

The enemy's major naval and air base at Rabaul was pounded incessantly by our forces throughout November, December and January, as was Kavieng, another important base on the northern tip of New Ireland.

On 15 February an Allied landing was made on Green Island followed on 29 February by a landing in the Admiralty Islands.

The Navy's campaign in the Southwest Pacific was meeting with brilliant success, enabling the Army to follow up our landings and occupations with the establishment of bases from which land-based aircraft could effectively attack strongly entrenched or by-passed Jap positions.

The capture of the Gilbert Islands, strategically located athwart the equator, was a necessary part of any serious thrust at the Japanese Empire. Therefore, during the second week in November, a large naval force under Vice Admiral Spruance headed west. Our cruisers bombarded Tarawa on 19 November and on the morning of 20 November our attack groups were off both Tarawa and Makin Islands.

Makin was captured on 22 November.

Tarawa's capture by our marines, came after a furious four day assault accompanied by heavy fire support from our ships and aircraft. The fight for Tarawa was considered by many to be the most intense of any in the war up to that time and cost us heavily in casualties.

The LISCOMB BAY, an escort carrier, was torpedoed and sunk with heavy loss of life off Makin Island during the period of assault on Tarawa and Makin.

Following the capture of the Gilberts, our carrier task forces repeatedly attacked Jap bases in the Marshalls and Bougain Islands. Bombing attacks on 30 and 31 January, simultaneous attacks on Kwajalein, Roi and Dotje were launched by three separate carrier groups.

Landings were made on Majuro 1 February followed by landings the next day on Roi, Manur and Kwajalein. By 8 February the entire Kwajalein Atoll was in our hands.

On 17 and 18 February, the Jap bastion of Truk was attacked by carrier based planes, followed up by battleships, cruisers and destroyers. Heavy damage was inflicted on the enemy in this large-scale attack which was generally regarded as partial payment for the debt incurred when Pearl Harbor was attacked.

Control of the Marshalls was completed on 20 February with the capture of Eniwetok. The Marshalls operations, under Vice Admiral Spruance, were characterized by excellent planning and by almost perfect timing in the execution of these plans.

While the fleet was accounting for itself so admirably in the South and Central Pacific our naval forces elsewhere were not idle.

During June and July, in spite of weather, our submarines prevented Jap reinforcements of Attu and Kiska in the Aleutians which had been occupied by the enemy in early June.

The Jap-held islands were attacked frequently by aircraft, and our naval forces again prevented the Japs from supporting their garrisons at Kiska and Attu.

On May 11th, we landed forces on Attu and by May 31st that island had been secured. After heavy bombing of Kiska during July and August, we landed forces there only to find that it had been abandoned by the enemy.