

ROYAL AUSTRALIAN NAVY

# SEA POWER

## SOUNDINGS



Issue 30, 2021

## **South-West Pacific: amphibious operations, 1942–45**

By Dr. Karl James

Dr. James is the Head of Military History, Australian War Memorial.

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On morning of 1 July 1945 hundreds of warships and vessels from the United States Navy, the Royal Australian Navy (RAN), and the Royal Netherlands Navy lay off the coast of Balikpapan, an oil refining centre on Borneo's south-east coast. An Australian soldier described the scene:

*Landing craft are in formation and swing towards the shore. The naval gunfire is gaining momentum, the noise from the guns and bombs exploding is terrific ... waves of Liberators [heavy bombers] are pounding the area.*<sup>1</sup>

This offensive to land the veteran 7th Australian Infantry Division at Balikpapan was the last of a series amphibious operations conducted by the Allies to liberate areas of Dutch and British territory on Borneo. It was the largest amphibious operation conducted by Australian forces during the Second World War. Within an hour some 16,500 troops were ashore and pushing inland, along with nearly 1,000 vehicles.<sup>2</sup> Ultimately more than 33,000 personnel from the 7th Division and Allied forces were landed in the amphibious assault.<sup>3</sup> Balikpapan is often cited as an example of the expertise achieved by Australian forces in amphibious operations during the war.<sup>4</sup> It was a remarkable development. Four years earlier, the capability of Australia or even the United States (US) to conduct amphibious operations in the South-West Pacific Area (SWPA) was limited if not non-existent. This paper provides a brief outline of the development of amphibious operations in the SWPA during the Second World War.

### **The South West Pacific Area**

The SWPA was a vast theatre that included Australia, Papua and New Guinea, the Netherlands East Indies (modern-day Indonesia), and the Philippines, with Allied forces under the command of General Douglas MacArthur. The term “amphibious warfare” was generally adopted for use in SWPA in preference to “combined operations” which was favoured in European theatres. In 1944, the Australian army defined “amphibious warfare” as “operations in which Navy, Army and Air Force participate together in a coordinated plan involving the transport of army assaulting forces by sea.”<sup>5</sup>

### **Amphibious Operations in the South West Pacific**

Unlike many of the amphibious landings conducted by the US Navy and US Marine Corps in the Central Pacific, the amphibious operations conducted by MacArthur's forces in the SWPA were frequently used to outmanoeuvre the enemy, rather than as a direct assault against the Japanese. Between 22 June 1943 and 12 July 1945, United States-led Allied forces conducted more than 60 major amphibious landings in the theatre.<sup>6</sup> The RAN participated in nearly half of these operations.

The Japanese were the first to conduct offensive amphibious operations in the South-West Pacific. They were initially successful, seizing areas such as Rabaul, New Britain, and Timor in early 1942. The Australian defenders of Port Moresby, Papua, thought that the greatest threat to the isolated outpost would come from the sea – a Japanese amphibious invasion against Moresby, rather than an overland advance from the mountains across the formidable Owen Stanley Range.<sup>7</sup>



### **The Battles of the Coral Sea and Midway**

The Japanese had assembled a seaborne invasion force to assault Port Moresby but this operation was abandoned because of losses suffered in the battle of the Coral Sea in May. Japanese plans for an amphibious invasion of Midway Island in the Central Pacific were similarly checked due to their defeat at the battle of Midway in June.<sup>8</sup> In late August, the Japanese conducted an unsuccessful amphibious operation at Milne Bay, Papua. The Japanese landed, reinforced and, after a week-long battle, evacuated their force by sea at night. Japanese air cover was minimal, while Australian soldiers were well supported by the Royal Australian Air Force (RAAF), particularly fighter-bomber squadrons. Indeed, air support proved the “decisive factor” in the Australian victory.<sup>9</sup> The battle of Milne Bay was the first comprehensive defeat of a Japanese amphibious force in the Second World War.

The aborted Japanese amphibious operations for Port Moresby and Midway, and their defeat at Milne Bay, demonstrate the first requirement for the successful conduct of an amphibious operation – control of sea and air.

### **Preparing for Amphibious Operations**

At the outbreak of the Pacific war, the Allies could not carry out amphibious operations in the South West Pacific, lacking suitable ships, landing craft, trained army and naval personnel, training facilities, and even instructors. In time these requirements were addressed, but it was a gradual process, as SWPA competed for Allied resources.<sup>10</sup>

During 1942 training centres were established for Australian and American forces, approaches to conducting amphibious warfare were developed, and landing craft and ships were ordered from Britain and the United States, in addition to those being built in Australia. In June, the First Australian Army Combined Training School was established at Toorbul Point, Queensland. This school later became the Amphibious Training Centre. The Joint Overseas Operational Training School (JOOTS) was established at Port Stephens, New South Wales. Staffed by American and Australian officers, from August it conducted courses in amphibious training. In September HMAS *Assault* was commissioned at Nelson’s Bay, NSW, for training landing craft and boat crews. The naval establishment became home to the slowly growing Allied amphibious fleet, including three Australian Landing Ships, Infantry (LSIs), and Australian constructed Landing Crafts, Assault (LCA), as well as landing ships and landing craft of various types from the United States.<sup>11</sup> In March 1943 both the Amphibious Training Centre and JOOTS came under the control of the Seventh Amphibious Force. JOOTS merged with the Amphibious Training Centre later in the year, while *Assault* operated until July 1944.<sup>12</sup>

### **Rear Admiral Dan Barbey**

Another key contributor to the development of amphibious operations in SWPA was the appointment in January 1943 of Rear Admiral Daniel E. “Uncle Dan” Barbey to command what became the Seventh Amphibious Force. An excellent planner and organizer, Barbey was likely the US Navy’s leading expert on amphibious warfare, and was concerned with development of amphibious materials,



doctrine, and training. Unlike many senior US Navy officers in SWPA, General MacArthur developed a firm relationship with Barbey, on one occasion describing him as “just about the Number One amphibious commander in the world”. The only criticism levelled at Barbey by some was that he was “too ambitious”.<sup>13</sup> MacArthur and Barbey’s first meeting was a one-sided conversation, with MacArthur telling Barbey of his plans for future operations in New Guinea and against Rabaul. In the general’s opinion, the reconquest of the Philippines had to have priority over all other objectives. “Your job”, MacArthur said to Barbey, “is to develop an amphibious force that can carry my troops in those campaigns.”<sup>14</sup>

From 30 June 1943 to 1 July 1945 Barbey planned and conducted 56 amphibious operations in the SWPA, carrying close to a million Allied troops (predominantly US forces) and a million tons of stores from Australia along the north coast of New Guinea, through the Netherlands East Indies, and into the Philippines.<sup>15</sup>

### **Landing in New Guinea**

The amphibious landing of the veteran 9th Australian Division in September 1943 in New Guinea, initially near Lae and the subsequent predawn landing at “Scarlet Beach”, Finschhafen, later that month, were the first opposed landings conducted by Barbey’s amphibious force.<sup>16</sup> (It was also the first Australian amphibious operation since the landing at Gallipoli in 1915.) Conducted without air cover or prolonged naval bombardment, both Lae and Finschhafen were successful, though not without mishap, and provided valuable lessons.<sup>17</sup> Australian army personnel from the 9th Division identified 35 specific lessons from these two landings, covering topics as varied as planning and the loading of landing ships through to beach congestion and the suitability of vehicles and equipment.<sup>18</sup>

Following the landing at Lae, Barbey recorded observations and recommendations for future operations, including having each service provide an adequate number of officers with the experience, knowledge, and authority necessary to ensure that joint planning was completed early; and having sufficient landing craft available to conduct full-scale rehearsals. Barbey noted that embarkation staff, loading officers, beachmasters, and unloading details need to be appointed well in advance to obtain the necessary experience for the “rapid unloading of bulk stores”, and that the “need for efficient control and adequate, trained personnel in this phase of the operation cannot be too strongly stressed”.<sup>19</sup>

Barbey’s fleet relied upon Landing Ships, Tanks (LSTs), Landing Craft, Infantry (LCIs), and Landing Craft, Tanks (LCTs). Shore-based air support was not always guaranteed and naval gun fire support was limited to destroyers. Barbey consequently chose to assault lightly-defended beaches and relied on the advantage of surprise. Often the same ships had to be used for assault and delivering reinforcements, so speed was critical.<sup>20</sup> Barbey developed a series of rules that still seem relevant today, insisting upon training, simple language in operational orders, landing where the Japanese was not, continuous air and sea coverage, and the quick unloading of only essential equipment and stores.<sup>21</sup> During the New Guinea operations, in which Allied ships were exposed to Japanese air attack en route to and from the beach during daylight hours, three hours was thought to be the maximum time for LSTs and LCTs to remain on an invasion beach.<sup>22</sup>





These regions presented unique geographic challenges. There were very few developed harbours in New Guinea and many waterways were poorly uncharted. Beaches were narrow, often with coral shelves extending from the beach, and there was an abundance of shoals and reefs. Thick jungle approached the water's edge and soft or swampy ground inland, complicating beach clearances and the dispersal of vehicles and stores. The jungle also provided difficulties in identifying Japanese defences and fortifications.<sup>23</sup> Interpreting aerial photographs proved an effective method to determine the nature of beaches and approaches, and of neighbouring terrain. Black and white photographs proved more reliable than colour.<sup>24</sup>

### Planning, Equipment and Techniques

By 1944, the Allies had far greater material and power in the south-west Pacific, and were dominating sea and air. The interception and decryption of Japanese codes (ULTRA intelligence), meant MacArthur could conduct a “spectacular” series of bypassing leaps secure in the knowledge “that he knew as much about local Japanese dispositions and strengths as it was possible to know”.<sup>25</sup>

Amphibious operations were complex undertakings. Hundreds of Allied ships, including the Australian squadron, participated in the landings in Philippines and Borneo in 1944–45. Every aspect was thought out and organized, from the sequencing of assault landing craft to an invasion beach to the loading and trimming of an LST to prevent it being stranded on a falling tide or mud flat. Minesweeping and hydrographic work were needed to plot, chart and mark navigational features, and beach reconnaissance was necessary to determine the types and gradients of beaches.

Naval and air bombardment proved effective in destroying and suppressing Japanese coastal guns and other fortifications. At Balikpapan, for instance, where the Japanese defences were known to be strong, the invasion area and surrounds were pounded by a prolonged aerial and naval bombardment that began on 1 July 1945, weeks before the 7th Division's landing. It was later reported that the navy had hurled an average of one shell or rocket against every 230 square yards of landing beach. In the 20 days before the assault, the Balikpapan-Manggar area received 3,000 tons of bombs, more than 7,000 rockets and over 38,000 shells – ranging from 8-inch to 3-inch shells.<sup>26</sup> An RAN officer standing aboard HMAS *Westralia* reported that “hell was let loose on Balikpapan”.<sup>27</sup>

The three Australian LSIs were present at these landings, carried troops and boats, and were essential for ship-to-shore operations. Yet the contributions of HMAS *Manoora*, *Westralia* and *Kanimbla* and their ships' companies have often been overlooked.<sup>28</sup> Originally built and operated as civilian passenger liners, following the outbreak of war *Manoora*, *Westralia* and *Kanimbla* were commissioned into the RAN as armed merchant cruisers. From late 1942 and into 1943 the three ships were converted to landing ships. An officer from *Kanimbla* noted that the merchant cruiser's guns had been removed, replaced by landing craft and scrambling nets; wooden panelling was replaced with galvanized iron sheeting; and all available space was converted for the carrying of troops and stores.<sup>29</sup> Once fitted with American pattern messing with standee bunks, *Manoora*, for example, could carry some 1,250 soldiers and carried 20 to 22 Landing Craft Vehicle, Personnel (LCVP) and two to three Landing Craft, Mechanised (LCM).<sup>30</sup>



The Australian LSIs made significant contributions to the Pacific war, participating in American landings in the Netherlands East Indies, survived *kamikaze* attacks in the Philippines, and carried Australian and Allied personnel to Borneo. *Manoora* took part in more than half-a-dozen amphibious operations, usually carrying US forces, including the landing at Lingayen Gulf, the Philippines, on 9 January 1945. An RAN officer who disembarked from *Manoora* to participate in the landing as an observer afterwards gave an evocative description of the assault:

*All boats were lowered and combat troops embarked without mishap, and as the boats moved inshore practically the entire countryside in the vicinity of the beach was shrouded in smoke from the exploding shells of the naval bombardment. My chief impression as we approached the beach was the seemingly ever increasing thunder of the rocket bombardment. All waves of landing craft approached the beach with admirable station-keeping and as we neared the shore ... there was no opposition fire whatsoever.*<sup>31</sup>

Another contribution made by the Australian navy was the presence of RAN Beach Commandos.<sup>32</sup> These men were specialists, trained in assault techniques and responsible for controlling successive waves of landing craft. After ordering the confusion of a landing into an organised beachhead, they would help to defend it, working directly with the army and liaising with the US Navy.

Established along the same lines as Royal Navy Beach Commandos, four RAN Beach Commando units were formed in 1944 to work with the Australian army's 1st and 2nd Beach Groups. An RAN beach commando unit, consisting of 120 officers and ratings, was about the equivalent of three US Navy beach parties. Units included beachmasters, beach parties, a repair and recovery section, and a naval beach signals section.<sup>33</sup> Units were lettered, "A", "B", "C" and "D", rather than numbered. In addition to seamanship skills, and boat and landing craft handling, sailors received infantry training in patrolling, field engineering, demolitions, and how to drive different types of vehicles, such as jeeps, trucks, graders, and DUKWs.<sup>34</sup>

These beach commandos were first deployed during Australian operations in Borneo, taking part in landings on Sabau and Tarakan Islands, Brunei Bay, and Balikpapan. At Balikpapan, advance parties from RAN Commandos B and D came ashore with the second wave – with a beach party at each of the three landing beaches – and immediately began working. When the principal beachmaster came ashore 45 minutes after H hour, he noted that the beachmasters had "organised their beaches well" – the shore had been surveyed, exists marked, and the area was kept "comparatively clear" of stores and equipment.<sup>35</sup>

The Australian army also developed its water transport capability during the war. In September 1942, the Directorate of Water Transport (Small Craft) was raised, for which the Royal Australian Engineers were responsible. The army's water transport was designed to resupply forward areas, as well as the army's remote garrisons on the islands that were only accessible by sea. The army's small craft ferried troops, transported equipment and brought supplies, covering a vast territory from the Australian mainland to New Guinea, the Solomon Islands, Borneo, and, after the war, the Philippines, operating a large fleet of landing craft, barges, lanches, workboats, and tugs. During 1945, landing craft companies and small ship companies were also used to conduct small amphibious landings in New



Guinea and Bougainville. These operations were modest affairs compared to Borneo landings and were shore to shore operations rather than ship to shore. These smaller activities warrant further study.

In North Bougainville, with no roads and only narrow foot tracks, the only way to regularly supply the Australian campaign in the north was by sea. The movement of troops, guns, stores, and ammunition, and the evacuation of wounded had to be done by sea. In March 1945, the 26th Battalion and the 42nd Landing Craft Company, operating Australian Landing Craft 15s (ALC15s) and LCAs, conducted a series of amphibious landings to outflank, bypass, and cut Japanese lines of communications in the Soraken Peninsula. Described as a “brilliant series of manoeuvres”, the Australians forced the Japanese to abandon one position after another.<sup>36</sup>

### **Porton Plantation**

The Japanese had laced the Bonis Peninsula with pillboxes and bunkers, located astride tracks and roads. To overcome these intimidating defences, an ambitious plan was devised: a small force would land by barge at Porton Plantation and push inland to link with the main Australian force. Early on 8 June a force of 190 officers and men, based on A Company of the 31st/51st Battalion, landed at Porton. It established a small perimeter but a barge carrying heavy weapons became grounded offshore on a reef. Within 50 minutes of coming ashore the Australians came under machine-gun fire. By dawn it had become clear that the perimeter was ringed by Japanese pillboxes. The Japanese were on all sides, controlling approaches to the beach. Only the accurate Australian artillery fire from Soraken prevented the Japanese from overrunning the beachhead. Japanese pressure continued to tighten. Attempts to reinforce the Australians by sea during the night were abandoned when the Australian landing craft came under heavy fire.<sup>37</sup> The decision was made to evacuate the force.<sup>38</sup> An officer afterwards described the hellish situation within the Australian perimeter:

*By early afternoon [9 June] the attacks had reached fanatical intensity. Our sector was subject to rifle fire from hidden snipers making it impossible to raise one's head, except for hurried observation, without being subjected to fire. Conditions in the pits were now almost unbearable. Eating, drinking and movement were impossible, personnel were cramped from lack of movement and the continued immersion in swamp water, and sun heated our rifles until they were almost too hot to handle.<sup>39</sup>*

The rescuing landing craft broke through to the beach to evacuate the Australians late in the afternoon of 9 June. Overloaded, three landing craft were grounded. One floated off but the other two remained stuck. Low flying RAAF aircraft and ongoing artillery support tried to protect those men trapped in the landing craft, but they still under fire from the Japanese. During the night one of the stranded craft drifted off. Finally, in the early hours of 11 June, the remaining survivors were rescued and brought to Soraken. One of the survivors later described the ordeal:

*The intense heat of the day, fatigue and exposure, plus the fact that we had not slept for three days and nights was beginning to take effect. Men often collapsed due to their exhaustion. A few were delirious. Men were half deaf from the continual explosion of bombs, shelling, and machine-gun fire.<sup>40</sup>*





Of the 190 men in the initial assault, 22 killed or missing, and 62 were wounded. More were hospitalised. Five men from the rescuing landing craft company were killed and seven were wounded.<sup>41</sup>

The planning for Porton was rushed. Mistakes were made at all levels. Although landing behind the Japanese had worked successfully at Sorakan, Australians were pushing their luck to try these tactics again. The reefs made the seaborne approach to Porton dangerous, and the force was too small to establish a beachhead and push inland. By daylight the Japanese had gained control of the approaches to the beach, making it impossible to unload the stores barge or land reinforcements. The failure of an infantry force to break through and link with the Australians at Porton also contributed to the defeat.<sup>42</sup>

### Conclusion

Much of the fighting in SWPA during 1942–43 was conducted in grinding, attritional actions in Papua and New Guinea, with the Allies responding to Japanese action.

In 1943 General MacArthur went on the offensive, enabled by the development of amphibious warfare. Allied operations became larger and tempo increased. The US-led invasions of Leyte and Lingayen Gulfs, in the Philippines, in October 1944 and January 1945, were vast undertakings. The Australian landings on Borneo in May–July 1945 were – and will likely remain – the largest amphibious operations ever conducted by Australian forces.

The development and application of amphibious warfare in 1944–45, when combined with Allied dominance over the Japanese at sea, in the air and intelligence, offered MacArthur the ability to manoeuvre Allied forces and to transport large numbers of troops, vehicles and stores across the vast theatre of the South-West Pacific. “No longer would it be necessary for MacArthur’s troops to make frontal assaults on skilfully prepared positions”, wrote Vice Admiral Barbey. “From now on enemy strong points could be bypassed and Allied troops landed on lightly defended beaches of their own choosing.”<sup>43</sup>

### End Notes

<sup>1</sup> 2/10th Battalion war diary, 1 July 1945, Australian War Memorial (AWM): AWM52, 8/3/10.

<sup>2</sup> Report of proceedings of RAN Beach Unit in Operation “Oboe Two”, 7 Aust Division landing at Klandasan near Balikpapan south east Borneo, AWM: AWM54, 505/10/5.

<sup>3</sup> Gavin Long, *The final campaigns*, Australian War Memorial, Canberra, 1963, p. 506.

<sup>4</sup> See, for example, James Golderick, “1941–1945: World War II: the war against Japan” in David Stevens (ed.), *The Royal Australian Navy*, Oxford University Press, South Melbourne, 2001, p. 149.

<sup>5</sup> Australian Military Forces, *Amphibious warfare for Australian forces in the South West Pacific Area*, Commander-in-Chief Headquarters, Australian Military Forces, 1944, p. 2.

<sup>6</sup> Amphibious landings in Southwest Pacific Area, 11 June 1946, AWM: AWM54, 923/3/15.

<sup>7</sup> Letter, Major General Basil Morris to A. J. Sweeting, 1 January 1957, pp. 7–8. (Morris commanded forces in Papua between January and August 1942.) AWM: AWM67, 3/274.



<sup>8</sup> David Stevens, “Maritime aspects of Australian amphibious operations”, in Glenn Wahlert (ed.), *Australian army amphibious operations in the South-West Pacific: 1942–45: edited papers of the Australian Army History Conference held at the Australian War Memorial, 15 November 1994*, Australian Army Doctrine Centre, Canberra, 1995, p. 103.

<sup>9</sup> Remarks by Lieutenant General Sydney Rowell. Report on operations—New Guinea Force, 11 August to 28 September 1942, p. 10, AWM: AWM123, 270.

<sup>10</sup> For an overview of the development of Australian amphibious operations, see Ross Mallett, “Together again for the first time: the army, the RAN and amphibious warfare 1942–1945” in David Stevens and John Reeve (eds), *Sea power ashore and in the air*, Halstead Press, Sydney, 2007, pp. 118–32; and Rhys Crawley and Peter J. Dean, “Amphibious warfare: training and logistics, 1942–45” in Peter J. Dean (ed.), *Australia 1944–45: victory in the Pacific*, Cambridge University Press, Port Melbourne, 2016, pp. 257–77.

<sup>11</sup> A summary of combined operations training in Australia: 1942–45, p. 8, AWM: AWM54, 943/16/1.

<sup>12</sup> The Amphibious Training Centre followed the Allied advance in SWPA. The centre later moved to Milne Bay and finally Subic Bay, the Philippines. A summary of combined operations training in Australia, pp. 7–8, AWM: AWM54, 943/16/1.

<sup>13</sup> Paolo E. Coletta, “Daniel E. Barbey: amphibious warfare expert” in William M. Leary (ed.), *We shall return!: MacArthur’s commanders and the defeat of Japan 1942–1945*, University of Kentucky, Lexington, Kentucky, 1988, pp. 228, 242.

<sup>14</sup> Daniel E. Barbey, *MacArthur’s amphibious navy: Seventh Amphibious Force operations, 1943–1945*, United States Naval Institute, Annapolis, Maryland, 1969, p. 22.

<sup>15</sup> Barbey, *MacArthur’s amphibious navy*, p. x.

<sup>16</sup> For a contemporary assessment of Lae highlighting the challenges involved in expeditionary and amphibious operation, see Chris Field, *Testing the tenets of manoeuvre: Australia’s first amphibious assault since Gallipoli: the 9th Australian Division at Lae, 4–16 September 1943*, working paper no. 139, Land Warfare Studies Centre, Canberra, 2012.

<sup>17</sup> Close coordination between the US Army Air Force, the US Navy, and the Australian Army planner for the landing at Lae, for example, were poor, and immediate cooperation was not achieved. During the night landing at Finschhafen, some Australian soldiers were landed in the wrong area while others became lost or disorientated. US Navy sailors manning the bow guns of some of the LCIs fired indiscriminately and were a danger to Australian troops on the shore, and ship-to-shore communication was non-existent. John Coates, “The war in New Guinea 1943–44: operations and tactics” in Peter Dennis and Jeffery Grey (eds.), *The foundations of victory: the Pacific war: the Chief of Army’s History Conference 2003*, Army History Unit, Canberra, 2004, p. 65.

<sup>18</sup> 9th Australian Division report on operations and capture of Lae and Finschhafen, p. i, AWM: AWM54, 589/7/26 part 3.

<sup>19</sup> Report on operations – SWPA Lae operation by Seventh Amphibious Fleet, p. 12, AWM: AWM54, 589/6/8.

<sup>20</sup> Barbey, *MacArthur’s amphibious navy*, p. 43; Stevens, “Maritime aspects of Australian amphibious operations”, p. 106.

<sup>21</sup> Coletta, “Daniel E. Barbey”, p. 242.

<sup>22</sup> Report on operations – SWPA Lae operation, p. 7, AWM: AWM54, 589/6/8.

<sup>23</sup> Australian Military Forces, *Amphibious warfare for Australian forces in the South West Pacific Area*, pp. 4–5.



<sup>24</sup> Review of amphibious operations in SWPA: December 1943–May 1944 by Brigadier R. N. L. Hopkins, p. 2., AWM: AWM54, 721/29/15.

<sup>25</sup> Coates, “The war in New Guinea 1943–44”, p. 68.

<sup>26</sup> VX18229 [Francis Hodgkinson], “Seventh Australian Division at Balikpapan”, in Australian Military Forces, *Stand easy*, Australian War Memorial, Canberra, 1945, p. 175; Long, *The final campaigns*, p. 511.

<sup>27</sup> “Voyage in time”, unpublished manuscript, Lieutenant Commander William Swan papers, p. 405, AWM: MSS0861.

<sup>28</sup> For detailed accounts of an LSI at war see HMAS *Westralia*’s: *Landing Ship Infantry*, John Sands, Sydney, 1947; and W. N. Swan, *Spearheads of invasion: an account of seven major invasions carried out by the Allies in the South-West Pacific area during the Second World War, as seen by a Royal Australian Naval Landing Ship Infantry*, Angus and Robertson, Sydney, 1954.

<sup>29</sup> Owen E. Griffiths, *Cry havoc: the story of HMAS Kanimbla*, Bloxham and Chambers, Sydney, 1949, p. 6.

<sup>30</sup> Sea power centre website. “HMAS *Manoora* (I)”, <http://www.navy.gov.au/hmas-manoora-I>, accessed 1 October 2019.

<sup>31</sup> Commander Arnold Green quoted in G. Hermon Gill, *Royal Australian Navy, 1942–1945*, Australian War Memorial, Canberra, 1968, p. 589.

<sup>32</sup> For more on the RAN Beach Commandos, see Karl James, “Those ‘army-navy freaks’”, *Wartime*, no. 51, 2010, pp. 32–36; and, A. E. Jones, *Sailor and commando: a Royal Australian Navy Special Service Beach Commando 1942–1946*, Hesperian Press, Carlisle, 1998.

<sup>33</sup> RAN Liaison Officer, Royal Australian Navy Beach Commandos, enclosure A, 2 October 1944, AWM: AWM54, 721/29/20; Royal Australian Air Force, *Combined operations RAN Beach Commandos*, Royal Australian Air Force, 1945, appendix A.

<sup>34</sup> V. W. Crichton, *An eventful life: the Royal Australian Naval Reserve go to war 1939–1945*, V. W. Crichton, Mount Martha, 1997, p. 159; Jones, *Sailor and commando*, pp. 44–45.

<sup>35</sup> Report of proceedings of RAN beach unit in operation “Oboe Two”, 7 Aust Division landing at Klandasan near Balikpapan south east Borneo, AWM: AWM54, 505/10/5.

<sup>36</sup> Long, *The final campaigns*, p. 175.

<sup>37</sup> W. E. Hughes, *At war with the 51st Infantry Battalion and 31st/51st Infantry Battalion (AIF) from 1940–1946*, Church Archivist Press, Brisbane, 1993, pp. 363–4.

<sup>38</sup> 11th Brigade war diary, “AQ” war diary notes for 8 June 45, Appendix 28, AWM: AWM52 8/2/11.

<sup>39</sup> Lieutenant Keith Scoble quoted in Audrey Davidson, *Porton a deadly trap: the battle that vanished*, Boolarong Press, Brisbane, 2005, p. 78.

<sup>40</sup> Report on events subsequent to boarding stranded ALCA on Porton beach until rescued by Private W. J. Crawford, p. 6, AWM: AWM54, 613/7/7.

<sup>41</sup> Davidson, *Porton a deadly trap*, pp. 168–72. The casualty figures in the official history are slightly lower, giving 23 killed and 106 wounded. Long, *The final campaigns*, p. 215.

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<sup>42</sup> For a more detailed account of the landing at Porton Plantation in June 1945, see Karl James, *The hard slog: Australians in the Bougainville campaign, 1944–45*, Cambridge University Press, Port Melbourne, 2012, pp. 127–45; Karl James, “Hell at Porton”, *Australian Army journal*, vol. III, no. 1, Summer 2005–06, pp. 221–38.

<sup>43</sup> Barbey, *MacArthur’s amphibious navy*, p. ix.