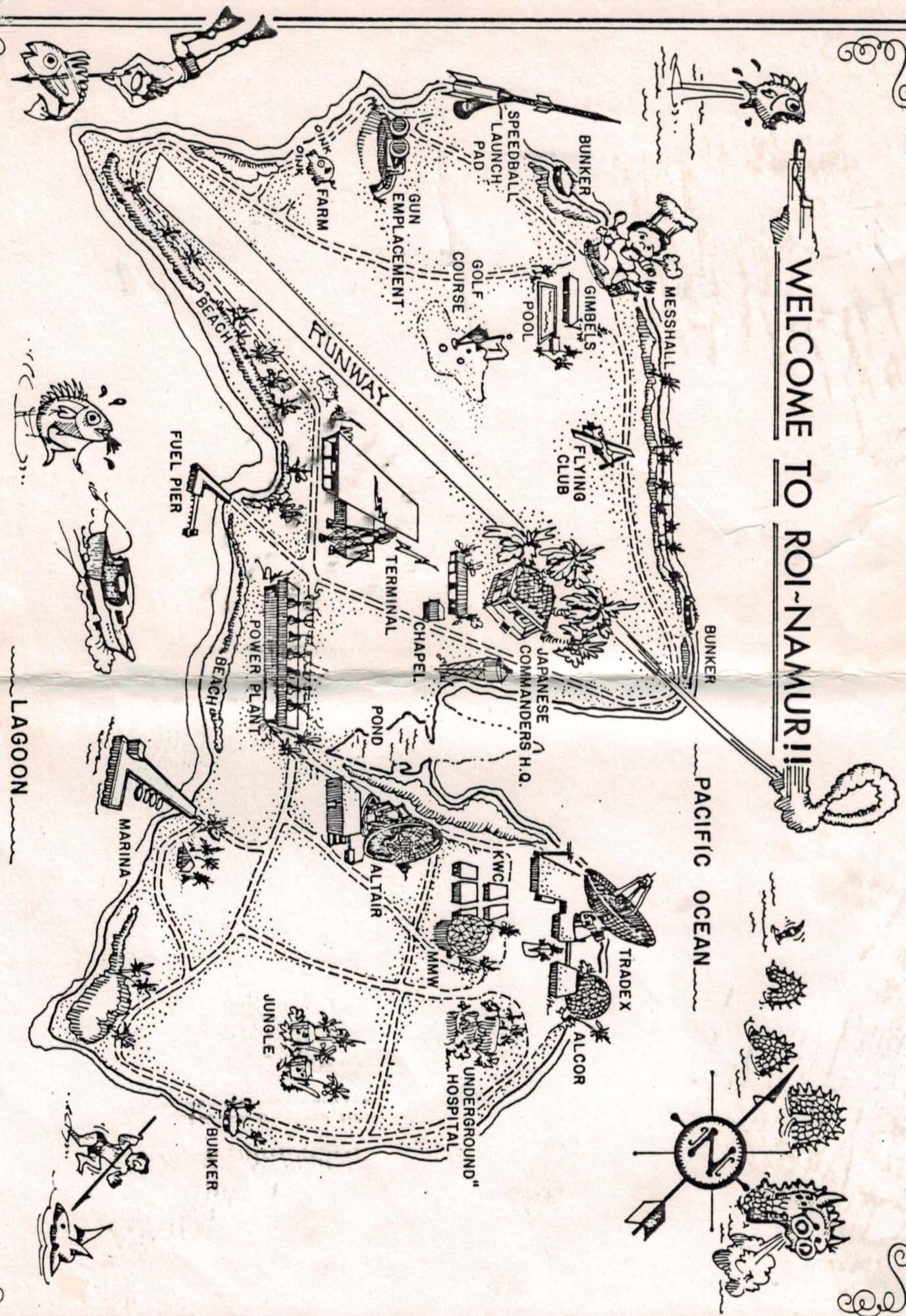
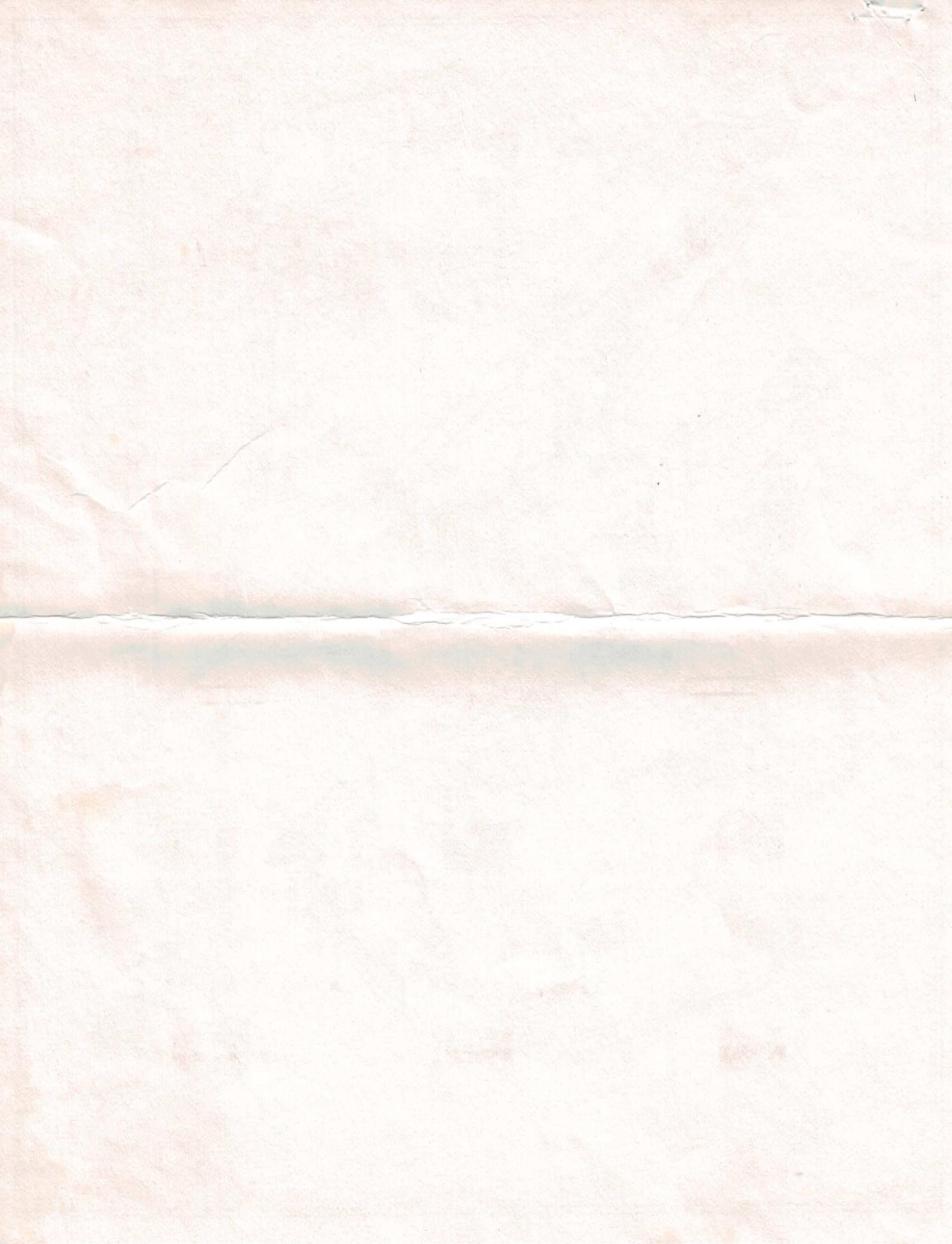


WELCOME TO ROI-NAMUR!!





ROI-NAMUR

PAST and PRESENT

Roi-Namur, home of Kiernan Re-entry Measurements Site, is situated

over 2,000 miles from the nearest mainland with coordinates of 167° east longitude and 9° north latitude. It is the second largest island in the Kwajalein Atoll. Originally two islands, the Japanese were responsible for joining Roi and Namur together with two causeways, one on the lagoon side and the other on the ocean side of the islands. Some of the area between the causeways was filled in by the U.S. to increase the available land. Due to the constant action of breakers on the reef, the shape of Roi-Namur is gradually changing. The average elevation is 5 feet above sea level, rising to a maximum of 13.5 feet. At high tides, the gentle waves from the reef sometimes splash onto the north end of the runway. The annual mean temperature and humidity both average in the low 80's. The island consists of a coral reef which drops off sharply to the ocean floor, in places to a depth of 5,700 feet on the ocean side and to depths of 180 feet on the lagoon side. Rainfall is heavy during the wet season, the record for one day being 17.1 inches on December 13, 1950. Vegetation on the island includes coconut palms, breadfruit, pandanus and papaya trees.

Much evidence of the Japanese fortification of the island remains; some bunkers are nearly intact. Wreckage of various wartime equipment lines the beaches in silent memorial to the bitter fighting of World War II. The Japanese operated 35 aircraft from this island, utilizing a figure "4" shaped airfield until the capture of Roi-Namur by the U.S. on 3 February 1944. This occupation marked a milestone in the long history of changes in control of the Marshall Islands.

Highlights of this history, though not specifically concerned with Roi-Namur, do bring out the colorful and varied influences which bring the Marshall Islands to what they are today.

Roi-Namur, as well as the rest of the Marshalls, remained undiscovered until 1528 when the Spanish voyager Alvaro de Saavedra happened upon the islands while searching for Magellan. He returned to Spain with glowing tales of the beauty and riches he had seen, which inspired the Spanish government under Charles V to send more expeditions to the Pacific Islands. The first of these was led by Ruiz Lopez de Villalobes, who sighted and charted approximately half of the Marshallse atolls in 1543.

No serious efforts were made in these early times by Spain or other European powers to assume or maintain effective control of the Pacific Islands. In succeeding centuries, the area was slowly opened up by various explorers, traders, missionaries and pirates from Portugal, Spain, the Netherlands, France, England and Russia.

In the late 1700's, the islands were rediscovered by the English captains Gilbert and Marshall, hence the present name, "Marshall Islands." In 1824, the first systematic exploration of the Marshalls took place, led by Lt. Ketzebeue of the Russian Navy. He was responsible for the first reasonable accurate charts and maps of the area.

The development of the copra trade sparked further interest in the Marshalls on the part of England, Germany and Spain, whereupon Spain formally proclaimed its sovereignty over the islands, to the dissatisfaction of England and Germany. In 1877, after an exchange of diplomatic notes, the three countries were able to agree upon complete freedom of trade in all Pacific areas not actually occupied by a European nation.

In 1885, however, with the support of treaties with atoll chieftains, approximating 20 in number, German forces assumed protectorate rights over the whole of the Marshalls, ceremoniously raising their flag on Jaluit and a number of other Marshall atolls. This assumption of control was formally recognized by

England and Spain the following year. Business flourished during the next 18 years, and the islanders profited accordingly. Serious problems developed between the islanders and German Administration in 1906 and 1907 in Palau and Ponape, respectively. These problems were quelled by quick and reasonable negotiations involving both parties; however, not before several Germans had been killed and a group of islanders executed.

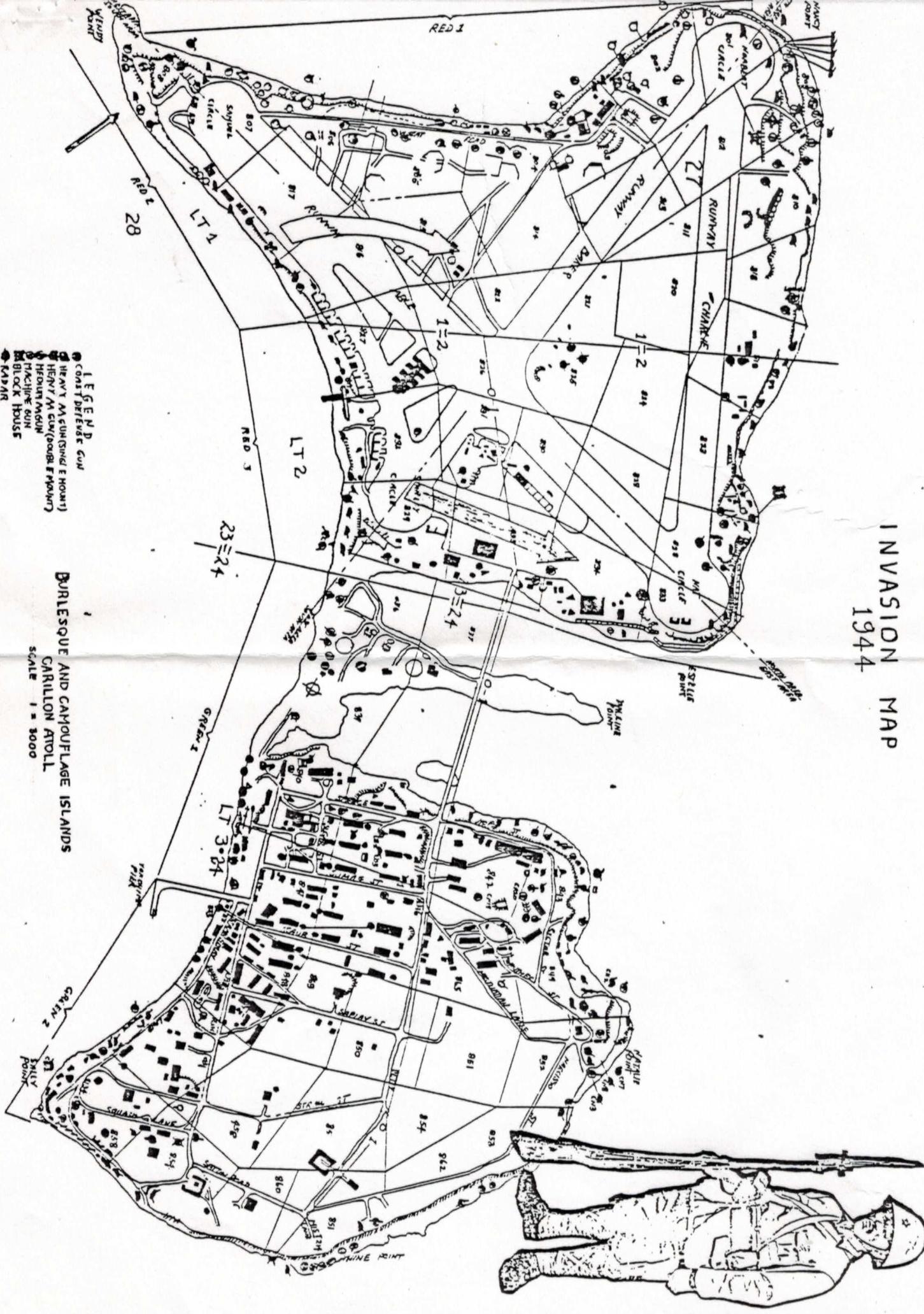
At the outbreak of World War I, German control of Micronesia was abruptly terminated. The islands were formally surrendered to England on September 17, 1914, but this agreement was short-lived, as Japanese naval squadrons moved in to occupy Jaluit on October 3, and Yap, Ponape, Truk, Saipan and Anguar during the rest of October. After World War I, a Civil Administration Department was created by the Japanese. In 1935, Japan began to fortify strategic islands, and from that time a cloak of secrecy prevented any accurate facts from reaching the outside world until the islands were captured by the U.S. in World War II. During the period of Japanese rule, the islanders appear to have enjoyed some degree of economic prosperity, but their progress in political advancement was pushed into the background for reasons obvious in retrospect.

During the bitter World War II fighting in the Pacific, Tarawa and Makin in the Gilberts were taken and occupied, followed by Majuro and the Kwajalein Atoll on 31 January and Eniwetok on 19 February 1944. These strategic gains paved the way for the capture of Saipan, Guam and Tinian, from which bombing raids were staged on Japan. After the Japanese surrender on September 2, 1945, the Japanese, Koreans and Okinawans were repatriated to their respective countries. Military occupation of the islands ended in July 1947 with the establishment of the Trust Territory. Under continuing supervision of the U.S. Navy, the type of government was changed to civil administration. In 1951, the responsibility for this administration was given to the Department of Interior.

81 next 18 The U.S. Administration brought improvements in medicine, education and prevention of disease. A Micronesian Congress was established in 1965 in order to give the islanders experience in self government. The Marshallese as a people are becoming increasingly aware of their position in economic, political and social development and their apparent goals are to improve this position gradually, while retaining their islander individuality.

INVASION 1944

MAP



27. Point Defense Bunker

This massive bunker was established to defend the rock spur between Roi and Namur. There were three machine gun positions in it. It is now being used to store sandblasting supplies.

28. 37MM Gunpoint and Pillbox
This is an interesting point because of the double use it was put to. "Downstairs" there was a lagoon-oriented machine gun position. The top had an encircling waist-high wall, inside which was a circular steel platform. This platform could be rotated in a complete circle. On the platform were tiedown points for the wheels and a trailer of a 37mm pack howitzer.

29. Plant Nursery
There used to be hobby shop/gym here. One noontime in the late sixties about two-thirds of the building blew up. This was due to the spontaneous explosion of a buried bomb over which the building had been erected. Fortunately, no one was hurt.

30. Site of Temporary U.S. Cemetery
U.S. troops killed during the invasion were temporarily buried here and later moved to the National Military Cemetery at Punchbowl in Honolulu.

31. Site of Japanese Main Aircraft Hangar

Roi-Namur was the primary airfield and communications center which the Japanese had in the Marshalls. The main hangar was located here just north of the present fire station. Under a pile of debris in one corner of this hangar, a Naval Intelligence Commander came across a blue leatherette map case embossed in gold leaf with the letters A.E. The map case was empty, but it is believed to have belonged to Amelia Earhart.

32. Command Post Bomb Shelter
This, and two others, are all that remain of two dozen such structures around the island. This shelter was connected to the Command Post by a low tunnel.

33. Command Post
This was the operations Command Post for the airfield at Roi and Rear Admiral Yasuda's office when he was not on Namur. Three tunnels provided for underground departure from this building. One went east under the road to the concrete seawall (now inland) that marked the edge of Roi in Japanese times; one connected the Command Post to the bomb shelter just to the south (32); and the third crossed the entire island of Roi to emerge near the five-inch gun positions (42) at the northeast corner of the island.

34. Barge
The pile of rusting metal on the ocean reef between Roi and Namur was a barge which ran aground around 1947.

35. Beach Bunker
As with items seven and thirty-six, this bunker provided part of the major defensive installations around the islands. It was the focal point of an enormous amount of bombardment and took at least two direct hits from large caliber Navy guns or boats.

36. Beach Bunker
This is the best-preserved of the beach bunkers on Roi-Namur. The outside has channels which guided heavy steel shutters down over the firing ports. These shutters were balanced by a weight and pulley system inside the bunker. The one door is heavy steel. This was punctured, probably by a bazooka round.
The internal ammunition bunker had its own steel door. Up the side of this internal bunker were a series of steel rungs by which the bunker commander could get up to the observation point called a cupola. It has a regularly spaced series of slits which allowed him to see in all directions and to direct the activities of his crew.

37. World War II U.S. Dump A favorite "hunting spot" on the island for World War II historical artifacts.

38. 20MM Anti-Aircraft Gun Pad
The positioning of these guns (38, 39, 40) demonstrates clearly that the Japanese expected any enemy approach to be from the seaward side of the islands. This may have also been used as an observation/ranging station for control of the five-inch gun positions nearby.

39. Twin Five-Inch Gun Pad and Mount

The guns from this mount are now lying on the reef at the west end of the runway. (See 47). There was a service pit on the edge of this pad which accessed a tunnel that runs directly under the gun mount proper.

40. "Singapore" Five-Inch Guns

This is what (39) looked like before it was dismounted. These guns are actually of British manufacture. They were seized by the Japanese when they took Singapore at the beginning of World War II in the Pacific.

41. Ammunition Bunker

This bunker served the various gun positions in this corner of the island, including the "Singapore" guns. Its counterpart on Namur near the TRADEX building is still in use as a paint and flammable materials storage building.

42. Site of Bomb Shelter (Terminus of Cross-Island Tunnel)

Inside this bunker was a tunnel to the five-inch guns (39). The tunnel began inside the Command Post (33) and ran under the runway and all across the island.

43. Third Hole Tee - Roi Golf Course

This tee is built on top of a large pile of parts of U.S. aircraft. Many of these may still be seen along the west side of the tee.

44. Lens Well

This well is encased now and is an integral part of the water supply system for Roi-Namur. Prior to Japanese occupation it was very important to the Marshallese and was set up as a major landmark—the starting and ending point for journeys. Straight lines were cleared from this point to the shore on Kwajalein Atoll. The well was marked with a high pole, and native seafarers could get a start to their destinations by keeping the pole centered in one or another of these azimuth lanes for as long as they could see it.

45. Japanese Memorial Cemetery

This site is maintained by Americans of Japanese descent. It is visited at regular intervals by members of the Japanese War Memorial Commission.

46. Pig and Duck Farm

The pig farm is the major ongoing livestock raising effort on the Island. It began as an experiment in cooperation with the agricultural experiment station on Majuro, the aim of which was to introduce pigs into the food resource base for the Islanders around the Marshalls.

47. Twin "Singapore" Guns on the Beach

This pair of guns was removed from the mount in the northwest corner of Roi (39).

48. Invasion Beach

This was "Red Beach 2" for the 23rd Combat Regiment, 4th Marines during the Invasion, and later the location of a large ammunition dump that was destroyed by the one Japanese air raid after the American occupation.



WARTIME HISTORICAL GUIDE

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- 13. TRADEX/5-Inch Gun Battery**
Where TRADEX now stands, the Japanese had a major defensive installation comprised of two pairs of five-inch guns and their support facilities.

This was the last point of organized resistance to the American invasion. It was in fighting here that Lt. Col. Aquilla J. Dyess was killed. He was posthumously awarded the Congressional Medal of Honor.

The only structure clearly remnant of that complex is the ammunition bunker, now being used as a paint storage warehouse.

14. Reef-edge Remote Controlled Torpedo Launcher
This structure consisted of a set of five launch tubes set on a turntable. The destruction of its control point (5) may have precluded its use during the invasion.

15. Bomb Shelter
This particular bomb shelter was probably used by staff personnel from the Japanese Headquarters complex which is about a hundred yards west (16).

16. Japanese Headquarters Complex
This small group of buildings was the headquarters of the Japanese 24th Air Force and housed the administrative offices of Rear Admiral Michiyuki Yamada, the ranking officer on the island.

17. Warehouse for the Radar Station
In 1966 several high power tubes of Japanese manufacture were found here as well as a cardboard box containing papers with Japanese writing.

18. Japanese Radar Station
Photos of this building taken during the invasion showed a "bedspring" radar antenna on the roof. The antenna was 30 feet across and half as high.
In more recent times a section of concrete spalled off from the ceiling. This spalling (as reinforcing steel rusts and expands) is the main reason many of the buildings are "off limits."

19. The Causeway
This was the only permanent link between Roi and Namur before the American occupation. Along the lagoon shore there was a sand spit which could be used to get from one island to the other when the tides were right. But high tides or storms surges sometimes closed this avenue of movement.

20. The Japanese Jail
Building 8154 is a composite building. The concrete portion was the Japanese jail. The recently added corrugated metal addition is to provide space for a warehouse.

21. Forty Millimeter Gun Mount
This was the largest defensive weapon installation sited on the lagoon shore of Namur. Joseph McCarthy, a Naval aviator, was awarded the Medal of Honor for his role in neutralizing this weapon. He later became a U.S. Senator.

22. Torpedo Test Tank
This tank was used to test torpedo propulsion motors before the final mating of the drive sections with the warheads in the Torpedo Assembly Building just across the street.

23. Torpedo Assembly Building
This building was the last stop for torpedoes before they were sent to the submarines which called at Namur for provisions.

24. Pillbox
There were a large number of these machine gun placements on Roi-Namur. Most of them were equipped with 13mm guns to back up beach defense positions.

25/26. Storage Building/Personnel Bunker
There is no information on the wartime utilization of these buildings.

Comments on Roi-Namur

1. Yokohama Pier
This was the main cargo transfer facility for the Japanese during the years they held Roi-Namur.

2. Torpedo Loading Dock
This non-collapsing structure was used by the Japanese to provision submarines. It was connected via a spur of the narrow-gauge railway to the Torpedo Assembly Building (23).

3. SCURA Club Facilities
Formerly the site of eight high bermed enclosures for oil tanks which made up the Japanese fuel farm.

4. Japanese "Underground" Hospital
This is the site of the only real "underground" hospital on the island. It was considered unsafe and backfilled in 1962.

5. "Sally" Point Bunker
The bomb shelter here took several devastating hits during the invasion. Its main function was to control a battery of five remote-controlled torpedo launching tubes (14) situated on the edge of the reef between Namur and Ennagarret.

6. Narrow-Gauge Railroad
The pylons visible here at low tide mark the route of the narrow-gauge railroad on its run to Cagan. The Japanese built an impressive net of railroads at the northeast (Roi) and southern (Kwajalein) corners of Kwajalein Atoll.

7. Namur Beach Bunker
There were numerous bunkers of this type situated at various points around the shores of Roi-Namur, most of them oriented toward ocean approaches (35 and 36).
This is the site of what the 4th Marines called the largest explosion they witnessed during the Second World War. Photos taken seconds after the explosion show the propagation of a visible shock wave reminiscent of those one normally associates with nuclear blasts. It was the storage area for the warhead of the type 93 "Long Lance" torpedo. The immediate cause of the explosion was a satchel charge tossed into an open window of the magazine by a Marine sapper.

8. Site of Former Torpedo Warhead Magazine
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9. Storage Quonsets (buried)
There are at least two U.S. built buildings here. Each of them is about the size of the surgery quonsets further along this road toward TRADEX.

10. The U.S. "Underground Hospital"
This building is considered unsafe to enter.

11. Concrete Pads from the U.S. Hospital Complex
This map shows three pads parallel to each other.

12. U.S. Hospital Surgery Quonsets
This hospital complex was installed by the Navy and planned as a permanent facility for the treatment of large numbers of casualties.