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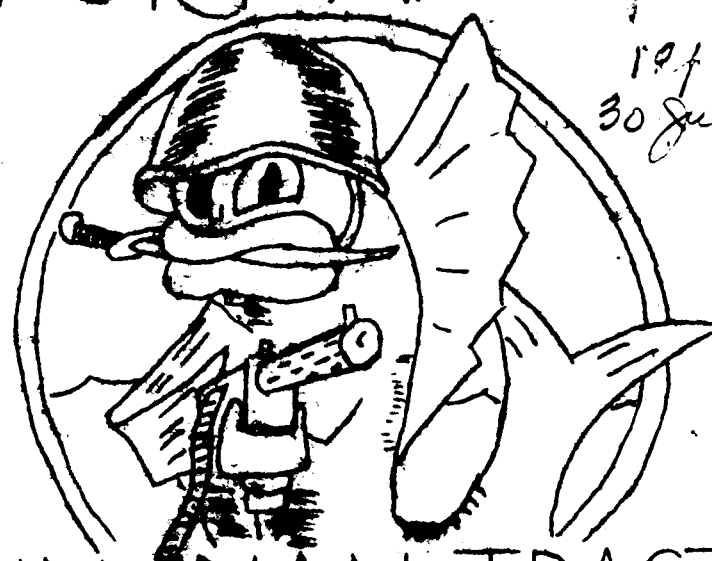
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ACTION AGAINST THE ENEMY REPORT AFTER

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728 AMPHIBIAN TRACTOR BN RYUKYUS CAMPAIGN

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Encl #1

HEADQUARTERS SEVENTH INFANTRY DIVISION
Office of the Commanding General
APC 7

SECRET

7 July 1945

SUBJECT: Commendation.

TO : Commanding Officer
728th Amphibian Tractor Battalion

1. On behalf of the officers and men of the 7th Infantry Division, I take great pleasure in expressing my appreciation to you and your men for their outstanding cooperation and performance of duty during the campaign on Okinawa. Every task assigned was performed without stress or confusion, and in defending extensive coastal areas in rear of the Division, this battalion made an important contribution to the success of Division Operations.

2. I congratulate you on a job well done, and wish to express the hope that we will be associated again on some future operation.

/s/ A. V. Arnold
A. V. ARNOLD
Major General, U.S.A.
Commanding

CLASSIFICATION CHANGED TO
~~SECRET~~
BY AUTHORITY OF THE
H. G. ...
DOWNGRADING COMMITTEE

728-466

17506

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HEADQUARTERS 728TH AMPHIBIAN TRACTOR BATTALION
APO 26, c/o POSTMASTER
SAN-FRANCISCO, CALIFORNIA

15 July 1945

ACTION AGAINST THE ENEMY, REPORT AFTER
RYUKYUS CAMPAIGN
1 April 1945 - 30 June 1945

Frederic B. Mann
FREDERIC B. MANN
Lieutenant Colonel, Field Artillery
Commanding

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REPORT OF ACTION AGAINST THE ENEMY

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REPORT OF ACTION AGAINST THE ENEMY

CHAPTER I

PURPOSE OF THE REPORT AND SYNOPSIS OF MISSIONS ASSIGNED

1. This report covers the activities of the 728th Amphibian Tractor Battalion in the RYUKYUS CAMPAIGN during the period 010730I April 1945 to 302400I June 1945.

The purpose of submission is to provide an accurate, factual account of the operation of this battalion and its execution of the missions assigned throughout the campaign as a basis for study and source of information for higher headquarters. A further purpose is to provide a vehicle for the various staff section of this battalion to make recommendations and suggestions for incorporation in the plans for pending operations.

2. The missions assigned this battalion throughout the RYUKYUS CAMPAIGN were many and varied. For the purposes of clarity, these missions are summarized below:

- a. Authority: FO No. 12, dated 8 March 1945, Hq. 96th Inf. Div:

At H-Hour on L-Day transport two assault BLTs of RCT 381, landing on WHITE BEACHES, rally at sea, transfer and land Res BLT of RCT 381 on WHITE BEACHES. Be prepared to land Res RCT on WHITE BEACHES and/or engage in ship to shore lighterage under SP control.

- b. Authority: VOCC, 1122d Engr Combat Group (Shore Party), 1 April 1945:

Engage in ship to shore lighterage with all possible vehicles, move troops and cargo directly to beach dumps, tow pallets and vehicles over coral reef.

- c. Authority: Opn Plan 27th Inf Div, dated 10 April 1945:

At George Hour on Queen Day transport one BLT of RCT 105, landing on Beach Three, TSUGEN JIMA, RYUKYU RETTO; move inland to Tractor Control Line, discharge troops and rally offshore.

- d. Authority: FO No. 47, XXIV Corps and FO No. 2, 20th Armored Group dated 16 April 1945:

All units within the assigned sector of the 728th Amph Trac Bn will be coordinated by the CC 728th Amph Trac Bn for defense against amphibious, airborne, ground attack or any combination thereof; will render useless caves and enemy defense works in the immediate vicinity of their bivouac areas and destroy all hostile infiltrators encountered. The 728th Amph Trac Bn will daily patrol the entire sector.

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- e. Authority: XXIV Corps Order and FO No. 25, 20th Armored Group, dated 22 April 1945:

Battalion (-) will move by LVT convoy to assembly area KATCHIN HANTO, OKINAWA JIMA, RYUKYU RETTO, execute reconnaissance in force of TSUGEN JIMA, RYUKYU RETTO, mop up and render useless caves and defensive positions, destroy enemy encountered.

- f. Authority: VCOG, 7th Inf Div, dated 22 May 1945:

Defend beaches on East coast of OKINAWA JIMA, RYUKYU RETTO, in the 7th Inf Div zone of action from enemy amphibious landing, protect the Div left (East) flank.

- g. Authority: VCOG, 7th Inf Div, 8 June 1945:

Continue mission of beach defense, make all possible LVTs available for logistical utilization by Div elements.

- h. Authority: FO No. 40, 7th Inf Div, dated 10 June 1945, as amended by Cpn. Overlay, dated 12 June 1945:

Continue present missions of beach defense and furnishing of LVTs for logistical utilization; patrol daily the assigned sector of 7th Inf Div zone of action; mop up and render useless caves and defensive works within assigned zone, destroy enemy encountered; bury enemy dead.

- i. Authority: FO No. 42, 7th Inf Div, dated 23 June 1945:

Relief from present mission of beach defense, continue mission of furnishing LVTs for supply purposes, sweep assigned sector of 7th Inf Div zone of action, establish ambushes and road blocks along Div North boundary to prevent movement of hostile troops to the North.

3. For this campaign the battalion was attached initially to the 96th Inf Div per Annex 1, FO No. 45, XXIV Corps, dated 8 February 1945. Immediately upon completion of the assault landing, battalion reverted to 20th Armored Group, attached for operational control to the 1122d Engr Combat Bn on 1 April 1945. On 7 April 1945 attached by VCOG, XXIV Corps to the 27th Inf Div for landing on TSUGEN JIMA, RYUKYU RETTO. On 14 April 1945 upon return from the TSUGEN JIMA, RYUKYU RETTO operation, battalion reverted to 20th Armored Group control per VCOG, XXIV Corps. Attached to 7th Inf Div also per VCOG, XXIV on 20 May 1945. Relieved from attachment to 7th Inf Div and attached to 96th Inf Div on 2 July 1945 per Operational Priority message dated 30 June 1945 from Hq XXIV Corps.

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CHAPTER II

ORGANIZATION

1. The battalion is organized in accordance with T/O&E 17-125, 126, & 127 dated 29 April 1944 as amended by C #1 19 Aug 1944. Upon departure from staging area, battalion was within two EM of full T/O strength. Although 119 LVTs are authorized, only 93 were used on the operation because of limitations of shipping space and were organized as follows:

Headquarters and Headquarters and Service Company

1 LVT	-	Bn Commander and S-2
1 LVT	-	Bn Executive and S-3
1 LVT	-	Communications and Med. Det.
2 LVTs	-	Bn. Maintenance

Each of two lettered companies (A and B)

1 LVT	-	Co Commander
2 LVTs	-	Co. Maintenance
14 LVTs	-	1st platoon
14 LVTs	-	2d platoon
13 LVTs	-	3d platoon

2. Operational organization. - During initial landing phase all LVTs were utilized. Each lettered company landed an assault BLT. Companies were organized with 13 LVTs in each platoon, 2 LVTs in Company Hq. and 2 in Company Maintenance. The remaining LVT was attached to Div. Artillery for initial ammunition supply. The 2 LVTs in Company Hq. carried the BLT Comdr. and part, accompanied by the LVT Company Comdr. The Bn. Maintenance LVTs and combined Commo and Medical LVT followed the last wave. The Bn Executive proceeded to and marked the rally position which was to be afloat. The Bn. Comdr. supervised the landing and landed with the 3rd wave. Hq. Commandant, Bn. S-1, and Bn. S-4 were assigned as Liaison Officers with the respective Beachmasters and Bn S-3 was assigned as Liaison Officer with the Naval Control Officer. When initial landing phase was completed, Officers used as Liaison reverted to their normal organization and LVTs to the organization shown in par. 1.

3. Communications organization. - This Bn. was assigned three FM frequencies and one AM frequency. One FM frequency was assigned to each lettered company and the remaining frequency to Bn. Company Comdrs. operated in both Company and Bn. nets. Bn. operated in Bn. and Group nets. Liaison Officers operated in Bn. net with SCR 509. The AM frequency was not used as the Bn. has only one AM set. This set was in the Div G-2 net as a listening station except for emergencies. After landing radio communication was largely replaced by telephone and the Bn. was reduced to one radio frequency. Bn. and Group nets operated throughout the campaign.

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CHAPTER III

PRELIMINARY PLANNING

1. Planning for the invasion of OKINAWA JIMA, RYUKYU RETTO started with the attachment of this Battalion to the 96th Inf. Div. The first preliminary planning meeting was called for 1 March 1945 and was attended by the Bn. CO and Bn S-3. During the meeting tentative overall plans were discussed by Div. G-3 and problems regarding loading, placing of LVTs on LSTs, loading of assault elements and vehicle priorities were covered.

On 3 March 1945 a second meeting was held with the Div. G-3 and representatives of all assault RCTs, again attended by the Bn CO and S-3. More detailed study of individual needs was made, with this Bn's representatives making several suggestions for minor changes in loading to facilitate the functioning of assault troops.

On 4 March 1945, Bn S-3 contacted staffs of both BLTs to be transported, ironing out small difficulties which had arisen, making complete and detailed plans to cover all contingencies.

On 5 March 1945 the Bn CO and S-3 attended meeting with the Div. G-3 and Naval Flotilla Staff in which the Naval plan was dovetailed with the Div. plan and the entire operation discussed in detail and at length to insure the complete understanding between Naval and Land forces. Arrangements made by Bn S-3 for Naval Staff to visit the 728th Amph Trac Bn for demonstration of the Naval phase of the landing.

On 7 March 1945, the Bn CO and S-3 attended meeting with the Div. General Officers, complete RCT Staffs, all Bn Comdrs, Air and Naval representatives in which the entire scheme of landing and maneuver was discussed with the Air Officer and Naval Gunfire Officer giving their respective accounts of the part to be played by their forces.

Practice landing was discussed at length and Field Orders for both practice and actual landing were disseminated, together with maps and other Intelligence papers of interest to troops.

During the above period of staff meetings, the various elements of this command had been given sufficient information to execute preliminary planning although the target nor the actual dates of loading were not announced. Extensive maintenance work was done on a rigid schedule and assault equipment was cleaned, maintained, waterproofed and crated.

Unit Personnel and Tonnage Tables, Cargo Manifests were prepared, checked and rechecked against actual shipping, changed to conform with modifications in plans received from Div Hq and finally submitted for approval.

Company Commanders were informed of the pending practice run and were issued, on 7 March 1945, the Bn Rehearsal FO #1A covering the practice landing. Scheduled briefings were held for troops daily, together with final classes on vital subjects.

During the period 8-12 March 1945, almost daily meetings were held between the Staff sections of the assault RCT and BLTs and this Bn Staff to keep constantly informed of all changes in plans and to promptly settle newly developed problems as they arose.

On 13 March 1945 Commodore Richardson and Lt Senior Grade Trappe of the Naval Staff arrived in accordance with previous plans and held an interesting and thorough briefing for all Officers, NOOs and Vehicle Commanders using models and covering the entire Naval plan.

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On 14 March 1945 further changes were made in the number of LVTs to be lifted with assault shipping which necessitated further meetings with Div and RCT staffs, and the preparation of New UP&T Tables.

Bn engaged in practice landing during the period 14-19 March 1945, making two assault runs on the beaches, remaining ashore on the 19th to complete maintenance of vehicles, further briefing of troops and critiques of both landing exercises.

Embarked at 1500 21 March 1945 enroute to OKINAWA JMA, RYUKYU RETTO.

2. Specific details covered in the planning are discussed under the proper headings in the following sub-paragraphs:

a. S-1 activities.

Unit was brought to strength of 478 EM, 2 WO, and 22 Officers prior to leaving for the target. Passenger lists were prepared for the troops of this command according to personnel loading tables outlined by S-3.

b. S-2 activities.

The Battalion Intelligence section was not called upon to obtain new Intelligence information. Intelligence information prepared by higher headquarters was secured from all possible sources, maps were drawn, monographs, tide tables, reef studies and some aerial photographs were made available for study. All of the above material was divided into six equal groups and issued still sealed, one group per LST, to be opened upon departure for objective area.

c. S-3 activities.

Preliminary planning was accomplished through joint meetings with Naval, Division, RCT, and BLT staffs. Thorough studies of higher units plans and requirements were incorporated into an operational plan which evolved into FO #1 ABLE. Unit Personnel and Tonnage tables, and Cargo Manifests were prepared and submitted to higher headquarters. Personnel loading tables, vehicle loading tables and cargo loading tables were drawn up and when approved, disseminated to the companies. Almost daily, bulletins and memorandums were issued to keep all troops informed of the latest changes in loading and in the tactical plan. A thorough program of intensified maintenance and training was published together with a scheduled series of briefings which culminated in a complete briefing of both officers and troops by members of the Bn. Staff and Naval Flotilla Staff.

Information relative to the practice landings was disseminated by means of Rehearsal FO and scheduled critiques were held at the termination of the landing exercise. Constant checks were maintained with S-2 for the procurement of Intelligence material; with S-1 for the preparation of passenger lists and with S-4 for the status of equipment and vehicles. Daily reports of progress were made to the Bn CO.

d. S-4 activities.

Normal supply functions to include supervision of marking and crating equipment and delivery to loading slots.

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CHAPTER IV

TRAINING PHASE AND REHEARSALS

1. Training Phase.

Upon being informed of the pending operation, the normal training program was intensified to include all required subjects plus those which it was believed would be the most valuable. A breakdown of the specialized training follows:

Scouting	12 hours
Patrolling	24 hours
Radio Procedure	8 hours
Ambushes	12 hours
Hygiene	2 hours
Malaria Control	2 hours
Marksmanship (land)	20 hours
Marksmanship (water)	20 hours
Water Driving	20 hours
Ship to Shore Operation	12 hours
Maintenance	120 hours
Athletics	24 hours
Swimming	20 hours
First Aid	8 hours
I&E	12 hours.

2. Rehearsals.

Battalion participated in landing exercises 1 and 2 which consisted of the following:

LEX #1.

- 1st day - Transport groups loaded with assault troops moved from anchorages to their transport areas, conducting AA firing enroute. Tractor groups (LSTs with LVTs aboard) moved to LST areas.
- 2d day - Transport and tractor groups made daylight approach against beaches; control vessels and gunboats formed LD, made dummy firing runs. Tractor groups conducted AA firing practice.
- 3d day - Transport and tractor groups took positions, discharged troops and made full scale landing of assault RCT with gunfire support ships and aircraft simulating support. Reserve RCT boated and taken to LD but not landed. Dummy cargo landed. Troops reembarked in the afternoon.

LEX #2.

- 4th day - Destroyers of fire support units conducted AA firing exercises. Critiques were held on all ships.
- 5th day - Tractor groups conducted AA firing. Briefings were held aboard ship.
- 6th day - Same program as 3d day except reserve RCT was landed. Problem ended at 1400 with Division troops being reembarked. Tractors remained ashore for further critiques and maintenance.

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CHAPTER V
LOADING AND EMBARKATION
CHAPTER VI

MOVEMENT TO AND ARRIVAL AT OBJECTIVE AREA

(These chapters, prescribed by Operational Directive #10, Hq. 10th Army, are combined since loading movements and arrival data are complex and closely related.)

1. Assault echelon.

Organizational and other combat equipment destined for shipment aboard LSTs or AKE were moved by organic transportation from company areas to designated loading slots upon call from the respective TQMs. This organization delivered its equipment properly waterproofed, boxes and banded with authorized markings to the DULAG and SAN ROQUE, LEYTE, P.I. loading slots. Wheeled vehicles were to be lifted aboard the USS Capricornus (AK 57) and were delivered waterproofed and in first class maintenance condition to the loading slot on call.

LSTs upon loading organizational and bulk cargo and assault troops moved to anchorages offshore in the vicinity of the battalion bivouac area and by means of blinker signals indicated their readiness to receive LVTs aboard. LVTs loaded with battalion personnel and equipment which was needed until the last moment travelled to the LSTs and were taken aboard.

This procedure of loading LVTs aboard LSTs was accomplished for the landing exercises (rehearsal) and for the final embarkation.

2. Rear echelon.

Organizational equipment and wheeled vehicles not lifted with assault shipping together with personnel to handle and guard same, were assembled at a designated area for consolidation aboard rear echelon shipping. Prior to departure the Bn S-3 arranged for the necessary troop and cargo space aboard rear echelon shipping.

3. Movement and arrival at objective area.

Upon loading in LEYTE GULF, LEYTE, P.I., tractor group EASY aboard which this organization's LVTs were loaded moved to anchorages at TACLOBAN, LEYTE, P.I. to take on additional ship's stores, water and fuel. On the 22 March 1945 convoy composed of several tractor groups and escorting vessels departed the PHILIPPINE ISLANDS enroute to the objective area. Upon leaving TACLOBAN, LEYTE, P.I., the last port of call, officers were permitted to open sealed maps and field orders and announce the target to the troops.

Daily periods of instruction as outlined in operational memorandums attached to the FOs were held aboard all vessels and included detailed briefings on the beaches to be assaulted, refresher courses in military subjects, orientation meetings and exercises.

The journey from the PHILIPPINE ISLANDS was uneventful and free from enemy action but the weather was cloudy and the seas rough, resulting in a good proportion of motion sickness. The morning of 30 March 1945 dawned clear and with quiet seas, with a consequent improvement in health and morale of troops aboard.

Tractor Group EASY began their approach to the LST area off OKINAWA JIMA, RYUKYU RETTO during the hours of darkness arriving in position and discharging combat loaded LVTs at 0720 1 April 1945. Upon discharging all LVTs, the LSTs with the exception of those designated as hospital ships withdrew to a rendezvous area at sea.

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CHAPTER VII

ASSAULT PHASE

1. Upon arrival in the objective area the battalion debarked from LSTs at 0720I 1 April 1945 with LVTs loaded with assault troops. CO A, 728th Amph Trac Bn, transported BLT 381/1 landing in six waves on BEACHES WHITE 2 & 3. CO B, 728th Amph Trac Bn, transported 381/3 landing in six waves on BEACH WHITE 1.

Tractor waves formed quickly and without confusion behind tank wave, immediately to seaward of the line of departure marked by the control boats. Waves were dispatched by flag signals from the control boat, and landed on their designated beaches on schedule. The beaches were not defended by the enemy.

Immediately after discharging assault troops all vehicles assembled off shore and proceeded to form transfer waves of 8 LVTs each for the transfer of boated troops of the reserve BLT. The transfer was made on call from the Naval Control Officer and was dispatched by the Naval Control Officer on order of the RCT Comdr.

Upon completion of landing of the reserve BLT, LVTs used in the transfer again assembled in the battalion rendezvous area at sea and prepared to engage in ship-to-shore lighterage. Battalion Liaison Officers had gone ashore, contacted shore parties on all beaches, established communications with Bn Hq. and prepared to call for LVTs as needed by the respective beachmasters.

Battalion immediately dispatched required LVTs to S-3 aboard control boat and liaison officers with beachmasters, then with the remaining vehicles proceeded ashore to designated bivouac area.

Initially the majority of LVTs were utilized at the transfer line in the vicinity of the control boat and transferred cargo by hand from LCVPs to LVTs and then to inland beach dumps. Other LVTs working under beachmasters engaged in unloading larger ships and towing hundreds of motor vehicles which were swamped while unloading from LCMS. All LVTs were operational and all were in use.

At approximately 1500I on L-Day, the Battalion furnished additional LVTs to transfer the reserve RCT from LCVPs, form waves, and land on beaches. LVTs thus utilized upon completion of this mission returned at once to lighterage.

With the arrival of a crane barge on L-1 hand transfer of cargo was decreased although used to supplement the crane which could not handle the flow of supplies. Considerable difficulty and delay was caused by the fact that beach dumps could be reached only by narrow one way roads and were insufficiently furnished with equipment and personnel to unload tractors as fast as they arrived. This caused congestion at the dumps in which at times as many as 17 fully loaded LVTs remained in line awaiting their turn to enter dumps and unload. This condition was corrected in later operations.

The Battalion continued ship-to-shore lighterage under shore party control utilizing additional Naval crane barges, and hand transfers, with every LVT remaining in operation until dark when unloading operations ceased. A reef patrol consisting of several LVTs augmented by amphibian

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tanks covered the reef area throughout the night, to guard against counter amphibious landing and swimmers attempting to damage larger vessels.

Identical operations and reef patrols were engaged in with all available LVTs working from the battalion pool each day until 070100I April 1945 when verbal orders were received from XXIV Corps to suspend unloading operations and make ready for a landing on TSUGEN JIMA, RYUKYU RETTO, off the East coast of OKINAWA JIMA, RYUKYU RETTO. Intensive maintenance program was immediately adopted and although the unit to be transported could not be contacted as they were at KERRANA RETTO, all possible information of the target was assembled, evaluated, and disseminated.

At 080900I April 1945 Battalion reembarked aboard six LSTs and were so loaded that each company could operate independently of the other. Contact was made at KERRANA RETTO with the unit to be transported, orders were issued, assault troops transferred from APs to assault LSTs and all participating troops briefed. Co. B was selected to make the landing which was to involve only one BLT and Co. A was to return to OKINAWA JIMA, RYUKYU RETTO and again engage in unloading over FAGUSHI BEACHES.

At 100630I April 1945 Co B with elements of the Bn Staff and Maintenance sections disembarked from three LSTs transporting assault troops of the 3d Bn, 105th Inf of the 27th Inf Div, formed into waves and were dispatched toward the beach by the Naval Control boat. First wave of amphibian tanks landed on Beach No. 3 on the South coast of TSUGEN JIMA, RYUKYU RETTO at 0841I and the last tractor wave at 0856I. Light mortar and heavy small arms fire was received coming in to the beach. The steep bank provided good cover for unloading troops. LVTs immediately assembled off shore awaiting instructions. One LVT was sunk from enemy action, no personnel casualties received. During the assault phase, all LVTs supported both tanks and infantry by heavy MG fire knocking out several prepared enemy positions.

As LCVPs were able to land directly on the beach, the LVTs were not needed for hauling of supplies and the Bn CO made a reconnaissance for positions and ordered B CO to land on the Southeastern quarter of the island. No enemy fire was received while occupying these positions. At 1500I orders were received to reembark LVTs for return to OKINAWA JIMA, RYUKYU RETTO. Heavy mortar fire was received by the last platoon of LVTs to leave the island. Reembarking was accomplished without incident.

Battalion returned on 13 April 1945 to OKINAWA JIMA, RYUKYU RETTO and immediately resumed unloading across WHITE and ORANGE BEACHES with an average of 20 LVTs daily. This unloading continued until 16 May 1945 when the battalion received orders to cease unloading activities.

At 160403I April 1945, four aerial bombs dropped from an enemy plane landed in Bn Maintenance area, killing four EM and wounding 16 EM, 1 WO and 1 Officer. One LVT was completely destroyed and several others badly damaged by bomb fragments and flying debris.

At 160900I Bn was assigned the additional mission of daily patrolling a large sector of the Corps Service Area, and coordinating all units within that sector of the Corps Service Area for defense against amphibious, vertical and ground attack. This was accomplished and orders issued assigning responsibilities to all units.

At 221020I April 1945 instructions were received to continue unloading operations with one company and prepare the other company to return to TSUGEN JIMA, RYUKYU RETTO, to execute a reconnaissance in force.

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CO. B was chosen to execute the reconnaissance in force, due to their familiarity with the terrain. CO A was selected to remain in their present position and continue unloading activities. CO B mounted in 17 LVTs, prepared to fight on foot, plus elements of Bn Command Group, Maintenance and Med. Det. departed on overland movement to assembly positions on KATCHIN HANTO, OKINAWA JIMA, RYUKYU RETTO.

At 230615I April 1945 CO B (reinforced) and supported by CO B, 780th Amph Tank Bn departed from KATCHIN HANTO, OKINAWA JIMA, RYUKYU RETTO on a shore to shore movement to TSUGEN JIMA, RYUKYU RETTO, and assembled off the North beach in two waves. CO B, 780th Amph Tank Bn (- 1 plat.) made up the first wave and CO B, 728th Amph Trac Bn (reinforced) made up the second wave. One platoon of Amph Tanks moved down the West coast of TSUGEN JIMA, RYUKYU RETTO as a diversionary force with the additional mission of furnishing supporting fire on call. The main force landed on order of the Bn CO, 728th Amph Trac Bn with the 1st wave hitting the beach at 231000I. Tanks and tractors moved inland 800 yds without opposition where an undefended anti-tank ditch and mine field were encountered. A gap thru the minefield and ditch was cleared and CO B, 780th Amph Tank Bn (-) passed thru and took up supporting positions. In the meantime CO B, 728th Amph Trac Bn formed skirmish lines and advanced with two platoons abreast, one in reserve, against the town of TSUGEN and the fortified hills beyond. Troops advanced rapidly through the village against light opposition encountering sniper and machine gun fire. Two strong points containing HMGs and LMGs and riflemen were developed, flanked and destroyed. Demolitions teams worked throughout the entire assault blasting caves, destroying installations and materiel. The sweep to the South end of the island was completed and the island declared secure at 1520I. Task force departed enroute to OKINAWA JIMA, RYUKYU RETTO and base camp at 1643I.

The Battalion again engaged in unloading activities using both companies with the exception of one platoon, CO B, which returned to TSUGEN JIMA, RYUKYU RETTO on 25 April 1945 equipped with large quantities of demolitions materiel and completed sealing caves, destroying defensive installations and materiel.

At 161645I May 1945, orders were received to cease unloading operations and commence rehabilitation of vehicles and equipment.

At 191000I May 1945, orders for movement to the East coast on a beach defense mission were received. Plans were made, orders were issued and the movement completed with the battalion assembled on the East coast in the vicinity of OUKI (TA 8574D). Orders were received attaching the Bn to the 7th Inf Div, who were in Corps reserve, for their pending attack against YONABARU, OKINAWA JIMA, RYUKYU RETTO. The Battalion was assigned the mission of defending the beaches in the 7th Inf Div zone of action against enemy amphibious attack, protecting the left (East) flank of the Division. This plan called for the extension of our defensive line forward as the infantry advanced, placing elements of this command abreast of the attacking infantry and tying in our defenses each night with their most advanced positions. At 220630I May 1945 the attack was launched and this battalion began execution of its mission, advancing abreast of the infantry, securing their flank from attack. As the attack progressed, considerable artillery, mortar and small arms fire was received by our leading elements during the hours of darkness, and many enemy swimmers and infiltrators destroyed.

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The Battalion continued on this mission advancing with the infantry until our defensive line extended 7000 yards along the beach (see map A atchd), whereupon the attack swung inland. Upon the capture of YONABARU, OKINAWA JIMA, RYUKYU RETTO, the Battalion was assigned the additional mission of patrolling assigned area and furnishing LVTs for logistical utilization by Division elements, both at YONABARU, OKINAWA JIMA, RYUKYU RETTO, and, after its capture, at MINATOGA, OKINAWA JIMA, RYUKYU RETTO.

At 241500I June 1945, relieved of beach defense mission, assigned new mission of establishing area block and ambushes along Division North boundary to prevent movement of hostile troops to the North during the Division mop-up. The Bn also was assigned an area of responsibility for mop up. Co. D, 776th Amph Tank Bn, was attached for operational control. Orders were issued and positions were occupied 251130I June 1945 and the execution of newly assigned missions begun. The mop up was completed 30 June 1945. For positions at the close of campaign, see map B, attached.

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Annex #1 to Chapter VII - Assault Phase.

MAP A

RYUKYU RETTO, 1:25,000

SHOWING DISPOSITION OF TROOPS
ON BEACH DEFENSE

-12-

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16

NISHIBARA-MURA

YONABARU AIRFIELD

BEACH ORANGE
BEACH ORANGE

BEACH ORANGE NO. B-1

BEACH BLACK NO. B-3

Yonabaru-wan

BEACH BLACK NO. B-2

BEACH BLACK NO. B-1

BEACH PURPLE NO. A-2

BEACH ORANGE
NO. A-2

BEACH ORANGE
NO. A-1

SASHIKI-MURA

Kuharu

Naha

Kibaru

Koshukai

Yonabaru
(Yonahara)

Yonabaru-ko

Ritai

Tsuwonuku
(Baten)

Okota
(Kozu)

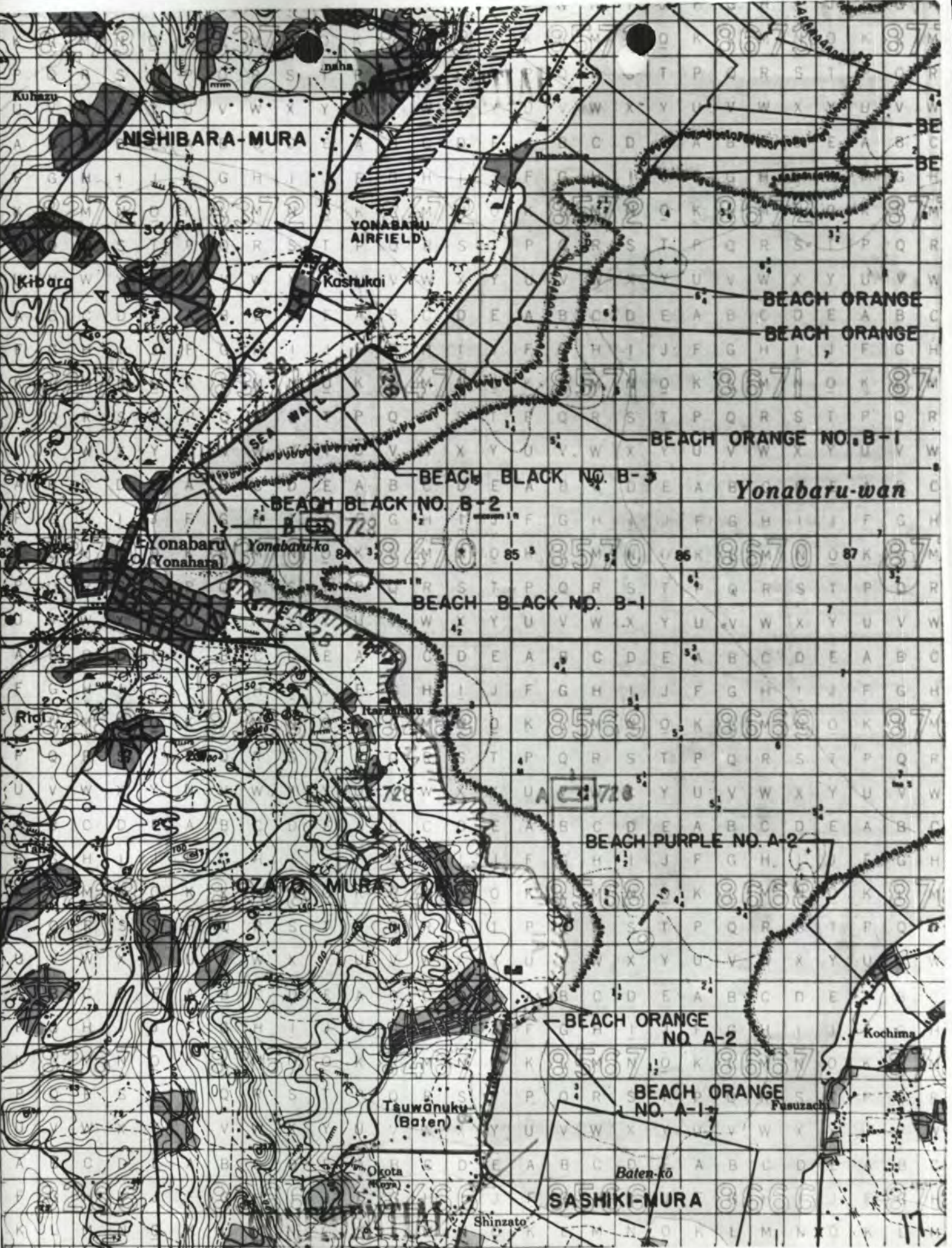
Shinzato

Baten-ko

Kochima

Fusuzachi

OZU-MURA



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Annex #2 to Chapter VII - Assault Phase.

MAP B

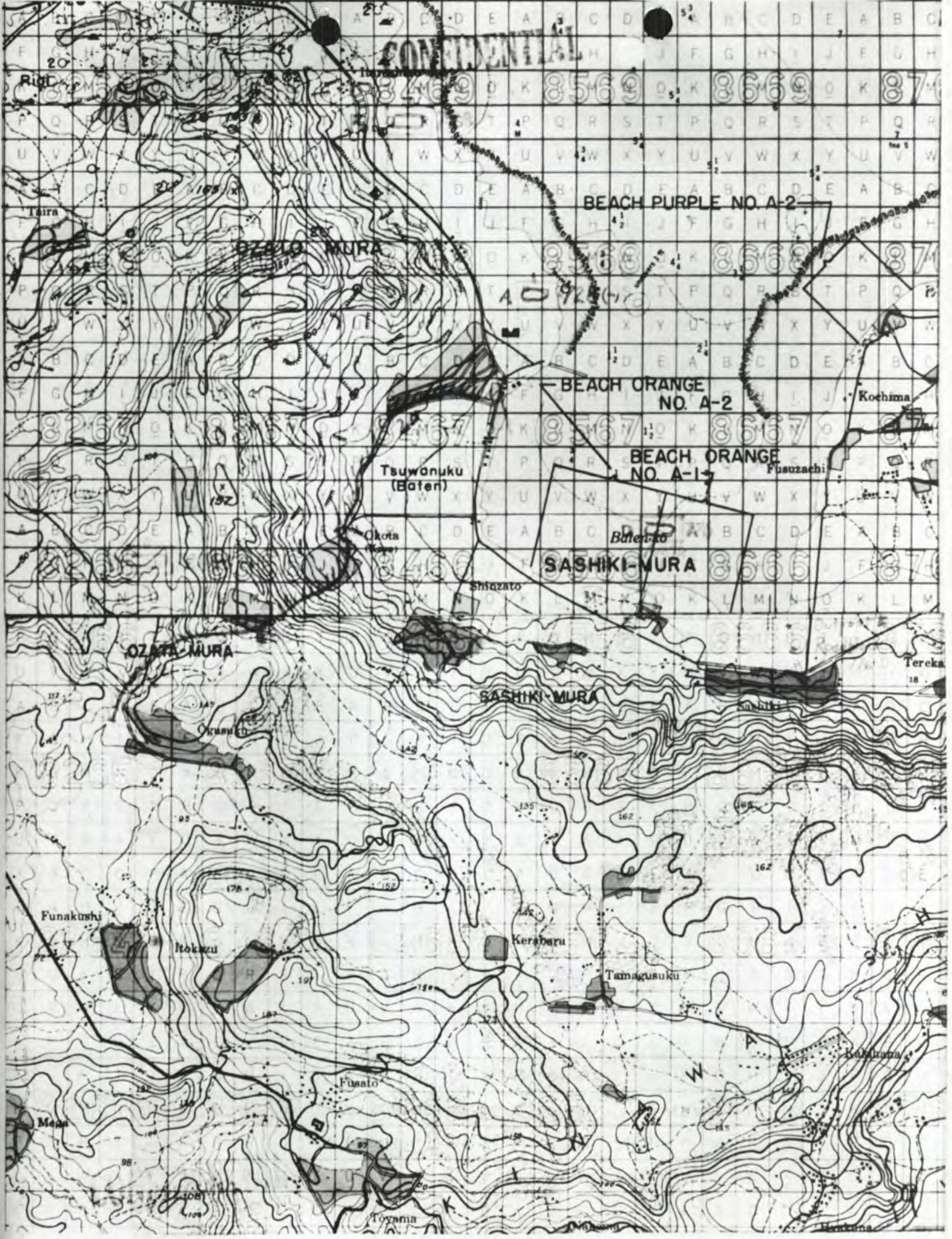
RYUKYU RETTO, 1:25,000

SHOWING DISPOSITION OF TROOPS
ON AREA BLOCK

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CHAPTER VIII

ENEMY TACTICS

(As the character of enemy opposition encountered by this Bn varied with the missions performed, tactics observed are reported below, segregated by missions).

1. On the initial assault against OKINAWA JIMA, RYUKYU RETTO, the enemy did not defend his beaches, choosing rather to retire to a favorable defensive line inland. As a result, no fire was received from enemy ground forces during the assault.
2. During the unloading phase of the operation, enemy activity was limited to scattered infiltration, sporadic sniping and intense aerial attack. No contact with infiltrators or snipers was made by this organization, however during one of the nightly air raids four bombs were received in the battalion area, causing many personnel casualties and the total destruction of one LVT. During this period no shelling was received although enemy shells were heard passing overhead at infrequent intervals during hours of darkness as the enemy shelled KADENA AIRSTRIP.
3. Pursuing his normal method of defending islands, the size of which prohibits maneuver, the enemy defended the beach at TSUGEN JIMA, RYUKYU RETTO with fire from all weapons from fixed defensive positions. The approach to the beach was met by artillery, heavy mortar and machine gun fire, emanating from positions on high ground immediately inland from beach. Both mortar and artillery fire was inaccurate, causing no personnel casualties and the loss of only one vehicle. After the assault troops were unloaded under cover of the low ridge, LVTs returned to sea until a suitable bivouac area was selected, whereupon all LVTs assembled on land awaiting orders.
4. Throughout mopping up activities on the West coast of OKINAWA JIMA, RYUKYU RETTO, no enemy contacts were made. Pillboxes, caves and other defensive installations were destroyed.
5. Upon returning to TSUGEN JIMA, RYUKYU RETTO on a reconnaissance in force no opposition to landing was encountered as the particular beach chosen was a poor defensive risk. During the dismounted assault against TSUGEN village and the high ground beyond, enemy action was characterized by occupation of caves and pillboxes, defending the entrances thereof. Enemy defensive organization consisted entirely of two strong points defended by machine guns and riflemen. No organized defensive line was encountered. Rifle fire was sporadic and ineffective. Caves were extensive but easily sealed upon neutralization of the many small entrances.
6. Beach defensive positions established by this organization were subjected to considerable artillery fire during the early phases of the attack by the 7th Inf. Div. This was particularly true in the vicinity of

YONABARU, OKINAWA JIMA, RYUKYU RETTO where almost nightly concentrations were received. The positions occupied along the beach from the YONABARU Airstrip to YONABARU were subjected to intermittent sniper and MG fire from vicinity CONICAL HILL, OKINAWA JIMA, RYUKYU RETTO. As the attack progressed and the defensive lines were extended many contacts were made with infiltrators armed with hand grenades or satchel charges, however many sampans were sunk, killing their occupants and many swimmers were killed along the reef. Throughout the advance by this Bn., abreast of the attacking infantry, no defensive line to the Bn front existed as our operations proceeded along the low, flat ground from the foothills to the beach. The enemy defended this area by fire from the hills immediately inland.

7. While engaged in supplying LVTs for front line supply and evacuation, the platoon so engaged, in vicinity of MIYATOGA, OKINAWA JIMA, RYUKYU RETTO, reported no enemy contacts other than an attack by a few Japs equipped with demolitions during early morning hours.

8. While patrolling and mopping up extremely rugged terrain assigned by 7th Inf Div along East coast of OKINAWA JIMA, RYUKYU RETTO, scattered contact was made with small groups of Japs equipped for the most part with grenades. The enemy initially chose to hide in caves by day and move about by night however, as our patrols sealed caves and emplacements which could be used as shelters, the enemy moved to cane fields and high grass patches where he was flushed by WP grenades.

9. Upon occupation of the area block and ambushes, a trap was formed toward which enemy troops were driven by elements of 7th Inf Div. Each night's activity was characterized by Japs usually in small groups of less than five, equipped with rifles and grenades attempting to pass through the block. Several local pitched battles ensued with exchange of grenades and small arms fire. The attempts to pass through the lines were not in the nature of an organized breakthrough, but rather the result of a general drift away from the sweeping Infantry to assembly points to the North. Many Japs were killed nightly along the ambush line.

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CHAPTER IX

ESTIMATED RESULTS OF OPERATIONS

1. Throughout the RYUKYUS Campaign, in the execution of its mission, this battalion -

- a. Participated in three separate landings against enemy beaches.
- b. Landed approximately 3600 assault troops on designated beaches.
- c. Transported and landed approximately 5000 reserve and service troops.
- d. Transported 23,379 short tons of cargo across HAGUSHI Beaches (For daily tonnage recapitulation, see Annex 1 atchd).
- e. Assaulted and secured TSUGEN JIMA, RYUKYU RETTO.
- f. Defended 7000 yards of sea coast from enemy amphibious landing.
- g. Occupied area block and ambushes to prevent escape of enemy troops during Div. mop-up.
- h. Patrolled and mopped up 14,000 sq. yds. of ground (For results of patrol activities, see Annex 2 atchd).
- i. Furnished LVTs to Div elements for front line supply and evacuation vicinity MINATOGA, OKINAWA JIMA, RYUKYU RETTO.

2. Enemy casualties inflicted by this Bn:

Counted dead - 548
Est. dead - 4
(caves, etc.)
Total dead - 552
PrW 14
Div interned - 444

3. Operational materiel damage to enemy by this Bn:

Sealed 423 caves
Sealed 94 tombs
Destroyed 46 gun emplacements and dugouts
Destroyed 17 ammunition caches
Destroyed 500 cases enemy small arms ammunition
Destroyed 300 rds 75mm shells w/fuzes
Destroyed 60 rds 4.7 inch ammunition
Destroyed 3 4.7 inch guns
Destroyed 3 75mm guns
Destroyed 2 20mm guns

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Destroyed 1 LMG
Destroyed 1 HMG
Destroyed 1 Twin mount HMG
Captured 1 gyroscope, Naval
Captured 1 Torpedo warhead
Captured 1 radio and generator
Captured 1 Morse Code set
Captured 1 rifle grenade discharger
Captured 400 oxygen tubes
Captured 40 rifles
Captured 2 HMG
Captured 1 LMG
Captured 1 Knee Mortar

In addition to the above, vast quantities of ammunition, demolitions, food and other supplies were destroyed on TSUBERI JIMA, RYUKYU RETRO.

4. Own losses.

KIA or DOW	-	5 (EM)
WIA	-	34 (30 EM, 1 WO, 3 Officers)
NBC	-	37 (36 EM, 1 Officer)
Missing	-	0

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Annex 1 to Chapter IX - Results of Operation.

DAILY TONNAGE RECAPITULATION

Tonnage Unloaded Across Beach-				Tonnage Unloaded Across Beach-			
Date	WHITE	ORANGE	PURPLE	Date	WHITE	ORANGE	PURPLE
April				May			
1	600			1	220		
2	620			2	135		
3	680			3	301		
4	660			4	310	120	
5	685			5	401		
6	700			6	500		
7)				7	417	330	
8)				8	491	335	
9)	- TSUGEN JIMA			9	437		
10)				10	514		
11)				11	490		
12)				12	493		
13	872		860	13	419		
14	1012			14	460		
15	832			15	320		
16	609			16	110		
17	524						
18	69						
19	285			Totals	Beach White		Short Tons
20	30				Beach Orange		18,981
21	354				Beach Purple		3,036
22	276						<u>1,362</u>
23	537	331		Aggregate Total			23,379
24	543	445					
25	647	465					
26	559	520					
27	417						
28	483						
29	438	490	502				
30	531						

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Annex 2 to Chapter IX - Results of Operations.

RESULTS OF PATROL ACTIVITIES - RYUKYUS CAMPAIGN

1. Daily patrols mopping up area of responsibility assigned by FO 2, Hq. 20th Armored Group, dated 16 April 1945 during the period 17 April to 19 May 1945:

Sealed 32 caves and 12 tombs at TA 8486.
Sealed 28 caves and 6 tombs at TA 8487.
Sealed 19 caves and 25 tombs at TA 8386.
Sealed 11 caves and 22 tombs at TA 8387.
Sealed 19 caves and 18 tombs at TA 8286.
Sealed 3 caves and 9 tombs at TA 8287.
Destroyed 23 pillboxes and emplacements at TA 8486.
Destroyed or salvaged 6 cases hand grenades, 400 oxygen tubes, 60 rds. 4.7 mm ammunition, 6 booby traps throughout area.

2. Daily patrols mopping up area of responsibility assigned by FO 40, 7th Inf Div, dated 10 June 1945 as amended by Opn. Overlay dated 12 June 1945 during the period 14 June to 23 June 1945:

Sealed 4 caves at TA 8268
Sealed 10 caves at TA 8271
Sealed 5 caves at TA 8367
Sealed 67 caves at TA 8368
Sealed 65 caves at TA 8369
Sealed 2 caves at TA 8371
Sealed 18 caves at TA 8468
Sealed 1 tomb at TA 8369
Sealed 1 tomb at TA 8271
Destroyed 2 pillboxes and/or dugouts at TA 8367
Destroyed 10 pillboxes and/or dugouts at TA 8368
Destroyed 4 pillboxes and/or dugouts at TA 8369
Destroyed 1 pillbox at TA 8468
Destroyed 5 gun emplacements at TA 8368
Destroyed 1 gun emplacement at TA 8468
Destroyed 4 ammunition dumps at TA 8367
Destroyed 13 ammunition dumps at TA 8368
Destroyed 50 cases mines at TA 8368
Destroyed 63 cases small arms ammunition at TA 8368
Destroyed 250 cases est. 50mm mortar shells at TA 8368
Destroyed 300 rds 75mm shells at TA 8368
Destroyed 3 75mm guns at TA 8368
Destroyed 1 .303 MG at TA 8368
Destroyed 1 twin .303 MG at TA 8368
Destroyed 1 20mm gun and mount at TA 8368
Destroyed 1 20mm gun at TA 8468
Turned in to G-2, 7th Div: 1 gyroscope, 1 torpedo warhead, 1 radio with generator, 1 Morse Code Signal set, and 1 rifled grenade discharger.
Killed 1 Jap soldier at TA 8371
Killed 1 Jap soldier at TA 8674
Killed 14 Jap soldiers at TA 8368
Buried a total of 98 Jap soldiers throughout area
Captured 2 Jap soldiers at TA 8674
Captured 1 Jap soldier at TA 8368

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3. Daily patrols sweeping and mopping up area of responsibility assigned by FO 42, 7th Inf Div, dated 23 June 1945 during the period 25 June to 30 June 1945:

Sealed 12 caves at TA 8366.

Sealed 11 caves at TA 8465.

Sealed 41 caves at TA 8466.

Sealed 14 caves at TA 8565.

Sealed 14 caves at TA 8566.

Sealed 8 caves at TA 8665.

Sealed 21 caves at TA 8666.

Destroyed 3 emplacements or dugouts at TA 8366.

Destroyed 5 dugouts and 1 gun position at TA 8366.

Destroyed 1 ammunition dump at TA 8366.

Destroyed 1 LMG at TA 8366.

Destroyed 1 knee mortar at TA 8366.

Killed 17 Japs throught area

Killed 1 Jap nurse at TA 8466.

Buried 24 Japs throught area

Captured 2 Japs.

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CHAPTER X

COMMENTS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

1. Administration.

- a. Many personnel reports were called for prior to arrival of rear echelon shipping which required information that could only be obtained from service records, 66-1's, and or allied records. It is believed that either:

- (1) The records must be brought in assault shipping,
- (2) Higher priority be given rear echelon shipping, or
- (3) The reports be not called for.

The first is a somewhat dangerous practice involving possible loss of irreplaceable records. The second must be subordinated to combat needs. The third must be decided by higher headquarters as it involves the necessity of the information.

Recommendation: It is recommended that higher priority be given to personnel section elements of rear echelon shipping.

- b. Many headquarters require reports on special forms which battalions lack the facilities to reproduce.

Recommendation: It is recommended that the headquarters requiring reports on special forms be required to reproduce and distribute the forms.

2. Intelligence.

It is recommended that the S-2 section be incorporated into the S-3 section as a combined S-2 - S-3 section and the Intelligence Officer be replaced by a Liaison Officer.

3. Operations.

- a. Initial operations over reefs are greatly facilitated by crane barges as it decreases the slow hand transfers.

Recommendation: Recommend that the number of barges used initially be increased.

- b. Miscellaneous loading of LVTs causes confusion and delay in dumps. In the initial phase of unloading several types of ammunition were loaded into each LVT. When the LVT arrived at the dump it was forced to make as many stops as there were types of ammunition. This resulted in confusion, delay use of LVTs as a temporary storage place while awaiting unloading, Beachmaster demanding more LVTs, dumps demanding more personnel, and LVTs spending 60% of their time awaiting their turn to unload.

Recommendation: Preload cargo nets only one class and type of supplies.

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- c. A lack of liaison between the Naval Control Officer and the Beachmaster was noted as many LVTs were dispatched to unload ships only to find the ships were in rear areas or the cargo was not desired at that time.

Recommendation: It is recommended that all unloading be placed under the direction of the Beachmaster as soon as he is set up for operation.

- d. The bivouac area assigned to this Battalion was approximately 100 x 500 yards in size. One hundred vehicles cannot be properly dispersed in an area of this size and heavy casualties would result if subjected to heavy shelling.

Recommendation: Recommend that assigned areas of Amph Trac Bns be enlarged to permit vehicular dispersal of 35 yards minimum.

- e. Many boats and small ships were beached in unfavorable sites. As a result much time was lost and some LVTs damaged while attempting to unload LCM, LST, etc. which had beached in areas full of pot holes and coral heads.

Recommendation: The shore party should mark all suitable beaching points at the earliest opportunity.

- f. Varied missions should be expected by an Amph Trac Bn as its primary mission is usually of short duration. However, it must be remembered that the assignment of other than normal missions will usually involve training and equipment other than that prescribed in T/O&E. This Bn has received varied training which qualifies it for many missions. The equipment for these missions was not always satisfactory.

Recommendation: It is recommended that higher headquarters make equipment available that is necessary for the successful fulfillment of the mission at the minimum cost.

- g. In all land operations, telephone communication is considered essential. In most of the missions assigned this organization it was necessary to borrow telephones, switchboard, climbers, wire, and test clips. Radio personnel had to double as PP personnel and lines could not be properly serviced.

Recommendation: T/O&E changed to provide equipment and personnel.

4. Supply.

- a. Amphibian Tractor Bns are assigned many missions and are attached to many units. In a three months campaign this unit

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was attached to one Armored Group, one Engineer Group, one Engineer Brigade (operational only) and three Divisions. During this period the Armored Group made every effort to adequately supply this Battalion with all classes of supply. Obviously, the Bn must suffer in an arrangement of this sort unless the unit to which they are attached comes to their rescue. Fortunately our attachments were very cooperative and furnished us most of the needed supplies in all classes even though it meant diversion from their organic troops.

- b. All echelons of maintenance must be handled within the Bn. Ordnance Companies are of little, if any, value to us except as a parts furnishing agency. They will not accept any tractor for repair regardless of the echelon of maintenance. The Bn is not properly tooled to handle all of this work efficiently, yet 39A units shipped to the Bns are diverted to Ordnance units which do no work for the Bns.
- c. Many of the difficulties in track maintenance which have been encountered by this Bn have been caused by the lack of track bolts. This bolt could be bought in any hardware store yet it can't be secured at all or it is furnished in insufficient quantities. The lack of bolts makes it necessary to run the tractor without a cross plate or a grouser. This causes undue strain on bogies, supporting rollers, track pins, track links, and possible damage to sprockets.
- d. Maintenance of final drives on LVT was greatly expedited in this Bn by replacing the gear and shaft in the old housing. This eliminates pulling the cab and transmission and is accomplished without the use of a hoisting device. By using this method two mechanics can change a final drive in three hours. The results are equal to those obtained by the old method.

Recommendations:

- (1) While the Bn is in combat the Class I, II, IV and V supplies be furnished by the unit to which attached. That Class II supplies be procured direct from the supplying branch.
- (2) Amphibian Tractor Bns be consulted regarding their LVT parts needs for an operation and those necessary for reconditioning tractors on completion of the operation.
- (3) That 50% of final drive replacements be shipped without housings.