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U.S. NAVY SURFACE BATTLE DOCTRINE AND VICTORY IN THE PACIFIC

Trent Hone

The basic strategic problems confronting the U.S. Navy during the interwar years of the 1920s and 1930s were how to move a large fleet across the Pacific, absorb or avoid Japanese attritional attacks, seize forward bases for further operations, and retain sufficient fighting strength to defeat Japan's Combined Fleet. Japanese and American policies in Asia were in conflict, and war was a possible result; the U.S. Navy planned to win by destroying Japan's navy, imposing a blockade, and forcing Japan's surrender. Details of the strategic dilemma were the focus of interwar plans, large fleet maneuvers, and complex war games at the Naval War College, in Newport, Rhode Island. By the time war arrived in 1941, the concept of an advance across the Pacific had become the subject of extensive and detailed strategic planning.¹

However, the fleet that advanced through the Pacific in World War II was not the fleet of prewar plans. The prewar Navy had centered on a battle fleet, a battleship-centric formation that, concentrated together with a large fleet train, would move as a unit, seizing objectives along its path.² By early 1943, a new and more effective fleet organization had become available. Fast carrier task forces

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had demonstrated their ability to form powerful striking forces, maneuver independently of slower assault shipping, and force a decision on their own.³ The fleet that took the war to Japanese shores was built around carrier task forces.

It is generally assumed that the change from a battleship-centric formation to carrier task forces

invalidated the strategic and tactical planning carried out before the war, but this view is incorrect. The continuity in the Navy's strategic planning has already been illustrated by Edward Miller's *War Plan Orange*; a similar continuity can be found in tactical plans and doctrine.⁴ Although the relatively high speed and flexibility of carrier task forces gave them operational maneuverability significantly greater than that of the battleship formations that preceded them, the basic tactical principles that the Navy employed in its battle doctrines remained unchanged.

The changes were confined to the method of applying and distributing these principles. Two important factors combined to temper the prewar concepts and produce a new approach. The first was the flexibility afforded by carrier task forces and the way they could concentrate against multiple targets simultaneously or against a single target without becoming a single target themselves. The second factor was wartime experience. By late 1942, the Navy's prewar approach to the development and dissemination of tactical doctrine had shown serious flaws. Ships and men were going into battle without the proper indoctrination, limiting their effectiveness.⁵ A new approach was needed; the Navy's Pacific Fleet was the first to synthesize all three elements: the necessity of a new approach to tactical doctrine, the challenge introduced by fast carrier task forces, and existing prewar doctrinal concepts. These were married together by new tactical manuals, new fleet organizations, and refined battle plans. Together, these elements enabled success in the rapid string of offensives that moved through the Central Pacific, returned American forces to the Philippines, and crushed Japan as a naval power.

OFFENSIVE IN THE CENTRAL PACIFIC

In early 1943, the Pacific War was entering a new phase. The Pacific Fleet, under Admiral Chester W. Nimitz, had defeated the Japanese in the attritional struggle for Guadalcanal and forced them onto the strategic defensive. It was essential that Nimitz's forces seize the opportunity afforded by their success and begin a strategic offensive, if they were to maintain the initiative.⁶

The Central Pacific would be the objective of the new offensive. Before the war, both sides had recognized the strategic importance of the Marshall, Caroline, and Mariana island groups, collectively known as the Mandates.⁷ The islands occupied a central position and provided numerous bases. The Navy could use these to support further offensives in the direction of the Philippines, Formosa, or Japan itself. It was estimated that the seizure of the Mandates would "make available . . . approximately 20 airfields, 15 seaplane bases, 8 submarine bases, and 10 fleet anchorages."⁸ Accordingly, in June 1943 Nimitz was directed by the Joint Chiefs of

Staff (JCS) to develop a plan to penetrate the Japanese perimeter; the initial target would be the Marshall Islands.⁹

The campaign plan Nimitz and his staff developed stressed two specific operational goals—a rapid pace of operations that would pressure the Japanese and keep the initiative firmly within the Pacific Fleet’s grasp, and a decisive showdown with the Japanese fleet. GRANITE, as the plan was code-named, stressed both of these objectives, emphasizing the need to maintain “unremitting pressure against Japan” and seeking the destruction of “the Japanese Fleet at an early date.”¹⁰

The fast pace of operations presented several challenges. It would be necessary to keep the striking arm of the fleet in forward areas almost continuously; this required a new approach to logistics.¹¹ Increased tempo also required a new approach to the development and dissemination of tactical doctrine. The pre-war concept of a fleet that would move through the Pacific as a cohesive unit had to be discarded.¹² To sustain the rapid pace of operations, individual ships and small task units would have to be interchangeable. They would have to move out of forward areas without disrupting the pace of the offensive; they would have to move into the combat zone and be effective immediately; and they could not be expected to spend adequate time training with their cohorts. Further exacerbating these issues was the need for ships of the Pacific Fleet to support two major offensives in two theaters simultaneously.¹³ A new tactical manual, *Current Tactical Orders and Doctrine, U.S. Pacific Fleet*, known as PAC 10, would help resolve these issues.

Victory in a major fleet action is commonly assumed to have been a tactical objective of the Pacific Fleet, but the GRANITE plan illustrates that it was a strategic goal.¹⁴ “All operations will be conducted as to maintain maximum readiness to take advantage of opportunities to bring important enemy naval forces to action.”¹⁵ The Japanese fleet was a credible fighting force, and so long as it could sortie and threaten the success of an amphibious operation, it would limit the Pacific Fleet’s freedom of maneuver. Operational and tactical plans had to account for this contingency. Thus GRANITE assumed that “a major fleet action, although it may delay amphibious operations for a brief period, will greatly accelerate them thereafter.”¹⁶

The movement into the Mandates was expected to draw out the Japanese fleet and enable its destruction. Every subsidiary operation plan to GRANITE—including GALVANIC for the invasion of the Gilberts, FLINTLOCK and CATCHPOLE for the Marshalls, HAILSTONE for Truk, LONGHOP for Manus, and FORAGER for the Marianas—therefore had to account for the possible opportunity of decisive action. Tactical and operational plans were developed to meet this contingency.

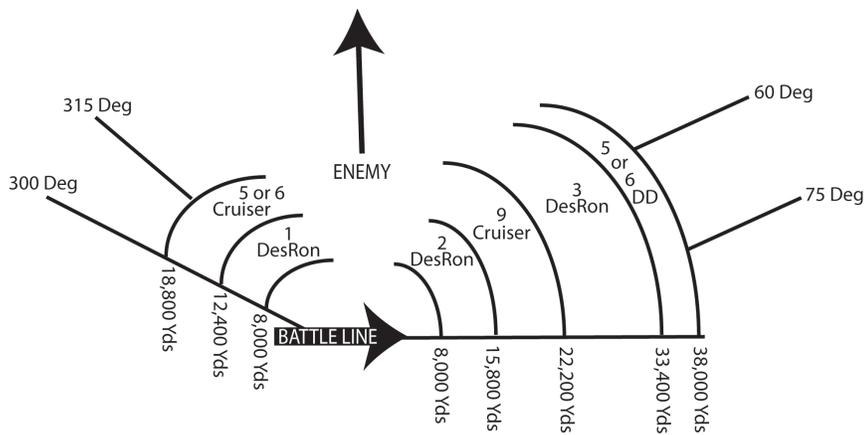
PREWAR EXPERIENCE AND DOCTRINE

The Navy’s existing tactical doctrine provided a backdrop for offensive preparations. Sophisticated and nuanced after refinement in the interwar period, this doctrine emphasized major fleet action and relied on several fundamental principles, including tactical concentration and coordinated action against the enemy.¹⁷

The doctrine’s set of “major tactics,” those for a large fleet in battle, were thorough and flexible; they covered a variety of contingencies apart from the main fleet action. Cruisers and destroyers were drilled in “night search and attack” procedures, designed to locate and damage an enemy battle fleet the night before a battle.¹⁸ Battle-line aircraft carriers operated with the battle fleet, providing air cover for the battleships and fleet train.¹⁹ Independent carrier task forces performed reconnaissance and targeted their opposite numbers to establish aerial superiority. Submarines scouted ahead and attacked enemy surface vessels.²⁰

But the main emphasis of major tactics was the complex ballet of a battle-line action. Battle plans emphasized the cooperation of all fleet units to destroy the main objective—the enemy battle line. The publication of *Tentative Fleet Dispositions and Battle Plans, 1930* introduced a new level of complexity and coordination.²¹ For the first time, the Navy had standard plans to govern the entire fleet in action. The new plans were further refined by *General Tactical Instructions, United States Navy (FTP 142)* in 1934 and by *General Tactical Instructions, United States Navy (FTP 188)* in 1940.

**FIGURE 1
TYPICAL BATTLE FORMATION**



Source: *Operation Plan 12-44*, p. J-1-7.
Note: DD = destroyer, DesRon = destroyer squadron; Deg = degrees relative to enemy bearing.

Battle plans were designated by a system of coded numbers and letters. The first number would determine the overall type of action to be fought. A normal action on similar courses—that is, with the Navy’s battle line steaming in the

same direction as that of the enemy—was indicated by *1*. The numeral 2 indicated a reverse action, with the Navy's battle line moving in the opposite direction and chasing the enemy's tail. Reverse actions were believed to offer significant advantages, because the Japanese were expected to put fast and powerful forces in the van of their line; if the battle moved away from them, their effectiveness would be reduced.²² Other numbers were used for more complex situations.²³ After the number followed a letter that prescribed a specific range band: *E* indicated a fight at extreme range, twenty-seven thousand yards and above; *L* signified long range, twenty-one to twenty-seven thousand yards; *M* was for medium range, seventeen to twenty-one thousand yards; and *C* meant close range, seventeen thousand yards and below. Other letters provided details on the use of supporting forces.²⁴ Common plans, such as "1L," a normal action at long range, and "2M," a reverse action at medium range, were described in detail.²⁵

All these scripted plans assumed the same basic battle formation, a focused concentration of offensive power. Battleships were positioned in the center, with their broadsides facing the enemy (see figure 1); light forces—groups of cruisers and destroyers—were positioned on either flank. A group of destroyers was generally retained with the battle line to provide close protection against enemy destroyers and submarines. Carriers and ships of the fleet train would position themselves on the far side of the battle line from the enemy.²⁶ The intent was to allow all elements of the fleet to cooperate, to fight as a unit toward the common goal of destroying the enemy battle line.

Concentration of the battle fleet was particularly vital to success in a gunnery action, and the battle formation reflected this. Although the range and accuracy of battleship guns increased during the interwar period, battleships had to group together to maximize their fighting power.²⁷ Experiments during tactical exercises were conducted with distributed formations, but results had repeatedly shown that dispersion invited defeat in detail. Accordingly, concentration had become a doctrinal tenet.²⁸ A concentrated formation maximized the offensive power of not only the battle line but also the other fighting units that made up the battle fleet.

The lessons of the interwar period had also led to an emphasis on combined arms—coordinated attacks on the enemy formation by all elements of the fleet, including battleships, destroyers, and airplanes.²⁹ For a time submarines and minelayers were even considered important elements of a major fleet action.³⁰ All available weapons were to be used in concert. Admiral Harris Laning, writing in his 1933 pamphlet on fleet action, emphasized this point: "With so many weapons carried on such different types of ships it is apparent that if we are to get the maximum effect of all weapons and make our blow the sum total of the

blows of all, there must be perfect coordination between the types carrying them.”³¹

The effectiveness of each individual attack, then, was expected to be increased by coordination with other types. This was particularly true of attacks by airplanes and destroyers; under normal circumstances enemy battleships were believed capable of thwarting them through a combination of defensive fire and maneuver, but when combined with battleship gunfire, aircraft and destroyers were considered to be far more effective.³² Coordinated attacks using planes, destroyers, and the guns of battleships were a recurring feature of the Navy’s Fleet Problems and tactical exercises. The idea of using aircraft and surface ships in concert to destroy an enemy fleet became an essential feature of the Navy’s plans for decisive battle.³³

Submarines were another important element of the Navy’s plans in the inter-war period. They had long been considered for use in major actions, but the specifics of how they were to be employed had not been resolved. Early plans had envisioned using them as a tactical scouting force for the fleet, sailing ahead to report on and attack approaching enemy ships.³⁴ This proved difficult to implement; submarines were too slow. In general, their usefulness in fleet operations proved limited. Wartime commanders would adopt a new solution.

WARTIME LESSONS

Opportunities for the employment of “major tactics” were lacking in the two years following Pearl Harbor. The combat that did occur—furious battles of light forces and long-range carrier duels—revealed flaws in the Navy’s prewar approach to the development and dissemination of tactical doctrine.

Minor Tactics

In contrast to preparations for decisive battle, “minor tactics”—those that would govern the employment of smaller forces—were neglected before the war. Very limited doctrinal guidance was provided for minor actions at the fleet level. Instead, individual squadron and task force commanders were expected to develop combat doctrines and battle plans themselves for the employment of their forces.³⁵

This mechanism worked well under prewar conditions, when formations were cohesive and had time to drill under individual commanders. Where these circumstances held in wartime, the Navy’s light forces were effective in battle. The performances of Commander Paul H. Talbot’s Destroyer Division 59 at Balikpapan and Rear Admiral Norman Scott’s Task Force (TF) 64 at Cape Esperance are worthy examples. In both these cases, the forces involved were familiar with their commanders’ doctrines and were able to practice together

before going into action.³⁶ In the latter half of 1942, however, combat losses, the pace of operations in the Pacific, and the demands of a two-ocean war made this increasingly difficult. The climactic battles for Guadalcanal in November 1942 saw ships thrown together in haste; commanders had no time to develop common doctrine or plans, and the resulting losses were severe.³⁷ It became obvious that the development of “minor tactics” could not be left to commanders at sea.

The Pacific Fleet’s initial approach to addressing this problem was inadequate. “Tactical bulletins” and “confidential letters” on specific topics were produced and distributed to fleet units. These documents modified, enhanced, or introduced procedures that reflected lessons of combat and experience with new tactics and techniques. They covered a variety of topics—major action plans, night battle tactics, the use of radar, and the introduction of the Combat Information Center. Their proliferation, however, led to redundancy and inconsistency.³⁸ By 1943, war experience had shown that a comprehensive revision of tactical manuals was necessary.

Carrier War

The Navy’s carrier battle doctrine was effective enough to allow operational, if not tactical, success in all the major carrier battles of 1942. However, lessons from combat illustrated that improvement was necessary, particularly in the coordination of multiple carriers within a single formation.³⁹ The Navy had limited experience with task forces containing multiple carriers. For much of the interwar period, the Navy had had only two large carriers for experiments and exercises, *Lexington* and *Saratoga*. During Fleet Problems, they were regularly placed on opposite sides; when teamed together, they operated in independent task groups or were tied to the battle line.⁴⁰

Technological factors also contributed to the Navy’s lack of experience in this respect. Before the advent of radar and effective fighter-direction techniques, carriers were best protected by keeping them hidden. A carrier that had been located could be struck and rendered inoperable by an enemy attack. Dispersing carriers into separate strike forces, away from the main body and each other, was a logical defensive measure.⁴¹ The war and the advance of technology changed the situation. Improved radars to detect incoming strikes and more effective techniques for vectoring fighters to intercept them allowed groups of carriers to pool resources and offer mutual support. The Navy’s carrier task force doctrine was revised on the basis of these developments and of lessons from the 1942 battles. Single-carrier formations were abandoned; task forces were formed around multiple carriers operating together.⁴²

Even more fundamental changes would occur. Fast carrier task forces became the basis of the offensive power of the Pacific Fleet. The shift to carrier task

forces and away from a battle fleet offered opportunities. For instance, because each of the carrier task forces could operate independently, it was possible to disperse them and strike multiple targets simultaneously. This would help achieve one of the major operational goals of the offensive, a rapid tempo. However, this was not without risk; carriers were still considered vulnerable to surface action, and they needed support during their thrusts into the enemy's defensive perimeter.⁴³ The new, fast battleships were ideally suited to provide this support, and they would be made part of the carrier task forces.

The dispersal of battleship strength, however, ran counter to the principle of concentration the Navy had emphasized for decades. It introduced the risk that a lone carrier task force might be isolated and destroyed; it also made it essential that the carrier task forces concentrate prior to major fleet action in order to bring the battleships together. Thus, although dispersal enabled the rapid pace of operations, it hindered the second goal, the need to bring the Japanese fleet to decisive action. An approach that balanced the two factors was necessary.

THE NEW APPROACH

A combination of approaches was used to satisfy the operational goals of the Central Pacific offensive. New fleetwide tactical manuals were developed that covered "minor tactics" and the operations of small task forces; the common doctrines they established allowed for the interchangeability of ships and task units demanded by the rapid operational tempo. Operation plans called for the seizure of multiple objectives but also acknowledged the need to concentrate for decisive action. Tactical plans emphasizing concerted action against the enemy prepared the Navy for the expected battles. Together, these methods ensured the success of the offensive in the Central Pacific.

In April 1943, Nimitz created a board to revise the Pacific Fleet Cruising Instructions. The officers of the board were ordered to review current doctrinal publications, examine combat reports, interview officers returning from combat zones, and produce a new set of cruising instructions.⁴⁴ They would in fact exceed this authority. By drawing on operational goals of the coming campaign, existing principles of the Navy's doctrine, and doctrinal flaws exposed by wartime experience, the board produced a new doctrinal manual for the Pacific Fleet, and the most important one issued by the wartime Navy.

Although carrier airpower would dominate the coming offensive, Nimitz chose three surface officers for the board and only one aviator. The senior member, Rear Admiral Robert M. Griffin, was an experienced surface warfare officer (as they are known today). He left the board before it completed its work, going on to command Battleship Division 3.⁴⁵ Captain Roscoe F. Good became senior member with Griffin's departure; later in the war he would command the

battleship *Washington*.⁴⁶ Captain E. M. Crouch replaced Griffin.⁴⁷ As commander of Destroyer Division 57, Crouch had survived the initial Japanese offensives in the South Pacific.⁴⁸ The aviator was Captain Apollo Soucek, who had served with distinction on the carrier *Hornet* and at the time of its loss had been its executive officer.⁴⁹ It was their labors that would produce *Current Tactical Orders and Doctrine, U.S. Pacific Fleet, PAC 10*.

PAC 10, issued in June 1943, provided what the Navy had been missing—a common set of tactical principles for the cooperation of small forces and detached units in battle. It corrected the underemphasis on “minor tactics,” granting them the same detailed treatment that major actions had received for over a decade.⁵⁰ The coded system of letters and numbers used for major actions was recycled and applied to small task forces. Compact battle formations developed specifically for combat by such forces were presented.⁵¹ Existing battle formations for light forces in night combat were retained.⁵²

Instead of having to create and distribute their own tactical doctrines, small task group commanders could now develop battle plans rapidly, having a common doctrine to which they could refer. This streamlined the process, relieved small-unit commanders of an unnecessary burden, and ensured a common approach.⁵³

Now, new ships could familiarize themselves with PAC 10 as they prepared to join the fleet and, because the manual applied to all task forces in all Pacific combat zones, it became possible to move ships from group to group or theater to theater without reequipping them with lengthy instructions by their new commanders. This was an extremely important development, and it was stressed in the manual’s introduction.

PAC-10 is intended . . . to obviate necessity for . . . special instructions under ordinary circumstances and to minimize them in extraordinary circumstances. The ultimate aim is to obtain essential uniformity without unacceptable sacrifice of flexibility. It must be possible for forces composed of diverse types, and indoctrinated under different task force commanders, to join at sea on short notice for concerted action against the enemy without exchanging a mass of special instructions.⁵⁴

Successors to PAC 10 built upon the foundation that the original provided. In February 1944, the U.S. Fleet followed the lead of its Pacific arm and issued *Current Tactical Orders and Doctrine, U.S. Fleet*, known as USF 10A.⁵⁵ USF 10A built directly upon PAC 10: its format, structure, and the majority of its contents were unchanged from the Pacific Fleet’s publication.⁵⁶ Although its title implied that it was an amendment of the prewar USF 10, *Current Tactical Orders and Doctrine, United States Fleet*, the new manual shared very little with its predecessor and

provided far more tactical detail.⁵⁷ A revision, USF 10B, followed in May 1945, introducing additional wartime lessons.⁵⁸

THE OFFENSIVE BEGINS

With PAC 10 the fleet solved two significant problems. First, as noted, the creation of a single, common doctrine allowed ships to be interchanged between task groups, and this in turn enabled the rapid operational tempo Nimitz desired. Second, shifting the development of small-unit tactical doctrine to the fleet level and out of the hands of individual commanders increased the effectiveness of all units, particularly the fast-moving carrier task forces. Tactical and operational plans for the coming offensive were built on this foundation.

GALVANIC

Although the JCS directive ordered the seizure of positions in the Marshalls, Nimitz considered a thrust directly into the island group too dangerous. Too little was known about Japanese positions; experience had demonstrated the importance of reconnaissance before amphibious landings, and the Marshalls were too far away for land-based planes to photograph the targets.⁵⁹ An intermediate objective was needed. Nimitz and his planners chose the Gilbert island group, formerly a British possession, recently seized by the Japanese. The code name for the operation was *GALVANIC*.

Nimitz's Central Pacific Force, augmented by ever-growing numbers of new ships and aircraft, was by November 1943 ready to begin major offensive operations. Vice Admiral Raymond A. Spruance had assumed command on 5 August.⁶⁰ The relative inexperience of the growing fleet had made a comprehensive doctrine for tactical operations imperative. Most of the ships of the force were new, the majority of their officers were reservists, and many of the men had never been to sea before.⁶¹ These ships could not operate as a cohesive unit without a doctrine to guide them, particularly if the Japanese sought a fleet action.

The possibility of fleet action heavily influenced plans for *GALVANIC*. The Central Pacific Force would seize three atolls: Tarawa, Makin, and Abemama. Possession of these would guarantee American dominance of the Gilbert Islands and provide airfields from which to reconnoiter and attack the Marshalls. Although long-range bombers and reconnaissance aircraft could reach the Gilberts, the extreme range forced Spruance to provide direct air support for the invasion forces with his fast carrier task forces.⁶² This severely limited the carriers' freedom of maneuver. In prewar exercises, combat forces caught while supporting amphibious assaults had been damaged by attritional raids and then defeated by major attacks.⁶³ At Savo Island, the Japanese had reinforced these lessons by decimating an Allied covering force.⁶⁴ Japanese responses in the Central Pacific were expected to be even more powerful.⁶⁵ Minor raids could be handled by the invasion

forces, using PAC 10 as a guide, but a major Japanese response would be a serious threat.⁶⁶

Spruance's GALVANIC plan accounted for this possibility. The main objectives would be seized simultaneously, Tarawa by the Southern Attack Force and Makin by the Northern. The atolls were expected to be occupied before the Japanese could mount a major response.⁶⁷ Simultaneous attacks divided his forces, but the best defense against the threat of attack in the middle of an amphibious operation was to overwhelm the objectives quickly, granting the fleet freedom to maneuver; this also satisfied the desire for a rapid operational tempo.

The potential for a major action was very real. Powerful Japanese forces based at Truk in the Caroline Islands could quickly move into the Marshalls and challenge the invasion. Estimates suggested that the Japanese could oppose the attack with ten battleships, seven aircraft carriers, and supporting forces.⁶⁸ "Current Intelligence indicates the presence of the major portion of the Japanese Fleet in the Truk area at the present time. Whether this fleet can or will be used to interfere with GALVANIC we do not know. . . . [W]e must be prepared at all times during GALVANIC for a fleet engagement."⁶⁹

Over a hundred miles separated Tarawa and Makin; the forces covering the assaults were too far apart to provide mutual support, unless Spruance had timely warning of a Japanese approach. He was extremely apprehensive that a powerful attack would fall on a portion of his force and defeat it in detail. Of the two island objectives, Makin was closer to the Marshalls and much more vulnerable to a Japanese response. Spruance expected air searches to give him adequate warning and allow concentration of the Central Pacific Force. If weather patterns were unfavorable, however, storm systems could prevent aerial searches in the direction of the Mandates; Spruance considered delaying the attack on Makin if such circumstances developed.⁷⁰

Even if they did not, however, the forces around Makin had to be ready to defend themselves. Spruance placed significantly more firepower in his northern groups. The old battleships in the Northern Attack Force, *Idaho*, *Mississippi*, and *New Mexico*, had been extensively modified before the war and were the most powerful of the old battleships available.⁷¹ In addition, all six fast battleships supporting the operation were near Makin, evenly divided between the carrier task group providing direct support to the attack and the "interceptor" carrier group.⁷² The latter, under the direct command of Rear Admiral Charles A. Pownall, Spruance's carrier force commander, was positioned to intercept Japanese aerial attacks and provide early warning of enemy forces approaching from the Marshalls.⁷³ Spruance urged these carrier groups to remain concentrated: "Carrier Task Groups which are screened by fast battleships and are supporting the attack on Makin and covering our northern flank will . . . be operated in as

close tactical support as possible of each other and the combatant units of the Northern Attack Force.”⁷⁴

If the Japanese sought battle, the nine battleships in the north could separate from their task groups and unite to form a powerful battle line under Rear Admiral Willis A. Lee.⁷⁵ But this was not Spruance’s desired approach. He wanted a margin of superiority over his foe, and his battle plan called for the entire Central Pacific Force to come together to counter any major Japanese move.⁷⁶ Three old battleships and additional ships supporting the landing at Tarawa would join the forces around Makin, giving Spruance a battle fleet of twelve battleships, nine heavy cruisers, three light cruisers, and twenty-eight destroyers.⁷⁷ It is important to emphasize that this battle fleet drew not only from the fast carrier groups but also from the invasion forces. As it would form on the spot, common doctrine would be essential.

Spruance’s GALVANIC plan emphasized the importance of destroying the Japanese fleet, and it echoed the goal of the GRANITE campaign.

If . . . a major portion of the Japanese Fleet were to attempt to interfere with GALVANIC, it is obvious that the defeat of the enemy fleet would at once become paramount. Without having inflicted such a defeat on the enemy, we would be unable to proceed with the capture and development of Makin, Tarawa, and Apamama [*sic*]. The destruction of a considerable portion of Japanese naval strength would . . . go far toward winning the war.⁷⁸

In fact, the Japanese too anticipated a major fleet action. Prior to GALVANIC, when Central Pacific carrier task forces had raided Tarawa, Makin, and Wake Island, Admiral Mineichi Koga, commander in chief of the Combined Fleet, correctly anticipated that these actions signaled the start of an offensive. Twice—in September and again in October—he moved the bulk of his forces from his main base at Truk to Eniwetok in the Marshalls, ready to counter Spruance. Each time, when the expected offensive did not occur, Koga returned to Truk.⁷⁹ By the time of the landings on 20 November, Koga was no longer prepared. In late October, faced with a threat to his southern flank by Allied advances toward Bougainville, Koga reinforced the bastion of Rabaul.⁸⁰ He sent his carrier squadrons there, along with most of his cruiser forces.⁸¹ Nimitz’s rapid operational tempo was delivering results. Frequent raids had kept the Japanese guessing about where the first blow would fall, and, pressured on two fronts, they chose to reinforce their southern flank. When Spruance moved into the Gilberts, stripped of its air squadrons and cruiser scouts, there was little the Combined Fleet could do. The looked-for decisive action did not materialize.

FLINTLOCK

With the success of *GALVANIC*, attention quickly shifted to the Marshalls. The important question was how best to continue the rapid pace of the offensive and quickly neutralize Japanese positions in the island group. The essential initial objective was an airfield that could support bombers; there were bomber airfields on Wotje and Maloelap in the eastern portion of the Marshalls. A phased approach, breaking the capture of the Marshalls into eastern and western operations, was considered and endorsed by the JCS.⁸² Nimitz and his planners rejected this idea; they did not want the offensive to degenerate into an attritional struggle like the fighting in the Solomons.

As plans for the Marshalls were refined, concurrent raids struck Japanese positions; PAC 10 facilitated these minor operations.⁸³ Lee's fast battleships were detached from the carrier task forces and moved to the South Pacific; along the way, they bombarded the Japanese base on Nauru, west of the Gilberts. Pownall led two of his carrier groups into the heart of the Marshalls, attacking the Kwajalein and Wotje atolls. Raids like these sustained the operational tempo. Pownall's strikes destroyed planes, sank ships, and damaged installations, but their most valuable achievement was a photograph of a large airstrip the Japanese were constructing on Kwajalein Island. This proved what none had expected, that a bomber airfield could be built on Kwajalein.⁸⁴

Plans to capture the Marshalls in one operation were quickly finalized. Kwajalein, the centerpiece of the Japanese defensive position, would be seized; the eastern Marshalls would be isolated and left to wither on the vine. *FLINTLOCK*, as the operation was code-named, required three attack forces. The first two would strike Kwajalein; the northern element would assault the twin islands of Roi-Namur, while the southern would capture Kwajalein Island, on the southern end of the atoll. The third force would occupy undefended Majuro Atoll, which would become a local anchorage for assault forces, and be an operational reserve. The reserves would be held ready to assist in the capture of Kwajalein; if not needed there, they would take part in Operation *CATCHPOLE*, the assault on Eniwetok.⁸⁵

The fast carrier task forces, now designated TF 58, had a new commander for *FLINTLOCK*, Rear Admiral Marc A. Mitscher. As in *GALVANIC*, they had to operate in direct support of the assault forces, but the previous approach of teaming a carrier task force to an assault objective was discarded. Pinning carriers to physical objectives restricted their mobility, and the decision had been criticized.⁸⁶ Mitscher would operate his carriers offensively in the Marshalls, rotating between supporting landings and neutralizing Japanese air bases.⁸⁷ Two of these carrier groups were kept near the main objectives at Kwajalein Atoll, close enough to concentrate quickly for mutual support. On 29 January 1944, Task

Groups (TGs) 58.2 and 58.3 attacked Kwajalein. The next day, TG 58.1 replaced TG 58.3, and the latter moved to Eniwetok, farther to the west and closer to Truk. These relative positions were held until TG 58.3 retired to fuel on 3 February.⁸⁸

The use of TG 58.3 as the advanced guard was deliberate. That group contained the two newest battleships, *Iowa* and *New Jersey*. The fastest and most powerful in the fleet, these two battleships constituted Battleship Division 7. Their high speed, over 32.5 knots, allowed them to keep pace with the fast carriers.⁸⁹ With Battleship Division 7, TG 58.3 could outfight any enemy surface force it could not outrun. If a major Japanese counterattack ensued, the task group would fall back on Kwajalein. The remaining six fast battleships were divided evenly between TGs 58.1 and 58.2.

Major action was once again anticipated. This was the first advance into the Mandates, which were known to be an important element of Japanese defensive strategy. In prewar plans, Admiral Husband E. Kimmel had expected to entice the Japanese to battle in the Central Pacific by threatening their position in the Marshalls.⁹⁰ Now Nimitz expected to do the same with the much larger and more powerful Central Pacific Force.

Spruance's battle plan for FLINTLOCK again called for the concentration of all fifteen available battleships, new and old, into a single battle line.⁹¹ Supporting units would be drawn from both the invasion fleet and the carrier groups. To guide the fleet in battle, Spruance planned to employ major action plans from FTP 188.⁹² These provided a mutually understood frame of reference and required the minimum of signaling—though if necessary, Spruance would develop his own battle plans and distribute them by signal.⁹³ Admiral Lee would command the battle line, as before.⁹⁴

CATCHPOLE and HAILSTONE

The anticipated Japanese response to FLINTLOCK did not occur. Majuro, Roi-Namur, and Kwajalein were all seized without interference from Japanese surface units. The reserve force moved to Eniwetok, initiating Operation CATCHPOLE. Admiral Spruance set his sights on the Combined Fleet. Aerial reconnaissance of Truk showed that major elements of the Japanese fleet were in the Carolines. A powerful attack, HAILSTONE, was planned to cover the landings at Eniwetok by neutralizing Truk and destroying any forces encountered.⁹⁵ If the Japanese fleet did not come out to fight, Spruance would take the fight to it.

Unlike previous major operations involving the fast carriers, HAILSTONE did not have an amphibious component; CATCHPOLE was a separate operation. HAILSTONE, however, was not just a raid but a deliberate attempt to destroy a large portion of the Combined Fleet. All the fast battleships were concentrated

into a single carrier group, TG 58.3, ready to deploy quickly and engage the enemy in the anticipated fleet action. The old battleships were left behind.⁹⁶

By the time of the initial air strikes on 17 February 1944, the Japanese had withdrawn their heavy units from Truk, but a large amount of shipping was discovered and attacked in the lagoon. When a group of Japanese light forces attempted to escape through the northern passage, Spruance detached a high-speed surface striking force, TG 50.9, to intercept. Battleship Division 7 formed its core; two heavy cruisers and four destroyers were attached in support.⁹⁷ This was the first employment of the new battleship division in a role that would often be assigned to it—pursuit and destruction of enemy ships.⁹⁸ The high speed of the battleships made them especially well suited for it, and on this occasion they were able to destroy four Japanese ships; a lone destroyer escaped.

The creation and detachment of ad hoc units like this, with no opportunity to train together, had produced unfortunate results fifteen months before off Guadalcanal.⁹⁹ PAC 10 and the recently issued USF 10A had made an important difference, enabling tactical commanders to seize opportunities presented by the rapid operational tempo.

The ships of TG 50.9 were not the only ones waiting to strike Japanese cripples. Ten submarines had been sent to prowl the waters around Truk in concert with the operation.¹⁰⁰ On 16 February *Skate* sighted and torpedoed the cruiser *Agano*, sinking it. The submarine's place in the decisive battle had been found. In future operations commanders ashore would strategically position submarines to provide distant reconnaissance and to attack targets of opportunity.

Additional carrier raids followed. After the successful strike on Truk and the enemy withdrawal from the Carolines, Spruance was free to range deeper into the Japanese defensive system. On 23 February 1944, TF 58 struck Japanese air bases in the Marianas, attacking the islands of Guam, Saipan, Tinian, and Rota. On the last day of March and first of April, the fast carriers hit Palau and Yap. The rapid pace of operations emphasized in the GRANITE plan was being sustained, and it was keeping the pressure on the Japanese.

DESECRATE II

The invasion of Hollandia on the northern coast of New Guinea was a southwest Pacific operation, not a Central Pacific one, but the JCS had decreed that the fast carriers would support it.¹⁰¹ Seizure of the Japanese base complex between Tanahmerah and Humboldt bays would provide General Douglas MacArthur's Southwest Pacific Force with an ideal position from which to further its advance along the northern coast of the island.¹⁰² Admiral Nimitz remained, however, focused on the destruction of the Japanese Combined Fleet, the primary aim of

GRANITE. On 23 March, during a visit to Brisbane, he emphasized the Navy's priorities to the general and made it clear that if the Japanese came out to fight, their fleet would become the primary objective of the fast carrier force.¹⁰³

The participation of TF 58 in the operation was code-named DESECRATE II. Mitscher was in command. (Spruance and the Central Pacific Force's amphibious elements remained behind, preparing for the invasion of the Marianas.) As in FLINTLOCK, the fast carriers were to provide direct support to the assault forces and suppress nearby Japanese airfields. Mitscher used three carrier task groups: TG 58.1, which had no battleships, would range to the west and attack Japanese airfields at Wakde, Sawar, and Sarmi;¹⁰⁴ TG 58.2, with the two fast battleships of Battleship Division 7, was to support the landings in Humboldt Bay; and TG 58.3, with four other fast battleships, would cover the landings in Tanahmerah Bay.

This arrangement positioned the bulk of Mitscher's surface striking power in the center, facilitating concentration if the Japanese appeared in force. Should a powerful battle fleet be required for a major action, six battleships, ten heavy cruisers, three light cruisers, and twenty-two destroyers were to concentrate under Admiral Lee; a carrier group, TG 58.1, would operate in direct support, under Lee's command.¹⁰⁵ In battle, Lee expected to leverage plans and dispositions from FTP 188 and USF 10A.¹⁰⁶ The remaining two carrier groups, stripped of the bulk of their escorts, would remain under Mitscher's command and operate in distant support.¹⁰⁷

Two additional plans were developed, for minor action, should the Japanese challenge with small forces. One teamed Lee's six battleships with two destroyer squadrons.¹⁰⁸ The other was a pursuit force built around Battleship Division 7, very similar to TG 50.9, which Spruance had sent around Truk; this time, the two fast battleships would be matched with two heavy cruisers and seven destroyers. Their preferred battle plan was "1E2," from USF 10A—an engagement on parallel courses at extreme range, with light forces on both flanks operating defensively.¹⁰⁹

DECISIVE BATTLE

By June 1944, Japanese bases in the Marshalls and Carolines had been seized or neutralized, the major base at Rabaul had been rendered untenable, and the Allies were rapidly advancing along the northern coast of New Guinea. It seemed as if the Japanese were content to let their defensive perimeter crumble without risking major fleet units, but this was about to change.

FORAGER

The third major offensive of Spruance's force, officially designated the Fifth Fleet on 29 April 1944, was the seizure of the Marianas. Operation FORAGER comprised the capture of Saipan, Tinian, and Guam. Saipan would be attacked first, on 15 June; landings on Guam were initially scheduled for three days later. The assault on Tinian would follow, but the specific date remained flexible.¹¹⁰ Because the capture of the Marshalls and Carolines had not produced a fleet action, the "prevailing opinion . . . was that the Japanese navy would not fight for the Marianas."¹¹¹

But Spruance had to be prepared for that contingency, and his battle plan for the Marianas changed little from those developed for earlier operations.¹¹² As before, he expected to concentrate all his battleships into one formation; seven old ones supporting the amphibious assaults were to combine with seven fast battleships from the carrier groups to give a total of fourteen. Supporting ships would be drawn from the carrier task groups and assault forces. Concentration and employment of his entire force remained fundamental elements of Spruance's plan.¹¹³ Concentration was also still a guiding principle of the employment of the fast battleships specifically: "In acting as a covering force have [carrier] task groups which are screened by fast battleships operate in as close tactical support of each other as the nature of their tasks and enemy action will permit."¹¹⁴

The increasing number of escort carriers in the invasion forces allowed the primary focus of the fast carriers to become the suppression of enemy air bases, rather than direct air support for the invasion. The plan called for the carriers to start their attacks three days before the landings, but this date was advanced a day, because of the "large estimated strength of enemy aircraft in the Marianas."¹¹⁵ On June 11, planes from Mitscher's TF 58 struck Japanese positions on Saipan, Tinian, Guam, Rota, and Pagan. These attacks continued for the next two days.

The carriers operated in four task groups: TG 58.1 attacked Guam, and the other three hit Saipan and Tinian. The fast battleships were kept concentrated; TG 58.2 contained the two high-speed battleships of Battleship Division 7, TG 58.3 the other five fast battleships. Finally, TGs 58.1 and 58.4 were supported by cruisers.¹¹⁶ The night before the landings, these two groups were sent north to attack the islands of Chichi Jima and Iwo Jima. The two other groups, with their battleships, remained to cover the landing beaches and assault forces.

In the meantime, the Japanese had resolved to contest the landings. On 12 June, having received word of the strikes in the Marianas, the new commander in chief of the Combined Fleet, Admiral Soemu Toyoda, issued orders to execute Operation A-GO, his plan for a major fleet action. Three days later, he made his

intention explicit: “The Combined Fleet will attack the enemy in the Marianas area and annihilate the invasion force. Activate A-Go Operation for decisive battle.”¹¹⁷ A powerful fleet was assembled under the command of Vice Admiral Jisaburo Ozawa, including nine carriers, five battleships, and eleven heavy cruisers.¹¹⁸ This force approached the Marianas in two main groups. The carriers and three battleships, with Ozawa embarked, left their base at Tawi Tawi in the southern Philippines and sailed through the archipelago, transiting the San Bernardino Strait. A second force, with the large battleships *Yamato* and *Musashi*, came north from Batjan in the Moluccas and rendezvoused with Ozawa in the Philippine Sea.

Spruance received word of these movements from submarines and realized that a major action was possible if the Japanese continued their approach.¹¹⁹ During the night of 14–15 June, he ordered TGs 58.1 and 58.4 to cut short their attacks on Chichi Jima and Iwo Jima and return for a rendezvous near Saipan on 18 June. On 16 June, he postponed the invasion of Guam and held a conference with Vice Admiral Richmond K. Turner, commander of the invasion force. The two developed a plan of action to deal with the approaching threat.

Two aspects of the developing situation presented particular challenges for Spruance. The battle for Saipan was still going on and limited his mobility; but he had expected that the Japanese would strike before one or more of the islands were secure all along.¹²⁰ The fact that the Japanese were approaching in two distinct groups was a more significant problem. Spruance’s original plan had anticipated that the Japanese might have two formations, a carrier group and an advanced guard, but he had expected them to be within supporting distance.¹²¹ The sightings so far suggested instead two independent formations.

Therefore, rather than concentrating the entire Fifth Fleet as per the plan, Spruance and Turner elected to strengthen TF 58 with five heavy cruisers, three light cruisers, and twenty-one destroyers detached from the invasion forces. The old battleships, three cruisers, and five destroyers were formed into a blocking force and sent west of Saipan.¹²² This plan had two advantages: the blocking force provided close cover for the Saipan beachhead, and TF 58 retained its mobility by separating itself from the slower old battleships. On 17 June, in preparation for a surface action, Admiral Mitscher recommended detaching the battleships entirely from the carrier task groups and placing them into a separate formation.¹²³ This would prevent the confusion that would inevitably result if the battleships and their escorts had to form in the middle of an air battle. Spruance concurred; the resulting TG 58.7 was placed under command of Admiral Lee. It contained seven battleships, four heavy cruisers, and thirteen destroyers.¹²⁴

Spruance then issued his battle plan. It called for air strikes to disable the enemy carriers and surface action by the battle line: “Our air will knock out enemy carriers . . . then will attack enemy battleships and cruisers to slow or disable them. Task Group 58.7 will destroy enemy fleet either by fleet action if enemy elects to fight or by sinking slowed or crippled ships if enemy retreats.”¹²⁵

Early on 18 June, when TGs 58.1 and 58.4 were to rejoin, a new submarine contact suggested the Japanese were close enough for a surface action that night. Mitscher asked Lee if he desired a night action.¹²⁶ Lee declined emphatically: “Do not[,] repeat[,] do not believe we should seek night engagement.”¹²⁷ Lee’s response reflected both his own experience and the limited training of his command.¹²⁸ He had fought and won a night battle and knew how quickly such an action could degenerate into a melee, particularly if the forces involved lacked cohesion.¹²⁹ Lee’s formation, formed on the spot from four different task groups, could operate together in daylight, by virtue of the common doctrines of USF 10A, but it was not prepared for night action.¹³⁰ Lee’s comments after his earlier battle provide clues as to his state of mind at this point: “Our battleships are neither designed nor armed for close range night actions with enemy light forces. A few minutes intense fire . . . from secondary battery guns can, and did, render one of our new battleships deaf, dumb, blind and impotent through destruction of radar, radio and fire control circuits.”¹³¹

Soon after Lee responded, Spruance decided against night action.¹³² He did not want to get too far from the forces at Saipan and risk defeat in detail. It is likely that he also wanted to ensure the concentration of all elements of TF 58; TGs 58.1 and 58.4 had not yet rejoined. In his response, Spruance mentioned concern at the prospect of a “diversionary attack” on the flank.¹³³ Most interpretations take this to mean that Spruance worried that a Japanese southern force would slip beyond him to raid the invasion beaches, but there is another possibility.¹³⁴ Captured Japanese planning material, which Spruance had reviewed, discussed “flanking,” but in another context—attacking an opposing carrier force after its attack planes had been committed to another, less important, target.¹³⁵ The Japanese believed they had been flanked in this sense at Midway, in that their carriers had been struck by surprise from an unanticipated direction while preoccupied with attacking Midway Island.¹³⁶ They hoped to do the same to the Americans in future battles, and since Spruance had come into possession of a Japanese document discussing this approach, it is likely that he expected to face such tactics.¹³⁷ This explains his preference for remaining concentrated and not striking in force until the Japanese had shown their hand.

Spruance’s emphasis on concentration continued to influence the developing action. He did not accept Mitscher’s recommendation to detach TG 58.1 and operate it to the northwest in order to cut off Ozawa’s escape route to the home

islands.¹³⁸ When a direction-finding fix from Pearl Harbor on 18 June placed the Japanese formation approximately 355 miles to the west, Mitscher recommended closing at night to launch a morning strike and get the battleships into position.¹³⁹ Spruance again refused, citing the possibility of an “end run.”¹⁴⁰ With that decision, the chance for a decisive action was lost.

The details of the ensuing battle are well known.¹⁴¹ The Japanese sent a series of air strikes against TF 58, but none succeeded in causing major damage; their losses in planes and pilots were tremendous. Unable to sustain the attacks, Ozawa turned toward Japan and began to withdraw. Spruance pursued, and on the evening of the next day a long-range strike succeeded in sinking the carrier *Hiyo*, but Spruance again refused to detach task forces.¹⁴² Before the action, Vice Admiral Charles A. Lockwood, commander of the Pacific Fleet’s submarines, stationed four of his boats in a square surrounding the area in which he believed Ozawa’s forces would operate. On 19 June, two of them found their targets. *Albacore* sighted and torpedoed Ozawa’s flagship, *Taiho*, just after it had completed launching its first strike; eight hours later *Taiho* sank, destroyed by the fires that ultimately resulted. In the interim, three torpedoes from *Cavella* sank carrier *Shokaku*.¹⁴³

The outcome in the battle of the Philippine Sea, however, was not decisive, even when the successes of submarines are considered. The Japanese were soundly defeated, but the majority of their fleet units, including most of their carriers and all their battleships, withdrew to fight again. Nonetheless, the first phase of the decisive naval battle of the Pacific War, the carrier duel, was over.

KING II

In the summer of 1944, in order to keep up the rapid pace of operations in the Pacific, Admiral Nimitz developed a second command for the Central Pacific Force, parallel to that of Spruance. The two flags and their respective staffs would command the same ships, alternately directing an operation and planning their next, thereby allowing less time between offensives and increasing the pressure on the Japanese. Admiral William F. Halsey, commander of the Third Fleet, was selected to be Spruance’s counterpart. When under Halsey’s command, the ships of the Central Pacific would be the Third Fleet; when Spruance led them, they would once again become the Fifth Fleet.¹⁴⁴

Halsey took Mitscher and the fast carriers, now TF 38, on a series of raids in September 1944. They struck the Palaus, Mindanao, and the Visayas, covering the invasions of Morotai, the Palaus, and Ulithi. The lack of resistance encountered convinced Halsey that the existing timetable for landings in the Philippines could be accelerated. Within a matter of days, the JCS had approved the new schedule.¹⁴⁵

The invasion of Leyte, code-named KING II, differed from previous large amphibious operations. The unity of command that had existed in GALVANIC, FLINTLOCK, and FORAGER was absent. The Central Pacific and southwestern Pacific offensives met in the southern Philippines, and KING II used forces from both theaters. Command was divided between the two, hindering effectiveness and leading to confusion during the naval battles that resulted.¹⁴⁶ Halsey's Third Fleet retained the fast carriers, but the Central Pacific Force's amphibious units, including the old battleships and escort carriers, were transferred to the Seventh Fleet, under command of Vice Admiral Thomas C. Kinkaid, who was subordinate to General MacArthur. Kinkaid led the amphibious assault.

As in FORAGER, the fast carriers were to suppress Japanese air bases and provide direct air support for the amphibious assault, but Halsey was freed of many of the burdens his predecessor had faced in the Philippine Sea. Without the old battleships and amphibious forces under his command, Halsey was able to develop plans that took full advantage of the mobility of his task forces. He was also free to seek out the Japanese; Nimitz's plan for the operation stressed that "in case opportunity for destruction of major portion of enemy fleet offers or can be created, such destruction becomes the primary task."¹⁴⁷

Third Fleet battle plans stressed the importance of this task.¹⁴⁸ They differed from those of the Fifth Fleet in two important respects. Lacking the old battleships, Halsey ignored them in his tactical planning and envisioned a battle line composed of only fast battleships. This increased his flexibility, because all forces in the battle fleet had sufficient speed to keep up with a carrier formation. Halsey planned to capitalize on this with a well developed prewar technique.

Halsey planned a coordinated attack. He assumed that his four carrier groups, far superior to what the Japanese could muster at this stage of the war, would either win the opening carrier duel or sight the enemy too late in the day for strike operations. In either case, the ensuing plan would be the same. Rather than steaming away at night as Spruance had done, Halsey would approach and, along the way, reorganize the carrier forces. Battleships, cruisers, and supporting destroyers would leave their respective task groups and form TF 34, a battle formation under the command of Admiral Lee, about seventy miles ahead of the carriers. As morning approached, planes would ready and launch. The coordinated movements of the fleet were designed to bring the attacking planes and the battleships within range of the enemy at the same time, at dawn.¹⁴⁹

Particular effort . . . will be made to gain a position from which a predawn carrier strike may be launched concurrently with the release of fast heavy striking force from a favorable attack position. Development of a favorable tactical situation . . . will be effected by dispatching TF 34 and carrier air groups to attack the enemy. The approach will be so conducted as to give TF 34 an opportunity to strike from a

favorable position and so coordinate its offensive efforts with those of carrier air groups.¹⁵⁰

Halsey considered this the “optimum plan for decisive action.”¹⁵¹ It would collect nearly all the striking power of TF 38 into one decisive pulse and overwhelm the Japanese. Halsey had revived the prewar coordinated attack.

The main landings took place on 20 October, with two of Halsey’s carrier groups providing direct support. Task Groups 38.1 and 38.4, with cruisers in support, attacked targets on Leyte and suppressed airfields on Mindanao and the western Visayas.¹⁵² The two other carrier groups, TGs 38.2 and 38.3, remained concentrated farther north, scouting for potential threats from the direction of Japan and Formosa.¹⁵³ Halsey kept all the battleships together: TG 38.2 had Battleship Division 7 (*Iowa* and *New Jersey*), and four battleships were with TG 38.3.¹⁵⁴

The possibility that the Japanese would commit significant naval forces to defend the Philippines was not seriously considered in Third or Seventh Fleet plans.¹⁵⁵ This was a mistake; in the summer of 1944, the Japanese had created a series of plans, code-named SHO-GO (Victory).¹⁵⁶ The southernmost of these, SHO-1, covered the defense of the Philippines.¹⁵⁷ On the basis of preliminary landings around Leyte, the Imperial General Headquarters made the decision to implement SHO-1 on 18 October.¹⁵⁸ Two days later, Vice Admiral Ryunosuke Kuasaka, chief of staff to Combined Fleet commander Admiral Soemu Toyoda, issued the final plans to units of the Combined Fleet.¹⁵⁹

The Japanese moved toward Leyte in four elements. Vice Admiral Takeo Kurita’s 1st Diversionary Attack Force divided in two, one part comprising his 1st and 2nd sections; led by Kurita himself, it would transit the San Bernardino Strait. Kurita’s 3rd Section, commanded by Vice Admiral Shoji Nishimura, was ordered to pass through Surigao Strait. Kurita planned to reunite with Nishimura in Leyte Gulf early on the morning of 25 October and destroy the invasion forces.¹⁶⁰ The third Japanese element, the 2nd Diversionary Attack Force, under Vice Admiral Kiyohide Shima, would come through Surigao Strait behind Nishimura and also attack the invasion fleet. Between them, these three attack forces had seven battleships, sixteen cruisers, and twenty-three destroyers.¹⁶¹

The fourth and last Japanese group, commanded by Vice Admiral Jisaburo Ozawa, was a decoy. Ozawa took the Combined Fleet’s remaining carriers south from Japan, hoping with them to draw the Third Fleet’s covering forces back north, away from Leyte Gulf.¹⁶² Ozawa had four carriers, two battleship-carriers, three cruisers, and nine destroyers.¹⁶³

Halsey, still confident that the Japanese would not seek battle, was preoccupied with preparations for the Third Fleet’s major follow-on operation, an

attack against the Japanese home islands.¹⁶⁴ On 22 October he sent TGs 38.4 and 38.1 to the fleet base at Ulithi to refuel and rearm. Before detaching them, he took two battleships from TG 38.3 and transferred them to TG 38.4, to go with it to Ulithi.¹⁶⁵ Two task groups and just four fast battleships remained in the area.

The same day, Kurita's 1st and 2nd sections left their anchorage at Brunei Bay on the north coast of Borneo. U.S. submarines again provided early warning of Japanese moves. The morning of 23 October, while transiting Palawan Passage, the submarines *Dace* and *Darter* sighted and attacked Kurita's ships, hitting three heavy cruisers—*Atago* and *Maya* were sunk, *Takao* was damaged and forced to retire.¹⁶⁶ Halsey and Kinkaid received these sightings and additional information from long-range air searches; they became convinced that the Japanese were moving toward the Philippines in force. Halsey quickly realized his dispositions were inadequate and recalled TG 38.4 and its two battleships. He did not recall TG 38.1. That group had more planes available than TG 38.4, but Halsey considered the two battleships more important.¹⁶⁷

Halsey disposed his forces to allow effective aerial searches to the west and provide warning of the Japanese approach. TG 38.3 was farthest to the north, east of Polillo Island. He placed TG 38.2 in the center, off the San Bernardino Strait, and TG 38.4 in the south, east of Samar.¹⁶⁸ This arrangement dispersed Halsey's battleship strength—each task group had just two battleships—but allowed him to cover the major passages through the archipelago.

On 24 October, Kurita and Nishimura were sighted by Halsey's carriers. TG 38.4 subjected Nishimura to a single attack, slightly damaging two of his ships. Since Kurita posed the greater threat, Halsey left Nishimura to Kinkaid and moved quickly to consolidate his battleship strength: TG 38.4 was ordered north; all three carrier groups would concentrate off the San Bernardino Strait, launching strikes against Kurita's formation along the way. Over the course of several hours repeated air attacks sank the battleship *Musashi* and damaged several other ships. In the early afternoon Kurita turned back, seeking relief from the onslaught.¹⁶⁹

In the meantime, Halsey had issued a preparatory battle order in expectation of Kurita's force exiting the strait. TGs 38.2 and 38.4 were close enough to concentrate; the plan combined Battleship Division 7 with the two battleships from TG 38.4. Four battleships, five cruisers, and ten destroyers would form as a surface striking unit. Admiral Lee would command the resulting formation, designated TF 34.¹⁷⁰ Because TG 38.3 was too distant, its battleships were not included. Halsey planned to make do with the forces immediately on hand.

He did not implement the plan; a variety of circumstances convinced him otherwise. Scouting reports indicated that Kurita was withdrawing, heavily damaged. Also, intelligence available to Halsey suggested that Japanese forces in

the area of the home islands were stronger than in fact they were, and this led him to the conclusion that the most serious threat would come from the north.¹⁷¹ In the afternoon, planes from TG 38.3 found that threat: they sighted Ozawa's main body. Halsey considered his alternatives.

[The option of] leaving TF 34 to block San Bernardino Straits . . . was rejected; the potential strength of the Northern Forces [Ozawa] was too great to leave unmolested, and requiring TF 34 to engage the Center Force [Kurita] while at the same time exposed to attack by land-based and carrier-based air attack was not sound. This alternative spread our strength and risked unprofitable damage in detail.¹⁷²

During the evening of 24 October, Halsey made the decision to move north with all his forces and pursue Ozawa.¹⁷³

Along the way, he put his battle plan in motion. The fleet slowed as all six battleships, seven cruisers, and eighteen destroyers separated themselves from the carrier groups and formed TF 34, under Lee. TG 38.2 was designated as the battle-line carrier group, to support Lee's surface forces.¹⁷⁴ Mitscher expected the surface contact to take place at 4:30 AM, but estimates of the Japanese position were incorrect. The first air strike from the carriers hit Ozawa long before TF 34 could come into action. Coordinated attacks would have to wait until the battleships were in position.

Halsey ran out of time. As TF 34 approached the Japanese, urgent messages were received from Kinkaid. Escort carriers on his northern flank were engaged in a running battle with Kurita's 1st and 2nd sections. The remnants of the 1st Striking Force had reversed course, passed through the San Bernardino Strait, and were now moving toward the landing beaches. Halsey sent TF 34, minus four cruisers and nine destroyers, south to assist; TG 38.2 followed in support.¹⁷⁵

The cruisers and destroyers detached from TF 34 filled in and formed a surface striking force.¹⁷⁶ They continued north and attacked Japanese ships damaged by the carrier strikes, finishing off the carrier *Chiyoda* and sinking the destroyer *Hatsuzuki* after a running gun battle.¹⁷⁷ Ozawa's other carriers, *Zuikaku*, *Zuiho*, and *Chitose*, were sunk by planes from TF 38.¹⁷⁸ The submarine *Jallao*, coached to the scene with several consorts by Admiral Lockwood, sank the light cruiser *Tama*, previously damaged by air attack.¹⁷⁹ Demoralized and broken, Ozawa's force retreated. In the meantime, Nishimura's 3rd Section had steamed into a trap set by Kinkaid's Seventh Fleet in Surigao Strait and been virtually annihilated.

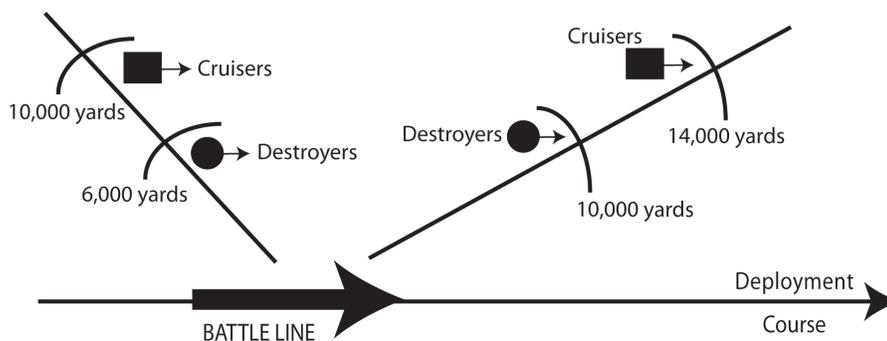
Although Kinkaid had not anticipated that the Japanese would seek major action, his forces had been well prepared for it. The Seventh Fleet's battle plan called for Rear Admiral Jesse B. Oldendorf's Fire Support Group, designated TG 77.2, and Rear Admiral Russell S. Berkey's Close Covering Group, TG 77.3, to

combine in the face of strong enemy opposition.¹⁸⁰ Oldendorf had all six of the old battleships supporting Leyte, along with escorting cruisers and destroyers; he and his ships had been part of the Fifth Fleet's offensives in the Central Pacific.¹⁸¹ Berkey's group was part of the multinational Seventh Fleet.¹⁸² Depending on the nature of the threat, Kinkaid planned to detach Berkey, Oldendorf, or both. Kinkaid also envisioned combining Berkey's group with units from the Third Fleet if Japanese light forces threatened the invasion fleet.¹⁸³ Details were left up to the individual commanders. USF 10A was perfect in situations like these, in which disparate task groups would come together for battle; Oldendorf would put it to good use.

By noon on 24 October, Kinkaid had realized that the Japanese were seeking major action and ordered Oldendorf to prepare for a night battle in Surigao Strait and to take Berkey's TG 77.3 in support.¹⁸⁴ Oldendorf began to formulate a plan. He called Berkey and his battle-line commander, Rear Admiral George L. Weyler, to his flagship so he could familiarize them with the details. The battleships were loaded mainly with bombardment ammunition; Oldendorf stressed the need to fire at medium ranges, where the effect would be maximized. He also discussed the use of destroyer attacks before the main action; he planned to send them down both sides of the strait.¹⁸⁵

After the conference, Oldendorf signaled his battle plan to the six battleships, eight cruisers, and twenty-one destroyers of his force. The battle plan specified disposition "A-2" from USF 10A, intended for the employment of task forces like this one.¹⁸⁶ "A-2" (see figure 2) placed the battle line in the center and light forces at either flank.¹⁸⁷ This was an efficient arrangement for the confined waters at the head of the strait, and it maximized the effectiveness of Oldendorf's gunfire.

FIGURE 2
FORMATION "A-2"



Source: USF 10A, p. 4-12.

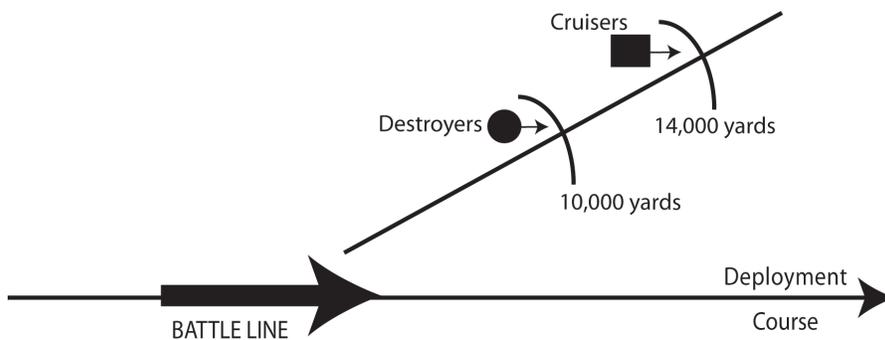
The plan worked to perfection, including one small, extemporized addition. Picket destroyers from TG 79.11 commanded by Captain Jesse G. Coward were the first to attack.¹⁸⁸ Coward had joined Oldendorf on his own initiative, displaying the aggressiveness inherent in the Navy's doctrine.¹⁸⁹ Nishimura's attempt to penetrate into Leyte Gulf failed, disorganized by a series of destroyer torpedo attacks and shattered by battleship and cruiser gunfire. One destroyer and a badly damaged cruiser were all that survived to retreat down the strait. Following in Nishimura's wake, Shima's 2nd Diversionary Attack Force "fired ineffective torpedoes at radar ghosts to the north" and quickly withdrew.¹⁹⁰

Soon thereafter, Kurita's force reappeared off Samar, within visual range of Kinkaid's escort carriers. A desperate fight ensued; both Halsey and Kinkaid mustered powerful forces to counter the threat.¹⁹¹ Kinkaid ordered Oldendorf to send a battleship division, a heavy cruiser division, and supporting destroyers to assist the carriers. Oldendorf chose to send the three battleships that had the most armor-piercing ammunition remaining, all four of his heavy cruisers, and twenty destroyers, all of which had at least five torpedoes.¹⁹²

As we have seen, Halsey sent TF 34 and TG 38.2 south to support Kinkaid, but they would not find Kurita. Shortly after noon on 25 October, he had turned to the north and headed back toward the San Bernardino Strait. When this became apparent, Halsey ordered TG 34.5, a pursuit force formed around Battleship Division 7, to separate from TF 34 and go after the retreating enemy.¹⁹³

The pursuit force contained two battleships, three cruisers, and eight destroyers under the command of Rear Admiral Oscar C. Badger. Halsey's intention was for Badger to employ battle disposition "A-1" (see figure 3) from USF 10A, concentrating all light forces in the van.¹⁹⁴ TF 34.5 would engage on parallel courses

**FIGURE 3
FORMATION "A-1"**



Source: USF 10A, p. 4-11.

at long range, with light forces on the offensive.¹⁹⁵ This was battle plan “1L1.” Badger arrived too late to engage Kurita but in the darkness found destroyer *Nowaki*, which had remained behind to pick up survivors, and sank it. The battle of Leyte Gulf was over.

Japanese efforts to contest the landings in the Philippines and Marianas had led to the decisive battle both navies had anticipated before the war.¹⁹⁶ Although the expected clash of battle lines did not occur, the outcome was decisive. The remaining Japanese surface forces lacked the fuel and strength necessary to challenge further offensives; the Combined Fleet had become a hollow shell.

PREWAR PRINCIPLES AND WARTIME LESSONS

Several important elements of the Navy’s tactical doctrine contributed to the success of the rapid offensive through the Central Pacific. The new approach to the development and dissemination of doctrine introduced by the Pacific Fleet in the summer of 1943 prepared it to divide itself into a series of carrier-centric task forces and ensured that when the fleet came together in the face of enemy surface threats, it could act as a cohesive unit. This approach rectified the shortcomings of prewar doctrinal development by relieving task force commanders of the burden of creating battle plans and doctrines for their forces.

Principles of prewar doctrine also contributed to success. The most obvious of these was the depth and richness of the Navy’s prewar major action plans, which relied on concentration of all available forces and cooperative action against the enemy battle line. The influence of these principles can be seen in the major action plans developed by Spruance, Mitscher, and Halsey. The coordinated attack attempted by the Third Fleet was derived directly from prewar concepts.

The synthesis of prewar principles and wartime lessons in PAC 10 and USF 10A also benefited lower-level commanders, who consistently relied upon them. The way Lee and Oldendorf leveraged the new manuals to ensure cooperation and common understanding has been described.¹⁹⁷ Other commanders, including Badger, Weyler, Rear Admiral John F. Shafroth, and Rear Admiral Giffen, employed them the same way.¹⁹⁸ Use of these doctrinal manuals became pervasive—and this was essential. Because the standard operational formations were fast carrier groups, surface commanders could not assume they would be able to concentrate all ships of their battle formations for practice or indoctrination. Coordinated action could only be ensured through specific common doctrines provided at the fleet level or above.

However, the Navy’s approach was not without its flaws. The worst of these was the failure to anticipate Japanese responses to the increasing size and power of the U.S. carrier forces. The Japanese addressed the problem in several ways,

two of which are relevant here.¹⁹⁹ The first was continued emphasis on a potential equalizer that had been an important part of their surface warfare doctrine for years—night battle. The second was the use of divided dispositions and dispersed formations.

Both of these responses were asymmetric, and the Navy did not deal with them effectively. This was particularly true of night combat. Existing doctrinal principles, reinforced by prewar exercises and wartime lessons, stressed that night action was undesirable, dangerous to powerful surface units. Concentrated formations of light forces could win minor battles at night, but major actions were to be fought in daylight. Spruance and Lee showed no desire to challenge these principles on the night of 18 June in the Philippine Sea and, as a result, missed an opportunity to force the Japanese into a decisive battle. Four months later, Oldendorf's ad hoc task force achieved overwhelming victory at Surigao Strait, suggesting what might have been.

The second Japanese response that caused problems touched upon a solidly entrenched principle of the U.S. Navy's tactical doctrine, concentration. Concentration was considered essential to the effectiveness of a battle fleet. Prewar plans assumed that the Japanese approach to decisive battle would also emphasize concentration and that major actions would accordingly be fought between massed formations. The Japanese use of dispersed task groups in the carrier battles of 1942 should have challenged this assumption, but it did not. Even in 1944, by which time the U.S. Navy had sufficient strength to divide into multiple task forces and fight two battles simultaneously, it developed no major action plans to counter dispersed enemy formations.

Spruance and Halsey emphasized concentration in their battle and operational plans. This conservative approach, driven by the fear of defeat in detail, limited their opportunities when the Japanese gave battle. In the battle of the Philippine Sea, Spruance repeatedly insisted on remaining concentrated and refused to capitalize upon the mobility and flexibility of his multiple carrier task forces. This reluctance allowed the Japanese to strike the first blow and permitted them to withdraw when their attacks failed. Halsey was presented with a perfect opportunity to finish off the Combined Fleet at Leyte; a judicious division of forces would have allowed him to defeat both Kurita and Ozawa on 25 October. But Halsey did not seriously consider divided action.²⁰⁰

The lesson was learned eventually, but too late. In his analysis of the October fighting, Vice Admiral George D. Murray, Commander, Air Force, Pacific Fleet, wrote, "Concentration, though usually sound, may sometimes be pursued too far, with diminishing returns. The ability to divide forces cleverly, as developed by the enemy, and to 'unconcentrate' quickly, may often be an advantage."²⁰¹ Unfortunately, the failure to recognize and adapt to Japanese asymmetries had

already prevented Spruance and Halsey from crushing the Combined Fleet in a single decisive blow.

Ultimately, it made no difference—Leyte Gulf destroyed Japan as a naval power. This victory was achieved not just by success in battle but through sustained campaigning. The Central Pacific offensive is an illuminating example of the benefits of prioritizing strategic, operational, and tactical goals appropriately. The main strategic objective, the defeat of Japan, was paramount. It was achieved by a sustained offensive through the Japanese defensive perimeter. This offensive had two subsidiary goals, maintenance of a rapid operational tempo and defeat of the Japanese surface fleet.

Airplanes and airpower—particularly the Pacific Fleet’s carriers, but also its land-based air forces—were essential to securing the first of these goals. The fast carriers were the engine that drove the fast pace of operations, suppressing Japanese positions, destroying planes and ships, and enabling amphibious landings.²⁰² Accordingly, the Pacific Fleet organized itself around carrier task forces, because only they could ensure a fast pace of operations.

The second goal, the destruction of the Japanese fleet, required a battle, a tactical component of a larger operation. Even though this was a strategic goal, its tactical nature gave it, appropriately, a secondary priority—carriers, and the operational tempo they enabled, were paramount. This fact limited the opportunities for battle-line commanders to train with their units and develop cohesion, and it led to Lee’s decision to decline a night battle at the Philippine Sea.²⁰³ But the overall rewards justified such decisions.

This outcome contrasts starkly with the opportunities the Japanese lost by inverting the priority of their strategic and tactical planning. They developed a sophisticated tactical doctrine for major fleet action, around which they developed operations and strategy—with predictable, and unfortunate, results.²⁰⁴

The success of the U.S. Navy’s approach and the emphasis placed on carrier airpower have overshadowed the important role battleships played in the Navy’s tactical doctrine. The long-awaited clash of battle lines never occurred; this fact, coupled with the dominant role of the carriers in the last eighteen months of the war, has led to the conclusion that battleships were relegated to supporting roles during the Central Pacific offensive.²⁰⁵ The foregoing analysis has shown this traditional view to be false. Battleships were an essential element of the Navy’s plan for decisive battle and therefore collectively an essential part of the campaign. Every plan for major action developed during the Central Pacific offensive relied on the employment of a battle fleet. In this respect, Spruance, though often considered to have been a “battleship admiral,” was no different from Halsey and Mitscher.²⁰⁶

When Halsey and Spruance emphasized concentration, it was the concentration of battleships that concerned them. Spruance always kept the bulk of his battleship strength together: at Makin in the Gilberts, off Kwajalein in the Marshals, in TG 58.3 at Truk, and around Saipan in the Marianas. Halsey, once he knew the avenue of Kurita's approach, quickly moved to mass his battleships. When he went after Ozawa, all the battleships came with him, and when TF 34 reversed course, they all headed south again. It was only after Leyte Gulf and the decisive defeat of Japanese surface units that battleships began to be distributed evenly among the fast carrier groups on a regular basis and moved to supporting roles.²⁰⁷

In the immediate postwar period, wartime experience was reviewed, and lessons were compiled into a new series of tactical manuals. The comprehensive, single-volume format of USF 10B was discarded; numerous additions to the core originally adopted from PAC 10 over the course of the war had made the document large and unwieldy. Material from it and other manuals was collected in several new volumes issued in 1946 and 1947: *U.S.F. 2, General Tactical Instructions, United States Fleets*; *U.S.F. 4, Carrier Task Force Tactical Instructions, United States Fleets*; *U.S.F. 5, Surface Action and Tactics, United States Fleets*; and *U.S.F. 15, CIC Instructions, United States Fleets*.²⁰⁸

Nimitz, now Chief of Naval Operations, oversaw the issuance of the new manuals. The introduction of USF 5 borrowed directly from PAC 10:

USF 5 is not intended nor shall it be construed as depriving any officer exercising tactical command of authority to issue special instructions to his command. USF 5, however, should make such instructions unnecessary under ordinary circumstances and should minimize them in extraordinary circumstances. The ultimate aim is to obtain essential uniformity without unacceptable sacrifice of flexibility.²⁰⁹

The new manuals retained both the doctrines developed before the war that proved effective and those produced during it. They offered tactics for units large and small.²¹⁰ The range bands and battle-plan designators first introduced in *Tentative Fleet Dispositions and Battle Plans* of 1930 were reissued in USF 5.²¹¹ Coordinated attacks were still considered effective.²¹² The problems of combat with small units, the "minor tactics" first seriously addressed by PAC 10, formed a large part of the new surface warfare manual.²¹³

The synthesis of prewar principles and wartime lessons introduced by the Pacific Fleet in 1943 was validated by the successful conclusion of the campaign and defeat of the Imperial Japanese Navy. The new approach enabled employment of fast carrier task forces in a way that allowed a rapid offensive. Detailed operational and tactical plans completed the picture, preparing the Pacific Fleet

to thwart Japanese countermoves and to triumph, even if not as thoroughly as desired, in the decisive battle.

NOTES

I would like to thank Mr. Barry Zerby of the National Archives for his invaluable assistance in locating numerous documents.

1. Edward S. Miller, *War Plan Orange: The U.S. Strategy to Defeat Japan, 1897–1945* (Annapolis, Md.: Naval Institute Press, 1991).
2. A fleet train consisted of supporting auxiliaries and amphibious ships necessary to seize an island base and sustain the fleet in distant waters; see *Blue Fleet Operation Order No. 1*, 1 January 1924, Fleet Problem Microfilm, Records of the Office of the Chief of Naval Operations, Record Group 38, National Archives [hereafter FPM, RG 38, NA], app. A.
3. These capabilities had been foreshadowed in the Navy's own Fleet Problems, illustrated by the Japanese in their initial offensives, and demonstrated in the famous carrier battles of 1942; see Mark Allen Campbell, "The Influence of Air Power upon the Evolution of Battle Doctrine in the U.S. Navy, 1922–1941" (History Department, University of Massachusetts, master of arts thesis, December 1992); Samuel Eliot Morison, *History of the United States Naval Operations in World War II*, 15 vols. (Boston: Little, Brown, 1984), vol. 3, pp. 80–126, 314–20, 381–86; vol. 4, pp. 33–64, 69–159; and vol. 5, pp. 79–107, 199–224.
4. For the continuity of strategic planning, see Miller, *War Plan Orange*, pp. 331–46.
5. See Trent Hone, "'Give Them Hell!': The US Navy's Night Combat Doctrine and the Campaign for Guadalcanal," *War in History* 13, no. 2 (April 2006), pp. 171–99.
6. Keeping the enemy off balance was an important element of the Navy's doctrine; see Trent Hone, "Building a Doctrine: USN Tactics and Battle Plans in the Interwar Period," *International Journal of Naval History* 1, no. 2 (October 2002), available at www.ijnhonline.org.
7. Dominion over the bulk of the island groups was granted to Japan by the Treaty of Versailles; this "mandate" led to the term's application to the islands as a whole. Although Guam in the Marianas was an American possession, it was isolated and quickly seized by the Japanese after the outbreak of war, as anticipated. The Japanese planned to use their positions in the islands to oppose the Pacific Fleet's advance with repeated attacks by airplanes, submarines, and light forces. Attritional battles on the defensive perimeter were expected to enable the main body of the Combined Fleet to challenge the Navy's advance and defeat it in a decisive battle; see David C. Evans and Mark R. Peattie, *Kaigun* (Annapolis, Md.: Naval Institute Press, 1997), pp. 286–91.
8. *Memorandum for Secret Files: Courses of Action Open to Us in a Pacific Campaign, Attack, Capture and Occupation of the Mandated Islands*, Strategic Plans Division Records, Records of the Office of the Chief of Naval Operations, Record Group 38, National Archives [hereafter SPD, RG 38, NA], box 153, p. 1.
9. Morison, *History*, vol. 7, p. 82.
10. *Preliminary Draft of Campaign—Granite*, Commander-in-Chief, United States Pacific Fleet, 27 December 1943, World War Two Plans, Orders, and Related Documents, Records of the Office of the Chief of Naval Operations, Record Group 38, National Archives [hereafter WW2 POR, RG 38, NA], box 24. The first quoted phrase appears on page 1, the second on page 2.
11. Thomas Wildenberg, *Gray Steel and Black Oil: Fast Tankers and Replenishment at Sea in the U.S. Navy, 1912–1992* (Annapolis, Md.: Naval Institute Press, 1996), pp. 168–203; Morison, *History*, vol. 7, pp. 100–13; Henry E. Eccles, *Operational Naval Logistics* (Honolulu: Univ. Press of the Pacific, 2003).
12. Although later Fleet Problems involved the use of detached and separated forces, the cohesion of the fleet remained a fundamental assumption; see *Report of Fleet Problem Ten*, 7

- May 1930, Fleet Problem Microfilm, General Records of the Department of the Navy, Record Group 80, National Archives [hereafter FPM, RG 80, NA]; *Estimate of the Situation of the Black Fleet, Fleet Problem XVIII*, 15 March 1937, FPM, RG 38, NA; *Fleet Problem XIX—Concept of*, Director of Fleet Training Division, 10 August 1937, FPM, RG 38, NA.
13. The Central Pacific offensive was considered complementary to the continuing operations in the South Pacific; see Thomas B. Buell, *Master of Sea Power: A Biography of Fleet Admiral Ernest J. King* (Boston: Little, Brown, 1980), p. 339.
 14. Milan N. Vego, *The Battle for Leyte, 1944: Allied and Japanese Plans, Preparations, and Execution* (Annapolis, Md.: Naval Institute Press, 2006), p. 286.
 15. *Preliminary Draft of Campaign—Granite*, p. 6.
 16. *Ibid.*, p. 7.
 17. Thomas C. Hone and Trent Hone, *Battle Line: The United States Navy 1919–1939* (Annapolis, Md.: Naval Institute Press, 2006), pp. 68–89.
 18. *Night Search and Attack Operations, Destroyer Tactical Bulletin No. 5-38, Commander Destroyers Battle Force, 1938*, USN Technical Publications, entry 336A, Records of the Office of the Chief of Naval Operations, Record Group 38, National Archives [hereafter 336A, RG 38, NA], box 129; *Night Search and Attack, DTP 2-40, Commander Destroyers Battle Force, 1940*, 336A, RG 38, NA, box 130; *U.S. Pacific Fleet Tactical Bulletin No. 5-41: Light Forces in Night Search and Attack*, 24 December 1941, Naval Historical Center, World War Two Command File [hereafter NHC, WW2 CF], box 250.
 19. Battle-line carriers were successful in numerous Fleet Problems. *Langley* was used this way in Fleet Problem XI; see *United States Fleet Problem XI, 1930*, Report of the Commander in Chief United States Fleet, Adm. W. V. Pratt, U.S.N., 14 July 1930, FPM, RG 80, NA, p. 68. *Langley* and *Saratoga* operated as battle-line carriers in Fleet Problem XIII; see *United States Fleet Problem XIII, 1932*, Report of the Commander-in-Chief United States Fleet, Adm. Frank H. Schofield, 23 May 1932, FPM, RG 38, NA. *Lexington* and *Saratoga* operated together with the main body in Fleet Problem XVIII; see *BLACK Fleet, Narratives of Events, Fleet Problem XVIII*, Commander Battle Force (Commander BLACK Fleet), 11 May 1937, FPM, RG 38, NA; battle plans described the employment of battle-line carriers; see *F.T.P. 188, General Tactical Instructions, United States Navy* [hereafter FTP 188], 1940, NHC, WW2 CF, box 108, pp. 14-1 through 14-27.
 20. Battle plans prescribed specific roles for submarines in battle; see FTP 188, pp. 14-1 through 14-27. In Fleet Problems they were occasionally employed this way; see *Report of Fleet Problem XV*, 1 June 1934, FPM, RG 38, NA.
 21. *Tentative Fleet Dispositions and Battle Plans, United States Fleet, 1930*, USN and Related Operational, Tactical, and Instructional Publications, entry 337, Records of the Office of the Chief of Naval Operations, Record Group 38, National Archives [hereafter 337, RG 38, NA], box 108.
 22. See Trent Hone, “The Evolution of Fleet Tactical Doctrine in the U.S. Navy, 1922–1941,” *Journal of Military History* 67, no. 4 (October 2003), pp. 1107–48.
 23. The number 3 was reserved for pursuit actions, 4 for retirement, 5 for delay, and 6 for withdrawal; see *F.T.P. 142, General Tactical Instructions, United States Navy* [hereafter FTP 142], 1934, NHC, WW2 CF, box 108, p. 235; FTP 188, p. 14-1.
 24. *D* indicated light forces on the defensive; *BF* meant light forces attacking on both flanks; *S* and *V* called for submarine and air attacks, respectively; see FTP 142, p. 235; FTP 188, p. 14-1.
 25. FTP 188, pp. 14-4, 14-5, 14-14, 14-15.
 26. *U.S.F. 10, Current Tactical Orders and Doctrine, United States Fleet* [hereafter USF 10], 1941, NHC, WW2 CF, box 270, diagram 1, p. 33.
 27. See Hone, “Building a Doctrine.”
 28. Perhaps the best perspective of the Navy’s views is provided by the comments of Adm. Joseph M. Reeves after Fleet Problem XVI: “The strategy of dividing the White Fleet into two groups each inferior to the Black Fleet is doubtful. . . . It gave Black the opportunity of defeating the White Fleet in detail.” *Fleet*

- Problem Sixteen, Report of Commander-in-Chief, United States Fleet, USS Pennsylvania, Flagship*, 15 September 1935, FPM, RG 38, NA, p. 20.
29. See Hone, "The Evolution of Fleet Tactical Doctrine in the U.S. Navy, 1922–1941."
 30. Submarines were given roles in battle plans; see FTP 188, pp. 14-1 through 14-27. Minelayers were also to be used; see *Tentative War Instructions for Light Mine Layers*, 1 November 1923, entry 178, RG 38, NA, box 1.
 31. Harris Laning, *An Admiral's Yarn*, ed. Mark Russell Shulman et al. (Newport, R.I.: Naval War College Press, 1999), app. 2, "The Naval Battle," May 1933, p. 414.
 32. See Hone, "The Evolution of Fleet Tactical Doctrine in the U.S. Navy, 1922–1941."
 33. See Hone and Hone, *Battle Line*, pp. 86–87.
 34. Numerous prewar battle plans involved the close cooperation of submarines and the surface fleet; see FTP 188, pp. 14-1 through 14-27; *U.S.F. 10, Current Tactical Orders and Doctrine, United States Fleet*, 1934, NHC, WW2 CF, box 270; *U.S.F. 10, Current Tactical Orders, United States Fleet*, 1938, NHC, WW2 CF, box 270.
 35. See Hone, "'Give Them Hell!'"
 36. See *ibid.*
 37. See *ibid.* Also, *Secret Information Bulletin No. 5: Battle Experience Solomon Island Actions, December 1942–January 1943*, Naval War College Archives, Manuscript Collection 207, box 1, folder 8, chap. 31.
 38. The redundancy and inconsistency were plain to Nimitz's staff; see *Revision of Pacific Fleet Cruising Instructions*, Pacific Board to Revise Cruising Instructions, 18 May 1943, WW2 POR, RG 38, NA, box 22, p. 1. For a sampling of tactical bulletins, see *U.S. Pacific Fleet Tactical Bulletin No. 3-41: Battle Plans*, 21 November 1941, NHC, WW2 CF, box 250; *U.S. Pacific Fleet Tactical Bulletin No. 4-41: Tentative Fleet Dispositions*, 5 December 1941, entry 107, Record Group 313, Records of the Naval Operating Forces, National Archives [hereafter 107, RG 313, NA], box 6543; *U.S. Pacific Fleet Tactical Bulletin No. 5-41: Light Forces in Night Search and Attack*, 24 December 1941, 107, RG 313, NA, box 6543; *U.S. Pacific Fleet Tactical Bulletin No. 6-41: Radar Doctrine, U.S. Pacific Fleet*, 31 December 1941, NHC WW2 CF, box 250; *U.S. Pacific Fleet Tactical Bulletin No. 2-42 (Revised): Instructions for Fueling at Sea*, 28 August 1942, 107, RG 313, NA, box 6543; *U.S. Pacific Fleet Tactical Bulletin No. 4TB-42: Pacific Fleet Radar Doctrine*, 26 November 1942, 107, RG 313, NA, box 6543; *U.S. Pacific Fleet Tactical Bulletin No. 5TB-42: Light Forces in Night Search and Attack*, 14 November 1942, 107, RG 313, NA, box 6543. For a sampling of confidential letters, see *Pacific Fleet Confidential Letter 12CL-41: Instructions for Escort Commanders and Commanding Officers of Escort Vessels*, 107, RG 313, NA, box 6593; *Pacific Fleet Confidential Letter 29CL-42: Damage Control and Rescue, Lessons Regarding*, 107, RG 313, NA, box 6593; *Pacific Fleet Confidential Letter 32CL-42: Command Relationships—Task Force and Task Group Commanders*, 107, RG 313, NA, box 6593; *Pacific Fleet Confidential Letter 33CL-42: Rangefinder Calibration—Procedure for*, 107, RG 313, NA, box 6593.
 39. John B. Lundstrom, *Black Shoe Carrier Admiral: Frank Jack Fletcher at Coral Sea, Midway, and Guadalcanal* (Annapolis, Md.: Naval Institute Press, 2006), pp. 497–99.
 40. The large carriers were on opposite sides in Fleet Problems IX, X, XI, XIII, XV, XVI, XVII, and part of XIX. They operated on the same side in Problems XII and XIV but in separate task forces. In Problem XVIII, they were together but tied to the main body; see Campbell, "Influence of Air Power," pp. 214–17; *United States Fleet Problem XII, 1931, Report of the Commander in Chief United States Fleet*, Adm. J. V. Chase, U.S.N., 1 April 1931, FPM, RG 38, NA; *United States Fleet, Problem XIV, Report of the Commander-in-Chief, United States Fleet*, Adm. R. H. Leigh, 10 April 1933, FPM, RG 80, NA.
 41. Campbell, "Influence of Air Power," p. 174; Lundstrom, *Black Shoe Carrier Admiral*, pp. 497–98.
 42. Carrier task forces were generally formed around three fast carriers, with two large fleet carriers and one small light carrier being the norm; see Clark G. Reynolds, *The Fast Carriers: The Forging of an Air Navy* (Annapolis, Md.: Naval Institute Press, 1992), pp. 75–76.

43. Campbell, "Influence of Air Power," pp. 147–48.
44. *Revision of Pacific Fleet Cruising Instructions*, p. 1.
45. Morison, *History*, vol. 7, pp. 334, 336.
46. *Ibid.*, vol. 13, p. 318.
47. *Revision of Pacific Fleet Cruising Instructions*, p. 1.
48. Morison, *History*, vol. 3, p. 160.
49. *Historic World War II: USS Washington BB56 Battleship*, bb56.com.
50. *Current Tactical Orders and Doctrine, U.S. Pacific Fleet, P.A.C. 10* [hereafter PAC 10], Commander-in-Chief, U.S. Pacific Fleet, June 1943, 337, RG 38, NA, box 61, p. IV-2.
51. *Ibid.*, figs. 6, 7, and 8.
52. *U.S. Pacific Fleet Tactical Bulletin No. 5-41: Light Forces in Night Search and Attack*; 24 December 1941, 107, RG 313, NA, box 6543; *U.S. Pacific Fleet Tactical Bulletin No. 5TB-42: Light Forces in Night Search and Attack*; PAC 10, figs. 9 and 10.
53. An excellent example of the prior method is the plan for night action developed by Rear Adm. Thomas C. Kinkaid before the battle of Tassafaronga: *Operation Plan No. 1-42*, Commander Task Force Sixty-seven, 27 November 1942, World War Two Action and Operational Reports, Records of the Office of the Chief of Naval Operations, Record Group 38, National Archives [hereafter WW2 AOR, RG 38, NA], box 241; Rear Adm. Norman Scott's plans are also noteworthy: *Memorandum for Task Group Sixty-four Point Two*, Norman Scott, Commander Task Force Sixty-four, 9 October 1942, WW2 AOR, RG 38, NA, box 19.
54. PAC 10, p. v.
55. *Current Tactical Orders and Doctrine, U.S. Fleet, U.S.F. 10A* [hereafter USF 10A], Commander-in-Chief, United States Fleet, 1 February 1944, WW2 Bates—Leyte Collection, Records of the Office of the Chief of Naval Operations, Record Group 38, National Archives [hereafter Bates, RG 38, NA], box 16.
56. Compare, for example, PAC 10, part IV, with USF 10A, part IV.
57. Compare, for example, USF 10, 1941, with USF 10A.
58. *Current Tactical Orders and Doctrine, U.S. Fleet, U.S.F. 10B*, Commander-in-Chief, United States Fleet, 1 May 1945, National Archives Microfilm NRS 1977-44.
59. Morison, *History*, vol. 7, p. 82.
60. *Ibid.*, p. 86.
61. *Ibid.*, p. 91.
62. *Operational Experience of Fast Carrier Task Forces in World War II*, WSEG Staff Study No. 4, Office of the Secretary of Defense, Weapons Systems Evaluation Group, Washington D.C., 15 August 1951 (copy provided to the author by Dr. Thomas C. Hone), pp. 153–55.
63. *Report of Fleet Problem XV*.
64. *Secret Information Bulletin No. 2: Battle Experience Solomon Islands Actions, August and September 1942*, United States Fleet, Headquarters of the Commander-in-Chief, 1 March 1943, Record Group 334, Records of Interservice Agencies, National Archives [hereafter RG 334, NA], box 443, chap. 11.
65. Nimitz and Spruance expected the Japanese to oppose the movement into the Central Pacific with the bulk of their fleet; see Reynolds, *Fast Carriers*, pp. 79–80.
66. *Operation Plan A2-43*, Commander Task Force 54 (Fifth Amphibious Force), 23 October 1943, WW2 POR, RG 38, NA, box 161.
67. *Operation Plan 3-43*, Commander Fifth Fleet (Central Pacific Force), 24 October 1943, WW2 POR, RG 38, NA, box 59.
68. *CATCHPOLE—Outline Plan*, Commander-in-Chief, U.S. Pacific Fleet and Pacific Ocean Areas, SPD, RG 38, NA, box 137, p. 39.
69. *GALVANIC Operation—General Instructions for*, Commander Central Pacific Force, U.S. Pacific Fleet, 29 October 1943, WW2 POR, RG 38, NA, box 59, p. 1.
70. *Possible modifications in plans for GALVANIC*, Commander Central Pacific Force, U.S. Pacific Fleet, 28 October 1943, WW2 POR, RG 38, NA, box 59.
71. These three ships were the last of the old battleships to undergo major modifications before the war, and they escaped the attack on Pearl Harbor. They received additional deck armor and updated fire control systems,

- making them the most capable of the old battleships at the time of Operation GALVANIC; see Norman Friedman, *US Battleships: An Illustrated Design History* (Annapolis, Md.: Naval Institute Press, 1985), pp. 201–203; *Fire Control Installations*, Postgraduate School, U.S. Naval Academy, 1939, Naval Historical Center Library, Washington, D.C. A fourth battleship in the Northern Attack Force, *Pennsylvania*, was operating as flagship for Rear Adm. Richmond K. Turner, commander of the assault forces, and was not included in Spruance's major action plan; see *Operation Plan 3-43*, Commander Fifth Fleet.
72. *Operation Plan 3-43*, Commander Fifth Fleet.
73. *Operation Plan 1-43*, Commander Central Pacific Force (Fifth Fleet), 25 October 1943, WW2 POR, RG 38, NA, box 59.
74. *Ibid.*, p. 9.
75. During the approach to the Gilberts, the amphibious forces, before identifying the carrier forces as friendly, assumed they were Japanese and formed a line of battle. Although no plan exists for northern forces in the GALVANIC operation to form a battle line, there is no doubt they would have done so if required; see Morison, *History*, vol. 7, p. 120. Admiral Lee was designated commander, battle line; see *Operation Plan 3-43*, Commander Fifth Fleet.
76. *Operation Plan 3-43*, Commander Fifth Fleet.
77. *Ibid.*
78. *GALVANIC Operation—General Instructions for*, p. 1.
79. *Imperial Japanese Navy Page*, www.combinedfleet.com.
80. *Ibid.*
81. Morison, *History*, vol. 6, p. 323.
82. *Ibid.*, vol. 7, pp. 201–203.
83. *Battle Plan No. 1*, Commander, Support Unit (Commander Cruiser Division Six), 29 November 1943, WW2 POR, RG 38, NA, box 260.
84. Morison, *History*, vol. 7, p. 203.
85. *Ibid.*, p. 206.
86. Reynolds, *Fast Carriers*, p. 103.
87. *Operation Plan No. 1-44*, Commander Central Pacific Force (Fifth Fleet), 6 January 1944, WW2 POR, RG 38, NA, box 60, p. 14.
88. Morison, *History*, vol. 7, p. 218.
89. Previous fast battleships were limited to 27.5 knots; see Friedman, *US Battleships*, pp. 447–49. For the task force breakdown, see *Operation Plan No. 1-44*, Commander Central Pacific Force.
90. Miller, *War Plan Orange*, pp. 286–312.
91. *Operation Plan 2-44*, Commander Fifth Fleet (Central Pacific Force), 6 January 1944. Spruance planned to use the old battleships in spite of the fact that they carried mostly bombardment ammunition; see *Operation Plan No. 1-44*, Commander Central Pacific Force, p. 12.
92. *Deployment and Battle Plan*, Commander Support Group (Commander Cruiser Division Six), 9 November 1943, WW2 POR, RG 38, NA, box 260; *Operation Plan 2-44*, Commander Fifth Fleet, p. H-5.
93. *Operation Plan 2-44*, Commander Fifth Fleet, p. H-5.
94. *Ibid.*, p. H-1.
95. *Operational Experience of Fast Carrier Task Forces in World War II*, pp. 162–64.
96. *Ibid.*, p. 162; Morison, *History*, vol. 7, p. 353.
97. *Engagement off Truk, 16 February 1944—Report of*, Commanding Officer, U.S.S. *Iowa*, 26 February 1944, WW2 AOR, RG 38, NA, box 556.
98. Battleship Division 7 was frequently considered as a pursuit element; see *Operation Order 3-44*, Battleship Division Seven (Task Group 34.5), 7 October 1944, WW2 POR, RG 38, NA, box 232; *Operation Order No. 5-45*, Battleship Division Seven (Task Unit 58.4.2), 31 March 1945, WW2 POR, RG 38, NA, box 232.
99. Task Group 50.9 faced similar difficulties; although the destroyers and battleships had operated together in FLINTLOCK, the cruisers *Minneapolis* and *New Orleans* had been part of the assault forces during the attack on Kwajalein; see Morison, *History*, vol. 7, p. 344. The battleships and destroyers had all been part of Task Group 58.3; see *Operation Plan No. 1-44*, Commander Central Pacific Force.
100. Morison, *History*, vol. 7, p. 319.
101. *Ibid.*, vol. 8, p. 36.

102. Ibid., p. 61.
103. Ibid., p. 36.
104. Ibid.
105. *Operation Plan 5-44*, Commander Fast Carrier Task Force, Pacific (Task Force 58), 9 April 1944, WW2 POR, RG 38, NA, box 235, annex H, Operation Plan A.
106. *Operation Plan 1-44*, Commander Battleships, Pacific Fleet, 12 April 1944, WW2 POR, RG 38, NA, box 224.
107. *Operation Plan 5-44*, Commander Fast Carrier Task Force, annex H, Operation Plan A.
108. Ibid., Operation Plan B.
109. Ibid., Operation Plan C.
110. Morison, *History*, vol. 8, pp. 160–61; *Operation Plan 10-44*, Commander Fifth Fleet (Commander Central Pacific Force), 12 May 1944, WW2 POR, RG 38, NA, box 61, p. 23.
111. *Secret Information Bulletin No. 20: Battle Experience, Supporting Operations for the Capture of the Marianas Islands (Saipan, Guam, and Tinian), June–August 1944*, United States Fleet, Headquarters of the Commander-in-Chief, 21 December 1944, RG 334, NA, box 444, p. 74–23.
112. *Operation Plan 12-44*, Commander Fifth Fleet (Task Force 50), 11 May 1944, WW2 POR, RG 38, NA, box 61; *Operation Plan 3-43*, Commander Fifth Fleet; *Operation Plan 2-44*, Commander Fifth Fleet.
113. *Operation Plan 12-44*, Commander Fifth Fleet; *Operation Plan A10-44*, Commander Task Force 51 (Commander Fifth Amphibious Force), 6 May 1944, WW2 POR, RG 38, NA, box 166, annex S.
114. *Operation Plan 10-44*, Commander Fifth Fleet, p. 21.
115. The plan called for strikes to start on 12 June; see *ibid.*, annex G, p. G-1. Explanation of the advanced date is from *Secret Information Bulletin No. 20*, p. 74–7.
116. *Operation Plan 10-44*, Commander Fifth Fleet, pp. 12–13.
117. Quoted in Morison, *History*, vol. 8, p. 221.
118. Morison, *History*, vol. 8, pp. 216, 233.
119. *Redfin* reported the sortie of Ozawa's force from Tawi Tawi on 13 June, *Flying Fish* spotted the Japanese as they left San Bernardino on 15 June, and *Seahorse* reported the advance of the Japanese southern group the same day, although its radio was jammed until early the next morning; see *ibid.*, pp. 237–41.
120. *Operation Plan 12-44*, Commander Fifth Fleet, p. J-4.
121. Ibid.
122. Morison, *History*, vol. 8, p. 242.
123. *Operations of Task Force Fifty-eight 11 June through 21 June 1944*, Commander Task Force Fifty-eight, 11 September 1944, WW2 AOR, RG 38, NA, box 215, pp. 12–13.
124. Morison, *History*, vol. 8, p. 415.
125. *Operations of Task Force Fifty-eight 11 June through 21 June 1944*, p. 14.
126. Ibid., p. 17.
127. Ibid.
128. Because the carrier task forces were the standard organization, Lee never had the ability to drill his battle fleet; see Reynolds, *Fast Carriers*, p. 126.
129. In November 1942 Lee took an ad hoc task force consisting of *Washington*, *South Dakota*, and four destroyers into the darkness off Guadalcanal. There had been no opportunity to train beforehand. Two destroyers were lost, the other two were disabled, and *South Dakota* was crippled by electrical problems and enemy fire; see Morison, *History*, vol. 5, pp. 270–82.
130. Lee's battleships came from Task Groups 58.2 and 58.3. His cruisers and destroyers were from the assault forces, Task Forces 52 and 53; see Morison, *History*, vol. 8, apps. II and III; *Operation Plan 12-44*, Commander Fifth Fleet; *Operation Plan 10-44*, Commander Fifth Fleet.
131. *Report of Night Action, Task Force Sixty-four—November 14–15, 1942*, Commander Task Force Sixty-four, n.d. (copy provided to the author by Mr. Keith Allan), p. 8.
132. *Operations of Task Force Fifty-eight 11 June through 21 June 1944*, p. 17.
133. Ibid.
134. For the traditional interpretation, see Morison, *History*, vol. 8, p. 244.

135. *Research on Striking Force Tactics*, Yokosuka Naval Air Group, 10 May 1943 (copy provided to author by Mr. David Dickson).
136. *Ibid.*, p. 3.
137. Morison, *History*, vol. 8, p. 253.
138. *Operations of Task Force Fifty-eight 11 June through 21 June 1944*, p. 13.
139. *Ibid.*, p. 19.
140. *Ibid.*, p. 20.
141. Morison, *History*, vol. 8, pp. 257–304.
142. *Operations of Task Force Fifty-eight 11 June through 21 June 1944*, p. 28.
143. Morison, *History*, vol. 8, pp. 278–82.
144. *Ibid.*, vol. 12, p. 12.
145. *Ibid.*, pp. 11–16.
146. Vego, *Battle for Leyte*, pp. 255–99, 335–36.
147. *Operation Plan 8-44*, CINCPAC, 27 September 1944, quoted in Vego, *Battle for Leyte*, p. 126.
148. *Battle Plan No. 1-44*, Commander Third Fleet, 9 September 1944, WW2 POR, RG 38, NA, box 57, p. 1. Note that this plan covered Third Fleet operations prior to Leyte. The raids of September 1944 were governed by this plan as well.
149. *Ibid.*, pp. 1–2, 18–19.
150. *Ibid.*, annex A, p. 2.
151. *Ibid.*, p. 2.
152. Vego, *Battle for Leyte*, pp. 155–60; Morison, *History*, vol. 12, p. 196.
153. Vego, *Battle for Leyte*, pp. 155–60; Morison, *History*, vol. 12, p. 196.
154. Morison, *History*, vol. 12, pp. 426–27.
155. Vego, *Battle for Leyte*, p. 100.
156. *Ibid.*, p. 10.
157. *Ibid.*, p. 49.
158. *Ibid.*, p. 197.
159. Kuasaka issued the order because Toyoda was on Formosa, with limited access to communication; see *ibid.*, pp. 161–62, 212; Richard W. Bates, *The Battle for Leyte Gulf, October 1944, Strategic and Tactical Analysis*, vol. 3, *Operations from 0000 October 20th (D-Day) until 1042 October 23rd* (Newport, R.I.: Naval War College, Bureau of Naval Personnel, 1957), Bates, RG 38, NA, box 3, p. 150.
160. Bates, *Battle for Leyte Gulf*, vol. 3, p. 397.
161. Morison, *History*, vol. 12, pp. 230–31, 430–31.
162. Vego, *Battle for Leyte*, pp. 227–29.
163. Morison, *History*, vol. 12, p. 430.
164. Bates, *Battle for Leyte Gulf*, vol. 3, pp. 106, 567.
165. *Ibid.*, p. 569.
166. Vego, *Battle for Leyte*, p. 221.
167. Bates, *Battle for Leyte Gulf*, vol. 3, pp. 769–72.
168. *Action Report—Period 23–26 October 1944, both dates inclusive*, Commander Third Fleet, 13 November 1944, Bates, RG 38, NA, box 10, p. 2; Bates, *Battle for Leyte Gulf*, vol. 3, pp. 771–72.
169. Vego, *Battle for Leyte*, pp. 257–59.
170. *Report of Operations of Task Force Thirty-four during the Period 6 October 1944 to 3 November 1944*, Commander Task Force Thirty-four, 14 December 1944, WW2 AOR, RG 38, NA, box 135, p. 5; Richard W. Bates, *The Battle for Leyte Gulf, October 1944, Strategic and Tactical Analysis*, vol. 5, *Battle of Surigao Strait, October 24th–25th* (Newport, R.I.: Naval War College, Bureau of Naval Personnel, 1958) (copy provided to author by Mr. Anthony Lazzaretti), p. 169.
171. Bates, *Battle for Leyte Gulf*, vol. 3, p. 98.
172. *Action Report—Period 23–26 October 1944*, p. 5.
173. *Ibid.*; *Secret Information Bulletin No. 22: Battle Experience, Battle for Leyte Gulf: A) Battle of Surigao Strait, B) Battle off Samar, C) Battle of Cape Engano, 23–27 October 1944*, United States Fleet, Headquarters of the Commander-in-Chief, 1 March 1945, RG 334, NA, box 445, pp. 78-13 and 78-14; Vego, *Battle for Leyte*, p. 278. Not all of Halsey's subordinates agreed with this decision; see David Hamer, *Bombers versus Battleships* (Annapolis, Md.: Naval Institute Press, 1998), p. 279.
174. *Report of Operations of Task Force Thirty-four during the Period 6 October 1944 to 3 November 1944*, p. 8; Morison, *History*, vol. 12, pp. 318–19.

175. *Report of Operations of Task Force Thirty-four during the Period 6 October 1944 to 3 November 1944*, pp. 9–10; Morison, *History*, vol. 12, pp. 318–19.
176. One additional destroyer was added; see Morison, *History*, vol. 12, pp. 318–19.
177. *Ibid.*, pp. 331–32.
178. *Ibid.*, pp. 322–28.
179. *Ibid.*, pp. 332–34.
180. *Operation Plan 13-44*, Commander Task Force Seventy-seven, 26 September 1944, WW2 POR, RG 38, NA, box 66, app. 2, annex E.
181. Morison, *History*, vol. 7, p. 346; vol. 8, p. 409; vol. 12, pp. 416, 419.
182. *Ibid.*, vol. 8, p. 406. Australian ships served under Berkeley; see *ibid.*, vol. 12, p. 421.
183. *Operation Plan 13-44*, Commander Task Force Seventy-seven, app. 2, annex E.
184. Bates, *Battle for Leyte Gulf*, vol. 5, pp. 99–102.
185. *Ibid.*, p. 122.
186. *Ibid.*, p. 124.
187. USF 10A, p. 4-12.
188. Bates, *Battle for Leyte Gulf*, vol. 5, pp. 352–77.
189. *Ibid.*, pp. 236–38.
190. See Trent Hone, “Triumph of U.S. Navy Night Fighting,” *Naval History* 20, no. 5 (October 2006), pp. 54–59.
191. For details of the action, see Morison, *History*, vol. 12, pp. 242–88.
192. Bates, *Battle for Leyte Gulf*, vol. 5, p. 675.
193. *Report of Operations of Task Force Thirty-four during the Period 6 October 1944 to 3 November 1944*, p. 11. For plans concerning Task Group 34.5 and its operation, see *Operation Order 13-44*, Commander Battleships, Pacific Fleet (Task Force 34), 6 October 1944, WW2 POR, RG 38, NA, box 224.
194. *Action Report of San Bernardino Strait—Night Action by Task Group 34.5 on 25–26 October 1944*, Commander Task Group Thirty Four Point Five, 7 November 1944, WW2 AOR, RG 38, NA, box 136, p. 2; USF 10A, p. 4-11.
195. *Action Report of San Bernardino Strait*, Commander Task Group Thirty Four Point Five, p. 2.
196. Thomas C. Hone, with Trent C. Hone, “The Pacific Naval War as One Coherent Campaign, 1941–1945,” *International Journal of Naval History* 2, no. 2 (August 2003), available at www.ijnhonline.org.
197. *Operation Order No. 10-44*, Commander Battleships, Pacific Fleet, 26 August 1944, WW2 POR, RG 38, NA, box 224; *Operation Order 13-44*; *Operation Order 19-44*, Commander Battleship Squadron Two (Commander Task Force 34), 15 December 1944, WW2 POR, RG 38, NA, box 224.
198. *Operation Order 3-44*; *Operation Order 4-44*, Commander Battleship Division Seven, 12 November 1944, WW2 POR, RG 38, NA, box 232; *Operation Order 5-44*, Commander Battleship Division Seven, 8 December 1944, WW2 POR, RG 38, NA, box 232; *Operation Plan No. 1-45*, Commander Battleship Division Seven, 10 March 1945, WW2 POR, RG 38, NA, box 232; *Operation Order No. 2-45*, Commander Battleship Division Seven, 6 February 1945, WW2 POR, RG 38, NA, box 232; *Operation Order No. 3-45*, Commander Battleship Division Seven, 12 March 1945, WW2 POR, RG 38, NA, box 232; *Operation Order No. 5-45*; *Operation Order No. 8-45*, Commander Battleship Division Seven, 17 May 1945, WW2 POR, RG 38, NA, box 232; *Operation Order No. 2-45*, Commander Battleship Division Eight, 4 May 1945, WW2 POR, RG 38, NA, box 232; *Operation Plan No. 1-45*, Commander Battleship Division Three, 23 January 1945, WW2 POR, RG 38, NA, box 229; *Battle Plan No. 1-45*, Commander Battleship Division Three, 26 January 1945, WW2 POR, RG 38, NA, box 229; *Operation Plan No. 2-45*, Commander Battleship Division Three, 30 January 1945, WW2 POR, RG 38, NA, box 229; *Battle Plan No. 1-44*, Commander Task Group Fifty-two Point Eight (Commander Cruiser Division Six), 21 January 1944, WW2 POR, RG 38, NA, box 260.
199. The other way in which the Japanese attempted to address the deficiency was the use of suicide tactics.
200. Halsey considered leaving Task Force 34 alone off the San Bernardino Strait but without air cover. This would have been a poor choice, and he appropriately dismissed it. Leaving Task Force 34 with Task Group 38.2,

- a more realistic option, was never seriously considered; see *Action Report—Period 23–26 October 1944*, p. 5. Halsey had developed no plans for dispersal of his fighting strength; see *Battle Plan No. 1-44*, Commander Third Fleet.
201. Quoted in Reynolds, *Fast Carriers*, pp. 279–80.
202. Reynolds, *Fast Carriers*, p. 141.
203. *Operations of Task Force Fifty-eight 11 June through 21 June 1944*, p. 17.
204. Haruo Tohmatsu and H. P. Willmott, *A Gathering Darkness: The Coming of War to the Far East and the Pacific, 1921–1942* (New York: SR Books, 2004), p. 42.
205. Reynolds, *Fast Carriers*, pp. 166–67.
206. *Ibid.*, p. 166.
207. The battleships were in three groups for the Mindoro landings in December 1944, the assault on Okinawa, and attacks on Japan in July–August 1945. This distribution contrasts with the concentration into two groups for the Gilberts, Hollandia, Marianas, and Leyte; see *Operational Experience of Fast Carrier Task Forces in World War II*, pp. 189, 206; Morison, *History*, vol. 14, pp. 382–85.
208. *U.S.F. 2, General Tactical Instructions, United States Fleets*, Navy Department, Office of the Chief of Naval Operations, 1947, Bates, RG 38, NA, box 11; *U.S.F. 4, Carrier Task Force Tactical Instructions, United States Fleets*, Navy Department, Office of the Chief of Naval Operations, 1946, Bates, RG 38, NA, box 11; *U.S.F. 5, Surface Action and Tactics, United States Fleets*, Navy Department, Office of the Chief of Naval Operations, 1947, Bates, RG 38, NA, box 12; *U.S.F. 15, CIC Instructions, United States Fleets*, Navy Department, Office of the Chief of Naval Operations, 1947, Bates, RG 38, NA, box 17.
209. *U.S.F. 5, Surface Action and Tactics*, p. III.
210. *Ibid.*
211. *Ibid.*, app. I.
212. *Ibid.*, pp. 3–23.
213. *Ibid.*, chap. 4.