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JAPANESE REMNANTS STILL FIGHT ON ISLES BEHIND PACIFIC FRONT

PEARL HARBOR, Hawaii, Dec. 7

Announcement of a drive by the marines to liquidate enemy remnants on Saipan, while army units were retaking Ngerengong Island in the Palau group from the Japanese, focuses attention on the substantial amount of fighting being done and remaining to be done in areas behind the Pacific battle front.

Although organized resistance on Saipan ended last July, and that island was declared secured, several hundred Japanese remained scattered throughout the hills and valleys.

Four months, remnants of the enemy garrison have rejected surrender appeals and threats and have sniped and otherwise harassed United States forces on that island while it was being converted into one of the most important bases in the western Pacific.

Clean-up Campaign
Having given enemy hide-outs ample time to exhaust their provisions and their will to resist, the marines opened their clean-up campaign early this month.

In three days of mopping-up operations—November 14 to 16—248 Japanese were killed and 472 captured, while nine marines were killed and 40 wounded.

Although the Navy communiqué announcing this action does not indicate how closely the 295 enemy troops represent the last of the Japanese on Saipan, it would appear that if many are liquidated in two or three days, probably considerably more remain to be dug out of the caves and crevices of that rugged island.

The fact that 20 percent of the Japanese preferred to surrender is encouraging, considering its relation to the heavy mop-up job remaining on numerous other islands by the leap-frogging offensive toward Japan.

Japanese Unpersuaded

However, the great majority of the Japanese stragglers apparently preferred to sacrifice themselves, although they must have known the hopelessness of their position and possibly were acquainted with the good treat-

ment accorded Japanese civilian captives on Saipan. Apparently this means that the Allies have yet to devise an effective persuasive psychological approach to these remnants.

These operations on Saipan also offer to some extent the measure of the cost to be anticipated if and when the clean-ups are extended to other rearward islands. Comparison of total United States casualties with the total enemy killed or captured shows a cost of one marine killed or injured for every six Japanese.

In actual fatalities, the ratio is much more favorable to the United States. Approximately 17 enemy troops killed for every American marine lost.

Mopping-Up Tactics

Fortunately, however, it is unnecessary for the American forces to employ the same digging-out process to eliminate enemy garrisons on all the islands. On some of the smaller and less rugged islands, air power can be applied more effectively to mop up the enemy remnants than on Saipan, where the Japanese were able to take refuge from aerial attack by hiding in dugouts in the hillsides.

Ngerengong provides an example of mopping-up almost exclusively by air. This small island, only 1,000 yards long and 70 yards wide, lies about midway between Peleliu and the larger Japanese-held islands of Babelthuap and Koror in the Palau group.

The Army 81st Division had been patrolling Ngerengong, but it was withdrawn when a superior force of approximately 200 Japanese landed on the island November 8 under cover of a raging typhoon.

It is believed the Japanese intended to mount artillery on the islet to shell Peleliu. But they were not given a chance to carry out their intentions.

Marine fighters from Peleliu hit Ngerengong on November 10-11, bombing and strafing so thoroughly that when the army units returned to Ngerengong on November 14, they met no resistance.



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FAMILY OF NEWEST V.C. WINNER—This picture, taken in their Owen Sound, Ont., home, shows the wife and son of Major David Vivian Currie who has just been awarded the Victoria Cross for personal courage and devotion to duty in the bitter fighting near Falaise in Normandy. Mrs. Isabel Currie and nine-year-old David Foster Currie had just been told of the award to their husband and father when this picture was made.



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