

Y AMPHIBIOUS CORPS LANDING FORCE

-IWO JIMA-

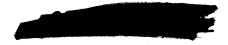
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Division Reports

Appendix 1 – CG 3d Mar Div Report Appendix 2 – CG 4th Mar Div Report Appendix 3 – CG 5th Mar Div Report



UNCLASSIFIED
Annex EASY



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Division Reports

(To be Distributed Separately)

Annex EASY to Special Action Report IWO JIMA Campaign.

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HEADQUARTERS V AMPHIBIOUS CORPS LANDING FORCE

-/WO J/MA-

Landing Force Air Support Control
Unit Report

Annex FOX

INCLASSIFIED

HEADQUARTERS
LANDING FORCE AIR SUPPORT COMMENT OF THE PROVISIONAL AIR SUPPORT OF THE PR

17 March. 1945.

SPECIAL ACTION REPORT

INO JIMA CAMPAIGN



HEADQUARTERS,

LANDING FORCE AIR SUPPORT CONTROL UNIT ONE, PROVISIONAL AIR SUPPORT COMMAND, FMF,

IN THE FIELD.

17 March, 1945.

From: To : Commander, Landing Force Air Support Control Unit One.

The Commanding General, Fifth Amphibious Corps.

Sub.j:

Special Action Report, IWO JIMA Campaign.

Ref:

(a) VAC Staff Memo 5-45, dtd 10Mar45.

Encl:

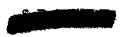
(A) Summary of Air Operations with carrier aircraft, 1 March to 9 March, 1945.

(B) Summary of Air Operations with Army aircraft, 8 March to 14 March inclusive.

1. NARRATIVE SUMMARY:

- (A) Landing Force Air Support Control Unit One, consisting of 17 officers and 56 enlisted men, reported to Commanding General, Landing Force, Fifth Amphibious Corps, on 4 January 1945, and to Commander Air Support Control Units, Amphibious Forces, Pacific Fleet, on 10 January 1945, for employment in the IWO JIMA operation. Three officers of this command were then temporarily assigned to the U.S.S. ESTES for duty with Advance Commander, Air Support Control Unit: two were temporarily assigned to the U.S.S. AUBURN for duty with Relief Commander, Air Support Control Unit; four officers and forty-eight men were assigned with the principal equipment to the U.S.S. THURSTON, and seven men and the secondary equipment to the U.S.S. CARTERET, for transportation to the objective. The Unit Commander, nine officers and one enlisted man flew to SAIPAN and rejoined the organization there for transportation to the objective. The Unit Commander was then embarked on the U.S.S. AUBURN with Commanding General, Landing Force, and his staff.
- (B) Commander, Landing Force Air Support Control Unit One, and a nucleus of his staff, landed on IWO JIMA with Commanding General, Landing Force, on 24 February (D/5). Due to unavoidable delays in unloading, fostered by the critical tactical situation ashore, the unit equipment did not reach the beach until 27 February (D/8). Emplacement of equipment and testing of circuits was completed within 24 hours, and Landing Force Air Support Control Unit One then monitored the circuits during 28 February while air support operations were being controlled from the U.S.S. ELDORADO, and later from the U.S.S. AUBURN. Commanding General, Landing Force, submitted an official







request that date for the control of air support missions to be shifted ashore at 0700, 1 March, which request was approved by Commander Joint Expeditionary Force. Due, however, to a temporary power failure, Landing Force Air Support Control Unit One was unable to assume full control until approximately 1000, 1 March.

- (C) This Unit exercised operational control of all close air support missions until 11 March 1945, when carrier support was withdrawn, and at which time the equipment and personnel, less the commanding officer and a small detachment, were secured for reshipment to SAIPAN for further scheduled operations. The remaining detachment, with radio jeeps borrowed from other Corps units, continued to exercise control of air strikes flown by Army VF Squadrons until all air support was secured at 1200, 15 March. Detailed operational summaries are given in the enclosures.
- (D) In addition to normal duties of air support control, Commander, Landing Force Air Support Control Unit One served as Deputy Commander, Landing Force Aircraft, and Deputy Air Defense Commander. As such, he exercised operational control of all shore-based air units, transient aircraft, and IWO FIELD Number One, until the arrival of the designated Air Defense Commander, Brigadier General E. Moore, U.S.A., who assumed his functions at noon, 7 March. These additional duties required much personal attention, the diversion of three operational officers, a communications detail, and the secondary control equipment from the Landing Force Air Support Control Unit for a period of ten days. To this extent the normal operation of Landing Force Air Support Control Unit One was somewhat hampered. It is recommended that future planning provide for an Air Base Commander with sufficient personnel and equipment to handle air traffic as soon as the first field becomes available, and that the Landing Force Aircraft Commander arrive with Commanding General, Landing Force, to assume full responsibility for his shore-based air units.

2. PERSONNEL:

(A) The morale and efficiency of the officers and men remained high throughout the operation, despite adverse living conditions and frequent night shelling by enemy artillery. No casualties were incurred, no cases of sickness reported, and no punishments recorded. Four officers and one enlisted man have been recommended for award of the Bronze Star for "Meritorious Achievement in Combat". Eight enlisted men have been recommended for immediate advancement to higher grades as a reward for outstanding performance of duty under combat conditions.



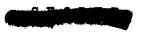


(B) The number of officers and enlisted men (17 and 57 respectively), tentatively assigned to a landing force air support control unit has proven insufficient for sustained operation in the field. Steps are being taken to increase this number to approximately 22 officers and 80 enlisted men. More adequate messing facilities can then be provided, provision made for better internal security, and for the immediate replacement of casualties. The five additional officers requested are necessary to provide reliefs for SAR, SAD, and SAO net controllers, who during this operation were required to operate an average of 12 hours daily for twelve consecutive days.

3. EQUIPMENT:

- (A) The principal equipment of this unit consists of modified Mark IV, U.S. Navy Communication Vans, with control remoted to a special operations room (tent). The arrangement of the control tables and the relative positions of the net controllers follows generally the layout in the Joint Operations Room of the AGC's, except that it is more commodious. All air support control nets, as listed in the communication annex of the Operations Plan, were manned continuously by officers during daylight; the ASC, LAW, and SAR nets were manned at night also, as required.
- (B) Except for the initial power failure, and minor interruptions on one net or another due largely to volcanic dust sifting into the receivers, the equipment functioned in a highly satisfactory manner. Occasional difficulty in communicating with ALO's on the SAR net was experienced, but was usually traceable to imperfections in the ALO's field equipment or to the location of their sets in rugged, defiladed terrain. In such instances communication was effected by relay from other stations on the net with but slight delay. The basic equipment as designed and assembled is considered to have passed its service test under most difficult conditions. No change is recommended at present.
- (C) The secondary equipment, mounted in three radio jeeps, proved very useful in controlling special strikes from advanced observation posts, and for directing air traffic at the airdrome. Its retention for this purpose is recommended. However, it would not be possible to control full scale air operations with such equipment, and it should not be depended upon for this purpose. A complete duplicate set of Mark IV Vans, modified, is recommended for each landing force air support control unit, as being absolutely essential for sustained operations in the field. Such a duplicate set has already been provided for Landing Force Air Support Control Unit One, and steps are being taken to so equip all other units for future operations.





17Mar45

(D) A medium cargo truck, a personnel carrier, and an additional passenger jeep are also considered essential additional equipment. Appropriate changes in the tentative TBA will be arranged.

4. OPERATIONAL PROCEDURE:

- (A) Landing Force Air Support Control Unit One operated in accordance with Amphibious Forces, Pacific Fleet, Standard Operating Procedure for air support control, thereby insuring smooth transmission of air support control from ship to shore. No change is recommended in this procedure at present.
- (B) Due to the location of Landing Force Air Support Control Unit One ashore, adjacent to Landing Force Headquarters, and connected directly by land wire to all major units, the control of close air support missions in coordination with troop movements, and with other supporting arms, was greatly facilitated. It is submitted that air strikes in close direct support of our troops, and in accordance with their current requests, can be handled more expeditiously and with greater safety when controlled from ashore.

 It is recommended, therefore, that in future operations the Landing Force Air Support Control Unit be established ashore at the earliest practicable date. To accomplish this, it is necessary that the unit be loaded in assault shipping, preferably in LST's.
- (C) It is further recommended that is many officers of the landing force air support control unit as possible be embarked on AGC's, for movement to the objective, and that they actively participate in the control of air support until the landing force air support control unit is established ashore. It is particularly recommended that Commander, Landing Force Air Support Control Unit, be embarked on the same AGC as Commander, Air Support Control Unit Afloat.
- (D) The principal operational difficulty experienced in running air strikes close to our troops was the variable efficiency and reliability of the battalion ALP's. Some of the ALO's were very alert and reliable; others were sometimes vague and uncertain in reporting observations. Some of this difficulty is attributable to an overloaded SAR net, and to insufficient personnel in the ALP's to maintain constant communications. It is evident however that a better system of selection and standardized training of ALO's is long overdue. Specifically, it is recommended that air-ground liaison officers should generally be chosen from combat experienced line officers and given special training in aviation tactics, sufficient to acquaint them with the capabilities and limitations of aviation as a supporting arm, and then be thoroughly grounded in the technique of air support control.





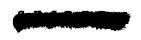
- (E) Commander, Landing Force Air Support Control Unit One, and his principal assistant conducted numerous strikes from forward positions, utilizing the secondary equipment on the SAD, SAR and SAO nets, and directing the strikes by observation of target areas and fall of bombs. While this system offers some advantages for conducting a very close strike, the limitations of portable communication equipment make it of doubtful expediency. Certainly, it indicates the undesirability of turning over control of strikes to ALO's, whose VHF equipment was invariably inferior to the secondary equipment of Landing Force Air Support Control Unit. Usually, when at a forward observation post, Commander, Landing Force Air Support Control Unit One, limited himself to passing on observations over the SAR net to the SAD controller at the station, who relayed the information direct to the air coordinator without appreciable loss of time. Only occasionally was it considered desirable to talk directly with the aircraft while a strike was in progress.
- (F) Coordination between air and artillery was provided by having an artillery officer located in the air support control room, provided with radio and telephone connections direct to all artillery units. This officer was advised in advance of all air strikes, and was thus enabled to take necessary action regarding artillery fires. Plan "Negat" was used only in very special cases to permit low altitude photo and DDT spray planes to accomplish their missions. Plan "Mike" was involved only when Corps artillery was engaged in high angle firing; otherwise the air strikes were so conducted as not to interfere with artillery supporting fires.
- (G) Coordination between Naval gunfire and air was generally handled by the Naval ground liaison officers in forward positions, but inasmuch as only sporadic call fires were in progress during the period of control by Landing Force Air Support Control Unit One, it was possible to run air strikes without formal coordination simply by warning the air coordinators of any danger areas.

5. SUPPORTING AIRCRAFT:

(A) Defensive air cover, as provided by Carrier Support Groups between 1 March and 9 March inclusive, and as provided by Army Garrison Air Forces after the latter date, was adequate and effective. No enemy aircraft closed the objective area during the period, although several attempts were made by single aircraft and small formations.

- (B) (1) The preliminary heavy strikes, made prior to D-3 day by Army heavy bombardment units, did not accomplish the desired result of neutralization. This is considered attributable to the inherent inaccuracy of high altitude bombing against precision targets. Practically all the heavy antiaircraft installations remained intact until taken out by Naval gunfire and dive bombers.
 - (2) The preliminary carrier based strikes (D-3 to D-1 inclusive) also failed to accomplish the desired degree of neutralization against enemy batteries and defensive installations. This was due in part to limited time and unfavorable weather, but principally to the disposition, number, and effective camouflage of enemy positions.
- (C) The D-Day carrier based attacks were well planned, well executed, and in maximum strength between H-60 and H-Hour. It is believed that air support during this period was highly effective. Post D-Day air support was adequate in strength, and is considered to have been generally employed to good advantage.
- (D) The air liaison parties performed their functions satisfactorily, considering their previous inexperience in some instances, and their inadequate personnel and equipment. (See paragraph 4(D) for additional comment).
- (E) Based on this and previous experience, it is considered that the ALP's did not have entirely satisfactory communications with the landing force air support control unit. Only one SAR net was available to three divisions, with a consequent overload. This resulted in the inability of some units to get their requests through while a strike was being run in another area. Due to the very limited enemy zone of activity, and the close proximity of our lines, Commander, Landing Force Air Support Control Unit One, chose not to invoke "procedure (1)", but continued to deal directly with battalion ALP's in the interest of greater speed in fulfilling requests, and in accomplishing the accurate direction of strikes. This procedure will undoubtedly be largely used in the future. Consequently it is recommended that a second SAR(MHF) net be provided the battalion ALP's in lieu of the useless VHF they now have, and that it be used only for the special purpose of requesting strikes while the primary SAR frequency is in use for reporting observations of air attacks in progress. This would entail the substitution of a second MHF radio set for the VHF set, as it is considered necessary that all ALP's monitor the primary SAR net at all times. The retention of VHF, (SAD frequency), by





regimental and division A so the madricon to the two SAR frequencies, is considered desirable, to enable them to know exactly how air strikes in their zones are progressing. It is not considered necessary or desirable that battalion ALP's be equipped to communicate directly with aircraft in the air.

6. CONCLUSIONS:

- (A) The control of air support missions from a shore-based unit located adjacent to Landing Force Headquarters is practicable and highly desirable.
- (B) In order to exercise such control a well trained team of operational and technical personnel is required, and a complex set of communication equipment similar to that installed in an AGC is necessary.
- (C) That the present organization and equipment of landing force air support control units, (with the exceptions noted above), is considered adequate for the operational control of aircraft in support of troops.

7. RECOMMENDATIONS:

(A) It is recommended that the selection, training, and administration of landing force air support control units remain a function of Aircraft, Fleet Marine Force, Pacific, exercised through Commander. Air Support Command, Fleet Marine Force, Pacific; and that, where possible, landing force air support control units be attached to the Third and Fifth Amphibious Corps, Fleet Marine Force, for operational control on a semi-permanent basis. It is considered highly desirable that a landing force air support control unit be available to each Corps and its divisions for conducting training in air support missions, utilizing whatever air units may be available in the area.

V. E. MEGEE.

Copy to:

ComASCU's, PhibsPac (2).

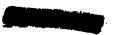
CG. AirFMFPac. (1).

CG, III PhibCorps (3).

CO, ProvAirSupCom (5).

FILE (10).





HEADQUARTERS, LANDING FORCE AIR SUPPORT CONTROL UNIT ONE, PROVISIONAL AIR SUPPORT COMMAND, FMF, IN THE FIELD.





Sub j:

17 March, 1945.

ENCLOSURE (A) TO: SPECIAL ACTION REPORT, INO JIMA CAMPAIGN.

Summary
Of
of Air
· Operations with carrier ai
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carrier
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March 1
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, 1 March to 9 March incl
inclusive.

		NATION:		(E) MISSION					PENDED:	(D) AMMO EX-		TYPE:		(c) MISSIONS					(B) MISSIONS:			(A) SORTIES:	
Corps	ALP:Battalion	ALP:Regiment	ALP: Division	LFASCU #1	Napalm	Rockets	Tonnage	100# Bombs	250# Bombs	500# Bombs	Other	X-CAP or X-VOF	Air Observer	Sumo Air Groups	TOTAL	Miscellaneous	Photographic	Observation	Direct Support	TOTAL	T	ŲF.	
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1	10	7	10	CS.	16	290	28	190	42	62	4	5	11	11	31	2	-	11	17	163	59	104	Mar 2
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10		22	200	\$ \$	120	3122	8.Th2	0TCT	82	623	1	100	122	8	194	+		2	130	1367	4,29	928	Total





Summary of Air Operations with carrier aircraft, 1 March to 9 March inclusive.

Mar 2

Mar 3

Mar 4 Mar 5

Mar 6

Mar

*Mar 8 *Mar 9

*Mar

10

Total

17Mar45.

										변
								REQUESTS:	PORT	AIR SUP-
Other	Weather	superior unit	By adjacent or	Lack of a/c	Lack of time	Lack of observ.	Prox to F/L	Denied:	Fulfilled	Total

0 ther	Weather	superior w	By adjacent	Lack of a/	Lack of time	Lack of ob	Prox to F/:	
		unit	cent or	a/c	time	observ.	F/L	

<u>£</u>

DISTANCE

STRIKES:

_	More than 800Yds	600-800 Yds	400-600 Ids	Less than 400Ids	Other	Weather	By adjacent or superior unit	Lack of a/c	Lack of time	Lack of observ.	Prox to F/L	Fulfilled	Total
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March 4 air support operations cancelled because of weather.

Note March 10 direct support operations by F-51 aircraft and X-VOF only.

Under section (G), data not available for 3 strikes on March 3, 3 on March 5, 1 on March 7 and 2 March 9. 8

Colonel, U. S. Marine Corps. V. E. MEGEE. Commanding.



^{*}Information under these columns include strikes by Army P-51 aircraft for corresponding dates, as shown on enclosure (B).

HEADQUARTERS,

LANDING FORCE AIR SUPPORT CONTROL UNIT ONE, PROVISIONAL AIR SUPPORT COMMAND, FMF, IN THE FIELD.



ENCLOSURE (B) TO: SPECIAL ACTION OF CRT. IWO JIMA CAMPAIGN.

Subj:

Air Support provided by 15th Fighter Group, Army Air Forces. Garrison Air Force, during occupation of IWO JIMA.

1. The 47th Fighter Squadron, 15th Group, arrived at IWO JIMA at noon 6 March, and flew their first close air support mission on the afternoon of 8 March. The 45th and 78th Fighter Squadrons of the 15th Group arrived 8 March and began flying close air support missions on the following day. The following summary of close support missions flown by the 15th Group between 7 March and 14 March inclusive is herewith submitted:

DATE	TARGET AREA	NO-TYPE PLANES	NO 100# BOMBS EXPENDED	NO 500# BOMBS EXPENDED	NO FIRE BOMBS EXP.	NO RDS. .50 CAL EXP.
8 March	185-202	8 P-51s	••••	**		16,640
9 March	230-246	8 P-51s	16	•••		8,770
9 March	196	7 P-51s	14		•••	9,185
9 March	196 - I	8 P-51s	16	-	***	12,265
9 March		8 P-51s	-	16	***	***
9 March	-	8 P-51s	-	16	•••	
9 March	185-D,Q,M.	8 P-51s	-	16		•••
10 March	250-T 251-P	8 P-51s	***	16	-	2,844
10 March	250-T 251-K L,M,N,P.	7 P-51s	•••	14	-	6,949
10 March	250-N,Q,S.	6 P-51s	•••	12	, -	47
10 March	250-251	8 P-51s		•••		
ll March		8 P-51s	-	14	-	11,272
ll March		8 P-51s	-	16		4,875
11 March	250-T	4 P-51s		g	-	4,692
12 March	250	8 P-51s		16	-	2,980
12 March	251	8 P-51s	•••	16	_	3,089
14 March	-	5 P-51s		-	10	9,000
		Strikes Sorties	46	160	10	92,608.
	127	POLITER	40	100	TO	76,000.





ir Support provided by 15th Fighter Group, Army Air Forces, Garrison Air Force, during occupation of IWO JIMA. 17Mar45.

considering that these squadrons had not previously been employed in close support missions, and that they had no previous knowledge of the control technique employed, their performance has been highly satisfactory. The flight leaders were intelligent, cooperative, and efficient in controlling their units in flight. The pilots were daring and skillful, pressing their strikes home to minimum altitudes with a consequent high degree of accuracy in their strafing and glide bombing. It is considered that the 15th Fighter Group provided material and timely assistance to our troops.

V. E. MEGEE,
Colonel, U. S. Marine Corps,
Commanding.

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IsCom IWO JIMA Preliminary Report

(To be Distributed Separately)

Annex GEORGE to Special Action Report IWO JIMA Campaign.





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