and 4,000 gallons of other oils - power kerosene mostly. These have been conspicuously left intact by the Japanese. There is also 1,400 tons of copra in B.P.'s sheds. It is to be deplored that these cannot be destroyed, but some Europeans

at Betio were threatened with the death penalty, unless stocks of oil and copra remained untouched.

⁸ There is another reason why Tarawa may not be occupied and fortified. But I am very conscious that what follows may be disproved in the event. One works out something today on the information available, but finds it rendered hopelessly antiquated by the events of tomorrow. However I hold the view that the Japanese have no intention of using the line Marshall Islands, Gilbert and Ellice Groups, and Rotuma for a movement southwards. The turn of Fiji - absit omen - is planned to come later, as part of a subordinate operation.

¹⁴ The Japanese plan includes two main strategic drives. The first is that already being developed, the line from the Phillipines to Northern Australia, which includes Malaya and the Dutch East Indies. The second by way of the Marianas and Carolines will be that from the Bismarck Archipelago to New Caledonia, where the line is to fork to Eastern Australia and Northern New Zealand.

¹⁵ If I am correct, then Butaritari is being held merely as a screen for Jaluit and not as part of an offensive plan. The Japanese fear a convergence on the Marshall Islands from two directions - an American one from Hawaii, and a British one by way of that chain ending in the Gilbert Group. Butaritari now forms a defensive outpost against the drive from the south.

¹⁶ All this ponderous talk leads to rather an anticlimax - our own rescue. For it has seemed to me that once the Japanese became satisfied that no attack was coming from the south towards Butaritari, they would leave Tarawa and other islands south of it free enough of air patrols for a rescuing ship to have a good chance of removing Europeans without undue risk. These are the reasons which have prompted me to telegraph as I have done on this subject.

¹⁷ In the foregoing I have mentioned the specific Japanese threat against using a transmitter. From what I have learned and know of Japanese reactions in war, I am convinced that Morgan and I have been and are in a perilous position. Our radio set may be detected one day by directional location, or its presence may be in time betrayed by the natives. (In this last connection, the set has gained an unenviable prominence, owing to its flights through the villages, whenever the Japanese came or were thought to be coming.) The result will be an enemy attempt, allowing of no failure, to capture the outfit. Then will follow the worst consequences for us. Irritation at being foiled for so long; the treachery - to Japanese minds - of our acting in using the transmitter when the island had been occupied by the Japanese Navy, and the "Rising Sun" actually flown; the defiance shown to two threats - one general and one particular. These are the grounds for this statement. I am anxious, therefore, that Morgan's danger may not be prolonged, that is, that he may leave the island when other Europeans are able to leave. My request to this effect has been answered in the negative, but I trust that Your Excellency may now, if this has not already been done, reverse this answer.

¹⁸ Native operators are fully competent to carry on, if necessary, after the departure of Morgan. Morgan has buried all possible equipment and has trained the native operators in its assembly and use, and how to deal with coded, and the coding of, messages. Further a native operator has a certain degree of safety. He can, as a final resort, mix with the population and cover his identity,

particularly John Milne, the senior native operator, who so far has not been noted by the Japanese.

¹⁹ My safe-conduct proposal to you was not happily born. I had the "John Williams" in mind. Speed would not matter with safe-conduct. I have been informed lately that certain Betio officers intend to approach the next Japanese senior officer on the matter of "safe-conduct." I hope they will think better of it.

²⁰ Matters of Native Administration have not been neglected during our difficult times. The natives at Betio have behaved very badly, as regards looting, but there has been no disorder in the other sixteen villages. Tarawa is not so self-reliant as other islands, and the Native Government might find itself, in the absence of all European Officers, unable to maintain full control. Among other things, I have suggested the formation of a Council of educated natives - N.M.P's, clerks, and assistant masters - who would give advisory help, though not orders, regarding the problems of native administration that may arise.

²¹ I would like to commend to Your Excellency's attention, if I may, the very fine work of Morgan. His precautions against detection by the enemy have been particularly clever. In all his work, in fact, he has been most resourceful. He has proved an excellent companion in a time of strain, wise in consultation, willing, cheerful, and unafraid.

²² I wish to thank you very much for your Christmas message, and for having my wife and Barbara sent on so early to New Zealand. I send greetings and best wishes to Your Excellency and to the High Commission staff.

May 1942 see the full turn of the tide!

Yours sincerely,

H. H. H. and

P. S. / This letter was to be taken away by the party going in the launch. Some days after it was written Harness and the other members stated that the venture had been abandoned. The reasons for this decision have been telegraphed. Stead of the "Nimanoa" and Chambers of the "Donerail" have just told me that they are getting away in a sailing boat, so I shall send this letter by them.

² Now for the "Donerail": Surely this voyage of the survivors will be outstanding among the outstanding boat voyages resulting from the war. Five and a half weeks in a shell-torn boat. For the first twenty-four hours the boat was actually submerged, but held up from sinking entirely, by the air tanks. Sharks, attracted by blood, had to be beaten off with oars. One shark swam into the boat, so much below water was it. Then the holes were plugged with clothing and the boat gradually baled out, though during the weeks that followed the boat made about a foot of water a day.

³ No chronometer and no sextant. Course north for $4\frac{1}{2}$ days, in attempt to reach Hawaii. The attempt failed by adverse winds, so the boat was then allowed to drift in general direction of the Gilbert Islands. No land sighted. Sixteen out of twenty-four men died, mostly from the effects of wounds. A bottle of iodine formed the whole medical supply. The food consisted of about 30 lbs of biscuits, which were spoiled by salt water while the boat was submerged, two bottles of

vitamin tablets, and 40 tins of milk, and - flying fish, which leaped into the boat. Two coco-nuts floated alongside, appropriately on Christmas Day. Rain fell constantly and though uncomfortable this gave sufficient drinking water.

† On the 23rd January, a four-engined flying boat landed at Betio. There were about 20 Japanese on board. The Commandant of Butaritari with 10 men came ashore in a rubber dinghy propelled by an outboard motor. Our wireless outfit was sent eastwards, according to custom. No visit again was made to Bairiki, and after four hours we saw the plane taking off. The relief that comes on the disappearance of a cruiser or a plane makes it almost worth while to have endured the suspense of the waiting period.

§ I felt obliged to suspend transmission, except, it will be understood, for urgent messages, for a few days on the 26th January. The reasons were concerned mostly with the thoughtlessness of operators at other stations. It has been Morgan's and my intention, whatever the local circumstances, to continue sending out messages, for so long as is possible, and in order to do so, it may be necessary, perhaps again, to suspend transmission when indiscretions elsewhere threaten to betray the presence of our outfit. Not to do this, might lead to the loss of the transmitter and thus to the loss of the service it gives.

H.H.H.
31.1.42.

Another Postscript: I am now bringing this letter myself. I retrieved it from Stead. Stead got away and sailed as far as Nonouti Island, about 150 miles south of Tarawa - a fine effort. Twenty-five of us, inclusive of a few natives with Harness in charge, got away in the lifeboat of the "Donerail", which had been repaired for the occasion. A launch did the towing. This was the launch mentioned previously in this letter. This launch and its engine had been damaged by the Japanese, the engine irretrievably so, during the first raid. The Japanese had failed to notice a Diesel engine packed in a case. The hull of the launch was repaired and the new engine installed. The first venture in the launch had been given up, owing principally to enemy air patrol. Eight people only were then getting away. The second venture, with the help of the Donerail's boat was a more ambitious affair, and resulted in twenty-five people getting away.

2 We left Tarawa on the 27th February, and reached Maiana without incident. Kuria the next island south was reached on the 1st March. Here we had to stay for some days, owing to adverse weather. A Japanese reconnaissance plane passed over Kuria on the 6th March. It flew low and probably observed the launch, which was lying in a passage. The lifeboat could not be seen, as it was hidden among the trees. This was the only enemy plane encountered. On the 8th March, the crossing to Nonouti was attempted. Twenty-four hours afterwards, when we were approaching the channel at Nonouti, the "Degei" came in sight. I should have said the "good" ship "Degei"

3 Morgan was left behind at Tarawa in order to maintain the communication from that island. He was, as may be expected, quite happy at staying. Forty students are still left at the school. Their home islands are in the Southern Gilberts and in the Ellice Islands. They afford probably a good protection for Morgan. He will

7.

inform the Japanese, if they visit the station, that some official had to remain behind to take care of these students and that he volunteered to do so. This combined with my story that he was an assistant master may appear a plausible enough reason to the Japanese for his still being at Tarawa. May it be so !

H. H.
12.3.42.

1st hand. 1942. (1942)

Please see hand. This from diary kept at that island.

SECRET

GILBERT AND ELLICE ISLANDS COLONY.
Education Department, Vaitupu Island.
24th August, 1943.

Sir,

I have the honour to inform you that I joined in a reconnaissance flight over the Southern Gilbert Islands on the 21st of this month. The plane was a "Ventura", and the pilot was Lieutenant-Commander J.A. Cooper, U.S.N.

2. Four islands were visited, the northernmost being Tabiteuea. It was hoped to reach Nonouti, but the amount of fuel carried did not allow the extra distance to be travelled. Rain squalls were met with in the Ellice Group area, but the Gilbert Islands were marked by calm seas and brilliant sunshine. A seaplane could have landed comfortably anywhere in the north. The flight took nearly 7 hours. The times of arrival over the islands were as follows: Left Funafuti at 6.20 a.m.; over Vaitupu at 6.45; over Tamana at 8.35; over Onotoa at 8.55; over Tabiteuea at 9.15; over Beru at 10.5; over Vaitupu again at 12.35; landed at Funafuti at 1.10.

3. The plane flew generally at 500 feet, but over the islands came down at times to lower levels. Aircraft were not seen, nor were surface craft of any kind, less native canoes. No anti-aircraft fire, of course, was encountered.

4. The scene at each island as one looked down appeared to be normal in all respects, with the exception of the "atmosphere" of Tamana. Tabiteuea itself was an encouraging sight indeed, to a member of the Colony service. The vegetation on the islands indicated ample rainfall. The flag-pole at each Government Station was bare. Very little European clothing was seen, practically all the natives wearing their own indigenous dress.

5. Here are some notes on each island:

Tamana: The community seemed to be subdued: There was no waving at the plane, and the people in general kept to their houses. The hospital area and the transit quarters looked empty. Six canoes were out on the reef opposite Bakaka - the tide was at the full - preparing no doubt to go fishing. The quietness of the island may indicate boredom, or, on the other hand, enemy control. Such control could easily be inclusive, as all the population is concentrated in the one village. If a Japanese coast-watching station is located here, doubtless it has already been detected by technical means.

Onotoa: This is not a demonstrative island, but is was demonstrative on this occasion. Welcoming gestures were common.

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The Resident Commissioner,
Gilbert and Ellice Islands Colony.

The villages of Tebuarorae, Aiaki, and Buariki were noted as being in good order. The cairn erected under the direction of Mr Telfer Campbell, one-time Resident Commissioner, was intact. The natives living in this part of the island - the north - have appealed over the years for the removal of this cairn, because of its "shame" significance. It is true that feeling in the matter has declined in recent years, but it occurs to me that, if the Japanese were administering the island, they would break up the cairn, as a gesture of Japanese "love" in contrast with British "tyranny". The plane came down to 100 feet during the run along the lagoon coast, but nothing out of the ordinary could be observed.

Tabiteuea: This island gave an enthusiastic reception to the plane. Fully half of the population streamed to the shore or into open places, waving branches and giving other signs of greeting. Communal works were in operation. Many dwelling houses had been lately repaired, but "Maneaba" were receiving attention and the reef latrines had already been completed. At Temanoku, the framework of a new "Maneaba" was ready for hoisting on to its stone pillars. A public meeting was evidently in progress at Eita, as a large assembly was seen leaving the "Maneaba", and scrambling for a view of the plane. At Tanaeang, a Catholic priest stood on built-up land near the church. He was shading his face with both hands, which prevented his being identified. Later we returned but he had gone, and nearby stood three European Sisters. Their uniform was composed partly of blue dungaree instead of the usual light-blue cloth. They waved greetings. Fifteen sailing canoes were out over the reef opposite North Tabiteuea, and about a dozen canoes were being poled along the lagoon at various points. The tide was still fairly full. One got the impression of normal activities, even perhaps to the functioning of the Native Government.

Beru: The Government Station was quiet, and it was significant possibly that the European quarters there, the best on the island, showed no signs of being occupied. The shutters were all tightly closed. Rongorongo Station looked deserted, except that the paths had been kept free of grass and rubbish. Nuka village was wide-awake, the people rushing forth into the island road. One canoe only was out beyond the lagoon. On the whole, I obtained an incomplete view of Beru, owing to my faulty directions to the pilot.

6. The information of military importance contained in the foregoing was duly conveyed to the American officers concerned.

I have the honour to be,
 Sir,
 Your Honour's obedient servant,
 (Signed) F.G.L. Holland,
 Director of Education.

GILBERT AND ELLICE ISLANDS COLONY.



OFFICE OF THE RESIDENT
COMMISSIONER,
Funafuti,

Ellice Islands.

3rd. September 1943.

SECRET.

Sir,

I have the honour to inform you that you are required to proceed as soon as possible to Pearl Harbour, in the Territory of Hawaii, and there to report immediately on arrival to the Chief of Staff to the Commander-in-Chief of the Allied forces in the Pacific.

2. You are being sent at the request of the Commander-in-Chief and on the recommendation of Major-General Sir Philip Mitchell, the High Commissioner for the Western Pacific. The Commander-in-Chief has authorized your passage by air from Funafuti to Pearl Harbour; the degree of priority assigned to you is TWO.

3. You have been handed a letter addressed to His Britannic Majesty's Consul-General in Honolulu, and you should apply to him for any advance of funds or other incidental assistance which you may require during your stay in Hawaii.

4. The date and manner of your return to the Colony will be determined by the requirements of the Commander-in-Chief.

I have the honour to be,
Sir,

Your obedient servant,

J. D. Shaw
Lieut.-Colonel

Resident Commissioner, Gilbert and Ellice Is. Colony.

Major F.G.L.Holland, O.B.E.
Funafuti.

Tarawa.

HEADQUARTERS, SECOND MARINE DIVISION,
FLEET MARINE FORCE, IN THE FIELD.

24 November, 1943.

From: The Commanding General.
To: Major F.G.L. HOLLAND, Fiji Military Force.
Subject: Orders to temporary duty.

1. Upon receipt of these orders you will report to Brigadier General L. D. Hermle for assignment and duty with the Apemama Occupation Force (3-6) as representative of LtCol. V. Fox-Strangways, Commissioner of the Gilbert Islands.

2. Upon completion of this temporary duty and when directed by proper authority you will return to Tarawa and resume your regular duties.

C. P. Van Ness
C. P. VAN NESS,
By direction.

JPR/cad 1st Endorsement 24 November, 1943.
Hq, 2d Marine Division, FMF, In The Field.

From: The Commanding General, Apemama Forces.
To: Major F.G.L. HOLLAND, Fiji Military Force.

1. Reported this date. You will further report to the Commanding Officer of LF 3/6 for transportation to Apemama.

J. P. Riseley
J. P. RISELEY,
By direction.

GILBERT AND ELLICE ISLANDS COLONY.

Island of Abemama.

10th December, 1943.

Sir,

I have the honour to submit a report on the situation at Abemama Island. The main attacking force landed on the island thirteen days ago, on the 27th November, 1943. I was with Brigadier-General Hermle, Officer Commanding the United States troops, in the north. As early as possible, we drove down the island road, meeting a jubilant population. The people were called for a meeting early the next day at the Government Station. This was attended by General Hermle, his Chief of Staff, and other senior officers. I introduced them to a full "maneaba", and then spoke at length, dealing with the features of the occupation, the many aspects of cooperation, the restoration of local and the central Government, the recent operations in the Gilberts, and the progress of the war at large. During the afternoon, the Union Jack was hoisted on a coco-nut tree and saluted with proper ceremony. The real flagstaff had been broken up by the Japanese. A further full meeting was held the next day, at which I explained the many details of the subjects of the first meeting. After two days, I moved from the north of the island to the Government Station, the better to coordinate administrative and liaison duties.

2. Action by the Enemy.- The Japanese bombed Abemama on three occasions prior to their occupation of the island. No casualties and no damage resulted. The Native Magistrate had a narrow escape from a bomb which fell very close, but which fortunately failed to explode. Seven enemy ships appeared off Abemama on the 2nd September, 1942, and landed infantry, coolies and supplies. A converging movement on the centre of the island was made by detachments which marched from each end. No guns were brought ashore then, nor at any other time. This first contingent of 150, inclusive of coolies, was soon replaced. There were five replacements in all, but with never more than 80 men. A warrant officer each time was in charge, a doctor was included, and also a wireless unit. The final lot numbered 25 only. Special parties visited the island. One carried out a careful survey of the lagoon, and the lee and weather coasts, working for two months, using launches brought in for the occasion. The chart produced by this party is reported to be a paragon of detail. A second party carried out diving operations in the main channel, apparently going into the possibilities of deepening it. Whether they took any action is not clear, but

His Honour,
The Resident Commissioner,
Gilbert and Ellice Islands Colony,
at Tarawa.

but I am credibly informed that the water is now much deeper there, i.e., 24 feet at low water springs. A third party went into the matter of a seaplane base. A superior officer from Tarawa visited Abemama and moved the defensive position some miles north to a place called Tabonaekana. The new position was admirably chosen, in the circumstances of the garrison.

3. Coast-watching Station.- The New Zealanders forming this unit were: J.J. McCarthy of 19 Meola Road, Point Chevalier, Auckland (Wireless Operator); D.H. Howe, Toraru Road, Thames; and R.I. Hitchon, No. 7 Road, Waitoa, Thames Line. Messrs Howe and Hitchon were soldier companions but unarmed. It is understood that all three were unmarried. Taukiei, a student trained at the King George V School, Tarawa, was an assistant operator. All took to the bush on the arrival of the enemy-occupying force. Taukiei smashed the wireless set. After three days, the New Zealanders were forced to give themselves up. They remained at the enemy position for one week, and according to reliable local report, were treated not unkindly. A cruiser then took them to Tarawa. A Japanese soldier at Abemama told the story later that, during the bombardment of Tarawa by an American heavy cruiser ("Augusta" was the name given), all the European at Tarawa, including the Abemama prisoners, attempted to escape in canoes and were killed while doing so. Some died from machine-gun fire, while others were beaten down by Korean coolies with axes and picks. The story told me at Tarawa was different, but no doubt an official inquiry will reveal the true circumstances of death. Death itself seems only too true. Mr J.A. Smith of Abemama has lived in the Gilbert Islands since 1886, except for a ten-year period in the Marshalls. He is now 85 years old, and has the melancholy distinction of being the one European, except for Sacred Heart Mission personnel, to survive the Japanese occupation of Tarawa and the islands south. The rest - Protestant clergyman, retired sea captain, retired trader, two Government officers, seventeen wireless operators and soldier companions - all perished during that occupation.

4. Treatment of Natives.- Women were not interfered with by the Japanese. Much the same story is told at Tarawa. But that is the sum total to go on the credit side, except that the first party behaved decently in general. The second party was nicknamed "Taani Ira", the thieves, because they carried their craft to such a fine art. This party, and to a lesser degree, later parties stripped the island of its pitiful stock of valuables. Anything gold was rudely seized. One husband complained to the Japanese officer of his wife's ring being torn from her finger by a soldier. The answer was that it would be better for him and others not to bring up any more complaints of this kind. Examples of native crafts were demanded under threat, and the changes of garrison kept the women's fingers busy. One native said to me, "Most women in
Abemama

Abemama had little idea how to make mats, fans, and baskets. That was altered. All women soon became skilled in native crafts." Forced labour was used for the building of camps, digging of trenches and making of dug-outs. A little food, a very little, was occasionally supplied to the labourers. Coco-nuts had to be delivered daily at the Japanese position. Distant villages suffered badly in this respect, as long journeys on foot were involved. The Japanese lived handsomely for them, as shown by the empty pig pens and fowl runs on the island. And for produce and labour, payment was rare, and even that of the meanest kind, just a cigarette or two. The Japanese obeisance was instituted, and many women as well as men beaten, until the lowest private was satisfied as to his dignity. Some poor folk cudgelled out of their wits went on giving full-waisted bows even after we arrived. In recorded times, Abemama has been enslaved twice, once by a savage, Binoka, its own High Chief, who ruled in the years before the British flag came; and once by warrant-officer Sons of Heaven, who ruled for 15 months in the years 1942-43. The savage comes the better out of the tyrannous record.

5. Action by the Americans.- American planes bombed Abemama on several occasions, before finding the target area. Casualties were inflicted by three bombs which fell in and near Tebanga village, where only natives were located. Seven were killed and six wounded. Tebanga village was again bombed, this time without causing any damage. There are 3 large craters north of the Government Station in the bush. As the blasts were mostly upward, very few trees were knocked down. A number of bombs were dropped on the north end of the island, away from any village, and failed to explode. Some of these were dragged to the sea by landowners. One inquisitive native went as far as he could in dismantling one bomb, without coming to any harm. Another was also unhurt when he made a fire around one bomb in order to have a view to himself of what would happen. The Japanese position was finally located and bombs dropped well inside it, with good results in the destruction of war material. A reconnaissance patrol of 60 men landed from the submarine "Nautilus" on the 22nd November, near Kabangaki village, the site of the original Japanese position. Three days later a destroyer stood in and shelled the enemy defences. On the 27th November, when the occupying force arrived off the island, the Captain of this patrol came out and reported that the 25 Japanese on the island were dead, the majority by shooting themselves. Mr G.E. Hard of the Colony's Education Department was a member of this patrol, and Captain Jones, officer-in-charge, spoke to me very highly indeed of the help given and the example shown by Mr Hard. The occupation and defence of the island has proceeded swiftly. Already the air-field in the north is well advanced, and planes will land shortly. A wharf flanked by channels grows rapidly. These and landing crafts, gun position, camps, the many vehicles, ordinary and amphibious, the

the various apparatus, the supply dumps, along with other sea, air, and surface activity, make Abemama a transformed place, and to the natives this has been wrought as if by magic wand.

6. Liaison with the Occupying Forces.- The Chief Kaubure has been placed in charge of the task of recording the land that is being taken over for military purposes, particularly of the area involved in the air-field. The speed of the operations, and the consequent early destruction of land marks, the removal of villages and the regrouping of natives, impairs the preparation of a completely authoritative record, but I believe that the major problems associated with ownership and areas that might arise later are being obviated. Some problems there are sure to be. The Native Scribe is the principal person in charge of native labour and is keeping a record that will facilitate the payment of wages. A labour company, about 120 strong, has been formed, and is divided into three parties, each in charge of the Scribe or one of his two English-speaking assistants. Much other labour of an incidental character is being employed. The labourers have all won unstinted praise, without exception so far. Payment for labour will be partly in kind, a boon to people long denied soap, cloth, tobacco, and other prized articles. More able-bodied labourers appear likely to be required, but these can be obtained only from further afield. I hope before long to be able to set up a market for native produce. A price list has already been circulated. A shop where natives may purchase articles is happily proposed by the Americans. A joint sanitary effort is in progress. The two interpreters I brought with me from Tarawa are employed at the headquarters of the Island Commander. All help, I think, consistent with common safeguards regarding food supply and the care of persons, has been afforded the occupying troops, and in turn the Island Commander and his Staff have been thoroughly cooperative and thoughtful.

7. The Native Government.- The Native Government, in form and personnel, as restored immediately on my arrival at Abemama, and is now functioning normally, except for matters of revenue and expenditure. Payment of taxes, fines, and salaries must await the restoration of the Colony's financial system. The Japanese varied in their treatment of the Native Government. Early officers gave it their tacit support; later officers were meddlesome; but the last two officers subverted it entirely, and even the burning of every record book was ordered. The Magistrate was finally sent home. Advisors to the Japanese, of which early appointments were made, were then ordered to assume the functions of the Native Government. One of my first acts was to release all prisoners convicted and sentenced in this enemy-sponsored court. I find that the conduct of Tobinabina, the Native Magistrate, during the whole time of the Japanese occupation to have been splendid. He attempted bravely to maintain the fabric of Government, by resisting every order foreign to the Constitution,

Constitution, and remained adamantly faithful to his office and to the service of the people. The natives themselves in their loyalty to the Empire and faith in the outcome of the war were worthy of their Magistrate.

8. Advisors to the Japanese.- The men so appointed were William Reiher, Tekinaiti, Albert Brechtefeld, and George Brechtefeld, and they naturally come under suspicion of having cooperated with the enemy. The natives at first murmured against the last three, but later declared they did not wish to press any complaint. I have dealt with the matter as far as seems necessary and recommend that it be pursued no further. William Reiher has been notable as navigator, carpenter, boat-builder and engineer, and for his sterling character, and also for his strong pro-British sympathies. He appears to have used the authority put upon him as sanely as he could. The other three do not come so well out of the matter, but their defence is one of fear, confusion and coercion. What they did, they say, they dared not do, and the plea is reasonable, according to my inquiries. Tekinaiti is the hereditary high chief of Abemama, a man still youthful in intelligence, and because of that, deficient in common sense, but with no un-British tendencies. The last remark appears true of the two Brechtefelds. Albert Brechtefeld is rather a nonentity. George Brechtefeld's calibre may be judged from a series of boat journeys that he undertook during March, April and May, 1942, by which he rendered a distinct service to Government and the Missions. The start was made from Nonouti. The islands visited in turn were as follows: Kuria, Aranuka, Abemama, Maiana, Tarawa; Maiana again, Kuria again, Abemama again, Nonouti, Tabiteuea, Beru, Nikunau, (Five Catholic Sisters were carried from Tarawa, and two stopped at Nonouti and three at Tabiteuea. The latter would be the sisters seen by me during my aeroplane flight of the 21st August last). From Nikunau, the voyage went on: Beru again, Onotoa, Tabiteuea again, Nonouti again, Abemama for the third time, Kuria for the third time, and finally to rest at Abemama. All travelling was done at night in order to avoid enemy reconnaissance planes. The time of course was that before the Japanese actual occupation of Tarawa and Abemama. The total ocean distance covered was about 1,000 miles. For part of the voyage, George Brechtefeld had William Reiher and Tekinaiti with him. Admiration must extend heartily to these three men, particularly to George Brechtefeld, and respectfully to the five Mission Sisters.

9. Government Records and Equipment.- The Government Station was robbed of its equipment. A few tools have been recovered. There were two office buildings, both rather small. One was removed to the Japanese position, and since has been badly hit by shell fire. It was composed wholly of European materials. The second office, partly of European materials, was given to George Brechtefeld, and removed by him to his home. He has been ordered to return it. The money safe has been

been found but not the key. The Post Office scales have been found, but not the weights. The cancellation stamp is useless. All postage stamps have disappeared, along with £15 of revenue in cash, general revenue. The Magistrate holds £7 of Government money. The rain gauge and rainfall return forms are gone, as are commitment warrants and revenue and expenditure receipt forms. The second but last Japanese commander ordered every Government record book to be burnt, but Native Government officials and the advisors conspired to defeat the order. The following have been collected: Cash Book, Court Minute Book, Birth Register, Deaths Register, Record of Native Government Officials, Court Book, Lands Register, "Babai" Pits Register, Devorce Book, Adoption Book, Prison Register and Bicycle Tax Book.

10. Medical Work and Health.- The Japanese dismissed the dresser, Kontitan, soon after taking over the island, closed the island hospital, and removed the dispensary and its supplies to their position. Titi, a retired dresser, was appointed in Kontitan's place, and thereafter he, along with the Japanese doctor, carried out a small amount of medical work. The island population in the main had to care for itself. The health of the natives by all signs is excellent. There have been no epidemics of any kind, and deaths from natural causes have been quite normal. The birth rate has risen, the Magistrate states. I expected to find many "Yaws" cases, but so far have seen none, a tribute to the intensive salvarsan campaign in the years before 1942. The continued dry weather explains the general good health of the people, together with a sufficiency of native foods. The rainfall was light during 1942, and again this year, but the coco-nut crop shows up as good. Abemama, of course, has been under populated comparatively for many years. The island hospital is in very fair repair, all the dwelling houses having been rethatched during 1941. The dresser, Kontitan, has been re-instated in his hospital, but he can do little at present, beyond acting as caretaker. He has recovered a few surgical instruments. The main military hospital on the island is being established close to the Government Station, which in turn is close to the Island Hospital. I am assured that the main military hospital, along with the first-aid posts, will provide adequately for native medical and surgical needs, until such time as civil provision will be available. The dresser will assist in the main hospital, and will have accommodation reserved for for his own particular work. He will benefit considerably by his greatly enlarged experience.

11. Education.- Church and school have come through well. Churches were not molested, nor the schools, except that the teaching of English was sternly forbidden. This mattered little, as English is not and never has been a compulsory subject in village schools. School materials became very short and conditioned instruction accordingly. The Catholic Training School at Manuku, Abemama, is important within

within the scheme of cooperation for the improvement of native education. It has 30 students, mostly married, in residence, who are drawn from all the islands. The Japanese called on the school for some forced labour, and seized certain equipment and stores, but the European staff managed to keep the current of instruction moving along strongly. The white personnel concentrated at the school consisted of two Priests, three Sisters, and one lay brother. One Sister died, primarily it is believed of malnutrition, and one Father became partly bed-ridden apparently from the same cause. The other members survived light in weight, but still fit and well.

12. I would like to conclude this report, mostly on an historical note: Abemama has a prominent place in the modern history of the Colony, owing to the fact that, on the 27th May, 1892, the Union Jack was hoisted there, and a Protectorate proclaimed over the whole Gilbert Group. The present year therefore is a Jubilee year and would have been fittingly (and profitably) celebrated, among other means, by a special issue of postage stamps. A description of Abemama, three years before the coming of the British flag, is given by Robert Louis Stevenson in Part 4 of his book "In the South Seas". The youth, Te Kop (properly Tekabu), mentioned in Chapter 4 is still alive and lives in Baretoa village. He calls himself Robati (Robert) after Stevenson, as noted by the author. Abemama for some years prior to 1919 was the headquarters of a district. The last District Officer to be stationed at Abemama was Mr Arthur Grimble (now Sir Arthur), now Governor of the Windward Islands. Abemama might well become a headquarters again, when normal conditions return to the Colony, this time of the Resident Commissioner. Its claims consistently advanced for many years in this respect have been greatly strengthened by the events of the last two years.

I have the honour to be,
 Sir,
 Your Honour's obedient servant,

Director of Education and Acting
 District Officer.

Betio.

4th June 1944.

Dear Holland,

I must thank you very much for your cheque for £50 for War Aid- contribution towards the Colony aircraft tender for the Royal Navy.

It is indeed pleasant to meet such generosity.

I think that we have now realised the necessary sum, or very near it. The Ellice Islands alone have given over £1500.

With kind regards, and renewed thanks,

Yours sincerely,

G. L. Hartman

UNITED STATES NAVAL AIR BASE
NAVY NUMBER 809
C/O FLEET POST OFFICE
SAN FRANCISCO, CALIFORNIA

4 November 1944.

To Whom It May Concern:

It is a pleasure to recommend Major F. E. B. Holland for any position of trust to which he may aspire or undertake. This command has observed Major Holland closely as British Resident Commissioner of Abemama, Gilbert Islands, during the period following the recapture of these islands from the Japanese Empire and the occupation thereof by American Military Forces. Major Holland has worked in close harmony and in an admirable spirit of cooperation with us at all times. The command has found him to be, under all circumstances, an honorable gentleman and officer, competent in discharging his duties as an officer of the British Empire, and a gentleman with considerable perception into the requirements of that job. He has been valuable in coordinating the efforts of the native Gilbertese and the American Military Forces. He is a man of keen intellect, and his sense of integrity and his personal honor are above reproach.

THOMAS D. SOUTHWORTH,
Commander, U. S. N. R.,
Commanding.

x British District Officer

UNITED STATES NAVAL AIR BASE
NAVY NUMBER 809
C/O FLEET POST OFFICE
SAN FRANCISCO, CALIFORNIA

4 November 1944.

To Whom It May Concern:

It is a pleasure to recommend Major F. G. L. Holland for any position of trust to which he may aspire or undertake. This command has observed Major Holland closely as British Resident Commissioner^{*} of Abemama, Gilbert Islands, during the period following the recapture of these islands from the Japanese Empire and the occupation thereof by American Military Forces. Major Holland has worked in close harmony and in an admirable spirit of cooperation with us at all times. The command has found him to be, under all circumstances, an honorable gentleman and officer, competent in discharging his duties as an officer of the British Empire, and a gentleman with considerable perception into the requirements of that job. He has been valuable in coordinating the efforts of the native Gilbertese and the American Military Forces. He is a man of keen intellect, and his sense of integrity and his personal honor are above reproach.

Thomas D. Southworth
THOMAS D. SOUTHWORTH,
Commander, U. S. N. R.,
Commanding.

^{*} British District Officer.

UNITED STATES NAVAL AIR BASE
NAVY NUMBER 809
C/O GILBERT POST OFFICE
SAN FRANCISCO, CALIFORNIA

4 November 1944.

To Whom It May Concern:

It is a pleasure to recommend Major F. B. B. Holland for any position of trust to which he may aspire or undertake. This command has observed Major Holland closely as British Resident Commissioner of Abemama, Gilbert Islands, during the period following the recapture of these islands from the Japanese Empire and the occupation thereof by American Military Forces. Major Holland has worked in close harmony and in an admirable spirit of cooperation with us at all times. The command has found him to be, under all circumstances, an honorable gentleman and officer, competent in discharging his duties as an officer of the British Empire, and a gentleman with considerable perception into the requirements of that job. He has been valuable in coordinating the efforts of the native Gilbertese and the American Military Forces. He is a man of keen intellect, and his sense of integrity and his personal honor are above reproach.

THOMAS D. SOUTHWORTH,
Commander, U. S. N. A.,
Commanding.

* British District Officer.

GILBERT AND ELLICE ISLANDS COLONY.
Island of Abemama.
15th November, 1944.

SECRET.

R. C.

No. 70.

Sir,

I have the honour to submit, in reply to your memorandum No. 79 of the 21st October, on the subject of rehabilitation, a report on the situation at Abemama. The last of the garrison on the island was withdrawn two days ago. The remains of the military establishment that may be considered as improvements are the airfield, the pier, and certain roads. In view of possible future commercial and civil requirements the airfield should remain untouched, except for a reduction in size of taxi and dispersal areas; the pier should be maintained in full, as well as the new main road from the airfield and one or two connecting roads. The rest of Abemama affected by the occupying force should be replanted and otherwise restored with all speed.

2. Satisfactory progress has already been made in certain directions. There are seven villages on Abemama. The two in the south were evacuated in December last, partly because of bombing attacks, but mostly because all able-bodied men were required to work in the military area, which was in the north. These two villages, along with the others, had fallen into decay, during the Japanese occupation of the island, and altogether were in a broken-down state, when the inhabitants returned to them last June, at the conclusion of their war work. Full restoration of these two villages was completed some weeks ago. The three central villages had fallen less into disrepair, owing to the fact that the inhabitants continued to live in them, but there was nevertheless much to do. These villages have been properly re-established. One for the first time has now a "maneaba", and another has replaced its diminutive "maneaba" with a full-sized one. The last village on the mainland, that in the north, was early evacuated and became a military stores centre. It suffered severely, and the inhabitants could not be allowed to return home until two weeks ago. Work is going on well with the re-building of ruined houses, and the "maneaba" and latrines will be taken in hand shortly. The seventh village is situated on an isolated islet, untouched by the occupation, and required little more than the normal amount of repairs.

3. The Native Government Station and the Island Hospital have been repaired and enlarged. The Japanese cut down the flagstaff. They removed the Government office and the dispensary to their defensive position, where later they were destroyed by shell fire. An American artillery unit used the hospital wards and some houses of the Government Station, leaving them in a wrecked condition.

A metal

The Secretary to Government,
Gilbert & Ellice Islands Colony,
at Tarawa.

A metal flagstaff now stands on the old plinth, a larger office and a larger dispensary replace those destroyed, and wards and living quarters have been restored, with increased accommodation. Nearly 700 young coco-nut trees have been planted on the two stations, and the adjacent footbridge, 140 yards long, was brought into a state for use again.

4. The island road, 20 miles in length, sustained much damage, during the American occupation. Bulldozers were used to widen 11 miles of it, trees and dirt being thrown to the side. The remainder was much cut up by the heavy traffic. A native repair party has been at work since June, levelling the fairway and removing debris well back to the rear. An avenue of all but five miles of the whole has been completed, with the accompanying advantage in the appearance of the island.

5. The programme of rehabilitation next calls for an immediate start with the re-planting of open areas - camp sites, playing fields, side roads, gun emplacements and storage places. There would appear to be no need in the circumstances to await any military approval before proceeding to this work. Landowners, of course, should be encouraged to share in the planting of coco-nuts, as well as in the re-digging of taro pits. That part of the airfield mentioned in paragraph one might be included, subject to the required permission. Prior to the re-planting operations, there must be completed the considerable task of cleaning up camp sites, some of which, I must add, have been left in a deplorable state, as regards everyday refuse. The scrap but valuable timber left behind must be sorted and removed to the sites of Government stations - Colony Headquarters, Central Hospital, Police and Prisons, and the King George V School.

6. I do not recommend the employment of any special machinery in the land rehabilitation to be done. This will mean that certain levelling operations will never be undertaken, but there would seem to be no noticeable disadvantage in this. Mounds are common enough in other territories. The outstanding thing is that coco-nuts should be properly planted. Men have already been trained in the correct method, as adapted to local resources. It is important to note that most of the coral sand deposited on the island during the last year is actually beneficial to coco-nut growth.

I have the honour to be,
 sir,
 Your obedient servant,
 (Signed) W.G.L. Holland,
 District Officer, Abomana.

Abemama,
Gilbert Islands.
20th November, 1944.

Dear Sir Harry Luke,

My last letter to you was from Tonga. This one is written towards the end of my period of service in this Colony. I had promised to remain on for 12 months after the recovery of the Gilberts, and the year is nearly up. I recently applied for retirement, and the application has been granted. I expect to reach Suva next month and New Zealand shortly afterwards. ~~When~~ Later my wife, Barbara and I will travel to England, and should arrive there about April. That is my present plan, subject to my not being ordered to any other Western Pacific Territory. I came out to the G. & E. in 1920, and have not yet returned to England. It is one of my great wishes to meet you again. There is much to tell you, apart from what follows.

I left Tonga in May, 1943, after a very happy 12 months in that little Kingdom, and went to New Zealand on short leave, but also to select a Principal for the Tonga Agricultural College. This involved much railway travel over the North Island, but I did in the end find a good man, and he has been at work in Tonga for over a year now. In August, I travelled by air to Suva from Auckland, was immediately put into uniform, given the rank of major, and then was flown to Funafuti via Wallis Island. I was to go on to Vaitupu, but while waiting at Funafuti, I ~~voluntarily~~ requested permission for a flight over the Gilbert Islands to observe signs of the Japanese occupation. The plane was a Ventura, and owing to fuel capacity, did not get further north than Tabiteuea. It was a wonderful experience at the time - incidentally the next Ventura to go up was shot down near Beru - and I found that the islands of Tamana, Onotoa, ~~the~~ Tabiteuea and Beru appeared to be normal ~~in all respects~~ - one of the triumphs of British rule - with no Japanese about. The plane flew at 500 feet all the way, which gave me an excellent view of things that had a meaning to those familiar with the scene. My report was subsequently borne out, after the re-capture of Tarawa, Butaritari and Abemama. I went on to Vaitupu in the "John Williams", which had been machine-gunned shortly before, when at Nanumea. It is curious to look back on those days, now that the Japanese have been pushed so far back. Funafuti and Wallis Island were then advanced outposts.

~~After~~ A few days at Vaitupu, and a Patrol Torpedo boat took me back to Funafuti, and next day I left in a Coronado for ~~Honolulu~~, via Wallis Island and Palmyra. Five weeks at Waikiki followed, with daily trips in to Pearl Harbour, where the invasion plan was being developed. Next came a sea journey to Wellington, New Zealand, where I was given two days leave in Auckland, ~~where~~ My wife and Barbara have been in Auckland since you got them away to New Zealand in December, 1941. The next move was to Tarawa, with the attacking force. I expected danger, and there was practically none - for me. Over 40 ships slipped through the channel between Tarawa and Maiana in the darkness, and ~~they~~ were in position before dawn for the assault. And then what ~~was~~ a bombardment, having regard to the ~~small~~ small target area, from sea and air! And of course, what defences, to survive such a concentrated fire! For all this I had a sort of grandstand seat. The Japanese had cut down hundreds of

Hundreds of coco-nut trees on Betio, but shells and bombs that day destroyed thousands, until the islet had under ~~twenty~~ ~~two~~ twenty left. My own ship was shelled early by an 8-inch gun, without result, but the gun was soon after knocked out, as were all the heavy guns. It was the lighter armament, that caused the casualties of which you ~~will know~~ read at the time. I moved to a minesweeper, and then got ashore when the place was safe, though Japanese snipers were still active. I slept in a fox-hole and was very uncomfortable, as the soil kept caving in, owing to the previous ~~blasting~~ stirring up. Before leaving Betio - I did not get to beloved Bairiki - I walked round most of the area. The awful stench from enemy corpses moved one on rapidly, but only to other equally repulsive spots. The scene was most desolate, and the last war gave me nothing approaching it. Few landmarks were left. A part of the wire fence around the lunatic asylum remained. Here on the 15th October, 1942, were decapitated Morgan - the wireless operator who worked with me - Sadd, the L.M.S. clergyman of Beru, and 20 other white people. most of them from the coast-watching units south of Tarawa. A brutal business. The murder of Morgan, in particular, hit me hard. The hospital was gone, but a little of the dispensary was standing, with corpses in it. All the quarters were gone. Tennis court, little trace, District Office, no trace. Everywhere mangled pill boxes, smashed vehicles, riddled ~~aircraft~~ Zero planes, silent siege guns, shell and bomb holes, corpses and - stench. Block houses, with three feet of reinforced concrete, survived the attack, crammed with dead Japanese.

I was moved immediately to Abemama, where I have remained for nearly 12 months, as District Officer and Liaison Officer, plus my own substantive duties. The small enemy force here, 24 in number, conveniently committed suicide the day before we arrived. I have paid visits to Tarawa by air - 30 minutes - and have stayed at Bairiki for a few days. The Japanese did not fortify it nor defend it, but it suffered from air attacks, and worse, much worse from the occupation. Beauty and character have gone, with the loss houses, trees, shrubs, food pits, ~~and so on~~ roads and so on. Thus disappeared the results, less human material, of course, of over 20 years' work, all mine.

The exciting days are now over. Bombing attacks on Abemama ceased with the operations against the Marshalls. Troubles did not cease, as you will know well. With thousands of troops in a native area, and a civil establishment of one officer only - me - work was overwhelming on occasions. However I was spared one thing. At Tarawa and Butaritari, natives agitated for American rule. Only some of course. This did not occur at Abemama, either with the local people, or with the labour brought in. On the contrary, loyalty to the old ~~regime~~ regime became more vocal. This has lent joy to my final period in the colony. I have written strongly from the beginning that Abemama should become Colony Headquarters, and learned recently that general opinion had come round to this view.

I do hope I shall have the luck to meet you again, sir.

COLONY OF FIJI,
Rambi Island.
6th February, 1947.

Confidential

The Pensions Advocate,
Dept. of Veterans Affairs,
Shaughnessy Hospital,
Vancouver, B.C.,
CANADA.

Sir,

With reference to your letter of 19th September, 1946, on the subject of Anton Pettersen (Petersen), late 3rd mate of the s.s. "Donerail", I have to inform you that I am not at liberty to divulge any part of the statement made to me at Tarawa on the 20th February, 1942, by Mr Petersen. If a copy of this statement is required officially, it can be obtained on application to the High Commissioner for the Western Pacific, Suva, Fiji, by the Canadian Authorities concerned.

2. I am able however to forward the following, taken from my notes made at Tarawa on the arrival there of the lifeboat of the s.s. "Donerail". Firstly, there are the matters reported to me by the survivors: The "Donerail" was sunk on the 9th December, 1941, by gunfire from a Japanese submarine, south-east of Hawaii. One lifeboat much damaged got away with 24 persons. For the first 24 hours, the boat was actually submerged, but held up from sinking further by the air tanks. Sharks attracted by blood from the wounded men had to be beaten off with oars. One shark actually swam into the boat, so much below water was it. The holes in the boat were plugged with clothing, and the water was slowly baled out, though during the weeks that followed the boat made over a foot of water a day.

3. No chronometer and no sextant. Course north-west for $4\frac{1}{2}$ days in attempt to reach Hawaii. The attempt failed because of adverse winds, so the boat was allowed to drift in the general direction of the Gilbert Islands. No land sighted. Fifteen men died during the voyage from the effects of wounds and privations, and the captain was swept overboard during a storm and drowned. A bottle of iodine formed the whole medical supply. Food consisted of about 30 lbs of biscuits, which however were spoiled by salt water while the boat was submerged, two bottles of vitamin tablets, 40 tins of milk, and such flying fish as leaped into the boat. Two coco-nuts floated alongside on Christmas Day, and at another time shell fish were taken from a drifting log of wood. Rain fell constantly and though uncomfortable this gave sufficient drinking water. Distance covered about 3,000 miles. Time 38 days.

4. Secondly, there are the matters actually observed by myself. The lifeboat of the "Donerail" came ashore at Tarawa, Gilbert Islands, not far from my house, on the 17th January, 1942. There were eight men in the boat, namely, Karl Gejl, Chief Officer, Anthon Petersen, third officer, Aage Christensen, second engineer, Sigfred Bruun, wireless

officer, Erik Hjersted, seaman, Murray Chambers, seaman, Kaare Solberg, oiler, Erling Kanstrup, cook. The names are spelled as then taken down. All were emaciated and very weak, and needed considerable attention. Petersen was in the worst shape, as he had a wounded finger which had become gangrenous. The finger later was amputated, at the second joint. I had the lifeboat pulled up on the shore, against the advice of the Chief Officer, who declared it could never be made seaworthy. It was badly holed and buckled. The holes, some of them fist size, had been stopped with bits of oar wrapped in cloth. The Europeans on Tarawa, themselves desperate to escape from Japanese control, decided that the boat was beyond repair. Later however repairs were taken in hand and successfully completed, and the boat towed by a launch made possible the get-away from Tarawa. This was on the 27th February, 1942. On the 9th March, we transferred to the ship "Degei", and arrived in Suva, Fiji, on the 18th March.

5. I may add that I can well understand Mr Petersen's continued disability. The circumstances under report were terrible enough - 24 wounded men in a shell-riddled boat, 16 of them lost during the voyage; the nearest land following the wind thousands of miles away, and the prospect of hitting it remote; the prospect of rescue at sea even more remote; hunger endured for weeks, tropical heat by day, and tropical rains at night. But there were other things to affect a man of Mr Petersen's sensibility. I had two month's association with the survivors of the "Donerail". I found Mr Petersen a man of character and fine fibre. Not so his companions. Most of them, although under the deepest obligation, proved ungrateful, unhelpful and animal in outlook. There had been therefore for Mr Petersen thirty-eight days of misery aggravated to its depths by a most unfortunate companionship.

Yours faithfully,

(Signed) F.G.L. Holland,

Administrative Officer, Fiji, and
late Director of Education, Gilbert
and Ellice Islands Colony.

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