

Empire of the Sun (EoTS)

Monograph on U.S. Air Operations versus Japanese Fleet Bases: Truk example

By Mark Herman

Introduction:

Pacific War strategy for both sides was driven by the need to support operations with land based air power and mobile fleets. One of the key decisions that a player in EoTS constantly considers is how to use his military infrastructure (airfields and ports) to support his ability to generate combat power with his air and naval assets. Part and parcel to deployment decisions are how do the opponent's forces impact those decisions? The game captures the impact of land based air through various systems, most notably how air units are based to project zones of influence (ZOIs) and their effect on movement and intelligence. A corollary to the importance of air forces was where to position the respective fleets to support those operations.

What is harder to depict are the second order effects of air on military operations. It is easy to capture the kinetic abilities of air forces (e.g., bomb results), but the ability to show the non-kinetic effects of air power on enemy decisions has tended to be elusive if not omitted in their entirety. During World War II the ability to operate a port within range of enemy airfields has been expensive in terms of lost assets, while having a profound impact on operations tempo.

A good example of this phenomena in the European theater was the siege of Malta. In this case the Allies chose to bear the cost of defending the island from an aerial siege, but while doing so, Malta's ability to react to enemy operations was severely curtailed. A comparison of Axis logistic flow to North Africa is inversely proportional to the health of British air and naval assets operating from Malta. The subtlety for a game design is how to capture the impact of enemy air power on a particular base whereby the player can choose to withstand a Malta-like aerial siege or decide to re-deploy assets outside of harm's way.

The Japanese were faced with a similar set of decisions regarding the viability of Rabaul and Truk as fleet bases. As the Allied drives up the Solomons, into New Guinea, and across the central Pacific gained momentum their forward deployed air units forced the Japanese to decide how, and from where, the Imperial Japanese Navy (IJN) would support their defensive perimeter strategy. EoTs portrays the impact of Allied air power on this Japanese decision through the application of its battle hex concept whereby a unit that is attacked must remain to fight the battle preventing it from participating in another simultaneous battle. This allows an offensive player to use his air power to effectively neutralize the ability of an enemy base to generate combat power over the course of a particular operation, while allowing the base to continue to generate offensive combat power while its assets remain viable. This concept is derived directly out of published U.S. military doctrine and was known as 'smothering' operations. Its application in the

design is reflected through the EoTS time scale lens (e.g., 4 months per turn) and the games use of very large air unit formations (e.g., 7th Air Force). A large amount of ‘expert’ opinion has weighed in to suggest the ‘ahistorical’ nature of this rule, with a host of ‘helpful’ suggestions on how to fix it. Unfortunately none of these opinions are supported by or dissuaded by actual research.

One of the questions that my research tried to answer is how did land based airpower effect fleet basing decisions? To accomplish this task I researched several historical cases the most notable being the Japanese decisions around their various defense perimeters and the role played by fleet bases in supporting their evolving concepts of operations. Toward this end I did extensive analysis on the role of Truk and Rabaul in supporting the Japanese outer defense perimeter. Of greater note was how to determine what caused the Japanese to abandon these locations as fleet bases.

The question I am going to explore and answer is why was Truk abandoned by the Imperial Japanese Navy? I am going to focus this monograph on this specific case as an illustration of my broader historical conclusions. This historical case is one of the micro studies that I embarked on when I designed EoTS and how I extrapolated analysis into the broader framework of the simulation. I decided to publish this paper as a demonstration of what facts and the analysis I used to make my design decisions. I have footnoted all of my information, so the reader can read the primary source material and draw their own conclusions.

Short History on the Japanese fleet base at Truk from Internet:

There are numerous general histories that relate the same facts as the one chosen below. It is neither the best or the most complete, just a convenient way to quickly bring the reader up to speed on the timeline of events.

“After the Kwajalein Campaign in the Marshall Islands, Admiral Raymond Spruance's Fifth Fleet moved on to the invasion of the Eniwetok Atoll, 380 miles to the northwest. To cover the Eniwetok operation, Spruance dispatched a carrier attack group (Operation Hailstone) of battleships, cruisers, and destroyers to neutralize Truk. The Truk attack was considered risky, the relatively small U.S. Navy Fast Carrier Task Force (or TF 58) against the reputed impregnable Japanese fleet base, compared to Pearl Harbor or Gibraltar. Reconnaissance flights over Truk on 4 February 1944 showed the large Japanese fleet at anchor along with an array of strategic support installations.

The Japanese knew the U.S. Navy was coming and withdrew their principal ships from Truk around 10

February, leaving the rest as a decoy. In two days and one night of attacks, 17-18 February 1944, Task Force 58 attacked Truk systematically, sinking or incapacitating most of the ships and aircraft they found there. Japanese losses at Truk included 200 planes destroyed on the ground and 41 ships sunk.

The Battle of Truk was one of the most significant air battles of World War II. The Japanese losses were a record for any one action in the war. The submarine USS Tang (SS-306) rescued 22 Navy pilots who had been shot down, a rescue record unsurpassed until near the end of the war. The action was also the first combat role for the battleship New Jersey (BB-62), serving as Spruance's flagship. Task Force 58 returned to the Marshalls 19 February.

A second massive raid on 29-30 April 1944 eliminated anything militarily significant on Truk, taking out the navy yard, aircraft service facilities and other military targets that had survived. US Army Air Force B-24s and B-29s from island bases pounded the island with bombs. Ground installations were reduced to rubble. The attacks were so successful that there was no need to invade the island and Truk was bypassed for the remainder of the war, although routine bombing continued. For example, on 28 October 1944, when B-29s began operating from airstrips in the Marianas, their first raid was a 14-plane "shake down" mission against Truk."

Source: http://www.olive-drab.com/od_history_ww2_ops_battles_1944truk.php

Design Analysis:

A large amount of the primary research for EoTS came directly out of the U.S. Strategic Bomber Survey (USSBS). A personal tragedy for me was the copy of this extensive study that I used for this game and my earlier Pacific War game was located in the Pentagon library. I last saw this copy on September 10th 2001, which proves that timing is everything in life. The Pentagon Library and this copy were destroyed the next day. The good news is this primary source is now available on the internet, so I have been able to footnote my earlier research notes.

I believe that most strategic Pacific War games have really been operational level games, with tactical flavoring, played on one map. It is the impression of many that any game that covers a lot of geography is a strategic wargame. I have played just about every Pacific War game on the market at one time or another and have thoroughly enjoyed

them, but felt there was a major hole in the collective wargame portfolio. EoTS is intended to be a strategic game with important operational factors and no tactical nuance outside of some card text.

Having studied this topic for over twenty years and taught this topic for the U.S. Naval War College I have come to various conclusions on the key variables that affected Pacific War strategy. First and foremost Pacific War strategy was dominated by the location and viability of land based airfields. Second, was the importance of interlocking port facilities and their ability to support operations at the point of contact with the enemy. Third was the profound impact signals intelligence had on operational planning. Last, was the impact that inter-service rivalry had on limiting strategic options.

All wargame designs have to develop and portray a model of history if they are to remain within this genre. I separate this kind of wargame from games that are set in an historical context. Hopefully this model of history causes the player to confront similar decisions and problems as they play the game. During my research I found a model of U.S. amphibious operations that succinctly portrayed the choreography of offensive operations that I adopted for this design.

“For long-range amphibious advances against strongly defended positions a typical pattern developed. **Japanese bases flanking the United States objective were smothered by a concentration of air power. Such bases as were within reach were hammered by shore-based air.** Carrier-based air and available shore-based air softened the area to be occupied, and as the amphibious force moved up, fast carriers advancing beyond the objective struck swift blows at all positions which could threaten the objective area. With close air support from both escort and fast carriers and a concentration of gunfire from combatant ships of the support force, an amphibious assault over the beaches was made. The objective was secured under air support and cover from the carriers, which were not withdrawn until air fields ashore could be prepared and activated.” *US Strategic Bomber Survey, 1 July 1946*

The bolded text was the source of an important operational variable in this design. The significance of this concept in the game is a fleet can operate at any friendly port, but to do so within range of enemy air power will cause the fleet to suffer a degradation in capability, most notably its ability to react in a timely manner to enemy offensive activity.

One of the more interesting aspects of the USSBS were the post war interrogation of Japanese officers where a wide range of topics were covered. This window into Japanese strategic thinking is an invaluable source when one is designing a strategic simulation. I have chosen two excerpts from this large body of information to illustrate my points. The

first one covers the impact of U.S. 'smothering' operations on the Japanese ability to react to U.S. attacks.

INTERROGATION NAV NO. 82, USSBS NO. 396:

Q. Describe the movement of the Second Fleet and other units from TRUK to RABAUL in early November 1943.

A. A cruiser and a destroyer force of the Second and Third Fleets left TRUK on 3 November for RABAUL to assist in the defense of BOUGAINVILLE. The force consisted of the Fourth Cruiser Division--ATAGO (flagship of Vice Admiral KURITA, Commander-in-Chief Second Fleet), TAKAO, MAYA and CHOKAI; the Seventh Cruiser Division--KUMANO (Flagship), SUZUYA and MOGAMI; the Eight Cruiser Division--TONE and CHIKUMA; the Second Destroyer Division--NOSHIRO or JUNTSU (flagship) and 4 to 5 destroyers; and the Tenth Destroyer Division--AGANO (flagship) and 4 to 6 destroyers. Enroute to RABAUL we received information by radio that a tanker to the northward had been attacked and damaged by a submarine. The cruiser CHOKAI and two destroyers were detached to help this tanker and escorted her back to TRUK.

The force arrived at RABAUL shortly after sunrise on 5 November and reported to the Commander-in-Chief Southeastern Fleet (Vice Admiral KUSAKA). We immediately commenced preparations for fueling. (At this point in the interrogation Captain OHMAE interjected that **"recommendation had been made to avoid RABAUL because of frequent enemy air attacks on the port"**).

The conclusion I drew from this evidence and other similar commentary in other interrogations was the fact that air activity reduced the ability of a fleet to react in a timely manner. Offensive activity is still permitted from a base under the threat of enemy air attack as the timing of a sortie was a self imposed vice enemy imposed deadline. Of course keeping a fleet in range of enemy air power can result in loss of assets, which the combat system handles in a direct manner.

One of the critical decisions a player will make in EoTS is where to base your fleet units. A major consideration of where to put your main fleet bases is their vulnerability to land based air attack as seen in the previous interrogation report. It was and is my conclusion that major fleet units, carriers and battleships, will not remain within range of land based air power for any length of time. Even cruisers will attempt to limit exposure to these situations, although they are forced at times to do so. A good historical example from the Pacific war is the relationship between Truk and its outer support bases at Rabaul and the Marshall islands. Once this outer ring of bases was compromised, the Japanese fleet was

withdrawn because of the concerns around Allied air attack on their fleet anchorages. The problem one encounters when coming to this conclusion is it is the case of the 'dog that did not bark'.

This conclusion is not found in any narrative history of the war that I have seen, but can only be determined from a deep digging into the primary source data. Three important pieces of historical chronology are Operation Flintlock was executed on 31 January 1944 with Kwajalein secured on 7 February. Truk is raided by U.S. carrier (anticipated by the Japanese fleet that withdraws) in early February followed quickly by the invasion of Eniwetok on 17 February 1944 and secured on 21 February 1944. Once the outer defenses of Truk fell the Japanese knew that Truk was soon to be vulnerable to air attack, which subsequent U.S. reconnaissance activity confirmed. It was this knowledge that directly led to the evacuation of Truk by the major fleet units of the Imperial Japanese navy. This information comes out of the following interrogation excerpt.

INTERROGATION NAV NO. 34, USSBS NO. 139:

Q. When did the Combined and Second Fleets abandon TRUK as a base and why?

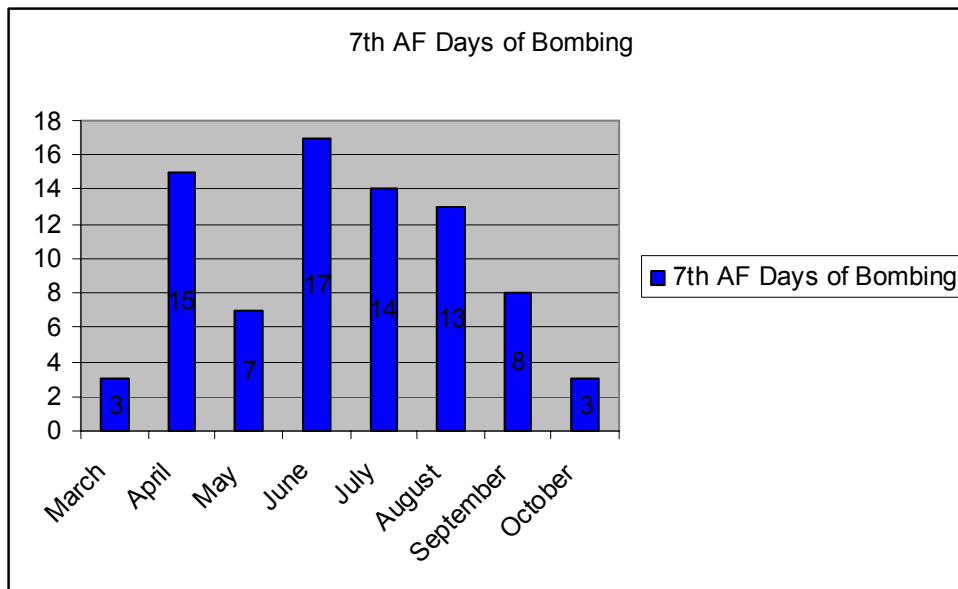
A. One of your scouting planes was observed by the people of TRUK on 3 February and we thought we had better leave. The YAMATO and the NAGATO plus elements of the Second Fleet proceeded to PALAU on 4 or 5 February. On 10 February the group known as the Combined Fleet proceeded to JAPAN. It consisted of the MUSASHI (Admiral KOGA'S Flagship), one light cruiser, and two or three destroyers. **The reason for the YAMATO, NAGATO and other units proceeding to PALAU was because of the danger of air attack at TRUK.** The CinC Combed Fleet returned to JAPAN with MUSASHI and units directly under his command for the purpose of discussing defensive tactics with General Headquarters. By that time the plans for strong defense of the so-called Secondary Defense Line were made. Admiral KOGA took his unit back for the purpose of discussing actual tactical moves towards implementing this defense plan and to arrange for proper conveying and for transport of troops to this area, as well as to obtain an increase of ship and airplane construction.

This evidence is confirmed in other reports, but I liked the directness of this quote. It became clear to me that the Japanese knew that they could not sustain their fleet in range of sustained Allied air attack. Eniwetok was subsequently used as a shuttle base for B-24 strikes on Truk akin to the manner in which this would occur in EoTS. The main problem that a Japanese EoTS player will face in this circumstance is where to base the fleet next with the range of enemy air power the key consideration.

One of the other issues is how effective were B-24s (i.e., EoTS LRB units) in neutralizing a fleet base? I did a detailed analysis of this aspect of the war and the answer is very

effective. Pacific bases had very sparse infrastructure and were very vulnerable to heavy bombers. Truk was effectively neutralized as a base by the end of April, which represents only 18 missions or basically equivalent to one or two card plays in EoTS.

During an offensive an LRB air unit can ‘smother’ the entire reaction out of a Japanese base within its range. To many players the fact that a 4 strength point LRB air unit can totally neutralize the reaction of 100 strength points of naval units seems incorrect. However, the LRB attack represents several weeks of air operations against the port, not a single sortie. Historically Truk was totally neutralized as a naval facility in April of 1944 after a bombing offensive of a little over two weeks (e.g., one card play). In fact the entire bombing campaign against Truk represents only two game turns of EoTS time and approximately 5 attacks. In the game the naval units will, with rare exception, take no losses, but will be ‘smothered’ from reacting in the current Allied offensive. This represents the fleet going to sea with little logistic preparation to avoid air attack. In most cases, the fleet is withdrawn, not because of kinetic (e.g., damage) power, but due to the necessity to maintain the ability to react to Allied offensives. The player is not forced to withdraw due to rules, but due to a deliberate strategic decision. The historical bombing information is summarized on the chart below.



Conclusion:

Based on this research and other supporting data I created a battle hex concept in EoTS that is very restrictive on reaction options. In EoTS a player can send air and naval units to attack beyond the objective of the offensive to ‘smother’ the ability of flanking enemy units to react into the prime battle hex as portrayed in official U.S. doctrine. In this manner the operations around the isolation and neutralization of Rabaul and Truk occur due to the second order effects of Allied air and naval power not through rules intervention. A Japanese player in EoTS does not have to capture New Guinea, but if he does not, Truk can be neutralized. A Japanese player does not have to withdraw from

Rabaul and Truk when threatened by Allied forces if they want to experience a Malta-like aerial siege, similar to the one experienced by Rabaul. Historically the Japanese initially chose to fight it out at Rabaul, but the losses taken as a result changed the Imperial General Staff view and when faced with a similar choice at Truk chose to withdraw before the full impact of U.S. air and naval power could be felt.

The design for EoTS, as is the case in all of my designs, is driven by the data vice long held wargame 'truths'. EoTS has at its core a model of conflict that is fully supported by the primary data. I do not believe that this monograph will change the minds of those whose desire to be right outweighs their desire to understand history, but for those with a more analytic bent I hope this short paper will offer some insight into the EoTS design process and its underlying assumptions.

Appendix:

Combat Chronology of the US Army Air Forces in operations against and from the Marshall Islands (Only Days with Truk Missions Shown)

WEDNESDAY, 15 MARCH 1944

B-24s from Kwajalein Atoll fly the first Seventh Air Force mission against Truk Atoll, Caroline Islands, hitting Dublon and Eten Islands before dawn; alternate targets of Oroluk Anchorage and Ponape Town are also hit. B-25s from Tarawa Atoll hit Maloelap Atoll. By this date the A-24s, P-39s, and P-40s used against Mille and Jaluit Atolls during Operations FLINTLOCK (operations against Kwajalein and Majuro Atolls) and CATCHPOLE (operations against Eniwetok and Ujelang Atolls) have returned to Oahu, Territory of Hawaii for rest and re-equipment. 27th Bombardment Squadron (Heavy), 30th Bombardment Group (Heavy), moves from Nanumea Island to Kwajalein Atoll with B-24s; they have been operating from Abemama Island since 26 Feb.

THURSDAY, 30 MARCH 1944

B-24s from Kwajalein and Eniwetok Atolls hit Truk Atoll before dawn. B-25s from Kwajalein and Tarawa Atolls strike Wotje, Mille, Jaluit and Maloelap Atolls.

FRIDAY, 31 MARCH 1944

B-24s from Eniwetok Atoll bomb Truk Atoll in a predawn mission. B-25s from Eniwetok hit Ponape Island while others, flying out of Tarawa Atoll, pound Maloelap and Jaluit Atolls. 431st Bombardment Squadron (Heavy), 11th Bombardment Group (Heavy), moves from Tarawa Atoll to Kwajalein Atoll with B-24s.

SATURDAY, 1 APRIL 1944

B-24s from Kwajalein Atoll, Marshall Islands hit Truk.

SUNDAY, 2 APRIL 1944

B-24s from Eniwetok Atoll, Marshall Islands hit Truk Atoll during the night of 1/2 Apr. During the day B-25s bomb Jaluit and Maloelap Atolls.

MONDAY, 3 APRIL 1944

B-24s, staging through Eniwetok Atoll during the night of 2/3 Apr, bomb Truk Atoll. B-25s from Abemama and Tarawa Atoll hit Maloelap and Jaluit Atolls. 98th Bombardment Squadron (Heavy), 11th Bombardment Group (Heavy), moves from Tarawa Atoll to Eniwetok Atoll with B-24s.

SATURDAY, 8 APRIL 1944

B-24s flying out of Kwajalein Atoll, strike Truk Atoll; B-25s from Tarawa Atoll hit Maloelap Atoll, rearm at Majuro Atoll and bomb Jaluit Atoll during the return flight.

MONDAY, 10 APRIL 1944

B-24s, staging through Eniwetok Atoll, bomb Truk Atoll (1 hits Ponape Island) while B-25s, based on Abemama Island, strike Ponape. B-25s, flying a shuttle mission between Tarawa and Majuro Atolls, pound Maloelap and Jaluit Atolls.

THURSDAY, 13 APRIL 1944

B-24s out of Eniwetok Atoll strike Truk Atoll; B-25s from Tarawa Atoll bomb Jaluit Atoll, rearm at Majuro Atoll and hit Maloelap Atoll.

SUNDAY, 16 APRIL 1944

B-25s, staging through Eniwetok Atoll, strike Truk Atoll; B-25s from Abemama Island hit Maloelap and Mille Atolls, using Majuro Atoll as a rearming base between the strikes.

TUESDAY, 18 APRIL 1944

First Seventh Air Force attack on the Marianas Islands takes place as B-24s escorting USN aircraft on a photographic reconnaissance mission from Eniwetok Atoll bomb Saipan Island. Other B-24s staging through Eniwetok Atoll hit Truk Atoll. B-24s from Kwajalein Atoll bomb Wake Island after failing to find shipping reported in the area; and B-25s from Abemama Island bomb Jaluit and Maloelap Atolls, using Majuro Atoll as a shuttle base between strikes.

WEDNESDAY, 19 APRIL 1944

B-24s, staging through Eniwetok Atoll, bomb Truk Atoll.

FRIDAY, 21 APRIL 1944

B-24s from Kwajalein Atoll hit Wotje Atoll. B-24s from Eniwetok Atoll, staging through Kwajalein, bomb Truk Atoll. B-25s from Engebi Island, Eniwetok Atoll, bomb Ponape Island. Abemama Island-based B-25s, using Majuro Atoll as a shuttle base, bomb Jaluit and Maloelap Atolls.

SATURDAY, 22 APRIL 1944

During the night of 21/22 Apr, B-24s from Kwajalein Atoll bomb Wotje Atoll; other B-24s from Kwajalein follow with another raid on Wotje during the day. B-25s from Tarawa Atoll, using Majuro Atoll as a shuttle base for rearming, bomb Jaluit, Maloelap and Mille Atolls.

SUNDAY, 23 APRIL 1944

B-24s based at Kwajalein Atoll hit Truk and Wotje Atolls. Makin Island-based B-25s hit Ponape Island and Jaluit and Maloelap Atolls.

TUESDAY, 25 APRIL 1944

Kwajalein Atoll-based B-24s, during the night of 24/25 Apr, staging through Eniwetok Atoll, strike Guam Island, Marianas Islands and Truk Atoll, and during the day hit Wotje and Maloelap Atolls. This is the first AAF mission against Guam. B-25s from Engebi Island, Eniwetok Atoll bomb Ponape Island, and Makin Island-based B-25s hit Jaluit and Wotje Atolls.

THURSDAY, 27 APRIL 1944

B-24s, staging through Eniwetok Atoll, bomb Truk Atoll during the night of 26/27 Apr. B-25s from Eniwetok follow up during the day with 3 raids on Ponape Island; Makin Island-based B-25s hit Jaluit, Wotje and Mille Atolls. 1 B-24 from Kwajalein Atoll, using Makin Island as a rearming base, bombs Jabor and Emidj and Enybor Islands, Jaluit Atoll.

SATURDAY, 29 APRIL 1944

B-24s, staging through Eniwetok Atoll from Kwajalein Atoll bomb Truk and Jaluit Atolls. B-25s from Makin Island also hit Jaluit Atoll .

TUESDAY, 2 MAY 1944

B-24s, staging through Eniwetok Atoll, Marshall Islands from Kwajalein Atoll bomb Truk Atoll, Caroline Islands, during the night. During the day B-25s based on Makin Island hit Jaluit and Wotje Atolls, Marshall Islands, using Majuro Atoll, Marshall Islands as a shuttle base to rearm between strikes. B-25s from Engebi Island, Eniwetok Atoll pound Ponape Island, Caroline Islands.

FRIDAY, 5 MAY 1944

During the night of 4/5 MAY B-24s from Kwajalein Atoll stage through Eniwetok Atoll and bomb Truk Atoll. During the day B-25s from Eniwetok Atoll strike Ponape Island, and 10 from Makin Island hit Jaluit and Wotje Atolls, Marshall Islands, using Majuro Atoll as a rearming base between the attacks.

SUNDAY, 7 MAY 1944

B-24s, staging through Eniwetok Atoll, bomb Truk Atoll during the night of 6/7 May. B-25s from Engebi Island hit Ponape Island during the following day. Makin Island-based B-25s bomb Jaluit and Wotje Atolls.

TUESDAY, 9 MAY 1944

During the night of 8/9 MAY B-24s stage through Kwajalein Atoll to bomb Truk Atoll. Makin Island-based B-25s hit Wotje and Jaluit Atolls, using Majuro Atoll as a rearming point between attacks.

THURSDAY, 11 MAY 1944

B-24s, staging through Eniwetok Atoll, bomb Truk Atoll during the night of 10/11 May. During the day B-25s from Engebi Island hit Ponape Island while others, based on Makin Island, pound Jaluit Atoll.

SATURDAY, 13 MAY 1944

B-24s, staging through Eniwetok Atoll from Kwajalein Atoll, bomb Truk Atoll during the early morning hours. Other B-24s from Kwajalein bomb Maloelap and Jaluit Atolls, Marshall Islands. B-25s from Engebi Island hit Ponape Island.

TUESDAY, 30 MAY 1944

B-25s from Engebi Island bomb Ponape Island, which is also hit by B-24s returning from the shuttle base on Los Negros Island. 2 forces of B-24s from Kwajalein Atoll strike Truk Atoll and Wake Island.

SATURDAY, 3 JUNE 1944

B-24s staging through Eniwetok Atoll, strike Truk Atoll in a pre-dawn raid; B-25s from Engebi Island, Eniwetok Atoll, bomb Nauru Island.

SUNDAY, 4 JUNE 1944

During the night B-24s, staging through Eniwetok Atoll, hit Truk Atoll; B-25s from Engebi Island, Eniwetok Atoll, follow with a daylight raid on Ponape Island.

THURSDAY, 8 JUNE 1944

During the night of 7/8 Jun, B-24s from Eniwetok Atoll bomb Truk Atoll and Ponape Island. B-25s from Makin Island follow up during the day with a strike against Nauru Island.

FRIDAY, 9 JUNE 1944

During the night of 8/9 Jun B-24s from Eniwetok Atoll bomb Truk Atoll.

SATURDAY, 10 JUNE 1944

B-24s, staging through Eniwetok Atoll, bomb Truk Atoll and Ponape Island during the night of 9/10 Jun. B-25s from Makin Island hit Nauru Island during the day.

SUNDAY, 11 JUNE 1944

B-24s from Eniwetok Atoll hit Truk Atoll during the night of 11/12 Jun. B-25s follow with a raid against Ponape Island during the morning.

MONDAY, 12 JUNE 1944

Eniwetok Atoll-based B-24s hit Truk Atoll during the night of 11/12 Jun and again during the day.

TUESDAY, 13 JUNE 1944

An attack during the night of 12/13 Jun by B-24s from Eniwetok Atoll against Truk Atoll and Ponape Island is followed by a daylight attack by Makin Island-based B-25s against Nauru and Ponape Islands.

SUNDAY, 18 JUNE 1944

B-24s stage through Eniwetok Atoll to bomb Truk Atoll.

MONDAY, 19 JUNE 1944

B-24s, staging through Eniwetok Atoll, strike Truk Atoll. B-24s from Kwajalein Atoll pound Ponape Island.

TUESDAY, 20 JUNE 1944

Kwajalein Atoll based B-24s bomb Truk Atoll.

WEDNESDAY 21 JUNE 1944

B-24s based on Kwajalein Atoll, bomb Truk Atoll.

THURSDAY, 22 JUNE 1944

B-24s, staging through Eniwetok Atoll from Kwajalein Atoll, hit Truk Atoll; 1 bombs Ponape Island.

FRIDAY, 23 JUNE 1944

Eniwetok Atoll-based B-24s strike Truk Atoll. B-25s from Engebi Island pound Ponape Island. During the evening, B-24s from Kwajalein Atoll also attack Ponape Island.

SUNDAY, 25 JUNE 1944

B-24s based on Kwajalein Atoll hit Wotje Atoll.

TUESDAY, 27 JUNE 1944

B-24s, staging through Eniwetok Atoll, pound Truk Atoll.

THURSDAY, 29 JUNE 1944

B-24s, staging, through Eniwetok Atoll, pound Truk Atoll .

SATURDAY, 1 JULY 1944

B-24s, staging through Eniwetok Atoll hit Truk Atoll, Caroline Islands, during the night of 1/2 Jul and follow up with another raid during the day. .

MONDAY, 3 JULY 1944

B-24s, staging through Eniwetok Atoll, bomb Truk Atoll.

TUESDAY, 4 JULY 1944

B-24s, staging through Eniwetok Atoll, pound Truk Atoll.

SATURDAY, 8 JULY 1944

During the night of 7/8 Jul B-24s stage through Eniwetok Atoll and bomb Truk Atoll; more B-24s follow with another raid during the day.

MONDAY, 10 JULY 1944

B-24s, staging through Eniwetok Atoll, pound Truk Atoll during the night of 9/10 Jul and again during the day.

WEDNESDAY, 12 JULY 1944

During the night of 11/12 Jul B-24s stage through Eniwetok Atoll to bomb Truk Atoll; during the day B-24s hit Truk Atoll again. P

THURSDAY, 13 JULY 1944

Kwajalein-based B-24s bomb Truk Atoll. B-25s from Makin Island pound Nauru Island.

SATURDAY, 15 JULY 1944

B-24s, staging through Eniwetok Atoll, hit Truk Atoll.

TUESDAY, 18 JULY 1944

In the Marshall Islands, 5 B-24s, flying out of Kwajalein Atoll, hit Wotje Atoll. 25 B-24s, staging through Eniwetok Atoll, attack Truk Atoll.

FRIDAY, 21 JULY 1944

P-47s attack enemy forces on Tinian Island. 28 B-24s, staging through Eniwetok Atoll, pound Truk Atoll.

SUNDAY, 23 JULY 1944

B-24s staging through Eniwetok Atoll, bomb Truk Atoll while others, flying out of Kwajalein Atoll, hit Wotje Atoll.

TUESDAY, 25 JULY 1944

B-24s, based at Kwajalein Atoll, bomb Truk Atoll.

THURSDAY, 27 JULY 1944

B-24s from the Marshall Islands bomb Truk Atoll. B-25s based at Makin Island, hit Jaluit Atoll.

MONDAY, 31 JULY 1944

B-24s from the Marshall Islands bomb Truk Atoll.

THURSDAY, 3 AUGUST 1944

B-24s from the Marshall Islands pound Truk Atoll, Caroline Islands.

FRIDAY, 4 AUGUST 1944

B-25s staging from the Marshall Island, hit Ponape Island. HQ 30th Bombardment Group (Heavy) and 27th, 38th and 392d Bombardment Squadrons (Heavy) move from Kwajalein Atoll to Saipan Island with B-24s.

SUNDAY, 6 AUGUST 1944

B-25s flying out of the Marshall Islands hit Ponape Island; and B-24s from Kwajalein Atoll bomb Wotje Atoll.

TUESDAY, 8 AUGUST 1944

B-25s from the Marshall Islands hit Ponape Island while B-24s bomb Truk Atoll.

THURSDAY, 10 AUGUST 1944

B-24s from Kwajalein Atoll hit Wotje Atoll.

SATURDAY, 12 AUGUST 1944

B-24s from the Marshall Islands bomb Truk Atoll .

MONDAY, 14 AUGUST 1944

From the Marshall Islands, B-25s hit Ponape Island and B-24s bomb Wotje Atoll. HQ VII Bomber Command moves from Kwajalein Atoll to Saipan Island.

WEDNESDAY, 16 AUGUST 1944

Marshall Island-based B-24s bomb Truk Atoll.

SUNDAY, 20 AUGUST 1944

Marshall Islands-based B-24s bomb Truk Atoll.

TUESDAY, 22 AUGUST 1944

Kwajalein Atoll-based B-24s hit Mille Atoll.

THURSDAY, 24 AUGUST 1944

Marshall Island-based B-24s bomb Truk Atoll while B-25s hit Nauru Island.

MONDAY, 28 AUGUST 1944

Marshall Islands-based B-24s hit Truk Atoll.

WEDNESDAY, 30 AUGUST 1944

Kwajalein Atoll-based B-24s hit Mille Atoll.

FRIDAY, 1 SEPTEMBER 1944

Island-based B-24s bomb Truk Island.

SUNDAY, 10 SEPTEMBER 1944

Eniwetok Atoll-based B-24s bomb Truk Island.

THURSDAY, 14 SEPTEMBER 1944

B-24s from Eniwetok Atoll bomb Truk Island .

MONDAY, 18 SEPTEMBER 1944

28 Eniwetok Atoll-based B-24s bomb Truk Island.

SUNDAY, 24 SEPTEMBER 1944

26 B-24s from Kwajalein Atoll bomb Truk Island. The detachment of the 28th Photographic Reconnaissance Squadron, Seventh AF, operating from Kwajalein Atoll with F-5s begins a movement to Peleliu Island.

MONDAY, 25 SEPTEMBER 1944

During the night of 25/26 Sep Kwajalein Atoll-based B-24s stage through Eniwetok Atoll on a strike at shipping at Truk Island; failing to locate the primary targets the B-24s bomb Tol, Eten, Param, and Moen Islands while others hit Wake Island during the night of 25/26 Sep.

WEDNESDAY, 27 SEPTEMBER 1944

14 Marshall Islands based B-24s strike Truk Island.

FRIDAY, 29 SEPTEMBER 1944

B-24s from Eniwetok Atoll pound Truk Island.

9 OCTOBER 1944

25 B-25's from the Marshalls bomb Truk.

13 OCTOBER 1944

From the Marshalls B-24's pound Truk.

16 OCTOBER 1944

From the Marshalls 14 B-24's hit Truk.

Source: http://marshall.csu.edu.au/Marshalls/html/WWII/AAF_Chronology.html

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