

United States Department of the Interior  
National Park Service

For NPS use only

National Register of Historic Places  
Inventory—Nomination Form

received

date entered

See instructions in *How to Complete National Register Forms*  
Type all entries—complete applicable sections

1. Name

historic Roi-Namur Battlefield

and or common Kiernan Re-entry Measurements Site, Kwajalein Missile Range

2. Location

street & number \_\_\_\_\_ not for publication

city, town \_\_\_\_\_  vicinity of Kwajalein Atoll

state Republic of the Marshall Islands code 75 county Kwajalein Atoll code 020

3. Classification

Category	Ownership	Status	Present Use
<input type="checkbox"/> district	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> public	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> occupied	<input type="checkbox"/> agriculture
<input type="checkbox"/> building(s)	<input type="checkbox"/> private	<input type="checkbox"/> unoccupied	<input type="checkbox"/> commercial
<input type="checkbox"/> structure	<input type="checkbox"/> both	<input type="checkbox"/> work in progress	<input type="checkbox"/> educational
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> site	<b>Public Acquisition</b>	<b>Accessible</b>	<input type="checkbox"/> entertainment
<input type="checkbox"/> object	<input type="checkbox"/> in process	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> yes: restricted	<input type="checkbox"/> government
	<input type="checkbox"/> being considered	<input type="checkbox"/> yes: unrestricted	<input type="checkbox"/> industrial
		<input type="checkbox"/> no	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> military
			<input type="checkbox"/> museum
			<input type="checkbox"/> park
			<input type="checkbox"/> private residence
			<input type="checkbox"/> religious
			<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> scientific
			<input type="checkbox"/> transportation
			<input type="checkbox"/> other:

4. Owner of Property

name Government of the Republic of the Marshall Islands

street & number \_\_\_\_\_

city, town Majuro \_\_\_\_\_ vicinity of \_\_\_\_\_ state Marshall Islands 96960

5. Location of Legal Description

courthouse, registry of deeds, etc. Office of the High Commissioner

street & number Trust Territory of the Pacific Islands

city, town Saipan \_\_\_\_\_ state Mariana Islands 96950

6. Representation in Existing Surveys

title Historic Site Survey of Kwajalein Missile Range has this property been determined eligible?  yes  no

date August 1980  federal  state  county  local

depository for survey records U.S. Army Corps of Engineers, Pacific Ocean Division

city, town Fort Shafter, Honolulu \_\_\_\_\_ state Hawaii

# 7. Description

<b>Condition</b>		<b>Check one</b>	<b>Check one</b>
<input type="checkbox"/> excellent	<input type="checkbox"/> deteriorated	<input type="checkbox"/> unaltered	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> original site
<input type="checkbox"/> good	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> ruins	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> altered	<input type="checkbox"/> moved    date _____
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> fair	<input type="checkbox"/> unexposed		

## Describe the present and original (if known) physical appearance

Roi-Namur Islands are at the northern apex of Kwajalein Atoll, which is in the Ralik (Sunset) chain of the Marshall Islands. Kwajalein is the largest atoll in the world, its lagoon having an area of 1,100 square miles. Roi-Namur has an area of 350 acres. Originally considered two separate islands they were joined by a sand bar on their lagoon sides. From the center of this bar a spit of firm land extended northward dividing the shallow reef water between the two. Americans named this spit Aqua Pura because of a Japanese water distillation plant there. Before World War II, Japanese naval personnel built a 1,200-foot causeway connecting the two islands and the spit. The causeway was well-constructed, being filled with coral, masonry revetted, and paved with asphalt. Repaired after the battle, much of the causeway remains, now serving as a seawall. Contrary to common belief, the Japanese did not construct a road along the sandbar; American Seabees built a road in this area immediately after the 1944 battle. Since the war, most of the area between the road and the causeway has been filled in and landscaped, making the two islands one. Americans also added a small area of new land by filling in the reef at Roi's southeast corner, where they constructed a small pier. Both islands are roughly rectangular in shape and have an elevation of 5.5 feet above sea level.

Roi-Namur is part of the U.S. Army Kwajalein Missile Range and is the home of Kiernan Re-entry Measurements Site. Facilities include the TRADEX and computer buildings, housing and administrative buildings, aircraft runway, docks, a 48-inch telescope, and several highly technical radars, including the huge ALTAIR and a Super RADOT. The residential area is located in the northwest corner of Roi. The one runway extends the length of Roi, from its southwest corner to the northeast point. Most of the technical facilities are on Namur.

Prior to 1944, the Japanese airfield covered most of Roi, which resulted in sparse vegetation on that island. Air headquarters, barracks, and support facilities were concentrated on Namur. The northeast portion of Namur was heavily wooded. After the battle, American naval personnel occupied both islands, employing almost every square foot of land, including the former wooded area. At the same time, work began to restore the tropical vegetation and 3,000 young coconut trees were planted within a year of the battle. Today, Roi-Namur is outstandingly beautiful. Palm, breadfruit, pandanus, and papaya trees cover the land; green grass and morning glory hide the scars of war; and once again northeastern Namur is a lush jungle of growth.

Like Kwajalein Island, Roi-Namur was subjected to the most severe air, land, and sea bombardment of World War II in the Pacific. Despite the terrible destruction, a number of Japanese fortifications and other structures have survived.

### Roi

The Japanese airfield on Roi had three short runways in a figure 4 configuration. Only the northeast-southwest runway is extant. Although

## 8. Significance

Period	Areas of Significance—Check and justify below			
<input type="checkbox"/> prehistoric	<input type="checkbox"/> archeology-prehistoric	<input type="checkbox"/> community planning	<input type="checkbox"/> landscape architecture	<input type="checkbox"/> religion
<input type="checkbox"/> 1400–1499	<input type="checkbox"/> archeology-historic	<input type="checkbox"/> conservation	<input type="checkbox"/> law	<input type="checkbox"/> science
<input type="checkbox"/> 1500–1599	<input type="checkbox"/> agriculture	<input type="checkbox"/> economics	<input type="checkbox"/> literature	<input type="checkbox"/> sculpture
<input type="checkbox"/> 1600–1699	<input type="checkbox"/> architecture	<input type="checkbox"/> education	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> military	<input type="checkbox"/> social/ humanitarian
<input type="checkbox"/> 1700–1799	<input type="checkbox"/> art	<input type="checkbox"/> engineering	<input type="checkbox"/> music	<input type="checkbox"/> theater
<input type="checkbox"/> 1800–1899	<input type="checkbox"/> commerce	<input type="checkbox"/> exploration/settlement	<input type="checkbox"/> philosophy	<input type="checkbox"/> transportation
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> 1900–	<input type="checkbox"/> communications	<input type="checkbox"/> industry	<input type="checkbox"/> politics/government	<input type="checkbox"/> other (specify)
		<input type="checkbox"/> invention		

Specific dates 1944

Builder/Architect

### Statement of Significance (in one paragraph)

Roi-Namur Islands, captured by U.S. Marines, along with Kwajalein Island, captured by U.S. Army troops, were the first Japanese territory in the Pacific to be taken in battle in World War II. Benefitting from costly lessons learned earlier at Tarawa and Makin atolls in the British Gilbert Islands, the U.S. Navy surface fleet and carrier aircraft, the Army Air Forces' bombers, and Army and Marine field artillery unleashed the most intensive bombardment of World War II in the Pacific against Kwajalein Atoll, stunning the enemy and resulting in relatively few American battle deaths. The Fourth Marine Division, in its first combat, captured Roi Island in the amazingly short time of six hours and seized Namur Island in twenty-six hours, inflicting heavy casualties on the enemy who resisted bravely almost to the last man. The Fourth Marine Division, stationed at Camp Pendleton, California, was the only Marine division in World War II to be mounted and staged into combat directly from the continental United States.

### Japanese in the Marshalls

The Marshall Islands consist of 32 coral atolls and a number of coral islands in the western North Pacific Ocean, a few degrees above the equator. Spanish navigators discovered them, English captains Marshall and Gilbert explored them, Germany purchased them from Spain in 1899, and Japan seized them in World War I. In 1920, the League of Nations gave Japan a mandate over the islands with the condition they not be fortified. Japan withdrew from the League in 1935 and closed the Marshalls to foreign visitors. Thus, these islands became the easternmost outpost of the Japanese empire. As war neared, Japan began to fortify five of the atolls: Mille, Maloelap, Wotje, Jaliut, and Kwajalein. Airfields, seaplane bases, fleet anchorages, and submarine bases were developed, all protected by land defenses.

Kwajalein Atoll had three principal bases in January 1944: an airfield on Roi Island at the northern apex of the atoll, with air headquarters for all the Marshalls under Vice Adm. Michiyuki Yamada and support facilities on adjacent Namur; the military headquarters for the Marshalls under Rear Adm. Monzo Akiyama on Kwajalein Island at the south end of the lagoon; and a seaplane base on Ebeye Island, near Kwajalein. Roi-Namur's garrison consisted of approximately 3,500 naval personnel, of whom some 500 were Korean laborers. About half the garrison belonged to the 24th Air Flotilla which had 35 landbased planes on Roi. These aircraft were either destroyed by American strikes or removed by the Japanese even before the invasion. The remainder of the combat troops was a 600-man provisional battalion named the Sonoyama Unit of the 61st Naval Guard Force, stationed primarily on Namur.

# 9. Major Bibliographical References

See continuation sheet.

# 10. Geographical Data

Acreeage of nominated property 350 acres

Quadrangle name None

Quadrangle scale \_\_\_\_\_

UTM References Not available

A	<input type="text"/>	<input type="text"/>	<input type="text"/>
	Zone	Easting	Northing

B	<input type="text"/>	<input type="text"/>	<input type="text"/>
	Zone	Easting	Northing

C	<input type="text"/>	<input type="text"/>	<input type="text"/>
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D	<input type="text"/>	<input type="text"/>	<input type="text"/>
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E	<input type="text"/>	<input type="text"/>	<input type="text"/>
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F	<input type="text"/>	<input type="text"/>	<input type="text"/>
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G	<input type="text"/>	<input type="text"/>	<input type="text"/>
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H	<input type="text"/>	<input type="text"/>	<input type="text"/>
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## Verbal boundary description and justification

See continuation sheet.

## List all states and counties for properties overlapping state or county boundaries

state	code	county	code
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state	code	county	code
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# 11. Form Prepared By

name/title Erwin N. Thompson, Historian

organization National Park Service, Denver Service Center date May 10, 1984

street & number 755 Parfet Street telephone (303) 234-4509

city or town Denver state Colorado 80225

# 12. State Historic Preservation Officer Certification

The evaluated significance of this property within the state is:

\_\_\_ national \_\_\_ state \_\_\_ local

As the designated State Historic Preservation Officer for the National Historic Preservation Act of 1966 (Public Law 89-665), I hereby nominate this property for inclusion in the National Register and certify that it has been evaluated according to the criteria and procedures set forth by the National Park Service.

State Historic Preservation Officer signature

title \_\_\_\_\_ date \_\_\_\_\_

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I hereby certify that this property is included in the National Register

date

Keeper of the National Register

Attest:

date

Chief of Registration

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improved several times, the strip retains the same dimensions, including a part of a turning circle at each end, as it had before 1944. An army air shuttle service between Roi-Namur and Kwajalein uses the runway on a regular schedule. The field has been named in honor of Lt. Col. J. Aquilla Dyess, USMC, commanding officer of the 1st Battalion, 24th Marines, posthumously awarded the Medal of Honor. In the fight for Namur, Dyess was killed directing his troops in assaulting the last Japanese position.

The Japanese built an ingenious water collection system at the airfield. On either side of the three runways they constructed concrete conduits, two feet square. Every three feet there was a six-inch slot in the concrete cover for the entry of water. Rain from the runways drained into these conduits and flowed to large underground reservoirs for storage. When U.S. Marines stormed ashore on Roi, a large number of Japanese took refuge in these conduits, where most of them lost their lives. Afterward, the ditches were covered over. It is known that at least one, running along the former east-west runway, is extant.

Roi and Namur each had a battery of two twin-mount, dual-purpose 127mm guns on raised mounds, both sited primarily for off-shore fire. Nothing remains of the battery on Namur, but Roi is the possessor of one of these emplacements including the weapon. The circular concrete revetment that surrounds the weapon is partially destroyed. The remaining portions retain their small ready magazines. The two gun barrels point menacingly toward the ocean.

Nearby, a substantial portion of the carriage and the concrete platform of the second gun remains. A bombproof ammunition magazine, measuring 43.5 by 22.5 feet, for each weapon was constructed 450 feet from the guns. One magazine remains, but there is no trace of the narrow-gauge tracks on which ammunition was transported.

On the west side of Roi a small cemetery has been established. From time to time, Japanese remains are accidentally uncovered and interred here. Japanese citizens have erected a memorial at the site. A translation of its legend reads, "Here Lie Members of the Japanese Armed Forces Who Gave Their Lives in Defense of Roi-Namur."<sup>2</sup>

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1. It is said that both barrels were loaded with ammunition for many years after the war. Then, one barrel was purposefully fired. Instead of a round roaring out to sea, the breech blew off and flew several hundred yards to the rear, causing only a little property damage. The other barrel supposedly is still armed.

2. Duane Denfeld, "An Historic Site Survey of Kwajalein Missile Range, Kwajalein Atoll, Marshall Islands" (Agana, Guam, 1980), p. 34.

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The Japanese constructed circular blockhouses on Roi-Namur and elsewhere in the Pacific.<sup>3</sup> Three of these blockhouses remain on Roi-Namur: on the northwest corner of Roi, near the northeast corner of Roi, and on the east shore (Nadine Point) of Namur. The two latter were hit by shells and are impressive evidence of the power of the American bombardment. The blockhouse at the northwest corner of Roi emerged from the battle relatively unscathed and is a prime exhibit of Japanese fortifications. These structures had a diameter of 40 feet. The seaward wall was four feet thick with four layers of one-inch reinforcing steel running vertically and horizontally. Each blockhouse had four steel-plated, stepped embrasures, each with a 60-degree field of fire and spaced 60 degrees apart around the circumference so as to cover the shore in either direction as well as the ocean. The interior walls were covered with one-inch rock wool insulation backed with hardware cloth. Wood framing suggests that the walls also were panelled with wood, as were the blockhouses on Saipan. Interior concrete walls partially separated the four gun emplacements and a circular concrete magazine, eight feet in diameter, stands in the center. A person standing on top of the magazine could observe through slits in a small steel turret that extended two feet above the roof. This blockhouse has a steel door at its rear (landward) entrance.

The Japanese air operations building, also of reinforced concrete, stands on the east side of Roi. Somewhat battered from the invasion, it no longer has its control tower on the roof. It was built in a standard design and is similar to structures on Saipan and Tinian. Following the battle, the U.S. Navy used the building for its own air operations. Nearby, is a Japanese air raid shelter, also of standard design and similar to two shelters on Namur.<sup>4</sup>

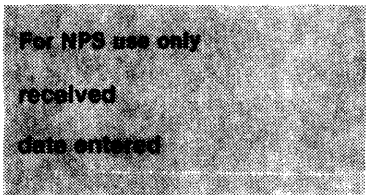
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3. Identical blockhouses are found on Saipan and a modified form exists on Wake. American intelligence personnel described them as German-style blockhouses. Denfeld, who has studied both German and Japanese fortifications, concludes they are inherently Japanese and the only close similarity to German construction is the concept of casemating the weapons. Ibid, p. 33.

4. One of these shelters on Namur is camouflaged by morning glory and most difficult to spot. Mr. Edward S. Burris, who has been exploring Roi-Namur for twenty years, has learned that Namur's other shelter, on the southeast corner of the island, was also a control point for a pair of remote-control torpedo tubes out on the reef. These tubes are not mentioned in Marine Corps records, but an American intelligence map shows narrow-gauge tracks running out to an islet in this area.

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At either end of the former east-west runway on Roi, the Japanese constructed protective seawalls. Both well-built, masonry walls continue to protect the island from the relentless surf.

Aqua Pura Spit

Two Japanese structures remain in this area, now a wide stretch of land joining the two islands. One is a non-bombproof concrete building that has been described as a general storage building. An American intelligence map, compiled before the 1944 invasion, shows only two buildings on the spit and identifies them as a water distillation plant. The other structure is a reinforced-concrete pillbox with a circular concrete ring attached. The same map shows two medium anti-aircraft guns and a blockhouse in this general area.

Namur

Along the former west side of Namur, from south to north, are five Japanese structures. On the lagoon shore is a typical reinforced-concrete pillbox. A little to the east is a windowless concrete building, which has been repaired and is now attached to a missile range corrugated-metal building. Persons who have examined the interior of this structure have concluded that the Japanese used it as a jail.<sup>5</sup> About halfway up the coast are two features that D. Colt Denfeld has identified as a communications center (a concrete building with three rooms) and a nearby tunnel that possibly housed transformers.<sup>6</sup> Just north of the former causeway road is a two-story, concrete power plant, its adjacent fuel storage building, and the ruins of an oxygen generating plant. On the northwest corner of Namur, only two concrete pillboxes remain at this once heavily defended point. Both are in good condition.

The Japanese dispersed reserve ammunition magazines and bombproof petroleum storage buildings in the wooded area of eastern Namur. This location provided a safety feature in the event of an air raid on the field on Roi. Two bombproof magazines have survived. A combat photographer made one of them famous during the war: On the last day of the battle, February 2, the 24th

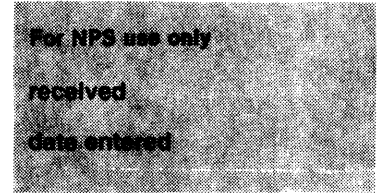
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5. Access to the building is restricted.

6. A post-battle intelligence report stated that the communications receiving station was "believed" to have been in the air administration headquarters. The gothic ruins of the communications transmittal center are on Ennubirr Island, southeast of Namur.

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Marines approached this structure and forced open its huge steel doors. Inside they found 500 tons of explosives, mostly 500- and 250-pound bombs. It took the Marines three full days to remove the ammunition. Meanwhile, a tragic scene unfolded outside the building. Sixty Japanese had taken refuge in a dugout under the bombproof where they had attempted for two days to blow up the magazine. Failing that, they began killing themselves rather than be taken prisoner. When discovered, only seven remained alive. Six of these were badly wounded and two soon died. (The site where a similar magazine blew up a day earlier on Namur may still be identified. In the excitement of the battle a Marine threw a satchel-charge into the building which was full of aerial torpedoes. The resulting explosion will never be forgotten by the survivors.) Also on eastern Namur are two large but somewhat battered bombproofs for storing aviation gasoline. They are of the same design as gasoline storage bombproofs on Saipan.

On the lagoon side of Namur are three wartime features: the L-shaped Japanese pier; the ruins of a small, post-battle pontoon pier nearby; and, in the water off Namur's south point, a concrete pillbox.

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7. A captured Japanese map of Roi-Namur shows many of the installations described herein, including the causeway, water conduits along the runways, bomb and fuel storage on eastern Namur, hospital complex in southwest Namur, and other features. Also appearing on the map, but not accounted for in other sources, are three structures or sites on the west side of Roi: command building, power plant, and "Waiting Place." Estimate of Japanese Troops and Defensive Organizations, Roi-Namur, no date, U.S. Marine Corps Records, World War II, WNRC.



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Throughout 1942 and much of 1943, the Japanese were able to strengthen their Marshall bases with little or no interference from United States forces. When the Americans captured the Gilbert Islands south of the Marshalls in November 1943, Japan realized that the Marshalls would be next. The Japanese were surprised, however, when the attack came at Kwajalein Atoll, "There was divided opinion as to whether you would land at Jaluit or Mille'. . . . 'Some thought you would land on Wotje, but there were few who thought you would go right to the heart of the Marshalls and take Kwajalein.'" Roi-Namur's defenses were more formidable than those on Kwajalein Island to the south, even though its combat personnel were fewer in number. Massive, circular blockhouses; pillboxes; four twin-mounted, dual-purpose 127mm guns; numerous 20mm dual-purpose guns; and machine guns protected the shores. Both islands were ringed with trenches, anti-tank ditches, and foxholes. North-central Namur, particularly, had a maze of trenches hidden in heavy undergrowth, as well as a number of strong, concrete storage buildings. When the enemy invaded the Gilbert Islands on their lagoon shores, the Japanese hastily strengthened the lagoon shores of Roi-Namur which had hitherto received the least attention.

The American Scheme

Under the direction of Admiral Chester W. Nimitz, Pacific Fleet, Pearl Harbor, the Fifth Fleet, led by Vice Adm. Raymond A. Spruance, departed Hawaii en route to the Marshall Islands for Operation Flintlock. Rear Adm. Richmond K. Turner commanded the Joint Expeditionary Force and Maj. Gen. Holland M. Smith, USMC, was commander of the Expeditionary Troops. Admiral Turner also directed the Southern Attack Force which assaulted Kwajalein Island. The Northern Attack Force (Task Force 53), which invaded Roi-Namur, was led by Rear Adm. Richard L. Conolly. Under him, Maj. Gen. Harry Schmidt, USMC, commanded the Fourth Marine Division's three infantry regiments, the 23d, 24th, and 25th Marines.

Prior to the landings, the Fast Carrier Force, under Rear Adm. Marc A. Mitscher, blasted Japanese airfields throughout the Marshalls. By D-Day, January 31, 1944, not a single Japanese aircraft was able to take to the air. In addition, the landing forces were supported by an additional six aircraft carriers and seven battleships which brought their destructive power to bear on the islands. Besides the carrier-based planes, bombers of the Seventh Air

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1. Henry I. Shaw, Jr., Bernard C. Nalty, and Edwin T. Turnbladh, Central Pacific Drive, History of U.S. Marine Corps Operations in World War II, vol. 3, p. 139, p. 139, quoting a Japanese naval officer.

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Force, commanded by Maj. Gen. Willis H. Hale, unleashed their fury against the enemy.

Assault

On D-Day, January 31, elements of the 25th Marines captured five islets off Roi-Namur. The first action was the assault on Ennuebing and Mellu islands to the southwest of Roi. Not only did these islands guard the passes into Kwajalein Lagoon, they provided a platform for Marine artillery to fire on Roi-Namur. Although delayed by rough seas and the incomplete training of the amphibious tractor crews, the Marines quickly overcame light resistance and secured both islands by mid-morning, the first capture of Japanese territory by U.S. Marines in the war. Further delays occurred and not until mid-afternoon were the 25th Marines able to land on Ennumennet and Ennubirr islands across the lagoon, southeast of Namur. Again, they faced light opposition and quickly swept the two with few casualties. On Ennubirr they took possession of the ruined Japanese communications transmission station. The 75mm pack howitzers of the 14th Marines arrived on both islands just before dark and registration on Roi-Namur was postponed until next morning. Darkness had set in before the 25th Marines seized the fifth island, Ennugarret, only 400 yards from Namur. During the night, weapons were rushed to this island to provide a base of fire for the main attack.

Analyzing the D-Day operations, Marine historians have concluded, "More reliable radios, closer cooperation between LSTs and LVTs [for the transfer of troops], and a tighter rein by control officers would have resulted in a less hectic operation, but these facts were of no consolation to the Japanese killed on the outlying islands."<sup>2</sup>

At early light on D plus 1, February 1, the big LSTs moved into the lagoon as a land, sea, and air bombardment of Roi-Namur began. Fresh delays, caused by a shortage of LVTs, forced a postponement of the landings from 10 a.m. to a few minutes before noon. Four battalions stormed ashore on Roi-Namur: two battalions of the 23d Marines on lagoon Beaches Red 2 and 3 on Roi, and two battalions of the 24th Marines on lagoon Beaches Green 1 and 2 on Namur.

Capture of Roi

Supported by tanks and the 37mm cannon of armored amphibians, the 23d Marines pushed ahead against a dazed but courageous enemy and within a few

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2. Ibid., p. 152. LST, landing ship, tank; LVT, landing vehicle, tracked.

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minutes reached its first objective, the O-1 line, on the airfield. Its commander, Col. Louis R. Jones, radioed General Schmidt, "This is a pip," adding, "Give us the word and we'll take the island."<sup>3</sup> Without waiting for the word, infantry and tanks plunged recklessly ahead. Colonel Jones required an hour to rein in his Marines in order to reorganize a coordinated attack. In mid-afternoon, the 23d renewed its advance, moving up both the east and west coasts of Roi. At 6:03 p.m., Roi Island was declared secured. Mopping-up in the center of the island continued through the evening; many Japanese had hidden in the water-collection conduits along the runways from where they harassed the Marines until captured or killed.<sup>4</sup>

#### Capture of Namur

As the bombardment of Namur continued, two battalions of the 24th Marines stormed ashore on Beaches Green 1 and 2 about the same time as those who hit Roi. At first, the advance met little opposition, but as the companies approached the O-1 line, progress slowed because of dense underbrush, heaps of rubble, and increasing Japanese fire. The ruins of the Japanese air headquarters were overrun. The Marines did not know it yet, but Admiral Yamada had been killed three days earlier in the bombardment and most of his senior officers had committed suicide. By early afternoon, most of the 24th's companies had come up to the O-1 line, which was the east-west road from the causeway. Toward the eastern part of the island, an assault team from the 2d Battalion began attacking a bombproof structure that appeared to be a gun position. Breaching a wall, Marines threw satchel-charges through the hole. Suddenly, a tremendous explosion shook the island, followed swiftly by two others. A Marine air observer flying over Namur at the time reported his plane

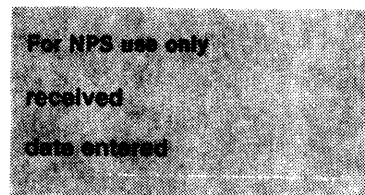
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3. Jones to Schmidt, 1207 hours, D-Day plus 1, Record of Events, 23d Marine Regiment, January 13-February 8, 1944, USMC Records, Washington National Records Center, Suitland, MD, hereinafter cited as WNRC. This must be the shortest Record of Events that included a battle ever written. The entire diary, from the time the 23d left San Diego to their departure from Kwajalein Atoll amounts to four pages!

4. Robert D. Heintz, Jr. and John A. Crown, The Marshalls: Increasing the Tempo (Washington, 1954), pp. 64-67; "Observations and Recommendations, Flintlock Operations," January 19, 1944, USMC Records, WNRC. Most U.S. Marine accounts agree that Roi was declared secure on the evening of February 1. The G-3 at V Amphibious Corps headquarters stated that the island was declared secured at 8 a.m., February 2. G-3, Headquarters, V Amphibious Corps, Report for Operation Flintlock, February 18, 1944, USMC Records, World War II, WNRC.

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was lifted 1,000 feet by the blast. It looked to him as if the whole island had blown up. On the ground, the number of casualties increased as chunks of concrete and steel rained down. The bombproof had been a magazine filled with aerial torpedoes. The 2d Battalion, 24th Marines, suffered severe casualties from the explosions with 20 dead and about 100 wounded. Not until late afternoon was its commander, Lt. Col. Francis H. Brink, who was himself wounded, able to reorganize his command and rejoin the attack. Some further advances were made before darkness came; one force of tanks and infantry actually gained the northernmost point of Namur but withdrew to the main line. This first day of fighting on Namur resulted in the Marines occupying about two-thirds of the island.

Small groups of Japanese harrassed the Marine forces during the night with little effect. At dawn, the enemy launched a counterattack which infantry and tanks quickly shattered. At 9 a.m., February 2, the 24th Marines renewed the attack with two battalions, reducing blockhouses and pillboxes one by one. Shortly after noon, the battalions met at the northern point and Namur was declared secured two hours later. The Fourth Marine Division, fresh from the training fields, was now battle-seasoned. It had met the enemy and had captured its objectives, even if beset with problems not of its own making, such as shortages in amphibious landing vehicles and the delays and confusion in delivering men and machines to the beaches.

Although they had lost the islands, the Japanese had the last word at Kwajalein Atoll. On the night of February 11-12, twelve Japanese bombers got through American radar and made a devastating surprise attack on Roi Island. Using both high explosive and phosphorous bombs, they hit the 20th Marines' (Engineers) comand post, a large bomb dump, and the LST unloading point. The explosions, which lasted four hours, and fires destroyed two landing ships and large stocks of food, ammunition, bombs, construction equipment, and clothing. The 20th Marines lost all its regimental records and journals. Casualties were severe with 30 killed and about 400 wounded.

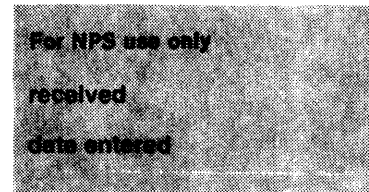
Japanese casualties in the Northern Sector for Operation Flintlock amounted to 3,470 dead, many of whom were killed in the pre-invasion bombardment. Of the 264 men taken prisoner, 99 were Japanese, the remainder, Korean. In contrast, the Fourth Marine Division had 313 killed and 500 wounded.<sup>5</sup> Japanese dead were buried in deep trenches within the triangle formed by Roi's runways. On Namur, three large bomb craters became the Japanese burial ground. The Fourth Marine Division established a temporary cemetery for its dead on Aqua Pura Spit.

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5. Both Japanese and American casualty figures differ considerably in the several official accounts of the action in the Northern Section. The figures given above may or may not be correct.

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As Marine engineers and Seabees cleared Roi-Namur of battle rubble, the Fourth carried out its last remaining task, an uneventful sweep of all islands in the Northern Sector. The division departed the atoll on February 8, enroute to Pearl Harbor to prepare for its next mission--Saipan.

Less than a week later the first of the runways on Roi was repaired and made operational. Soon thereafter, the 4th Marine Air Wing arrived on Roi-Namur. From then to the end of World War II, Marine pilots bombed and strafed the bypassed Japanese bases in the Marshall Islands, Ponape, and Wake.

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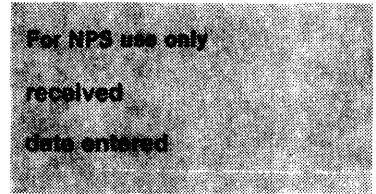
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GEOGRAPHICAL DATA

The boundary is the water's edge around Roi-Namur islands so as to include the landing beaches, and surviving Japanese structures, weapons, and fortifications. All Kwajalein Missile Range developments on Roi-Namur, while within this boundary, do not contribute to the historical significance of the battle and are exempted. Because the bombardments and the fighting involved all the land, all of it is historically significant despite the continuing impact of modern developments.



# CAPTURE OF ROI AND NAMUR

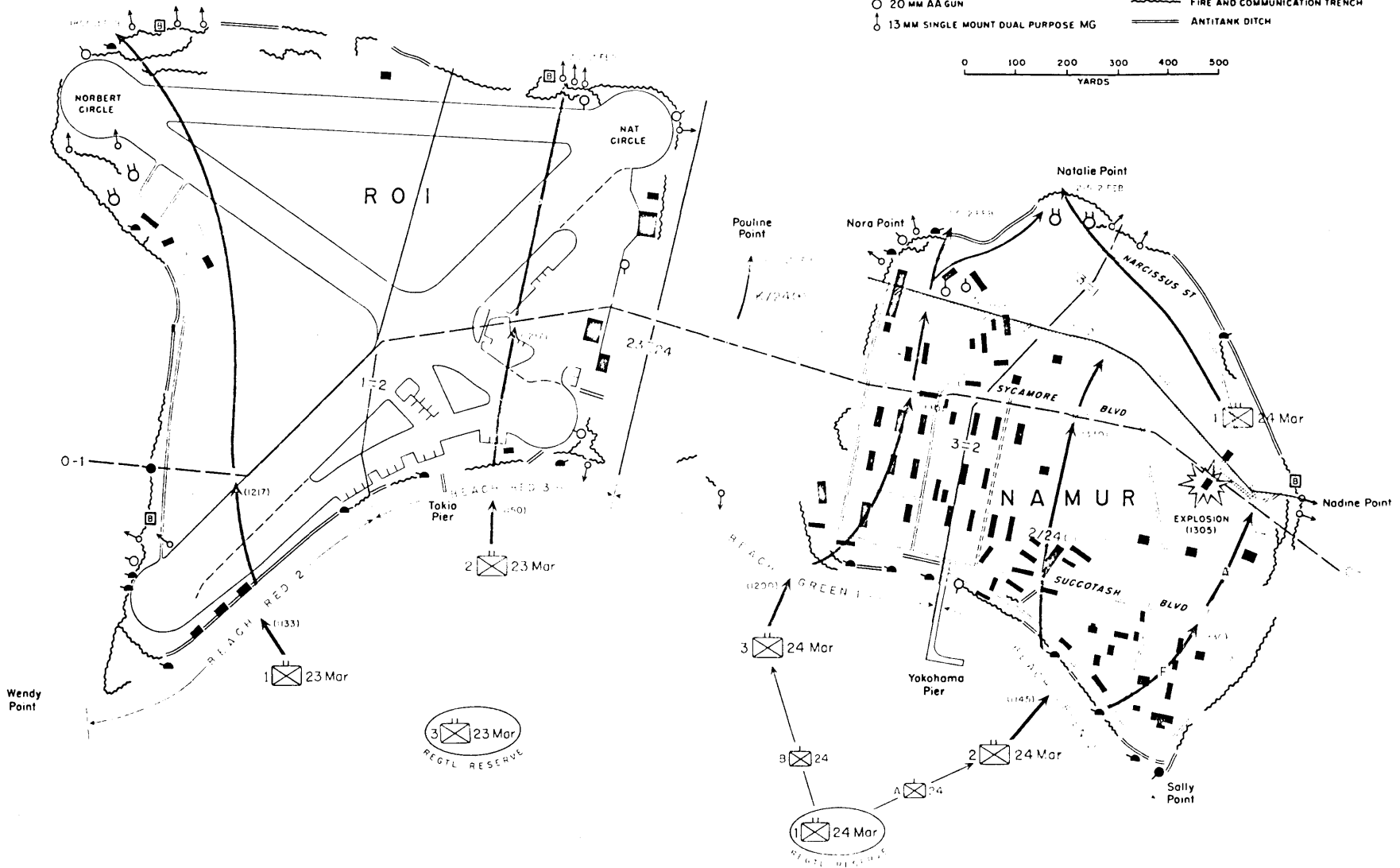
1-2 February 1944

## JAPANESE DEFENSES

(Based on after battle terrain study)

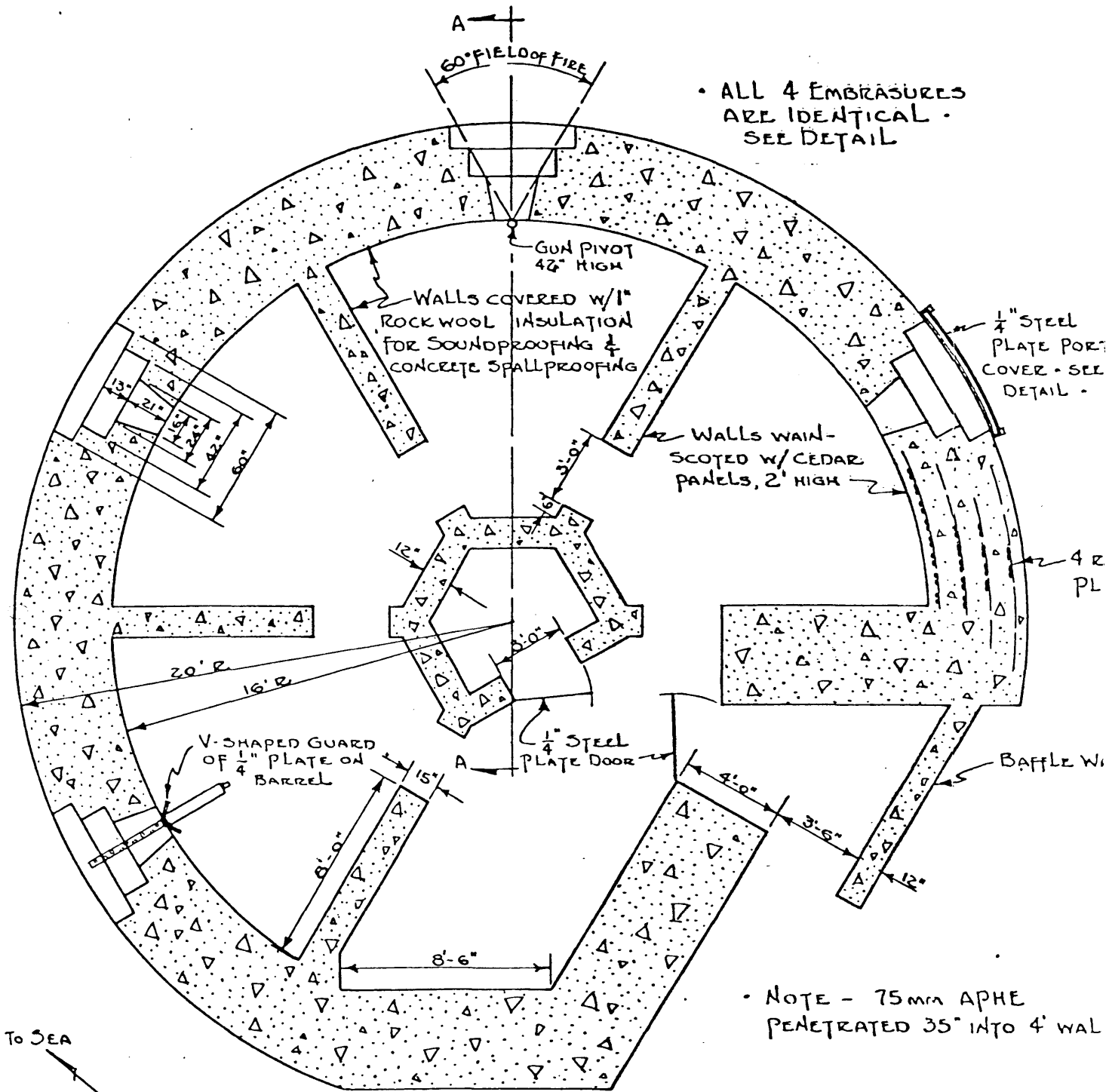
- |   |                                    |     |                               |
|---|------------------------------------|-----|-------------------------------|
| ⊕ | 127 MM TWIN MOUNT DUAL PURPOSE GUN | ⬛   | PILLBOX                       |
| ● | 37 MM RAPID FIRE GUN               | ⊠   | BLOCKHOUSE                    |
| ○ | 20 MM AA GUN                       | --- | FIRE AND COMMUNICATION TRENCH |
| ⊖ | 13 MM SINGLE MOUNT DUAL PURPOSE MG | --- | ANTITANK DITCH                |

0 100 200 300 400 500  
YARDS



Printed by the U. S. Army Topographic Command MAP VIII

From Philip A. Crowl and Edmund G. Love, Seizure of the Gilberts and Marshalls. The War In the Pacific. United States Army In World War II (Washington 1955).

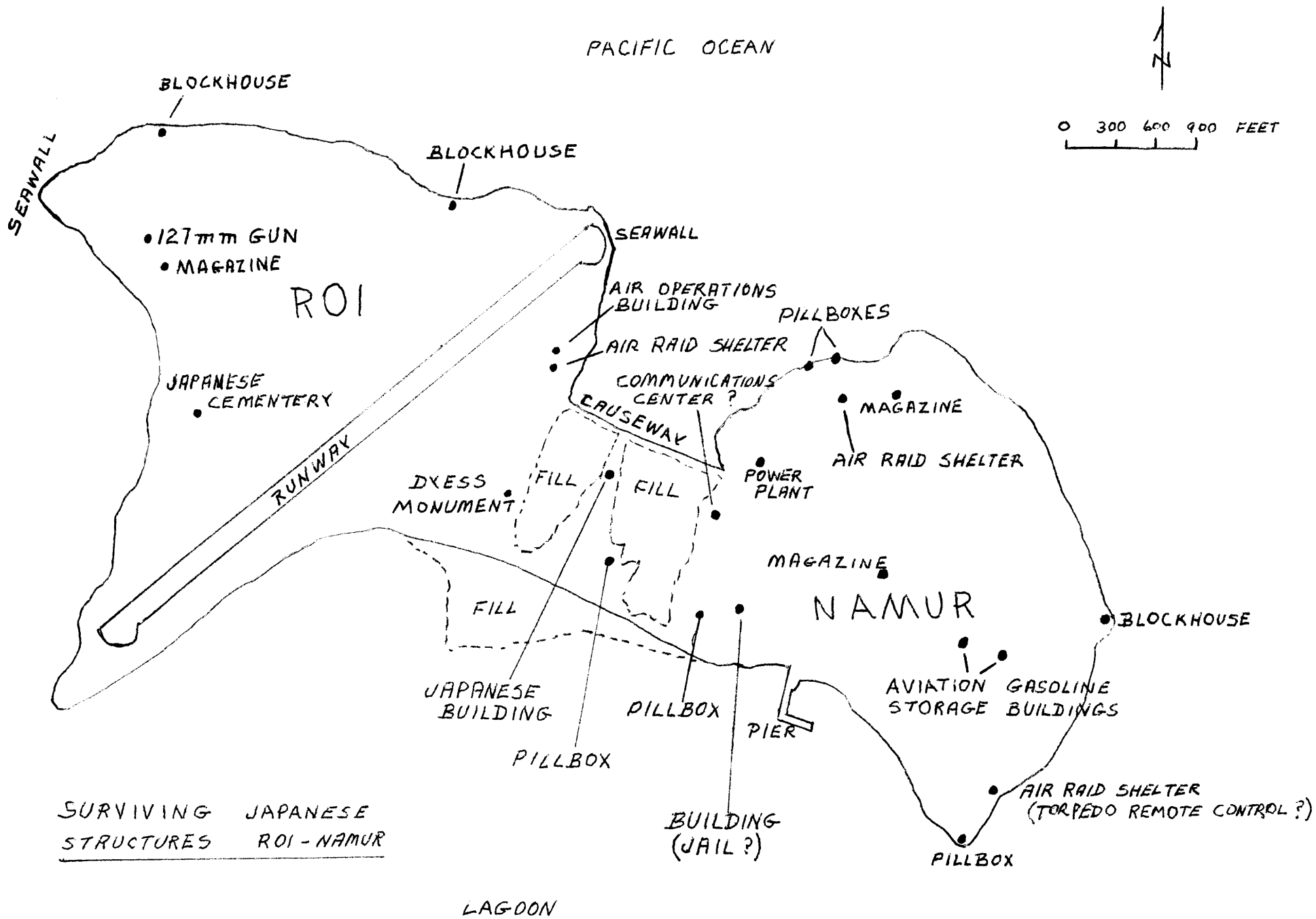


PLAN SECTION .

SCALE  $\frac{3}{16}'' = 1'-0''$

Plan of Japanese blockhouse. Feature in center was an ammunition magazine.

SEE PH



SURVIVING JAPANESE STRUCTURES ROI - NAMUR